

A STUDY OF THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS ON  
EMPLOYEES WHO REMAIN THROUGH  
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: A VIEW  
THROUGH KUBLER-ROSS (1969)  
IN AN EDUCATIONAL  
INSTITUTION

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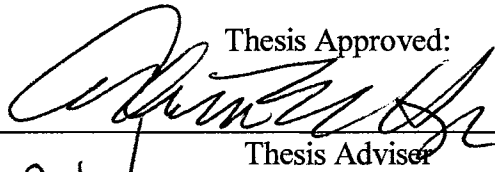
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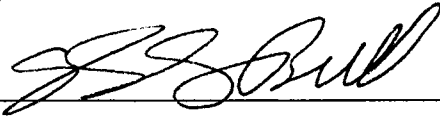
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## CHAPTER ONE

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Today's organizations, including America's schools, live in the constant shadow of environmental and organizational change. Educators "must prepare themselves to totally reinvent the American system of education" (Schlechty, 1997, p. 24). A tremendous amount of time and effort has been devoted to discussion around change in the schools. But few people would argue that widespread change, and even most singular organizational change, has been successful. Schools are known for being notoriously difficult environments for implementing change (Fullan, 1999; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Sarason, 1996).

School change efforts, like other organizational change efforts, tend to focus on external, process, or technical issues (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Marshak, 1996). Even when people are considered an integral part of the process of change, it is rare to find the individual impacts, particularly the emotional impact, of change addressed (Barger & Kirby, 1995, 1997b; Fineman, 1993; Humphrey, 1997; Jeffreys, 1995). While we continue to wonder why organizational change--particularly school change--is ineffective, this critical issue remains, for the most part, unaddressed (Barger & Kirby, 1995; Humphrey, 1997; Marshak, 1996; Vince & Broussine, 1996).

## Statement of the Problem

Educational change is not a new issue; Americans have continually “translated their cultural anxieties and hopes into dramatic demands for educational reform” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 1). A preference for systemic change continues to be apparent in many parts of school reform today (Clinchy, 1997). Change efforts traditionally focus on rational process issues, strategic decision making, or external behaviors while avoiding the emotion that is natural to an organization of people (Fineman, 1993; Marshak, 1996; Vince & Broussine, 1996).

Although school districts have attempted to change, they have not been considered successful by most (Fullan 1999; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Sarason, 1996). Schlechty (2001) states, “The pace of change in American society is far outstripping the capacity of schools to keep up” (p. xi). Schlechty also notes that while school systems are prone to change, they are not good at implementing change in a way that has impact on performance; while numerous changes have been introduced to the schools, schools have stayed pretty much the same.

The lack of successful change may best be explained in terms of a lack of attention to the role of individual loss in the change process (Barger & Kirby, 1995, 1997b; Bridges, 1991; Daugird & Spencer, 1996; Humphrey, 1997; Knight, 1998; Marshak, 1996; Marris, 1986; Massey, 1991, 1992; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994; Stein, 1988; Vince & Broussine, 1996). The work of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969) has recently been used as a lens through which to view the individual impacts of organizational change (Daugird & Spencer, 1996; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994). The loss/grief framework allows the individual’s experience of change to be examined as an integral yet

missing piece of most change strategies. This study focused on individual loss and grief for those who stayed with a changing organization as possible key indicators in the more general failure of educational change.

### Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Using the lens of the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief cycle, the purpose of this explanatory case study was to examine the emotional impact of organizational change on individuals. Specifically, the following was addressed:

1. Description of the emotional responses of individuals impacted by organizational change who choose to stay in the organization;
2. Analysis of these responses through the lens of the Kubler-Ross grief cycle;
3. Identification and discussion of other findings that evolved from the data; and
4. Assessment of the usefulness of the Kubler-Ross grief cycle for explaining these individual responses to organizational change.

### Procedures

The use of case studies, based upon the naturalistic paradigm, allows the researcher to maintain the meaningful characteristics of a complex phenomenon within its natural context. Through this research method, in-depth meanings about particular social phenomena can be discovered and described (Merriam, 1988).

The explanatory case study method was used for this study. This type of case study typically attempts to answer “how” and “why” questions and is a method for investigating a “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). In the case study method, the researcher has deemed the context to be of crucial

importance in understanding the phenomenon under study, and the relevant characteristics of the phenomenon are outside of the control of the researcher. Case studies are concerned with “understanding and describing the process more than behavioral outcomes” (Merriam, 1988, p. 31); understanding and description are the key goals of this study.

There are few set rules in the case study approach, and the quality of the outcome depends a great deal on the skill of the researcher. Nevertheless, the method provides for development of a uniquely in-depth description and complex understanding of the phenomenon under study. It relies on a “thick description” of the situation to allow readers to determine its transferability and study findings to other settings (Merriam, 1988).

#### Researcher and Methodological Implications

I, the researcher, have a background in both career and technical education and in business and industry. I served in various curriculum development, teaching, training, and administrative positions in an Oklahoma technology center for over eight years. I then spent four years in business and industry—first in a Texas-based consulting firm and then in internal consulting and organizational development with *WorldCom*, Inc. My beliefs about how people react within the context of the organization have been shaped by my management and consulting experiences in both education and industry. However, the primary impetus for this particular research inquiry was my work with *WorldCom*, which became *MCI-WorldCom* during my tenure—the largest corporate merger to that date.

In preparation for the *MCI-WorldCom* merger, I led the development of change management curriculum for delivery within our domestic facilities. It was during this time

that I first began to understand organizational change, particularly imposed change, as a type of loss. Throughout the next one and a half years, I was a front-row observer of the impact of this massive organizational change on individuals and teams. The teaching of the grief cycle and redefinition of change as a type of loss became a core part of our corporate efforts, as did the use of drawings for surfacing the emotions that were a part of the change. Grief cycle information became a positive tool for understanding and communicating individual reactions and needs in divisions as diverse as engineering and customer service. The process affirmed my belief that emotion plays a strong role in the processing of organizational change. I also believe that emotion that is deemed negative remains unrecognized and unsupported in most organizations. I believe that the impact of organizational change has common elements that cut across environmental characteristics. And, I believe that the way in which business or educational organizations approach and support the emotions that inevitably surround change will do much to determine success, or failure, at making needed change.

All of these beliefs and experiences impacted the development of my problem statement, the methodology, and the path of analysis I have chosen for inquiry into this problem. With this recognition, I was cautious to plan my research in a way that, to the best of my ability, looked at this problem without concern for my preconceived ideas and biases.



### Data Needs

The use of the explanatory case study method focuses on the drawing out of meaning from the intertwining of context and behavior. In a single case study, this occurs within a bounded system or case through “detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). The most useful collection of data in this study was related to the emotional impact of organizational change on affected individuals within the chosen case—or selected organizational change. The choice of the change, school, and the data sources within the school created natural “bounding” of this case study. Institutional Review Board approval was granted for the study on May 11, 2001 (Appendix A1); minor modifications were approved January 17, 2002 (Appendix A2). Study site approval was received on December 19, 2001 (Appendix B).

### Data Sources

This study focused on a change in school leadership that brought widespread changes in philosophy and practice to the school site. The focus of the case study was on those who chose to stay with the system throughout the numerous resulting changes; this group included staff, faculty, and administration. Actual implementation of the changes was not required to occur during the course of the study; rather, this study focused on the ongoing impact of the changes and how varying individuals processed the changes. Those who had chosen to stay with the organization served as the primary sources of data through the use of interviewing techniques, participant-produced drawings (further described in the Data Collection section), and completion of demographic profiles.

Documents that were helpful in understanding the context of the change, such as school, program, and community demographics and descriptors, were used as additional data sources. Informal observations and interactions with faculty and staff also added insight. As Yin (1994) notes, the “use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues” (p. 92). Yin also makes note that quality may be increased by the use of multiple sources.

Criterion sampling was used to identify employees who met the requirements for the sample. The use of criterion sampling means that all individuals must meet pre-set criteria for inclusion in the sample (Creswell, 1998). Specifically, the sample criteria were that the subject:

1. Was a current employee at the educational institution/system chosen,
2. Had been employed at the school site for 18 or more months,
3. Had been a primary recipient of the change(s), and
4. Could articulate his or her experience.

Informants, as described by Yin (1994), provided the researcher “with insights into a matter,” suggested “sources of corroboratory evidence,” and initiated “access to such sources” (p. 84). Informants played a key role in this study as data sources and were from both the participant pool and from administrative personnel not serving as respondents in the study.

### Data Collection

As noted by Creswell (1998), the researcher is “an instrument of data collection who gathers words or pictures” (p. 14), an active learner rather than an expert on the

topic. The partners in this study, the respondents, voluntarily participated in a four-phase process. Each was asked to complete a brief demographic profile. Each was asked to create two drawings about their experiences of organizational change. These drawings were used as entry points to unstructured interviews. Following the ninth interview of the study, it was determined that no new categories were emerging and that a saturation of data had been achieved. Follow up interviews were conducted for the purposes of clarification. The data collection was intended to address, in theory, a single point in time as it related to the overall changes. In practice, the process of data collection extended over 8 weeks.

The purpose of the study was explained and participants were asked to voluntarily participate during an all-staff meeting in December, 2001. Additional email and/or phone conversations occurred with some potential participants to further clarify details as desired. Interviews were then scheduled with each volunteer who, prior to the interview, again received both verbal and written information about the study as required by the Oklahoma State University Internal Review Board (Oklahoma State University, 2000). After receipt of information, each participant was asked to voluntarily sign a consent form (Appendix C1) and a copy of the consent form was provided to the participant. Following the completion of all data collection, participant names were entered in a drawing for a \$150 gift certificate to the vendor of his or her choice.

Feelings List. Fineman (1993) notes that most organizations consider emotions something to be controlled and, in fact, control of emotions resides on most human resource training agendas. “Although the business climate is changing, it can still be taboo to have feelings at work” (Ridge Associates, 1993, p. 37). Because of the traditional

taboo on feelings, people can develop rather limited vocabularies about feelings (Ridge Associates, 1993) and, therefore, have difficulty describing them. With this recognition in mind, like Massey (1991) and Clapper (1991), respondents were provided with a list of feeling words and asked to select those they identified with. This list was also used at their discretion throughout the interview (Appendix C2).

Demographic profiles. The pencil and paper demographic profiles (Appendix C3) were used for identifying personal characteristics. Organizationally-related information was also collected.

Drawings. In this study, like Meyer (1991), respondents were asked to first draw their feelings about their chosen organizational changes and then to interpret their drawings (see Appendix C4 for provisions and instructions for drawings). The drawings were used as a tool for eliciting emotionally-based information during a respondent-led interpretation. This interpretation by the respondent provided the foundation for an open-ended interview. Every respondent in the study agreed to draw his or her experience of change at both the local and state levels.

A notable advantage of drawings is that they more strongly involve the respondent in the research process. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) note “the open-ended interview rests on the assumption that the researcher will ask questions that are culturally meaningful to the subject” (p. 410). The photo or drawing-based interview, on the other hand uses images as a guide. The model suggests strong collaboration and, as such, “the marriage of visual methods and ethnography seems natural” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 410).

All drawings were retained by the researcher and were numerically coded to the corresponding interview transcript. The interpretation of drawings was audiotaped and transcribed.

Case study questions. Case study questions (Appendix C5) were used as an assurance that all of the needed data was retrieved through the participant's interpretation and explanation of his or her drawing. The questions were basically "reminders regarding the information that needs to be collected, and why" (Yin, 1994, p. 69) and served as prompts during an interview session. Questions were open-ended so that the participant could be listened to, data studied, and questions reshaped as needed (Creswell, 1998). In cases where the natural flow of information during the drawing interpretation did not elicit all of the needed data, the case study questions were used to gain the missing data. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

Follow up interviews. After the initial round of data collection, follow up interviews were conducted in person. The needed content of these interviews flowed naturally from continuous analysis of data collected during the first round of interviews. In the spirit of qualitative research, questions had changed "during the process of research to reflect an increased understanding of the problem" (Creswell, 1998, p. 19). "Hunches, working hypotheses, and educated guesses direct[ed] the investigator's attention to certain data and then to refining and/or verifying one's hunches" (Merriam, 1988, p. 123). In this spirit of evolving themes and meaning, second interviews were used both for clarification and verification of earlier data.

## Data Analysis

In the case of most qualitative research statistical tests are rarely appropriate, and that was also the case with this study. Instead, data was analyzed using the theoretical orientations on which the study was based as a guide to case study analysis (Yin, 1994). In this case, that guide was the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct.

Data was first organized topically through a “search for regularities” (Merriam, 1988, p. 131) or repeating words, behaviors, or emotions that could be used as categories for data items. Data was then examined and coded according to these categories in an ever-evolving process. This process produced numerous identified changes, losses and gains, and emotional reactions to the changes.

Categorized emotional data was then compared to the categories provided by the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief model. It was quickly discovered that the unstructured interview process produced a number of emotions that had not been matched to the Kubler-Ross model in previous research; this required an additional categorization process that was accomplished with the assistance and advice of numerous mental health professionals familiar with the grief process. The final outcomes were produced in a process much like that described by Merriam (1998) who said the “database is scanned to determine the fit of a priori categories and then the data is sorted into the borrowed categories” (p. 137). This examination of the data produced both data that fit the Kubler-Ross grief cycle as well as other meaningful themes.

## Research Criteria

Certain research criteria must be met for a qualitative study to be considered trustworthy. These criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

### Credibility

Credibility refers to the match between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Several techniques were used to increase credibility. First, I continually clarified and considered my biases and theoretical orientation, as stated previously, throughout the study (Merriam, 1998). Peer debriefing and member checks were also used. Peer debriefing involves “extended and extensive discussions of one’s findings, conclusions, [and] tentative analyses” with an outside evaluator who asks questions and provides feedback about the study in order to challenge and refine the study and its processes as necessary (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Dr. Adrienne Hyle, my dissertation chair, served in this role. Member checks involve “taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible” (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Member checks were informally conducted on a one-on-one basis through follow up interviews and other discussions; these checks gave participants an opportunity to correct errors, offer additional information, and judge overall accuracy (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Finally, multiple sources of data including participant drawings, interviews, documents, and informal observations created triangulation and increased credibility (Merriam, 1998).

### Transferability

Transferability deals with the extent to which the results can be applied to other settings, a question that is determined by the practitioner (Merriam, 1998). To assist in this determination, this study provides a “rich, thick description . . . so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211). For this study, this includes details about the people (gender, length of employment, etc.) organization (size, rural/suburban, student population, etc.), town, and the change that was the subject of the study. The use of criterion-based sampling, or using only subjects that fit specific pre-set criteria, also provides specific information about those included in the sample.

### Dependability

Dependability is concerned with whether outsiders “concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense—they are consistent and dependable” (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). Dependability was assured through multiple methods of data collection, details about the sample selection and social context, and an audit trail created throughout the study by the researcher (Merriam, 1998). The multiple methods of data collection and other “thick description” details are detailed in this study report. An audit trail of drawings, interview transcripts, tapes, documents, notes, and analyses was also kept and remains in the possession of the researcher.

### Confirmability

Confirmability deals with the issue of whether the data, data interpretations, and results are based upon the site context and informants, not created by the researcher. This is assured via the confirmability audit, related to the dependability audit, which makes both



the data and the interpretation process traceable and available to outside reviewers (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). A numerically coded chain of evidence was kept that allowed all data to be traced to its original source. Clear citations of specific documents and interviews were made, circumstances surrounding the collection of the evidence are a part of the study's database and, through these documents, it was clear that the process used was linked to the stated methodology.

### Significance of the Study

A good study should contribute to the building of multiple knowledge bases. This study adds to the knowledge bases of research, practice, and theory.

### Research

The results of this study add to a limited bank of knowledge about how change affects people who choose to stay in the organization. This is only the second known study of emotional responses to change in schools and, as such, its findings provide critical information to other educational researchers. Further research in this area may include additional studies in other similar educational sites and with similar changes. Additional studies in other educational settings with other types of organizational changes would also contribute to the question of whether results are transferable to a broader set of organizational changes in educational organizations. In addition, as grief is a process that extends over time (Barger & Kirby, 1995; Jeffreys, 1995; Kubler-Ross, 1969; Parkes, 1988; Pollock, 1977), longitudinal or follow up studies to existing research would greatly add to the available research.

With the inclusion of drawings as a data collection tool, this study used a methodology that is unique. Findings about the efficacy of the methodology contribute

important information for researchers who seek to uncover human emotions as a part of their inquiries.

### Practice

This study helps school administrators, teachers, and change agents better understand the impacts of organizational change on the individual, information that is critical if schools are to meet the rapidly evolving needs of stakeholders. The uncovering of emotions experienced by people who stay through organizational change is important as a guide for developing implementation and intervention strategies. In addition, individuals may use the results of this study to find better understanding of their reactions, leading to better self-management of the impacts of change.

### Theory

Theoretically, this study used the Kubler-Ross grief model (1969) to provide an explanation of the emotions experienced by individuals during times of organizational change. This study clarifies the applicability of this theory to organizational change in schools as detailed further in Chapter Four.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to use the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct as a lens for examining the emotional responses of individuals who choose to stay during a time of school change. In addition the study reports other findings that evolved from the data and assessed the usefulness of the Kubler-Ross model for application to organizational change. In keeping with the spirit of qualitative methods, this study allowed for “insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing” (Merriam, 1988, p. 10).

## Reporting

A review of literature is presented in Chapter Two and Chapter Three presents the data collected on organizational change. Chapter Four is comprised of the analyses and interpretation of this data.

In a departure from the standard organization of dissertation reporting, Chapter Five deals only with the methodology of participant-produced drawings used in this study. This chapter is unique in that it is a fully enclosed report presenting the drawing data, observations, analyses, and conclusions about the use of participant-produced drawings in a single chapter rather than as a thread throughout the other chapters. The literature review for the drawing methodology, however, remains in chapter Two.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, returns to the study's purpose and includes a summary, implications, conclusions, and discussion of the study outcomes. References and Appendices follow Chapter Six.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

An examination of the related literature for this research study includes a review of thought on organizational change and the emotion, loss, and grief literature. The Elisabeth Kubler-Ross grief model (1969), as the *a priori* theoretical frame for this work, is also reviewed to explore past uses and usefulness in social science and the appropriateness of its application for this and future studies. This review of literature provides a basis for understanding the origins and issues of the problem through a discussion of related thought and study in the three areas listed above. As a final piece of the review of literature, the uses of participant drawings as a data collection device are presented.

#### Organizational Change

Organizations, be they schools or for-profits, probably share a greater number of change drivers than those that are unique only to their type of business or service. For instance, while *Brown v. Board of Education* could be identified as a primary change driver specific to the public schools, other concerns such as keeping pace with technology, the changing workforce, changing societal values, diversity and leadership issues affect all types of organizations. For the technology training school that serves high school students, business and industry clients, as well as adults in re-training, change demands come from a broad array of sources. The rapid and sometimes overwhelming

demands for change naturally invite a variety of perspectives, “expert” opinions, and research, which have given rise to a number of change theories and models.

In general, theoretical perspectives on change in organizations may be broken into three mainstreams of thought: orthodox or classical theory tends to focus on organizational structure without people—the classic bureaucracy; neo-orthodox or neo-classical adds the human element but still places primary emphasis on the organizational structure; and non-orthodox or non-classical theory views people as the most important component of organizations.

### Orthodox or Classical Theories

Orthodox or classical theories include the oldest existing theories about how organizations behave and should be managed, dating back to the eighteenth century. They include the work of some of the most well known organizational theorists and have structure as their primary driver. Reflecting the social values of their time, “organizations, it was thought, should work like machines, using people, capital, and machines as their parts” (Shafritz & Ott, 2001, p. 29). The issue of change or an organization’s ability to accomplish real change was not a viable issue because organizations were expertly designed to accomplish set tasks—tasks that did not change. The work of this group of theorists continues to influence today’s efforts to accommodate change. The work of Max Weber, Henri Fayol, and Frederick Winslow Taylor are ideal examples of classical theorists.

Weber is the “father” of bureaucracy which he called “bureaucratic authority” for the public administration arena and “bureaucratic management” for the private, for-profit sector (Weber, 2001, p. 73). As a sociologist, Weber observed the power of the

bureaucratic organization and he was certain that it would be the predominant, and the most successful, structure for the modern world (Gaynor, 1998a). This was due to his belief in a bureaucracy's ability to achieve technical efficiency (Pugh, 1984).

Weber's bureaucratic principles affect activities of the total organization, which would certainly include any efforts of the organization or its people to implement or respond to change. Gaynor (1998a) identifies nine components of Weber's theory:

- 1) a transcendent life span or existing beyond the life of its employees,
- 2) high task specialization (creating expert workers who are assigned to only one specific piece of the process),
- 3) sufficient authority which is defined by Weber (2001) as "a firmly ordered system of super- and subordination in which there is supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones" (p. 73),
- 4) authority that is limited to just that necessary to do their assigned duties,
- 5) strong hierarchy of units within the organization,
- 6) an emphasis on technical competency,
- 7) clear distinctions between administrators and owners,
- 8) clearly written rules and regulations (along with universal application of them regardless of individual or circumstances), and
- 9) authority that is legitimated by laws and contracts.

Weber's theory clearly does not directly address the issue of organizational change. At this time, organizations were not thought to need to change—they were set up as ideal.

Frederick Winslow Taylor, known for his pioneering of time and motion studies, did not see what is commonly referred to as the "theory of scientific management" as a

theory at all. In fact, Taylor referred to scientific management as an evolution where many practices have been tried until the “proper remedy has been found” (Taylor, 2001, p. 63), another way of saying that there was “‘one best way’ to accomplish any given task” (Shafritz & Ott, 2001, p. 31). The four principles produced by Taylor’s work were intended to increase the output per worker by: careful selection of workers; knowing, training, and paying higher wages to the worker; offering worthwhile incentives to “make” the workman and the science of doing things come together, and dividing the work equally between management and workers (Pugh, 1984).

Like Taylor, Henri Fayol concentrated on management— but rather than the individual worker, Fayol specifically concentrated on the fundamentals for structuring and managing the larger corporation. Fayol proposed a theory of the critical functions of managers believed to be applicable to all types of organizations. He believed that the function of management is to ensure the good working order of the “body corporate” or personnel of the organization (Fayol, 2001, p. 48). To accomplish this, managers must operate from a clear set of principles or constructs. “This code is indispensable . . . in every concern there is a management function to be performed, and for its performance there must be principles, that is to say acknowledged truths regarded as proven on which to rely” (Fayol, 2001, p. 60). Fayol’s management principles are: “division of work,” “authority and responsibility,” “discipline,” “unity of command,” “unity of direction,” “subordination of individual interest,” “remuneration of personnel,” “centralization,” “scalar chain” or chain of authority, “order,” “equity,” “stability of tenure of personnel,” “initiative,” and “esprit de corps” or harmony and union among personnel (Fayol, 2001, p. 48-59).

These classical theorists provide the foundation of the ever-evolving arena of organizational theory and their influence is still seen today in both education and business. However, by the end of World War II, their theories began to be attacked as overly mechanistic and ill attuned to the human elements of organizations as well as organizational decision making processes (Shafritz & Ott, 2001). Today, an emphasis on structure is rarely seen as a positive approach for dealing with change but organizational change, as a primary organizational issue, was not addressed by classical theorists. However, their efforts toward organizing, managing, and controlling organizations and their workers, as well as their total focus on structure rather than individuals, must be well understood as they continue to impact our efforts to change today.

#### Neo-Orthodox or Neo-Classical Theory

Neo-classical theory evolved due to increasing criticism of the classical theories. While neo-classical theorists never said that these structure-bound theories were wrong, they did believe that there was more to dealing with organizations than just structure. This was the beginning of organizational theorists' efforts to consider people as an important and viable component of organizational success. These theories have a strong effect on how we organize and manage today and, more specifically, how we deal with ever increasing demands to accommodate or lead change in our organization. Some examples of neo-classical theory are: Etzioni's (1961) compliance theory (which looks at power and the relationships between those who hold power and those who are subject to that power), Herzberg's (1984) motivation-hygiene theory (which focuses on determinants of job satisfaction), and Argyris and Schon's (1984) organizational learning theory (which considers how members of an organization modify their personal maps and



images of the organization in a way that results in organizational change). What is evident in this selection of neo-classical theories, is the new focus on the individual and the turning of organizational theorists to the issue of organizational change.

While all the identified neo-classical theories are well established and could be further expounded on, social systems theory (Getzels & Guba, 1957; Katz & Kahn, 2001) in particular has had a clear influence on change efforts in education. With this in mind, social systems theory will be outlined as a broad concept and an example of the philosophy that undergirds theories in this group. The philosophy behind social systems theory as well as two well known examples of educationally-based change efforts based upon this philosophy are discussed next.

Social systems theory. More than one theorist can be identified as an integral contributor to the evolving development of systems theory—specifically, Jacob Getzels and Egon Guba (1957), and Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn (2001). Systems theory has as its focus the behavior of an individual or representative individuals as it evolves from the interaction of the individual and the organization. The organizational

dimension is represented in terms of transactions, or cross-pressures, between the organization and the culture within which it exists. Individuals are represented in terms of cross-pressures among their respective personalities, physical constitution, and the complex of subcultures with which they identify. Thus, individuals and organizations are conceived within larger environments to which, presumably, they must adapt. (Gaynor, 1998b, p. 56)

While systems theory is well-known for being applied in the field of business, those seeking reform for education have also promoted its practice. Schlechty (1997)

says that systemic thinking “requires us to look beyond the individual and individual actions for explanations” (p. 135). This type of thinking recognizes the importance of people in the organization, but primarily as factors in the organization’s social systems and relationships, history, and structure, which are the key to shaping human behavior. With this type of thinking, then, it follows that changing the structure, including the rules and regulations, or the culture of an organization is the best path toward changing its outputs or products.

Systemic thinking, by its very nature, supports change at the direction of senior manager/administrators. As noted by Butcher and Atkinson (2000), systems-based change has been a popular approach to effective change because it follows well-accepted organizational logic. It assumes that senior managers are in the best position to understand strategy and initiate changes and that “significant change stands little chance of success without the active support of senior management” (p. 48).

From a practical perspective, Schlechty (1997) gives a flavor of how systemic change might look. He recommends the drawing of a map of “connections between various components of the system. Such maps, properly drawn, can hint at the collateral changes that may need to occur in the system to support the intended changes” (p. 137-138). He also says “if school systems are to be improved, educators must be able to control the components of the system that are critical to system performance” (p. 140). Schlechty’s thoughts in 1997 do not differ much from what he proposed in 1976—prior to *A Nation at Risk* (1983) that inflamed the public’s concerns about schools and generated a rash of top-down change.

It is possible to suggest that the reason school reform has failed lies not in the fact that schools are not reformable but in the fact that reformers too often start from faulty premises, premises that insist that personalistic variables are more important in schools than are structural . . . . To try to change the behavior of individual school participants can lead to little more than personal frustration and the failure of reform. It is reasonable to believe that schools can be reformed, if we but understand the level at which reform is needed. Knowledge of the structural sources of classroom behavior will provide a clearer view of where needed reform might be instituted. (Schlechty, 1976, pp. 266-267)

Two well-known educational examples of social systems theory at work are the current push toward national and state standards and testing for public schools, and the 1980s move toward site-based management. President Bush campaigned on a “growing consensus that the federal government should step up the pressure on states and school districts to improve academic achievement” (Robelen, 2001, p. 24). Bush’s agenda included extensive testing of students, the mandated right to transfer out of failing schools, and the loss of school funds for those failing to make progress. He supported greatly expanded testing programs in more than 25 states (Robelen, 2001). His plans also required states to move to criterion- or standards-referenced tests that are aligned to state standards rather than the old norms-based tests that most states still use (Lynd, 2000). For educators, these changes brought up questions on funding (Robelen, 2001) and concerns that testing would be unfair to learners from minority and special needs populations. Others strongly questioned whether mandated, top-down change can ever be effective in changing public schools (Berger, 2000).

On January 8, 2002 Bush signed an education bill that requires annual testing of students in grades 3-8 beginning in 2005; science tests will also be added in 2005. Schools face penalties of federally-supported student transfers and, possible, federally required changes. Over the coming years, we will have the opportunity to see whether the performance-based accountability proposed by Bush finds any success in changing the quality of the public schools. Critics of systems-based changes argue that it will not.

Site-based management (SBM), another well-known systems-based change movement that began in the 1980s, “may be instituted by state law or by administrative action, by a district, or by a school. It may be linked to an accountability system with consequences tied to student performance” (David, 1995, p. 4).

Malen and Ogawa (1988) effectively capture the essence of the beliefs behind site-based management:

By altering decisionmaking relationships, site-based governance could make schools more responsive to their clients and constituents, more receptive to innovation, more deserving of public support (Davies, 1978; Goodlad, 1984; Thomas, 1980). . . . Proposals aimed at involving teachers and parents in the determination of school-level policy are being advanced as measures that might professionalize teaching, revitalize schools, restore confidence and, in some instances, offset the threat of parent exit and the pressure for privatization, by providing greater voice and choice in the public sector. (p. 107)

As evidenced by Leithwood and Menzies’ (1998) examination of 83 empirical studies of SBM implementation, site-based management may take a variety of forms but it is usually “cloaked in the language of increasing student achievement” (David, 1995, p.

5). Their comprehensive review of 83 empirical studies of SBM appear to support top-down implementation of SBM. Forty-five of the 76 different effects of SBM reported, were positive. There is, however, some strong opposition of social systems-based change.

Critique of social systems theory-based change. As early as 1977 a study of the implementation of a comprehensive Massachusetts' special education law found that teachers impacted by the law found ways to routinize procedures, ration their services, modify the goals, limit the intended clientele, and assert their own priorities. In practice, the change looked different from the intent because of the power of the people who had to implement the change—the teachers (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977).

Berger (2000), who analyzes the arguments for and against standards-based school reform and comes out *in support* of the movement, still notes that to be successful many of the challenges of standards-based reform must be accounted for by local administrators, not the national- or state-level initiators of the change. Schrag (1998) also notes that, in order for standards-based reform to be successful, classroom teachers must go along with the movement.

Another study by Timar and Kirp (1987) also found that educators are skilled in finding ways to change or evade the effects of reform demands they see as inappropriate. This may be excluding low-achieving pupils from state examinations, responding to a longer school day by extending the time between classes, changing grades or grading systems for students in danger of ineligibility for athletics, or re-labeling old courses to appear to comply with new requirements.

The implementation of site-based management has also met with mixed results. While they did find a majority of positive measurements in their examination of 83 empirical studies of school-based management, Leithwood and Menzies (1998) found there to be “an awesome gap between the rhetoric and the reality of SBM’s contribution to student growth” (p. 345). They also found that significant improvements in student learning, the real goal of most SBM programs, are primarily dependent on teaching practices and note that this is not an organizational structure issue.

Activities to thwart or change the goals of mandated change, as noted in several of the referenced studies, are indicative of individual defensive maneuvers. To the question of whether states can mandate educational excellence through top-down regulations, Timar and Kirp (1987, 1988) say no. “Excellence cannot be coerced. At best laws and rules might create some necessary but not sufficient conditions under which competent and caring teachers and intellectually curious students might flourish” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 80).

Ultimately, the implementers of the change have tremendous influence on the success, partial success, or failure of mandated change. This is the battle cry for people-oriented change efforts, which fall primarily (but not necessarily neatly) into the category neo-orthodox or non-classical theory. They note that, when people are not placed at the heart of organizational change, they will find alternate ways to make their voices heard.

#### Non-Orthodox or Non-Classical Theory

In terms of organizational theory, non-classical theorists see the people, not the organization, as most important; in fact, they deny the importance of structure and focus on the people (Adrienne Hyle, personal communication, February 14, 2000). Well-

known non-classical theorists and theories include Karl Weick's work on action in organizations (1987), Jeffrey Pfeffer's work on power and organizational decision making (2001), James March and Michael Cohen's work on leadership ambiguity (1974), and Margaret Wheatley's application of chaos theory (1992, 1993). Michael Fullan also makes tremendous contributions to this area with his writings directed at educational change (1999, 2001; see also Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

Advocates for change that stem from the activities, thoughts, and behaviors of the people point to a failure in decades of mandatory school reform and a need for more productive approaches (Fullan, 1999). "A common notion in considering change is to think about it in ambiguous, impersonal terms. But change affects people, and their role in the process is of utmost importance" (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987, p.6). Change that is driven by people rather than systems "recognizes and builds on the reality of how groups and organizations function" (Butcher & Atkinson, 2000, p. 49). But, perhaps more realistically, many of these people-oriented change advocates (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Fullan, 1999; Wheatley, 1993; Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996) do not promote divorce of the people from the organizational systems; this would be too simplistic in today's world. With an infinitely more flexible but in some ways more complex approach, they advocate that there is a place for both; in a distinct departure from both neo-classical and classical theory, they recognize and emphasize the role of people in effective organizational change. Fullan (1999) says "the deeper meaning of coping with change forces requires living between too much and too little structure in which people derive new directions as they encounter diversity inside and outside the organization (p. 79).

Chaos theory, which resulted from science's quest to predict the weather, captured the attention of American business when Margaret Wheatley (1993) began using it to explain how organizations manage change. Although Fullan (1999) refers to it as "complexity theory," he also references chaos theory in understanding change in the educational environment.

Chaos theory addresses at least three key components of organizational change. Information is recognized as a key organizer of work; "more and more organizations are discovering that their only route to health and resiliency is to open up their organizations to free-flowing information, around which trustworthy employees are free to organize work" (Wheatley, 1993, p. 13). Relationships are also key; "our organizations need to open up and let people circulate more freely, making contact with others based on work needs, not status or history (p. 14). And, on the issue of organizational values, vision, and mission, Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) note that these emerge from the activities of the people rather than from planning:

How much of any human endeavor comes to fruition from precise plans unfolding step by step, just as their designers described? If we look at any successful human activity, we see that what led to success was the newly discovered capacity of people. They came together and invested new ways of doing something. They explored new realms of ingenuity. They made it happen by responding in the moment and by changing as they went along. (p. 74)

Fullan (1999) offers support of Wheatley's perceptions saying "rationally constructed reform strategies do not work" and they never will because of the rapid changes in our environments (p. 3). (I would depart somewhat from Fullan's wording in that it appears



that *systemic change strategies* that do not work; people-centered change strategies are quite rational.)

For some change advocates, the emphasis goes much deeper than the behaviors and concerns of people to their underlying emotions—proposed as the cause of those behaviors and stated concerns. These researchers point to unresolved individual emotions as potential causes of the lack of success in organizational change. Research efforts into the individual emotional impacts of change have been most prominent in the medical field, and existing grief and loss literature has been used as a reference for study here (Daugird & Spencer, 1996; Humphrey, 1997; Knight, 1998; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994; Stein, 1988; Triolo, Allgeir, & Schwartz, 1995). Others in the field of business have addressed the issue of individual loss primarily through observation and consulting (Barger & Kirby, 1995, 1997b; Bridges, 1991). Only two efforts of this kind were found in education. One article on school change and individual grief (Marshak, 1996) simply set forth the author's opinion based upon anecdotal evidence but was eerily in line with studies in other environments. The other was dissertation-driven research (Clapper, 1991) that explored the individual effects of imposed change in an educational institution and came to the conclusion that imposed educational change produces loss, gain, and feelings of grief that must be recognized and managed. The common vein of thought in these studies can be summed up by Barger and Kirby (1995) who state:

It is to the organization's and leaders' great disadvantage to ignore emotionally charged areas during a time of change, however difficult they may be to deal with. It is the inward focus on unacknowledged pain that keep people from being able to focus on the future and approach new challenges with energy. (p. 82)

This depth of focus on the emotional impacts of change on individuals is an important new direction in analyzing the role of people in effective organizational change. And there is a major need, that is being recognized only by a few, to do well-designed research into the role that emotions play in organizational change.

### Emotion, Loss, and Grief

The grief phenomena in organizations is not well understood, primarily due to a lack of thorough research. This makes it advisable to return to the available literature on human attachment, loss, and grief to provide a foundation for further discussion of human loss in organizations.

Theories on human development abound but, when considering human attachment, the literature places heavy emphasis on the work of John Bowlby (1953, 1980). According to Bowlby, the first attachment in human life is when the human infant, just like other species, imprints or attaches to a particular parent figure. The infant then develops through a series of stages of attachment from birth to adulthood. Perhaps one of the most important facets of Bowlby's attachment work was the understanding that evolution plays such a key role in early attachment behaviors. "As a product of evolution, the human child has an instinctual need to stay close to the parent on whom she has imprinted. . . . On some level, the child herself may sometimes feel that losing contact with the parent means she will die" (Crain, 2000, p. 45). This early ability to make a meaningful attachment provides children the ability to attach throughout his or her lifetime; in Bowlby's work, it was the children raised in orphanages who showed what was sometimes a lifetime inability to attach or to love.

It is Bowlby's (1953, 1980) work in attachment that lends itself as the framework for his research and writings on loss and grief. While Bowlby is clear that the majority of his work on loss and grief stems from a single source, that of death, he also stated "probably a majority of losses that occur in our society are due to causes other than death" (Bowlby, 1980, p. 75). Likewise, he believed that if we have a good understanding of the loss and grief that results from death, we are better prepared to understand other types of loss and grieving behaviors.

For there can be little doubt that, whatever the cause of a loss may be, certain basic patterns of response are present and that such variations of response as may result from losses having one or another of many different causes are best regarded as variations on a single theme. (p. 76)

Using Bowlby's (1953, 1980) work on attachment, with the infant-parent figure as the initial attachment event for a pattern of attachments throughout life, it becomes clear that with attachment comes the potential for loss. The value that Western society has placed on work is a topic discussed by Jeffreys (1995). In our society humans develop a significant attachment to their jobs, and these jobs become an important component of how they define and value themselves. Employees become invested in the organization as it is now, often setting personal and professional goals in line with their understanding of it.

Tomko (1983) broadens our understanding of attachment to include the loss of what might have been or the "dissolution of the dream." This includes "what had been planned on, or wished for, or hoped would someday come to be" (p. 391) and, like other attachments, can lead to grief-related emotions. Organizational change upsets

employees' understandings of the world, plans, and dreams as it threatens the status quo of the organization. "People grieve for the old organization, the old people, the old ways" (Perlman & Takacs, 1990, p. 33)—just as they have become securely attached to in the organization as it is, organizational change brings loss.

Loss is a unique, isomorphic experience. As such it cannot be measured against some outside criterion. The nature of the experience is the individual's response to it, not necessarily what was lost. Thus losses obviously are not limited to the loss of people. Any tangible or intangible thing which is perceived as part of a person's identity can be attached to and separated from . . . Our relationship to loss and attachment may well be the central life task. (Headington, 1979, p. 338-339)

There are numerous models and a variety of thought about successfully grieving adult loss. While he noted that the stages are not clearly definable and that individuals may not move through them linearly, Bowlby (1980) attributed four stages to the process of adult grieving: (1) numbness interrupted by outbursts of anger, panic, or other intense emotions, (2) yearning as the reality of the loss begins to register broken by "intense pining," "great restlessness, insomnia, preoccupation with thoughts of the lost" (p. 86), (3) disorganization and despair which may result in depression and apathy, and (4) reorganization.

Solari-Twadell, Bunkers, Wang, and Snyder (1995) place the grief process on a pinwheel model that labels the change a "fierce wind" which starts a process of being stopped, missing, seeking, valuing, pain and hurting, and holding. Solari-Twadell et al. believe movement through the process to be cyclical rather than linear. Worden (1991)

established a four-part process to successful resolution of grief. This included a cognitive acceptance of the reality of the loss, a full experience of the associated emotional pain, a readjustment to an environment that was the site of the loss, and an emotional detachment from the person or object that allows the individual to reinvest in life.

Perlman and Takacs (1990) added five stages to the Elisabeth Kubler-Ross model (1969), the grief model used as a lens for this study. The Perlman and Takacs model consists of ten stages including equilibrium, denial, anger, bargaining, chaos, depression, resignation, openness, readiness, and re-emergence.

Regardless of the model applied to the process of grieving, Bowlby (1980) foreshadowed the place of grief in the organization when he said, “there is a tendency to underestimate how intensely distressing and disabling loss usually is and for how long the distress, and often the disablement, commonly lasts” (p. 8). This, too, seems to be the general consensus of those who seek to understand grief as a normal part of organizational change.

### Grief in Organizations

The application of the grief models from death and dying research to other life losses is not a new idea. Crosby, Gage, and Raymond’s (1983) study into divorce-related grief showed that grief resolution that results from divorce is similar to the bereavement that follows death. Trolley (1994) sought to link the death-related grieving literature to a number of traumatic life events, specifically: alcoholism, sexual abuse, disability, divorce, and infertility. In reference to her comparison of the grief resulting from these types of losses to death-related losses, she says

Independent of the nature of trauma, commonalities exist. Content may differ but the process is the same. A gut-wrenching event occurs that challenges every aspect of self. The loss of a highly valued object is emotionally mourned and cognitive means of coping are desperately sought. Integration of the loss into victim's lives in such a way that they become survivors is a common goal.

Similarities and differences are two sides of the same coin as alpha and omega are infinite circles. (p. 297)

Efforts to apply grief models to change in organizations have been based upon anecdotal reports and observations (Barger & Kirby, 1995; Jeffreys, 1995; Kaplan, 1991; Owen 1987; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994;) as well as varying levels and types of both qualitative and quantitative inquiry (Clapper 1991; Humphrey, 1997; Kavanagh & Johnson, 1990; Massey, 1991, 1992; Stein, 1990a, 1990b; Triolo et al., 1995). Although some anecdotal efforts did not produce clear empirical data, the reported insights in organizational change, loss, and grief have fired continued research into this area and their contents are extremely similar to the empirically-based studies. The majority of these efforts occurred in the medical setting. Only two reports were based on change in the schools—one that included simple anecdotal evidence and author opinion (Marshak, 1996) and one that was an empirically based inquiry into change in the public schools (Clapper, 1991).

#### Efforts in Non-School Organizations

Massey reported a two-part study in 1991 and 1992 that sought to assess the reactions of nurses whose hospital was scheduled for closure in 15 months, including nurses still at the hospital as well as nurses who had relocated to other positions. Massey

found that the nurses experienced a type of loss he termed “institutional loss” (p. 582)—a type of grief he considered to be more complicated than the type of grief that follows death. Nurses reported feelings of shock and disbelief, isolation, anxiety, guilt, anger, and feelings of emptiness. Nurses also reported a perceived loss of identity and a continuing identification and idealization of the hospital setting as it was prior to the closure announcement.

In research at a Nebraska hospital, Triolo et al. (1995) found that involuntary reductions of employee numbers produced a set of reactions like those termed “survivor layoff sickness” (Noer, 1993). The identified symptoms of survivor layoff sickness were also markedly similar to those identified with grief reactions—feelings of fear, insecurity and uncertainty, frustration, resentment and anger, sadness, depression, guilt, and betrayal. The study also found that one of the primary causes of the grief reactions was due to the violation of trust that occurred for employees who had linked their identities with the organization. This is supported by reports on identity and work from as early as 1938 when Eisenberg and Lazarfeld noted that work for Americans is a major source of a sense of value and worth.

Other researchers have shown that it does not take what are perhaps the ultimate organizational changes—institutional closure and widespread downsizing—to produce grief reactions in employees. Humphrey (1997) found extensive evidence of grief reactions in her mixed methods study of organizational change in a medical setting. In this case of a medical center in northeastern Ohio, like the school site for this study, the medical center had experienced a reorganization of management structure, philosophy and practice that began with the hiring of a new administrator. This in-depth empirical

look into employee responses produced evidence of numerous grief reactions and reported that 57% of employees said that the changes were some type of personal loss.

Regarding the study results, Humphrey said,

The grief found in this organization was similar to the grief that has been observed and described in other work places in anecdotal reports. Moreover, the grief here is also similar to the grief experienced in non-work situations of loss.

The findings were consistent with the literature for attachment, loss, and grief. (p. 148-149)

Among Humphrey's conclusions were that grief reactions of the nature found, if left unrecognized and ignored, have the potential for serious negative effects on the organization as well as the individual. These included changes in "employees' attitudes, work efforts, and overall commitment to the organization," potentially leading to a "dysfunctional workplace" (p. 149).

Barger and Kirby (1995) used the metaphor of the Pioneer journey to describe both the process and reactions involved in their observations of organizational change. From their international consulting work in organizations, they parallel the experiences and reactions of Pioneers on the trail to Oregon with the very real changes that occur in organizations today. Special consideration is given to the decision and preparation to change, the confusion and unexpected challenges, the loss of identity and meaning, and the differences in expectations versus outcomes when the change is considered complete.

Two of Barger and Kirby's (1995, 1997a) contributions to our current understanding of change bear special mention. First, they are unique in that they clearly establish that reactions to change are quite different depending upon whether the change



is experienced as chosen or imposed. Some, particularly managers and leaders, may see the need for change and have the opportunity to research, think about, discuss, and identify what they believe to be a positive path toward change. These individuals experience a conscious decision to change that is “anticipated,” “incremental” and “solves problems” (p. 47). Most organizational changes, however, affect much more than just those who have given prior thought to the change; for the others who must implement and live with the change, the change is experienced as imposed change—“sudden,” “disruptive,” and one that “*creates problems*” (italics added) (p. 47). Many managers prepare logical explanations for employees and are frustrated and angry when employees do not immediately see the value of their logic. They may choose to ignore employee reactions in order to force the change through. Like Barger and Kirby, Marris (1974) is quick to denounce this common strategy saying

When those who have the power to manipulate changes act as if they have only to explain, and, when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. (p. 155)

The second important contribution Barger and Kirby (1995) make is the observation that even “good” change may produce grief-like reactions because it involves loss and “grief is the natural human response to loss” (p. 77). For things to change, there must be a loss of something —“the end of the way people have been doing something, the people they have been doing it with and the places they have been doing it” (p. 72).

Bridges (1991) concurs saying

Even in these “good” changes, there are transitions that begin with having to let go of something. There are endings. There are losses . . . The failure to identify and be ready for the endings and losses that change produces is the largest single problem that organizations in transition encounter. (p. 5)

The idea that even “good” or positive change may produce feelings of loss grief is a very important addendum to current literature on organizational change and loss. Barger and Kirby (1995, 1997b) also note the costs associated with not dealing with loss reactions as well as the difficulties.

If these emotions are not dealt with directly, they stay under the surface, interfering with employee morale and productivity. They are one of the primary reasons that employees get stuck and don’t participate actively and creatively in the change process. Yet leaders can find it very difficult to deal with the emotions of people (as well as their own) and choose to deny the experience of grieving employees. (p. 358)

### Efforts in School Settings

While advances in understanding organizational change and loss are slowly being made, it was very unusual to find references in the literature to efforts that are specific to the educational environment. Marshak (1996) pulled from his experiences in the public schools to write a report on the emotional experience of change in the schools. In an echo of the work in other types of organizations, Marshak says that most decision makers in education

seriously underestimate the complexity of school change . . . . By focusing almost exclusively on the rational elements of change, we ignore or neglect the emotional

experience of change; and when neglected emotion sabotages our rational planning, we are baffled. (pp. 72-73)

An empirically-based study in the schools was conducted by Clapper (1991) and is the only known study of grief and change in the school environment. Clapper's year-long study was designed to investigate the "applicability of the change-loss/gain-grief construct, most often associated with other types of life changes, to educational change" (p. 2). As her study site, Clapper chose a K-12 public school district that had been chosen for review by the state department of education, reported due to "perceived problems" or "citizen complaints" (p. 3). It was the district's perceived inability to meet minimum educational standards and the external pressure on the system to make changes that would bring it to standard that were the subject of Clapper's work.

Clapper (1991) used participant interviews and reviews of related documents in her methodology, and as well as a loss/gain questionnaire. A list of feeling adjectives, which had been taken in part or in whole from a previous study by Johnson (1980), were used in both Clapper's work and in the current study. This list had been aligned to the Kubler-Ross (1969) categories in previous research (see Clapper's work for a full explanation).

Clapper (1991) reported that 46% of the subjects in her study reported feelings of loss and that the magnitude of various feelings changed (both increased and decreased) with the passage of time. A measurement of reported "net loss" and "net gain" was used to encompass the overall emotional experience of her participants. Seventy-one percent reported either high net loss or gain, and Clapper found that there was a pattern between the "magnitude of gain and acceptance indicators and the magnitude of loss and denial,

anger, bargaining, and depression indicators” (p. 116)—the latter being stages of the Kubler-Ross (1969) model. There was no pattern found that supported previous research findings that high attachment to the organization was linked to greater feelings of loss or that other life changes or potential job loss increased the magnitude of feelings of loss or gain. Ultimately, Clapper concluded “the emotional behaviors exhibited by the respondents under study supported the belief that grieving behaviors were present in those who experienced the change” (p. 136-137). However, there was never a clear statement made about whether the study showed the Kubler-Ross model to be an appropriate tool for measuring or describing this grief.

As suggested by the work of Clapper (1991), the current study focused more specifically on the loss elements of organizational change. In order to provide a complete look at respondent experiences, respondents in this study were not limited to a preset list of words (as in Clapper) but encouraged to fully describe their experience both verbally and through drawing. In addition, the current study looks specifically at the usefulness of using Kubler-Ross (1969) as a model for change in organizations—an issue that was never fully explored by the Clapper study.

#### Kubler-Ross (1969) Grief Construct

Perhaps the most well-known work in the area of individual grief is that of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969), which was also the orienting theory chosen as a lens for this study. Her model was not developed in organizations, but many have begun to see the application to organizational change (Daugird & Spencer, 1996; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994). Woodward and Buchholz (1987), for instance, note that they have often been asked if their models of change are like Kubler-Ross’ model.

At first our initial response was, “No.” To compare change and death seemed a little heavy. But the more we thought about it, the more we realized that the process was, indeed, very similar. In many ways, it is identical to it . . . . When loss occurs, the people who remain have to go through some basic states—denial, anger, bargaining, depression—to finally achieve acceptance. (p. 66)

The Kubler-Ross (1969) model was the result of a collaborative research project by the author and students at the Chicago Theological Seminary on the experience of death. This project included a multitude of real-life interviews with dying patients on the various defense and coping mechanisms that they experienced during different periods of time—or the anticipatory grief they felt in preparation for dying. However, since the publication of the Kubler-Ross findings, this grief construct has been applied to a broad range of both anticipatory and post-loss grief situations.

The stages discovered and identified by Kubler-Ross (1969) and her students include: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Hope was also included, not as a stage in the process but rather as an underlying feeling that threaded throughout the dying process. This process was viewed by Kubler-Ross not as a linear progression of grief but as stages that may replace each other, repeat themselves, or exist side by side.

### Denial and Isolation

Denial in Kubler-Ross' (1969) death and dying arena refers to the patient's denial or refusal to accept the diagnosis of a terminal illness; this denial may lead to isolation from others. Kubler-Ross considers denial a healthy reaction. “Denial functions as a buffer after unexpected shocking news, allows the patient to collect himself and, with

time, mobilize other, less radical defenses” (p. 52). Schoolfield and Orduna (1994) carry this position over into their work in a medical organization saying, “Denial can give individuals needed time to understand that the change is going to occur and what it may mean for them” (p. 60). Barger and Kirby (1995) characterize denial as the most prevalent response to organizational loss and grieving.

### Anger

In the stage of anger, Kubler-Ross (1969) includes feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment. This stage can be difficult to cope with as it may be “displaced in all directions and projected onto the environment at times almost at random” (p. 64). Wherever the person looks he will find reason for complaint.

### Bargaining

Bargaining, says Kubler-Ross (1969), is only helpful for brief periods of time. This grief response stems from the temporary belief that “there is a slim chance that he may be rewarded for good behavior and be granted a wish for special services” (p. 94). In organizations, bargaining may be subtle and is often designed to weaken the proposed change so that it can more easily be condemned or sabotaged (Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994).

### Depression

Depression signals the replacement of anger with a sense of great loss (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Daugird and Spencer (1996) state that overt sadness is usually acknowledged and honestly expressed—but likely only to trusted friends or colleagues or to no one at all. Both Kubler-Ross, in the case of dying patients, and Daugird and

Spencer, for employees in organizations, note that depression cannot be talked or reasoned away by others.

### Acceptance

Acceptance is described by Kubler-Ross (1969) as a stage where anger and depression about “fate” have dissipated; in fact, it is described as a stage almost devoid of feelings. In the realm of Kubler-Ross’ work, death follows the state of acceptance and the grief cycle ends for the patient him- or herself. (Kubler-Ross did not address the post-death grief of family and friends of the patient, although her work has since been extensively applied to the post-death grief of others.) However, in the organizational realm, employees have options. They can experience a “death” of their relationship to the organization by “opting out” or choosing to leave the organization, which will arguably result in a “post-death” grieving process that occurs outside the organization and was not a focus for this study. Or employees can choose to stay through the change.

The focus of this study was on the stayers for whom, in some fashion, life tends to trudge on. Like Kubler-Ross, organizational researchers see “acceptance” as a time that peace has been made with the change. However, organizational researchers also see the acceptance stage as a time in which creative work around the change can commence and employees who chose to stay may even begin to celebrate the good aspects of the change (Daugird & Spencer, 1996; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994).

### Hope

As mentioned previously, Kubler-Ross (1969) believes that hope is threaded throughout the grieving process. Perhaps it is during the stage of acceptance, then, that

hope re-asserts itself as the primary emotion for the stayers who have experienced grief as a result of organizational change.

The original spirit in which Kubler-Ross (1969) approached patients in her ground-breaking work on death and dying was the same spirit that was the foundation of this study. This spirit drove the design of this study toward that of asking the employees in a changing organization to be teachers so that we may better understand the emotional process of organizational change.

#### Organizational Change with the Kubler-Ross (1969) Model

Some have chosen to modify the Kubler-Ross (1969) model (Perlman & Takacs, 1990) or combine it with other models (Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994) for organizational analysis; others have incorporated models that are incredibly similar to Kubler-Ross (Bridges, 1991; Barger & Kirby, 1995, 1997a), while still others choose to use the model very much as it was originally developed in the death and dying literature for their work in organizational change (Clapper, 1991; Kavanaugh & Johnson, 1990; Daugird & Spencer, 1996). Whether it is used in part or in whole, the Kubler-Ross model is one of the most broadly applied models to organizational change.

As noted previously, Perlman and Takacs (1990) used the Kubler-Ross (1969) model as a foundation for developing a 10-stage model of organizational change. They stated that while Kubler-Ross addresses death loss at the individual level, “the stages she presents are strikingly similar to those encountered in organizational change” (p. 33). Schoolfield and Orduna (1994) used the model as modified by Perlman and Takacs (1990) but also combined it with the Lewin model of change (Lewin, 1947). In their work with the restructuring of an oncology unit of a large hospital, they found the revised



model to explain the “beliefs, behaviors, emotions, and actions of employees faced with change” (p. 58).

Barger and Kirby (1995, 1997a), whose work was addressed extensively in a previous section, present a grief model consisting of 11 steps that is similar to the Kubler-Ross (1969) model. Beginning at the time of the change, their steps are relief, shock, denial and disbelief, anger, bargaining, guilt and remorse, panic, depression, resignation, acceptance, and building. Barger and Kirby share much in common with Bridges (1991) who adds a three-part transition model: ending, neutral zone, and beginning. Bridges associates emotions with transitions that are also consistent with the Kubler-Ross work; they are anger, bargaining, anxiety, sadness, disorientation, and depression.

The clearest applications of the Kubler-Ross (1969) work to organizations includes a report on the grief felt by physicians experiencing health care reform (Daugird & Spencer, 1996). The analysis found the Kubler-Ross model applicable to physician reactions in experiencing “both real and perceived losses” (p. 500). Kavanaugh and Johnson (1990) also found the Kubler-Ross model to be useful in their case study of a juvenile correction facility that was to close in six months. Although the evidence of the Kubler-Ross stages existed, the “transition often seemed neither linear nor organized. The traditional stages of dying . . . were sometimes, but not always, discernible, discrete, or sequential” (p. 13).

Also a part of the application of the Kubler-Ross (1969) work to organizations is the study previously addressed by Clapper (1991). This is the only known in-depth study on grief and change in the schools, and this study also used the Kubler-Ross model as a

tool. However, while Clapper found evidence of grief in the school site, the issue of whether Kubler-Ross was an appropriate tool for this work was never clearly addressed.

### Drawings as a Data Collection Device

The use of photos or drawings to elicit personal thoughts and feelings is not new; art therapy for children has long since used drawings for this purpose. Meyers used diagramming as a part of an organizational adaptation study in the medical field (Miles & Snow, 1978) more than 20 years ago, and his work is one of the earlier examples of the use of drawings and diagrams as a part of organizational study. Others have also successfully used drawings as a part of organizational data collection—some for research purposes (Meyer, 1991; Zubroff, 1988) and still others for surfacing important thoughts and emotions as a part of organizational interventions (Vince, 1995; Vince & Broussine, 1996).

Nossiter and Biberman conducted a study in 1990 specifically for the purpose of examining the usefulness of drawings as a research methodology. They concluded that drawings “focus a person’s response” and lead to “respondent honesty and parsimony” (p. 15). Further, they note the willingness of respondents and the joy expressed in completing the activity, suggesting “that this rather unusual request for creativity may be quite motivational in getting respondents to analyze their organization” (p. 15). Meyer (1991) also found that the request for drawings seemed to increase response rates, noting that every CEO contacted in his study completed the requested diagram but seven of 22 “failed to return an accompanying questionnaire” (p. 227).

Drawings may also be a more specific route to the emotions and unconscious responses underlying behaviors during change (Vince, 1995). Imagery can perform the

function of “bridging the gap between the apparently individual, private, subjective, and the apparently collective, social, political” (Samuels, 1993, p. 63). In his 1988 study, Zubroff found that, for clerical workers experiencing organizational change, “pictures functioned as a catalyst, helping them to articulate feelings that had been implicit and hard to define” (p. 141). “These simple drawings convey feelings that often elude verbal expression” (Zuboff, 1988, p. 142).

It is this ability for drawings to function as a “catalyst” and their link to emotions that suggest that drawings are an appropriate data collection device, used as a companion to the open-ended interview, for this study.

#### Summary

Chapter Two has provided a look at the history of the development of organizational theory, specifically as it has developed into current views on organizational change and the place of grief-related inquiry. Included also were concepts and theories from the literature on attachment, loss and grief as well as reports of efforts to study loss and grief in organizations. The Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct was outlined along with specific examples of the use of the model in organizational research into change. Finally current thought and research into the use of participant drawings as an elicitor of human emotion during participant interviews was presented.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the emotional impact of organizational change on individuals. The chapter begins with a detailed summary of the study procedures. Because the context was considered critical to the phenomena under study (Yin, 1994), a description of the school site and conditions of the change follows; this detail also provides a “thick description” that allows readers to determine the study’s transferability to other settings (Merriam, 1988). Finally, data from interviews, demographic surveys, and other observations is presented, and local and state data is contrasted. To protect the anonymity of the school and study participants, pseudonyms have been assigned where appropriate and identifying information has been removed from the data.

#### Case Study Procedures

This case study used a number of methodologies for the collection of data. These included long interviews, participant produced drawings, observations, informants, and school-wide input as to the most critical school-based change. These multiple sources resulted in triangulation of the data and increased credibility (Merriam, 1998). Figure 1 visually depicts the research process.

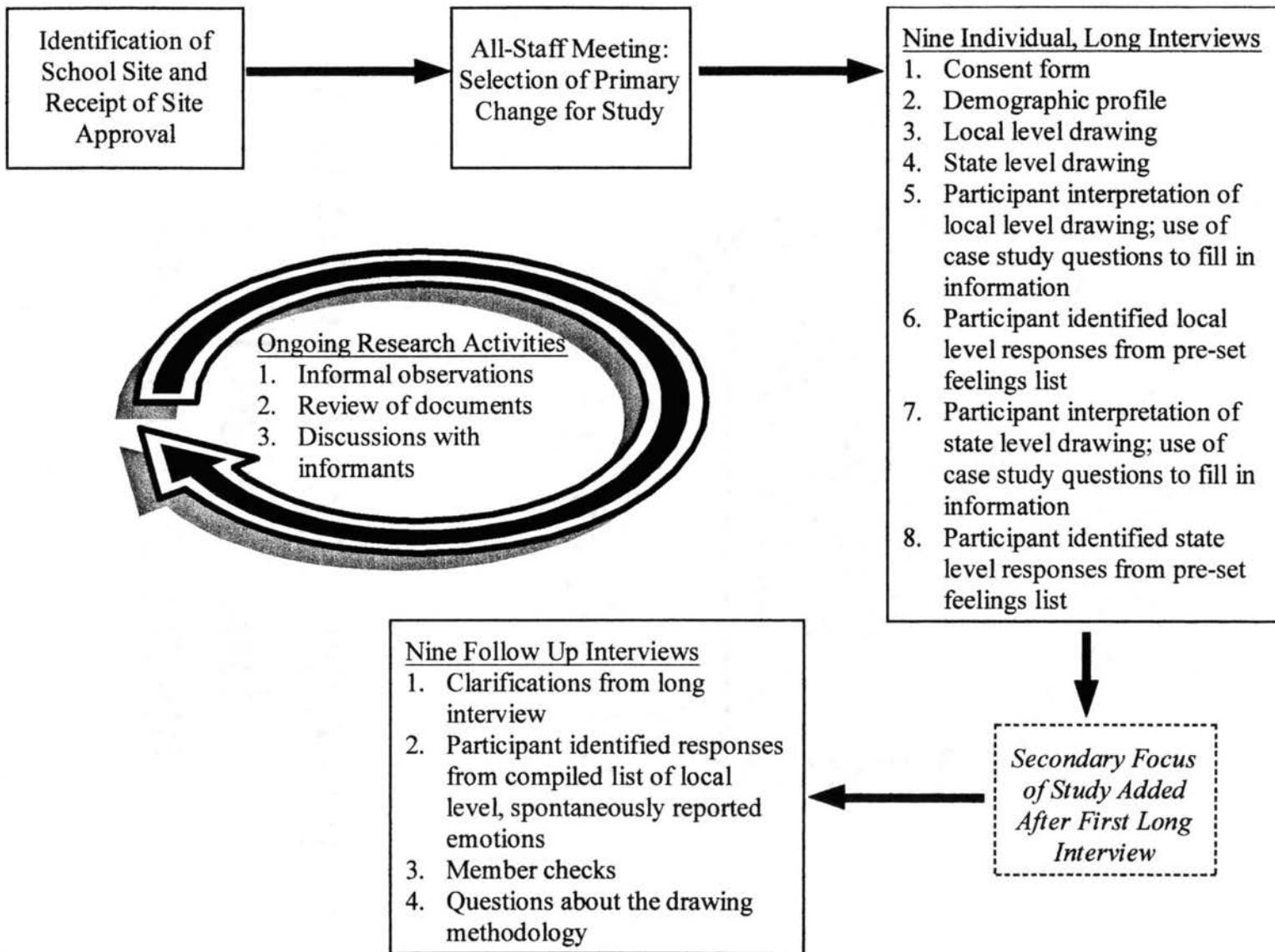


Figure 1. Research Process

## Interviews and Drawings

School employees were given both a verbal and written overview of the study at an initial meeting and asked to participate. One-on-one interviews were scheduled, primarily through email, with those who responded with an unqualified “yes.” Follow ups were completed with those who wanted more information. Two “yes” respondents were disqualified from the study due to their lack of longevity of employment (participants were required to have been with the school throughout the change, which had spanned the previous 18 months), and two were disqualified because they were not directly impacted by the local organizational change. Nine long interviews ultimately comprised the interview portion of the study.

An on-site location was set aside for interviews but participants were given the option of meeting at another location. Although several follow up interviews were conducted at other locations on the school campus, only one initial interview occurred in the workspace of the participant. The primary location for interviews was a fully enclosed office area in the back of one of the school’s computer labs.

Before each interview began, the purpose of the study was reviewed. All were given another opportunity to ask questions about the study before and after reading and signing the IRB consent form (Appendix C1). A copy of the IRB form was retained by each participant. Participants also completed the demographic form (Appendix C3).

The focus of the study was explained. Participants were then asked to draw their experience of the local level change(s). Precise instructions for the drawing exercise as used are provided in Appendix C4. Following completion of the drawing on local level change, participants were then asked to create a second drawing that addressed their

experiences of proposed state level changes. For the one interview that occurred prior to the addition of this second level of focus, this part of the process was completed in a follow up interview. Drawings for the local level change are presented in Appendix D; state level change drawings are in Appendix E.

As an entrée to the long interview process, participants were asked to explain their local level drawing. This was followed by an unstructured interview that was primarily participant guided. At some point in the interview, every participant was given a preset list of emotions from the Clapper (1991) study (Appendix C2) and asked to identify those emotions that had been experienced in relation to the change. The process was repeated for the state level drawing. Case study questions (Appendix C5) provided assurance that pertinent issues were addressed.

Every participant agreed to have his or her interview audio taped. Each long interview lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. Notes were made immediately following each interview on observations of voice tone, demeanor, and other participant characteristics.

Following transcription and review of interviews and other observational data, follow up interviews were conducted in person with each participant. For clarification purposes, participants were given a checklist of the spontaneously reported emotions (those that occurred naturally during the interview that were not included on the preset list) compiled from the first round of interviews for the local level only and asked to check those that they had experienced in response to local level change. Because it exposed all participants to the same set of emotions, this helped to address the issues that arose on the local level when individuals used different names for similar emotions. In

addition, other clarifying questions were asked, missing data was filled in, and member checks were used for portions of the data.

#### Non-Interview Sources of Data

Informal conversations and observations in the school's break area, hallways, and teachers' lounge provided additional data. Likewise the school's new administrator and one faculty member, who was also a participant in the study, served in the role of informants as defined by Yin (1994). In this role, they provided additional insight into the issues raised as well as assisted with access to both people and documents. Finally, school documents believed to be pertinent were reviewed.

#### Selection of the Change for Study

As noted previously, an overview of the study, its purposes, and its parameters were initially presented in an all-staff meeting; this occurred at the school site at the end of the fall semester. The change that was to be the focus of this study was not chosen prior to this meeting. Instead, everyone at the meeting was asked to give input as to the greatest change at their campus during the last 12 months, whether or not they intended to participate in the study. A written document that included the key points of the study protocol, fill-in-the-blank opportunities to list important change(s), and an option to indicate willingness to participate were provided to each individual (see Participant Elicitation Form, Appendix C6).

A review of the 24 forms returned showed a general consensus that the greatest change had been the arrival of a new administrator. The majority of other changes related to shifts in philosophy or practice or to other concrete changes related to the new administrator's arrival. With receipt of this information, the study's focus became the



change in leadership to include its organizational outcomes as identified by each participant.

During initial informal conversations and the first interview it was discovered that, while participants were focused on the local changes, proposed state changes to the system also cast a large shadow. In an attempt to best “re-present” (Eisner, 1998, p. 27) the experiences of study participants and change, the issue of the proposed state level changes was added to the study as a secondary focus. Like the local level change, participants were asked to identify and talk about those proposed state level changes most meaningful to them.

Therefore the study developed a two-level focus on organizational change, first change occurring at the local school site and then that which was perceived to be pending at the state level. The local level change remained the study’s emphasis; however, interview data on changes identified at both levels of concern are reported.

### Data Presentation

To give voice to the participants, the demographics of the respondents are presented first. From that point forward, the data splits between the local and state changes; local information, the primary focus of the study, is presented first. The second data set is for the state change. An important difference between the two data sets was that the local level change was already in place or in process of implementation while the state level change was primarily perceptions of proposed changes. This created slight modifications in the presentation format.

Quotes from interviews follow these guidelines:

1. Extraneous interjections, false starts, and repeated words have been removed.

2. Omission of a few words is indicated by three dots; longer omissions of phrases or sentences are indicated by four dots.
3. Words added to aid understanding or to preserve anonymity are bracketed.
4. Where the interviewer's words do not add meaning, they have been omitted.

Because only nine people made up the participant group and the school itself was small, additional precautions were implemented in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. A random set of letters and/or symbols was assigned to each participant rather than a participant number or pseudonym. The list of assignments has been retained only by the researcher. Additional information about participant demographics is presented in the next section.

Drawings from the local level change are presented in Appendix D. Drawings associated with the state-level change are presented in Appendix E. Further detail about the content of drawings and an analysis of their usefulness to the research process is present in Chapter Five—Drawings as a Research Methodology.

### The Context of the Change

The Paige School of Technology district was part of a larger state system of technology school districts located in the southwestern part of the United States. The school districts served high school students (who were concurrently enrolled at their “home” high school and at the technology school), adults, and business and industry clients. The actual site of this study, Dalton campus, was a branch campus of Paige School.

Dalton was a close-knit community of 5500 people, rich in its history of farming and ranching. It was an educational community that, in addition to Dalton campus and its

public schools, was also home to the main campus of a four-year, regional university. Technology had definitely found its way to education in Dalton. Its university was the only one in the United States with a School of E-Commerce. And at Dalton campus, high school and adult students could enroll in an e-commerce program for the first time during the school year of this study. Seventy-five percent of Dalton's high school graduates attended college or received other post-secondary education (personal communication, February 13, 2002). Education was a highly practiced value.

In Dalton and its surrounding communities, neighbor knew neighbor and parents did not go to open house at school to meet the teacher; she was likely to be someone they already knew quite well. Here it was not unusual to hire family because families stayed in this area where they put down roots and raised another generation. If you walked into any store on the Dalton town square, you were likely to walk out knowing the name and a little about the life of the store clerk . . . who had likely also asked where "you're in from," because it was clear you were a stranger in town. If you walked down the street to the local florist, and you could buy some of the best homemade fudge you had ever tasted. If you stayed for a Friday night in the fall, and you could watch eight-man football; over the weekend you could attend one of 20 churches. This was the community of Dalton and, like all schools, Dalton campus was a reflection of its values and practices.

Simply walking through the halls at Dalton campus showed the diversity of clients that the school served. High school juniors and seniors streamed from the building when bells signaled the end of classes, free yet again for the important activities of youth. Adult students often exited from the same classrooms, usually at slower paces,

carefully avoiding the construction activities on the school's new business incubator and additional classrooms. In a small group outside the auditorium, regional law enforcement officers could be seen sipping coffee on a break from a training class, while just down the hall a local CEO shook hands with a Dalton staff member and sealed a deal for the delivery of custom training at his company's site. And, finally, around the corner a young single mother found comfort and help in a federally funded assistance program that provided her with basic employment skills, vocational training, and, perhaps most importantly, support from people who care. These are just some of the faces that could be seen on an average day, in an average week, at bustling Dalton campus.

Typical of most school districts, Paige School and its branch campuses in Dalton and Jake City were overseen by a publicly elected, five-member board of education. Paige School served a district that included parts of seven counties. Training classes were both short- and long-term, may be ongoing during both day and evening hours, and may culminate in certifications, licensures, or college credit. Funding came from a variety of sources including local and state taxes, revenues from tuition and fees, federal grants, and loans. Paige School had a single superintendent with a tenure of 17 years and two assistant superintendents—each with the responsibility of a single campus, and one of whom was the new administrator that was the subject of this study. Paige School employed some professionals who served both campuses and others who were assigned only to a single location and administration. Table I shows a comparison of population demographics to study participant demographics.

Table I

*Comparison of Population Demographics to Participant Demographics*

Demographic	Total Population	Study Participants
Total number of employees	30	9
Faculty	12	4
Non-faculty (support staff and administrators)	18	5
Male	11	2
Female	19	7
Age 44 and older	18	2
Under age 44	12	7
Employed less than 18 months	6	0
Employed 18 months – 5 years	12	4
Employed 5 years or more	12	5

The six employees that had been employed less than 18 months were excluded from the study, which included the new administrator/assistant superintendent. The superintendent was also excluded.

Study participants reported total years with the school ranging from 1 year, 8 months, to 15 years, with an average of just over 8 years. Total years in education were reported from 2 ½ years to almost 29 years, with an average of 18 years. Seven respondents reported having held multiple full-time jobs outside the field of education.

After exclusions due to lack of longevity or position, 23 employees were eligible for the study, of whom 9, or 40%, were participants. This study had a slightly higher number of females than in the overall employee population (78% while the population was 63% female) and a higher number of those under age 44 (78% of study participants

were under age 44 versus 40% in the general employee population). It was suspected that the incidence of younger participants was, in part, due to the fact that several were graduate students themselves and had a personal interest in the process of educational research. Older employees had less interest in the research process, and several were reportedly close to retirement from the school.

Approximately 18 months prior to this study, one of Dalton's "own," a man who had been raised from childhood in the area but spent 15 years "downstate," took the assistant superintendent's position at Dalton campus. In so doing, he brought with him new philosophy and practice that had far reaching changes throughout the school's campus. This study is about the impacts of those changes on employees of the school.

#### Local Level Change Data

At the time of data collection, the new assistant superintendent/administrator had been in place for approximately 18 months. Employees noted a number of changes they associated with the change in administration. Participants were not limited to a specific change but were encouraged to talk about those that had most impacted them.

Elements of an increased pace, new or changed people and programs, and facility changes were the most often reported issues at the organizational level. These changes are listed in Table II.

Table II

*Reported Organizational Changes at the Local Level*

Organizational Changes with Greatest Perceived Impact in Random Order	
Pace has increased markedly	Shortage of classrooms and equipment
Changes in policies and procedures	People “encouraged” to resign or retire
New curriculum or classes/programs; updates of existing programs	Increased need to communicate but decreased and disrupted communications
New positions and people	Software changes and new software
Change in overall focus	Increased technology and equipment
Upheavals and changes in facilities	Increased budget and expenditures
Increased accountability	Increased stratification of employee base

Participants also reported personal changes that were either direct or as a result of the organizational upheaval. These included changes in responsibilities, effects on personal lives, and increased pressure and stress. Personal changes are listed in Table III.

Table III

*Reported Personal Changes at the Local Level*

Imposed Personal Changes with Greatest Perceived Impact in Random Order	
Changed jobs	Have new duties
Took increased responsibilities without extra assistance	Being pulled between family time and work demands
Got additional help to complete my duties	Increased pressure and stress
Increased interruptions	Working a lot of overtime hours

## Gains and Losses

In addition to identification of the changes reported, respondents also reported numerous gains and losses as a result of the changes. Table IV lists these gains and losses.

Table IV

### *Reported Gains and Losses at the Local Level*

Reported Gains and Losses Resulting from Above Changes	
Gains	Losses
Improvements in programs and services	Loss of familiarity with curriculum
Increased public relations efforts	Loss of role clarity
New programs	Decreased working space
Decreased conflict	Decreased sense of family
Positive changes in superintendent	Loss clarity about position
Increased quality of customer service	Loss of coworkers
Increased equipment, books, and software	“Loosening” of team ties
Increase in excitement, energy, optimism	Loss of time to interact with coworkers
“A new start”	Loss of feedback if you’re doing well
Administration open to change/new ideas	Disruption of the chain of command
More supportive and open administration	Loss of sense of closure
Increase in consistency of administrative actions and decisions	Decreased quality of customer service in some areas
	Loss of knowledge about software, equipment, processes, etc.
	Loss of administrative knowledge of my capabilities—my “earned” work history—and knowledge about my program area
	Decreased influence and access to information
	Loss of organization, structure, stability, and attention to detail; loss of sense of control



There was consensus across all respondents that the majority of organizational changes were good ones and brought numerous gains for staff. Only the occasional change was questioned; two respondents questioned some of the additional positions (not the people filling them) and several expressed some level of discomfort with the change in focus toward business and industry and adult programs. While most changes were seen as positive, they were still associated with some type of loss for employees. For instance, the loss of employees was reported as a necessary and needed change, but it was not without associated and sometimes negative emotions. One faculty member explained this by saying, "I knew there probably needed to be some changes made, but that's hard to see people that you really like decide to go ahead and retire or just not do the job anymore because of the changes" (C). Another participant (non-faculty) reported a "very close" relationship with an employee who departed the organization and continuing feelings of missing him. The same participant, however, appeared somewhat chagrined to report "even though I like this person a lot, I guess I was excited about the change and what it might mean" (A).

One of the most frequently reported changes was an increased pace. This change was linked with several primary losses including the loss of a sense of family due to decreased time for interaction, a loss of personal identity, and the perceived development of cliques within the employees. Pace was also linked to the loss in achieving a sense of closure; the demands that drove the increased pace prevented ever getting "caught up" or finished with one task before being pulled to another. One respondent (non-faculty) explained about the loss of a sense of closure.

At first I thought it was the end of the world. It drove me crazy because I could not do everything . . . . Things got drug out and they still would get done but not when I was expecting . . . . I might be working on something and then something new would come up that I'd have to deal with and so I'd have to take some of the time away from here and put it over there. I'd have to leave that undone. That just wasn't comfortable to just leave it undone or not get it done in time. So that was like a panic. I remember the panic situation coming in . . . . I mean, if I didn't walk fast, that would affect how much I got done." (F)

An often reported loss was that of weakened team ties, also related to the loss of a sense of family. One respondent said, "It's a team but it hasn't become a round circle yet" (V, non-faculty). Causes given for this loss included the increased pace, the addition of a number of new employees, building and space adjustments, and remaining feelings about the new administrator's role in the loss of former employees. Regarding the space adjustments, one faculty member said, "I felt that there were separate entities and all were trying to struggle for their own program and for their places at the school" (E). This respondent called these struggles a territorial battle that impacted the team. In general, the new employees appeared welcome. Some of the words used to describe them included: nice, good, effective, passionate, gung ho, and exceptional. However, in addition to loosened team ties, the increase in new people were also linked with other losses such as decreases in attention to detail, organization, structure, and stability. Respondents also noted the sheer number of new employees (making up 20% of the overall employee base) greatly heightened demands on their time as they assisted new people with learning equipment, policies, and processes.

Finally reports of lack of space due to growth and shifting of employees due to new construction were frequent. One faculty member gave a particularly vivid accounting, noting,

We did have growth along with the growth of the building which kind of leads to not knowing where anybody's office is sometimes. Or, you might come in and the teachers' lounge was gone and that was [the superintendent's] office and you wondered where your mail was and where to go to get your mail. And it had moved. And we didn't even know where to go get our mail! And we knew where the bathroom was, then it changed and it became [the superintendent's] office.

We didn't need that bathroom anyway! (L)

Discussion in the follow up interview clarified that the doors of the employee restrooms opened into the teachers' lounge. During the time the superintendent was housed in the teachers' lounge due to construction, employees sometimes found themselves standing in his door by habit when actually they were in search of the bathroom. Another respondent corroborated the difficulties of construction saying "Offices [were] all crammed together and the front office was out in front of the seminar [center] and that was a mess. It was so disjointed" (J, faculty). Still another noted, "We've gone through all this construction and it just split everybody [up]" (I, faculty).

Several respondents reported that the overall focus of the school changed, leading to more classes and services in business and industry services and adult evening programs. In a conversation with the new administrator, he confirmed this change saying that when there is no focus on business and industry, a technology school struggles. Business and industry is the "foundation piece" and it "impacts the health of everything

else at the school” (personal communication, March 6, 2002). While the new administrator felt he was ensuring the health of the overall school with his focus on business and industry, one respondent noted,

It seems like sometimes we’re so focused on growth and our night classes and getting all these other things going that sometimes . . . I think, wait a minute, why are the rest of us here? Lets go back and look at what the school was originally built for. It just gets a little frustrating (W, faculty).

Another respondent said,

It’s not because secondary is not important but because we haven’t done a good job in adult and BIS and we need to. But the day program people feel abandoned because it was the other way with the other boss. And I don’t think [the new administrator] recognizes that and we don’t know how to tell him . . . . I think he leaves them alone because he thinks they’re doing a good job. (G, non-faculty)

Interestingly, even with reports of a shift in focus, there were no reports of a decreased sense of job security due to the local changes. In fact, several reported perceived increases in job security. Most participants felt their value to the organization had remained the same or increased; one reported that it was up and down.

It is also important to note that many of the participants considered certain losses to be temporary or a part of a process. For example, one teacher who reported a loss of administrative knowledge of her capabilities and of her program due to the change in administrators also noted that both issues had been resolved. When asked how long it took for her to feel comfortable that the new administrator had a good grasp of her capabilities and program, she replied “I would say it probably took the whole school year

to feel that way” (U). Other losses such as the loosening of team ties, loss of coworkers, and a decrease in the sense of family were reported as still ongoing and still felt.

As evidenced in Table IV, characteristics and practices of the new administrator produced a number of reported gains for employees. This included such things as increased support, being willing to “sit down and talk” and practice of an “open door policy” (K, non-faculty), and observations that he was “sincerely concerned about the well being of teachers and students” (O, non-faculty). An increase in the consistency of decision making was also noted by one faculty member who said,

It used to be when I’d ask the [previous] administrator what I should do about a certain situation, it might be one answer on one day and then I’d go back and ask the same questions and it would be a different answer on another day. So [our new administrator] probably thinks I’m a very slow learner because I keep asking the same questions. And I keep getting the same answers so I have gotten some consistency. I like the consistency in that role. (Q)

One respondent also described a perceived gain as increased “faith and trust” in administration. “They’re going to watch out [for us]” (C, faculty). One respondent was more colorful in her description of the comfort she has developed with the new administration. “I feel very secure in what my administrators do. If they . . . came in and said we’re going to paint the school pink, I’d probably look at them and say, ‘Well, if that’s what you think we need to do!’ (S, non-faculty). Only one (non-faculty) respondent reported that there was little difference between the new administrator and the previous one.

Several respondents reported that the school's superintendent had a heart attack shortly after the new administrator arrived. This caused the new administrator to be gone from the campus frequently as he attempted to cover both his new responsibilities and assist with the superintendent's. Respondents noted they were unsure about how much that may have affected the new administrator's transition into the school. One stated that this event affected overall communications. "We had a breakdown in communication simply because he was so busy. He didn't have time to keep us updated on some things" (D, faculty). Another respondent brought a different perspective on the effect of the superintendent's heart attack saying, "Maybe things didn't change as much as they might have if [the new administrator] had been here fulltime. He might have been harder-nosed . . . . but he wasn't here enough" (E, faculty) Another agreed and said, "In a lot of respects it was good for him because where he could have come in . . . and been more dictatorial and dogmatic . . . It purposely shoved him back because the world spun so much out of control that first six months" (K, non-faculty).

### Reported Emotions

For the most part, frequency counts of the wide range of reported emotions are a questionable presentation tool for unstructured interviews. However, as noted previously, every participant was asked to select both their past and present emotions resulting from the change from the preset list in Appendix C2 as well as from the list of spontaneously reported emotions from this school site. These two practices allow for some consideration of the frequency with which emotions were selected because all respondents were ultimately exposed to and selected from the same sets of emotions for

the local level change. All reported emotions are presented in Table V. Those emotions reported by two or more people are printed in bold.

Table V

*A Summary of All Reported Emotions for Self*

*In Response to Local Level Change*

Spontaneously Reported Emotions at this School Site		Emotions Selected from the Preset List Provided	
<b>Aggravated</b>	<b>Outside the loop</b>	<b>Afraid</b>	<b>Numb</b>
<b>Apprehensive</b>	<b>Optimistic</b>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Panicky</b>
<b>Bad/Very bad</b>	<b>Overwhelmed</b>	<b>Anxious</b>	<b>Peaceful</b>
<b>Bothered</b>	<b>Pleased</b>	<b>Bitter</b>	<b>Sad</b>
<b>Burned out</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Calm</b>	<b>Steady</b>
<b>Challenged</b>	<b>Pressured</b>	<b>Cheerful</b>	<b>Tense</b>
<b>Concerned</b>	<b>Relaxed</b>	<b>Contented</b>	<b>Thoughtful</b>
<b>Confused</b>	<b>Relieved</b>	<b>Cool</b>	<b>Uneasy</b>
<b>Crazy</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Depressed</b>	<b>Warm</b>
<b>Embarrassed</b>	<b>Secure</b>	<b>Disbelieving</b>	<b>Worried</b>
<b>Excited</b>	<b>Shocked</b>	<b>Discouraged</b>	
<b>Exhausted</b>	<b>Stressed</b>	<b>Easy Going</b>	
<b>Frustrated</b>	<b>Unappreciated</b>	<b>Furious</b>	
<b>Glad</b>	<b>Uncomfortable</b>	<b>Helpless</b>	
<b>Happy</b>	<b>Unsettled</b>	<b>Indifferent</b>	
<b>Hopeful</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Mad</b>	
<b>Jealous</b>	<b>Upset</b>	<b>Nervous</b>	
<b>Nice</b>			

Feelings of anxiety were reported by eight of nine respondents. Several respondents associated their highest levels of anxiety with the unknowns of who was going to be hired for the administrative position and what he or she would bring to their campus.

You were afraid you were going to get somebody that was just going to sit in there and direct, not really do, just really direct you to do this and you had to take care of that and didn't want to know any more about it (R, non-faculty).

Another seemed to agree saying, “We’re going to clean house but you could always get someone who is worse” (O, non-faculty)! One faculty member considered her feelings of fearfulness similar to anxiety and said, “When you hear the administration is changing: Oh, what’s going to happen to my position? It’s a selfish thing. Afraid is for me” (J). For some anxiety continued even after the new administrator arrived,

I didn’t know how to act around him. Is he going to think I’m good for here? Is he just going to be a serious person? . . . I didn’t know what he was going to expect. He might come in and say you need to be doing more of this or you’re not doing enough of this (I, faculty).

And when the new administrator talked about change in his opening statements to employees, another respondent said she wondered, “How’s this going to affect me? What’s he really saying? Is he going to shut us all down or is he going to kick us out” (W, faculty)?

This sense of not knowing or fear of the unknown also translated into similar reports of being nervous. “Maybe [its that I’m] not sure where we’re going. I think we’re going but we’re just not exactly sure where. And I just don’t want to be left behind” (B, non-faculty). Frustration, an emotion reported by six of the nine respondents, was also sometimes associated with the discomfort of the unknown.

Reported feelings of sadness were primarily related to the loss of coworkers due to the change. “That would have been that the people left. Now that was really sad” (U, faculty). However, because of the small community, one respondent offered a different perspective on the loss of people. “When you live in rural [state name], they are still your friends . . . They’re still there. We haven’t lost them” (S, non-faculty).



Reports of feeling “thoughtful” were somewhat common across respondents. One faculty member described thoughtful as she saw it related to change.

When there is change, it makes you think a lot about every aspect of your life.

What if something does happen to my job, what else could I do? What are some other avenues? The process of change makes you become more thoughtful (E).

The emotion “thoughtful” was interpreted a little differently by one respondent who said “we’re just a very thoughtful [group] . . . and that comes from the administration down because he is a thoughtful person . . . . I think this has always been a thoughtful group but I think [the new administrator will] keep that going” (C, faculty).

One description of “burnout” resulting from the changes was vivid. “[You] don’t want to come. And then when you get here, if it isn’t on fire, you don’t want to take care of it. You don’t want to organize it” (M, non-faculty). This report of burnout and resistance to coming to the office was unique among respondents. While all reported some difficult emotions related to the changes, for only this one respondent did emotions result in what was described as “burnout.” What was considered a related emotion for another respondent, however, was numbness, “The numbness may come from just continuing to try to show the easy way and it not being [done that way] and so the change keeps going on and on and on” (#, non-faculty).

Feelings of being hopeful and optimistic were reported by eight of the nine respondents. Respondents were equally split on whether they considered these emotions to have been present throughout the process or something that had been achieved. One seemed to hold to feelings of hopefulness as a point of strength for seeing the process through and said,

It's pretty much always been hopeful because I think we'll get there. It's just shaky along. It's just shaky. I think we'll get there. I really do. I'm not exactly kicking my heels or anything but it's just a lot of firm belief (N, non-faculty).

Seven of nine respondents reported feelings of relief. Several associated their feelings of relief with the announcement that a new administrator had been hired and said the relief was due to "just knowing that things were going to move on" (J, faculty). Other respondents said their feelings of relief occurred only when they got to know the new administrator and became comfortable with his leadership. "I didn't feel relief until I knew what he was about" (T, faculty). Others reported both types of relief—the first occurring at the time of announcement and a second occurring when they had a chance to become comfortable with the new administrator himself. This issue of "knowing" or the discomfort of "not knowing" was a theme that threaded itself throughout much of respondent reporting, and it is discussed further in a later section.

While the feelings of coworkers (termed "others") were not a primary focus of this study, reports naturally evolved from the interview process. Those emotions reported for others are listed in Table VI.

Table VI

*A Summary of All Reported Emotions for Others' Responses to Local Level Change*

Reported Emotions for Others			
Abandoned	Defiant	Insecure	Threatened
Angry	Excited	Intimidated	Unhappy
Challenged	Frustrated	Jealous	Unwilling
Concerned	Guilty	Left out	Wary
Confused	Happy	Pressured	Worried
Defensive			

One faculty member was surprised by the response of her coworkers to the announcement of the research study. “Honestly I thought everyone was on board pretty much. But after you [the researcher] came, I had a few people visit with me and I just didn’t realize they were so, you know, the other” (I). Another noted that it was the feelings and reactions of coworkers, rather than the change itself, that caused her to continue being tense, “There’s still some tension every once in awhile when I get in on conversations where there is some obvious . . . discontent. It is a little unnerving to me . . . I like everybody to be happy” (W, faculty). Another respondent seemed to agree stating that the cause for uneasiness was “some of the tension. For instance, my coworker and his frustration” (P, faculty).

Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of employees that had serious struggles with the changes, but still stayed with the school. Estimates ranged from 10-45% with an average of about 20%. Perceived reasons for this resistance varied. Two reported that coworker resistance was solely due to emotional reactions. One other said, “In a couple of instances, it was emotional probably because of some of the things that happened right following the changes. But others, [it’s] their unwillingness to accept somebody who’s a little bit different” (E, faculty). One respondent said, “70% are wary

and concerned about their jobs . . . . worried about our job as we know them” (Z, non-faculty). Others gave reasons for the emotions such as, “30% are resistant to change because of the new demands on them where they were very comfortable with where they were. And that tends to be the ones that have been here a long time” (Y, non-faculty). “They’ve done things the old way and you get someone that’s new and is willing to do new things and it’s scary because he’s going to ask me to change” (K, non-faculty). One respondent simply reported “they’re digging their heels in and not being willing to do the change” (O, non-faculty).

### Other Themes

Because of the unstructured approach to this study, other themes considered important by respondents were encouraged to evolve and they eventually “rose” from the data (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 102) due to repetition. A number of respondents referred at some point to “cheese” or “moving of the cheese.” This theme throughout the data reportedly occurred because, upon his arrival, the new administrator had gifted every employee with the popular book, *Who Moved My Cheese* (Johnson, 1998). In response to this, one faculty member said “I smiled because I thought that was good—a good illustration that change is good for any organization. And we needed one at the time” (J). Another faculty member said, “That was the indication that we were going to change” (L)! It appeared that this book made a primarily positive impact on respondents who incorporated cheese into their drawings (see Appendix D2 & D5), metaphors about change, and descriptions of the change process. When describing the change, one respondent laughingly reported that her cheese had moved so many times, she has decided she “does not even like cheese anymore” (Q, faculty). Another respondent’s

self-description was, “I’ve been a person that has moved to where the cheese is” (X, faculty). Still another respondent lamented that her “cheese may be permanently lost” (T, faculty). This was a book that had clearly impacted the way that these respondents thought about change in their organization.

All but one respondent specifically discussed his or her ability to influence change and indicated they felt they had influence at the local level. However, one indicated a decreased ability to influence following the change. Another respondent indicated the ability to influence had only occurred recently, some 12 months or more after the change. Still another respondent indicated that, while there was ability to influence, it’s “like having to play a game to do it” (B, non-faculty). One respondent was asked if increased influence would have lessened the emotions that had accompanied the change. That respondent replied, “Some of them would have come regardless. But probably if I thought I had more influence, I could have been more proactive instead of reactive” (G, non-faculty).

One fascinating theme that occurred throughout many of the reports of respondents was a general discomfort or resistance to their own feelings about the change. This sometimes created an internal struggle when trying to identify emotions from the lists provided, as is evident in the following two exchanges between respondents and the interviewer:

Respondent 1:

“I’ve felt helpless. I’ve felt nervous. At one point when I was in burnout, I felt panicky. Tense. Worrying. Worried. These [referring to list of emotions] are all awfully negative.”

*Interviewer:* Actually they're not. There are quite a few positives. Scan again.

"I've been excited about some things too. I wish I could be more excited than I am because I know there are some really good things we're doing . . . . I wish I felt more excited about my job because I used to, really."

*Interviewer:* Would it be fair to say that when you scan down the list and you don't see the positive words, it's because they are something you would only like to be?

Probably." (M, non-faculty)

Respondent 2:

"Wow, have you noticed that most of these [referring to list of emotions] are negative? It's interesting because I mean there are a lot of positive feelings but the positive ones on here aren't exactly what I would say, not cheerful. It's not really peaceful. I mean that doesn't exactly fit. Not hopeless but hopeful would fit . . . .

*Interviewer:* What other positive words would you add?

Mmmmm, hopeful, for me that's pretty . . . I mean that sounds like a lot" (N, non-faculty).

A third exchange highlighted the struggle with acceptance of changed feelings:

Respondent 3:

"When you have to fight yourself to go to work, I'm not that kind of person at all. I like to go to work. I love Monday mornings. That's my best day. I'm fresh and ready to go. So, (pause). Tell me the word again?"

*Interviewer:* The word was depressed.

“Depressed. I suppose a little bit.” (Z, non-faculty)

Several other respondents were insistent about their reluctance to deal with any negative thoughts or emotions. When asked about the less positive feelings on the list, one simply replied, “Those are negative words and I don’t do negative” (S, non-faculty).

Several respondents reported issues with letting go of duties or responsibilities that had been theirs. The words of one respondent spoke to her frustration but also the understanding that perhaps there was some overreaction.

They’ve changed everything. You’ve got to make things your own but when you leave something and you feel like it’s in good shape . . . You don’t HAVE to do it my way but, it’s a mess! You have ownership in things, which is anal-retentive. And, no, we haven’t killed anyone. So, honestly, we probably overblow it all but it’s exhausting (G, non-faculty).

#### State Level Change Data

At the time of data collection, participants were also focused on a number of changes they perceived to be proposed, and of threat, at the state level of their system. These changes are identified in Table VII. Participants were not limited to a specific change but rather were encouraged to talk about those of most concern to them.

Table VII

*Reported Potential Changes at the State Level*

Reported Potential State Level Changes in Random Order	
Removal of state director by state board	Shift of control from local to state
Efforts to “pare down” state department resulting in less support for the schools	Moved under the junior college/community college system
Dismantling the technology school system	Restructuring the technology school system
State board stopping any new money	Change in our identity and what we do
Change in requirements for graduation at the public schools which decreases opportunities to enroll in technology school programs	Changed perception of and attitude toward system’s viability by state board members (toward the negative); lack of knowledge of system in current board members
More unfunded mandates	

The identification of proposed or perceived changes at the state level brought about considerable defensive statements of the school system and rationales as to why implementation of those changes would be negative for the system, its stakeholders, and the state. The statements were passionate and often eloquent, however, since the focus of this study is not on the issues themselves, this content was omitted from this report.

Potential Gains and Losses

Potential gains and losses resulting from the above changes are reported in Table VIII.



Table VIII

*Reported Potential Gains and Losses at the State Level*

Gains	Losses	
Caused people to stand up and speak for the system	Decreased high school student enrollment	Closed technology school system
No matter what happens, it will make us stronger	Decreased learning and activity choices for students	Loss of community's access to training
	Loss or change of identity	Loss of small communities
	Closed programs	Increase in student dropouts
	Closed schools	Loss of money
	Job losses	Decreased job security
	Loss of local control	

Eight of the nine participants voiced serious concerns, accompanied by evidence of strong emotions, about their perceptions of the proposed state changes. Only one person showed a lack of concern about proposed state level changes, although even this participant admitted to occasional feelings of doubt. When questioned further about the viability of the proposed changes, this participant said,

I believe there's some turmoil. I believe that. But is that turmoil going to cause people to lose their jobs? Or is it going to cause people to change the way they do their jobs? I don't think it's going to cause any job losses . . . . [Teachers] may not be spending time with high school students. They may be doing something else but I don't think it's going to be a loss of jobs. (H, non-faculty)

There was a real difference in focus between this participant and others. Other participants were heavily focused on concerns for students, the community, and the current mission of the school. It mattered deeply to them whether the school continued to

serve its current population and in its current capacity. These concerns, in addition to concerns about the viability of the school and their jobs, greatly increased their individual levels of distress. In addition, the participant who stated a lack of concern was confident that other people would ultimately assure that the state changes proposed did not occur. This faith in some unidentified set of people was termed the “superhero phenomenon” and is addressed later in this section.

One other (non-faculty) respondent reported great concern about state changes but also noted that, whatever the outcome, there would be things gained. The two “gains” as voiced by this participant and presented in Table VIII are the only two gains found in the reports of respondents when they considered the proposed state level changes.

The positive side of the state change is that people in some [schools] and companies have pulled together and stood up for the system. [This school] and others have been passive—whatever happens happens. So, the positive side of this battle is that it is win-win. No matter what happens, it will make us stronger.

(K).

### Reported Emotions

Reported emotions for proposed state level change are in Table IX. Emotions reported by two or more people are printed in bold. Unlike the local level changes, participants were not given an opportunity to review a compiled list of spontaneously occurring emotions from the first round of interviews for state level changes. Based upon the local level experience, presentation of a compiled list would have likely increased the number of people selecting the spontaneously occurring emotions shown in the two left columns.

Table IX

*A Summary of All Reported Emotions for Self*

*In Response to State Level Change*

Spontaneously Occurring Emotions from by this School Site		Emotions Selected from the Preset List Provided	
Aggravated	Passionate	<b>Afraid</b>	<b>Helpless</b>
Attacked	Resentful	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Hopeless</b>
<b>Concerned</b>	Sorry	<b>Anxious</b>	<b>Hostile</b>
Confident	Stunned	<b>Apathetic</b>	<b>Mad</b>
<b>Defensive</b>	<b>Threatened</b>	<b>Bitter</b>	<b>Nervous</b>
Distrustful	Unappreciated	<b>Contrary</b>	Panicky
<b>Fearful</b>	Underutilized	Cross	<b>Sad</b>
<b>Frustrated</b>	Unsettled	Depressed	Tense
Hate	Upset	Desperate	<b>Thoughtful</b>
Incapable		<b>Disbelieving</b>	<b>Uneasy</b>
Insecure		<b>Discouraged</b>	<b>Worried</b>
Negative		<b>Furious</b>	

The politics that surrounded state level decisions and the perceived lack of ability to influence the process were a common source of a variety of negative emotions. One participant had just recently come to understand that board members for the state technology schools were appointed by the governor, not elected by the people, and was frustrated with the lack of access and influence.

I thought it was like a local school board. You could run, your dad could run, and his too. But the governor appoints these people and these people have now found fault with the system. But I don't know what that fault is" (O, non-faculty).

Another respondent also expressed feelings of frustration about lack of influence as well as feelings of helplessness. "[They say] call your legislators, do this, go here, do that, and still you're just one little person" (W, faculty). And, like many others, another pointed to the current governor and said, "I don't know that me, as an individual person,

has that much control and especially over what [the governor] wants or how he's going to go about getting that" (L, faculty).

Confusion, too, was associated with thoughts about the political process and how to influence it. "In the past [teachers] went down to the state capitol. That can be negative though because they wonder why you're not in school during the day" (Q, faculty). Anger also was a common response to the proposals.

[We're] not being treated fairly, not looked at as a whole. [The governor] sees it through his little rose-colored elitest vision. Come and look at the kids we work with everyday that don't come from regular families, that don't have support, that don't have things that he has taken for granted because his kids have it (E, faculty).

And a second respondent voiced disbelief in addition to her anger.

Who is [the governor] to say what exactly students need . . . to be successful when maybe other people are successful and didn't have that. I'm angry that [he] can have the right to say what it takes to be successful. [I'm] disbelieving that somebody could have that much control, and I don't know if the general public realizes what that could do to students" (T, faculty).

Fear of the process and possible hidden agendas were at issue as were continuing feelings of helplessness and anger.

If you've got a group of legislators who may not get any of their bills passed if they don't put something in there that has to do with [the governor's plan for increasing high school graduation requirements], then it could easily go through and nobody really wants it. Nobody does, nobody but [the governor]. But it

could go through because of the whole political process . . . . Who is coming up with these laws?! These people aren't in education. They don't know what's going on" (U, faculty).

Finally, some respondents appeared tired and simply overwhelmed by the magnitude of it all. "We all have this in the back of our minds. So it does affect everything. It affects everything that we do" (C, faculty).

### Other Themes

Several respondents perceived the threat from the state level to be higher for their school than for other schools in the state due to their rural location.

There no way that they [the state board] can reach out that far to govern us because we are so much different from [the metropolitan schools]. So, the next step would be to eliminate so that they have just a few . . . They will, of course, keep them near the big cities (Y, non-faculty).

Regarding the potential removal of the state director, one respondent said the current director was a source of great comfort in terms of being sure the rural parts of the system were protected. This participant feared her removal would cause rural parts of the system to become even more vulnerable.

[The former director], I don't think he'd ever been out [here]. And [the current director], I think the first six months or a year was out here three times . . . .

We've had somebody [in her] that's always taken care of us (V, non-faculty).

Another respondent cut right to the bottom line, "When someone of bigger strength starts to threaten individualism, ruralism, that makes me mad" (S, non-faculty)!

As was found with the local level change, participants also reported discomfort that resulted simply from the unknowns or “not knowing” what would come of the proposed changes. After listing all of the emotions resulting from the proposed change, one respondent said, “And the part that really bothers me it that we could be left hanging for quite a while” (I, faculty). The commonalities in the theme of “not knowing” between the local and state levels are a subject for further discussion in Chapter Four.

One other fascinating theme that evolved from the respondents’ reports appeared to result from feelings of being overwhelmed and helpless. This theme dealt with the concept of outside people or an outside force that would simply take care of the threat on their behalf. This was termed by the researcher as the “superhero phenomenon” because of the underlying belief that “someone or someones” of great power would resolve the problem on their behalves. This phenomenon was evident in several comments made. “I guess I have a kind of confidence, whether I should have it or not, that people aren’t going to let it happen” (M, non-faculty). When this respondent was questioned as to who the “people” were, the response indicated they were other, perhaps stronger people, working for the system, “The daddies. The daddies out there will take care of it” (M).

Another respondent placed faith in the logic of those “people” involved in the process. “Logic is going to prevail . . . . I think enough people will see the light” (A, non-faculty). Still another attempted to shelve any concern by assuming someone of greater power or influence would step in.

I should probably be more worried because I have less influence [at the state level], but I guess there are more people who have influence, who will take care of it . . . . I’m thinking someone else will take care of this (Z, non-faculty).

This element of placing faith in some “other force or person” to fix the problem was unique to the state level change reports. At the local level, there was also great faith in “others”, specifically the current administration. However, even with clear statements of their trust in their administration, respondents still were clear that they wanted to be able to influence the decision making process. Perhaps it is simply difficult for people we actually know and work with to maintain superhero status.

### Summary

The data collected from respondents in the form of interviews, demographic surveys, documents, and other observations has been summarized in this chapter. Reported changes, gains, and losses were listed. In addition, respondent-reported emotions about both the local and state level change were reported. This information serves as the foundation for the data analysis, with respect to the study’s questions, that occur in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This study used qualitative methods to delve into the emotional impacts of organizational change on individuals. Specifically this study was intended to describe the emotional responses of individuals who stayed with the organization, analyze these responses through a grief construct, identify and discuss other themes that arose in the data, and assess the usefulness of the grief construct for use in organizational change.

In keeping with those original objectives, analysis of the data in this chapter proceeds topically. First the emotional data resulting from the local level change is categorized according to the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct, which was selected as the *a priori* theory. Emotions that seem to fall outside of the Kubler-Ross model are next, followed by identification of other common themes in the data. This process is repeated for the state level change data. A comparison of the results of the local versus the state level change data is then addressed. And finally, the Kubler-Ross model is assessed for its usefulness in organizational change settings.

#### Use of Lists and Categorization to the Kubler-Ross (1969) Construct

The grief construct of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969) was used as a lens through which to view emotional data. Emotions were elicited through the use of participant drawings, unstructured interviews, and checklists of emotions.

On the local level, lists were used in two ways. First, participants were provided with a preset list of emotions taken from the Clapper (1991) study and asked to identify



those that they either had experienced or were still experiencing as a result of the local change. Second, the spontaneously produced emotions (those that did not appear on the preset list but evolved through the drawings and interviews) were compiled and, during follow up interviews, respondents were asked to identify those resulting from the local level change. On the state level, only the preset list of words was used; emotions resulting spontaneously were never compiled and re-presented to the participants, however, they are reported as a part of the state level data.

The preset list of emotions used by Clapper (1991) had been categorized to the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief stages through a series of fieldtests in a 1984 study by Michael (1984). Since the design of the current study encouraged participants to talk freely about their experiences of change, a number of emotions surfaced that were not a part of this pre-categorized list. In order to categorize the spontaneous emotions occurring in this study, a process similar to Michael's was used.

A regionally based review panel of thirteen professionals who were both formally trained, as well as experienced in working with individuals and grief, served as a review panel. Seven of the reviewers were either counseling or clinical psychologists. Three others provided counseling services through various religious associations—one was a minister, one was a deacon and a trained Stephen minister (trained to deal with long-term care), and one was a bereavement and spiritual care coordinator with a doctoral degree in counseling. Two additional reviewers were patient liaisons in the medical field—one of those was certified for long-term care. The final reviewer was the executive director of a regional Hospice unit, which specializes in nursing and support care of the terminally ill and their families.

Reviewers worked independently and were asked to place each spontaneously reported emotion in the grief stage in which the emotion, from their training and experience, was most likely to be found. Reviewers were also asked to indicate those reported emotions that did not seem to fit within the categories identified by Kubler-Ross (1969). A category for “hope” was not included as a part of previous organizational research (Clapper, 1991) but, as it was presented by Kubler-Ross as “the one thing that usually persists through all these stages” (p. 148), it was added a potential category for this set of reviewers.

Each of the final categories used by the current study included those emotions that had been placed in the same stage by 62% or eight of the thirteen reviewers. This requirement was intentionally higher than the Michael (1984) study, which required only 33% of the reviewers to agree on an emotion’s placement. The final categories used for this study, which included both the original categories provided by the Clapper (1991) study (presented in bold type) as well as those categorized in the current study, appear in Appendix F.

#### Local Level

Changes and losses identified at the local level were quite varied and appeared to be heavily dependent on the position of the individual. For instance, faculty members tended to deal first with curriculum and program-level changes. Others, who had experienced specific changes in their job duties or had changed jobs, focused on those changes first. While some school-wide changes, such as the change in focus and a loss of coworkers were identified by most participants, for the majority of participants they were secondary to the more personal changes and losses.

Changes at the local level were considered to be either implemented or in the process of implementation. Whichever the case, the changes produced a number of reported emotions that, according to the review panel and the previous work of Michael (1984), could be categorized into the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages.

#### Categorization of Emotional Data

In accordance with recommendations by Merriam (1988), emotional data was sorted into sets that fit the *a priori* categories established by the selection of the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct. This data is presented in Table X.

Table X

*Categorization of Emotions by Kubler-Ross (1969) Grief Construct:**Local Level Change*

Participant Descriptor	Kubler-Ross (1969) Stages					
	Denial	Anger	Bargaining	Depression	Acceptance	Hope
Faculty	■ (2)	■ (3)	■ (3)	■ (1)	■ (7)	■ (3)
Non-faculty	■ (1)	■ (5)	■ (7)	■ (6)	■ (2)	■ (2)
Non-faculty	■ (1)	■ (4)	■ (7)	■ (4)		■ (3)
Faculty	■ (1)		■ (5)	■ (3)	■ (1)	■ (3)
Non-faculty	■ (1)	■ (1)	■ (2)		■ (1)	■ (3)
Faculty	■ (1)	■ (2)	■ (9)		■ (8)	■ (3)
Faculty	■ (1)	■ (1)	■ (10)	■ (2)	■ (10)	■ (2)
Non-faculty	■ (1)	■ (1)	■ (2)		■ (3)	■ (2)
Non-faculty	■ (2)	■ (3)	■ (8)	■ (5)	■ (5)	■ (3)
TOTALS	11	19	53	21	37	24

Four of the nine respondents reported emotions that, when categorized, suggested they had experienced the full scope of the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages. Interestingly, one respondent reported emotions for all stages except acceptance, although elements of “hope” were clearly present. Acceptance of the reality of the change in an organization (versus acceptance in the realm of death and dying) seemed to lead to a new beginning for participants. Daugird and Spencer (1996) and Schoolfield and Orduna (1994) characterized acceptance as a time in which employees begin to focus on the positive

aspects of the change and creativity reasserts itself. It could be argued that the one participant not reporting emotions of acceptance had simply not processed the change to this point. Even without this employee, emotions in the category of “acceptance” were some of the most frequently reported emotions across the participants.

The most commonly “skipped” stage was depression; one-third of respondents did not report any emotions that could be categorized as depression. However, six of the nine respondents did. Only one respondent actually labeled her distress as “depression.” This respondent attempted repeatedly to force her emotions into a rational framework and, when “owning” some feelings, appeared uncomfortable that they were “illogical” or not “rational (G, non-faculty).” Both Kubler-Ross (1969) and Daugird and Spencer (1996) point out that feelings of depression cannot be reasoned away by others. The verbal reports and observations of this participant suggest that the difficulties with “reasoning away” feelings of depression also cannot be accomplished by the individual herself, no matter how much she may desire this.

Every respondent reported emotions that could be categorized as “denial,” “bargaining,” and “hope.” More emotions fitting into the category of “bargaining” were reported than in any other stage. A first glance of the categorized words in Appendix F may suggest that this is simply due to the fact that more words are available in this particular category than several others. However, since the categorized words list evolved primarily from reports of participants at this school, this argument appeared less likely.

Bargaining results from a belief that good behavior may be exchanged for some type of desired reward; this results in employees who “bargain to prevent loss” (Daugird

& Spencer, 1996, p. 409). Bargaining behaviors are attempts to hold on to the status quo through negotiations, and managers can sometimes be fooled into thinking that progress is being made (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). Perlman & Takacs also note “this phase appears to be rational, logical, and professional . . . these quasi-negotiations are just a mask for the feelings behind them. Energy is channeled to stop or limit the change, not to achieve it” (p. 36).

Although numerous examples of bargaining appeared in respondents’ verbal reports, one related to the school’s shift in focus to the adult evening programs rather than daytime. This faculty member said, “Night classes don’t even break even money wise. And I’m not saying that’s bad because they need to be offered . . . . But if we close down the day programs and try to rely on the night programs, we’d close down. And I think we need to remember that” (E). When asked whether she believed that there was a push to close daytime programs, the same respondent admitted that daytime program still were also an emphasis but she had feelings of frustration about the shift. The very rational factor of money had become a way to bargain about changed focus to adult evening programs which reduced perceived emphasis on daytime programs (with which she was associated).

It is important to note that hope-related emotions were reported by every participant. As noted previously, Kubler-Ross (1969) observed that hope was threaded throughout all stages of grief. Even for the one respondent that did not report any acceptance-related emotions, she still reported a unwavering feelings of hope and a “firm belief” that school “get there” (B, non-faculty)—wherever “there” might be. Data in this

study suggested that Kubler-Ross' observation that hope may be a thread maintained through all stages may be also be true in the organizational setting.

It is clear from the data presented that grief reactions similar to both previous reports on organizational change (Clapper 1991; Humphrey, 1997; Massey, 1991, 1992; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994; Stein, 1990a, 1990b, Triolo et al., 1995) as well as to grief in other contexts such as divorce (Crosby et al., 1983; Trolley, 1994) and death (Bowlby; 1980; Kubler-Ross, 1969) were present. Reactions, however, were unique to the individual and did not necessarily include all stages of the Kubler-Ross grief construct. It is important to note that every participant in this study reported that most of the organizational changes at the local level were "good." Their emotional reactions lend support to Barger and Kirby's (1995) assertions that grief occurs even in response to change that is perceived to be "good." Participant demographics were not further discussed in this analysis of grief reactions as no patterns specific to these factors were discerned in the data.

#### Other Reported Emotions

Clearly many of the Kubler-Ross (1969) emotions were present in this organization; however, there were others that did not fit into these categories. Most often, these included reports of feeling challenged, bothered, and stressed. However, reports of feeling pleased, positive, and happy were also not categorized into the Kubler-Ross stages. An examination of the notes from the panel of reviewers suggested that these three feelings (pleased, positive, and happy) were too easily applied to several stages with very different implications. For instance, someone in denial may very well report being pleased, positive, or happy; likewise the stages of acceptance or hope may

also contain elements of these emotions. For these three reported emotions, too many other factors were critical to categorization for there to be any level of comfort in placing them in the Kubler-Ross stages.

Another emotion of concern was reported feelings of relief. This emotion seemed appropriately categorized into the Kubler-Ross (1969) stage of “acceptance” for seven out of nine respondents. These respondents reported relief after “getting to know” (U, faculty) their new administrator and after he had been in his position for some amount of time. This did appear to be associated with some acceptance of the school’s change to a new administrator (separate from the other changes he then brought).

Three other reported instances of relief, however, raised a question as to its clear or singular fit as an emotion of acceptance. Of the same seven respondents, three reported a separate instance of relief that actually occurred before they knew the identity of their new administrator—something that did not seem to be associated with acceptance. Explanations given for this included the faculty member who said her relief came from just “knowing things were going to move on” (W). Another echoed her statement saying it “was a relief knowing what was going to happen” (D). The third had a slightly different perspective that the new administrator’s arrival (even before knowing him) brought feelings of relief because of the removal of tension associated with the previous administrator (K, non-faculty). All these respondents seemed to be reporting feelings of relief that actually occurred before the actually processing of the change to the new administrator began—it was simply related to having the pending change finally in place so they could start dealing with it.



While these three reports of relief did not fit within the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages, they did support Barger and Kirby's (1995, 1997a) placement of relief at the beginning of their grief cycle, which was developed in relation to their work in organizations. This type of relief seemed to be associated with an element of finally "knowing," which allowed the processing of the change to begin. "Knowing" is addressed further in the analysis of state level changes, where this theme reappears.

### The "Discomfort" Theme

Three additional themes evolving from the data were identified and presented in Chapter Three: the metaphor of "cheese," the issue of influence, and an apparent theme of "discomfort" shared by most participants (see Chapter Three, pp. 71-73, for a full description). Only one of those themes, that of "discomfort," is complex enough to benefit from further analysis.

Observations and verbal reports of participants indicated they genuinely liked their new administrator. In addition, all respondents reported that they believed, in general, that the changes being made were needed and were positive, and many respondents were careful to explain why the changes were "good." Distress resulted for participants when, during the course of interviews, they recognized the contrasts between reported positives about the new administrator and the changes versus some of the less than positive emotions that resulted. This was a theme that was termed "discomfort" by the researcher.

It would be easy to explain participants' intentional care in pointing out the positives by theorizing that respondents might simply have had concerns about any negative reports and were playing organizational politics. However, fieldnotes on

mannerisms, voice tone, and facial expressions showed true confusion and discomfort, sometimes surprise, at the emotions they struggled with. Some expressed a sense of being torn in their verbal reports. “I’ve got this frustration level that I’m dealing with and I’ve got to get . . . . you think you need to deal with it and just let it go and not let it bother you but yet . . . (#, non-faculty). It appeared that in many cases respondents were truly torn between logic and emotion, loyalty to their new administrator and the challenge of letting go of the past, thinking the change was positive and confusion about why they sometimes felt so bad. Emotions were difficult to understand and not always very welcome as evidenced in the following exchange. This interaction with a respondent (non-faculty), who had repeatedly worried about the rationality of her feelings, occurred in conjunction with a report of a change-related incident:

*Interviewer:* So it makes you a little angry.

“Well, I UNDERSTAND it.”

*Interviewer:* There’s a difference between understanding it and what your emotions are telling you. It’s different . . . .

“Yes, it made me angry but I got over it because . . . (pause)”

*Interviewer:* It’s rational?

“Right.”

*Interviewer:* And you’re a rather rational person.

“Yeah. And I can’t hold anger either. It’s too much trouble.” (G, non-faculty)

Data in Chapter Three showed that co-worker emotions and reactions created additional emotional responses for these participants. It was not surprising, then, to find their resistance to the emotions involved with the change extended to their coworkers.

When asked about the opportunity to see co-participants' drawings, one respondent said, "It may be uncomfortable to see some. I hate negative stuff and that may come through in their drawings" (H, non-faculty). In many ways, the mixed responses to change seemed to put participants' minds at war with their hearts as well as brought about a certain level of guilt for the feelings they were experiencing. It never became completely clear through the data whether the theme of discomfort was a theme separate and apart from the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages or whether it was actually just another form of denial. If this theme of "discomfort" was denial, it was denial of the feelings resulting from the change, rather than of the change itself. Regardless, this theme gave additional support to the idea that even "good" change produces feelings of loss and grief (Barger and Kirby, 1995).

#### State Level

Changes at the state level were considered to be pending or proposed. This situation meant that participants' reactions were primarily to what they perceived to be of threat at the time of the study.

#### Categorization of Emotional Data

Emotions for the proposed state level change were categorized using the same guide (Appendix F) produced by the panel of reviewers and used for the local level change. Table XI presents emotions categorized for the state level. Because state level changes were considered to still be in the proposal stage, employees were actually experiencing emotions related to the anticipation of change. This was a slightly different application of the Kubler-Ross (1969) construct than to existing local level change (which was already reality), so it is important to remember that the Kubler-Ross model

was developed from observations of the reactions of dying patients and their families. Most certainly the Kubler-Ross model, then, is also an anticipatory model with death as the final change, yet to come, that these individuals grieved toward. This fact makes the application of the model to the anticipatory grief related to proposed state changes an appropriate one.

Table XI

*Categorization of Emotions by Kubler-Ross (1969) Grief Construct:*

*State Level Change*

Participant Descriptor	Kubler-Ross (1969) Stages					
	Denial	Anger	Bargaining	Depression	Acceptance	Hope
Faculty			■ (2)	■ (1)		
Non-faculty		■ (1)	■ (5)	■ (2)	■ (1)	
Non-faculty		■ (5)	■ (3)	■ (2)		
Faculty	■ (1)	■ (3)	■ (5)			
Non-faculty	■ (1)					
Faculty	■ (1)	■ (6)	■ (7)	■ (4)	■ (1)	
Faculty	■ (1)	■ (9)	■ (9)	■ (5)		
Non-faculty		■ (5)				
Non-faculty	■ (1)	■ (3)	■ (4)	■ (1)		
TOTALS	5	32	35	15	2	0

As shown in Table XI, emotions related to bargaining and anger were the most often reported. This was followed by emotions related to depression. Most striking of the categorization of the proposed state change-related emotions, however, occurred in the stages of “acceptance” and “hope.”

Only two respondents out of nine reported a single emotion each in the stage of acceptance. For both, this emotion was reported as “thoughtful.” When asked what she meant by “thoughtful,” one faculty member said “You think about things, lives, and put

things in perspective. At least I try to see it from their perspective, I guess” (W). The other (non-faculty) respondent provided no real explanation other than she tends to “overthink” everything (Z).

Issues around hope and the state level change became quite complex. Not one hope-related emotion was reported by a single respondent. However, when asked, two respondents addressed this issue. “Hopeless, I hope not. Sometimes it feels that way but hopefully we won’t get that bad” (J, faculty). Another respondent said “I’m not hopeless yet. I hope not to get to that point” (M, non-faculty). However, neither respondent was willing to go so far as to report that she actually had feelings of hope about the change itself; they would only admit to feelings of “hoping not to lose all hope.” Two of the nine respondents did report actual emotions of hopelessness. It is unknown from the data why emotions of hope were missing from the reactions to state level change. It can only be hypothesized from participant reports that, perhaps since so little was actually known about the implementation and effects of the change at the time of the interviews, a majority of respondents simply did not know whether or not to have hope so they reported no position at all.

As noted in Chapter Three, one respondent reported emotions only related to the stage “denial.” (While some other participants reported a greater number of denial-related emotions, they also reported emotions that could be categorized into other Kubler-Ross (1969) stages.) Any explanation of this individual’s report is, again, purely hypothetical. However, it raises the question of whether denial, or in this case refusal to even consider the possibility of the proposed changes, could be at such a depth or strength that no other emotions were recognized even by the person him- or herself.

Like the emotions reported on the local level, it appeared that emotions comprising grief were present within these participants' responses to proposed state level change, although perhaps in its early stages. This data supports the idea that grief can be anticipatory, or occur prior to the actual loss itself. This premise was originally reported by Kubler-Ross (1969) whose work was based upon observations and interactions with the terminally ill, and whose work provided the lens for this study. Again, the loss found at the state level was similar to grief descriptions for death and dying (Bowlby, 1980; Kubler-Ross, 1969), as well as grief found in other organizational change studies (Clapper 1991; Humphrey, 1997; Massey, 1991, 1992; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994; Stein, 1990a, 1990b, Triolo et al., 1995).

#### Other Reported Emotions

Reported emotions resulting from the state level changes that did not fit within the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages were few and varied. Since commonalities of these emotions did not exist among participants, those emotions will not be discussed further.

However, while relief was not reported as an emotion occurring at the state level, the phenomena that led to the emotion of relief at the local level was present at the state level. This theme or phenomena was the distress of "not knowing" which changes would be implemented and what that would bring to the participants. At the local level, this was eventually followed by relief when the new administrator arrived and change moved forward. At the state level, however, the proposed changes remained nebulous and unknown so relief was a much hoped for but not yet present emotion. The "knowing" theme is discussed further in the next section.

### The “Knowing” Theme

Participants were clearly distressed about dealing with proposed state level changes, while continually being left not “knowing” what was next for their school and for the system. While respondents reported a number of data sources including newspapers, radio, peers, emails from state-level officials, legislators, and their own administrators, the reality was that no one really knew what changes would be implemented at the state level. However, it was widely feared by all but one respondent that they would be strongly negative, which led to anticipatory grief as evident in their reports of emotions.

The discomfort of not “knowing” surfaced in respondents’ verbal reports. “I keep saying, ‘Now, when will this be decided? When are they going to vote? What day? (L, faculty). Another report showed equal frustration and fear resulting from not “knowing”:  
“How long are we going to drag this out, where we don’t know what our role is going to be?” (C, faculty). For some respondents, being in limbo was so uncomfortable that they stated that even if they eventually found they had gotten a “bad change,” they preferred this to just being held in limbo. One respondent explained this reasoning saying any decision would be an improvement, just “so we know where we [are] and what we need to do about it” (#, non-faculty).

The distress of not “knowing” was so overwhelming for one faculty member that feelings about being faced again and again with the issue, even by an obviously well-meaning administration, came forth in a rush:

There have been times I wish [our administration] wouldn’t even bring it up.

We’ve had meetings! And I’m [thinking], “Do we have to face this again today?!”



How much more can we take of this?" . . . . I'm a little resentful . . . . I know that they've just tried to get us involved. But I have felt like "Why are you telling me this? I can't handle this right now. I don't want to have to worry about this."

Some people, they can handle this just fine. [But] there's just so many [effects] personally . . . . And I'm thinking "what can [I do]? I wrote letters. We wrote letters but what can I do about it?" . . . . So please don't tell me about it anymore. . . . I know there are other people like me who feel that way too. They don't want to be reminded because we don't know what's going happen. (U).

The distress associated with not "knowing" was common to a number of respondents, although typically not reported with such vigor. At the local level, issues of not "knowing" who would be the new administrator were resolved with feelings of relief once his name was announced—even before any knowledge of his abilities or plans.

As with the local changes, the expectation of several respondents was that the distress of not "knowing" would be followed by feelings of relief when the changes were announced. "I'll be relieved when [the state level changes] are announced, even if it's not what we want" (B, non-faculty). With the assumption that participants would then grieve the losses produced by whatever change was implemented, feelings of relief would actually start the process of grief, rather than being a part of "acceptance." As noted previously, this phenomena is represented by Barger and Kirby (1995, 1997a) in their conceptualization of grief resulting from organizational change, rather than by Kubler-Ross (1969).

### Analysis of Differences Between Local and State Level Change

One key difference that existed between the state and local changes was that the state changes existed in “proposed” form—while they seem to loom for participants, they were not yet a part of reality. Local level changes, on the other hand, were already in the process of implementation or considered to be implemented—they were “real.” As shown in Tables X and XI, there are marked contrasts between emotions categorized to the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages for the proposed state level change and those reported for the local level change. However, a breakdown of actual emotions (Figure 2) reported shows that a number of the same emotions were reported for both levels of change. (Spontaneously reported emotions are shown in italics.) This led the researcher to ask participants for their explanations of the commonalities and differences.

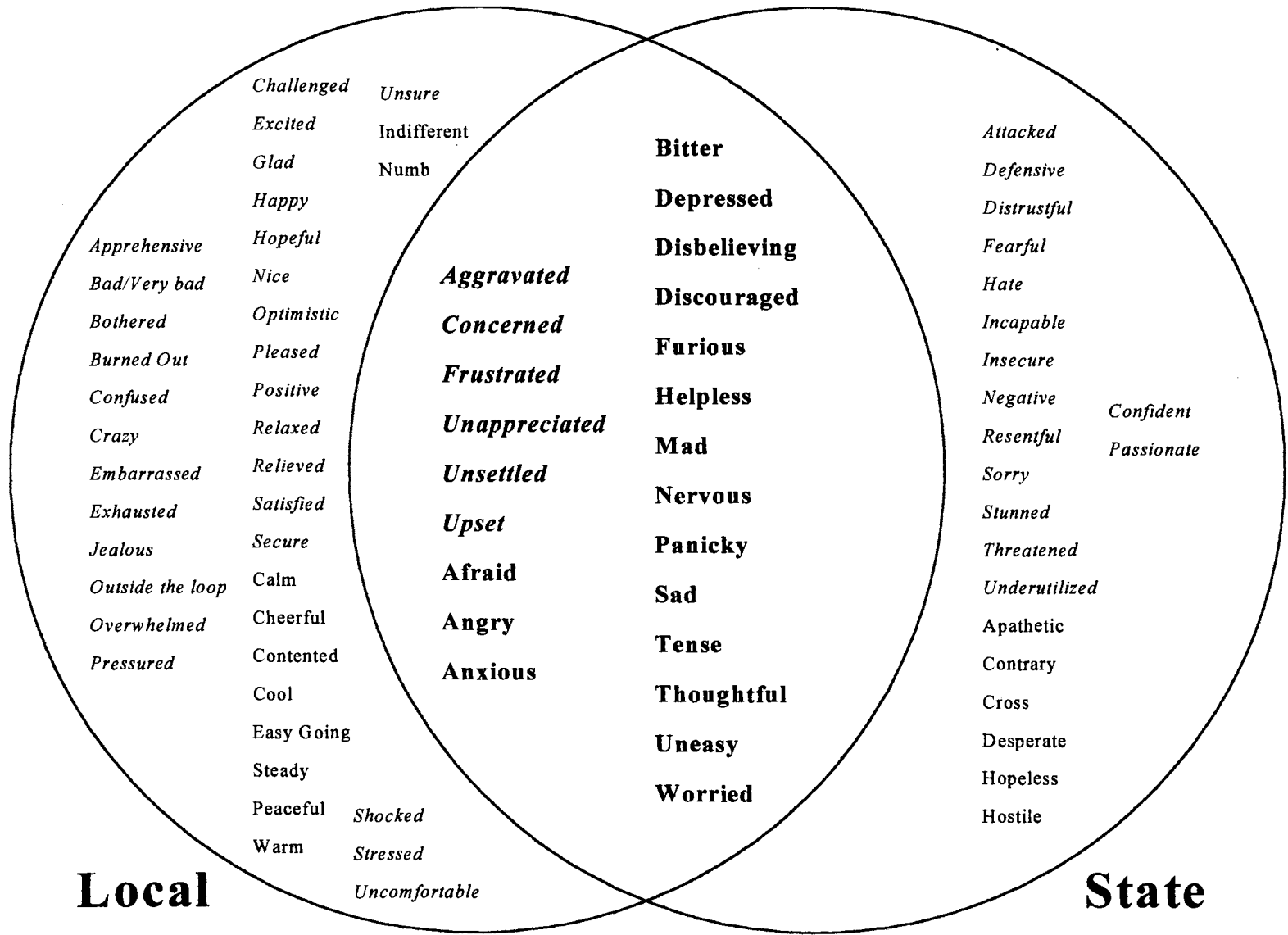


Figure 2. Combined Local and State Level Emotions

### Participant Explanations for Differences

Partially due to the structuring of the questions, participants' comments about commonalities and differences fell into three general categories: magnitude, influence, and perceptions about whether the change would have positive or negative results. A discussion of these areas follows.

Magnitude. The potential magnitude of the changes proposed at the state level affected how some respondents reportedly felt about the change. This was communicated various ways. One respondent said her stronger negative feelings at the state level occurred "because it's going to affect a lot of people" (W, faculty). A co-participant agreed, "[The state change] covers so much more than just us. Locally, I think we can work through [the local level changes]" (B, non-faculty). Two other respondents attached perceived consequences to the changes, the state change "is at such a magnitude where we don't know that our [new administrator] will have a job next year" (C, faculty). "I think your job security is being tested to some extent" (V, non-faculty). A final respondent described her responses to the magnitude of the change more vividly:

From local to state my feelings [about the state level changes] are probably more passionate because we're going to have to unite to take care of it. And it really worries me. When it comes to family, I'm going to stand in front of them and protect them. They can mess with me but don't mess with my kids. We'll handle our own problems but we need to unite. And that's probably why [the state level change] becomes more passionate. If you get everybody united, you don't feel so helpless (N, non-faculty).

Influence. The differences in participants' influence at the local versus state level was also perceived as a factor in their responses to the changes. All reports showed that participants clearly felt they had more influence on the local level. "[At the local level] I feel like if I really had a big problem and needed to deal with it, I could take it to the administration . . . and they would at least hear me out" (J, faculty). A second respondent agreed, "We're not as directly involved [at the state level]. I can't just go to somebody's office during the day and ask a question or communicate one on one" (Q, faculty). One respondent reported that she had stronger negative reactions to the state change because

I cannot make an impact on that. Whereas if I was to really rant and rave . . . here, somebody is going to listen. And there, I just feel helpless. Large numbers [are the] only thing that's going to talk (Y, non-faculty).

Belief in the change. A final difference between feelings about local and state change dealt with the overall belief about whether the change to be implemented was "good" or "bad." One respondent reported that believing in the change definitely makes a difference in the willingness to "ride it out" (K, non-faculty). Another noted that she is probably a little "less anxious" about a change she believes to be positive. Regarding the local level change, one respondent said,

At least with the changes here, I know we're going to have some bad things and there's going to be some negative things but we're doing it for the right reasons. Maybe they have a good reason [at the state level], but I don't see it (B, non-faculty).

## Other Themes

One of the more obvious conclusions that resulted from the comparison of local and state level change emotions was that grief reactions were found whether the change was “real” (defined as already in the process of implementation or implemented) as it was at the local level or “anticipated” (where only known factor is that change is coming) as it was for pending change at the state level. In both cases, grief reactions were occurring. This suggested that even the possibility of loss may cause humans to begin having grief-related emotions. It is not known to what extent the factor of not “knowing” (which was reported and discussed previously) and the associated loss of comfort and security related to not “knowing” may also be a factor in anticipatory grief. It is important to note that the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct was originally developed as an anticipatory grief model but it has also been widely applied to other “post-change or loss” grief.

In many ways the reasons given for the differences in reactions at the two levels of change (magnitude, influence, and beliefs about change) relate to Barger and Kirby’s (1995, 1997a) differentiation between change made by choice and change that is imposed. Particularly the element of influence leads to issues about “chosen” and “imposed” change, although likely the perceived magnitude about the change and negative or positive beliefs about change outcomes are also related. Barger and Kirby (1995) say that those who are involved in the process of choosing the change experience it as a solution to a problem while those for whom change is imposed experience it as “disruptive,” “dramatic,” and “out of control” (p. 47). At the root of Barger and Kirby’s explanation, then, is that of control. Those who are involved in the process of choosing change have it; those who are not involved don’t.

The issue of control or loss of control seemed to occur across two of the three factors reported for differences in reactions to local versus state change. The sheer magnitude of the change caused participants to feel a loss of control—a change they felt little ability to influence. This common feeling of having little control or influence appeared to cause increases in the emotional responses to the change and was compounded by a separate issue--feelings that the state changes were basically negative or bad for the system and for the local school.

In contrast, reports of participants' influence on the various components of change at the local level varied. Especially for those making changes in curriculum or in personal job duties, most stated that they were included in the process of making the change decision. This type of change was experienced as "chosen" and, while it still brought about change emotions, they were lessened. Obviously, none of the participants felt that they had a say in the choice of the new administration; however, many felt they had input or influence into some of the changes that he brought and this, again, appeared to lessen their emotional responses. Other respondents did report a lack of influence and involvement in some of the changes, in particular the shift in focus to adult and business programs. In general, these types of changes produced stronger emotions; they were experienced as "imposed." So, at the local level, while there were some changes experienced as "imposed," there was consistency in the feelings of access, an ability to scream loud enough or jump up and down long enough that they would be heard.

Perceptions and reported emotions were markedly different at the state level, where not only did every participant report a lack of influence and involvement in the decision making process, there was also limited understanding of what the changes would

be—mostly due to the unknowns that existed at the time. There was no question that participants were experiencing all of the proposed state changes as “imposed” and their negative emotions about the situation were considerably stronger and more frequent than at the local level. The data in this study supported Barger and Kirby’s (1995, 1997a) observations about the differences in impact of “chosen” versus “imposed” change.

#### Applicability of the Kubler-Ross (1969) Grief Construct

It is clear from the data that respondents reported a full spectrum of emotions that appeared to fit within the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages. However, each individual’s experiences seemed to be as unique as the individuals themselves. This brought up the question of whether a representative “process” of grief can actually exist for humans who have such different experiences and perspectives. In some ways this question, also set forth by Hagman (1995), Solari-Twadell et al., (1995), and Schwartzberg and Halgin (1991), is about the way that “grief models” have been both presented in the literature and practiced in the field.

The literature has, in some ways, attempted to simplify the Kubler-Ross’ (1969) work by presenting it as a process that each individual moves through and comes out at the end having processed their grief. From her original writings, it appears this is a gross oversimplification of the intent of Kubler-Ross who said the defense mechanisms or stages, “will last for different periods of time and will replace each other or exist at times side by side” (p. 147). The only visual depiction of her grief stages (p. 265) depicts anger as partially crossing over with denial, elements of denial throughout anger, anger and depression sitting almost on top of one another and so on. This mixing and meshing of



emotions was certainly found to be true for this organization, although some employees did refer to the “processing” of their emotions.

Evidence of “processing” and the individuality of this process seemed to be present in some of the most reported emotions. For instance, feelings of apprehension were reported by six of the nine respondents; however, five reported that these feelings had “passed.” Those who reported emotions like “peaceful” and “contented” identified them as present, not past, feelings. Eight respondents reported feelings of excitement but only in the present; respondents had “grown into” these feelings. Six described feelings of happiness; only one reported they had been happy about the change in the past. Feelings of optimism were reported by eight respondents, four of whom said this was a recent feeling, while the other four said they had been optimistic throughout the change.

One respondent noted that, although there had been ongoing frustration in the process of change, “It’s gotten better, though, in the last couple of months” (M, non-faculty). Another agreed that there had been a “process” of getting back to a place of comfort but said, “I still have my bad days . . . I still have those about once a week probably, but it goes pretty good” (A, non-faculty). As noted previous, two drawings (Appendix D8 & D9) suggested a process of grief.

However, no linear process or order of emotions was clear in the data. In this organizational setting, it appeared that each change brought new and very individualized feelings. Changes came one on top of another so, even had there been a specific path for processing a particular change, it would have been highly unlikely that an individual could have fully processed one change before being hit with another. Organizational life was simply not that organized, no matter how much these employees would have

preferred that. One respondent said, “There’s [been] so many different situations that that some point you’re going to come across just about all of [the emotions]” (B, non-faculty). For some, the emotions became overall responses to ongoing and complex organizational change—change that could not be defined by one event or decision. “It’s pretty much been a level of frustration” (G, non-faculty). Another respondent described anxiety as “just a general feeling” (M, non-faculty). So, in some ways, the usefulness of the Kubler-Ross (1969) model in organizational change is very dependent on how the construct is applied—as a process or as a collection of emotions that are common in response to change.

One additional concern, as discovered during the process of categorizing spontaneously reported emotions at the local level, dealt with the difficulties of placing some emotions, such as pleased, positive, and happy, into the stages of Kubler-Ross’ (1969) grief. These emotions were shown to occur within different stages across the model, depending on the context the emotion occurred within. This issue is likely one of concern for all models of grief, not specific to the Kubler-Ross construct. However, it is an important consideration when using a grief model for the study of reactions to organizational change.

As noted previously, an additional feeling that occurred often in this study was that of “relief,” which led to a closer examination of Barger and Kirby’s (1995) model—a construct they call the “grieving cycle” (p. 78) that incorporates “relief” as an initial stage for dealing with the grief of organizational change. Additional differences between this model and that of Kubler-Ross (1969) are that “panic” becomes a stage on the Barger and Kirby model but was considered by this study’s reviewers to be incorporated as a part of

“bargaining” on the Kubler-Ross model. Additionally, shock and guilt or remorse are separate stages for Barger and Kirby. Some elements of guilt or remorse were reported by this study’s participants but the role of these emotions was unclear. For the Kubler-Ross model, shock appears to be incorporated into “denial” and guilt or remorse into “depression.” For Barger and Kirby, acceptance becomes four separate stages: “resignation to the situation, acceptance of reality, building, and opportunity: growth and new directions” (p. 78). And in some ways, an expansion of Kubler-Ross’ stage of “acceptance” seems appropriate since, for those that stay in an organization through change, life does have a way of going forward. However, the Kubler-Ross model, developed in the death and dying arena, does not address this organizational reality.

One element that Barger and Kirby’s (1995) model certainly does not solve is the issue of presenting grief as a linear process. Unlike the simple mis-presentation that seems to occur with the Kubler-Ross model, Barger and Kirby’s depiction of their “grieving cycle” is clearly a “U”-shaped process, with stages falling along the “U,” and where depression resides at the bottom. Again, any conceptualization of a process with specific starting points and outcomes was not supported by the reports of participants in this study nor warranted by other research in this area (Kavanagh, Hopkins, et al., 1990).

Solari-Twadel et al. (1995) attempted to solve the problems associated with presentation and practice of linear grief processes with the pinwheel model of grief. This model, also from care of the terminally ill, is anchored at its center with each person’s “personal history” or “each person’s experience with loss” (p. 324). This recognition of the effects of personal perspective and experience in the model makes it unique, and the need for this recognition in any grief model was clearly supported by data in this study,

as well as by others as noted previously. The pinwheel model is drawn in the cyclical shape of a pinwheel with the specific starting point left to the uniqueness of each individual. Likewise the shape of the model represents “the recognition that at any time the circular experience of the loss may be revisited” (p. 325). The inherent flexibility of the visualization of this model is an exception in the literature, and it may be a sound guide for creating a flexible model of grief for the organizational setting.

Much like any truth, the reality of organizational grief in this setting appeared to fall somewhere in the spaces between published accounts of the grieving process. Kubler-Ross (1969) certainly provided a solid foundation from which to work in identifying emotions that resulted. However, through reporting their informal observations, Barger and Kirby (1995, 1997a) also provided additional insight into the issue as it relates specifically to the organizational setting. And finally Solari-Twadell et al. made a real contribution with the philosophy and visualization behind their model of grief. Further research will likely be the only vehicle that can bring more clarity to the question of understanding change-related grief in organizations.

### Summary

Consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two on the presence of grief-like employee responses to organizational change, the data revealed that grief responses were present in this school. The reported grief responses at both the local and state levels of change were similar to those found in other reports of grief resulting from organizational change (Clapper 1991; Humphrey, 1997; Massey, 1991, 1992; Perlman & Takacs, 1990; Schoolfield & Orduna, 1994; Stein, 1990a, 1990b, Triolo et al., 1995), divorce (Crosby et al., 1983; Trolley, 1994), and death (Bowlby; 1980; Kubler-Ross,

1969). Using the work of Kubler-Ross as an *a priori* lens for reviewing the data, three participants were found to have reported emotions that included all of the stages of the Kubler-Ross construct at the local level; the six other respondents reported emotions falling into some, but not all, of the Kubler-Ross stages.

At the state level, grief responses were deemed to be “anticipatory” (occurring prior to the actual change) and appeared to be in the beginning stages of the grieving process. This was in contrast to the local level reports where not a single participant reported emotions related to the Kubler-Ross (1969) stage of “hope,” and only two reported a single emotion each related the Kubler-Ross stage of “acceptance.” Participant demographics were not found to be a factor in presence or uniqueness of the grief responses at either the local or state levels.

At the state level, a theme of “knowing” was discerned that indicated that a great deal of distress was created for participants because the specifics of the actual change were yet to be announced—state level grief was “anticipatory.” This theme seemed to be precursor to the emotion of “relief” that was reported at the local level at the beginning of the grief process, in addition to its expected place in the Kubler-Ross (1969) stage of “acceptance.” Participants reported an expectation that they would also experience feelings of relief when specifics of the state level change were announced—regardless of whether the change was that which they desired. This supported Barger and Kirby’s (1995, 1997a) placement of relief at the beginning of their grief model for organizational change.

A theme of “discomfort” was found at the local level across a number of participants who struggled with their logical/intellectual agreement with the changes

versus the sometimes negative emotions evoked from them. This “discomfort” was also shown to extend to the emotional reactions of co-workers. Analysis of the data never made clear whether the theme of “discomfort” was related to the Kubler-Ross (1969) stage of denial—if so, it was of the feelings resulting from the changes, not denial of the changes themselves. The theme supported Barger and Kirby’s (1995) assertion that even “good” change produces loss and grief reactions.

When the local and state level reports of emotional responses were compared and participants asked about their similarities and differences, their comments fell into three general categories. These three categories were considered to have impact on the presence of grief, as well as its depth and breadth. The three areas included: the magnitude of the change, their perceived abilities to influence the change, and their perceptions about whether the change would have positive or negative results.

Comparison of emotional reactions at the local and state levels also suggested that grief reactions occur whether the change is already “real” (is in process of implementation or has been implemented) or “anticipated” (is only known to be coming in some form). The comparison also suggested differences in reactions according to whether the change was “chosen” or “imposed.” Both of these outcomes supported the observations of Barger and Kirby (1995) regarding the impact of certain elements of organizational change on individual reactions.

Although elements of the Kubler-Ross (1969) construct were found at both the local and state levels, the analysis of the data raised the question of whether a single “process” of grief can be applied—at least as a linear or common experience. This issue

was discussed using the work of Kubler-Ross, Barger and Kirby (1995), and Solari-Twadel, et al. (1995).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DRAWINGS AS A QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

This chapter departs from the “typical” organization of dissertation reporting by focusing solely on the methodology of participant produced drawings that was used in this study. This chapter proceeds topically according to the questions asked of participants about their “drawing experience.” It is a comprehensive report that presents data, analyses, and conclusions about the use of the drawing methodology. It concludes with recommendations for further research on the use of participant produced drawings as a data collection tool in qualitative inquiry.

Participants in this study were asked to make two drawings—one that represented their experiences of local level change and one directed at their experiences of the pending state level change. Specifics about the drawing activity as used in this study can be found in Appendix C4. There were two primary rationales for the use of participant produced drawings in this study. First, both the literature (Vince, 1995; Vince & Broussine, 1996; Zubroff, 1988) and the researcher’s previous organizational development experience suggested that drawings were a way to tap quickly into the emotional lives of participants—the primary focus of this study. Second, there was concern that the study’s design allow data collection to remain unstructured so that participants had the freedom to frame their own experiences, unencumbered by the researcher’s previously held biases about people and organizational change.



Several organizational researchers have addressed the use of drawings in organizations (Meyer, 1991; Nossiter & Biberman, 1990; Vince, 1995; Vince & Broussine, 1996). However, in each of these cases, reported conclusions were drawn primarily from the researchers' observations and analyses of participant responses to drawings as well as researcher analysis of the drawings themselves. This is valuable information and an important perspective. However, in the follow up interviews of the current study, participants themselves were asked how their experience changed their responses to the research, as well as how it affected the information they shared. Both the participants' and the researcher's perspectives on the drawing methodology, as used in this study, are reported and discussed.

The amount of time between when each participant produced his or her drawing and when asked about the drawing experience varied from three to six weeks. Participants were given the opportunity to review their local level drawings (Appendix D) and all were asked a similar set of questions about their experience, as well as encouraged to add other pertinent information. State level drawings are presented in Appendix E and are included where appropriate in some portions of the analyses. Notes on any modifications made by the researcher to aid in reproduction of the drawing or to protect confidentiality are included with each drawing. Excerpts from the participants' explanations of the drawings are included in the Appendices to aid understanding.

#### Initial Responses to the Request to Draw

Participants were first asked about their initial feelings in response to the request that they draw as a part of the research process. All admitted that it was surprise to them with one noting that it "didn't seem very conventional for research" (A, non-faculty).

Over half of the respondents (5 people) reported their initial negative responses resulted from a lack of confidence in their artistic abilities. One faculty member said her first thought was, “I’m a terrible artist. I hope I can do what I’m supposed to do” (E). Another noted that her initial response was more about “not feeling confident about the technique [of drawing] rather than sharing emotions. If I had been asked to write, okay.” (C, faculty). Still another respondent said “I’m not an artist so it gave me a little anxiety” (L, faculty). The self-described responses of the participants aligned well with the researcher observations recorded in the field.

Several participants responded to the request to draw with flat facial expressions and paused before responding. The movements of others seemed to freeze up temporarily as if absorbing information that was not welcome. One noted that if she had known she would have to draw, she probably would not have signed up for the study. While her comment was made with some amount of humor, her facial expression and mannerisms suggested there was a real element of truth in her statement.

Two people seemed to think that their particular personality type may have been a factor in their discomfort. One said that detail-oriented people like herself “are stressed because they cannot be accurate and precise. Drawing leaves room for feelings and emotions and things we don’t want to express” (G, non-faculty). Another added, “I wasn’t prepared. If I had known ahead, I would have had something explicit” (V, non-faculty).

Only one respondent, a faculty member, initially described the drawing process as “fun” (F, non-faculty). One other respondent, who had previously reported an initial lack of confidence in her ability, later admitted, “It was cool to get colors. It was fun to play

again” (J, faculty). This participant spent more than the average amount of time drawing, although she noted that it was not her “strength.” She also was observed to use multiple crayons out of the box and to rotate the pad of paper to gain a good angle for whatever she was working on, as well as to review her work. Both her efforts and her enjoyment, although not her initial reactions, were anomalies in the group of participants.

The fact that most participants did not appear to enjoy or become excited about the opportunity to draw conflicted with reports in earlier research about the use of drawings. To complete their study on the methodology of drawings, Nossiter and Biberman (1990) used participant produced drawings to compare workers’ perceptions of their organizational culture. They found that the respondents’ “expressions of enjoyment in completing the [drawings] suggest this rather unusual request for creativity may be quite motivational in getting respondents to analyse their organization” (p. 15). In a 1978 study of hospital CEOs’ perceptions of their environments, Meyer (1991) observed that “CEOs found diagramming their environments to be an engaging activity” (p. 227). Such was not the case with this study. While no participant refused to draw, their behaviors, comments, and later recollections of their initial responses were ones of resistance. Interestingly, as in this study, Derry (2002) also encountered resistance to drawing from a participant due to artistic ability. However, the resistance of her respondent was reportedly due to meanings the respondent attached to the activity because she was an accomplished artist. This was in direct contrast to the reasons given for resistance (lack of artistic ability) in the current study.

### Accuracy of What the Drawings Captured

There was a three to six week time period between when participants completed their drawings and when the follow up interviews were conducted. After reviewing his or her drawing, each participant was asked what assumptions might be made about the artist's experiences based solely on the drawing itself. Responses to this request to attempt to view their drawings through unbiased eyes were varied. In an echo of the responses previously reported, one faculty member immediately exclaimed, "He or she is not a good artist" (D)! Many others described assumptions similar to what the drawing was originally intended to mean. Some believed the face value of the drawing left its interpretation to chance. In reference to Appendix D1, this participant said, "This person is either pulling her hair out or is happy. She does have a smile on her face. We may not know for sure" (Q, faculty). About Appendix D4, the participant laughingly noted, "There's no real message. Someone else would just say 'I don't get it'" (O, non-faculty).

However, when respondents were then asked whether their drawings captured the "heart" or the "core" of their personal experiences, eight of the nine said that it did. The ninth respondent, who produced Appendix D2, said, "Pretty much. Except there is nothing that really shows some anxiety. That could have been added in" (J, faculty). For some, "capturing the heart of their experience" could only occur if they were given the opportunity to explain the drawing. "Knowing what it means, it does capture the key part of my experience with change" (S, non-faculty). One respondent paused, intently perused her drawing and said slowly, "Yes. It captured it better than I originally thought" (N, non-faculty).

Following collection of all the drawings and completion of all interviews, a comparison was made between the drawings produced and the verbal reports of respondents. In general, there appeared to be consistency between the drawings and verbal reports although, in most cases, the meaning of the drawings could only be fully understood with the participant's interpretation.

Some drawings represented only the single factor in the change that had most impacted the individual. The drawing process itself seemed to cause the related emotions to be internally accessed, and therefore more readily available to verbal sharing, even if the emotions were not clearly a part of the drawing itself. For instance, in Appendix D7, this respondent clearly drew a large number of activities occurring in small increments of time. The arrows, often labeled with the word "run," depict his movement through the activities with the clock ticking off time in only a couple of minutes per stop. The verbal report of this participant had a very strong emphasis on the increased pace at the school site, and this change was at the root of a loss of a sense of closure and changes in the relationship to the team. The verbal explanation contained emotions related to the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages of denial, anger, bargaining, acceptance, and hope. However, it is important to note that this participant reported very low numbers of emotions fitting these the first four categories; three key emotions (hopeful, optimistic, and excited) were reported for the stage of "hope." Overall this participant reported being excited and challenged in positive ways by the change, even if it brought some elements of loss. His drawing provided the foundation for the related emotions to be shared and remained accurate as a representation of the key factor in his change experience.

Other drawings such as Appendix D8 and D9 were unique in that they represented the overall processing of the change by the participant rather than a specific piece. Drawing 8 (faculty) depicted a jump from dry land into rough waters, which were adjacent to calm waters and a lighthouse. This participant included elements of loss, struggles, and related emotions in her processing of the change, as depicted by the rough waters, as well as her movement into the calm waters and accepting emotions she held at the time of the interview. She envisioned her process taking her toward the lighthouse or “light at the end of the tunnel”, a metaphor for where the most intensive processing of the change was already culminating in peacefulness. By describing her drawing and its meaning, she very eloquently laid out a grieving process for organizational change. Her reported emotions included all but the depression stage of the Kubler-Ross (1969) construct.

Appendix D9 (non-faculty) was also a visual about the processing of change. The facial expressions in this drawing led the viewer through a series of emotions related to the change, and this was a very apt depiction of the experience this respondent described. At the time of the interview, she was continuing to struggle with the impact of the change that was the focus of her drawing. Interestingly, it was possible to actually observe her continued progress toward resolution in later follow up interactions with her. She was in the process of experiencing all of the stages of the Kubler-Ross (1969) process, and this was supported by the changing emotions depicted in her drawing. This tide of emotions was the key component in her experience of change.

In the researcher’s observation, there was only one drawing (Appendix D2, faculty) that was, perhaps, less well-matched with the verbal report of the respondent.

This drawing had also been described by the respondent as non-representative of her feelings of anxiety. In this case, the communication of an uncomplicated and extremely positive view appeared to be a cover, in some ways, for the more complex experience of the individual.

The state change drawings were similarly accurate in their match to the verbal reports of respondents. Large “X’s” across buildings depicting the school in Appendices E3 (non-faculty), E6 (faculty), and E7 (non-faculty) communicated participants’ overriding concerns that their school would cease to be in existence. A dead flower, raindrops, broken computers, and the job listings shown in E1 (faculty) clearly showed this participant’s thoughts about what would happen to the school if proposed changes were implemented and yet the school continued to exist in some fashion.

Appendices E2, E4, and E8 clearly communicated emotion. Drawing 4 (non-faculty) was eloquent in its simplicity: two faces appeared in the drawing, one labeled “happy”, the next labeled “stunned”. Drawing 8 (faculty) depicted a red face and gritted teeth. This respondent reported a large number of anger- and bargaining-related emotions. Drawing 2 (non-faculty) communicated a great deal about this respondent’s struggle between a closely held belief that the proposed changes would not occur and the impact of coworker perceptions. This participant’s single reported emotion about the change fell into the Kubler-Ross (1969) stage of denial.

The verbal reports of these respondents regarding the proposed state changes were well aligned with their drawings. Emotions about the proposed state changes were highly negative and fears abounded. When reported emotions were categorized into the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages, not a single respondent reported an emotion fitting into the category

of “hope.” Only two respondents reported a single word each that fit the category “acceptance.” The general tone and elements of their drawings communicated these thoughts and emotional states, as well as provided a foundation for further discussion.

According to both the participants’ follow up reports and after comparison of the full interview transcript to the drawings, both the local and state level drawings seemed to fairly represent the key components of each participant’s change experience. When the primarily emotions were not vividly evident in the drawings, the process of drawing itself seemed to prepare respondents to more easily share these emotions as a part of their personal interpretations of the drawings. These findings are supportive of the findings of Nossiter and Biberman (1990) and Vince and Broussine (1996), who also found the drawings of their study participants were well matched with the verbal reports of participants.

#### Cognitive Outcomes of Drawing

One of the assumptions made when selecting drawings as a data collection tool was that this activity would require respondents to use a different cognitive process than that used if asked to verbalize or write about their change experience. The hope was that the use of drawings would lead to reproduction of “the single most salient feature or perception” (p. 13) of the experience, as found by Nossiter & Biberman (1990). Likewise, it was hoped that, as Zuboff (1988) found in his study of clerical workers and departmental change, the drawings would function “as a catalyst, helping [participants] to articulate feelings that had been implicit and were hard to define” (p. 141). Vince (1995), too, had found that drawings “usually capture the underlying emotional issues present” (p. 11).



To explore these issues, each respondent was asked two questions. First the participant was asked to describe the mental process undertaken in order to be able to produce the requested drawing. Respondents reported the process did, indeed, cause them to just “hit the high points and the things we must know. It might have tapped more things if asked to write but it got more key things when I was asked to draw because I left the secondary, or less important things, out” (Z, non-faculty). Other respondents agreed. One described her experience of the process as “trying to figure out how to make it simple, to make the point known” (#, non-faculty). Another respondent said, “I took myself back to sample days and times. It brought back specific visual images in time” (H, non-faculty). Still another said,

Because I couldn't explain it in words, a lengthy explanation, I had to explain it all in one piece. I wanted to be able to look at it and get all the thoughts. I felt pressured into capturing the face value and that's it. No accessories. (B, non-faculty)

Two of these respondents made references to their difficulties in producing a drawing. One said, “I was frustrated. I had to figure out how to get what was in my mind through my hand and to paper. It was hard trying to come up with something that accurately represents it and present it in this medium” (S, non-faculty). The second respondent said, “I'm not one to describe in pictures. I am a words person. I had to find a visual to describe thoughts. Finding this visual mentally was not hard; drawing it was” (Y, non-faculty). Interestingly, in both these cases the respondents were certain that their drawings captured the “heart” of their experiences. The first respondent further noted that she saw the value in the process. “It makes people get out of the box and we

sometimes need to be moved out. It makes you focus and think about how to make it succinct and make sense to someone” (K, non-faculty).

Although no reference to feelings was made in the request to describe the mental processes produced by the request to draw, four respondents referred specifically to their feelings as a key components in their processes.

I was trying to picture a concrete picture of how I’m feeling, whether it was something that could be drawn. I wouldn’t have thought as hard [without drawing]. I wouldn’t have spent as much time thinking about how I feel” (U, faculty).

Another seemed a bit chagrined at her reaction to the request to draw, “I had to think about personal feelings. I thought it was weird later because I didn’t focus on students” (W, faculty). Another noted, “I had to think of facial expressions to emphasize feelings. I probably went to my feelings faster” (X, faculty) while still an additional respondent said, “I had to visualize how I felt, what emotions” (T, faculty).

The second question asked of participants also did not make direct reference to feelings. Each participant was asked if they believed that the drawing process caused them to share “different things” than what would have been shared if they had been asked to describe their change experience verbally. Eight out of nine participants responded with a resounding “yes.” One said simply, “I accessed information differently than if asked to do so verbally. It brought out some things you wouldn’t have had otherwise” (A, non-faculty). Again, some respondents went directly to the issue of the feelings. “There were probably a few more emotions that came out due to drawing” (E, faculty). Another who had previously said he probably went to his feelings faster added, “I

probably also expressed my feelings more thoroughly” (D, faculty). Still a different respondent said that drawing “pulls together some thinking processes that don’t necessarily get pulled together in a spoken process . . . . There were probably a few more emotions that came out due to drawing” (J, faculty).

Nossiter and Biberman’s (1990) report also found that drawings lead to “respondent honesty” (p. 13). Some respondent experiences seemed to support this finding. “It probably made me more blunt about my feelings because I had to draw them first. If I were just telling someone, I probably wouldn’t have made it that blunt” (N, non-faculty). One respondent, who had reported previously that the request to draw had caused her anxiety, reluctantly reported, “I probably tapped into things I wouldn’t have gone to. I probably shared more depth because of the drawing . . . much as I hate to admit it” (Q, faculty).

Only one respondent reported that the request to draw did not impact the details of what she shared. She gave a suggestion as to why this may have been the case when she said, “In talking and letting feelings out, it lifted a burden off my shoulders” (V, non-faculty). This suggested that drawings may not be necessary as an elicitor of information if respondents already see particularly strong benefits in sharing their thoughts and feelings.

### Co-Participant Drawings

Informal feedback during the course of the study indicated that the experience of drawing and a related curiosity about their co-participants’ drawing were popular topics after respondents left their interviews. The motivation behind this focus on drawings was explored during follow up interviews. Only one respondent reported no real curiosity

about others' drawings. Others seemed to think that the drawings would provide them particular insight into the other participants' "perspectives on situations" (E, faculty). "I may learn . . . things they kept to themselves. Some, I would have no idea what's bothering them" (C, faculty). Another respondent said, "I want to see if I'm the only person feeling turmoil" (V, non-faculty). While still another reported that he believes he "will learn . . . expressions of emotions" (X, faculty) from the other drawings.

Apparently with some concern about her co-participants' artistic abilities as well as her own, one respondent said, "I would like to think I would learn. But only if they are better artists" (S, non-faculty)! A final participant re-emphasized concerns that had surfaced previously about artistic ability when she voiced her desire to see if the others also used "stick figures"(Q, faculty).

### Findings

The experiences created by the use of participant produced drawings in this study, combined with the experiences reported in the literature, led to a number of observations about the application of this methodology. These findings provide areas of consideration for other researchers who seek to use visual data in their work.

1) Participant produced drawings appear to create a path toward participant emotions, making them viable tools for researchers who seek access to this type of data.

Vince (1995) and others have found that "drawings are good at revealing the underlying emotional experience" (p. 12) and this was certainly found to be true in this organization. As noted previously, multiple descriptions of the cognitive process in preparation for drawing described a pathway to feelings, although no reference to feelings was made in the request of participants to describe their mental processes. For

many, it appeared that they simply believed that the best vehicle for representing their experiences of the change were the feelings that the experiences had evoked. Several noted that less or different emotional information would have been reported had the drawing exercise not taken place.

2) The cognitive process required to draw leads to a more succinct representation of the key elements of participants' experiences.

Reports of the mental process employed by the participants in this study, as well as the outcomes derived from the drawings, suggested that the production of a drawing helps respondents to make sense of their reactions. The mental process required by drawing helped them to begin sort their experiences into succinct pieces and attach meaning to them. This outcome of the drawing process itself may also prepare them to process their experiences more easily.

3) The personal experience depicted by participant produced drawings could only be considered complete with additional interpretation of the drawing by the participant.

Nossiter and Biberman's (1990) suggested that drawings could be analyzed and interpreted by graphic artists and clinical psychologists, and this seems a valid, but additional, option. Interpretations of drawings in this study were conducted by the participants themselves. In part this was due to the intended purpose of the drawings as an elicitor of information for a long interview. As Vince (1995) observed, the power of the drawings was "not only in the diagnostic power of the images themselves, but also in the contextual and collaborative discussions and developments that emerge as a result of them" (p. 12).

To have interpreted the drawings independently of the participants in this study, no matter how capable the source, would likely have caused some omissions and, perhaps, serious misinterpretations. One example occurs with Appendix E8, which depicts a flock of birds in flight. The participant herself noted that this part of her drawing might easily be misinterpreted. In explaining the birds, the faculty member said, “You would probably think of this as serene. No! I hate to fly . . . It scares me to death . . . But that’s my feeling of insecurity” (C). To fully understand the meaning of her drawing, further explanation about her personal fears was needed from the participant herself.

It could certainly be argued that in some cases drawings produce unconscious thoughts and feelings that may be identified by trained professionals. The whole psychological concept of “unconscious” suggests that the participant may be unaware and therefore unable to fully communicate these issues. However, caution should be applied in making any interpretation independent of the participant’s explanation, as well as a complete understanding of the context—both of the change and of the drawing activity.

4) Whether the drawing activity encourages or discourages participation in the research process is dependent on individual and situational characteristics and its impact may unpredictable for any given study.

Observations of the participants in this study suggested an overall resistance to the request to draw. Follow up interview data showed that the primary issue behind participants’ resistance was concerns about their artistic abilities—a personal characteristic. For this reason, drawings as applied in this study could not be described as

a positive factor in getting respondents to participate in the research; if anything the knowledge that they would be asked to draw may have deterred them from participation.

As noted previously, this contrasts with other findings reported in the literature and suggests the need for continuing inquiry into the causes of respondent reactions to the request to draw. One question raised is whether asking participants to draw one-on-one or in groups affects their initial responses. Both Nossiter and Biberman's (1990) and Meyers' (1978) requests to draw occurred on an individual basis and found that participants displayed "enjoyment" and became quite "engaged" in the activity. Derry (2002) also made her request on an individual basis and had only one resistor. However, while the request was also made on an individual basis in the current study, this was not found to produce positive responses. Vince and Broussine's (1996) requests to draw occurred in various group settings and they also reported positive responses to the request. It is unknown if the responses of the participants in the current study would had been different had they been asked to draw as a part of a group activity rather than as individuals, but this remains a valid question for future inquiry.

Finally, the timing of the request to draw may impact the reaction of the respondent. For instance, Derry (2002) concluded that she received generally positive responses to her request of her participants to draw primarily because the request was placed late in the one-on-one interviews. She explained this by saying that the placement of the request after the bulk of the verbal interview had been completed had allowed respondents to develop a level of trust for the researcher. While this may be a very valid explanation, it must be balanced with consideration of the fact that placement of the

request to draw late in the interview may negate the value of using drawings as a tool for combating researcher bias (see Finding 5 below).

From this study and the available literature, it seems the only common finding is that the drawing activity itself causes powerful responses for some participants. However, because of the varied and sometimes conflicting reports on participant resistance, there is not yet sufficient evidence to allow the researcher to predict respondent reactions with any accuracy.

5) The provision of little structure in the drawing activity allows for participants' unique experiences to be communicated. This lack of boundaries helps to combat any preconceived biases of the researcher that might have otherwise been unintentionally imposed.

Like Meyer (1991), this study found that “visual instruments seem uniquely suited to situations where a researcher . . . prefers not to force informants into his or her cognitive framework prematurely” (p. 232). The lack of structure in the drawing exercise encouraged participants to identify whatever component or components of their experiences with change most impacted them. This varied across respondents and was unique to both their personal characteristics and positions in the school environment. Due to the lack of structure, participants were encouraged to present specific pieces of information about the components of the change they chose to address. This prevented the researcher from forcing participants into a particular perspective and, perhaps, leaving untouched the most significant experiences of the change to the participants themselves. It appeared that the lack of structure in the drawing activity was one way to combat the biases of the researcher herself, as well as to accomplish the qualitative research goal of



accurately representing participant experiences. However, there are two additional issues to be considered.

Unlike Derry (2002), the use of the drawing methodology to combat researcher bias required that the request to draw be placed at the beginning of the interview process—before the reports of participants were influenced by the researcher. As noted above (Finding 4), the placement of the request before extensive interaction between the researcher and participant may have compounded some of the initial negative reactions of respondents to the request to draw.

In addition, as Meyer stated, there is a danger that drawings produced under conditions of little structure may be so far off target of the focus of the research so as to be useless. This structure versus lack of structure dynamic is an important balance, as is the concern about respondent resistance and the timing of the request to draw. Both issues should be the subject of serious consideration by any researcher using participant produced visuals.

6) The amount of researcher-imposed structure on the drawing process is one determinant in how the drawings may be interpreted.

Nossiter and Biberman's (1990) study included a request to draw that was semi-structured by the researchers. Because of the imposed structure, these researchers were then able to make comparisons across the participants' views of their culture. Other than a discouragement of simply writing words on the page, the drawing process in the current study was left unstructured. Because each participant held a very unique view of the organizational change, this meant they sometimes used completely different components of the overall change as subjects for their drawings. In this case, the drawings did not

lend themselves to making comparisons across participants. Rather, this activity created an opportunity only to consider how well each drawing communicated the core experience of its artist when compared with verbal reports or other information for each individual.

In his outline of the benefits and liabilities of the use of visual data, Meyer (1991) supports this difference in the use of unstructured and researcher-structured requests for drawings.

Informant-generated visual displays . . . are most appropriate for ideographic inquires treating each informant or organization as a unique entity. Researcher-generated displays [those where the researcher provides structure], on the other hand . . . , appear more suitable for nomothetic inquires seeking to draw comparisons across informants, organizations, or time. (p. 232)

Meyer's observations appeared to hold true for this study.

### Conclusions

The findings of this study, in addition to findings of other researchers using the drawing methodology, established that drawings are an important additional source of data. The demonstrated ability of drawings to create a path to participant emotions and to lead to succinct representations of their experiences appeared to create the opportunity for more meaningful and honest verbal reports—arguably the methodology caused respondents to reveal more than what may have been captured with only the standard verbal interview.

At the very least, drawings served as powerful confirmation of the participants' verbal reports and observations made at the school site, as well as informant reports. In

this way, drawings served as a confirmatory piece of the other data in the study. This supported Meyer's (1991) contention that integration of visuals with verbal reports can be useful as an additional form of triangulation. As noted by Merriam (1998), data triangulation lends further credibility to study results.

#### Future Research

The use of participant produced drawings in qualitative research is still a largely unexplored area. While the current study adds to what has been found in previous studies, there is still much to be discovered about the uses and implications of this methodology. A few of these issues are presented next.

Larger studies with greater sample sizes need to be conducted to determine if drawings create positive contributions consistent with those found in this study, as well as to provide additional guidance on the best application of the methodology. Additionally, further research may answer some of the questions to which this study did not bring clarity. Two of these issues, addressed previously, are whether the use of drawings in an individual versus a group setting influences participant reactions, as well as how the timing of the request to draw influences the initial reactions of participants. An additional question would, of course, be the impact of the setting on the outcomes (i.e.: consistency with verbal reports, participant honesty, etc.) of the process.

An additional and unanswered question for this researcher is the impact of the surfacing of emotions using drawings without a commitment to meeting the desires of participants to view and interact with other participants regarding their work. Confidentiality commitments made prior to data collection for this study prevented bringing participants together in a process similar to team debriefing practices used by

organizational development professionals. It is a remaining ethical question as to whether some type of debriefing process should be incorporated with the use of participant produced drawings. This is in addition to the question of what additional depth and breadth of data may be provided by observations of the debriefing process itself.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND COMMENTARY

In today's organizations, including the schools, the successful implementation of organizational change is of constant study and concern. Change in the schools has traditionally focused on systemic and rational drivers, while avoiding the natural emotional reactions and behaviors of people. This chapter includes a summary, conclusions, recommendations, implications and commentary, which evolved from data compiled in this study of the emotional impacts of organizational change on people of this organization and, therefore, upon the organization itself.

#### Summary of the Study

This study was conducted in the spring of 2002 at a branch campus of a rural technology school. The school provided high school juniors and seniors, adults, and business and industry clients with a number of training programs and services. Major organizational change had occurred 18 months prior to the study in the form of a new administrator with primary responsibility for this campus. His arrival brought changes in both philosophy and practice to the school and its stakeholders. An additional level of proposed organizational change, that which was pending at the state level of the school system, was added during the study as a secondary focus.

## Purpose

Using the lens of the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct, the purpose of this explanatory case study was to examine the emotional impact of organizational change on individuals. Specifically, the following goals were set:

1. A description of the emotional responses of individuals impacted by organizational change who choose to stay in the organization;
2. Analysis of these responses through the lens of the Kubler-Ross grief cycle;
3. Identification and discussion of other findings that evolved from the data; and
4. Assessment of the usefulness of the Kubler-Ross grief cycle for explaining these individual responses to organizational change.

To accomplish these purposes, several kinds of data were needed.

## Data Needs and Sources

Because the primary focus of this case study was to describe the emotional impacts of organizational change on individuals, the primary data needs were voluntarily met by nine participants who had chosen to remain with the school through the change. Participants were required to have been employed by the school for at least 18 months and have been a primary recipient of the change. In addition to the nine participants, two informants were also used—one was the new administrator of the school and was also a participant in the study. All employees of the school were given the opportunity to help identify the primary change that was the study's focus.

## Data Collection

All participants were asked to voluntarily sign a consent form before participating in the study; consent forms were signed following a complete description of the study

purpose and parameters. All respondents were also asked to complete a demographic profile that asked for items such as age, gender, position, and length of employment. Additional data collection consisted of unstructured long interviews using participant produced drawings as elicitors of data. An interview guide of case study questions was used to assure that all pertinent data was collected. Follow up interviews were conducted with all participants approximately 3-6 weeks following the first interview. Checklists of emotions related to organizational change were used during both forms of the interviews.

#### Data Organization and Interpretation

Data resulting from the interviews was presented within the two contexts studied—changes at the local school site and proposed changes at the state level of the system. The school site, its community, and the school system were described and demographic data was presented on all study participants. Identified changes, losses, and related emotions were reported in tables, followed by narrative that was often enriched by the direct quotes from the respondents. Other themes that evolved from both the local and state levels of the data were also reported. Commonalities and differences between the local and state sets of data were then presented in both visual and text formats.

#### Data Analysis

Data from the study was searched for relevant patterns. Emotional data was sorted into categories borrowed from the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct and other commonly reported emotions were noted. All data was then carefully reviewed for its significance to the study, and comparisons were made between the local and state level data. Finally, the Kubler-Ross grief model was assessed for its usefulness in organizational change settings.

## Findings

Major findings related to the purpose of this study at both the local and state levels of change will be addressed in a similar format as the original research questions. However, findings for the drawing methodology, listed in detail in Chapter Five, will not be repeated here. Findings include:

1. Types of change and associated losses of most impact to respondents;
2. Findings which resulted from categorization of the emotional data to the *a priori* theory—the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct;
3. Other commonly reported emotions falling outside the Kubler-Ross grief construct;
4. Other major themes which evolved from the data;
5. Findings which resulted from the comparison of the local and state data sets; and
6. The applicability and usefulness of the Kubler-Ross model.

### Identified Changes and Losses

A large number of changes and losses were reported by respondents in this study. While the foci for this study—a change in administrator, philosophy and practice at the local level and proposed state changes—were intentionally broad, participants identified changes and resulting losses in great detail. At the state level, the identified changes (which had yet to be implemented) quickly became repetitive as participants seemed to share a common perspective—that of a rural technology school.

At the local level, however, the varying roles of participants in the school had an effect on which components of the overall change they deemed of most impact. The range of reported changes was broad and while some, such as the loss of coworkers and



an increased pace at the school, were reported by most respondents, others had experienced impacts at the curriculum, program, or personal job level that were unique to them. Often those changes and losses that were unique to the individual were the primary focus. Individual position and experience, then, made a major difference in the perception of the magnitude and importance of the components of change at the local level.

In addition, all respondents viewed most of the local level changes as being positive for the school. However, they still were able to associate a number of losses that were a deeply felt cost of making the changes. It was their emotional responses to these losses that were the focus of this study.

#### Categorization of Emotional Data

Emotional data for this study were categorized according the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct, the *a priori* theory for this study. Almost half of the respondents reported emotions in all stages of the grief model for the local level change. Application of the Kubler-Ross grief model suggested that respondents had been “processing” the grief at the local level, which gave rise to emotions across the stages. Participants themselves made a number of references to “processing” the changes as well as described emotions that “had passed” or had only recently arrived with the “processing” of the changes. Every respondent at the local level reported emotions of hope. This supported Kubler-Ross’ observation that hope often threads itself throughout the stages of grief.

At the state level, two respondents reported emotions for only a single category—denial and anger—and no respondent reported emotions across all of the Kubler-Ross (1969) stages. The most striking factor at the state level was the fact that not a single

respondent reported an emotion of hope, and seven did not make any statement about hope or hopelessness at all. It was hypothesized from the emotional data and other verbal reports of participants that so little was actually known about what changes would be implemented at the state level, respondents were simply uncertain as to whether hope was a viable emotion. The result was that they reported no position at all. In addition, only two respondents reported a single emotion each that fit into the stage of “acceptance” which suggested that the processing of this change was only in the early stages—likely to move ahead only when the outcomes of pending state changes were known.

Grief responses were evident at both the local and state levels of change, similar to other reports of grief in organizations, and appeared to be diverting a great deal of participants’ energy in order to deal with them. This suggested that employees’ emotional reactions to change might well be a major factor in organizations’ inability to make successful change. Assuming employees possess a finite amount of energy, a diversion of energy toward emotional resistance is a diversion of energy away from making the change itself.

At the local level, participants reported numerous emotions related to “acceptance,” suggesting that the “processing” of grief at the local level was moving forward. This was in contrast to the state level change where reported emotions were variable across the grief stages, and the high number of emotions reported for anger and bargaining suggested that the “processing” of change at this level was in its beginning stages—likely due to the fact that change at the state level was yet to become concrete in the lives of participants.

### Other Reported Emotions

Only the local level change produced enough commonality of emotions outside of the Kubler-Ross (1969) construct to make reporting necessary. These emotions included: challenged, bothered, stressed, pleased, positive, and happy. The final three emotions were found by the review panel to fit across several of the Kubler-Ross stages, leading to the conclusion that the context of the emotion was a factor in determining placement on the model.

Context was again a factor at the local level for the emotion “relief.” Although “relief” was categorized by reviewers in the “acceptance” stage, further analysis of participants’ verbal reports suggested that there actually two different instances of relief reported: one that occurred prior to the other stages of grief--when a pending change simply moved forward so the processing of it could commence--and one that appeared to be related to the stage of “acceptance.” Data at the state level also supported placing “relief” at the beginning of the grief model when participants reported an expectation of relief when the state changes were actually known—whether or not the changes were the ones desired.

### Other Major Themes

At the local level a major theme labeled “discomfort” by the researcher rose from the data. This theme occurred because of the contrast between respondents’ genuine like for their administrator and belief that most of the local level changes were “good” versus some of the less than positive emotions that making the changes evoked for them. This resulted in distress for a number of participants as they became torn between their rational beliefs and their emotional responses. Participants’ outward resistance to “own”

their negative feelings was suggestive of the Kubler-Ross (1969) stage of “denial” but, if this resistance was to be placed here, it was unique in that it was denial not of the changes themselves but of the unwelcome and often “irrational” emotions that the changes evoked in participants. One of the observations made from the theme of “discomfort” was that it supported Barger and Kirby’s (1995) assertions that even “good” change causes grief reactions for employees.

A theme related to the previously discussed emotion of “relief” surfaced at the state level and was called “knowing.” This theme appeared to be the precursor to feelings of relief that occurred at the beginning of a grief process, and it dealt with participants’ clear discomfort in the continuing unknowns surrounding the state level change. It was the expectation of several respondents that the distress of not “knowing” would be replaced with feelings of “relief” when the changes were actually made concrete—again, whether or not the changes were the ones they wanted.

A final theme, termed the “superhero phenomenon,” occurred only at the state level. This was related to participants’ reports of having a belief in some undefined outside person or force who would resolve the threat of state level change on their behalves. It was considered possible that this response was related to the “denial” stage of grief (Kubler-Ros, 1969).

#### Comparison of Local and State Level Data

Comparison of the local and state level data showed that grief reactions were present for both existing changes (local level) and anticipated changes (state level). This suggested that humans may begin experiencing grief reactions prior to the actual loss itself. However, the loss of comfort associated with not “knowing” what the final

outcome (as was the case with the state change) may also be a factor in causing what was viewed as “anticipatory grief.”

A comparison of the local and state level emotional data suggested that Barger and Kirby’s (1995, 1997a) concepts of “chosen” versus “imposed” change did impact participants’ overall emotional experience of the change. Influence and involvement in change at the local level was believed to be generally accessible (elements of “chosen” change) while state level change was clearly considered to be inaccessible and “imposed.” The local level change produced a full range of both positive and negative emotions while emotions in response to the state level change were primarily negative.

Additional findings that evolved from comparison of the data dealt with the impacts on emotional responses from three identified areas: perceived magnitude, influence, and general beliefs about the positive or negative outcomes of the change. Participant reactions, whether they felt more strongly about the local or state level change, were clearly impacted by these three key factors of the changes. The three areas also appear to relate back, in some fashion, to Barger and Kirby’s (1995, 1997a) concept of “chosen” versus “imposed” change.

#### Usefulness of the Kubler-Ross (1969) Grief Construct

Emotions reported by participants at both the local and state levels of change could be characterized as grief reactions using the Kubler-Ross (1969) construct. A number of respondents spontaneously referred to their “processing” of grief. However, the grief reported was not linear, was highly individualized, and did not necessarily show common starting points and outcomes. This raised the question of whether any visual depiction of human grief can fully represent the unique experiences of individuals.

Another question raised about the applicability of the Kubler-Ross (1969) model in organizations occurred when several emotions—specifically pleased, positive, and happy—could not be categorized into the model because of their potential placement in multiple categories. It was found that the context of the emotion was very important in categorizing it. This suggested that visual depiction of grief models without careful narrative explanation and allowances for individual differences is a questionable practice.

Two other models were also considered, that of Barger and Kirby's (1995, 1997a) grief cycle and Solari-Twadel et al.'s (1995) pinwheel model of grief. These two models may make important contributions to the development of a grief model that is specific to emotional responses to organizational change.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Research

This findings of this study were clear that emotions that are typically associated with human grief were present as a result of organizational change. However, considerable research remains to be completed on the role of individual emotions in organizational change and how best to predict and manage it.

### Practice

An important conclusion of this study is that grief reactions were clearly found for employees who had experienced organizational change as well as for those who anticipated organizational change. For those who seek to implement change within their organizations, this suggests that they should begin to concern themselves with the role of individual emotions beginning with the initial possibility of the change—not just as a part of the implementation phase.

In addition, a tremendous amount of participants' energy was being absorbed in dealing with naturally occurring, change-related emotions—many of which the participants themselves were resistant to. Organizational change agents should take notice. This finding leads to the inevitable conclusion that those who do not attend to the grief reactions of employees are neglecting an unavoidable (even when both employees and change agents prefer to) and potentially manageable part of the successful implementation of change. The energy and distress that is experienced by employees, who struggle with the often uncomfortable and unwelcome emotional responses to change, draws away energy that could be better focused on implementation activities. However, assuming that energy is finite for any one individual, emotions must first be surfaced and addressed to free up energy spent on negative emotions for organizationally-productive endeavors.

Employees also experienced grief reactions for changes seen as “good” as well as changes seen as “bad.” It was the change itself, which required letting go of something in order to achieve change, that caused grief reactions. This is important in that even change that is seen as welcome or desired is likely to still produce varying levels of emotion.

Although this study did not pursue the positive results to participants of the verbalization and drawing of their change reactions, one participant did spontaneously report that “In talking and letting feelings out, it lifted a burden off my shoulders” (V, non-faculty). This suggests that organizational interventions and genuine support for employees may assist in the processing of change. Care should be practiced, however. While Kubler-Ross (1969) also acknowledged the positive benefits of individuals venting

their grief responses, “they also had the need to choose the time and the duration for this” (p. 266).

The common misinterpretation of the Kubler-Ross (1969) construct as a linear model was not applicable for these participants. The lack of linearity as well as the individualization of grief was also a finding common to other studies of grief in organizations. The success of the future use of Kubler-Ross or any other grief model for organizational intervention or research is likely dependent upon how the construct is applied—as a linear process or as a collection of emotions that are common responses to change.

### Theory

In general, the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct was found to have useful application to the study of organizational change because it points to what may be an important factor in understanding individuals’ resistance to change—that of individual emotion. However, study results showed that there were a number of emotions present beyond just those captured with Kubler-Ross.

Also, as a theory developed in the death and dying arena and with a common misinterpretation of the construct as a linear process, the Kubler-Ross model (and any other general grief model) must be applied with caution. There is a need for further development of theory specific to emotional reactions to organizational change. Other existing theories, such as Barger and Kirby’s (1995, 1997a) grief cycle and Solari-Twadel et al.’s (1995) pinwheel model of grief, may offer important components to the construction of a grief model specific to organizational change.



## Areas for Further Study

The study of the emotional responses of individuals to organizational change would benefit greatly from additional studies in educational settings, of which this is only the second known study. In addition, longitudinal studies that perhaps track the full process of the implementation of the change would be beneficial. Some of these studies should be large enough to productively compare employee demographics such as gender, age, and length of employment for commonalities in grief reactions.

Since it remains unclear which, if any, of the existing grief models accurately represent the grief experienced with organizational change, existing knowledge may be enhanced by presenting participants with a selected grief model and having them speak to how their experience does or does not fit. Several models as referenced in this study may provide viable alternatives. Another option that would be less constricting to participant views would be to ask participants draw the “process” that has occurred for them.

One of the questions that remained unanswered in this study was the potential impact of teaching a grief model, Kubler-Ross (1969) or some other model, to the employees of an organization undergoing widespread change--regardless of the exact “fit” of the model to the human grief experience. The researcher’s previous, non-research experience in the for-profit world suggested that the presentation of a grief model for organizational change allowed some employees to give a name—grief—to the complex set of emotions they experienced, however uniquely they occurred. Somewhat like the issue of “knowing” in this study, this seemed to give employees permission to have and to deal with the emotional impacts they experienced, rather than trying to override them with logic or experience them with additional guilt. Pursuit of this

phenomena from a research perspective would add greatly to the literature on emotions and organizational change, as well as lend itself to practice.

This study included only those employees of the school who chose to stay with the school through the change. Studies of the role of grief for those employees who choose to leave the organizational setting are needed as well as studies of how organizational change affects other stakeholders in the school setting: students, parents, and the community.

Finally, from a methodological standpoint, this study supported earlier findings about the efficacy of using participant produced drawings as a pathway to individual emotional experience (see Chapter 5). Still more inquiry is needed.

#### Limitations of the Study

Two of the identified limitations of the study were related to the participants themselves. The number of participants under age 44 in the study was clearly higher than in the general employee population (78% versus 40% in the general population). It is unknown whether reports on the experience of change would have been affected by a more adequate representation of older employees. In addition, participants consistently identified a similar set of 2-3 people that had greatly struggled with the changes. All refused to participate in the study. Because this group of people shared their thoughts and feelings to some extent with respondents in the study, some insight into their responses to change were gained--but certainly not at the level that would have occurred had they chosen to personally participate in the study. One of the reasons that "hearsay" is not allowed in a court of law is because each individual's biases make it difficult for any person to fully represent the thoughts and feelings of another. Although research is

not required to adhere so completely as to discount reports of others' thoughts and feelings, it is true that reports for co-workers should be considered differently, and perhaps be considered less trustworthy, than those reported by the individuals themselves.

Another issue to be concerned with in the study of grief, including this study, is the potential impact of factors other than those occurring in the organizational setting. While care was taken to focus participants on reactions specifically related to the organization change itself, the complexity of grief may not make it possible for employees to full separate organizational loss from other types of loss that may be occurring within the same time period.

This study was conducted at a rural technology training school in the south-southwestern part of the United States. It is unknown whether the results of the study are transferable to other types of settings.

#### Summary

This chapter has discussed the design, findings, and limitations of this study on the emotional impacts of organizational change on employees who remain with the organization. Conclusions and recommendations for research, practice, and theory were included as were recommendations for areas of further study. Limitations of this study were also presented and discussed.

## Commentary

This study grew naturally out of the change management related work that I did as a senior management trainer for *WorldCom*, Inc., during its merger with MCI in 1999. At the time of the *WorldCom*-MCI merger, my actions were not born of a general curiosity about organizational change but rather from a sometimes frantic effort to find a way to help our managers—most of whom were dealing with their own vulnerabilities as well as their teams'. This was, of course, in addition to the continuing pressure to just get their jobs done.

Sometime during this change, I realized that the use of a grief model and asking managers to draw about their change experiences were two of the most powerful tools I had. This experience and my review of the small amount of available literature on this topic led me to believe that these were tools that could be used in a more methodical and planned way to “discover” grief resulting from organizational change and to assist employees with its processing. This study was my attempt to put research “legs” beneath my belief.

I expected to find grief in the educational setting just as I had observed it in the for-profit world because both have an inordinate amount of change. What I did not expect to find (although in hindsight I should have) was the absolute resistance of school administrators to research that dealt with employee emotion and change—especially if their schools were experiencing change. Although all were at first willing to talk to me about using their school as a study site, their openness was greatly reduced upon hearing the focus of the study. My first contact simply said that things were beginning to smooth out for his organization and he did not want anyone stirring things up again. Although I

suggested that, if emotion was already present, talking about it would likely only be a positive, he seemed to prefer to just keep it comfortably buried.

Two school principals, while initially open to discussion, simply refused to respond at all after learning the purpose of my study. In one of these cases, an assistant superintendent pressured one to at least call me back; she simply said that she could not see any value for her school. In this case, her faculty were strongly motivated to participate in the study and gravely disappointed and, in some cases angry, at her response. A fourth inquiry at a branch of a major university stopped prior to any formal discussions because of the obvious political problems associated with the focus of study. While frustrating, these reactions only increased my belief that individual emotion is a little understood and, perhaps, much feared part of the organizational change process.

Ultimately, I located an administrator with a common interest in this topic, genuine concern about his employees' experience, and a hope for using the results in a positive way. When the employees turned the focus directly to him by identifying his arrival as the biggest organizational change they had experienced in the last 18 months, I expected him to balk. But he held firm and, in the end, probably experienced one of the most thorough 360-degree assessments ever conducted!

The most important lesson I learned from the process of finding a study site was that many administrators/managers would prefer to hide from, rather than deal with, the natural emotional responses of their employees. And when one looks at the traditional way that American business and schools have operated, as well as our administrator preparation programs, it is really no wonder that this is the case. However, as the results of this study further solidified my beliefs about the pivotal role of individual emotion in

organizational change, I became sad for the opportunities missed by many managers to make their organizations healthier and more responsive. Ironically, the power of their fears is likely equaled only by the change-related emotions of their employees.

During this study, however, fear certainly cut both ways. As is typical of organizations of people, there were a number of “off the record” reports to me, made only after the tape recorder was turned off and my pen was laid down. Most concerned the reasons being shared by those few who refused to participate in the study and reportedly “really should have.” All the reasons dealt with fear of some type—fear that I would be reporting directly to administration or fear of administrative retaliation. These responses simply affirmed for me that, in general, most of us know that emotions are not a welcome thing in the workplace and, as both employees and managers, we fear the implications and repercussions of them.

As this study evolved, this school system became a system under siege from the political agenda of the current governor and his political allies. And, although the outcome of the battle is, as yet, unknown, I suspect that the anticipatory grief reported by participants at this school is likely echoed throughout all the schools in the system. I must wonder how much energy is being diverted from students as, what is likely hidden grief, takes further hold of these professionals.

This study, my other field experiences, and the findings of other researchers all support the idea the individual emotion is a key component of the difficulties of implementing change. However, I would predict that the discomfort of dealing with emotions in the workplace, administrators’ fears that this type of inquiry may reveal “undesirable” facts about the workings of their organizations, and an inability to see any

long-term value in investing organizational time in dealing with emotions will continue to make this type of inquiry, and the administrator that allows it, unique. My experience has solidified one belief, however. Those who choose to deal honestly with the natural emotion of people will be rewarded with the loyalty and commitment of those people who will then move that organization forward in leaps and bounds—free from the efforts of hiding their very human responses to change.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)  
APPROVAL FORMS

## Appendix A1

### IRB Approval Form

#### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 5/10/02

Date: Friday, May 11, 2001

IRB Application No ED01118

Proposal Title: A STUDY OF THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS ON EMPLOYEES WHO REMAIN AFTER AN  
IMPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Principal  
Investigator(s):

Kerri Shutz Kearney  
3610 s 74 West Court  
Tulsa, OK 74107

Adrienne Hyle  
314 Willard Hall  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

---

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

  
Carol Olson, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

Appendix A2

IRB Study Modification Approval

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 5/10/02

Date: Thursday, January 17, 2002

IRB Application No ED01116

Proposal Title: A STUDY OF THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS ON EMPLOYEES WHO REMAIN AFTER AN  
IMPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Principal  
Investigator(s)

Keri Stutz Kearney  
3610 s 74 West Court  
Tulsa, OK 74107

Adrienne Hyle  
314 Willard Hall  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and Exempt Modification

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

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Signature



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Thursday, January 17, 2002

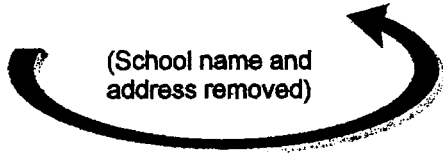
Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

**APPENDIX B**  
**STUDY SITE APPROVAL**

Appendix B  
Study Site Approval

(School name and  
address removed)



December 19, 2001

This letter grants Kerri Kearney permission to conduct research on organizational change at our school site.

I understand that, prior to their participation, all respondents will be fully informed about the purpose of the study and will voluntarily sign written consent forms. Times and locations of one-on-one interviews will be negotiated with individual participants so as to least affect the regular school day and lend the appropriate amount of confidentiality to the process. The identities of the participants and the school district will be protected throughout the study and in all written documentation of study results.

This study is expected to be complete during the 2001-2002 school year.

Sincerely,

(Signature blurred and printed  
name removed to protect confidentiality)

Assistant Superintendent

**APPENDIX C**  
**STUDY FORMS**



## Appendix C1

### Research Consent Form

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in a research project conducted by Kerri S. Kearney. I understand that data collected during this study will be used by Kerri to complete a doctorate in Educational Administration at Oklahoma State University.

By agreeing to participate in this study, I agree to do the following:

1. complete a brief demographic survey instrument;
2. participate in a one-on-one interview that would last approximately 1 ½ hours; and,
3. participate in a short follow-up telephone or in-person interview.

I further understand that:

1. the confidentiality of all data collected by the research will be protected through the use of numerical identifiers and pseudonyms rather than names for both individuals and the school district; access to the data will be limited to the researcher and her major advisor;
2. data collection is expected to be completed by April 2002;
3. this research is being conducted with the intent of contributing to the existing research, theory, and practice regarding organizational change and its impact on individuals.

This investigation is entitled *A study of the emotional effects on employees who remain through imposed organizational change in an educational institution.*

I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw from this project at any time without penalty after notifying the researcher. I also understand that, if I choose to participate, my name will be entered in a drawing for a \$150 gift certificate to the vendor of my choice upon completion of data collection. (Only the winner will be notified as confidentiality of participants prohibits a public announcement.)

If I have questions regarding this study, I may contact Kerri Kearney, 918/447-3087, [kskearney@home.com](mailto:kskearney@home.com); her major advisor Adrienne Hyle, 405/744-9893, [ah@okstate.edu](mailto:ah@okstate.edu); or the OSU Internal Review Board, Sharon Bacher, Oklahoma State University, 203 Whitehurst, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405/744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (a.m. / p.m.)

---

Name (printed)

Signature

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the respondent before requesting him or her to sign it.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kerri S. Kearney, Researcher

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Feeling Adjectives

Afraid	Helpless
Angry	Hopeless
Anxious	Hostile
Apathetic	Indifferent
Bitter	Lonely
Calm	Mad
Cheerful	Miserable
Contented	Nervous
Contrary	Numb
Cool	Panicky
Cross	Peaceful
Depressed	Sad
Desperate	Steady
Disbelieving	Tense
Discouraged	Thoughtful
Easy-Going	Unconcerned
Fearless	Uneasy
Furious	Warm
	Worrying

Appendix C3  
Demographic Profile

*This study is for the purpose of learning more about the reactions of individuals in the process of organizational change. Your answers will help to determine the impact of certain personal and organizational variables on the experience of change. The confidentiality of all identifying information will be protected.*

1. Gender (please circle one)?      F      M
2. Age (please circle one)?    21-29      30-44      45-58      59-73      74+
3. What position do you currently hold *in this school* (please circle one)?

Staff                  Faculty                  Administration                  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Time served in this position: \_\_\_\_\_ years, \_\_\_\_\_ months

4. Other positions held *in this school*?

Staff / Faculty / Administration / Other for \_\_\_\_\_ years, \_\_\_\_\_ months

Staff / Faculty / Administration / Other for \_\_\_\_\_ years, \_\_\_\_\_ months

Please define "Other" responses: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are your *total* years of experience in education? \_\_\_\_\_ years, \_\_\_\_\_ months

4. What types of full-time experience have you had *outside of education*?

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*Thank you for your participation!*

## Appendix C4

### Provisions and Instructions for Drawings

Each participant was provided a blank page of a 17” x 20” drawing pad as well as a 64-color set of crayons. The time allotted for the drawing activity was not allowed to exceed fifteen minutes per person. The researcher moved away from the respondent while he or she was drawing but remained in the room.

The following instructions were given verbally: “Draw a picture or series of pictures that describes what this change has been like for you—your experience of the change. If possible, try not to use words. You are not going to be evaluated on your artistic ability. “Stick people,” for example, are fine.”

## Appendix C5

### Case Study Questions

#### Local-Level Changes

Tell me about the changes in the organization since the change in administration. *What change(s) have been most challenging or “biggest” for you?*

*Did you participate in the decisionmaking?*

How has the change(s) affected your daily life?

*Responsibilities? Relationships? Location? Motivation/commitment?*

In pilot studies for this research, I discovered that, because most of us are taught not to talk about emotions in the workplace, the words can be hard to access even when we want to. Using this list of emotions that are common to change, what words do you see that you have experienced or are experiencing in relation to your local change? Are there others you would add to this list?

You said you experience \_\_\_\_\_, tell me about that, etc.

Complete this sentence: “When I realized how the change(s) would be affect me, I felt . . .”

How did you find out about the change(s)? What were your initial thoughts and feelings?

How were the announcements of changes handled in a way that made it easier or harder for the people affected? What was its effect on you?

Describe your feelings when you wake in the mornings and realize it is a workday. Has this shifted throughout the change(s)?

What did the school lose in the change—either temporarily or permanently?

What did you lose in the change—either temporarily or permanently?

*Identity? Coworkers? Sense of comfort? Security?*

How do you feel about these losses?

How has your organizational or team identity been affected?

*Your position?*

*Your sense of value?*

*Your sense of stability?*

*A clear knowledge of what you are to accomplish?*

In what ways has emotion played a different role in your worklife during this change?

How do you feel about what changes might come next or are just around the corner? Or is the major change just about completed here?

Some people believe that in successfully making school change, we should concentrate on the process and implementation facts . . . the people should be professional enough to take care of their own feelings. What would you say to them?

**State-Level Change(s) Questions**

***Ask for drawing interpretation***

*Ask about list of emotions relative to state changes . . .*

Where are you getting your information about the state-level changes? How do you feel about these avenues? Are they getting you accurate information?

Are the state-level changes here now or are they ones you anticipate may happen? If anticipated, how do you explain the reactions you've shared?

Is concern about the local changes being dwarfed by the state ones? Why or why not?

What are the similarities or difference you see between what your local and state drawings reveal? Are similarities or difference due differences in:

*Perceived influence?*

*Proximity of change?*

*Magnitude of change?*

*Whether you believe the change to be good or bad?*

*Negative/positive effects at the local level?*

Appendix C6

Participant Elicitation Form

- Who:** Kerri Kearney, OSU doctoral student in educational administration
- What:** Research study on individuals' reactions to organizational change
- When:** Spring 2002
- Where:** (Name of school and city removed)

If I choose to be a study participant, I will be involved in:

- Ⓐ A one-on-one interview for approximately 1 ½ hours at a day/time convenient to me
- Ⓑ A follow up conversation by phone or in person (approximately 30 minutes)

My participation:

- Ⓐ Is strictly voluntary and can be revoked at any time
- Ⓑ Does not affect my status or employment
- Ⓒ Is completely anonymous and may only be revealed by me

***But why should I????***

---

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **I am:** facultystaff      admin.

The biggest organizational/divisional/team change I/we have experienced in the last 12 months is: \_\_\_\_\_

We participated in the decision to make this change:yes                      no

Sure, I'm willing to participate. Please contact me by:

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like more details before deciding. Please contact me by:

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

No thanks

If my name is drawn from the pool of participants, I would like my \$150 gift certificate purchased from: \_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you!! Have a great holiday!!!! ☺***

**APPENDIX D**  
**LOCAL LEVEL CHANGE DRAWINGS**



Appendix D1



“I’m pulling my hair out. [Interviewer: And you’re down to 1,2,3,4,5,6 strands!] Yes! There’s so much change, not just within our school with the different administration, but there’s enough change in my program . . . it’s always changing and I don’t feel like I’ve done the same thing very long. . . . [Interviewer: So, there’s no sense of stability.] No. And, really with the way technology changes, I keep thinking, when will there be a little bit of stability?”

Modifications to drawing: None.

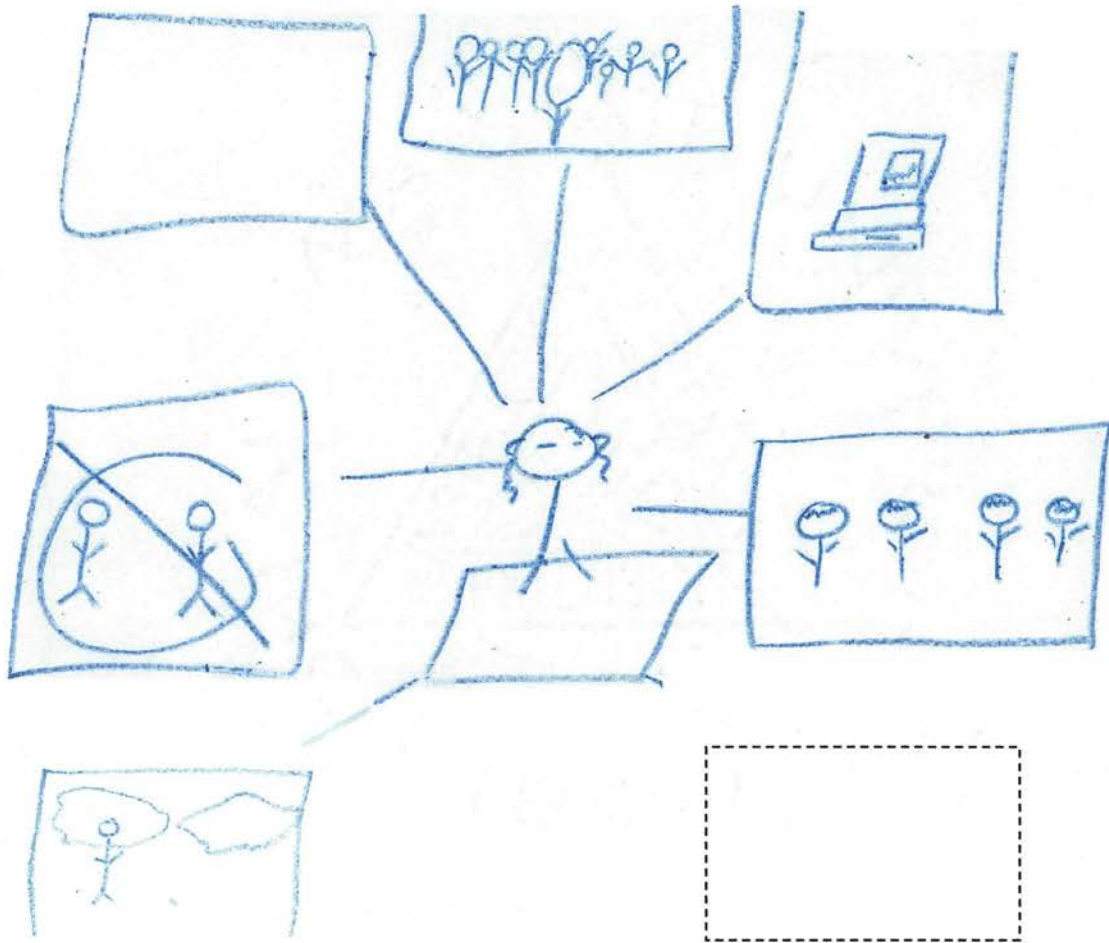
## Appendix D2



“This is the change in administration . . . and, overall, that’s the kind of thing that makes me real happy. I’m an individual who likes change, gets bored with the same-o, same-o, so for me it meant a lot of good things. This is the cheese moving. When he [new administrator] moved in, he gave us this book on moving our cheese. Then I smiled because I thought that was a good illustration [that] change is good for any organization and we needed one at the time. Even though we’re inside, the sun is shining because it made me happy. . . . It’s August and I’m smiling, so that’s something new and different. . . . So I’m wearing purple. It’s a happy color, one of my good colors.”

Modifications to Drawing: None.

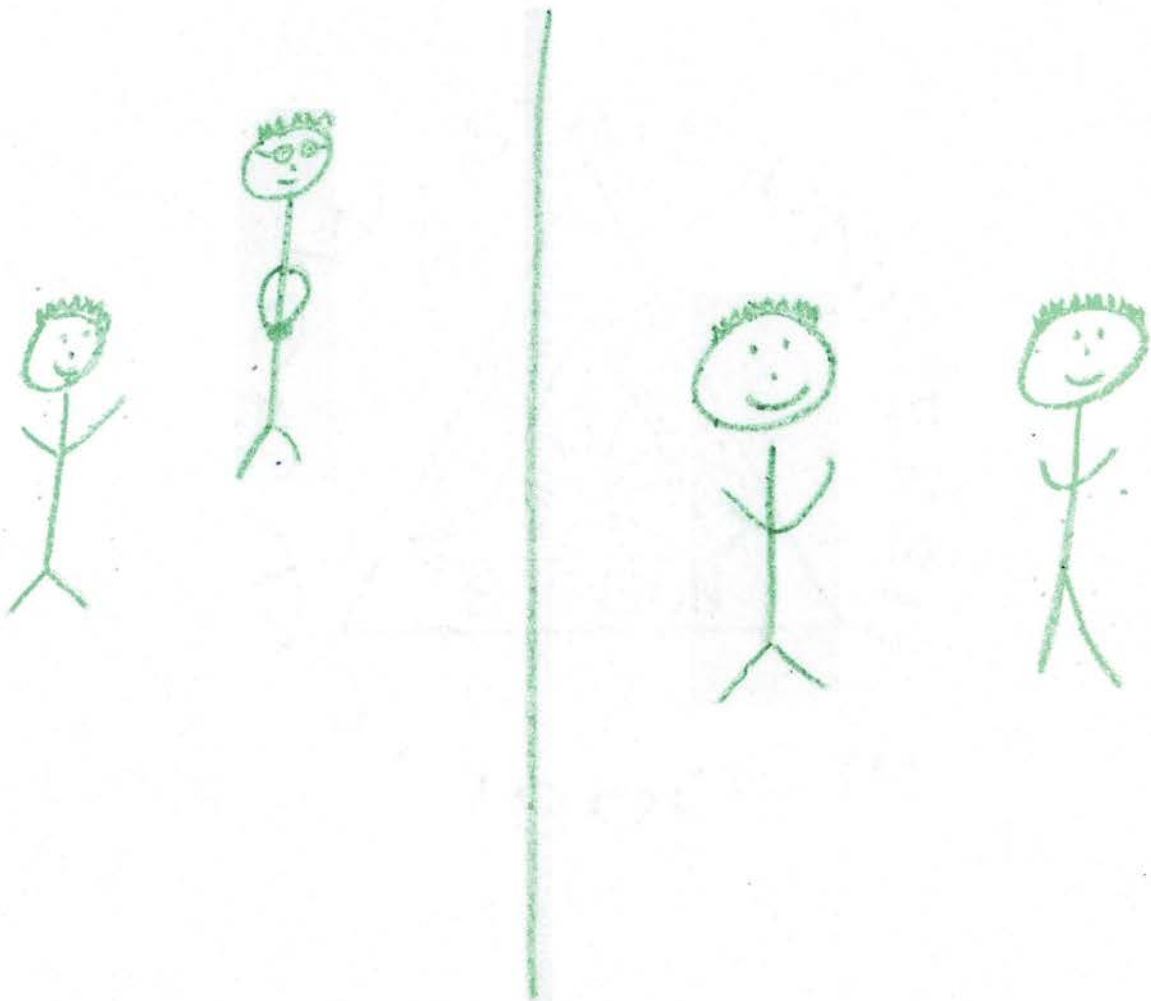
Appendix D3



“This is my world. . . . Lots of things changed. He [new administrator] spurred [superintendent’s name] to do things. . . . He has ideas, which is not bad, but . . . . it does move you out of your comfort level. We’ve hired a lot of new people. A lot of extra people. We’re doing a lot more things. . . . Taking care of my end has been hard. Also administration is gone a lot . . . . We’ve also lost some people off the staff, which was needed and necessary but causing emotional flare-ups. . . . And the people in the trenches don’t think that administration wants to know and sometimes they don’t, honest to God, but sometimes they do. . . . We need a little bit more . . . attention to detail and that’s caused problems throughout the school and throughout the perception in the community . . . . It’s been difficult. We’re used to having things s-s-s-s-s [downward hand strokes—indicating all is in order]. It’s been very exhausting. . . . And, no, we haven’t killed anyone. So, honestly, we probably overblow it all but it’s exhausting. . . .

Modifications to drawing: Element containing identifying marks was replaced with box on bottom right.

#### Appendix D4



“This is me and this is me [pointing to first and third figures]. Previous administration would smile a lot, as you can see, and wanted to be helpful but didn’t have a lot of team backing. . . . hands in his pocket. . . . My immediate supervisor [new administrator] is more of team player. He’s more willing. He doesn’t have his hands in his pockets. He’s not going to say, ‘well, by God, this is the way we’ve done it for 20 years . . . and we’re not going to change.’ He’s more willing to be a team player with everyone involved and is sincerely concerned in the well being of his teachers and the students. Not that this man [previous administrator] wasn’t, he just didn’t portray it as much.”

Modifications to Drawing: None.

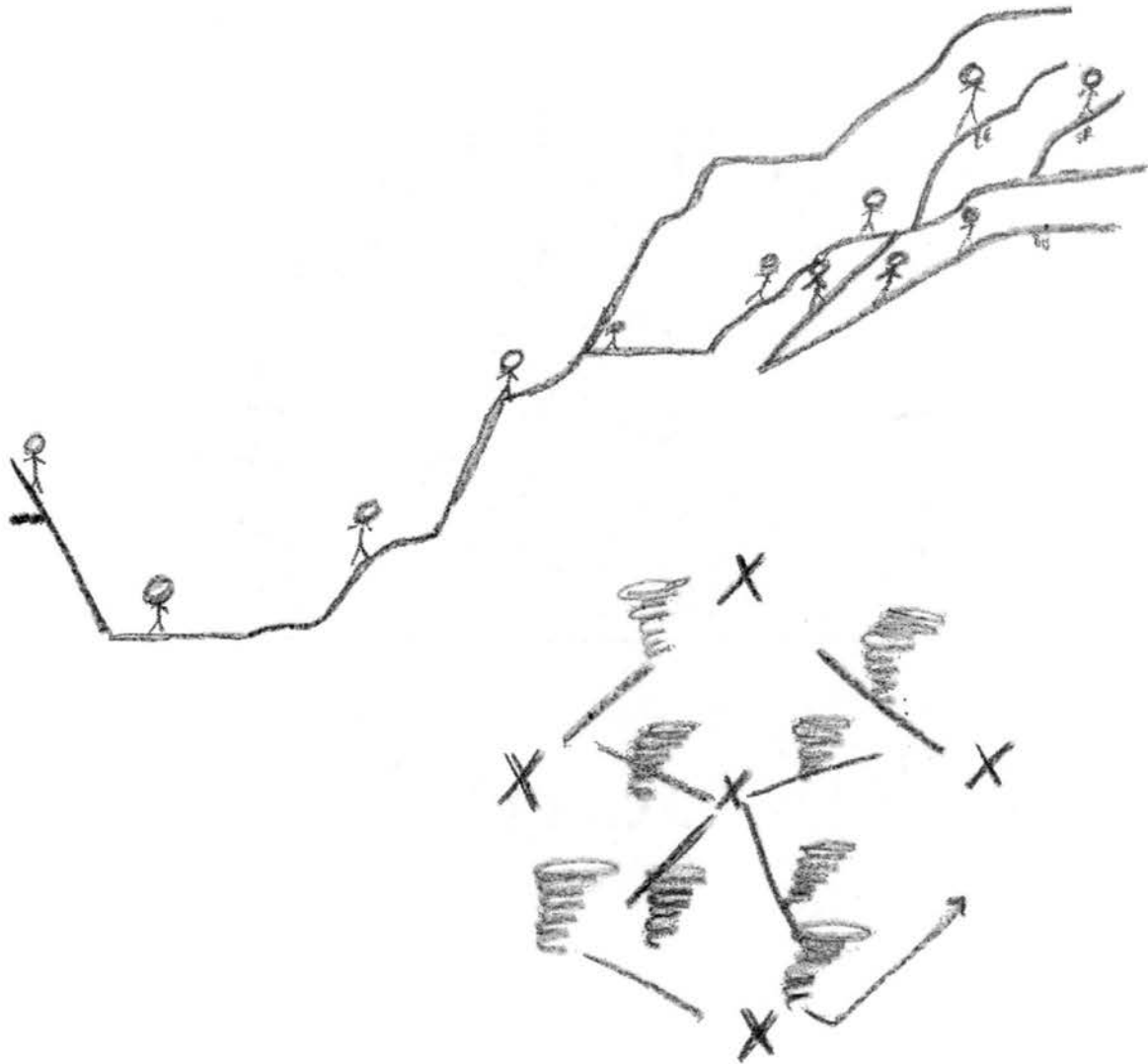
Appendix D5



“The first thing [new administrator’s name] did when he came in is give everybody a little book called *Who Moved my Cheese*. This represents *Who Moved my Cheese* and then my experience afterward is a happy face with a tongue hanging out because it takes a little bit of effort.”

Modifications to drawing: Original color of yellow was retraced with orange to allow for reproduction.

Appendix D6

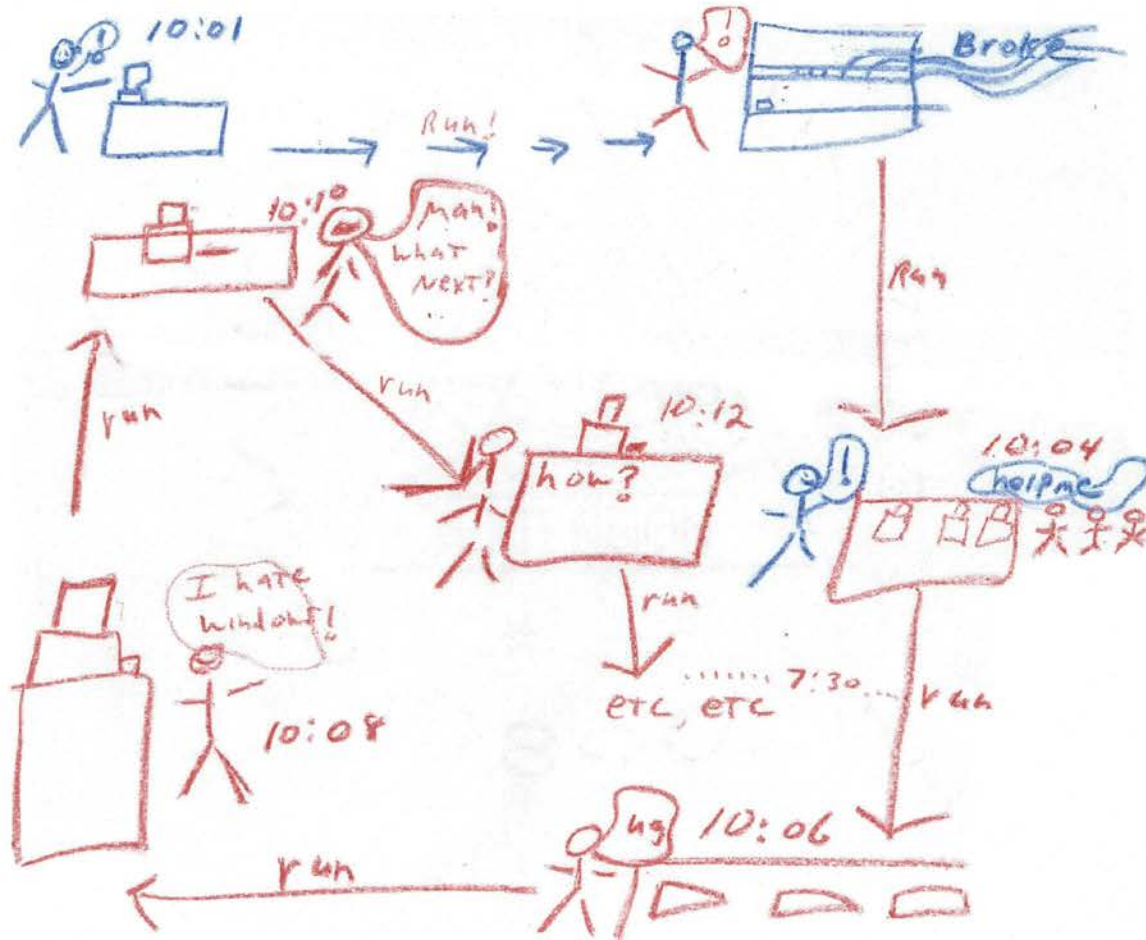


Bottom figure: “My hands are in so many different pies. This is my primary [job] and it’s always like this. Always. There’s always something happening in every area. So there’s a lot of juggling.”

Top figure: “Starting out . . . we made leaps and bounds. It would level off and then it would just be giant, giant growth. And then we’d level off and then be giant growth. Here I got off from this giant growth so I took another route . . . I’m branched out here and finding different ways to go further.”

Modifications to drawing: Removed names of responsibilities from bottom figure.

Appendix D7



“Here I am working on something, running to the next deal, and it might be 10:02 there and something’s broke and I’m, ‘Ohhhh’. And I’m still thinking about this back here [pointing to previous figure]. I run to the next one and it might be 10:04 and there’s lots of people here, ‘help me, help me.’ I run to a different place in the school and it might be 10:06 and I’m ‘what is wrong’ and I’m still thinking about this and these people and probably this [pointing to previous figures], and now I’ve got one, two, three, four things by 10:06. [I] then run to here and at 10:08 I spend a lot of time hating Windows. So here I am. I hate Windows and I’m still thinking about these back here and it keeps piling up and then at 10:10, I’m finally saying ‘what’s next.’ I run to the next one at 10:12 and ‘how do I fix this’ and it just keeps going like that.”

Modifications to drawing: None.

## Appendix D8

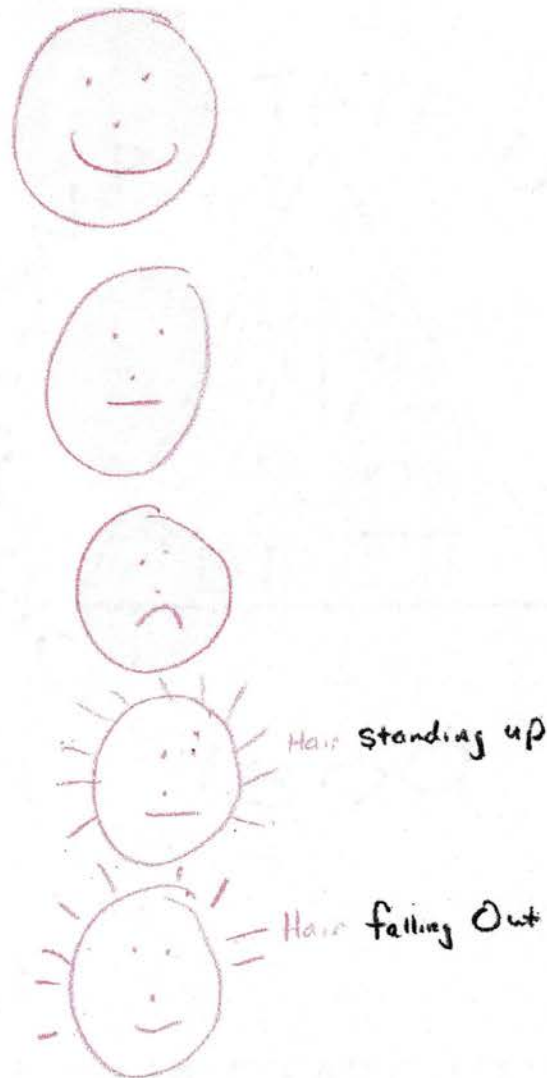


“What I drew here was the beach. But in the beginning, it was pretty rough waters. . . . because I didn’t know what he [new administrator] was going to expect, if he was going to expect things to be done differently in my program. I’m pretty new at it anyway and I was just getting settled in, [getting] comfortable with it and then he came, so this was more me feeling this way. . . . [Interviewer: So, really, anxiety over the unknown.] Anxiety, uh-huh. And since then, it’s been smooth, smooth waters with me. I’m very relaxed. This is my lighthouse and it’s supposed to be my lighthouse at the end of the tunnel because . . . there’s been so many things thrown at me that I didn’t know if I was going to survive it or not. I mean mentally, physically, emotionally, or anything. And now I see a light at the end of the tunnel and a lot of that has to do with the [new] administration.”

Modifications to drawing: Brown and blue colors were darkened to allow for reproduction.



Appendix D9



“We had a new change of administration and when he [new administrator] came in, he was just great to respond to changes and that was great because so many times before that we wanted to do a change, it was kind of put on the back burner . . . . I was real glad about that . . . . Then I [took a different role] and that one made me happy too. . . . I was hoping everything going right . . . so I really wasn’t quite smiling yet. . . . Everything built up and that was to be expected . . . . On the second semester, you’re thinking things are [going well] . . . but it hadn’t so your hair is standing up. . . . [You’re] hoping it will improve. And it has to some extent but it might take a long time. So my hair is kind of falling out this semester.”

Modifications to drawing: None.

APPENDIX E  
STATE LEVEL CHANGE DRAWINGS

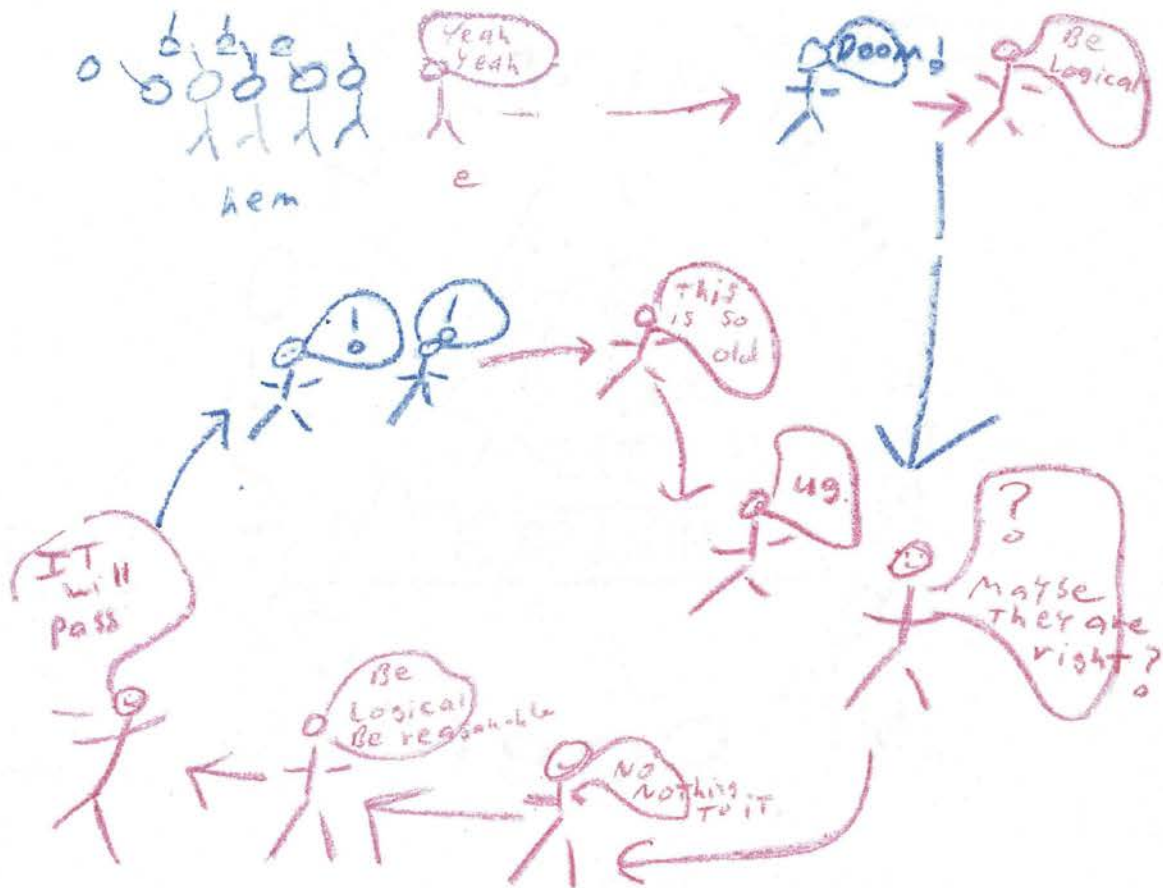
Appendix E1



“This is if Governor [name] gets his . . . plan in. It’s very scary what it’s going to do. I’m looking for job listings. I have to find a new job. The flower is dying. It’s raining. The computers that used to be running perfectly are all broken. Repair orders for [computer support person] to fix them [are done] but he’s probably been fired anyway. My books on the shelf, I have one on GEDs, one on remedial, and one on drop outs. I see lots of bad things happening if the state level happens [the way] they want it to happen.”

*Modifications to drawing: None.*

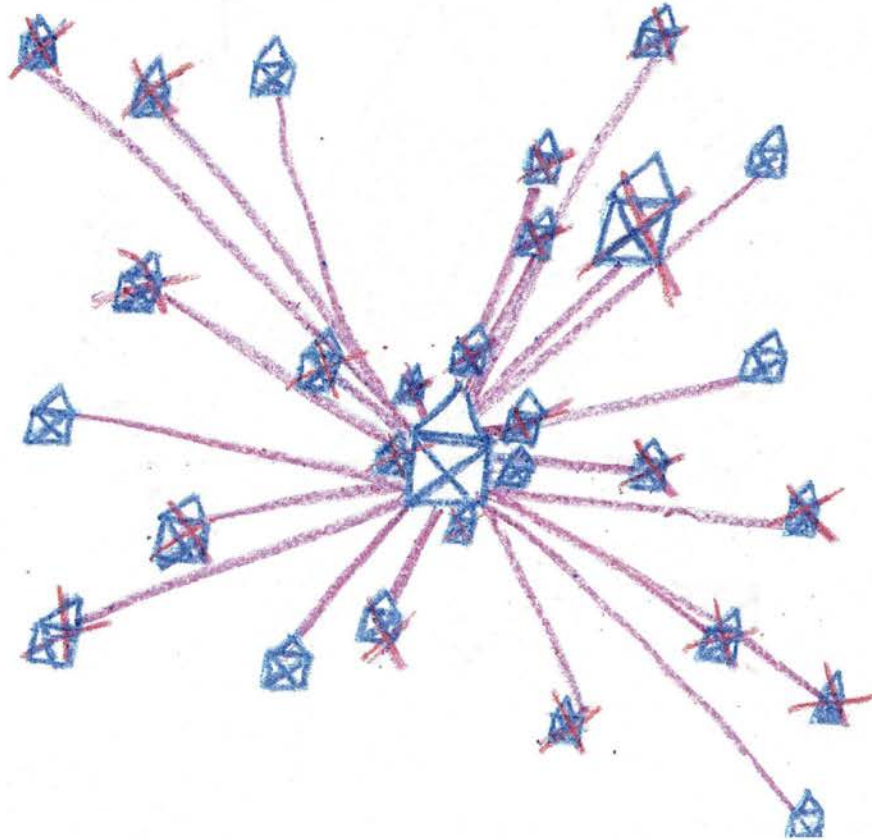
## Appendix E2



“Blue is [the other people at the school] and I always look at myself as I’m on the outside. . . . So there are all these explanations marks, panic, and I’m saying, ‘yeah, yeah.’ And they’re saying doom and I’m saying, ‘be logical.’ But once in awhile it creeps in and I’m saying, ‘well, maybe they are right; maybe there is something; maybe I should be worried.’ I’m thinking ‘maybe they do know; maybe I’m going to lose my job.’ So that does crop up once in awhile. But then I go, ‘no, nothing to it; be logical; be reasonable; it will pass.’ And there they are again and then I’m saying, ‘this is so old.’ And then just, ‘get a grip’. . . . I believe there’s some turmoil. I believe that. But is that turmoil going to cause people to lose their jobs? Or is it going to cause people to change they way they do their jobs? I don’t think it’s going to cause any job losses.”

Modifications to drawing: None.

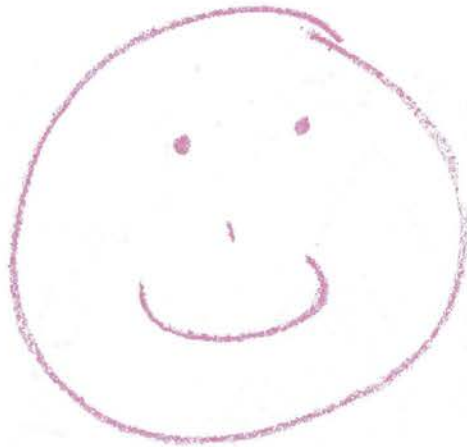
### Appendix E3



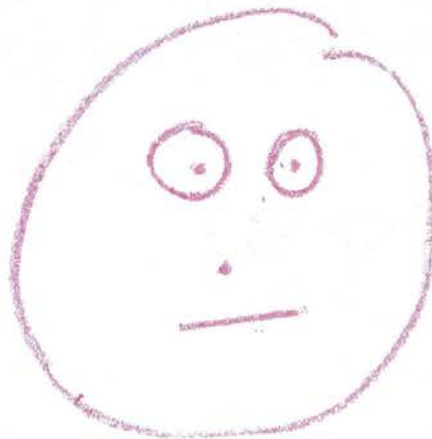
“We have our state headquarters in [city] and . . . we [the technology schools] are still just hands throughout, servicing quite a few people. And we’re all locally governed and if they are to try to take control . . . . There’s no way that they can reach out that far to govern us because we are so much different from this or this [pointing to locations on drawing]. So the next step would be to eliminate so they have just a few, if even this many . . . . My thought is that they will, of course, keep them near the big cities.”

Modifications to drawing: Outline of state in original drawing was replaced with ellipse.

Appendix E4



Happy

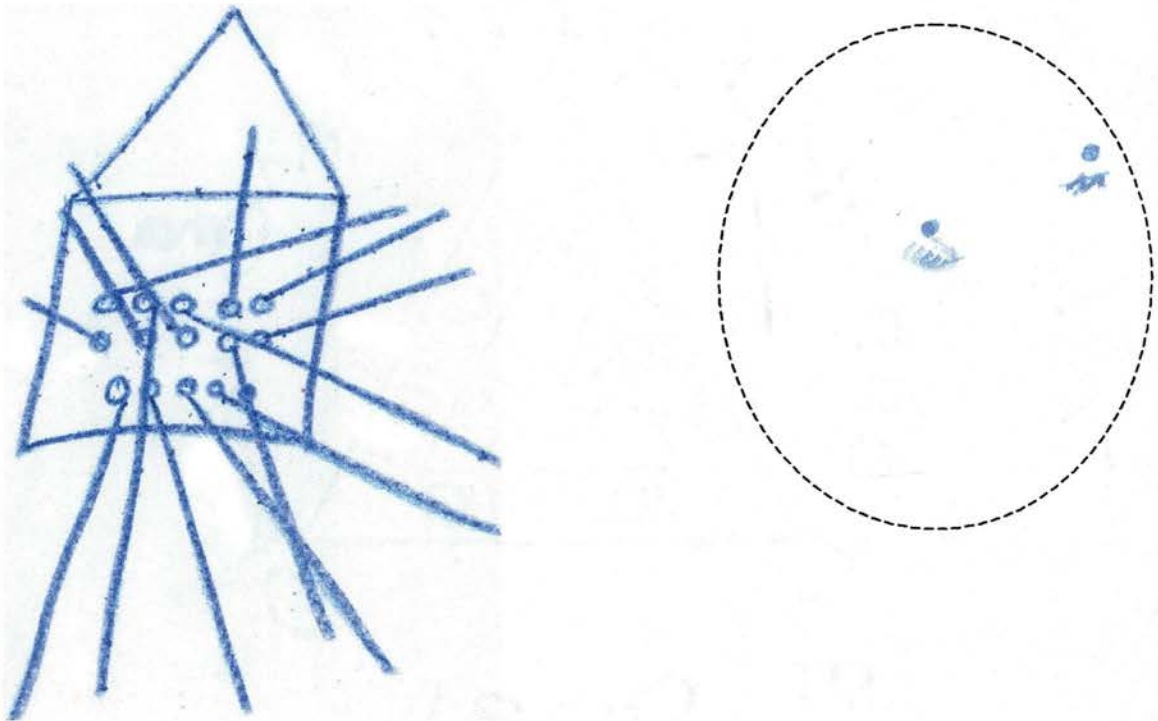


Stunned

“The happy was because I’ve always known this institution and the [technical] system to be trying to stay ahead in technology and working with everybody. . . . It’s just a wonderful system . . . I’ve always seen the positive things. Then here in the last few months, especially when they’re trying to do something to [state director’s name] who is just a jewel of a person, that kind of stunned me.”

Modifications to drawing: None.

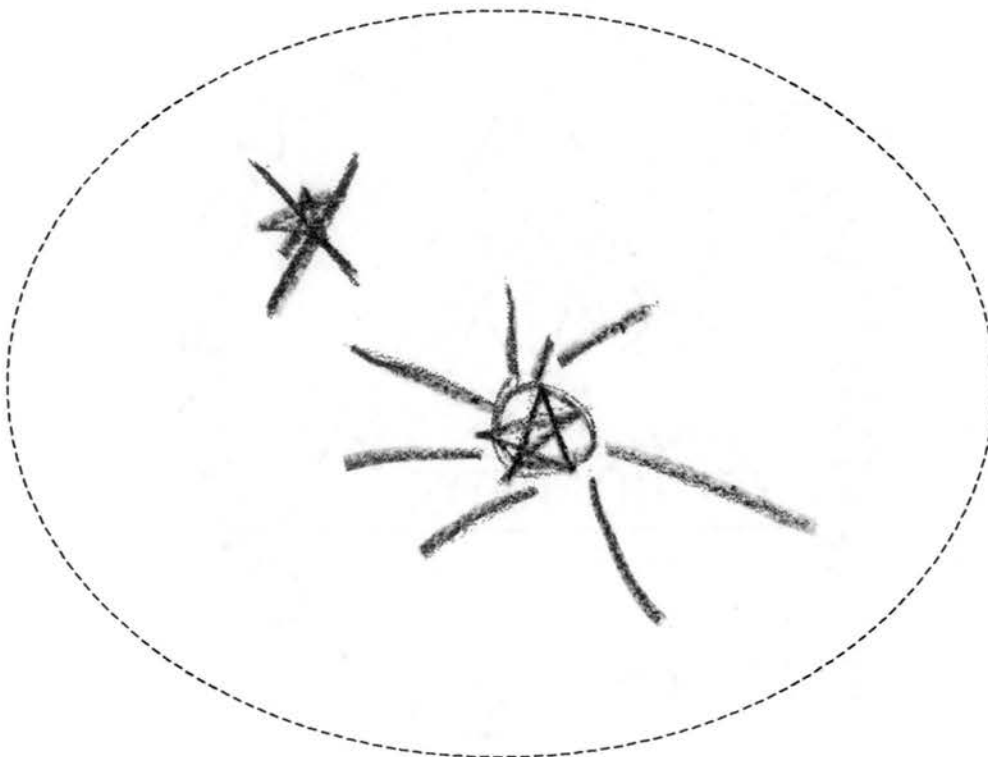
## Appendix E5



“This is [name of school] as a group taking care of the needs of [region]. When the state gets involved, we feel very threatened that everybody should live in [two largest cities]. Those of us that choose to live [region of state] are idiots and they want to pull all of this out and take away these options. . . . Unfortunately our governor has made comments about different parts of the state being stupid, redneck, and all those kinds of things. Well, we’re not. . . . We figure if we don’t make waves, everybody will leave us alone. Well, they’re not leaving us alone so money and some of that money and other stuff that is out here is going to [one of two largest cities]. Well, that’s not right. . . . So, that’s what it represents to me. Actually it was more of a group and then they were split—pulling our resources out.”

Modifications: Outline of state in original drawing was replaced with ellipse. Name of school was removed from the drawing. City names were blurred.

Appendix E6

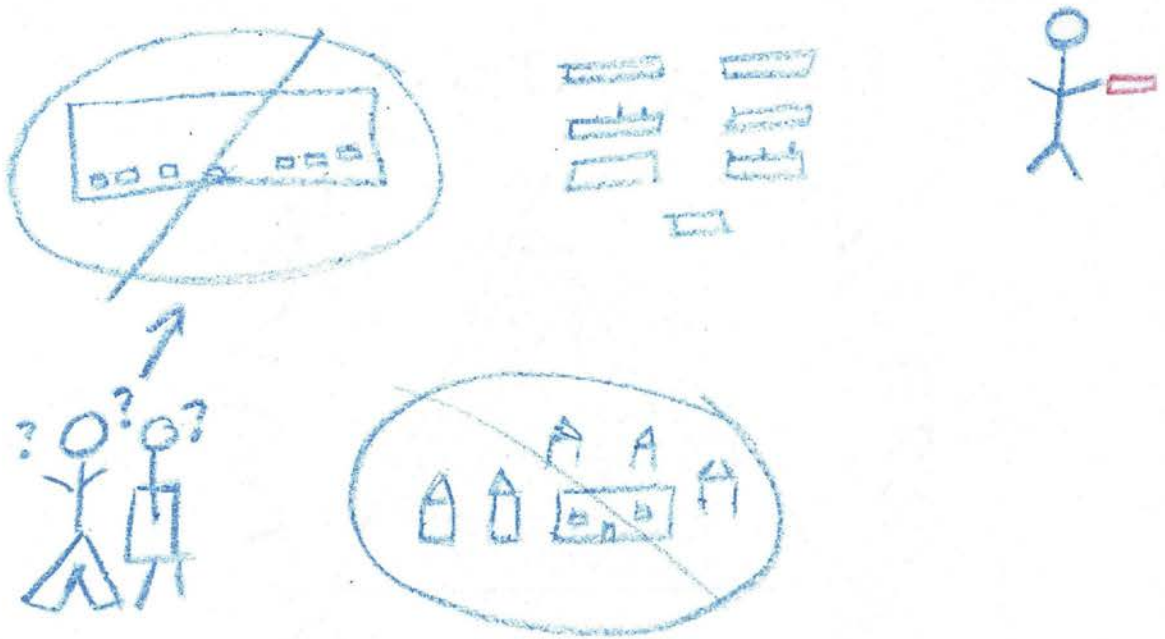


“I wanted to write [governor’s name] out there but I wrote [name of governor’s plan to increase high school graduation requirements]. As a state capitol they’re going to make some decisions . . . that will affect everybody in the state and basically wipe us out. I think that I could really take the math test so maybe I can come back and teach in high school math [laughter]. Since they’re going to make everybody have four years of math, I might have a job.”

Modifications to drawing: Outline of state in original drawing was replaced with ellipse. Name of governor’s plan removed.



Appendix E7



“[The governor’s plan for increasing high school graduation requirements] is a big problem--the state board’s attitude towards our schools, the state board’s attitude toward no money, the state board’s change. If we lose [state director’s name], how is that going to impact our school? Because I think they’re going to bring someone in who will try to redo what we’re doing . . . They’re trying to pare down the state department. . . . I see the small [technology schools] closing if all we have is adult population and we can’t get high school students . . . I see students who aren’t as successful. . . . I think there’ll be a lot of dropouts. If we can hold on for four years after [the governor’s plan is implemented], there’ll be so many dropouts that we’ll just be a different kind of school. . . . We’ll lose our small communities . . . . We’ll lose all our extracurricular . . . We’ll get the dropouts. I see smaller class sizes. I see us having to close programs and my pink slip.”

Modifications to drawing: None.

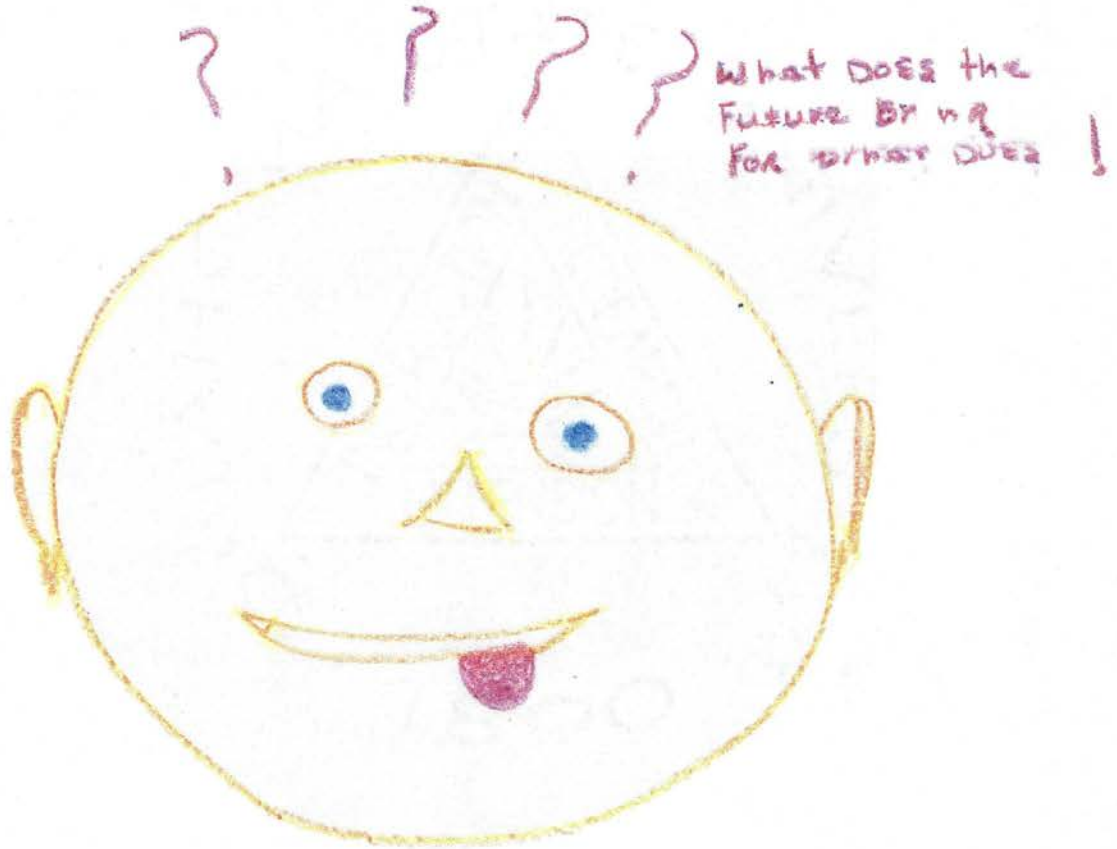
Appendix E8



“This is where I’m angry. And this is where I’m frustrated [and] gritting my teeth. You would probably think of this as serene [pointing to birds in flight]. No! I hate to fly. . . It scares me to death! And the insecurity I feel in an airplane, I absolutely hate it . . . . But that’s my feeling of insecurity. I feel only negative things when it comes to what [governor’s name] is proposing.”

Modifications to drawing: None.

Appendix E9



"I drew a happy face and I was able to put a smile on my face because [of] the resignation of one of our state board members. I would probably have had a frown on my face a week or so ago. And you notice that there's question marks radiating from my brain. That is about what will be the future of [the system] as a whole because it's a very undecided issue."

Modifications: Modifications to drawing: Original color of yellow was retraced with orange to allow for reproduction. School system's name (last two words of written text) was intentionally blurred.

APPENDIX F  
CATEGORIZATION OF FEELING ADJECTIVES  
ACCORDING TO THE KUBLER-ROSS (1969)  
GRIEF CONSTRUCT

## Appendix F

### Categorization of Feeling Adjectives

According to the Kubler-Ross (1969) Grief Construct

Denial	Anger	Bargaining	Depression	Acceptance	Hope
<b>Apathetic</b>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Afraid</b>	<b>Apathetic</b>	<b>Calm</b>	Excited
<b>Cheerful</b>	Aggravated	<b>Anxious</b>	Abandoned	<b>Contented</b>	Hopeful
<b>Cool</b>	Attacked	Apprehensive	Bad	<b>Easy-going</b>	Optimistic
<b>Disbelieving</b>	<b>Bitter</b>	Concerned	Burned Out	<b>Fearless</b>	
<b>Fearless</b>	<b>Contrary</b>	<b>Desperate</b>	<b>Depressed</b>	<b>Peaceful</b>	
<b>Indifferent</b>	<b>Cross</b>	Fearful	<b>Discouraged</b>	Relaxed	
<b>Numb</b>	Defensive	<b>Nervous</b>	Exhausted	Relieved	
Stunned	Defiant	<b>Panicky</b>	<b>Helpless</b>	Satisfied	
<b>Unconcerned</b>	Frustrated	<b>Tense</b>	<b>Hopeless</b>	Secure	
	<b>Furious</b>	Uncomfortable	Incapable	<b>Steady</b>	
	Hate	<b>Uneasy</b>	<b>Lonely</b>	<b>Thoughtful</b>	
	<b>Hostile</b>	Unsettled	<b>Miserable</b>	<b>Warm</b>	
	Jealous	Unsure	Outside		
	<b>Mad</b>	Wary	Overwhelmed		
	Resentful	<b>Worrying</b>	<b>Sad</b>		
	<b>Tense</b>		Sorry		
	Threatened		Unhappy		
	Unwilling				
	Upset				

Note: Words in bold type were originally from the Clapper study (1991, p. 161). All others were categorized as a part of the current study.

## VITA 2

Kerri Shultz Kearney

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

**Thesis: A STUDY OF THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS ON EMPLOYEES WHO REMAIN THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: A VIEW THROUGH KUBLER-ROSS (1969) IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION**

**Major Field: Educational Administration**

### **Biographical:**

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**Experience:** Worked for Meridian Technology Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, from 1987-1996. Held positions of evening supervisor, business and industry contract trainer, program development specialist, interim director of personnel, director of marketing, and director of the career assistance center. Employed by Bernard Haldane Associates as a senior advisor from 1996-1997. Served as senior management trainer for WorldCom, Inc., from 1997-2000. Have worked as an independent management consultant/contractor and free-lanced as a photographer from 2000 to the present.

**Professional Memberships:** American Educational Research Association (AERA); American Society for Training & Development (ASTD); Association for Psychological Type (APT).