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MAKING MEANING OF BARRIERS AND SUCCESSES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF UPPER LEVEL FEMALE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

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By

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MAKING MEANING OF BARRIERS AND SUCCESSES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF UPPER LEVEL FEMALE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

A Dissertation Approved for
Graduate College

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee for their help in bringing this project to fruition: Dr. Charles Butler, Dr. George Henderson, Dr. Thomas Owens and Dr. Joseph Rodgers. They are wonderful mentors and scholars. My special thanks to Dr. Rosa Cintron, my dissertation chair, for giving me her constant support and encouragement during this academically enriching process. She is a powerful, female role model and guide.

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ABSTRACT

The 2000 United States Census Bureau characterized the superintendency as having been the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the United States. However, this was not the case in the overseas military school system researched in this study, which was where the women in this study were employed and led. The military overseas school system studied in this project actually had a preponderance of upper level female administrators.

This study revealed the phenomenological meaning three women in the upper levels of school administration in a military school system overseas made of the barriers (both internal and external) they experienced in their professional lives and the strategies they used to overcome those barriers.

The primary data collection tool in this research study was the semi-structured interview combined with professionally transcribed tapes, member checks, and an audit trail maintained by the researcher.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Case Scenario

Jean had worked for the overseas military school system for 30 years in various countries. She served as a teacher, a counselor, an educational program manager (basically an administrative internship along the lines of an assistant principal) and a principal in a total of seven schools. She had also been an assistant superintendent and a superintendent before assuming her current position as a deputy director.

When Jean first arrived in this system, the senior leadership was almost exclusively white male. It was only twelve years ago that this system had its first and only female director for a period of three years.

Jean remembered very clearly the times when she was the only female in the room and what it was like to try to establish her credibility. She was still amazed at the lack of females when she attended national superintendents conferences in the United States.

One of Jean's primary strategies for success was that she worked long hours each week and gave up many of her weekends due to the demands of her job; but she felt it was all worthwhile when she looked at the various initiatives she had been able to put in place in her area of influence, such as the infusion of technology into the system. Jean also attempted to surround herself with the best-qualified and experienced colleagues she could find.

Statement of the Problem

"The United States Census Bureau has characterized the superintendency as being the most male-dominated executive position of any profession in the United States" as cited in Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000, p.17).

Fifteen years ago in 1989, Shakeshaft (p.100) reported that "females are overrepresented in teaching and underrepresented in administration" and that women and minorities were becoming certified in numbers that were not being reflected in the number of administrative positions they held and that is still the case today.

Jackie Blount in her book "Destined to Rule the Schools" (Blount 1998, p.5) gave us a historical overview of the percentage of women in the superintendency in the United States by providing the following dates and figures:

- 1910 9 percent
- 1930 11 percent
- 1950 9 percent
- 1970 3 percent
- 1990 5 percent

Twelve years ago, Ragguet, Russo and Harris (1994, p. 398) suggested, "Women have long been well-represented in the teaching profession. Yet, traditionally there has been an inverse relationship between the number of females qualified to serve in administrative positions in the schools and the rate at which women actually fill these jobs."

Glass, Bjork, and Brunner (2000, p.17) told us that in the year 2000 women accounted for fourteen percent of the superintendents in the United States-- the highest level achieved during the 20th century. Although the fourteen percent would seem a great improvement over the past, the fact that only twice over the course of the last one hundred years has the percentage of women in the United States in the superintendency gone into the double digits (see page 2) tends to minimize that sense of success.

Also noteworthy, was the fact that Glass, Bjork and Brunner (2000, p.16) stated that the greatest gains for women in terms of superintendent positions over the past decade were in the suburban/urban districts serving 3,000-24,000 students. This suggested that in rural districts women were still an anomaly.

In addition, the same authors discussed the fact that the number of female superintendents in these districts nearly tripled from 1992 to 2000, but 71 percent of female superintendents responded that they were working under their first contract, meaning that the gains for women as superintendents are rather recent. It is important to examine the fact that sixty-eight percent of female respondents were in rural/suburban districts with fewer than 2,999 students. “The increased number of female superintendents is a laudable achievement; however, women continue to be significantly underrepresented in the superintendency” (Glass, Bjork, and Brunner 2000, p 16-17).

However, this accepted notion of underrepresentation appeared not to be a reality in the military school system overseas. For example, in one of the two school areas overseas, the most recent 2006 statistics on this organization’s administrative structure indicated that the top two leadership positions were held by women (100%); three of the

five superintendent positions were held by women (60%) and three of the nine assistant superintendent positions were occupied by women (33%). All of these statistics were well above the national norm in the United States and indicated that there might be something unique about this contextual environment or about the women who chose to work within this context.

This organization was not always so gender inclusive, though. In 1992, when I first entered the overseas military school workforce, the statistics were entirely different. At that time, men held the two top leadership positions in the European theater; there were seven district superintendencies all of which were held by men; and only three of the fourteen assistant superintendents were female. In other words, the upper level leadership in the organization at that time was predominately male and those positions were seemingly closed to all but an extremely small, select group of females.

Since the military school system overseas was generally viewed by the federal government in the United States as the 51st state for licensing and reciprocity purposes, the contemporary statistics on the lack of female leadership in the upper levels of school administration vs. the proportion of women in those positions in the overseas military school system appeared, on the surface, to have made this educational organization a great career advancement environment for women administrators within this "state," in spite of the fact that this organization served one of the most conservative and still basically androcentric cultural communities or "states" in any society-- the United States military.

Need for the Study

The need for the study was argued on the paucity of research done on women leaders in the military school system overseas. Although this system had been in existence for over 50 years, there had only been a handful of research projects or dissertations related to its organization, its leadership or its effectiveness. None of these studies had provided any particular understanding of the opportunities for advancement to the upper organizational levels for women within the organization or recommendations as to how to excel in spite of the barriers perceived by many female building-level administrators. Neither did any of these studies explain why women had more opportunities for professional success at the upper levels (superintendent and above) in this environment than they would in the continental United States. There was no formal mentorship program in the military school system overseas, but it was obvious that the women in this study could be seen as role models, which may be the next best thing to a mentorship program.

There was a strong commitment to staff development in the overseas military school system, perhaps because it was so removed from the continental United States. Both the eastern and the western areas of the system provided administrators of all levels annual conferences. These conferences provided administrators the opportunity to network and to remain abreast of current stateside practices and policies, as well as providing collegial and team-building experiences.

Other female administrators needed to “hear” these three women’s perceptions of the phenomenon of their success and “see” their reflections on their own experiences in

terms of the barriers they faced throughout their careers and their strategies for overcoming those barriers in order to learn how to effectively and efficiently break the glass ceiling.

According to Rusch (2004, p.22), a review of the 22,323 dissertation topics related to race, gender, and school leadership done between 1991 and 2001 only 94 were done on topics related to leadership, superintendents and women and/or 93 were done on leadership, superintendents and gender. The statistics on the topics related to race are even lower, but they are not relevant to this study.

Shakeshaft (1989, p.324) said that "for many reason, some understandable and others less clear, research in educational administration has largely looked at the male experience."

McDade and Drake (1982, p.210) asserted that in order to overcome the barriers in their career paths, the paths of women superintendents needed to be described in more detail with the specific problems or challenges identified and, then, these same women needed to offer advice to aspiring women that is specifically tied to each career path. If this were done, McDade and Drake believe that "perhaps more women would consider the challenge."

McCabe and Jamison (1998, p.4) also saw the need to study the experiences of female superintendents. They purported that researchers needed to determine the qualities of leadership, the similarities and differences of women's experiences, and the types of strategies that women used to overcome any of the barriers they may have

encountered in their career paths in order to help women who might be seeking direction in their educational leadership careers.

The career paths of these women and their insights into the phenomenon of their success contributed not only to the understanding of the cultural change that occurred in the military school system overseas over the years and how, presumably, these women contributed to the change, but it also shed light on how other educational environments in the United States might also constructively change to become more gender inclusive.

This is also why qualitative methodology was used to do this study, as Gerdes and Conn (2001, p.188) suggested, “Part of the uniqueness of qualitative methods is that they can serve as an impetus for cultural change as the method explores dynamic systems and processes often unrevealed through traditional studies.”

Significance of the Study

This study illuminated the career paths of three upper level female educational leaders in the military overseas school system and provided recommendations on how women might have been successful in this particular context. In spite of the projected transformation of our military in Europe (see p.19) and its accompanying drawdown of military family members, aspiring women leaders in this system should still have an extraordinary opportunity for professional advancement within the organization because of the many retirements expected in the near future, provided that they were given the necessary and appropriate insights. The women in this study provided those critical insights, suggestions and recommendations by reflecting on their experiences and attempted to make sense of the phenomenon of the barriers they faced in their careers and

the strategies they used to overcome them. With the predicted shortage of superintendents and the increasing number of women in educational administration programs in the United States, this study may help women identify their individual career path strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to maximize their strengths and to overcome their weaknesses.

Education appears to be significantly behind the times in terms of gender inclusion. In 2004, Corporate America was already beginning to learn the benefits of gender inclusion, as evidenced in the Catalyst study, "The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity"(BMO Financial Group 2004, p.2). This corporate research group analyzed the management composition of 353 of the Fortune 500 companies and found the following:

- The group of companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams experienced better financial performance than the group of companies with the lowest women's representation. The finding holds for both financial measures analyzed: Return on Equity (ROE), which 35.1% higher, and Total Return to Shareholders (TRS), which 34.0% higher.
- Financial performance was also analyzed by industry, and in each of the five industries analyzed, the group of companies with the highest women's representation on their top management teams experienced a higher ROE than the group of companies with the lowest women's representation.

- In four out of the five industries analyzed, the group of companies with the highest women's representation on their top management teams experienced a higher TRS than the group of companies with the lowest women's representation.
- Catalyst Award-winning companies financially outperformed the others in the sample.

As Corporate America has learned that it literally pays to be gender inclusive, presumably, education will follow, because education is one of the most powerful, institutions for this type of constructive change, or lack thereof, in any society. Bjork and Keedy (2001, p.405-406) reported that historically schools have been important resources in shaping the future of the nation. They believed that the schools have been responsible for the conservation and transmission of knowledge and culture from one generation to the next. They also informed us that schools are the institutions in which all of our American leadership is educated. Additionally, the authors instructed us that education contributes to our nation's economic well-being, the strength of our military, and the social stability of our country. Because of all this, schools are one of the primary vehicles for social change—for better or for worse.

As will be seen later in the study, in many ways the women in this study, because of their individual successes, were living examples of constructive change in the educational domain, but there is still much work to be done in this area.

The following were the research questions that this study addressed in an attempt to understand how these women perceived their experiences as they reflected on their careers.

Research Questions

How do upper level female leaders in the military school system overseas make sense of and interpret their career paths?

a. What phenomenological meaning do they give to their success?
b. What phenomenological meaning do they give to the barriers they encountered?
c. What recommendations can these women make to other women interested in becoming superintendents?

Disclosure of Personal Interest

One of the central goals of feminist methodology is that "the researcher learns to openly locate her history, values, and assumptions in the text so that she, like those researched, are open to critical scrutiny by her readers" (Bloom 1998, p. 148). The below story about my mother's academic and professional experiences should help to illuminate how I was situated in relation to this study.

As late as 1966, my mother was the first woman to receive her Doctorate in Education in the Administration of Higher Education from Columbia University. In 1967, she became the first female director of Fund Raising and Development at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Flushed with success, my mother was proud of her accomplishments. She was proud, but not satisfied.

Whether fact of fiction, the story goes that after approximately two years, she approached the Board of Trustees to demand a raise and the difference in back pay owed to her by the museum based on the salary that her male predecessor had received. The board supposedly gave her both-- not because she was a female, but because she had produced so much revenue for the museum.

What I do know for a fact is that my mother worked hard to get her foot in the door, so to speak, so that she could prove her worth. Many other women, even well after the gains made by the women's suffrage movement at the beginning of the century, were not willing to make the sacrifices my mother made in order to climb the corporate ladder. Most were simply not as fortunate to find a job in a "man's world" or they found that they could only climb so far before they hit what is now commonly known as "the glass ceiling." My mother was and is an exception and not the rule in terms of success in the highest echelons of American leadership arenas.

In this study I was interested in finding out what three exceptional contemporary women understood about their career paths and experiences in today's world and what recommendations they may have for up and coming female administrators.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to a series of semi-structured interviews with three upper level, white, female educational leaders in the military school system overseas that was one of two organizations belonging to a system that provided schooling for the children of servicemembers and government employees both overseas and in the United States.

The assumptions of the study were as follows:

1. Women in the upper levels of educational leadership in the overseas military school system encountered barriers as they moved up in their careers and they were able to identify those barriers.
2. The women in this context developed strategies to overcome these barriers and they were able to identify the strategies they used for success.
3. The women provided accurate and reliable information in response to the survey, the interview and the follow up probe questions.

Because of the phenomenological nature of this study, the findings may not be able to be generalized to other organizational or professional contexts such as non-public school, independent school districts, or parochial schools.

As with all interviews, the interviewees' recollections and interpretations of the events in their lives were subject to the limitations of human memory and bias. Self-report is always dependent on the honesty and objectivity of the person doing the reporting.

The study only dealt with the perception of barriers, strategies and recommendations from one perspective: that of the female subjects who were all in the upper level of educational administration in the overseas military school system.

Because this research was done by a woman, the element of bias in the support of women and their professional issues was seemingly a given. I, however, attempted to "bracket" those biases as Garko (1999, p.171) suggested that feminist researchers must do. Garko said, "Feminist researchers believe that, if they are to challenge the taken-for-granted male-oriented values of society and transform societies' institutions, themselves,

and other women, they must suspend their own taken-for-granted beliefs and presuppositions about the world as they attempt to explore and expose the meaning of women's lived experiences. In phenomenological terms, they must bracket their natural attitude so that they can connect with women's consciousness."

Although I was an insider to the organization, the researcher and the participants were in different social locations due to their places in the organizational hierarchy. I did not work for any of these women directly; and, therefore, I maintained a natural distance from them and their experiences. The subjects were, however, above me in terms of the organizational hierarchy; and, therefore, the researcher was "studying up." The researcher worked diligently both during the interview process and in the final analysis and presentation of data not to treat any of the subjects deferentially. Again, I attempted to bracket my place in the organizational hierarchy by acknowledging the differences in our professional levels. All three subjects appeared to see me solely as a researcher during the context of this study and no mention was ever made of my position within the organization.

It is acknowledged that women of other races or nationalities might have entirely different experiences than the women in this study, since all three women in the study were Caucasian.

It might also be said, that another female researcher doing this same research with the same three female participants in the same context might come to somewhat or entirely different conclusions about these women's perceptions of their experiences and their recommendations for other aspiring female administrators. According to Allison

(1995, p.26), this was perfectly acceptable “because phenomenological enquiry is based on the subjectivity of the researcher, two researchers may interpret the same event or phenomenon differently, both equally valid in this context.”

Summary

Upper levels of educational administration in the United States at the time of this study still tended to be male-dominated except, at the time of this project, in the overseas military school system. This study attempted to determine why the women in this study were different and why the context they worked in (the overseas military school system) was unique.

In Chapter Two, I provided a review of the literature related to this topic.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"Well- behaved women rarely make history."

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

Introduction

Since the turn of the century, thanks to the vision, hard work, and dedication of many different types of feminists in the United States, the number of women in the workforce had steadily increased in all walks of life. Unfortunately, most of that increase had been predominantly in the service industries. At the time that this research paper was written in 2006, professional women were still underrepresented in all career fields and especially in educational leadership. The "glass ceiling," which was defined as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization" (Powell and Butterfield, 1994, p.69), was still alive and well in the United States and in other first world countries**.** Kornblum and Julian (2004, p.255) in their book, *Social Problems,* had an entire chapter devoted to gender and sexuality. In that chapter in the section on sexism and employment they informed us "the vast majority of retail clerks, typists, and secretaries are women, whereas men account for by far the largest proportions of corporate directors, white-collar administrators, and blue-collar supervisors."

Although there were several federal laws passed in the 1960's that should have helped to improve the economic status of women, such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, salary differences still existed between men and women

performing the same work. Macionis (2000, p.231) reported that women still received only 74% of the pay that a man would receive for comparable work.

Fortunately, the school system for military dependents overseas was a federally funded organization and its teachers and administrators were federal employees, so pay equity between men and women was not an issue; however, in the past, upward mobility had been. Somehow the women in this study managed to overcome the barriers to upper mobility and reach the top echelons in what was once a male-dominated arena.

As discussed earlier, in the field of education, women far outnumbered men especially at the elementary level, but in school administration they were not proportionally represented. In the overseas military school system this was still true, but the gender stratification was not nearly as dramatic as in the United States, at least for Caucasian women in the system at this point in time.

Background Information on the Overseas Military School System

The following information comes from a federal government Internet website, http://www.dodea.edu/aar/2004/dodea.htm on the overseas military school system structure and mission and was public information.

Shortly after the end of World War II, the United States military established schools for the children of its service men and women stationed in Europe and the Pacific. Schools for children of military members stationed at various bases in the United States were already well-established. These overseas and domestic schools were originally administered by the individual services, but as the number of schools grew, their administration was transferred to civilian managers. The schools were organized in

two distinct but similar systems: the overseas system, and the stateside system in the United States. In 1994 the two systems united under one umbrella organization that had its headquarters in the United States.

The umbrella organization operated 223 public schools in 16 districts located in seven states, Puerto Rico, Guam, and 13 foreign countries to serve the children of military service members and Department of Defense civilian employees. Approximately, 104,935 students were enrolled in this system's schools, with approximately 73,200 students in the overseas portion of the system, and approximately 31,700 students in the stateside part of the system. The overseas branch had approximately 12,060 employees and the stateside branch had approximately 5,700 employees.

Demographics of the Overseas Military School System

Children of enlisted military personnel represent 87 percent of the total enrollment in the combined overseas and stateside schools; minority students accounted for 54 percent of the total enrollment. Because military assignments often resulted in frequent moves, the transient rate for students in these schools was 35 percent.

In the stateside portion of the system, the parents/guardians of the majority of the students (65 percent) were affiliated with the Army. In the overseas part of the system, approximately 37 percent of students had parent/guardians in the Army, 29 percent had parent/guardians in the Air Force. The other students had parents/guardians in the following percentages: 16% Navy, 6% Marine Corps and 11% Civilian.

In the overseas military school system, 48% of the students were White, 17% were African American, 11% were Hispanic, 14% are Bi- or Multi-racial, 8% were Asian, and 2% were Other.

Assessment Systems in the Overseas Military School System

The students in the overseas military school system took the Terra Nova Achievement Test, a norm-referenced test for students in grades three through eleven, which rated their performance on whether students were learning what they were being taught. The students also tool the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the "Nations' Report Card," which was the only continuing assessment of the nation's students in various subject areas. NAEP provides state/jurisdiction comparisons of student achievement in reading, writing, math, and science. In addition to the Terra Nova and the NAEP, the students of military servicemembers took a variety of standards based assessments.

The students of military servicemembers continued to perform at a high achievement level on all of these tests. These students as a whole performed above the national average on the 2003 NAEP in reading and math. In particular, Black and Hispanic students of military servicemembers in both the domestic and overseas schools scored at or near the top of the scoring scale for both the 2003 Reading and Math assessments when compared to their minority peers in other participating states and jurisdictions.

Teacher Demographics in the Overseas Military School System

As of June 2004 at the Internet website, http://www.dodea.edu/aar/2004/teachers.htm' the overseas parts of the military school system employed 5,521 teachers, 73% of which were female and 27% of which were male. The ethnic breakdown of these teachers was 88% White, 7% African American, 3% Hispanic, and 3% Other. Thirty-seven percent of the organization's teachers held Bachelor's Degrees and 63% held a Master's Degree and above.

How U.S. Military Transformation Will Affect the Overseas Military School System

According to a website devoted to the options for changing the Army's Overseas Basing, at the Internet website, http://www.cbo.gov/showdoc.cfm?indes=5415&sequence=1, for over fifty years, the United States has stationed large numbers of military personnel overseas—legacies of the forces that were in place in Germany and Japan at the end of World War II and in Korea when hostilities there ceased in 1953. All the way through the early 1990's, U.S. forces stationed overseas were still considered to be on the front lines of the Cold War. Since that time, the United States had cut its overseas forces in half. In the 1990's there were about 400,000 active-duty personnel in 1990. In 2006, there were about 200,000 (excluding troops taking part in temporary operations, such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq). What had not changed was the placement of those forces around the globe, which remained roughly the same as it was during the Cold War.

During the first George W. Bush Administration, the President and some

members of Congress called for a review of the U.S. military's overseas basing posture. They argued that the current military posture was a vestige of the Cold War and was not well suited to the current strategic environment. "The Administration has stated that stationing large numbers of U.S. forces- particularly heavy Army units- on big, expensive bases far from the location of likely conflicts is not in the U.S. interest."

According to Klaus (2004, p.1), "On August 16, 2004, President Bush announced a proposal to significantly alter the U.S. overseas military basing posture. The proposal would establish new overseas operating sites, and transfer up to 70,000 U.S. troops, plus 100,000 family members and civilians, from Europe and Asia back to the continental United States (CONUS)."

Needless to say, the loss of 100,000 family members and civilians overseas would dramatically affect the size and configuration of the military schools overseas. What exactly the re-configuration would look like had not been fully announced in 2004. However, already in 2006, the military school system overseas has announced the closure of two small schools in Germany and more were expected before the school year was over. Opportunities for advancement for men and women alike were about to be decreased and competition for the remaining upper level educational administration positions was about to become intense, which was all the more reason for this study. Women administrators would need all the information they could obtain to increase their chances of upward mobility.

Theoretical Review

"Does feminist mean large, unpleasant person who'll shout at you or someone who believes women are human beings. To me it's the latter, so I sign up."

Margaret Atwood.

Since this research study was grounded in feminist methodology, the theoretical review had to begin with a brief description and history of feminism in the United States. According to Schaefer (2000, p.270), the feminist movement began in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 where there was a women's rights convention attended by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and many other female pioneers in the struggle for women's rights. This first group of women were ridiculed and scorned because of their belief in legal and political equality for women. Susan B. Anthony was even arrested in 1872 for attempting to vote in the presidential election that year.

The Seneca Convention supported a political platform that called for the following rights for women: the right to vote, the right to control their own property, and the right to obtain custody of their children after divorce (Kornblum and Julian, 2004, p.269).

Eventually, these courageous women won the right to vote in the 1920 election by obtaining the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Unfortunately, this victory did not lead to the other reforms these women were seeking in terms of women's social and economic standing. The early and middle part of the twentieth century saw little forward motion in those areas.

In the 1960's, thanks to Betty Friedan, Kate Millett and Simone de Beauvoir and their books on women's issues and perspectives combined with the general political activism for Black civil rights and against the war in Viet Nam, a second wave of feminism was inspired. Many women at that time began to examine what they perceived as their powerlessness. It was during this time that more women were made aware of what became known as sexist attitudes and practices (Schaefer 2000, p.270).

In 1964 Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, which included a provision called Title VII. This title made it illegal to discriminate against women in promotion and hiring. Unfortunately, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission established to enforce this title, chose not to do so. The other major problems in terms of effectiveness of the Title VII legislation were complicated rules for filing discrimination complaints, an enormous backlog of court cases, and loopholes within the act itself.

This caused the creation of the National Organization for Women (NOW) whose stated purpose was "to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men" (Kornblum and Julian, 2004, p.269).

In the 1970's, "a rapid increase in intolerance of sex discrimination was manifested by legislative and judicial reforms" (McDade & Drake, 1982, p.210). For instance, the passage of Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1972 prohibited discrimination based on gender in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Mertz and McNeely (1994, p. 361) state that, "The passage of Title IX of the Education

Amendments in 1972 called public attention to the situation and launched a period of scrutiny and debate about the status and condition of women in administrative positions."

The question then becomes, what is feminism? Although there are many forms of feminism, most people who consider themselves feminists support five general principles:

- the importance of change;
- expanding human choice;
- eliminating gender stratification;
- ending sexual violence;
- and promoting sexual freedom" (Macionis, 2000, p.238).

Lather (1991, p.6-7), expanded Habermas' three categories of postpositive research methodology to four . She suggested that the feminist research methodology should focus on prediction, understanding, emancipation, or deconstruction of the status quo, with the emphasis on emancipation. This was in keeping with Whit's (1991, p.407) philosophy of achieving understanding through research by doing the types of research that:

- acknowledges the subjective perspective as valid and admits the impact of the researcher on (and within) the research situation;
- privileges natural settings as opposed to laboratory ones;
- operates from a holistic perspective that does not automatically exclude certain detail as irrelevant;
- retains a sense of the uniqueness of what is being studied;

- operates inductively, rather than deductively;
- and recognizes the value-laden nature of inquiry with data that is collected and analyzed by a human instrument.

However, Lather (1991, p.71) purported that feminist methodology overlays these concerns with the desire to put "social construction of gender at the center" of the research.

There has been much debate over the years about the pro's and cons of liberal, socialist and radical feminism and how they related to the above. Continuing this debate or labeling the researcher or the participants in this study as feminists was not the purpose of this study. Instead this study focused on the importance of change, the elimination of gender stratification, and the expansion of human choice as understood and articulated by the participants in this study in collaboration with the researcher. In particular, this study was interested in the barriers the three participants felt they faced, the strategies they used to overcome them and, especially, their recommendations to up and coming female administrators.

In his book, *Society, the Basics,* Macionis (2000, p.242) summarized gender issues as follows:

- Gender involves how societies link human traits and power to each sex.
- Gender varies historically and across cultures; some degree of patriarchy, however, exists in every society.
- Through the socialization process, people link gender to personal identity (gender identity) and behavior (gender roles).

- The major agents of socialization- family, peer groups, schools, and the mass media—reinforce cultural definitions of what is feminine and masculine.
- Gender stratification results in numerous social disadvantages for women.
- Although most women are now in the paid labor force, a majority holds clerical or service jobs. Unpaid housework remains a task performed mostly by women.
- On average, women earn about 74 percent as much as men. This disparity stems from differences in jobs and family responsibilities, as well as discrimination.
- Women now earn a slight majority of all bachelors and masters degrees.
- Men still earn a majority of doctorates and professional degrees.
- The number of women in politics has increased sharply in recent decades.
- Still, the vast majority of elected officials—especially at the national level—are men.
- Moreover, women make up only 15 percent of U.S. military personnel.
- On the basis of their distinctive identity and social disadvantages, women are a minority, although most do not think of themselves that way.

Looking at professional life from a woman's point of view was important for several reasons. Gosetti and Rusch (1994, p.6) discussed this perspective through what they called the feminist lens: "The power of a feminist lens is its ability to focus on the gaps and blank spaces of male-dominant culture, knowledge, and behavior." They

suggested that through the feminist lens we can locate in the spaces, women and other marginalized groups who not only in the past, but also in the present, have been excluded from the development of knowledge. They saw contemporary feminism as democratic in nature—seeking social change by confronting issues oppression based on gender, race, class, sexuality, and economic status, but suggested that the clarity of the feminist lens comes from a focus on women and their experiences. They believed that by using this lens we were able to move beyond the consideration of women as ”add-on” issue and, instead, critically examined society, culture, and the world from the standpoint of being female.

Stanley and Wise (1993, p.146) contended that what was needed was “a language, a language of experience. And this must come from our exploration of the personal, the everyday, and what we experience—women’s lived experiences.”

Brayton (1997, p. 4-5) looked at the issue this way, “Methodologically, feminist research differs from traditional research for three reasons. It actively seeks to remove the power imbalance between researcher and subject; it is politically motivated and has a major role in changing social inequality; and it begins with the standpoints and experiences of women.” The energies of the researcher in this project were actively focused on these three dimensions of feminist research, in particular-- hence, the use of participant rather than subject and the creation of questions aimed at finding out not only what barriers the participants encountered, but also their strategies for overcoming them and their recommendations to other female administrators.

Barriers Faced by Women

"Can she do discipline? Can she do budget? Can she be tough enough to do whatever needs to be done?…You know, what the hell does she know if a damn school bus breaks down?…Sure gender biases still exist on boards. Even when the woman candidate becomes a finalist, then the questions becomes, 'Do we have to pay her as much as a male contender?"

School board member's questions about women's ability to be a superintendent, as reported in Tallerico (2000, p.32)

"Invisibility. Silence. Inequality. Oppression. Missing viewpoints and perspectives. Contradictions. The words describe reality for educational leaders who struggle to integrate new perspectives of gender, race, and class in organizations. These words also describe a reality for students of leadership who cannot locate themselves in the discourse and quickly learned that privilege perspectives marginalize or exclude them, not only from the conversation, but potentially from equal opportunities to lead." So began a paper presented by Gosetti and Rusch (1994, p.3) at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1994, which is only a decade ago.

When women attempted to enter into administration, Pigford and Tonnsen (1993, p.88) found that women faced both external and internal barriers. "Among the external barriers are sex-role stereotyping, sex discrimination, career socialization, lack of professional preparation, and balancing career and family responsibilities. Internal

barriers include sex-role socialization, lack of confidence, low aspiration, and negative self-image."

For the purposes of this study a barrier to upward professional mobility was defined as "any obstacle that is believed to hinder the employment of women as school superintendents" (Dulac, 1992, p.8). External barriers to upward professional mobility were defined as those "that require social and institutional change" and internal barriers were "those that can be overcome by individual change (Shakeshaft, 1989, p.82).

Kowalski and Stouder (1999, table 3) listed the following as barriers to career progression as perceived by female superintendents in the state of Indiana:

- lack of family support,
- lack of employment opportunity,
- gender discrimination,
- lack of collegial support,
- familial responsibilities,
- lack of self-confidence,
- racial/ethnic discrimination,
- personal lack of tenacity.

Hill and Ragland (1995, p.9) identified the following barriers that women face in their professional careers:

- male dominance of key leadership positions;
- lack of political savvy;
- lack of career positioning;

- lack of mentoring;
- internal barriers and bias against women.

In relation to the lack of political savvy alone, Tallerico, Burstyn and Poole (1993, p.17) found that such things as the ability or inability to do the following all indicated the need for women to increase their attention to political skills building: understand school board politics; analyze external and political influences on the board-superintendent relationship; understand the media's influence on shaping, expanding, or constraining conflict; be aware of school board turnover and the knowledge of how to prevent, cope with, or capitalize on it; deal with the endless scrutiny on the job; and foresee the predictable mobilization of teacher or administrative union forces,

Lack of mentoring was a particularly challenging barrier for women in leadership positions, because Swiss (1996, p.170) found that "the higher women rise, the more difficult it is to find a mentor—male or female. The tendency to gravitate toward people like oneself made it more difficult for women to find mentors." Swiss reported that for men, mentoring easily revolves through golf games, business trips, and after hours socializing. These were the places where mentoring opens the doors for men. "For women, one of the greatest challenges is to find viable alternatives to such door-opening opportunities."

Kanter (1977, p.182) suggested, "Sponsors provide an important signal to other people, a form of reflected power." This was similar to the age old folk wisdom "birds of a feather flock together" and/or guilt or success by association.

Granovetter (1974, p.22) noted that personal contacts are of paramount importance to connecting people to employment opportunities. The best jobs-- the ones that were highest paid, that afforded the most satisfaction and prestige-- were the most apt to be filled through networking/personal contacts.

Tallerico talked about two other obstacles: a) gatekeeping (Lewin, 1947 and Shoemaker 1991, as cited in Tallerico 2000, p.19) by search committees and b) Teihl and Byrd (1997 as cited in Tallerico 2000, p.21) identified concurrent responsibilities in the home and access to information networks of influential others as barriers to career development. They also identified:

- the lack of structures of opportunity,
- the lack of advocacy by superordinates,
- the absence of role models in the profession
- detrimental institutionalized screening procedures

as additional gendered influences that affected career mobility at the organizational level.

Finally, they examined occupational and sex-role stereotypes at the sociocultural level as challenges to female aspirants to the superintendency.

McDade and Drake's (1982, p. 214) list of the special problems associated with the women respondents in their study was similar in many ways to the above. They found that:

- women usually must be better than their male competitors to be considered for administrative positions,
- successful women are usually viewed as the exception,

- aggressiveness in women (unlike in their male counterparts) is seen as a negative trait,
- women frequently do not receive the salary, title, and status to match their job responsibilities,
- women are not usually willing to compete for the top level jobs.

Even once they were in administrative positions, women were vulnerable. Marion Hampton (2002, p.2) in a Simmons School of Management Seminar called "Who Do We Follow and Why" discussed her research on the vulnerability and visibility of female leaders. Because women were still in the minority in leadership positions, they were highly visible and, therefore could easily become the targets of other peoples' attacks. She went on to elaborate about how female leaders were watched very carefully. People asked themselves either silently or out loud, "Will they stumble? Are they tough? Are they acting in sex-role appropriate ways?" Because they were scrutinized so intensely both in their professional role and personally, there was little margin for error in the decisions they make. She described the paradox this way—"but it is difficult to grow into leadership roles without making mistakes, which makes women genuinely vulnerable at work."

In this study, I examined whether or not the participants perceived that they had experienced these barriers and the strategies they used to overcome them. Each of the participants described having faced some of them during the course of her career and shared her strategies for overcoming them.

Strategies for Success

"When people ask me why I am running as a woman, I always answer,

"What choice do I have?"

Pat Schroeder

Kowalski and Stouder (1999, table 5) listed the following as perceptions regarding strategies that had a positive career influence on women aspiring to leadership positions:

- identified and maintained a mentor,
- relied on flexible goals,
- attended seminars on career planning,
- identified and maintained sponsors,
- consistently evaluated personal strengths and weaknesses,
- became more visible professionally,
- obtained support from family and friends,
- developed/utilized 'new girl' network,
- gained leadership experience outside of education.

In regards to obtaining support from family and friends, it was obvious from the poem provided on the following page that at least the author of the poem, who was a female superintendent at the time it was written, felt that obtaining support from her professional colleagues as well as her family and friends was important to her feelings of success and to her ability to limit or minimize her sense of being an outsider.

Thoughts after a long day by a new superintendent

By Leslie Conrad

***L**onely…*
***O**stracized. Why? Because I'm an*
OUTsider and a woman?
***N**ew to most of the people in the community?*
***E**xcellence, they said, "Focus on*
academic excellence.
***L**ead and we will follow."*
***Y**es, I have lead and I am very lonely.*

(as cited in Young and Skrla 2003, p.128)

Jennifer Brayton (1997, p.2) provided this simple definition of feminism, "…feminism is about challenging gender inequalities in the social world." The women in this study had obviously challenged those inequalities and had risen above them. They were role models for what was possible in spite of a variety of hurdles that were placed in their way. Some of the strategies that these women employed turned out to be different. Some of the strategies turned out to be the same. The uncertainty was a natural part of this type of qualitative research.

Frankel and Devers (2000, p.121), in their article, "Qualitative Research, A Consumer's Guide" reminded us that, …"in many qualitative research domains data collection and analysis occur simultaneously rather than sequentially."

Recommendations for Future Female Leaders

Skrla, Reyes and Scheurich (2000, p.65-69) suggested the following recommendations to help future female administrators climb the organizational ladder to the superintendency:

- deeper, more meaningful research;

- integrated discourse with other female superintendents;
- university preparation programs including the role of gender in leadership;
- state agencies and professional organizations need to examine the role of gender;
- school boards need to be trained on gender and power-related issues;
- women's upbringing needs to change so that women are taught it is all right to be competitive.

The integrated discourse with other female superintendents goes back to the idea of mentorship or sponsorship. As Brown (1994, p.22) stated: "moms and dads, school teachers, and especially the college professors" needed to encourage women to aspire to the upper levels of administrative leadership.

Arons' research (1980, p.8) demonstrated that although women possessed as much administrative ability as men, attention still needed to be paid to the career paths of potential females in terms of encouraging them to enter administrative fields, to ensuring that they obtained adequate preparation for administrative certification, and to seeing that they entered the applicant pools in numbers relatively equal to their male counterparts.

Arons went on to say, "Staff development programs for potential administrators should concern themselves with the training and expansion of the individual's style flexibility, as well as the development of the skills to diagnose situational demands."

Jones and Montenegro (1992, p.9), found that in a program conducted by the American Association of School Administrators that the curriculum was designed to help female administrators develop a positive self-concept and, then, to present that self-

concept; to teach them how to enlist influential sponsors; to learn how to discover potential jobs; to instruct them on how to analyze the jobs to determine their professional desirability; to train them to write letters of application and effective resumes; and to help them prepare for interviews and discuss the conditions of employment. The workshop gave the women special insights into the superintendency and, thus, helped them prepare for it.

Erickson and Pinter (1980, p.10) recommended that women find ways to demonstrate their competence. They suggested that women do this by showcasing their abilities outside of the classroom; by being willing to take the risk of getting into administration; by publicizing the admirable traits of female administrators in their areas; by viewing themselves as equals; by ignoring the historical prejudice and, instead, using time and performance to remedy the situation.

Swiss (1996, p.166-67) gave the following recommendations to aspiring female superintendents that were more practical and specific:

- Educate yourself first. Then educate your workplace on concrete strategies to remedy the unequal treatment of women.
- Formulate a plan around facts that are indisputable. Management will always react more favorably to a plan than to a problem.
- Focus on the solution, not the problem.
- Establish measurable goals for collective efforts in women's organizations and in professional networks.
- Repeat your message at every opportunity.

- Adopt the role model strategy by reaching out to women in less senior jobs.
- Establish links to community groups and to your girls and women who will enter the workforce next.
- Initiate from the bottom up what is not happening for the top down. Find new points of entry to effect change.

Summary

In Chapter Three, I discussed the research design for this study and the philosophical foundation on which the methodology was based.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

"There is no occasion for women to consider themselves subordinate to or inferior to men."

Mohandas K. Gandhi

This study analyzed how three higher-level female administrators made phenomenological meaning and sense of their success. In this study I collected the experiences, perceptions and feelings of female educational leaders to determine commonalities in their understanding of their leadership experiences. Based on their reflections on these phenomena, I asked them to make recommendations to up and coming female administrators in their current context. This was in keeping with Lester's view-- "the purpose of phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation…Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation" (Lester, 1999, p.1).

To elaborate on the choice of phenomenological research, Allison (1995, p.25) said that it begins with the proposition that any situation, circumstance or event offered, in itself the possibility for inquiry. She suggested that because phenomena of this sort were invariably animate and time related, research adopting this method was predominantly in the social sciences. Although all phenomena could be the subject of

inquiry, Allison believed that some were of more interest than others and, of course, individual researchers were more interested in some situations than others. The researcher who adopted the phenomenological method did not form precise questions prior to engagement in the research, unlike in the case of researchers who subscribed to the scientific method. The researcher still had a general feeling of the problematic nature of the situation to be studied.

According to Shenton and Dixon (2004, p.1), "Essentially, the emphasis of qualitative research lies in the exploration of a particular phenomenon at length, typically through the collection and analysis of subjective data from a relatively small number of "participants" involved in the processes, circumstances or situations at the heart of the inquiry." This study attempted to both define the essence of these women's experiences and to educate the reader as to the significance and usefulness of those experiences.

In contrast to the positivist research methods of the past, this study was purely qualitative in nature. Qualitative research has meant different things at different times historically, but Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.4-5) offered the following generic definition.

- Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world.
- It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible.
- These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a

series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self.

In other words, qualitative research involved an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world at this level. The difference between quantitative researchers and qualitative researchers was that qualitative researchers investigated and studied things in their natural settings. Qualitative researchers endeavored to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people brought to them.

In his book, "Phenomenological Research Methods," Moustakas (1994, p.25) provided the background philosophy as transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology began with German mathematician Edmund Husserl's development of a philosophical system founded in subjective openness, which was considered a radical approach to science at that time and for which he was criticized.

Moustakas (1994, p.27) continued by explaining the challenge that faces the researcher in human sciences was for the researcher "to describe things in themselves, to permit what is before one to enter consciousness and be understood in its meanings and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection."

Phenomenological data analysis proceeds through themes, and a search for all possible meanings. The researcher also sets aside all prejudgments, bracketing his or her experiences.

Merriam (1998, p.15-16) described this type of study by explaining that phenomenology was a school of philosophical thought that was the foundation of all qualitative research. In this type of study, the focus would be on the essence of structure

of an experience (phenomenon). The task of the phenomenologist was to identify and describe the essence of the basic structure of experience. “Prior beliefs about a phenomenon of interest are temporarily put aside, or bracketed, so as not to interfere with seeing or intuiting the elements or structure of the phenomenon. When belief is temporarily suspended, consciousness itself becomes heightened and can be examined in the same way that an object of consciousness can be examined.”

Last, but not least, this study was grounded in feminist philosophy, which allowed the researcher to enter into a cooperative relationship with the subjects. Garko (1999, p.170) described the situation as follows. In opposition to the philosophical foundations of quantitative methods, feminists define research as a dialogue between the researcher and the research participant. According to Acker, Barry and Esseweld (1983, p.427) both the researcher and the research participant are assumed to be individuals who reflect upon their experiences and who can communicate those reflections. Feminists recognize that in the dialogue between the subject and object of research there is reciprocal influence and a mutual exchange of knowledge and experience (Shields and Dervin 1993, p. 5).

After reflecting on the epistemological framework of the last 30 years in regards to the research about women in educational leadership, Marshall (2000, p.699), maintained that the type of research questions that were based on the traditional paradigm, “constrained curiosity, and evaded the realities of people’s lives.” She was much more impressed with the more recent qualitative studies that place women at the center of the research.

Marshall (2000, p. 701) argued that research on women in educational leadership had much to offer in times such as these when "policy, practice and theory are constantly challenged." She believed that incorporating women's perspectives was particularly auspicious in terms of developing "urgently needed alternative models of leadership." Gilligan (1993, p.173) asserted that research on adult women, in general, was needed. She claims, "Among the most pressing items on the agenda for research of adult development is the need to delineate in women's own terms the experience of their adult life."

Feminist critical theory also called for research that encouraged societal change. Lester (1999, p. 1) suggested this was one of the strengths of phenomenological research when she said, "Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions." When you added an interpretive dimension to phenomenological research, you enabled it to be used as the basis for practical theory. You allowed it to inform, support or challenge policy and action.

Acker (1994, p.57) gathered from a number of feminist sources the following list of feminist research assumptions that guided this research project:

- Feminist research involves an acute state of awareness of the injustice women suffer because of their sex.
- The purpose of this research is to improve women's lives.

- Feminist research asserts the centrality of women and of gender to all aspects of human existence.
- It rests on the belief that existing knowledge and techniques are deficient and need revision.
- Women's experience in patriarchal society is the starting point for research: the personal is political and valid.
- The researcher should enter into the same space as her subject, rather than taking up a powerful or detached position.

One of the forerunners in feminist research, Patti Lather, suggested that the goal of feminist research was "to correct both the invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position' (1995, p.295).

Because the research was qualitative in nature the design was deliberately flexible, evolving and emergent, which meant, in this case that the study's design changed slightly over time due to the nature and content of the interviews with the participants.

Data Collection and Analysis

Based on Merriam's (1998, p.16) vision of the task of the phenomenologist, my study focused on having the participants describe their everyday lived experiences "to depict the essence or basic structure of their experiences." This was done through the use of one semi-structured interview with accompanying probes and reflection by the researcher instead of the two interviews that were originally planned. It was obvious throughout the course of the taped interviews with the three women that the quality of the

answers obtained would have been richer had the participants been able to reflect more on some of the questions beforehand, such as the questions about their career paths.

As a phenomenologist, I was most interested in the meanings of the experiences for myself first and, then, in turning outward and establishing the "intersubjective validity," by testing this understanding with other individuals (Moustakas 1994, p.57) -- in this case with the subjects themselves by giving them the opportunity to provide feedback on my interpretation and/or to clarify or elaborate on any of the information that I gathered from the interviews. This strategy is known as member checking.

Merriam (1998, p.5) defined qualitative research as an "umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible." This study was inductive in nature (theory building) rather than deductive (theory testing) with the researcher as the primary participant observer. It used a combination of a semi-structured interview, a set of written probes based on the information gathered from the interviews, and a demographic survey, so that the researcher disrupted the natural setting of the women who were interviewed as little as possible, and so that the participants became comfortable with and trusting of the researcher, as is consistent with feminist research methodology.

Phoenix (1994, p.50) discussed the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the participants as twofold: 1) the establishment of friendly relations through the researcher's willingness to answer any questions asked of her may help create an easy intimacy between the two that feels less exploitive and more equally

balanced in terms of power; and, 2) the level of rapport created under these circumstances "may well have a direct impact on how forthcoming respondents are and hence the quantity (if not the quality) of the data collected."

The researcher was the research instrument and was the person who performed the data collection. At the onset of the process, the participants were asked to answer a brief background/demographic survey (see Appendix I) to look for any personal or professional experience or preparation commonalities. This survey was also used as an icebreaker before the taped interview.

Qualitative researchers, in contrast to quantitative methodology, are usually concerned with meaningfulness, rather than objectivity and reliability. There is less emphasis on finding the "truth" in qualitative research. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are the most widely used methods in feminist research. Feminist methodology claims that these types of interviews "convey a deeper feeling for or more emotional closeness to the persons studied" (Jayaratne 1983, p.145). Feminist researchers "attempt to actively involve the participant in the research process as much as possible"… and "they reject the word "subject" that implies the participant is an insensate object" (Westmoreland, 2001, p. 4).

The interviews were conducted in a mutually agreed upon place and time between the researcher and the three individual participants. The interviews were tape recorded by the researcher with the permission of the interviewees. The interviewees had permission to stop the interview at any time. There was one short break in all three participants' interviews for various personal and professional reasons and, of course the one minute

breaks to turn over the tapes in two of the interviews. A professional transcriptionist transcribed the taped interviews. The researcher reviewed the transcripts for accuracy. Ninety- minute tapes were used in an attempt to limit the distractions of changing the tapes too often and to ensure the quality and durability of the tapes themselves. The tabs were also be punched out of the tapes to prevent erasure of the interview material.

After each session, the original tape was dubbed, so that the original could be better preserved. The transcriptionist worked off the original tapes and the researcher worked off the copies. The original tape and the copies were "labeled with the names of the interviewer and interviewee; the date, the place… and the total number of tapes in the interview" (Everett, 1992, p.15).

The study consisted of one interview per subject and the interviews were of various lengths. One was 45 minutes, one was 90 minutes and one was almost two hours' and all of the interviews followed the interview protocol found in Appendix II. As the interview progressed, the researcher asked related questions, called probes, in order to acquire the rich description that qualitative research requires and/or to keep the flow of the interview going by allowing the participants to feel comfortable with the researcher.

The purpose of the interviews was to identify emergent themes that would answer the research questions. After their individual interviews, the interviewees had an opportunity to review, correct or amend their statements to ensure the integrity of their responses and the accuracy of the transcriptionist's work.

The researcher followed Everett's (1992, p. 16) recommendations in terms of post-interview responsibilities as follows:

- the interviewer should listen to the interview tapes shortly after the session, while the memory of events is still fresh;
- during this review expand upon the interview notes; clarify any garbles sections of the tapes; and, if not already prepared during the interview, make a word list of terms requiring identification;
- Prepare an interview summary that records the topics discussed.

After the interviews were transcribed, the interviews were divided into statements, otherwise known as horizontalization. Once this was completed, I transformed these statements into clusters of meaning… "Finally, these transformations were tied together to make a general description of the experience, the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced" (Creswell, 1998, p.55).

The researcher required the professional transcriptionist to use the transcription protocol as put forth by Everett (1992, p.17-18):

- transcribers should provide a verbatim transcript. Omit such filler expressions "um" or "ah;
- record such expressions as "uhhuh" or "umhum" as "Yes" in response to a specific question. Expressions of disagreement should follow the same rule;
- false starts usually represent a change in thinking and should appear in the transcript separated from the rest of the text by two dashes and parentheses -- ( );
- when the interviewee reads theses statements, he may recall the original train of thought and perhaps clarify or expand upon his recorded remarks;

- if the false starts appear to be insignificant, they can be deleted during the editing phase;
- unusual or regional speech patterns and characteristics (that is, accents/dialects and use of phrases like “you know,” etc.) should be transcribed, whenever possible. These phrases may reveal much at the interviewee’s personal character;
- the interviewee, however, should have an opportunity to delete these expressions during his review of the transcript, or the interviewer and/or editor may omit them during the editing phase after imparting some of the flavor by including a few examples;
- transcribers should use standard symbols within the transcript to convey specific messages to readers. Place a question mark before and after a word or phrase to indicate any uncertainty about imprecise language or terms (for example, “destroyed”);
- bracket details explaining why the interview was interrupted or why the tape recorder was turned off (for example, [Interview interrupted by a telephone call]). Indicate the end of a side in capital letters, (for example, END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE.);
- portions of a tape may be garbled or simply inaudible. Identify these sections in the transcript. If one word is inaudible, the transcriber should indicate the gap with “___” and multiple words by inserting “___+.” If a significant passage is inaudible, the transcriber should estimate the elapsed time using the indicator “___… (___seconds.).

In between the interview and the actual dissertation writing, the interviewees were allowed to have a copy of the transcript of their interviews and then the individual participants and the researcher compared their transcripts for accuracy and for the purpose of sanitizing any direct references to the participants and/or the overseas military school system, "noting any passages that may need his/her special attention or explanation. This revision was the interviewee's opportunity to clarify and develop comments, to correct inadvertent errors of fact, and to improve grammar and syntax" (Everett 1992, p.18), so that they may have sufficient reflection time to ensure the accuracy of their viewpoints and perceptions.

Everett (1992, p.18) added the following caveats, however, "Discourage any deletions from the text, whenever possible. Interviewees may be slow to return their edited transcripts, so it is crucial to impose a reasonable suspense date. Once returned, the statements in the transcript are considered to be "on the record." At this time a second review to check for any remaining spelling errors or other editorial oversights is advisable before printing a clean transcript."

The researcher's task was to describe the phenomenon as perceived by the interviewees who were co-researchers. Garko (1999, p.173) suggested that, "Describing engages the researcher in an idiographic and nomothetic interpretation of the data." In the idiographic interpretation the protocols were analyzed for their situated structure and, then, they were thematized. In the nomothetic interpretation of the data, the idea was to see two things-- if the generated themes are supported by the data and if the data are represented by the themes.

The researcher kept an audit trail via the use of a interview log relating to the researcher's intentions and reactions to the interviews (See Appendix III), and process notes about decision-making procedures and day to day activities such as interview question revisions before, during and after the interview process.

Again, to ensure the meaningfulness of the qualitative methods in this type of project, according to Gerdes and Conn (2001, p.186), the investigator established trustworthiness through a collection of methods such as member checks, peer debriefing, and data audits. Possibly a "paper trail" exists in order that an outside reader could trace back the data directly to an original conversation, which is often tape-recorded and transcribed, or to a log or field note entry in a journal. "In addition, the researcher can verify through an auditing process the dependability (repeatability) and confirmability (that findings are a product of the research process, not researcher bias) of the study." They went on to elaborate on trustworthiness as a concept that did not happen in a linear fashion, but rather unfolded and emerged along with the flow and methodological contingencies of the investigation.

So, how did I know when I was done? Gerdes and Conn (2001, p.187) suggested that the researcher would know he or she was done when he or she attain redundancy in the interviews. They stated, "When you find that your data is beginning to reflect the same kinds of 'themes' or 'patterns,' or when your participants have ceased to offer new insights or they reiterate statements earlier made concerning the given line of interview questioning, or when the information being collected begins to reflect the same things, you've reached redundancy."

I, in collaboration with the participants in the study, in keeping with the feminist and phenomenological philosophies of co-researching and member checking, did the final data analysis. Or as Gerdes and Conn (2001, p.188) explained, "the researcher then has an opportunity to further 'tighten' the report, adding these freshly revealed nuances gleaned from participants' interaction and dialogue while clarifying various interpretations within the report as a result of the final member checking phase." Each of the participants benefited since they openly responded to the information in the report, as well as to the interpretations of the other participant/researcher.

The final member check was not to be adversarial on any level. Instead it should have and did assist in clarifying the materials of the case report by allowing the participants a "candid" and open forum in which to share and check their thoughts and perceptions with the researcher and/or the other participants. This, in turn assisted in determining if the report portrayed the setting, its participants, and the researcher's reconstructions correctly.

Again, Garko (1999, p.170) reminded us what was different about feminist research was that feminists define research as a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. "Both are assumed to be individuals who reflect upon their experience and who can communicate those reflections" (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1983, p. 427).

More emphatically, according to Van Manen (1990, p.82), "Phenomenology does not allow for empirical generalizations, the production of law-like statements, or the

establishment of functional relationships. The only generalization allowed by phenomenology is this: “Never generalize!”

Shenton and Dixon (2004, p.1) addressed the issue by saying that the emphasis of qualitative research lie in the exploration of a particular phenomenon at length. They suggested that usually this was done through the collection and analysis of subjective data from a relatively small number of “participants” involved in the processes, circumstances or situations, which were at the foundation of the inquiry. In this case knowledge and understanding was gained from patterns and episodes within the data itself. This was in contrast to quantitative studies where the understanding would be obtained from the frequency with which the data falls into categories developed by the investigator from the outset of the study. They went on to say, “…the orientation of qualitative research is towards transferability rather than generalisability” (Shenton & Dixon 2004, p.3).

Also noteworthy from the feminist perspective in this selection process, was the terminology, “participant.” Brayton (1997, p.5) went one step further by saying that recognizing the participants as experts and authorities on their own experiences is taken as the starting point to research. Participants were part of the social world and as critical thinkers were also conscious and aware of the patterns of social relationships that shaped their own personal realities.

That said, I was well aware of Maynard and Purvis’ (1994, p.7) descriptions of the interpretive implications in feminist research. They reminded the feminist researcher that she has to “accept that there is no technique of analysis or methodological logic that

can neutralize the social nature of interpretation." This meant that feminist researchers must acknowledge that there might be complexity and contradiction beyond the interpreter's experience and they would have to recognize "the possibility of silences and absences in their data."

Credibility was established in this study through triangulation: interviews, member checks, an interview log and the analysis of relevant literature.

Selection of the Participants

My study consisted of three female leaders in the overseas military school system all of whom have extensive experience in the upper levels of educational administration. I only knew the participants on a limited basis, but I did share the organizational frame of reference or context with them in a general sense, since we all worked for the same overseas military school system. The selection of this group of participants was intentionally small, non-random, and purposeful. The latter meaning, in this case, that all the women shared the specific characteristic of being in the upper levels of educational leadership in the overseas military school system; thus ensuring information-rich cases.

This type of selection was consistent with existential-phenomenological exemplar of feminist research proposed by Garko (1999, p.168) which states, "The starting point for an existential-phenomenological study is the co-researchers' personal experience with the phenomenon being investigated and not the adequate number of randomly chosen subjects to conduct statistical test of significance to confirm or disconfirm hypotheses and make generalizations."

According to Merriam (1998, p.208), "in qualitative research, a single case or small nonrandom sample is selected precisely *because* the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many."

The selection process might also be called "extreme or deviant sampling" which Patton (1990, p.169) says "focuses on cases that are rich in information because they are unusual or special in some way." These women, by their positions in levels of superintendent and above, were certainly special or extraordinary in the realm of educational leadership in the United States school system at the time of this study; because although the overseas military school system resided outside the continental United States, it was still part and parcel of the United States public school system.

Introduction of the Participants

"A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go but ought to be."

Rosalynn Carter

Sandra

Sandra had been the director of one of the two overseas military school areas since 1999. Before accepting this position, she served as a superintendent of a district in a her home state in the United States and as that state's Secretary of State. The latter position meant that she served as the de facto Lieutenant Governor, the Securities Commissioner, the State Election Officer, and the Corporations Administrator. She also served on five state boards and commissions during this period.

Prior to running for Secretary of State, Sandra served one term as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in the same state. During this time, she was an ex officio member of the State University Board of Trustees, the State Community College Commission and the State Board of Education.

Prior to running for elected office, Sandra spent 19 years as a teacher, an elementary school principal, and a special education director in several districts in her home state.

Sandra had a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Educational Administration. In 1990, she was named the state's "Elementary Principal of the Year." In 1984, Sandra was one of the county's "Professional Business Woman of the Year" and in 1980, she was named the same county's "Teacher of the Year."

Sandra was most proud of her involvement in the state level United Way Campaigns, her Commerce and Rotary Club work.

Janice

Previous to her current position as deputy director of one of the two overseas districts in the overseas military school system, Jan was a teacher, an assistant principal, a principal and a superintendent for 20 years. All of her professional career except for her time as a superintendent was spent in one country. At one point in Jan's career she was named the umbrella organization's "Superintendent of the Year."

Janice had one undergraduate and two graduate degrees from the same university, as well as her Ed.D. from a different university. She is a member of the American

Association of School Administrators, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and Phi Delta Kappa.

Catherine

Catherine had been a teacher at the high school level, a counselor at the elementary and middle school levels, an educational program manager (an internship program for beginning assistant principals in the overseas military school system a decade ago), an assistant principal in a middle school and a principal in two different middle schools. She has also been an assistant superintendent in two districts in the overseas military school system. She was, at the time of this study, a superintendent. All of her overseas experience was in one country.

Catherine had her Bachelors degree, her Masters degree and her Ed.D. from three different universities.

Risk Towards Participants

Because of the small sample population in this study, the researcher acknowledged that the participants in this study may have been placed at risk; but preliminary, as well as on-going discussions with all of the participants, indicated that they were comfortable with those risks. Conceivably, this might be because one of the women is retiring from the system this year, one of the women is within five years of retirement, and one is within ten years or less of retirement. Potential risks might involve negative performance appraisals or negative recommendations to future employers should either of the women choose to work again in another venue.

Formal informed consent took place after approval of this project by both the University of Oklahoma's Institutional Review Board and through the military school system's research approval process, which was done at the system's Department of Research in the stateside headquarters.

Summary and Critique of Validity of Study with Counter-arguments

Since qualitative research is not theory testing, but rather theory-building; therefore, statistical analysis was not possible or appropriate. This did not mean that the data collected was any less valid. On the contrary, in qualitative research "the analytical process involves an interactive, creative, and intuitive examination of the data, all in the search for patterns, themes, or emerging insights, each unfolding from the research process and grounded in the data" (Gerdes & Conn 2001, p.5).

Gerdes and Conn (2001, p.5) proposed that to verify that the qualitative data analysis process was legitimate and rigorous:

- collected data are disassembled, then reassembled to find "uniquenesses" in pattern or principle of process or behavior;
- data are subsequently coded so that they can be traced back to the original interview (via transcript), or document, or observation for purposes of a conformability audit to verify the process and research method;
- data are analyzed and synthesized through a developmental process, continually evolving and emerging through constant comparison of newly acquired data with previously acquired materials:
    - Units—disaggregated data into the smallest part that still stands

alone;

- Categories—developed from triangulated data units;
- Themes—the development of a working hypothesis, based on the emerging units and categories.
- Theory—the working hypothesis tested through member checks and follow-up.

In terms of the trustworthiness of the data collected in qualitative studies, there had been a great deal of debate. Gerdes and Conn (2001, p.6-7) addressed this issue, also, by highlighting the strengths of the process as follows:

- the investigator establishes trustworthiness in a cumulative sense via triangulation, member checks, peer debriefing, and data audits;
- conceivably a "paper trail" exists in a qualitative study, such that one could trace back the data directly to an original conversation (often tape-recorded and transcribed), a document, observation, or log or field note entry in a journal;
- the researcher can verify through an auditing process the dependability (repeatability) and confirmability (that findings are a product of the research process, not researcher bias) of the study.

In the case of qualitative research, trustworthiness does not happen in a linear fashion. Rather it unfolds and emerges along with the flow and the methodological contingencies of the investigation.

The intent of the design of this study was to provide comprehensive and richly descriptive information on how the women in this study make phenomenological meaning of their experiences.

In Chapter Four, I will discuss the results of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

"Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform. Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathy with despised and persecuted ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequences.

Susan B. Anthony

This chapter presents a report of the information found in the background surveys, the semi-structured interviews with spontaneous interview probes, the researcher's field notes and the interview log on the three women in this study.

The results of this study were organized as follows: a) background information from the researcher's field notes; b) biographical and demographic information on the three women; c) the perceptions of the barriers they faced in their careers; d) the strategies they used to overcome those barriers; and e) their recommendations to aspiring female leaders.

Reflections from the Researcher's Field Notes

"All things are possible until they are proved impossible and even the impossible may only be so, as of now. Pearl S. Buck

One of the first challenges that I perceived as almost an insurmountable barrier in this project was scheduling. My original thought was that I would be lucky to get one of the subjects in this study to match her schedules (personal, academic and professional)

with my schedules and timeline for the completion of this research study. Since this project consisted entirely of my "studying up" (researching people in organizational positions higher than mine by two or more steps), I considered this one of the potential realities of the project and was thoroughly prepared to re-design the study for only one or two subjects.

However, I quickly learned that all things were possible due to the commitment that these women had to this project from its inception. Not only did these women fit me into their hectic schedules filled with appointments and meetings that spanned the Western Hemisphere, but they also met with me at various times during and after the duty day. One of the participants even came to me for her interview saving me valuable travel time and expense. Not once did I have to re-schedule an interview and the women were always on time and ready to participate. I allotted one to two hours for each interview. As it turned out, Catherine's interview lasted 45 minutes, Sandra's lasted approximately 60 minutes and Janice's lasted two full hours. If Sandra's schedule had allowed, we probably could have talked for another two hours. This did not surprise me. Sandra will retire from the system in August and so my sense was that she was the most candid of the three; although, all three women are used to choosing their words carefully and are extremely articulate.

Each of the participants exhibited marked self-awareness, either a natural or acquired ability to reflect on the questions and give credible answers, and a genuine sense of the importance of the study and their role in it combined with a sincere effort to provide valuable insights and suggestions to aspiring leaders. The self-awareness and the

ability to reflect could be expected from women at their levels of leadership. The women's willingness to provide valuable insights into their experiences and strategies for success through their individual stories of successes and failures, however, was truly remarkable.

Transcription and Process Notes

The words! I collected them in all shapes and sizes and hung them like bangles in my mind. *Hortense Calisher*

I taped all three interviews with professional recording equipment provided by the professional transcriptionist who was, in actuality, a full-time court stenographer. Before beginning each interview, I reminded each subject that this was a collaborative effort and that she could choose to opt out of the research project at any time. Each of the women was also assured that the information she shared with the researcher via the interview would be held in strictest confidence.

Additionally, I explained to each of the women that this was a project by a woman about women for women that was grounded in phenomenological and feminist methodology with the intent to affect social/systemic change. I informed them that it was about their stories.

Finally, I went over with them the research process. I informed them that we would begin with the biographic and demographic information survey, but that we would do that as an icebreaker and the information they gave me would not be taped. Next would be the actual interviews. Subsequently, the tapes would be professionally

transcribed. I informed the participants that once the transcripts were ready, each of the women would have an opportunity to review the transcripts for editing purposes.

Each participant was told that aside from making corrections, they would also be allowed to actually delete information after re-consideration, but that they should not delete anything, if at all possible. None of the women deleted any pertinent information. We did together, however, scrub the transcripts by creating pseudonyms for anyone named in them, as well as for places or other obvious information that would directly link the women to the transcript.

Each of the women was realistic about the transparency of their identities in spite of the use of pseudonyms in the transcripts; and, if they had any reservations, they did not verbalize them.

Lastly, I explained that I would do the actual coding of their information and the write up, which would be reviewed by my dissertation chair before the paper was published. I also reminded them that this was "our" project and that during the course of the interview I might ask them to elaborate on something they would say or ask them to give me an example. Additionally, they were allowed to make additions to their transcripts, if they felt like they left something out or that they needed to elaborate on something. Only Janice added information to her transcript.

After each interview was over, I carefully labeled the tape, made a copy of it and sent it to a professional transcriptionist to transcribe. The latter took longer than I expected-- however, it also went better than I expected. The only challenge that the transcriptionist and I had to work out was a difference in the numbering of the lines in

each of the transcripts and getting the tapes to him in another city. As it turned out, I had a colleague who lived in that city who was able to deliver them to him, which cut down on the time challenge considerably.

Once I received the electronic version of the transcripts, I sent them to their respective subjects for review with a five-day suspense request. All three women responded within the requested timeframe.

As I waited for the revisions to arrive, I developed a preliminary set of categories of data based on my research questions as seen in Appendix 3. The interview log was maintained with: 1) background information on the subjects' perceptions of working with the military; 2) their views of leadership and women, which was a topic I used basically to ease into the heavier topics that followed as the interview progressed; 3) the barriers they faced; 4) the strategies they used to overcome the barriers; and 5) their recommendations to aspiring female administrators. I was most interested in developing categories based on Lincoln and Guba's (1981, p. 95) guidelines of frequency (or the number of times things were mentioned in the data), credibility with the researcher's audience, and uniqueness. I, also, spent this time reviewing the transcripts myself and "sanitizing" (removing through substitution) any names and places that were directly linked to the participants or anyone or any place else that they mentioned to protect the participants and the people they mentioned in their interviews. Janice was the only one who asked about the use of pseudonyms and I assured her that they would be used throughout her transcript. I, also, assured each of the participants that my chair and I would be the only people reading the transcripts.

Catherine called in to mention one or two minor typographic errors, but was otherwise satisfied with the transcript. Sandra asked that I come to her office, again, to make mostly typographic corrections that were clearly just the product of the transcriptionist not hearing a word or two accurately or not knowing our organization well enough to make out the acronyms that are so entrenched in the military vocabulary. Janice used Microsoft Word's tracking option to make her corrections in red and, then, we spoke on the phone to compare notes. All three participants were satisfied with the content and integrity of their transcripts in the end.

Biographical and Demographic Information on the Three Women

In Chapter Three, I gave a brief introduction to the participants based on public knowledge. Below is some additional, pertinent and / or interesting information that I gleaned from the "Biographic and Demographic Information" Survey found in Appendix 1 that I used as an icebreaker before the taped interview with each of the participants.

As it turned out, this survey instrument worked well enough as an icebreaker, but was inadequate in terms of collecting the specific data it was asking for about their lives, because two out of the three women couldn't remember exact dates or other pertinent information. I see this as a design flaw that could be rectified in the future by allowing the participants to either bring their resumes to the interview with them or by giving them the survey instrument ahead of time.

In the end, all three women gave me copies of their resumes. The following information is a combination of the data from the survey and from their individual

resumes. Catherine was the only woman who used a chronological resume. Sandra and Janice both used experiential resumes that reflected their professional duties.

Catherine

Catherine has worked in the overseas military school system her entire career with the exception of two years as a teacher in the United States. She came overseas when her husband was assigned there in a civilian position. She taught for six years and, then was a counselor for seven years. After teaching and counseling for thirteen years overseas, Catherine became what used to be called an Education Program Manager for a year and served in two different schools. This position no longer exists, but was basically set up as a screening position/ practicum for aspiring assistant principals.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, next she became the acting principal at a middle school for part of the year and, then, the assistant principal. The following four years she would serve as the principal at two different middle schools before earning her first assistant superintendency. Eight years later, Catherine became a superintendent and is currently serving in her second district. Almost all of her professional career has been spent serving the Army overseas and she believed she worked very well with that branch of the service.

When Catherine and I reviewed her transcript together on the phone later, the only thing she strongly suggested we add to the information she provided during her interview was that she felt that earning her Ph.D was a “critical piece” in her career progression. This is, of course, an entirely different point of view than Sandra’s who had no interest in earning a Ph.D and a somewhat different view than Janice about earning her Ph.D Janice

said, “I think doing my doctorate taught me perseverance… that you develop certain skills. One is to look at all aspects of something… I will tell you as you apply for jobs people like to see in their cast of characters the Ed.D and the Ph.D I think they like to see that, and so it has some superficial merit.”

Janice

Janice, also, was basically a career overseas educator. She only taught in the United States for six years prior to entering the overseas military school system. Once she entered the overseas system, she was only a teacher for two years before becoming a teaching principal for three years. She spent twelve years as a superintendent. She was the Education Division Chief for one of the two overseas programs for two years basically developing, creating and staffing the Education Division. She had held her position as Deputy Director for four years in the same overseas program, at the time of this project. Among her many accomplishments and awards, such as the Superintendent of the Year award mentioned in Chapter Three, Janice was selected to Who’s Who in American Education in 2005.

Janice had spent 36 years in education and would officially retire from the system the August after this project. This did not mean, however, that she would retire permanently. She was already considering the options for her next career. She had not settled on her future path as of yet, but she could see herself in various venues. She could see herself as a university professor, but she also had already discovered that her career as an educator had made her extremely marketable in the private, corporate sector as well. She seemed genuinely excited about entering the next phase of her life.

Sandra

Sandra was adamant throughout the interview that she dislikes going to school. She was very proud of the fact that she had succeeded without a Ph.D and that she had no intention of ever getting one. She was twenty-nine years old when she was appointed to her first administrative position and she worked her way up to her current position of the Director of the Overseas Military School system after only 19 years in administration.

Sandra had never worked in the overseas military school system before becoming the director, which was extremely unusual in that system. Career employees held most of the administrative positions throughout the system. The director's position was the longest time period she had ever held one position (seven years) and she said that she thought that it was probably pretty close to time to move on again. She was realistic enough to know at that point, though, that she had to factor in retirement plans; so she suspected that she would stay in federal government, in spite of hating the vastness and inefficiency of the bureaucracy that went with it.

Sandra was the only participant who could basically rattle off her resume including her titles and the years she held each job, in spite of having held eight jobs over the course of the last 34 years. She was obviously proud of the diversity of the positions she filled throughout her career as an elected official and in education, and freely admitted she was always looking for the next challenge. She particularly enjoyed taking on positions that she believed she could do better than the incumbent did.

As one of the two directors of the overseas military school system, she was in charge of a budget of 190 million dollars and was responsible for the overall operation of

eight districts, 117 schools, 7,000 employees and approximately 49,000 students in ten countries.

Sandra was the only one of the three women who worked outside the field of education during her extensive career. She was extremely proud of having been the Secretary of State in her home state, which was equivalent to Lieutenant Governor in other states and was the second highest office in that state. Additionally, she was elected to that position with more votes that any other candidate for any office on the ballot against a candidate who was an incumbent.

The Perceptions of the Barriers They Faced in Their Careers

It was fascinating to see and feel the differences in the three participants views on the barriers they faced during the course of their careers.

Glass Ceiling

Catherine felt that she really only had one major challenge during her career, but it was outside the field of education. After completing her Bachelors Degree in Business Education, she applied to a Masters of Business Education program at a local university only to be told that they did not accept women into that program. Instead she went back to school for a counseling degree and decided to stay in the field of education.

Janice had one experience in the field of education that she will probably never forget; but, in her case, it was not in the overseas military school system. Her experience occurred in her home city. The story follows:

> "I applied for this job, and I was in competition with our assistant principal who was an Italian male. The city was run by the Italian political wheel. I went to the interview and it was down to the two of us. Now, he did have some assistant principal experience, but I'd led committees, I worked for the local

> minority support group, I was working with the NAACP, and they really liked me. The community did because I cared about their kids, and when you're the token white person in a school, it isn't easy, but I loved it and I did train to do that. So, I had some skills. I will never forget I went to the board interview and this guy came out and he had this big grin on his face. I went in and I had my interview. You know how you walk out of an interview and you know you've nailed it and you've got the job, and I will never forget. I came back in on Monday and I'm thinking I'll go check my mailbox, and nothing there, and this was before e-mail and all of that. The courier came in because the courier came from the district and delivered the mail, and the principal called me in and he handed me the letter. I will never forget, and it mad me so angry I didn't get the job. So, I called and they were very blunt. They told me they needed a man in the job, and I went ballistic."

What fascinated me about this story was that Janice's boss at the time was the one who encouraged her to apply for this principalship.

Both these experiences, however, are consistent with Powell and Butterfield (1994, p.69) research findings on the "glass ceiling."

Sandra either did not ever encounter this barrier or she failed to mention any examples of it in her interview.

Good, Old Boys Network/ Gender Stratification / Societal Roles of Women and the Change in These Roles

Catherine mentioned very briefly that the overseas military school system "was at one time the 'old boys' network." She also mentioned later in the interview that things had gotten better, "Well, since I've come into teaching I certainly have seen more women in high school principal-ships. I think that's a big change. There have been more women at the assistant superintendent's level than there were when I first came into teaching in the system." The fact that things had gotten better over time, still does not negate that the "good, old boy" network was in place at an earlier time.

Janice supported this perception in the story she told on pages 67 and 68 about her hometown selecting a male instead of her, “They told me they needed a man in the job.”

Janice, too, felt that things had gotten better as evidenced by the following scenario she related, “Actually, we're seeing more female high school principals; because females were not hired as high school principals, because they couldn't handle it, of course. We were relegated to the elementary schools because we could handle the little ones because we were nurturing and mothering and guys shouldn't have to do that, although there were a lot of male principals at the elementary schools.”

Janice even gave her perception of the timeline of the change when she said, “1988. I think for women in the system things did start to change at that time.”

These experiences mirror Hill and Ragland’s (1995, p.9) findings on the barriers that aspiring female leaders face, which include “male dominance of key leadership “

Since Catherine and Janice were career employees of the overseas military school system and Sandra is not, that would explain why Sandra did not mention it in her interview.

Sandra did mention the change over time, in general, when she was talking about women in leadership positions. She said, “There are many more today than there were when I started. I think there’s a change in attitude about how women are viewed.”

Sandra continued on to say, “I think for the most part I have always been respected. I can't say that people treated me poorly or shabbily as far as respect is concerned. I think there is more of an attitude of, ‘It’s okay if there are more women. It's all right’."

Related to the idea of a “good, old boy” system was Janice’s perception that gender stratification was still alive and well in the southern United States, in at least one of the professional association she belonged to in the States, and in one of the foreign countries where she was a superintendent. Janice’s feelings about the southern United States are evident in the following example, “….Down there it's alive and well, and I was amazed. I remembered checking into the hotel and the guy said, 'You do what? You're from where? You run what?" Conversely, she shared her feelings about the difference in her experiences in the North. She said, “I think that area hit me the most; because, being from the East Coast and being in the Washington, D.C. milieu so much of the time, especially the last 10 years of so, it's very different, very different.”

In terms of the professional association meetings she attended in the States, she cites one example of this phenomenon, “In the United States, you go to the American Association of School Administrators Convention… It’s all the good, old boys get together; and, then, women aren’t a part of that.”

The following example of gender stratification Janice shared very openly and with a sense of amusement at the time of her interview, but it was obvious that she found it incredibly frustrating at the time it occurred. She gave the example in response to my question about whether she faced any unique challenges as a female leader working with the military. The story is as follows.

> “I think, for me, working in the military community there wasn't so much the military; but more like when I was a superintendent in a southern country dealing with a third world country culture which is really in the dark ages, and going and trying to conduct business in that community and having to take a man with me. Because until they realized that I was the boss and I was the one with the checkbook, they weren't going to talk to me because that was the culture.”

Role Conflict

In terms of personal support for their career choices, Catherine and Sandra's parents were supportive.

Janice's mother and father were not initially supportive, but grew to be over time. Again, there was a role expectation that Janice did not fulfill in the eyes of her parents. Janice explained her family background this way,

> I grew up in a lower middle-class family. The expectation was that I would get married, that I would be a secretary, and I still remember when I told my dad that I was going to college I thought he was going to have a major epileptic fit. "No, you're not. We cannot afford that." My mom was supportive. My mom had two years of college. My dad left school at grade eight…"

She elaborated on her mother's background and feelings by adding, "…my mom had had two years of college, and that was during the war, and she never went back. So, she was kind of supportive. She really didn't like the idea of my going to be a teacher, but she was more supportive."

Fortunately, as time went on, her father became more supportive, also. Janice can still remember:

> "I think it was once I got started and was successful. I mean I got good grades and all of that when I was in college. I got better grades in college than I did in high school. Then I think my dad came around and my mom and I think the turning point for them was when I graduated. I never saw my dad cry and I remember him crying at graduation. But, when I did my masters, it was a cultural change for them. I really was the first one to go to college and then I had cousins and stuff who did that."

Catherine's husband has always been supportive of her career; but she suggested that perhaps it was because he was a professional, too, so they had similar hours. "It really helped that he was working long hours and I was working long hours. So, there

wasn't that conflict." Catherine imagined that this was one of the reasons that she had become so successful. Her husband didn't mind her working long hours, because he did, as well. Catherine is the only one of the women that is married and none of the three have children, so they each had limited role conflict issues in that sense.

Janice did have to face this type of role conflict, however, when her father passed away and she had to make the choice of leaving her position overseas, so that she could be with her mother or leaving her mother alone in the States. She told me, "On one side you have the role of the daughter with a mom who has taken care of this man and now he is gone. And she wants you -- and he wants you after the funeral to get back on the plane and go back to work." This is one of the barriers that women face that Pigford and Tonnsen (1993, p.88) describe as the role conflict of "balancing career and family responsibilities."

Systemic Challenges

Sandra considered her challenges systemic, rather than personal. The first frustration or barrier that she talked about centered on the enormity of federal government and the inefficiency of its bureaucracy. She explained that frustration this way-- "The bigness of federal government. My state is a little state and there's not a lot of state government. I mean the legislature meets 20 days one year and 40 days the next and that's it. I got into this and it's a morass of silliness."

Additionally, Sandra was frustrated with the people in headquarters' attitudes ("We are in headquarters, and we are better than you are…") and their unwillingness to listen, which I sensed she saw not only as professional snobbery, but also as a lack of

concern for the people in the schools. She, also shared that she felt that universities and State Boards of Education were "stuck in their ways." Skrla, Reyes and Scheurich (2000, p.65-69) suggest the following related recommendations: …university preparation programs need to include the role of gender in leadership; state agencies and professional organizations need to examine the role of gender; and school boards meet to be trained on gender and power-related issues….

Janice found the overseas school system's lack of caring frustrating. She reported, "I think about when I went to that first assignment. Here I am. I'm a brand new administrator. No one came to supervise me nor did they care, and I still remember this." Kowalski and Stouder (1999, table 3) mention this "lack of collegial support" in their list of the barriers perceived by female superintendents in the state of Indiana.

Women's Unwillingness to Compete

Although Sandra's career progression does not reflect McDade and Drake's (1982, p.214) research findings that, among other things, "women are not usually willing to compete for the top level jobs, she certainly recognized it in the female teachers in our system. She suggested that teachers really are not interested in becoming administrators. "Women teachers want to be teachers. They want to go to work at 8:00, and they want to come home at 4:00. They want their summers off. They want their weekends off."

She went on to challenge me, "Ask your colleagues. No, we do not apply in droves. Some do. Yes, there are some who do, but I think overall we're still fearful. In the States they don't know what to do with school boards. They don't know how to react with them. I think women do not apply in numbers as men do."

The Strategies They Used to Overcome Those Barriers

None of us suddenly becomes something overnight. The preparations have been in the making for a lifetime. Gail Goodwin

Mentors and/or Role Models

All three women mentioned mentors and/or role models in their interviews. According to Sandra, all of her family member role models had been female (her mother and her sisters). In terms of her career, though, when we first began her interview she told the story of a male mentor who told her about the job opening that brought her to the overseas military school system.

Janice mentioned several types of mentors in her professional life— one "true mentor" who was a male principal she worked for when she first entered the system and who was the first person in the system to tell her that she should become a principal. Then she talked about "interim mentors" as being there in certain situations. These interim mentors were male and female and she attributed a lot of her success to these individuals. She also mentioned situational mentors, "Those are kind of situational mentors, but each one of those people along the way—and they are mixed. They're male and female. But, those two that I mentioned really stand out because I think both of them were pivotal for me. If I had not followed Eric's advice, I would not be where I am today. If I had not learned from Joyce, I think that some of the success that I have had with things that I have tried to implement and do, would not have happened because that was a very different way of doing it."

Catherine reported that all her mentors or the supervisors who had promoted her had been male, “I know that the Castle (a pseudonym for one of the two overseas military school system’s headquarters buildings—author’s note) was mainly male, and now as far as my progression the administrators that selected me were all male.” She also mentioned in the part of her interview on leadership and women that perhaps the presence of female role models early on in her career had been significant to her career. She put it this way, “…maybe there were role models, because when I was starting out we already had female superintendents. We had Alice Smith and Jean Brown was the director. There were women. So, you can see that there were women in those positions.

The experiences of these three women are consistent with Kowalski and Stouder (1999, table 3) who suggested that identifying and maintaining a mentor had a positive career influence of women in leadership positions.

The Importance of Teamwork

All three women stressed the importance of teamwork in one way or another. Catherine asserted that the theory of teamwork/collegiality had always been there for her.

Janice stressed, “I think that as a leader you have to build a team that is supporting whatever you want to do, and then you slowly take away the excuses for why, because people will tell you why you can’t do it.” This was obviously an important strategy for her, because she referred to it again later in her list of things that another administrator had taught her. She also noted the change in the times by saying, “Then the third thing, which was a real change from when I did the credentialing, was you’ve got to have a team to support it, and that was really at the end of the 1990’s. Just because you

had the title, people were no longer going to just go ahead and say, 'Oh, the boss said it,' and I've seen that evolve to this day."

Although Sandra didn't use the teamwork, did speak about listening to the people who work for you, which is certainly the same concept. She said, "I think leadership is about listen, listen, listen…When the classroom door goes closed and there are 25 kids in the room with the teacher that's where the rubber meets the road, and if we're not listening there, we're not listening."

Although Sandra volunteered this advice in the leadership and women portion of her interview, it was obvious that she felt that this was a leadership strategy and that she attempted to use that strategy throughout her career, because she mentioned it again in the strategies for success part of her interview. In that part of the interview, she said, "Listen, listen, listen, especially to people below you, because they usually have the answer. If they have a problem, they usually have an answer or a suggestion-- especially if you ask them."

Sandra acknowledged that she was well aware that she couldn't possibly know everything about everything, so she developed a strategy of listening carefully to the people who work for her-- or as was mentioned earlier-- particularly at the building level where "the rubber meets the road." She elaborated, "I haven't developed anything, but I listen. In your school you have people who have developed awesome stuff because they needed to. They had to. Something had to work, and they did. So, I've made lists and shared lists with people. And, I'm thinking about one specific week when we had 17 funerals in one community, and I went there, and I didn't do anything but hug people."

By stressing the importance of teamwork these women have been able to demonstrate their leadership skills and their competence as Erickson and Pinter (1980, p.10) recommend in order for women to succeed.

Do More Than Expected / Women Must Work Harder Than Men

All three of the women felt that hard work and a good attitude were the keys to the successes they had experienced in their careers. They also emphasized the importance of establishing a good working relationship with the military communities with which they interfaced.

Catherine actually summed up very simply the concept of a good attitude with a traditional cliché. She said, “I think attitude—your attitude whether the cup is half full or the grass is green or not greener, whatever.”

Although Catherine tended to talk very quietly and was very calm and composed, she was extremely self-aware and assured about the strategy of doing more than expected in all the positions she held throughout her career. She was clear about saying, “One of the successful strategies as a teacher, counselor, and administrator, I always did much more than my job.” She elaborated, “I was the head of the curriculum committee. I was NCA. I was the junior class sponsor. Whatever they needed I was willing to do because I felt that the classroom was only part of my job. I really had to contribute to the total school. As a result, I worked closely with my administrators and got along with my colleagues and was considered a leader in the school as a classroom teacher-- as a counselor, the same thing. In addition to counseling duties, I was the CSC chair. I was

whatever needed to be done to help make the school successful, and supported the administration."

Catherine added, "Another thing-- when I had an opportunity to become an administrator I took on a very difficult school that others, even experienced administrators, shied away from. I think being willing to take on challenges is another way if you're to be recognized or to get people to look at what you're doing."

Catherine's decision to do more than expected concurs with Erickson and Pinter's (1980, p.10) recommendation that women find ways to demonstrate their competence. They suggested that women do this by showcasing their abilities outside of the classroom; by being willing to take the risk of getting into administration; by publicizing the admirable traits of female administrators in their areas; by viewing themselves as equals; by ignoring the historical prejudice and, instead, using time and performance to remedy the situation.

Janice related the story of her first end-of-year appraisal meeting where all the administrators were supposed to bring their portfolios as a classic example of this. She told the story this way, "…but I will never forget we have a superintendent's meeting and we were all supposed to bring our portfolio for our evaluation. I have never forgotten this. I think, at that time, two of us were women and the other seven were men. Of course I came in and I have a binder. Everything is organized with all my documentation. Actually, I had written the appraisal for it, and then I looked around at what the guys brought which was basically nothing, and afterwards I found out we all got the same rating. I knew that they were not doing a lot of the things that I did, and some

of them were not as respected, and I saw that over and over and over again, and it always kind of bothered me, but of course it wasn't my place."

Janice also spoke about this concept, in general. She expressed these two beliefs this way— 1) "you had to prove you were better than the men, and I always felt that," and 2) "women, even in our system have to show that they've got the skills, and you have to be out there. I mean that's why I've been president of every single professional organization overseas that I could be."

Janice also believed in embracing challenges. She asserted, "I think that challenges—adversity challenges you and makes you stronger if you use everything as a learning experience to develop your skills."

The other personal strategy that Janice spoke about was the fact that she was a "prolific reader" who shared what she read with her subordinates on a regular basis. Pointing to one of the bookcases in her office she said,

> "That stuff there [pointing] is my plain reading. At the end of the year I throw them out. But, I grab a pile and throw them in my briefcase and I read it because I'm going to be in the air for 16 hours, no choice, and probably to some of my staffs dismay because I come back and I have articles that are torn and marked with their name on it, 'Have you thought of this? Have you seen this?' And, all of that. That's another way of doing staff development."

Again, Janice did more than what was expected of her in the position she was in at the time.

Sandra included personal physical fitness as part of her efforts to more than expected. She was very animated as she stressed, "I get up at 5:00 in the morning and I run, and I do 100 sit-ups and 100 push-ups. If I didn't do that I would be mostly crazy. If

you don't react first thing in the morning with some physical energy, you're a slug most of the day because you're not suped up."

It is not hard, then, to see why Sandra also believes that you have to produce. She said it this way, "Execution is everything. Execute or you're worthless. If you can't make it happen, get out the way… You're going to have good scores…Positive attitude…love life…love what you're doing…lots of energy."

The information in this section speaks directly to McDade and Drake's (1982, p. 214) list of the special problems associated with the women respondents includes the belief that women usually must be better than their male competitors to be considered for administrative positions

On a positive note, all of the above reflections by the participants echo Erickson and Pinter's (1980, p.10) recommendation that women find ways to demonstrate their competence. Erickson and Pinter suggest that women do this by showcasing their abilities outside of the classroom; by being willing to take the risk of getting into administration; by publicizing the admirable traits of female administrators in their areas; by viewing themselves as equals; by ignoring the historical prejudice and, instead, using time and performance to remedy the situation.

These women seem to have followed Erickson and Pinter's advice with or without consciously knowing these authors' recommendations; but, it entirely possible that the three women have read the authors' work somewhere along the way on their professional development trail.

Recommendations to Aspiring Female Leaders

We write our own destiny. We become what we do.

Madame Chang Kai-Shek

Goal Setting and Evaluation, Flexibility and Readiness / Self-awareness and Success

All three women stressed the importance of having goals and about evaluating those goals realistically. They also recommended that women should ensure that their goals are flexible. Most importantly in terms of the goal setting, perhaps, they stressed the need to be ready when opportunities arise.

Related to the goal setting recommendation is the concept need for self-awareness. All of the aforementioned concepts are discussed in this section; although the original information is found throughout each of the women's transcripts.

Catherine offered the following advice on goal setting-- "I would say think about what your goals are and what you really want to accomplish, and what really interests you. Because I think sometimes people go in thinking that they want to be at this level or that level, but they haven't really thought about what does all that mean, or what are some things that you have to do because it is very different."

She reiterated this concept just a little later in the interview by saying, "So, think about what it is that you really want because you want to make sure that you're excited about what you're doing because if you're not if you just there because of the title then you're not going to be able to do the same things you need to do for the people out in the schools."

To continue on with the concept of goal setting and making sure that you really want the job you're applying for, Sandra elaborated on Catherine's advice. She said, "If you're not going to be happy doing a role like that, don't do it. You're not in schools everyday. You're not working with kids every day. You're not even working with principals everyday. There are a lot of people up above you that frustrate the dickens out of you, and you got to live with it…"

Janice expanded on this theme even more by talking about having goals and being ready, "I think you have to set your goals. As I said I think you have to have the path laid out. You can't leave it to circumstance and happenstance. The goal can change. There is no question about that, and that's okay. You've always got to be going somewhere. If you're going to wait for it to happen to you, you might as well forget it.

She elaborated by adding, "I would tell people to start right now working on the résumés. I would tell them to start drafting KSA's that they only need to tweak, and the reason for that is when the announcement comes out you're under so much pressure."

Sandra's comments about goal setting and readiness are similar, but she adds her personal philosophy about her selection thought process—"Do the goals. Get there. And, I think you should have energy. You can't be a slug and think, 'Somebody is going to choose me because I'm a woman and there's a quota, so it's my turn.' Wrong answer for me."

Sandra also discussed the fact that sometimes you have to do things you don't particularly want to do to get where want to go and that you have to create your own opportunities. She offers the following advice to aspiring female leaders—

> "I didn't like it that they took me from that school and said you're going to do special education, but once I got over it, I got home and said, 'What's the issue here? There's a challenge here. Why wouldn't you want to fix this? You're already irritated with special education in your school,' but we fixed it in our school."

She emphasized that even if you don't like the job you've been given, look at it as a challenge and do it well.

Sandra goes into more detail about being ready for the actual application and selection process. She says,

> "...you have to have a strategy. If it takes three years being an assistant get those three years under your belt, and get your paperwork in, and keep it up to snuff, and be ready when somebody says there's an interview. When something is posted, pay attention. Go regularly to the whatever it is site where that stuff is. Know how to get there and do it every week. It's the season. You know they're going to be postings, and be ready."

Sandra also commented on the fact that she did not think women were particularly good at developing a strategy—"I think women are not good strategizers generally, and we need to be better. If you have a goal, and you should, then you need to be strategic in how you approach it."

Janice brought in the idea of flexibility in relation to goal setting, "I think the other thing when you set that goal you need to look at what you have to do to get there. It's not always A to B to C. You might go A to B to D and then back to C and then on to B just because that's the situation at the time." This seemed to be an important theme for Janice. She also spoke to it earlier in her interview when we were talking about strategies for success-- "I think that you just have to be strong, and know that you're right. If you can't go from A to B, maybe you have to go from A to C and then B, and that's okay. I think sometimes people aren't successful because they're not willing to do that.

Catherine, Janice and Sandra's comments on the recommendation for women to set goals, replicate two of the findings of Kowalski and Stouder (1999, table 5) on the perceptions regarding actions that had a positive career influence on women's careers – women needed to rely on flexible goals and they needed to consistently evaluate their personal strengths and weaknesses. Their comments also are aligned with Arons' (1980, p.8) feelings on staff development programs for potential administrators. He recommends that staff development for administrators should "concern themselves with the training and expansion of the individual's style flexibility, as well as the development of the skills to diagnose situational demands."

Additionally, Janice and Sandra's specific job application strategies and all the women's advice on setting goals and evaluating them to make sure their goals are truly ones you want to reach and, therefore your level of self-awareness, spoke to one of the barriers that Hill and Ragland (1995, p.9) discuss—lack of career positioning. Women must learn to set goals and to do whatever the system in which they are working requires in terms of experience and in terms of applying for upper level management positions. Women must also overcome both external barriers, such as lack of professional preparation and internal barriers, such as lack of confidence, low aspiration and negative self-image, as Pigford and Tonnsen (1993, p.88) found in their research on women attempting to enter into the field of administration.

Related to the concept of goal setting and to Pigford and Tonnsen's findings, is the concept of women having to have enough self-awareness to set appropriate goals that they can live with, recognizing what they are lacking in order to be a successful candidate

for positions, and being aware enough to recognize when they are having difficulty applying for those jobs and why.

One example of this was when Catherine questioned her desire to become a stateside superintendent. This is an interesting case of advising women to know what they do not want to do, as well as what they want to do. Her reflection follows.

> "I'm not sure I would want to pursue a stateside superintendency, because they spend a lot of time with the board... The nice thing here in our system is you really can focus on education. You don't have to be out fund-raising and passing bond issues or working with the board. You really can spend your time looking at how to make the school system better, and how to support the kids and the teachers and the administrators."

Janice, in the section on barriers in her interview, had enough self-awareness to both know that she wanted to be a superintendent and that she needed to improve her marketability for that position by deepening her administrative experiences, "I mean I was in an elementary school, and I knew if I wanted to be a superintendent I had to have secondary experience."

Later in that same part of the interview, she talked about another issue that illustrates her self-awareness-- "I think the hardest thing I've ever done is getting ready to retire writing up my résumé and writing up letters telling people how wonderful I am because they don't know me in America. That's very hard to do…" On the other hand, there was a time in her life where she was only partially self-aware. She told me, "I never thought I was going to be a principal, but I hated my principals. I thought they were terrible. I can do better than this, and I will." She did not know she wanted to be a principal, but she did know that she could do the job better than her boss.

Sandra was very animated about the topic of self-awareness and she spent a good deal of time expanding on the topic. Later in the section on recommendations, she had this to say:

> "... you do have to know yourself and you have to have success. You have to have been successful. Success breeds success. You have to surround yourself with people who can help you. One person does not change the world. I have around me the very best people I could possibly choose. If I were in a position where I couldn't choose them, I would try to make them into the very best person who can help me when I need help, or do what needs to get done."

So, Sandra's advice to other aspiring women on the topic of self-awareness may very well relate to her advice of "either work the problem or get out of the way." In order to do either of the aforementioned, you have to know yourself.

Professional Skills, Abilities and Experiences

Catherine, Janice and Sandra recommended that aspiring female administrators all hone their professional skills, abilities and experiences, if they want to succeed.

Catherine gave specific examples of how to do this in the section of her interview on strategies for success. She used herself as and example—"when I became an assistant principal I worked really hard to learn everything I could about what a principal did or what had to be done, and anything that the principal needed doing I was willing to do." A little later in the same part of her interview she elaborated, "...whenever I was an assistant principal or assistant superintendent, I was always watching and observing my principals or superintendents to see how they did things to really instill those good things that they did and really utilize that." In her actual section on recommendations to aspiring female administrators she reiterated this comment by adding that in order to succeed you

need the following-- "good attitude, willing to be a team player, willing to do whatever needs to be done"

As reported earlier under strategies for success, Janice maintained, " Women, even in our system have to show that they've got the skills, and you have to be out there. I mean that's why I've been president of every single professional organization overseas that I could be."

Sandra had two suggestions about the necessity for honing your professional skills, abilities and experiences.

> First, "I think you have to know your stuff. You have to be a good educator. You have to have made your mark" Secondly, "You have to have come through the ranks and know what it takes, probably been there and done that, and all of those kinds of things, though I should say that lightly. I was never an assistant principal. I was never an assistant superintendent. I was only a superintendent for two or three months. It was not like I jumped on every stone and stood there, learned it all, knew it all, and did it all. I didn't."

Although Sandra's second suggestion may sound like "do as I say, not as I do, this probably was not the case, since Sandra began her career outside of the overseas military school system where one is able to jump ranks, so to speak. This was not the case in the overseas military school system where she was working at the time of her interview. In other words, this recommendation was one that she was making specifically to the women in our organization. Sandra actually warns the women in our system about taking advantage of the professional development opportunities that the overseas military school system offers. She reminds the women in our system, "In this system there's a lot of professional training that goes on. If people choose not to take advantage of it-- well, wrong answer. I'm going to go looking." In other words, she expects the women in our

organization to take advantage of those opportunities, if they expect to move up in the system.

Arons (1990, p.8) discussed the need for professional development programs for potential administrators and what they should include. Arons suggested that they "should concern themselves with the training and expansion of the individual's style flexibility, as well as the development of the skills to diagnose situational demands."

These three women are all in different places with different roles in the overseas military school system and they all have very different backgrounds, but this chapter suggests that they share a great deal philosophically.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, this study analyzed how three higher-level female administrators made phenomenological meaning and sense of their success. This was in keeping with Lester's view-- "the purpose of phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation…" (Lester, 1999, p.1).

The three women in this project provided what Shenton and Dixon (2004, p.1) described as the essence of qualitative research-- "the emphasis of qualitative research lies in the exploration of a particular phenomenon at length, typically through the collection and analysis of subjective data from a relatively small number of "participants" involved in the processes, circumstances or situations at the heart of the inquiry."

The results of this study also reflect what feminists recommend in terms of a dialogue between the subject and object of research there is reciprocal influence and a mutual exchange of knowledge and experience (Shields and Dervin 1993, p. 5).

It also reflects Marshall's (2000, p.699) view that the recent qualitative studies that place women at the center of the research are important for the understanding and support of women in leadership positions.

Gilligan (1993, p.173) affirmed that research on adult women, in general, was needed. She claimed, "Among the most pressing items on the agenda for research of adult development is the need to delineate in women's own terms the experience of their adult life."

Feminist critical theory also called for research that encouraged societal change. Lester (1999, p. 1) suggested this was one of the strengths of phenomenological research when she said, "Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions." When you added an interpretive dimension to phenomenological research, you enabled it to be used as the basis for practical theory. You allowed it to inform, support or challenge policy and action. The recommendations of these women will, hopefully, provide other women the opportunities and means to challenge policies and act to correct any real injustices inside or outside of the system. This is in keeping with Acker (1994, p.57) who suggests that the purpose of this research is to improve women's lives.

In Chapter Five, I will summarize the study and make suggestions for future study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

"The history of all times, and of today especially, teaches that…women will be forgotten if they forget to think about themselves."

Louise Otto

Lessons Learned

Rusch (2004, p.14) purported that, "John Dewey dreamed of a dynamic democracy where gender, race, class, and territory were no longer barriers to participation. As the 21st century moves forward, that dream is still largely unfulfilled."

The findings in this study are not earth shattering, but they are meaningful. These women all grew up in the United States in different parts of the country in different family situations, post-World War II, and witnessed the struggle for both gender and racial equality during the second half of the 20th century.

When I began this study I assumed that all three women would perceive and/or have experienced the same types of barriers in their professional careers. This was not the case. Each of these women faced different obstacles with only a few commonalities.

What all three women did share was the ability to adapt to the circumstances beyond their control and to develop strategies either consciously or sub-consciously to overcome the obstacles that were placed in their paths.

The above strategies were consistent with the research done by Kowalski and Stouder (1999; table 5) regarding actions that had a positive career influence. They reported: identified and maintained a mentor; relied on flexible goals; attended seminars

on career planning; identified and maintained sponsors; consistently evaluated personal strengths and weaknesses; became more visible professionally; obtained support from family and friends; developed/utilized ‘new girl’ network; gained leadership experience outside of education.

What did not surprise me was that each woman felt differently about her experiences. For example, one participant felt that aside from one academic obstacle early in her life that forced her to change her career goal, she really hadn’t face any substantial barriers to success and she was just grateful that she had basically always been in the right place at the right time, and had succeeded through hard work and being a team player that her superiors could count on for taking on any challenge they needed for her to take on.

One participant felt very strongly that she always created her own success through thoughtful, determined strategy development based on her perception that each position she attained, she pursued based on her belief that she could do the job better than the man in the position at the time.

The third participant felt that she just always loved a challenge and was determined to see more of the world than her family had.

Another lesson learned was that there were advantages and disadvantages of the demographic survey and semi-structured interview. In terms of the demographic survey which was designed as an icebreaker, its effectiveness was extremely limited in terms of the memories of the participants. Only one of the women was able to remember the information required by this tool. The other two women had to provide me with resumes

later to address the career path portion of this tool. The survey needs to be redesigned to ask questions that the participants can answer effectively and easily. Asking the participants for copies of their resumes either at the time of the interview or beforehand would be a better strategy for obtaining the career path portion of this tool.

Regarding the semi-structured interview, the positive aspect was that it provided for the richness of data required by this type of research by my being able to put the women at ease and develop rapport with them. The downside was that they did not have a lot of time to reflect on their answers until the time when they were able to review their transcripts. A combination of interviews and written questions might provide another dimension to the richness of data obtained in this type of study.

Challenges of the Study

The major challenge of the study was that the more I read, the more I wanted to read, and research, and write. Limiting the scope of the project as my reading touched on more and more of the myriad of personal, social, political, and societal challenges of being a woman in the past and even in today's world was extremely difficult.

The information available on this topic is still sparse, but only in the sense of everything being relative. Slowly, but surely over the course of the last twenty years, more women are learning to research and to write about their experiences and their issues and their ways of overcoming obstacles and resolving issues. I found myself more and more frustrated by what I did not know and what I wanted to learn so that, at times, it was difficult to keep the focus on just the experiences of the three subjects in this study.

Related to the challenge of narrowing the topic and keeping it narrowed, was the challenge of time. Working full-time as a building level administrator with 850 students and over 100 employees in a community where the majority of breadwinners are either in a war zone, returning from a war zone, or going to a war zone and where the schools are the stabilizing factor in their children's and even the parents' lives seemed, at times, an overwhelming task. As the research suggests, balancing motherhood, a profession, and an academic life proved as difficult as the interview committee informed our cohort it would be, if not more so.

I would like to re-iterate, however, that the major challenge the researcher faced in this endeavor was learning how little she knew and how much more she would like to learn-- and doing something with the knowledge she gained. Learning for the sake of learning is all well and good, but using what you learn is the price of the gift of learning that needs to be passed on to others in return.

Last, but not least, the challenges were well worth the effort.

Implications for Women Administrators

According to all three women in this study, the opportunities for women to succeed in the upper levels of school administration have improved since they first began their careers. That said, they still made it perfectly clear that they feel that women still have to work harder than men do and that more is expected of women than of men. Whether the latter is fact or fiction is immaterial. The reality is that is their perception. None of the three women complained about it, per se. They just stated it as their perception and, then, shared how they dealt with that particular feeling. However, it

also means that aspiring women need to be aware that they may face challenges even in today's world.

Secondly, all three women recognized that they needed to have a plan in order to succeed. That plan centered around hard work, a positive attitude and working over, under, around or through whatever adversity they faced. They all seemed to embrace challenge and revel in the victories they won.

Last, but not least, it was interesting that none of the women sounded bitter or pessimistic. Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that most women do not consider themselves a minority group. This is in keeping with Macionis (2000, p.242): "On the basis of their distinctive identity and social disadvantages, women are a minority, although most do not think of themselves that way."

In other words, things have gotten better, so there is hope; but we still have a ways to go before have full gender inclusion, not to mention racial and class equity.

Recommendations for Future Study

There are several recommendations for further study.

The first recommendation would be to do a follow-up case study on any one or all three of the women including interviews and/or questionnaires based on the perceptions of the women's subordinates and superiors past and present to add more depth to these women's experiences by seeing them through other people's eyes.

The same research questions need to be posed to men and women of various ethnicities to see if their perceptions matched the perceptions of these women.

A contemporary comparison needs to be done of women in fields outside of education to see if the perceived barriers and strategies for overcoming them are the same. A contemporary comparison also needs to be done between stateside superintendents and overseas superintendents not only in terms of gender issues, but also in general so that the best practices of both groups may be heard and shared and disseminated.

What would be particularly helpful would be a well-funded, national level study of female superintendents past and present to compare their perceptions of the barriers to their success and their strategies for overcoming them in an historical context. Even one or two generations may show a difference in the level of perceived difficulties or challenges that women face in their professional lives.

An international study of women in educational leadership is also needed, not just in first world countries, but in a variety of developed and developing countries, so that we may share the lessons learned and the best practices that are already in place.

Comparing the perceptions of women in particular leadership positions at different ages/stages of their lives is needed to see if there are life passages or stage differences in their perceptions.

Regarding the interview protocol, it would be interesting and/or significant to include questions regarding participants' views on feminism and if they see themselves as feminists, since during the course of this study not once did any of the women mention, or even allude, to the word "feminist." It would be interesting to see if the women in the

upper levels of management perceive themselves as feminists and, if so, how that influences who they are and what they do.

Conclusion

The women in this study have experienced a variety of barriers to success many times in their professional lives, but have always overcome them, through sometimes different, but more often strategies they share in common, probably without even knowing it on a conscious level.

All three women are self-aware, bright, well-educated, articulate and confident, but not arrogant. They are all deeply dedicated to their profession. Each of the women could be researched as an individual case study and, I suspect, still not scratch the surface of their wisdom.

The three women in this study were not soldiers, but rather were civilians who serve the military overseas day in and day out quietly, but courageously. In many ways, they were gentle, but powerful women warriors in their own right who do battle in a myriad of ways every day that they don their professional garb and enter the arena of their workplaces. Their strength of character is evident. They are opinionated, but they are also trained listeners who have learned to wait and watch before they jump into the fray.

I still don't know these women well, but I would offer the following poem (Vega 1994, as cited by Brunner in Buttingol, 2003, p.442) as, perhaps, both a composite of the philosophies of Sandra, Janice and Catherine and as inspiration to other women either already in or aspiring to upper level management positions in education or elsewhere:

The Warrioress Creed

A Warrioress…
Is honorable;
Has strength, determination, and perseverance;
Is magical and optimistic;
Is wise and powerful;
Revels in silence;
Can appreciate both inner and outer beauty;
Is dedicated to the sacredness of her life;
Loves to live fully;
Is unwavering in her quest for the infinite;
Is respectful;
Can commit to those she deems worthy;
Can let go of what is no longer useful, or necessary; is compassionate;
Possesses the will to walk away from illusion;
Is willing to trust and surrender when appropriate;
Has extraordinary vision and clarity;
Faces fears head on;
Believes.

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Appendix 1

Biographic and Demographic Information Survey

Highest degree earned _____

Undergraduate major _____

Graduate major(s) _____ _____

Number of years as a classroom teacher _____

Age when appointed to first administrative position _____

How many years have you served as an administrator _____

Number of years in DODDS _____

Total number of years in education _____

Number of years in present position _____

Longest position held _____

Current Position Title _____

Please list (in sequence) your career path:

	Position	Start/End Dates	Age	Location
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

Appendix 2

Interview Protocol

DoDDS/Military/Life Overseas

What made you decide to go to work for DoDDS?
What is the difference between working in DoDDS and working in a stateside system?
Have you ever served in the military?
How would you describe your professional relationship with the military?
How important is the partnership between DoDDS and the military community?

Leadership

What is your personal philosophy of leadership?
Has there been a change in the role of women in educational leadership?
To what do you attribute the under-representation of women in educational leadership?
Why do you think there are more women in leadership positions in DoDDS?
What about your role brings you the most satisfaction?
What about your role brings you the most dissatisfaction?

Barriers

What barriers to success have you faced in your professional life?
Has working with the military created any unique barriers in your life?
Describe one major challenge in your professional life and describe how you overcame it.

Strategies for Success

What particular strategies have you used to become successful in your career?
What strategies have you used to overcome the barriers to success that you faced?
Are there strategies for success that you feel are unique to the military community?
Is Affirmative Action a help or a hindrance to women?

Recommendations to Aspiring Female Leaders

What are your suggestions or recommendations to other women who may want to go into the upper levels of school administration?
What are your suggestions or recommendations to other women who may want to go into the upper levels of administration in DoDDS?

Appendix 3

Interview Log

Interview locations: Researcher's Conference Room and, Janice's, and Sandra's Conference Rooms

Interview dates: 5/1/06, 5/3/06, 5/5/06

Interview times: 1300, 0700, 1630

Special conditions (noise, interruptions, etc): One short interruption during Janice and Sandra's interviews

Tape numbers: C1, J1 & 2, and S1

Key themes: Identified in chart below

Tape position	Respondent's comments	Researcher's notes	Research references
	Overseas military school system		
C1--22-24 & 2--1	So, a big difference is that the overseas military school system only hired people to teach in their area that they were certified in.	Military system advantage	
C3--1-2	...as a teacher, administrator, and counselor I've always found the Army command very supportive.	Military system advantage	
C4--18-19	I believe so only because this is what they tell us when the NCA people come over to visit our schools. (military partnership stronger overseas)	Military system advantage	
J3--1-7	Where else in the world can a school administrator or even someone on our level get on the phone with someone's commander, and say, "Look, I have one of your servicemembers who is not doing the right thing by their child. I need your help." In America you don't have that kind of leverage.	Military system advantage	

J4--3-10	In this setting we take the kids to those sites. I as an educator have seen them. I've been to the Maginot line. I have been able to take kids as a teacher to see the Coliseum in Rome. I think in our system being here the educational program is so enriched because it's not a one-dimensional picture on page 63 of the textbook, but it's living and it's happening.	Military system advantage	
J5--12-19	I also think that we are so well resourced by the government...the fact that we have a curriculum renewal cycle that every five to six years we have new textbooks. We have new materials. We revisit our standards.	Military system advantage	
J7--24 & 8--1-3	I think when we implement new curricula, and I read and I also talk to my stateside counterparts, to do what is educationally researched and sound is often difficult in the school board setting.	Military system advantage	
J8--5-6	We have our Advisory Committee on Dependents education. We have the Dependents Education Council, and we brief them on what we are going to do, but we do not ask non-educators to bless what we want to do.	Military system advantage	
S--3--12-18	The education that we deliver is the same, but our relationship with our community is much, much different because the mayor in this community has bars or stars, and can kick people out. In downtown America, the mayor has no bars or stars and can't kick anybody anywhere. So, the problems you have to deal with stateside are much harder to deal with then they are here.	Military system advantage	
J7--18-19	...we don't have to float bond issues	Military system advantage	

	Leadership and women		
C9--1-11	Well, I think in the population there are more women in the school system and the progression for promotions has -- up until a few years ago you had to be in the system in order to get promoted. At one time counseling was a promotion, and I guess it still is because you get on a different salary scale. So, you have to be working in the system to get that. You had to be working in the system to become an assistant principal or principal or assistance superintendent and a superintendent. So, the pool that we were drawing from was mainly, I think, a larger female pool than male pool.	Advantage for women in overseas system	
C9--18-21	And, it also could be that we are federal employees and there is more emphasis on equal opportunity trying to make sure that we have representation from all different areas.	Advantage for women in overseas system	
C10--11-12	Well, if I changed something, I suppose it would be looking at ways to change our personnel system so that we could make sure that we have the very best teachers in the classroom.	Dissatisfaction	
J41--17-18	(Dissatisfaction)...is when the organization makes decisions to please a political entity.	Dissatisfaction	
J43--11-13	(Dissatisfaction)I think sometimes also we don't want to step up to the plate when we have, I'll call them, a bad apple.	Dissatisfaction	
S9--14-18	The bigness of federal government. My little state is a little state and there's not a lot of state government. I mean the legislature meets 20 days one year and 40 days the next and that’s it. I got into this and it's a morass of silliness.	Dissatisfaction	

C28--3-7	...maybe there were role models because when I was starting out we already had female superintendents. We had Alice Smith and Jean Brown (pseudonyms) was the director. There were women. So, you can see that there were women in those positions.	Female role models	Kowalski and Stouder (1999; table 5) list the following as perceptions regarding actions that had a positive career influence: identified and maintained a mentor; relied on flexible goals; attended seminars on career planning; identified and maintained sponsors; consistently evaluated personal strengths and weaknesses; became more visible professionally; obtained support from family and friends; developed/utilized 'new girl' network; gained leadership experience outside of education. **STRATEGY**
J30--18-22	In the U.S., "You go to the Amer. Assoc. of School Admin. Convention…It's all the good old boys get together and then women aren't a part of that."	Good old boys	
C5--21	Theory of teamwork/collegiality has always been there for her (paraphrase)	Importance of teamwork	
J13--19-22	I think that as a leader you have to build a team that is supporting whatever you want to do, and then you slowly take away the excuses for why because people will tell you why you can't do it.	Importance of teamwork	
J15--4-5	The second one was that you have to keep your enemies close.	Leadership Advice	
J15--5-6	One was you never argue with anybody who buys ink by the barrel. Interesting -- the media.	Leadership Advice	In relation to the lack of political savvy, Tallerico, Burstyn and Poole (1993, p.17) found that such things as the ability to: understand school board politics; analyze external and political influences on the board-superintendent relationship; understand the media's influence on shaping, expanding, or constraining conflict; be aware of school board turnover and the knowledge of how to prevent, cope with, or capitalize on it; deal with the endless scrutiny on the job; and foresee the predictable mobilization of teacher or administrative union forces all indicate the need for increased attention to political skills building. **BARRIER**

J15--12-17	Then the third thing, which was a real change from when I did the credentialing, was you've got to have a team to support it, and that was really at the end of the 1990's. Just because you had the title people were no longer going to just go ahead and say, "Oh, the boss said it," and I've seen that evolve now to this day.	Leadership Advice	
S4--6 & 10-14	...I think leadership is about listen, listen, listen…When the classroom door goes closed and there are 25 kids in the room with the teacher that's where the rubber meets the road, and if we're not listening there, we're not listening.	Leadership Advice	
S6--9-13	Teachers don't want to be administrators. Women teachers want to be teachers. They want to go to work at 8:00, and they want to come home at 4:00. They want their summers off. They want their weekends off. They do not want to be administrators.	Leadership and Women	McDade and Drake's (1982, p. 214) list of the special problems associated with the women respondents in their study is similar in many ways to the above. They found that: women usually must be better than their male competitors to be considered for administrative positions; successful women are usually viewed as the exception; aggressiveness in women (unlike in their male counterparts) is seen as a negative trait; women frequently do not receive the salary, title, and status to match their job responsibilities; women are not usually willing to compete for the top level jobs. **BARRIER**
S6--18-23	Ask your colleagues. No, we do not apply in droves. Some do. Yes, there are some who do, but I think overall we're still fearful. In the States they don't know what to do with school boards. They don't know how to react with them. I think women do not apply in numbers as men do.	Leadership and Women	Arons' research (1980, p.8) demonstrated that although women possess as much administrative ability as men, attention still needs to be paid to the career paths of potential females in terms of encouraging them to enter administrative fields, to ensuring that they obtain adequate preparation for administrative certification, and to seeing that they enter the applicant pools in numbers relatively equal to their male counterparts. **RECOMMENDATION**
J1--9-10	"Sandra, this sounds just like you. You'd do a great job here. Apply for this. Love, Craig."	Mentor	
J26--7-8	I think in federal government, in particular, the role of women has been recognized and accepted.	Military system advantage	

S7--4-6	I think because of the milieu. When there is something that has to do with a misbehaving student you know you can go to the mayor.	Military system advantage	
J27--22-23	…in the United States…women do not establish the networks like men do. (response to 2000 Census on male dominance of superintendency+C59)	Networking	Granovetter (1974, p.22) notes, "Personal contacts are of paramount importance to connecting people to jobs." The best jobs, the ones that are highest paid, that afford the most satisfaction and prestige, are the most apt to be filled this way. **Strategy**
J28--5	Was told she needed "to learn to play golf."	Networking	
J28-16-18	I think that in the military community by the very nature of the fact that we are in a community that we are forced into certain kinds of relationships by virtue of the community and you're known and you're out there. In the States that doesn't necessarily happen.	Networking	
J31--1 & 7-9	You need to interject yourself into the male groups. "It's a skill you learn in the military community, which I think would be really helpful to females in the United States."	Networking	
C5--6-7	...I think that it's important when you are the leader that you make sure that you're taking care of the people that you're trying to lead, and that you make sure that they're following you, because it's kind of hard to lead if you don't -- if you are unable to generate that support that people believe that what you're doing is something that they need to follow.	Nurturing	
J26--10-13	…at the beginning there were a lot of slurs…"Well, did you sleep with him?"	Perception that women are not capable of doing the job	
J22--24 & 25--1-7	Was appointed a male mentor and in less than a year she became his mentor instead. Then became his boss (paraphrase)	Role reversal	
C10--1-2	Being able to go into a school and see the wonderful progress that we can provide for children.	Satisfaction	
J37--2-3	(Satisfaction) I think when I have had the opportunity to impact a child.	Satisfaction	

J39--19-21	(Satisfaction) The other thing for me in this job that is very rewarding is when I see our teachers or administrators grow because of something we did.	Satisfaction	
S8--7-8	Visiting schools is probably my favorite thing to do, and visiting with teachers after school.	Satisfaction	
S8--12-17	I like that everywhere I go I have lunch with the kids. I particularly like just to talk with the kids and listen to what they have to say about their schools and what's going on in their lives. I actually don't mind the meetings with the leadership, commanders and like that, and there are lots of them.	Satisfaction	
J22--15	"I can do that. If he can do, that I can do that."	Self-confidence	
J16--18	Has there been a change in the role of women in the educational leadership over the years? Yes, definitely.	Societal change in role of women	
J22--4-11	Actually, we're seeing more female high school principals; because females were not hired as high school principals, because they couldn't handle it, of course. We were relegated to the elementary schools because we could handle the little ones because we were nurturing and mothering and guys shouldn't have to do that, although there were a lot of male principals at the elementary schools.	Societal change in role of women	
J24--23-24	1988. I think for women in the system things did start to change at that time.	Societal change in role of women	
S5--21-24 & 6--1-2	There are many more today than there were when I started. I think there's a change in attitude about how women are viewed. I think for the most part I have always been respected. I can't say that people treated me poorly or shabbily as far as respect is concerned. I think there is more of an attitude of, "It's okay if there are more women. It's all right."	Societal change in role of women	
J22--11-12	I think the system now has evolved and I think a lot of that has to do with women's rights.	Societal change in role of women--reason for change	

C6--6-10	Well, since I've come into teaching I certainly have seen more women in high school principalships. I think that's a big change. There have been more women at the assistant superintendent's level than there were when I first came into teaching in the system.	Societal change in role of women	
C6--16-21	Well, I think that one thing is we have women who made a decision to have a career as opposed to a job where they follow their husband, and so as a result of that, we have women that are looking for challenging opportunities. So, they've gone from teaching to other leadership roles in the school system.	Societal change in role of women	
C7--1-11	Well, I think it's a societal change. There are certainly more women now in all professions than there were when I went to undergraduate school because when I went to undergraduate school in the late 1960's you could be either a teacher, a nurse, or a secretary. Well, you didn't have to go to college to be a secretary, but those were the three professions that a lot of women were encouraged to go into. So, a lot of women were encouraged to go into teaching. Whereas now young women are going into all professions, and of course, there are more women now going to universities than there are men.	Societal change in role of women	
J34--23-24 & 35--1-3	There is still that belief that women can do certain jobs... They can teach in an elementary school. They are good to be nurses and the administrative assistant and get the coffee and that kind of stuff. There is still a lot of that.	Societal role of women	Through the socialization process, people link gender to personal identity (gender identity) and behavior (gender roles). · Through the socialization process, people link gender to personal identity (gender identity) and behavior (gender roles). · Although most women are now in the paid labor force, a majority holds clerical or service jobs. Unpaid housework remains a task performed mostly by women. Macionis (2000, p.242) **BARRIER**
J35--24 & 36--1-2	In the southern U.S…."Down there it's alive and well, and I was amazed. I remembered checking into the hotel and the guy said, 'You do what? You're from where? You run what?"	Societal role of women	

J36--9-15	I think that area hit me the most because being form the East Coast and being in the Washington, D.C. milieu so much of the time, especially the last 10 years of so, it's very different, very different.	Stateside regional role differences	
J33--10-11	Women may be different overseas. "I think anyone who goes to a foreign country has to have some special quality…the people that work in the stateside military schools are there for life, they grew up there."	Women as risk-takers overseas	
S7--21-24 & 8--1-3	I think that is true--the adventure part. Women who are teachers in the States have their house, their family, their whatever, and their husband has a job there in town and they like it just like that. Here, women come sometimes single and move through the system and are not dependent on a certain partner or a job that that person has, or a family, or something like that.	Women as risk-takers overseas	
J25-- 17-24 & 26--1	J came prepared to the appraisal. Men came with nothing and got the same rating (paraphrase)	Women must work harder then men to proved themselves	McDade and Drake's (1982, p. 214) list of the special problems associated with the women respondents in their study is similar in many ways to the above. They found that: women usually must be better than their male competitors to be considered for administrative positions; successful women are usually viewed as the exception; aggressiveness in women (unlike in their male counterparts) is seen as a negative trait; women frequently do not receive the salary, title, and status to match their job responsibilities; women are not usually willing to compete for the top level jobs. **BARRIER**
C8--8	Doesn't know why there are less women in upper management in the U.S. (paraphrase)		

	Barriers		
C11--8-13	Women not allowed in the Masters of Business Administration program when she wanted to do that. Stayed in education because of that.	Glass ceiling	The “glass ceiling” which is defined as: “those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization” (Powell and Butterfield, 1994, p.69) **BARRIER**
S15--1-4	"We are in headquarters, and we are better than you are, and we know more than you, or you wouldn't be there and we wouldn't be here,"-- those kinds of attitudes.	External barrier	
S29--12-14	Universities and State Boards of Education are stuck in their ways in the past	External barrier	
J46--5-8	I think about what happened, you know. I think about when I went to that first assignment. Here I am I'm a brand new administrator. No one came to supervise me, nor did they care, and I still remember this.	External barrier	Kowalski and Stouder (1999, table 3) list the following as barriers perceived by female superintendents in the state of Indiana: lack of family support, lack of employment opportunity, gender discrimination, lack of collegial support, familial responsibilities, lack of self-confidence, racial/ethnic discrimination, personal lack of tenacity. **BARRIER**
J48--18-20	I mean I was in an elementary school, and I knew if I wanted to be a superintendent I had to have secondary experience.	Internal Barrier Self-awareness	
J50--15-16 & 21-23	As I said earlier you have to be very political, and you've got to be out there….It's that same thing you've got to be almost in the right place at the right time and make sure that the people, who have that sphere of influence, know you.	External barrier	Hill and Ragland (1995, p.9) identify the following barriers that women face: Male dominance of key leadership positions; lack of political savvy; lack of career positioning; lack of mentoring; internal barriers and bias against women. **BARRIER**
J51--13-19	I grew up in a lower middle-class family. The expectation was that I would get married, that I would be a secretary, and I still remember when I told my dad that I was going to college I thought he was going to have a major epileptic fit. "No, you're not. We cannot afford that." My mom was supportive. My mom had two years of college. My dad left school at grade eight.	External barrier	

J56--2-4	I think that at first, yes, when I first got into working with the military; but I think as time has evolved you learn the culture.	External barrier Unique to military	
S11--7-11	The military doesn't like change very much. We have to be efficient, and we have to change with the times. And, transformation, when they say it, then we're going to transform; but when I say it, it's much, much harder for them to swallow.	External barrier Unique to military	
S14--16-17	I have challenges with headquarters. I think they are not good listeners.	External barrier	
J56--16-23	I think for me working in the military community there wasn't so much the military, but more like when I was a superintendent in a southern country dealing with a third world country culture which is really in the dark ages, and going and trying to conduct business in that community and having to take a man with me; because until they realized that I was the boss and I was the one with the checkbook, they weren't going to talk to me because that was the culture.	External barrier-- foreign culture	
C12--8-16	I think working with the military has been really, really good because in our schools we have such a diverse population, and it's really neat to see how people from different cultures, different areas of the United States, can come together into one community and be successful as a community. From that I think the military has done a tremendous job with doing the integration of different people, and also providing opportunities for a lot of different people.	External barrier-- lack of	
C13--3-5	Husband not a barrier-- always been supportive (paraphrase)	External barrier-- lack of	
C13--6-9	Family not a barrier-- always encouraged her (paragraph)	External barrier-- lack of	
C13--11-12	Children not a barrier-- no children (paraphrase)	External barrier-- lack of	
C14--23 & 15--1-2	It really helped that he was working long hours and I was working long hours. So, there wasn't that conflict. (husband)	External barrier-- lack of	
C28--10-11	The school system was at one time the "old boys" network. I mean there was definitely that going on as far as administration.	Good, old boys	

J50--7-10	I think the hardest thing I've ever done is getting ready to retire writing up my résumé and writing up letters telling people how wonderful I am because they don't know me in America. That's very hard to do…	Internal barrier Self-awareness	
J52--8-12	And, my mom had had two years of college, and that was during the war, and she never went back. So, she was kind of supportive. She really didn't like the idea of my going to be a teacher, but she was more supportive.	Mentors Female	
J52--21-25 & 53--1-5	I think it was once I got started and was successful. I mean I got good grades and all of that when I was in college. I got better grades in college than I did in high school. Then I think my dad came around and my mom and I think the turning point for them was when I graduated. I never saw my dad cry and I remember him crying at graduation. But, when I did my masters, it was a cultural change for them. I really was the first one to go to college and then I had cousins and stuff who did that.	Mentors Female	
C29--19-20	.. as far as my progression the administrators that selected me were all male.	Mentors Male	
J55--11-16	Roles for women evolved exponentially. The fact that I would be the deputy director of a federal school system or anything federal-- because we all know the federal government was very similar at that time. The senior roles, and even today, if you look the demographics are skewed the other way to men.	Societal change in role of women	
J55--18-21	There were certain jobs that people would say that's just not for women. Well, now there's anything. You can be an astronaut. You can do whatever you want as long as you've got the skills.	Societal change in role of women	
J53--13-16	I have a sister, and she was in the service. That was not just part of the culture or the expectations at the time. There were women's jobs, elementary teacher, nurse, secretary, paralegal maybe, or work in a store.	Societal expectations for women	
J45--12-13	You had to prove you were better than the men, and I always felt that.	Women must work harder than men	

J50--1-4	Women, even in our system have to show that they've got the skills, and you have to be out there. I mean that's why I've been president of every single professional organization overseas that I could be.	Women must work harder than men	
J55--21-24	Again, I still believe you have to be better than the next down the totem pole male in some settings to get that, but that's all right. We can show them we've got it.	Women must work harder than men	
C12--12	No real barriers in education		On the basis of their distinctive identity and social disadvantages, women are a minority, although most do not think of themselves that way. Macionis (2000, p.242) **BARRIER**

	Strategies for success		
C19--11-18	Well, one thing that I always told my administrators is to remember that the military they're trained to be fighters, and they are trained to be aggressive. So, when they come into the school that they sometimes come in, in that role, and you have to understand that, and rather than being aggressive back with them you have to figure out how to bring them down so that they know how to operate in a school environment.	Adapt to your environment	
C20--15-17	Well, I think it certainly has been a help for minority women. And, perhaps it's been a help for all women. (Affirmative Action)	Affirmative Action	
J74--23-24 & 75--1-5	I really believe that in my personal career I have gotten every position because of merit. I think affirmative action has its place, but I've also in my career within the government seen that backfire where individuals were placed in jobs because they needed a woman to balance the numbers, and it was the wrong match, and I've seen that several times	Affirmative Action	
J75--11-15	If you can't find a good candidate who was a female then you grow that candidate. It's kind of like what I was talking about before. You find somebody who's got potential and you start grooming them and getting them ready to move in to that.	Affirmative Action	
S24--22-24 & 25--1-3	Not all the affirmative action programs are good programs; but we probably, as America, would not be down the road without them. Somehow, you would think we would learn and grow enough that we could wean ourselves off of them and it would become a part of the way we live, treat each other, and do business. I wish we didn't have them.	Affirmative Action	

C16-- 9-11	One of the successful strategies as a teacher, counselor, and administrator I always did much more than my job.	Do more than expected	Erickson and Pinter (1980, p.10) recommend that women find ways to demonstrate their competence. They suggest that women do this by showcasing their abilities outside of the classroom; by being willing to take the risk of getting into administration; by publicizing the admirable traits of female administrators in their areas; by viewing themselves as equals; by ignoring the historical prejudice and, instead, using time and performance to remedy the situation. **RECOMMENDATION**
C16--12-22	I was the head of the curriculum committee. I was NCA. I was the junior class sponsor. Whatever they needed I was willing to do because I felt that the classroom was only part of my job. I really had to contribute to the total school. As a result, I worked closely with my administrators and got along with my colleagues and was considered a leader in the school as a classroom teacher. As a counselor, the same thing. In addition to counseling duties, I was the CSC chair. I was whatever needed to be done to help make the school successful, and supported the administration.	Do more than expected	Kowalski and Stouder (1999; table 5) list the following as perceptions regarding actions that had a positive career influence: identified and maintained a mentor; relied on flexible goals; attended seminars on career planning; identified and maintained sponsors; consistently evaluated personal strengths and weaknesses; became more visible professionally; obtained support from family and friends; developed/utilized 'new girl' network; gained leadership experience outside of education. **STRATEGY**
C17--6-8	Another thing, when I had an opportunity to become an administrator I took on a very difficult school that others, even experienced administrators, shied away from.	Do more than expected	
C17--9-10	I think being willing to take on challenges is another way if you're to be recognized or to get people to look at what you're doing.	Do more than expected	

J68--9-16	“That stuff there [pointing] is my plain reading. At the end of the year I throw them out. But, I grab a pile and throw them in my briefcase and I read it because I'm going to be in the air for 16 hours, no choice, and probably to some of my staffs dismay because I come back and I have articles that are torn and marked with their name on it, "Have you thought of this? Have you seen this?" And, all of that. That's another way of doing staff development.“	Do more than expected	
S20--16-17	Loves a challenge (paraphrase)	Embrace challenge	
J60--1-3	I was a principal at the time, and my boss was not a family man. You know, your place is in the building.	External barrier	
C31--20	Things just worked out.	External barrier-- lack of	
J73--13-15	I think the uniqueness in the military community is you make those connections that I talked about before and those people reappear.	External strategy Networking overseas	
J74--4-9	I don't believe that you have a community in the States where people who you grow up with who rotate in and out of your life, or in and out of the greater community in which you work on a three to five year basis, and each time they come back they're a little bit higher ranking and so forth.	External strategy Networking stateside	
C28--3-7	...maybe there were role models because when I was starting out we already had female superintendents. We had Alice Smith and Jean Brown (pseudonyms) was the director. There were women. So, you can see that there were women in those positions.	Female role models	
J68--9-10	I think that doing my doctorate taught me perseverance.	Importance of Ph.D	
J69--1-3	I think what doing the doctorate taught me was that you develop certain skills. One is to look at all aspects of something.	Importance of Ph.D	
J71--8-10	I will tell you as you apply for jobs people like to see in their cast of characters the Ed.D and the Ph.D. I think they like to see that, and so it has some superficial merit.	Importance of Ph.D	

J61--6-9	On one side you have the role of the daughter with a mom who has taken care of this man and now he is gone. And she wants you -- and he wants you after the funeral get back on the plane and go back to work.	Internal barrier Role conflict	When women attempt to enter into administration Pigford and Tonnsen (1993, p.88) found that women face both external and internal barriers. "Among the external barriers are sex-role stereotyping, sex discrimination, career socialization, lack of professional preparation, and balancing career and family responsibilities. Internal barriers include sex-role socialization, lack of confidence, low aspiration, and negative self-image." **BARRIER**
C33--6-7	I think attitude-- your attitude whether the cup is half full or the grass is green or not greener, whatever.	Internal strategy	
J68--14-15	I'm a prolific reader.	Internal strategy	
J72--13-17	I think that you just have to be strong, and know that you're right. If you can't go from A to B, maybe you have to go from A to C and then B, and that's okay. I think sometimes people aren't successful because they're not willing to do that.	Goal setting and flexibility	Arons goes on to say, "Staff development programs for potential administrators should concern themselves with the training and expansion of the individual's style flexibility, as well as the development of the skills to diagnose situational demands." **RECOMMENDATION**
C17--2-5	When I became an assistant principal I worked really hard to learn everything I could about what a principal did or what had to be done, and anything that the principal needed doing I was willing to do.	Professional skills, abilities and experiences	
C18--21-24 & 19--1-2	...whenever I was an assistant principal or assistant superintendent, I was always watching and observing my principals or superintendents to see how they did things to really instill those good things that they did and really utilize that.	Professional skills, abilities and experiences	
C18--4-7	Had a mentor (paraphrase)	Mentor	

J64--14-20	...there is really one person who stands out to me as a true mentor. When I came to the overseas military school system I had a male principal, and I was the union representative. The second year I was there he called me into his office, he said, "You know, you are wasting your skills." You would make an outstanding principal."	Mentor	Kowalski and Stouder (1999; table 5) list the following as perceptions regarding actions that had a positive career influence: identified and maintained a mentor; relied on flexible goals; attended seminars on career planning; identified and maintained sponsors; consistently evaluated personal strengths and weaknesses; became more visible professionally; obtained support from family and friends; developed/utilized 'new girl' network; gained leadership experience outside of education. **STRATEGY**
J66--9-12	I think also there have been people along the way who I will call interim mentors, and what I mean by that is in the situation that I was in they were there.	Mentor	
J67--17-24 & J68--1	Those are kind of situational mentors, but each one of those people along the way -- and they are mixed. They're male and female. But, those two that I mentioned really stand out because I think both of them were pivotal for me. If I had not followed Eric's advice I would not be where I am today. If I had not learned from Joyce, I think that some of the success that I have had with things that I have tried to implement and do, would not have happened because that was a very different way of doing it.	Mentor	
S37--1-2 & 4-6	I don't like school and so I didn't want to go to school… My mom said, "You're going to go to school. Are you going to choose a community college or are you going to go to the University?	Mentor--Female	
S43--29-21	The first thing is my mom. She was a single-parent. My dad died when I was 11. I'm the oldest of three. She was just a huge influence on me.	Mentor--Female	
S49--14-15	All of the sisters (Sandra and two others) are competitive (paraphrase)	Role model--Female	
S50--14-15	Only female family member role models (paraphrase)	Role model--Female	
S15--8-9	I never take it off my agenda. I never let go of the things that are important to me.	Strategy for success	
S16--20	I don't care who goes to the union	Strategy for success	

S17--8-9	Listen, listen, listen especially to people below you because they usually have the answer. If they have a problem, they usually have an answer or a suggestion especially if you ask them.	Strategy for success	
S17--15-17	"Execution is everything. Execute or you're worthless. If you can't make it happen, get out of the way."	Strategy for success	
S17--23	You're going to have good scores.	Strategy for success	
S19--3-8	Positive attitude… love life…love what you're doing…lots of energy (paraphrase)	Strategy for success	
S19--14-18	I get up at 5:00 in the morning and I run, and I do 100 sit-ups and 100 push-ups. If I didn't do that I would be mostly crazy. If you don't react first thing in the morning with some physical energy, you're a slug most of the day because you're not suped up.	Strategy for success	
S21--13-14 & 22--2-3	Use special strategies during deployments and re-integrations (paraphrase)	Strategy for success	
S22--21-24 & 23--1	I haven't developed anything, but I listen. In your school you have people who have developed awesome stuff because they needed to. They had to. Something had to work, and they did. So, I've made lists and shared lists with people.	Strategy for success	
S23--9-11	And, I'm thinking about one specific week when we had 17 funerals in one community, and I went there, and I didn't do anything but hug people.	Strategy for success	
S23--16	...I have expectations.	Strategy for success	
S23--18-23 & 24--1-2	Empower people to do what they do best (paraphrase)	Strategy for success	
S24--7-14	Provide professional development through various conferences (paraphrase)	Strategy for success	

	Recommendations to aspiring female leaders		
C22--15-16	There's a paper process, but there's also that networking.	Application process plus networking	
J77--19-21	I think that challenges -- adversity challenges you and makes you stronger if you use everything as a learning experience to develop your skills.	Embrace challenge	
C21--6-12	I would say think about what your goals are and what you really want to accomplish, and what really interests you. Because I think sometimes people go in thinking that they want to be at this level or that level, but they haven't really thought about what does all that mean, or what are some things that you have to do because it is very different.	Goal setting and evaluation	Kowalski and Stouder (1999; table 5) list the following as perceptions regarding actions that had a positive career influence: identified and maintained a mentor; relied on flexible goals; attended seminars on career planning; identified and maintained sponsors; consistently evaluated personal strengths and weaknesses; became more visible professionally; obtained support from family and friends; developed/utilized 'new girl' network; gained leadership experience outside of education. **STRATEGY**
C21--16-21	So, think about what it is that you really want because you want to make sure that you're excited about what you're doing because if you're not if you just there because of the title then you're not going to be able to do the same things you need to do for the people out in the schools.	Goal setting and evaluation	Jones and Montenegro (1992, p.9), found that in a program conducted by the American Association of School Administrators that the curriculum was designed to help female administrators develop a positive self-concept and, then, to present that self-concept; to teach them how to enlist influential sponsors; to learn how to discover potential jobs; to instruct them on how to analyze the jobs to determine their professional desirability; to train them to write letters of application and effective resumes; and to help them prepare for interviews and discuss the conditions of employment. The workshop gave the women special insights into the superintendency and, thus, helped them prepare for it. **RECOMMENDATION**

C24--8-10	I'm not sure I would want to pursue a stateside superintendency because they spend a lot of time with the board... The nice thing here in our system is you really can focus on education. You don't have to be out fund-raising and passing bond issues or working with the board. You really can spend your time looking at how to make the school system better, and how to support the kids and the teachers and the administrators.	Goal setting and evaluation	
S28--11-16	If you're not going to be happy doing a role like that, don't do it. You're not in schools everyday. You're not working with kids every day. You're not even working with principals everyday. There are a lot of people up above you that frustrate the dickens out of you, and you got to live with it...	Goal setting and evaluation	
J76--14-19	I think the other thing when you set that goal you need to look at what you have to do to get there. It's not always A to B to C. You might go A to B to D and then back to C and then on to B just because that's the situation at the time.	Goal setting and flexibility	Arons goes on to say, “Staff development programs for potential administrators should concern themselves with the training and expansion of the individual’s style flexibility, as well as the development of the skills to diagnose situational demands.” **RECOMMENDATION**
J76--9-14	I think you have to set your goals. As I said I think you have to have the path laid out. You can't leave it to circumstance and happenstance. The goal can change. There is no question about that, and that's okay. You've always got to be going somewhere. If you're going to wait for it to happen to you, you might as well forget it.	Goal setting and readiness	Hill and Ragland (1995, p.9) identify the following barriers that women face: Male dominance of key leadership positions; lack of political savvy; lack of career positioning; lack of mentoring; internal barriers and bias against women. **BARRIER**
J79--9-12	I would tell people to start right now working on the résumés. I would tell them to start drafting KSA's that they only need to tweak, and the reason for that is when the announcement comes out you're under so much pressure.	Goal setting and readiness	
S28--6-9	Do the goals. Get there. And, I think you should have energy. You can't be a slug and think, "Somebody is going to choose me because I'm a woman and there's a quota, so it's my turn." Wrong answer for me.	Goal setting and readiness	

S36--6-14	...you have to have a strategy. If it takes three years being an assistant get those three years under your belt, and get your paperwork in, and keep it up to snuff, and be ready when somebody says there's an interview. When something is posted, pay attention. Go regularly to the whatever it is site where that stuff is. Know how to get there and do it every week. It's the season. You know they're going to be postings, and be ready.	Goal setting and readiness	Hill and Ragland (1995, p.9) identify the following barriers that women face: Male dominance of key leadership positions; lack of political savvy; lack of career positioning; lack of mentoring; internal barriers and bias against women. **BARRIER**
S53--8-16	I think I have created opportunities. When I didn't like the principals, I went back to school. I hated school, but I went back to school and was ready when there was a vacancy. Suddenly there was a vacancy so I could apply. When I watched that state superintendent fail the students of my state, I thought I can't be elected from that county. I've got to get out of that county. So, I get myself into a place where I was ready for the next election. So, you can make opportunities for yourself.	Goal setting and readiness	
S53--21	Strategies for success vary by individual	Individual strategies	Arons (1980, p.8)goes on to say, "Staff development programs for potential administrators should concern themselves with the training and expansion of the individual's style flexibility, as well as the development of the skills to diagnose situational demands." **RECOMMENDATION**
J85--22	I will tell you I'm a real proponent of Title IX	Legislative improvements	
J87--5-12	I don't see affirmative action selection in that same venue. I see them very differently. I think affirmative action provides a permission in some cases, but I don't think anyone should be appointed just because of affirmative action. They've got to have the merit to go with it. If there are two equal people and you've got all men in your organization, yes, I think you ought to do it, but on merit not because you have to have one token woman.	Legislative improvements	

J87--15-22	I think that's going to be long in coming *(ERA)* but you can pass all of the legislation you want but you have to change the culture of the organization. I will tell you we've got affirmative action and we've got this and we've got that, but there are still organizations that are totally male dominated, and they will continue to be because it's not enforced unless somebody files a complaint and wins.	Legislative improvements	In 1964 Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, which included a provision called Title VII. This title made it illegal to discriminate against women in promotion and hiring. Unfortunately, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission established to enforce this title, chose not to do so. The other major problems in terms of effectiveness of the Title VII legislation are: complicated rules for filing discrimination complaints, an enormous backlog of court cases, and loopholes within the act itself. (Kornblum and Julian, p.269) **BARRIER**
J78--18-20	But you have to let people say their piece and then you go on from there, and sometimes that's hard to do.	Listen instead of speaking	
J88--1-6	The culture is not changing. You can pass all of the legislation you want. Until you change the culture, it's not going to change. The legislation is there and if somebody wins a case great, but you look at all of the cases and how many are actually won the percentage is very small.	Need for societal change	The integrated discourse with other female superintendents goes back to the idea of mentorship or sponsorship. As Brown (1994, p.22) states: “moms and dads, school teachers, and especially the college professors” need to encourage women to aspire to the upper levels of administrative leadership. **RECOMMENDATION**
J88--23-24 & 89--1-6	I look at our student activity from that venue, and it's still male dominated. As a matter of fact, Sandra and I go to all of these performances and we sit there, and the first thing we do is count how many girls are on the program and how many boys. One year in jazz there wasn't a woman on the stage. They've never done that again because I chewed them out.	Need for societal change	
J88--7-11	It's still there. I think that, unfortunately someone has to continue to monitor those kinds of things, and I think it starts right at the school level encouraging the girls to apply, encouraging the girls to participate, and I don't think that's always done across the board.	Need for societal change	When women attempt to enter into administration Pigford and Tonnsen (1993, p.88) found that women face both external and internal barriers. “Among the external barriers are sex-role stereotyping, sex discrimination, career socialization, lack of professional preparation, and balancing career and family responsibilities. Internal barriers include sex-role socialization, lack of confidence, low aspiration, and negative self-image.” **BARRIER**

S34--12-21	My business about never let it come off the agenda: Because in this outfit you're used to rotating people out. The military comes and goes. We've had leaders in headquarters coming and going. The strategy in the system is, if we just wait long enough it will go away. No, not with me. The strategy isn't going to cut it for me because I know that strategy. So, it's going to be on the agenda. Get ready. Every time until what I want to happen -- when I punch that button, it should say PTS and when that happens it will get off of the agenda.	Perseverance	
C32--17-19	Good attitude, willing to be a team player, willing to do whatever needs to be done	Professional skills, abilities and experiences	
S36--3-6	In this system there's a lot of professional training that goes on. If people choose not to take advantage of it-- well, wrong answer.C172 I'm going to go looking.	Professional skills, abilities and experiences	Arons (1980, p.8)goes on to say, “Staff development programs for potential administrators should concern themselves with the training and expansion of the individual’s style flexibility, as well as the development of the skills to diagnose situational demands.” **RECOMMENDATION**
S26--21-22	I think you have to know your stuff. You have to be a good educator. You have to have made your mark.	Professional skills, abilities and experiences	
S26--21-24 & 27--1-6	You have to have come through the ranks and know what it takes, probably been there and done that, and all of those kinds of things, though I should say that lightly. I was never an assistant principal. I was never an assistant superintendent. I was only a superintendent for two or three months. It was not like I jumped on every stone and stood there, learned it all, knew it all, and did it all. I didn't.	Professional skills, abilities and experiences	
J80--18-19	They'd need to do more work with real-life scenarios.	Recommendations to universities	
J82--3-4	I never had a budget course in my whole administrative career.	Recommendations to universities	

J82--16-21	We did case law. Each of us read 125 cases, stood up every period and presented it. But, no one ever said, "What do you do when the police come in and they want to haul off seven of your kids?" We learned that the hard way. Sometimes you don't have access to the lawyers. So, you need to know those things.	Recommendations to universities	Arons (1980, p.8)goes on to say, “Staff development programs for potential administrators should concern themselves with the training and expansion of the individual’s style flexibility, as well as the development of the skills to diagnose situational demands.” **RECOMMENDATION**
J83--7	None, and we need it. (Diversity training--homosexuality, racial, kids today/gangs)	Recommendations to universities	Skrla, Reyes and Scheurich (2000, p.65-69) suggest the following recommendations to help future female administrators climb the organizational ladder to the superintendency: deeper, more meaningful research; integrated discourse with other female superintendents; university preparation programs including the role of gender in leadership; state agencies and professional organizations need to examine the role of gender; school boards need to be trained on gender and power-related issues; women’s upbringing needs to change so that women are taught it is all right to be competitive. **RECOMMENDATION**
S29--13-19	I think the universities and colleges don't teach what people need to know to be teachers, but I sat on the University of my state’s Board of Education for eight years, and I didn't make a dent. It's a system that's worse than the federal government. They're so entrenched in the way we always are and the way we always plan to be, and that's it.	Recommendations to universities	
J76--19-20	I think the other thing is that you have to look for good role models.	Role models	
S27--9-16	... you do have to know yourself and you have to have success. You have to have been successful. Success breeds success. You have to surround yourself with people who can help you. One person does not change the world. I have around me the very best people I could possibly choose. If I were in a position where I couldn't choose them, I would try to make them into the very best person who can help me when I need help, or do what needs to get done.	Self-awareness and success	

S32--5-15	"I didn't like it that they took me from that school and said you're going to do special education, but once I got over it, I got home and said, 'What's the issue here? There's a challenge here. Why wouldn't you want to fix this? You're already irritated with special education in your school,' but we fixed it in our school." Even if you don't like the job you've been given, look at it as a challenge and do it well (paraphrase)	Self-awareness	
S38--21-23	I never thought I was going to be a principal, but I hated my principals. I thought they were terrible. I can do better than this, and I will.	Self-awareness	
S54--11-13	Either work the problem or get out of the way	Self-awareness	
S33--6-9	I think women are not good strategizers generally, and we need to be better. If you have a goal, and you should, then you need to be strategic in how you approach it.	Strategize	Hill and Ragland (1995, p.9) identify the following barriers that women face: Male dominance of key leadership positions; lack of political savvy; lack of career positioning; lack of mentoring; internal barriers and bias against women. **BARRIER**
		C's interview was short and very calm. C is a quiet person and she often reflected before she responded.	
		C is confident and unassuming. There is nothing pretentious about her; but it's obvious that she knows how to make her views and edicts known and respected.	
		C basically saw her career as naturally progressing without barriers in the field of education.	

		C did acknowledge the past "good old boys" days, but did not express any real resentment in that regard.	
		J acknowledged the "good old boys" days, but seemed almost amused by it.	
		J's interview was the longest and the most comfortable and free flowing.	
		J was extremely self-aware and reflective about both her successes and her failures.	
		J is about to retire from the system, but plans on finding a new position/promotion elsewhere.	
		S's interview was animated. S is an intense women who is very opinionated.	
		S seemed to feel very strongly about everything we discussed.	
		S did not feel affected by the past "good old boys" days and seemed to have enjoyed the challenge.	
		S is very competitive and thrives on challenge.	

Adapted from Hunt, M. (2003) The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing