

Secondary School Department Chairs Leading Successful Change

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Abstract A foundational understanding within education leadership literature is that education leaders are expected to guide reform efforts within school. This expectation mirrors organizational development literature that describes leaders as individuals who constructively institute change within their organizations. Although leadership and change are portrayed as codependent, no scholarship has linked change models with leadership theories. This article describes a multiple case study that explored the relationship between leadership behaviors and the change process through secondary school department chair stories of change. From this analysis, a clearer picture emerged that illustrates how leaders with little control over decisions implement change. Findings included distinct connections between CREATER change process stages and the Leadership Grid. Suggestions as to how education leaders should approach change attempts within their schools are discussed.

Introduction

Secondary school department chairs are considered content-area specialists and instructional leaders who occupy organizational positions that lie between senior leadership and teachers (Feeney, 2009; Hannay & Erb, 1999; Lucas, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1984; Tucker, 1993; Wettersten, 1994; Zepeda, 2007). Their position, as Ginny Lee (1987) and Kenneth Leithwood (1994) observed, requires them to simultaneously manage the smooth operations of their departments while leading meaningful change

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within them. However, due to their middle-level leadership positions, they rarely have the power to institute unilateral change; their reform ideas must receive support from multiple stakeholders, including their administrative staff and their department teachers, in order for their change attempts to be successful (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Hannay & Erb, 1999).

Department chairs typically possess little ability to use coercive or reward power to enhance change attempts, and therefore they must rely on specific leadership skills related to other forms of power if they are to successfully enact curricular or program changes (Tucker, 1993). In a literature summary completed by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), department chairs in schools within the United Kingdom relied mainly on interpersonal and professional skills to influence their department members (Bennett, Newton, Wise, Woods, & Economou, 2003). Within this set of studies, researchers similarly reported that department chairs who attempted to exert authoritative power over their departments often failed in their efforts unless their authoritative power was coupled with other personal or professional sources of influence (Busher, 2006). Given the unique role of department chairs in the organizational structure of a school and the evidence that this position requires them to employ strategies beyond simple authoritative power to enact change, it is critical to gain an understanding of what behaviors and actions taken by department chairs facilitate the successful conversion of policy reforms ideas into effective, on-the-ground departmental changes.

Although there are challenges associated with the department chair position within the hierarchy of school systems, department chairs are keenly positioned to work as a powerful conduit between policy and practice. Donald Ely (1999) identified the actions of immediate supervisors (e.g., department chairs) as a critical element of successful change, and considered these actions as separate from the actions taken by powerbrokers (e.g., school principals, district administrators). Department chairs might influence school reform on a strategic planning level; however, they are more likely to influence change on a practical level through their tactical actions and behaviors during implementation of a reform effort or policy within the school. Policy implementation without tactical leadership has little chance of producing meaningful change; department chairs are uniquely positioned school leaders who can, with the right training and support, provide tactical leadership and aid the conversion of policy into practice.

The reality that secondary school department chairs hold a middle-leadership position and are expected to, or at least have the potential to, convert policy into action despite their lack of power prompted the overarching research question of this investigation: how do department chairs lead successful education change? This research question targeted the intersection of two allied constructs: leadership and change. Common definitions of leadership refer to the expectation that leaders institute meaningful change (Kotter, 1995; Northouse, 2004; Rogers, 1995; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002), and change literature often describes actions leaders should take during the change process (Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 1995; Rogers, 1995; Zaltman & Duncan, 1977). For instance, *The Change Agent's Guide* suggests leadership roles and actions during specific stages of the change process (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995).

Interestingly, despite the assertions linking change and leadership, no research has made definitive connections between established change process models and leadership theories (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008). The absence of these connections led to two focused research questions about how secondary school department chairs lead change: (i) are specific leadership behaviors evident during different stages of the change process, and (ii) are there differences in the patterns of leadership behaviors during stages of the change process between successful and unsuccessful change attempts? These two specific questions investigated within the context of department chair-led reform efforts illuminate the role department chairs play in school reform and connect stages of the CREATER organizational change model (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995) with behaviors associated with the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCauley, 1991).

Change framework

In *The Change Agent's Guide*, Ronald Havelock and Steve Zlotolow (1995) present a cyclic, seven-stage change process model—Care, Relate, Examine, Acquire, Try, Expand, and Renew—represented by the acronym CREATER. Each stage of this model describes signature developments in the change process, as well as change agent roles and duties that move the change initiative forward.

Table 1: Stages of the CREATER model

| Stage | Description |
|---------|---|
| Care | The change agent recognizes that a change could benefit the organization. |
| Relate | The change agent builds relationships with stakeholders. |
| Examine | The change agent and change participants determine if a change should be attempted. |
| Acquire | The change agent assembles the needed resources for change implementation. |
| Try | The details of the change are determined and refined, and a pilot is possibly conducted. |
| Expand | The change implementation expands to other participants or areas of the organization. |
| Renew | The change implementation is evaluated and nurtured. After this stage, the change is continually refined as the CREATER model cycles again. |

The foundation of the CREATER model is Kurt Lewin's (1947) unfreeze-move-re-freeze change model, which was reworked in 1984 by Micheal Huberman and Mathew Miles into the phases of initiation, implementation, and continuation/routinization. In general, the unfreeze/initiation phase of the change process consists of preparing the organization for the possible intended change. Actions during this stage could include increasing change participants' knowledge about a possible change, providing professional development, or procuring resources. The move/implementation phase consists of enacting the change, which may require gathering more resources and providing ongoing professional training and support. The final phase of refreeze/continuation/routinization involves fine-tuning the change based on feedback and continued work with the change adopters (Ellsworth, 2000). Research, including the 1974 Rand Change Agent Study, supports the prevalence of these three phases (as cited in Fullan, 2001), and the CREATER model further fleshes out the details that comprise these three broad phases of the change process. Table 1 provides an overview of the main roles the change agent plays at each stage of the CREATER model.

Although the CREATER model suggests different actions and roles for leaders of change (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995), the stages within this model have not been linked to established leadership theories. One purpose of this study was to provide evidence that links these CREATER change stages with specific behaviors associated with the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCanse, 1991) as identified by Gary Yukl, Angela Gordon, and Tom Taber (2002).

Leadership framework

A review of the literature on leadership reveals a plethora of theories and models, indicating the complexity of the topic, as well as a tendency for researchers to propose new models that often ignore or fail to integrate previously proposed leadership theories (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This proliferation of novel paths can often result in fragmented views on leadership without capturing its contextual complexity (Middlehurst, 2008; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Based on descriptions that assert connections between leadership and beneficial organizational change, the change process itself can create part of the contextual complexity that leaders must consider as they adjust their behaviors and strategies. Therefore, in order for this study to investigate how individuals lead change, an established leadership theory that could be applied to leadership behaviors as described during different stages of the change process was required.

The Leadership Grid, first described by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1962) and then further developed by Blake and Anne Adams McCanse (1991), categorizes leadership behavior as focused on tasks, people, or a combination of both. A meta-analysis of leadership literature determined that the foci represented by this grid correlated with general leadership outcomes, as well as with specific leadership outcomes such as followers' satisfaction with their leader, followers' job satisfaction, and followers' perception of their leader's effectiveness, all of which indicate the robustness of this task- and people-focused view of leadership (Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004).

Further exploring leadership behaviors through the lens of the Leadership Grid, Yukl et al. (2002) analyzed published literature and categorized specific leadership behaviors within these articles as either task-, people-, or change-focused. Task-focused leadership behaviors identified included (i) planning short-term activities, (ii) clarifying objectives and role expectations, and (iii) monitoring operations and performances. People-focused leadership behavior categories included (i) providing support and encouragement, (ii) providing recognition for achievements and contributions, (iii) developing member skills and confidence, (iv) consulting members when making a decision, and (v) empowering members to take initiative in problem solving. Because this current investigation focused solely on leadership behaviors occurring within the context of change implementation, items within the change-focused category (proposing an innovation or new vision, taking risks to promote necessary changes, monitoring the external environment, and encouraging innovative thinking) were re-assigned for coding purposes as being either task- or people-focused. Table 2 provides the modified list of Yukl et al. (2002) leadership behaviors categorized as either task- or results-focused, or people- or relationship-focused.

Table 2: Coding scheme for leadership behaviors

| Blake and Mouton's leadership axes codes, elaborated by Yukl et al. (2002) | Codes |
|--|------------|
| General tasks or results focus | T |
| Planning short-term activities | T-PLAN |
| Clarifying objectives and role expectations | T-ORE |
| Monitoring operations and performances | T-MONITOR |
| Monitoring the external environment | T-EXTERNAL |
| Proposing an innovation or new vision | T-VISION |
| Taking risks to promote necessary changes | T-RISKS |
| General people or relationship focus | G |
| Providing support and encouragement | G-SUP/ENC |
| Providing recognition for achievements and contributions | G-REC |
| Developing member skills and confidence | G-PD |
| Consulting members when making a decision | G-CONSULT |
| Empowering members to take initiative in problem solving | G-DELEGATE |
| Encouraging innovative thinking | G-INNOV |
| Building trust | G-TRUST |

Methodology

This particular investigation concentrated on the interplay between two phenomena: leadership and the change process. These two phenomena influence one another: as leaders implement change, they are influenced by the context of the change processes, and as leaders, they take action during the change processes and influence the context in which the change occurs. Robert K. Yin (2003) recommends the use of multiple case studies to examine the interactions between phenomena within a context. This interaction between these two phenomena (i.e., change and leadership) lends itself to investigation via a multiple case study approach in order to understand how and why emergent properties materialize from the interaction of leadership behavior and change.

Information for this study was collected through document analysis and a series of three interviews with six secondary school science department chairs. Based on their reflections of their experiences with change attempts, four of the six department chairs shared stories of both successful and unsuccessful change attempts, whereas two department chairs only shared their experiences of successful implementations of reform.

Participating department chairs were purposefully selected from a pool of Illinois Science Educator Leaders Association (ISELA) and Illinois Science Teacher Association (ISTA) members who responded to an online survey designed to identify possibly insightful stories of education change. Survey items included questions about respondents' current position, such as the number of years they had been in their current position and their tenure status, as well as questions about the change attempts they had led, such as the number of teachers involved in the change, the general change idea, the origin of the change idea, the percent of the change goals accomplished, and whether they would recommend that other department chairs consider implementing similar changes. From this survey, the following department chairs were invited to share their stories of successful and unsuccessful change:

- Peggy is a science department chair with more than 15 years of experience in education; she works in a school that is transitioning from a rural high school to an outer-ring suburb. Her description of a successful change attempt revolved around the implementation of a common grading system and common assessments between content courses.
- Samuel is a science department chair with more than 15 years of experience in education; he works in a wealthy, high-performing suburban high school. His stories of change involved the creation of two new course sequence strands; one of these course strand initiatives was successful, and one was not.
- Anita is the science and music department chair for three high schools within one ethnically diverse suburban high school district. She has more than 15 years of education experience, and her successful change initiative was the creation of common course assessments.
- Joseph is a science department chair who has been in the field of education for over 6 years. He works at a suburban high school with little minority representation. Joseph shared a story of successful change involving the replacing of a popular freshman course, and his story of unsuccessful change described an attempt to map the department's curriculum.
- Mary is a science department chair with more than 15 years of experience in education; she teaches in a fairly wealthy suburban high school. Her story of successful change involved changing a course sequence strand, and her story of unsuccessful change detailed her attempts to create a common format for student work.
- Xavier is a science department chair at a suburban high school with little minority representation. He has been in education for over 6 years, and his successful change story involved an increase in inquiry lessons within two core courses. His unsuccessful story of change was this same change focus, but with a third core course.

These department chairs submitted electronic documents they identified as illustrating aspects of their change attempt (meeting notes, plans, reports, etc.). Documents were analyzed using a coding system based on the stages of Havelock and Zlotolow's (1995) CREATER model (see Table 1) and Yukl et al.'s (2002) leadership behaviors (see Table 2). CREATER stages—Care, Relate, Examine, Acquire, Try, Expand, and Renew—were identified and coded within department chair information. Leadership behaviors were coded as either being task-focused (T) or people-focused (G). Task-focused behavior codes, based on Yukl et al.'s research and the re-assignment of the change-focused meta category, included planning short-term activities (T-PLAN), clarifying objectives and role expectations (T-ORE), monitoring operations and performances (T-MONITOR), monitoring external information (T-EXTERNAL), presenting a

vision or innovative idea (T-VISION), and taking leadership risks to promote change (T-RISK). People-focused leadership behavior category codes were similarly based on Yukl et al.'s (2002) compilation and re-assignment from behaviors listed in the change-focused meta category. These people-focused codes of leadership behavior included providing support and encouragement (G-SUP/ENC), providing recognition for achievements and contributions (G-REC), developing member skills and confidence (G-PD), consulting members when making a decision (G-PD), and empowering members to take initiative in problem solving (G-INNOTH). In addition to these codes on leadership behavior, a previously unanticipated leadership behavior emerged from department chairs' stories of change; these were department chair behaviors that enhanced the trust of department members in the department chair's skills, motivations, and talents. Once identified, these recurrent behaviors were added to the coding schema as a people-focused behavior, G-TRUST.

An initial, broad analysis of these documents provided insight into the stages of the change process, which was then used to augment initial interview prompts, resulting in site-specific interview questions. This document analysis also provided data triangulation with the information gathered from interview transcripts. And, unlike spoken words, which are translated from interviews, documents are more concrete and permanent than conversation; therefore, more effort is expected to go into their construction (Creswell, 2009). These documents, therefore, provided insights into the unstated leadership strategies of the department chair.

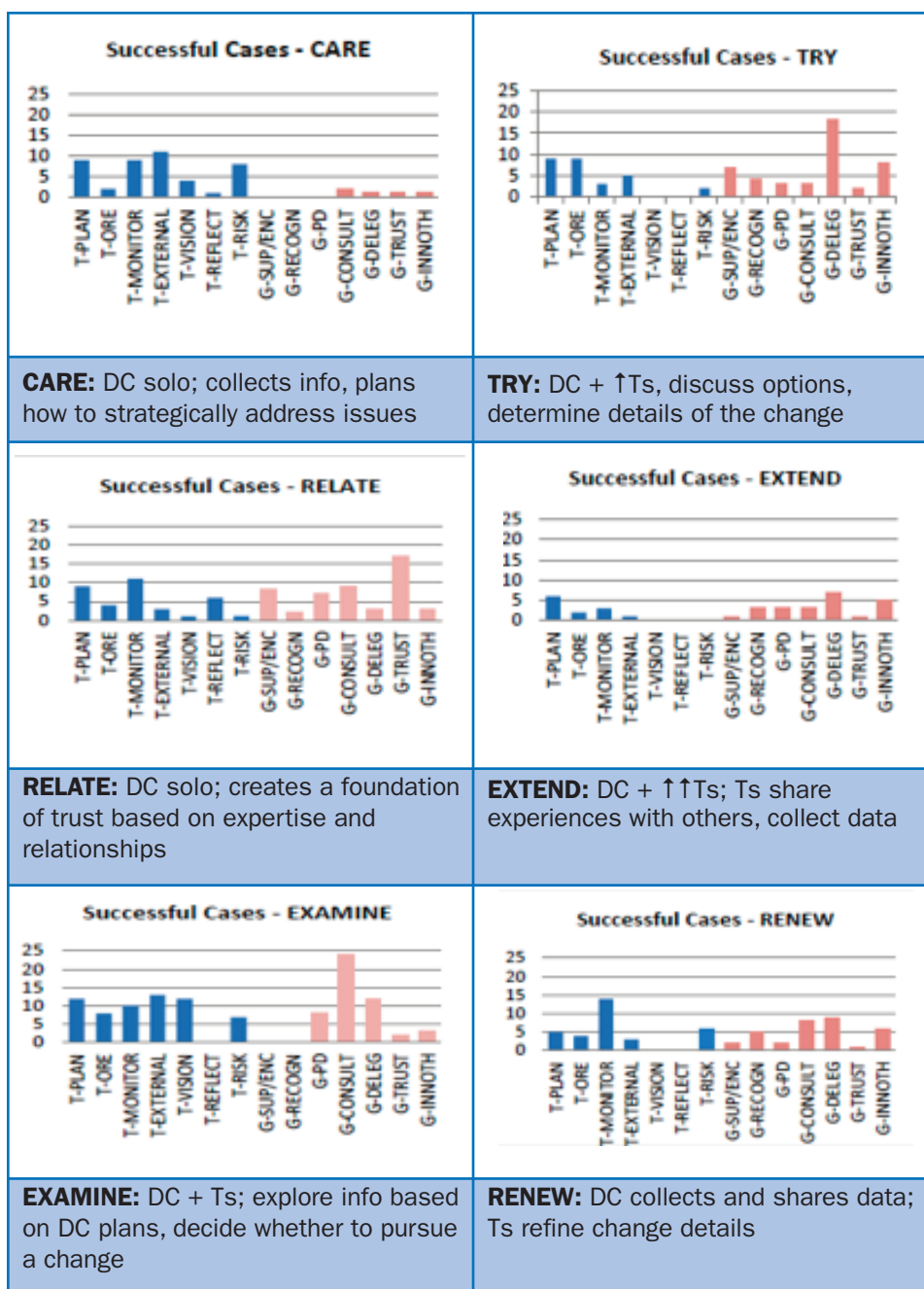
Each of the six selected department chairs was interviewed three times. Based on their reflections on change attempts, four of these department chairs shared stories of both successful and unsuccessful change attempts, and two shared stories of only successful changes, resulting in six stories of successful change and four stories of unsuccessful change attempts. The first interview consisted of questions about the change attempts, as well as questions about the documents department chairs provided for analysis. These first interviews were transcribed and coded for stages of the change process and leadership behaviors in a similar fashion to the document analysis. The second interviews were more collaborative, and they consisted of member checking the department chairs' stories, along with clarifying questions. Information from these second-round interviews provided a more accurate and enhanced record of the change processes described by department chairs. After this second interview, information derived from department chairs' coded stories were compiled and emerging trends identified. This compiled information was then shared with each individual department chair during the third interviews, and department chairs were asked to share insights on leadership and the change process based on the shared data and analysis. In addition to exploring department chair stories of change through the lens of the CREATER stages and leadership behaviors, pattern differences between successful and unsuccessful change attempts were also analyzed.

Results

Several provocative themes emerged within the present findings. First, department chair (DC) stories of change largely align with Havelock and Zlotolow's CREATER model of change. Second, DCs described a recurrent pattern of leadership behaviors

that differed identifiably during each stage of the change process; from this pattern, specific connections were made between CREATER change stages and behaviors associated with the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCaense, 1991; Yukl et al., 2002). This connection between the CREATER model of change and specific leadership behaviors is shown in Figure 1, which describes the level of involvement of the DCs and department teachers, the main work related to change as described by DCs, and graphs depicting the number of times DCs mentioned a specific leadership behavior during each stage of their successful change process. The third finding from this study was that although DCs' successful and unsuccessful change stories overlapped considerably in the early stages of the change process, differences emerged during the Examine stage, after which unsuccessful changes did not progress.

Figure 1: Interaction between leadership behaviors and stages of change



In DC stories of successful change, a recurrent pattern of progressive leadership behaviors emerged. In general, change stories began with DCs working on their own, collecting data and assessing their programs, then strategizing how to address areas of concern or opportunities uncovered during their data collection and assessment. They then gently, and tactically, shared information with their department while avoiding discussing any specific changes. As teachers absorbed the shared information, explored ideas, and began to see the potential benefits of initiating a change, the DC released some control of creating the details of change design and implementation to teachers, while providing guidance, support, and organization. As change details and implementation coalesced, DCs arranged situations in which the teachers could share their successes with others outside of the immediate change. Toward the end of the change implementation, DCs retook greater control of the change process by gathering, evaluating, and presenting the data to others within and outside of the department. At this point, the cycle began again as the DC and teachers considered the next steps to enhance the success of the change implementation. This general pattern exhibited in stories of successful change aligned with most stages of the CREATER model; from this successful change information, a specific, linked, and recurrent pattern of leadership behaviors associated with the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCanse, 1991) was evident in each CREATER stage.

Care

The earliest patterns of behaviors that emerged as DCs shared their stories of change aligned with the Care stage of the CREATER model. Havelock and Zlotolow (1995) described this stage as a time when leaders first detect that a change could benefit the organization. As depicted in Figure 1, DC descriptions of their leadership behaviors during this stage frequently fell within three task-focused categories: educating themselves with information from internal (T-MONITOR) and external sources (T-EXTERNAL), and strategically planning how to approach department members who were currently unaware of areas of possible change (T-PLAN). These leadership activities, completed by DCs on their own, laid the foundation for departmental discussions that occurred later in the change process.

Mary observed that leaders need to patiently strive to understand the system in which they work during this foundational stage: “You can’t come in as a new leader and expect to turn everything around in a year.” Other quotes related to the work DCs did during the Care stage, along with their associated leadership behavior codes, include the following:

Anita: “You’ve got to gain expertise, and more than just reading an article.” (T-EXTERNAL)

Joseph: “Do some research and come up with a very strong rationale as to why they want to do it. It can’t just be a fly-by-night kind of thing.” (T-EXTERNAL, T-MONITOR, T-PLAN)

Peggy: “I did spend a lot of time thinking about group dynamics [and] putting people in good working groups together. I do it more strategically now.” (T-PLAN, T-MONITOR, T-REFLECT)

Anita: “I started looking at our grading system and how our PSAE scores don’t correlate very well with grades that we give. Something is wrong here.” (T-MONITOR)

Peggy: “I was receiving a lot of phone calls about parents comparing grades ...” (T-MONITOR)

Xavier: “Labs were ‘cut this out and attach it together.’ It didn’t seem like a real lab experience.” (T-MONITOR)

Relate

The Relate stage surfaced from DC stories less as a stage, and more of a continuously nurtured foundation. Havelock and Zlotolow (1995) described this stage as a time when leaders build relationships with people in their organization and identify possible resistors. In DCs’ stories of change, this stage of the change process was associated with a mix of task- and people-focused leadership behaviors. As summarized in Figure 1, most behaviors during this stage involved DCs demonstrating their ability to do their job well (T-PLAN, T-MONITOR, T-EXTERNAL), connecting with and gaining the trust of department members (G-TRUST), and working constructively and respectfully with department members (G-CONSULT, G-DELEGATE, G-SUP/ENC). DCs also shared that they reflected (T-REFLECT) on their work and interactions with department members more heavily during this stage of the change process.

Although a focus on relationships might seem to call for people-focused leadership behaviors, many of the behaviors that built relationships between teachers and DCs were task-focused, revolving around teachers’ ability to trust that their DC could do their job well. A few DC quotes described task-focused behaviors that resulted in enhanced trust of teachers:

Joseph: “It’s taken a few years for them to see that I’m not here to make them look bad or do something they don’t want to do, but we have to move in a different direction because this isn’t good enough yet.” (T-PLAN, T-MONITOR, G-TRUST)

Xavier: “I rotate to different late-start meetings ... if a team is struggling, I’ll stay with them for more of the days.” (T-PLAN, T-MONITOR, G-TRUST)

Peggy: “I’m still in the trenches, I try things out first before I ask teachers to do it; I am a classroom teacher.” (T-ORE, T-PLAN, G-TRUST)

Key quotes reflecting people-focused strategies in DC descriptions of the Relate stage included the following:

Peggy: “I’m a shepherd. I get the sheep together, going in the same direction. I take care of the sheep. The shepherd puts her/himself out in front of the sheep [and] makes sure that the sheep have everything they need. Teachers need support; they need you to listen.” (G-SUP/ENC, G-CONSULT, G-PD, G-TRUST)

Mary: “I try to be really supportive, and I thank them for a lot of things. When they try things in the classroom, I tell them I appreciate it. It might be a personal note, or an email.” (G-SUP/ENC, G-REC, G-TRUST)

Joseph: They see me in pain about the data, so they know that I'm in it with them; I'm not doing the same thing as them but I'm in there with them and I'm there to support them; I care about what is going on." (G-SUP/ENC, G-TRUST)

Anita: "In the early years, it felt like I was wasting time with conversations, but I also knew it would pay off—and it did. I spent time listening and getting to know people—it felt like I spent so much time talking to people that I didn't get anything done. I wanted to talk with everyone to avoid perceptions of favoritism. It was almost like a defense or preventative move." (G-SUP/ENC, G-CONSULT, G-TRUST)

Examine

Once DCs assessed their departments' needs during the Care stage and established trust and professional relationships with department members during the Relate stage, DCs ushered the change process into the Examine stage. This stage, described by Havelock and Zlotolow (1995), is when leaders involve members of the organization to best determine if a change is needed and what the overall change might entail. It was during this stage that successful change attempts began to separate from unsuccessful change attempts. Successful change attempts continued onto the next steps of the change process and full implementation, whereas unsuccessful change attempts either ending during this stage or the seeds of failure were set.

As shown in Figure 1, DCs in stories of successful change continued to focus on structuring tasks and information (T-PLAN, T-ORE, T-MONITOR, T-EXTERNAL) and emphasizing their vision (T-VISION) for the department while consulting with teachers (G-CONSULT) and encouraging them to problem solve (G-SUP/ENC, G-INNOV, G-DELEGATE). Throughout the Examine stage, DCs tactically shared information they hoped would lead teachers to identify problems or opportunities that DCs identified during the Care stage; DCs also expected teachers to examine the information with fresh eyes and contribute new perspectives to the discussion. This trust in teachers' professional abilities was tacitly communicated through DCs consultation with department members. As Joseph noted, "They are true scientists; they believe in data" (G-CONSULT).

DCs' trust in teachers' professional skills was also evident as they coupled the shared information with provocative consultation questions (G-CONSULT), such as these:

Xavier: "Couldn't we do more with our labs?"

Anita: "If it's the best thing for kids, they [sic] why aren't we doing this?"

Peggy: "Isn't common grading a solution?"

Information and questions were often followed by a reminder of the overall vision (T-VISION) of science education; Anita related that, "Discussions centered on what is best for students."

A key difference between the stories of successful and unsuccessful change that emerged during this stage was the DCs' patience with the process and the involvement of teachers. DCs who oversaw successful change attempts, even change attempts that were softly mandated from a top-down direction, provided time for

teachers to process and understand information related to possible change options, and to determine their role in the possible change process. An example of the thinking behind this leadership behavior can be seen in Anita's summary of her approach to the Examine stage:

Very often a mistake we make in education administratively is just because you learn how to do something out there, we then expect you to implement it without bringing teachers along for the journey. You know, it took me months to get to a place where I could say we should do common exams. So what makes me think that in one 20-minute meeting I'm going to convince 35 teachers to agree with me? I have to give them all of the things that I've read that got me there, and give them time to think about it. (G-PD, G-CONSULT, G-INNOTH)

Although all DCs stories reached this stage of the change process, unsuccessful change attempts were clearly in danger during this stage when viewed in retrospect—whether the DC was aware of this impending failure or not. In three of the four stories of unsuccessful change, it seemed that DCs moved quickly through this stage because they assumed more teachers understood and agreed to the change than was the case. In Joseph's story of unsuccessful change, the initiative involving curriculum mapping was an administrative mandate; therefore, teacher input was not needed or valued. Because of this perceived lack of need for teacher input into the change, Joseph cursorily moved his teachers through the Examine stage. Teachers responded to this pace and their lack of control by resisting or simply not participating in the change.

In Samuel's unsuccessful change story, his change attempt also faltered during this stage, but he did not detect it due to a lack of thorough consultation with teachers. Samuel thought his teachers supported the change regarding a new strand of their science sequence; unfortunately, he interpreted the department's minimal feedback on the change inaccurately. This misreading and subsequent moving forward resulted in teacher resistance and difficult interpersonal relationships. Samuel remembers this unsuccessful change attempt as a very painful time:

I really felt like it was an attack on me and what I was doing. ... It's really hard being a leader and having these things come up, especially the way people approach it instead of approaching it like a dialogue. I think it can get more ... not combative, but ...

Another change attempt that failed during the Examine stage, but ended with little relational damage, was Mary's attempt to create a department format for student work. During this stage of her change attempt, teachers gave Mary feedback (G-CONSULT) that indicated they were not on board with the idea; they simply did not think the information provided by Mary indicated a need for a change. She stated:

Eventually, I was like, you know what? I think we're just not going to worry about this right now ... we're trying to do all this other stuff, so we don't need to layer this on. I can live with this. It did raise awareness, and I do want to revisit it later on.

Unlike the other examples of failed change attempts, Mary's teachers were fully engaged in the Examine stage; Mary provided time for teachers think about the change,

and she encouraged teachers to provide feedback that she listened to with openness and respect. Although this change was unsuccessful, the DC was attentive to the needs and interests of her teachers, and based on that feedback, she tabled the change attempt. However, her saying “I do want to revisit it later on,” indicates that because she was able to maintain good relations with her teachers, this change could be resurrected at a later time. The other DCs overseeing unsuccessful change did not portray that optimism, which may connect to how the DC handled this stage.

Acquire and try

The Acquire stage was mostly missing in DC stories of change or was interwoven with the Try stage. This stage consists of the change leader finding the resources necessary for the change to occur (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995). Most of the materials needed to implement the changes described in DC stories were easily obtained (e.g., meeting space), in possession already (e.g., computers), or intangible (e.g., creativity). One necessary factor for change, predicted in the Acquire stage, was time for teachers to work on the change implementation; fortunately, all schools in this study had late-start days or institute days during which departments could work on curricular issues and devise change plans. If this study had participants from districts that were less financially healthy or from districts that had less trust in their teachers’ professionalism, this may not have been the case, and more leadership behaviors associated with the Acquire stage might have emerged.

The six successful change attempts progressed to the Try stage, whereas the four unsuccessful change attempts stopped either during the Examine stage or very early during the Try stage. Havelock and Zlotolow (1995) described the Try stage as a time where details of the change are determined and adjusted to fit the needs of the system. In successful instances of change, teachers decided that a change would be beneficial and worthwhile during the Examine stage, which prompted DCs to move the change process to the Try stage. Confident that teachers had gained traction with the idea that a change was needed, DCs reduced their level of overt involvement in the change process and passed more of the innovative detailing responsibilities to teachers during the Try stage.

The main leadership activities described in DCs stories during this stage included behind-the-scenes, task-focused leadership behaviors that provided the structure within which teachers could work together creatively and efficiently. These behind-the-scenes tactical behaviors were chosen by DCs to aid in the specific stages of the change process, and the reason for these choices were not shared with teachers. Some of these behaviors included structuring meeting activities, deciding on which materials to share with teachers and when, and creating teacher teams. Specific leadership behaviors associated with this stage of the change process, shown in Figure 1, involved setting objectives for teams (T-ORE) and arranging meeting times and spaces (T-PLAN). Within this structure, DCs released much of the creative process of determining the details of the change to teachers, which was evidenced as DCs described high level people-focused leadership behaviors, such as delegating creative tasks to teachers (G-DELEGATE), supporting and encouraging teachers in their work (G-SUP/ENC), and promoting innovative thinking (G-INNOV). This level of dele-

gation within a structured setting indicates placing trust in the professional skills of teachers while still providing the expertise and vision of the DC to help guide the process when needed. Some thoughts DCs had regarding teacher ownership of the change, releasing control of the change to teachers, and supporting teachers during this stage included:

Anita: “[Teachers] have to have some kind of ownership over some part of it. If they don’t have ownership . . . then they’re not going to buy in.” (G-DELEGATE)

Peggy: “You know the type of people you’re working with and there’s sometimes [*sic*] they might really need you there to kind of support what’s going on. Other times their [*sic*] totally self-sufficient, which makes you so proud, you’re like, ‘Yes! They did it on their own, and I don’t have to be there.’” (G-DELEGATE, G-SUP/ENC)

Xavier: “My presence demonstrated my own time commitment and provided support and encouragement without controlling their work.” (G-DELEGATE, G-SUP/ENC)

Expand

Havelock and Zlotolow (1995) describe the Expand stage as a time when the change implementation extends into other areas, or gains a larger band of influence. During this stage, DCs focused on arranging times for teams associated with the change to share their successes with others (T-PLAN). These meetings for sharing change process reports served two functions: they recognized the work of teachers involved with the change (G-REC), and they provided encouragement and role models for teachers not yet associated with the change (G-SUP/ENC).

Xavier: “One of my goals that we’ve done is to increase show-and-tell during department meetings. I didn’t set it up very well, but now it’s working better.” (T-PLAN, G-REC, G-SUP/ENC)

Mary: “Teachers are now sharing their experiences and what students are doing in their classrooms so there is more alignment of skills in upper classes.” (G-REC, G-SUP/ENC)

Peggy: “Now teachers have said, ‘Can we go back and make all of our test a common test and not just partial?’ So they see the value in it. I said to them if that’s the choice you want to make then we’ll do that. So now they can go into their teams and follow up with that.” (G-DELEGATE, G-SUP/ENC)

Renew

Renew is the final stage of the CREATER cycle, after which the change process re-enters the Care stage. Havelock and Zlotolow (1995) describe the Renew stage as a time to assess the effect of the change, nurture the continuation of the change, and adjust areas that would make the change more effective. During this stage, DCs began to take a more prominent role in the change process. Although DCs were constantly playing substantial behind-the-scenes roles during the change process, they became

more public with their roles during the Renew stage. In the stories of successful change, as shown in Figure 1, DCs collected and analyzed data (T-MONITOR), strategized solutions to problems (T-PLAN), and celebrated and nurtured the successes related to the change during this stage (G-REC, G-SUP/ENC). The analysis aided public relations with their administration and with teachers who were less involved with the change process, and the nurturing and problem solving encouraged teachers who were involved with the change to continue onward with their efforts. DCs shared thoughts of their experiences during this stage:

Peggy: “This meeting reviewed the progress and our student surveys, and focused on making year two stronger.” (T-MONITOR, G-CONSULT)

Anita: “I’ll never forget the first time I showed [the data], and the teachers were aghast. They were joking, asking me, ‘did you manipulate that data?’ For real, I didn’t. This isn’t me, this is your data.” (T-MONITOR, G-REC)

Joseph: “I feel like we’re at the point where people can be proud of some of the things that they’re doing.” (T-MONITOR, T-REFLECT, G-REC)

In most cases of successful change, teachers adopted stronger change agent roles by the conclusion of the Renew stage:

Samuel: “They want more grants, they want to re-examine and re-structure. It kind of has its own life.” (G-DELEGATE)

Peggy: “In my professional learning teams, they don’t need me anymore. I go into the meetings and ask, ‘Do you have any questions, do you need anything?’ and they look at me, like, ‘Why are you here? We have work to do.’ And that’s a very fulfilling moment, but it’s also a very sad because they don’t need you anymore. What’s my role now? You want to be there, you want to be part of it, and that’s when you need to step back. You going in there is disruptive, but you wonder, where is my place in it? That’s hard. That was a transition for me this year. I’m no longer leading the charge.” (T-REFLECT, G-DELEGATE)

Discussion

Change and leadership are implicitly interdependent phenomena; however, no empirical research has connected specific change process frameworks with specific leadership models (Herold et al., 2008). The data presented in this article begins to address this gap in the research by illustrating how secondary school department chairs led successful and unsuccessful change attempts. Lenses for data analysis included the CREATER change process model (Havelock and Zlotolow, 1995) and the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCause, 1991) as detailed by Yukl et al. (2002). Findings from this study support the presence of both the CREATER stages and the leadership behaviors detailed by Yukl et al. (2002) as they relate to the Leadership Grid. Findings from this study additionally connect specific change stages from the CREATER model with specific leadership behaviors from the Leadership Grid. A final insight from this analysis emerged from the comparison of successful and unsuccessful

ful change attempts; this insight points to the importance of leadership behaviors within the Examine stage of the change process.

Within this study, the nexus of the interplay between the constructs of leadership and change was the department chair. Although department chairs may be privy to the larger policy-level discussions, their position within a school typically requires them to convert policy into practice. As change leaders, department chairs must take tactical actions that will create structures and conditions that encourage faculty to participate in the changes that bring policies to life.

Based on DCs' descriptions within this study, their actions as change chaperones with little authoritative power consisted of behind-the-scenes researching and strategizing of their large change implementation plan, followed by creating structures within which teachers were stimulated to think about possible change, then tactically encouraging and supporting teachers as they enacted change. These DC actions required intense knowledge acquisition and reflection, along with subtle interpersonal maneuvers that relied on teachers' trust in the DC, and the DC's respect of teachers' opinions and talents.

Content analysis of DC reports indicated clear connections between CREATER stages of the change process (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995) and leadership behaviors associated with the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCanse, 1991; Yukl, 2002). Blake and Mouton (1978) suggested that the Team Management Style, which consists of a balance between task- and people-focused leadership behaviors, was the most effective leadership style, regardless of context or situation. This is somewhat supported by the findings in this study: DCs reported a mix of task- and people-focused leadership behaviors in all stages of the CREATER change process, except the Care stage. These results align with the findings of the NCSL (Bennett et al., 2003): department chairs must utilize both professional skills (i.e., task- or results-focused behaviors) and interpersonal skills (i.e., people- or relationship-focused behaviors) in order to promote meaningful and successful implementation of change.

Interestingly, Havelock and Zlotolow (1995) numbered the Care stage "0" because it happens before others are able to witness leadership actions and therefore might be taken for granted; this was echoed in the findings of a study on principals' leadership in which the authors found that a critical "planning" stage was lacking in Lewin's foundational unfreeze-move-refreeze 1947 change model (Reinhard, Arends, Kutz, Lovell, & Wyant, 1980). Specific Care stage patterns emerging from DC stories of change reveal they mostly use task-focused behaviors, such as monitoring internal information (T-MONITOR), educating themselves on external issues (T-EXTERNAL), and planning their future department communications and activities (T-PLAN). Leadership behaviors during this stage were completed behind-the-scenes, which allowed DCs to gather information and strategize how to bring teachers to the idea that a change would benefit students.

Connections between leadership behaviors and the change process were also identified in DC stories of change as they described the Relate stage. This stage occurred simultaneously with other stages, and consisted of DCs building trust with department members (G-TRUST) through both task- and people-focused activities. Task-focused activities included behaviors that demonstrated their abilities as de-

partment chair, such as planning (T-PLAN) and monitoring of the department activities (T-MONITOR). Another task-focused behavior that aided this stage was the DC's reflection (T-REFLECT) on individual department members, and strategizing how to forge relationships with these individuals (T-PLAN). Providing teachers with professional development to help them feel more comfortable and capable in their jobs (G-PD) and consulting with teachers (G-CONSULT) were some of the most prevalent people-focused activities during this stage. Consulting requires two-way communication, during which the DCs expressed interest in the experiences and knowledge of teachers and listened with the intention of acting on what they heard from their teachers. This communication is an expression of respect for teachers that enhances the DC and teacher relationship.

A combination of task- and people-focused leadership behaviors was also present in the Examine stage. In this stage, DCs strategically planned and organized events (T-PLAN) during which DCs shared possible change-related information (T-MONITOR, T-EXTERNAL) and consulted with teachers (G-CONSULT) about the shared information. It was during descriptions of this stage that decisive differences emerged between successful and unsuccessful change attempts. In stories of successful change, DCs described more instances of consultation (G-CONSULT) than in unsuccessful changes; this increased level of consultation indicated a higher level of involvement of teachers, and additional time for information processing and departmental discussions. In successful stories of change, DCs provided time for teachers to think about and explore change options, and they strived to understand teachers' perspectives through department meetings, one-on-one conversations, and written feedback. From this feedback, DCs were able to determine teachers' concerns, need for professional development, and ideas on change they had not previously considered.

In general, the patience of the DC during the Examine stage allowed for richer consultation with teachers, and this appeared to be a key factor not only in whether a change was successful or not, but also whether an unsuccessful change ended well or poorly. In stories of unsuccessful change, the DC who temporarily or permanently ended her change attempt based on teacher feedback exited the change process with disappointment, but with department relationships intact. On the other hand, DCs who did not fully hear teacher feedback and therefore pushed on with the change process only to have the process fail, left the process not only disappointed, but also with wounded relationships. In these damaging unsuccessful change attempts, additional consultation during the Examine stage might have provided richer feedback and allowed DCs to either strategize a new approach to gain the support of teachers, or acknowledge teachers' opinions and call the change off.

In successful change attempts, if teachers and the DC decided that a change should be attempted during the Examine stage, the DCs loosened their control over the change process and moved their department into the Try stage. In this stage, DCs used task-focused behaviors to set the tone and structure of meetings (T-ORE, T-PLAN), while enacting the people-focused behaviors of delegation (G-DELEGATE), support, and encouragement (G-SUP/ENC).

Once teachers determined the details of the change and the change implementation began, DCs ushered in the Extend stage by focusing on tasks that arranged space

(T-PLAN) for teachers involved with the change to share their successes (G-REC), and by again focusing on the people-focused behavior of delegating (G-DELEGATE). Finally, DCs took on a greater public role during the Renew stage as they focused on task-related behaviors related to data collection and analysis (T-MONITOR), as well as people-related behaviors in which teachers and their hard work were recognized (G-REC).

This study was a beginning exploration of the connection between two frameworks: the CREATER change model (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995) and the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCauley, 1991). On a general, theoretical level, this article presents support for the CREATER model of change and illustrates the interplay between specific leadership behaviors within the Leadership Grid framework as they connect to the CREATER change process stages. On a more localized, practical level, this study adds to our understanding of how secondary school department chairs use leadership behaviors to implement department-level change.

Secondary school department chairs can play a critical role in chaperoning educational change through their department work. However, department chairs, like other mid-level leaders, face the positional challenge of not having a large amount of control over reform efforts that convert policy into reality. This lack of authoritative power, however, does not reduce department chairs' ability to lead change; department chairs who employ tactical task-focused and relationship-focused behaviors at various points during the change process are able to successfully lead change. This study illustrates an emergent pattern of change associated with leadership behaviors; findings indicate that a strategic and informed approach to change, coupled with tactically arranged involvement of teachers, enhances the chance for successful implementation.

The preliminary linkages found in this investigation between the CREATER change process stages (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995) and specific leadership behaviors associated with the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCauley, 1991; Yukl et al, 2002) leads to some general suggestions for department chairs and other mid-level leaders interested in navigating the change process. From the analysis of DC reports within this study, it appears that much of their essential work occurs behind-the-scenes. This would suggest that department chairs prioritize working on their own to (i) gather and analyze data during the Care stage; (ii) strategize how to build relationships during the Relate stage; and (iii) tactically organize work structures during the Examine, Try, Expand, and Renew stages within which teachers are encouraged to use their knowledge, passion, and talents to create details of change, and where they are recognized for their hard work and successes.

A more specific suggestion for department chairs and other mid-level leaders is to use multiple methods of consultation during the Examine stage of the change process, such as large and small group discussions, one-on-one conversations, and anonymous written feedback. Within this study, teacher feedback allowed DCs to move forward with the change, slow the process down and strategize a new approach, or stop the change process completely. Even in unsuccessful cases of change, the DCs who fully listened to and accepted the feedback from teachers ended the change process without damaging department relationships. However, in unsuccessful cases in which the DC did not fully hear or respond to teachers' feedback, those

change attempts failed and were coupled with hard feelings between the teachers and their DC.

Areas for future research into the creative space between change and leadership could include enlarging this investigation to mid-level leaders in other fields, or leaders with more variation in their years of experience. The purposeful selection of participants within this study provided valuable baseline information on how experienced secondary school department chairs lead change, but it could be informative for leadership development programs to determine the learning curve related to how leaders approach the change process. Another area of investigation that could enhance the effective structuring of organizations could focus on how higher-level leaders, such as school administrators, support mid-level leaders in their charge of implementing policy changes within their groups, teams, or departments.

Conclusion

This investigation centered on secondary school department chair stories of educational change, and revolved around two change-leadership questions: (i) Do behaviors related to the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCanse, 1991; Yukl et al., 2002) emerge in a recurrent pattern during specific stages of the CREATER change model (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995)? (ii) Is there a difference in “change stage-leadership behavior” patterns between successful and unsuccessful change attempts? By addressing these questions, this investigation begins to fill a void in change-leadership literature; namely, that no research has previously linked change process models with established leadership theories (Herold et al., 2008). Department chair stories analyzed within this investigation revealed distinct and recurrent connections between CREATER change process stages (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995) and specific behaviors associated with the Leadership Grid (Blake & McCanse, 1991; Yukl et al., 2002). This analysis also identified differences in the change-leadership connections during the Examine stage between patterns present in department chair stories of successful and unsuccessful change attempts. In addition to gleaning understanding on topics related to the questions posed by this research, these findings provide insight into the process through which leaders with limited power implement change and indicate actions for leaders to consider as they contemplate systemic change.

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