# A PROGRAMME OF PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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**ABSTRACT**   *This article is an overview of an indepth action research study (Robertson, 1995) conducted with 12 New Zealand primary school principals between 1992 and 1995. Prior to this study, major administrative changes in the education system in New Zealand had been introduced, to give schools more responsibility for their own management in conjunction with elected committees of parents. This research sought a model of professional development which would assist principals to implement new ideas and practices, deal effectively with the current issues and problems in their schools and provide skills, challenges and support.*

## INTRODUCTION

This research study explored the ways in which the use of peer partnerships could make a contribution to principals' professional development programmes. The case for the necessity for schools to have lifelong learners in their leadership positions had been well made (for example, Blase, 1987; Robinson, 1993). It had also been a matter of personal concern that the professional development of New Zealand school principals often appeared to be ad hoc, and much of their learning about administration and leadership was picked up 'on-the-job'.

A model was needed that would assist the principals to implement new ideas and practices (Barth, 1986) and also provide the skills, challenge and support for these principals to be able to reflect upon their own practice in their schools. The model of professional development outlined in this article set out to provide the type of outside intervention that Argyris and Schön (1978) believed was important to enable leaders to discover their personal theories-of-action, unlock these and, in addition, learn new theories which could help them address many of the dilemmas and issues they faced.

However, no research or development takes place in a vacuum. A knowledge of the context of New Zealand school leadership at the time of this research is particularly important to an understanding of this study.

## CONTEXT

The duration of this research coincided with a period of rapid social, economic, educational and political change in New Zealand. New Zealand schools became self-managing. The managerial thrust on school leaders was dominant (Codd,

1990) and principals were faced with increasing difficulty in being able to focus on the educational aspect of their role (Robertson, 1991; Wylie, 1994). A New Zealand Principals' Federation survey (1995) showed that 400 principals resigned in 1994 which, they stated, was twice as many as in any preceding years. These factors all impacted on the research of a professional development model for school leaders at this time. At this time, Grace (1990) called for research at the macro level of the social, cultural, economic and political level in New Zealand education but also asked for engagement in "sensitive, complex, and qualitative studies of school processes" (p. 39) which was what this research set out to do.

One urban primary principal in an earlier study (Robertson, 1991) advocated the type of aided-reflection espoused in models where principals expand their knowledge through reflective practice by forming professional partnerships (Bailey, 1987; Barnett, 1990; Robinson & Absolum, 1990). This principal commented:

> What I would really like to do is to talk to other principals and perhaps buddy with someone. They would spend a day or two with me and then I would say "OK, warts and all, what can you see in here that I am doing wrong—tell me. What things do you like? What things am I doing that I could do better?" (Robertson, 1991, p. 89)

The idea for further research and development in this area took root. The present study researched a professional development model based on the formation of a partnerships' programme. The research was guided by two research questions :

> Do partnerships assist in the professional development of primary school principals?

> If so, in what ways?

Qualitative action research was needed to explore the thoughts, feelings and experiences of these school leaders during the development of such a model (Bogden & Biklen, 1982).

**METHODOLOGY**

Greene (1988) lent further support for qualitative research processes when she stated that research of this kind cannot be carried out by researchers who see themselves detached or neutral as "the life of meaning does not present itself for examination" (p. 175). The search for this meaning required getting to know the principals in depth, Over time, an understanding would, be gained of their relationship with their partner and within the community of researchers, their reactions and ways of responding, and how they learned and developed as educational leaders. Qualitative methods, within an action research process, were the obvious option.

Killion and Todnem (1991) stated that because busy people do not engage in reflection they need to be "given some time, some structure, and the expectations to do so" (p. 14). The expectation provides the necessary pressure and the structure and time provides the support. This qualitative action-research was

designed to not only develop a theory of professional development but also to assist the principals to become more critically aware of the educational, social and political environment in which they were practising.  In this way, it was hoped that they would be able to make more informed choices about the most appropriate actions to take to improve learning in their schools.

There were many methods built into the partnerships' programme which were not only for data collection for the principals in the achievement of their professional goals but also for data collection for the theory building.

## METHODS

Traditional methods of gathering data in qualitative research were  used in perhaps non-traditional ways as I redefined them "to more interactive, contextualized methods" (Lather, 1992, p. 92) in the search for a greater understanding of how school leaders are best supported and learn throughout their careers.  For example,  the use of cassette and written reflections were included under observations as I utilised these alternative methods as ways to gather and supplement the observations.  These were the principals' recordings of their observations at the time of the event.

The development of the theory was inductive rather than deductive which meant that a large amount of data was continually gathered to support the ongoing grounded theory analysis.  All of these methods will now be explained.

### Observation

Observation included the principals observing each other, which was called shadowing.  The principals were taught how to note down only observable events, to give descriptive accounts and not to make judgements or interpretations of the behaviours that they had observed.  Observation also included the researcher observing the principals in action.  The principals were data gathering during their shadowing of each other for their professional development; I was also data gathering, when shadowing, for the building of theory.

Other observations were made through the written reflections the principals made, either in full group sessions when they were prompted to do so, or when they wrote reflections from their schools or homes.  Yet other observations were recorded in my letters written to the principals which described what I had experienced in their schools or in response to their cassettes or written reflections.  All of these methods were forms of gathering data of observed behaviours—either data for informing future action in the schools or for informing the research within the action research process, or data for the emergence of a theory of professional development for school leaders.  These were often different accounts of the same event, which assisted in data triangulation.

### Interviews/Interactions

The term interview was extended to include all dialogic interactions.  Therefore not only were there the interviews in the traditional sense between researcher and researched but there were the 'context' interviews which the principals carried out

when they first met together to become thoroughly familiar with the context in which their partners were conducting their actions.

There were also the *reflective interviews* conducted by the principals working together to achieve professional goals. Reflective interviewing is a questioning technique that provides opportunities for the questioned person to explore his or her knowledge, skills, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values (Lee, 1990). This was a key principle in this research model. The questioning technique leaves the power for reflection and judgement in the hands of the person being questioned. There were three levels of questions that the principals were taught to use to assist their partner to reflect critically on their practice which explored reasons, purposes and intended outcomes of actions as well as the philosophical and contextual basis for these actions.

There were also *goal setting sessions* in addition to the sessions where the principals met primarily to give and receive *evaluative feedback*. Giving evaluative feedback was a method whereby the principals could get a colleague's judgement and professional advice on their leadership actions. It was important that there were guidelines for this process also.

There were *action research planning sessions* and the *full group sessions* where the interactions often included outside consultants who assisted in the professional development process. During the regular full group sessions at the University, the principals had many opportunities to learn and practise the various methods discussed above. For further details on all of these methods see the original report (Robertson, 1995).

The principals were also given many opportunities at these sessions to assist with the analysis of data through the action research process.

## Grounded Theory Developed Through Action Research Processes

This qualitative research study used "grounded theory" data analysis techniques in which theory was developed from data gathered through observation, interview and document analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) within an action research process. As the theory was constructed directly from the data, it developed during the research (Blase, 1987; Bogden & Biklen, 1982; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The principals read and discussed the developing categories of propositions and commented on my interpretation of the developing theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated that the theory developed from studying only one group is "at most the discovery of some basic categories and a few of their properties" and that the theory that develops is "only the beginning of a theory" (p. 62). All grounded theory is simply that—a beginning.

## THE THEORY - A BEGINNING

Although all efforts were made to select a representative group of principals, this study ultimately produced a substantive theory which could only apply to the group studied. There was no intention to extrapolate findings from this group to generalise across other groups of principals, but even so, it was hoped that many other principals could relate to the grounded theory developed from these principals' experiences. This study demonstrated that the partnerships'

programme had been beneficial to them and that the principals saw the programme as an integral part of their professional development. One urban intermediate school principal said this about the partnerships' programme in his final reflection:

> This has been one of the most—no, the most!—professionally supportive experience of my 39 years in the job!

A newly appointed rural teaching principal saw substantial benefits throughout the research process:

> I hope we keep up this partnership. It is my best development undertaken! Even my staff comment on this. (Robertson, 1995, p. 157)

The ways in which these principals gained from their involvement in their partnerships in the research fell into four major categories: (a) enhanced critical reflection on practice; (b) increased professional interactions; (c) educational leadership development and finally, (d) establishing structures for processes of action research and school development.

## (a) Enhanced Critical Reflection On Practice

This research found that to enhance the likelihood of critical reflection on practice occurring, the time for reflection needed to be formalised into the principals' practice. The demands of the principals' jobs worked against them being as reflective as they would have liked. When their partner was observing them in their school it forced the principals to stop and take the time to analyse their leadership actions. One principal summed up the experiences of the others when he said "Apart from these sessions [with partner in reflective interview] I cannot recall spending any time on thinking about my leadership style [before involvement in this programme]."

When the principals took time out of their own school to visit their partner this also became enforced time for reflection on practice. They were able to stand back from the demands of the day in their school and think about their own practice and school as they spent time observing and interviewing their partner. In this way, their learning was vicarious. This is how one principal described it:

> Going into someone else's school you tend now to really look. You really are looking at some of the things that are occurring and, when you are doing that, you are thinking to yourself all the time "Would I do this?" (Robertson, 1995, p. 161).

This was a valued aspect of the research. The principals all said that they seldom, if ever, had had the opportunity to observe another principal in action before their involvement with the partnerships' programme.

These outside perspectives, the outside intervention (Argyris, 1976), were an important factor in enhancing the process of critical reflection on practice. The principals were often not aware of their actual practice or the effects of their

practice because previously they had not had these opportunities to reflect critically on their leadership actions. The new ways-of-knowing and new perspectives then challenged or affirmed the principals' previous ways-of-knowing.

There were many ways in which these principals attained outside perspectives: through their partner shadowing them; through shadowing their partner; through reflective interviewing and receiving evaluative feedback on their identified area of focus; through discussions and role plays at full group sessions; through discussions with the researcher. One principal described the outside perspectives gained when his partner shadowed him as "a pair of eyes coming in from out." The outside perspectives enabled the principals to see the differences between their espoused theories and their theories-in-action (Schon, 1983). Often what they thought they were doing and what they were actually doing, were different things. As one principal said about his partner: "They can't do it for you, but they can listen and give support, and they can give another perspective." The principals all said that this vicarious reflection on their practice helped them to become more critical of their own practices and more knowledgeable about the values and philosophies that underpinned their practice. This was one of the theoretical principles underlying the methodologies of the partnerships' model—to provide chances for principals to ask questions such as: What am I doing? Why am I doing it? What are the effects of my actions on learning in this school? (Smyth, 1985). One principal described it like this: "The experiences have helped me to look critically at my own performance and to use the outcome of such reflective thoughts to improve it."

The outside perspectives, then, led the principals to further reflection *on* action and to enhanced reflection *in* action for decisions about prospective actions. The principals' overall awareness of how things were being conducted in their own schools had been enhanced. This critical reflection then led the principals from practice to praxis in their schools—informed, committed actions to improve the quality of learning. One principal described it like this:

> I am quite sure that in all my interactions with staff I am all the time subconsciously, and occasionally quite consciously, thinking back to some of the techniques and topics that were discussed in the big group. I remember one of the things you said...that in the long run, the one criteria that you need to apply to everything is "What is the educational value—the impact on children's learning—of what is going on?" That is a criterion that I consciously apply all the time [now]. (Robertson, 1995, p. 167)

In summary, there was no doubt that the partnerships led to far greater reflection, on practice and in practice, taking place in these schools by these principals. The fact that many more structured opportunities for reflection were made available during the school day, in the evenings and at the full group sessions, meant that these principals began to experience and hence recognise the value of more in-depth reflection on their professional practice. The collegiality and collaborative nature of these reflective practices leads on to the next main category of findings

which describes how partnerships assisted in the professional development of these school principals—through increased professional interactions.

### (b) Increased Professional Interactions

This section highlights the many ways in which there were increased professional interactions for the principals through their involvement in the partnerships' programme. These increased professional interactions were experienced between partners; between schools and other members of staff in the schools; between the members of the research group; and between the university researcher and the principals. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

All of the principals in the research talked about the differences between their interactions within their partnership, the research group, and their usual interactions with colleagues. They said that when principals usually talked together the interactions tended to be social rather than centred on the resolution of specific leadership dilemmas. They said there appeared to be an unspoken rule among them that principals would not reveal any personal concerns or inadequacies and that nobody really ever revealed anything of any depth when principals talked together in their usual social and professional situations. One principal said that "This group is much more open with each other than other groups... principals put on a bluff exterior at Association meetings."

The principals said that this research gave them their only legitimate access to see other principals in action in their schools. One rural principal described how it normally would have been by saying "I may have gone for a few beers with (partner) but never something professional like this." This research opportunity enabled principals to go beyond "the bluff" and attain access to a deeper understanding of each other and themselves. It was an aspect of the model which was highly valued as they realised it enhanced their professional relationships as they were able to reveal their own development needs.

The principals were all very humble about the level of trust that their partner had afforded them. They were concerned with the overall picture of what was happening to principals' collegiality in New Zealand since Tomorrow's Schools. One principal said that "The whole philosophy of partnership is that collegiality is important. Schools seem to be becoming so individualistic."

The principals soon became very familiar with each other's schools and communities and in all partnerships, after about one year, the amount of professional interaction between the partner-schools began to increase,. As the principals became more familiar with each other's schools they began to identify the strengths in each other's practice and looked for ways in which they could share this valuable resource between their schools.

Two of the principals jointly planned and implemented a social studies unit on myths and legends in their second year of working which involved the whole staff and students of one school, with the partner principal and his class. In yet another partnership, the two principals worked alongside each other through the same school development plan and their staff met for joint staff meetings and action related to school change.

In another situation, one principal took his deputy principal to his partner school so that the deputy could also benefit from a partnership with another deputy

principal. The principals in the fourth partnership worked with each other's senior staff on different occasions such as in the appointment of staff and the development of performance agreements.

In the fifth partnership, the principals worked together on senior staff development. In his final reflections about the most important things that happened during the process of the research, one of these principals said that it was this increase in the amount of interactions between the two schools which was the highlight. He said:

> The partnership has led to an increased degree of professional interaction between our two schools at all levels—support staff; teachers; seniors, tech-art staff and deputy principals. (Robertson, 1995, p.174)

The philosophy of collegiality that these principals were fostering in working so closely with their partner was therefore pervasive through their school cultures. One principal could see the importance of the role model he was setting as early as at the end of the preliminary study:

> I think it is important that the staff see that the principal is also committed to the concept of professional development and that the principal doesn't think "Well, I'm at the top—now you others catch up". (Robertson, 1995, p.174)

This commitment to their own professional growth led to a greater understanding of the other principals in the group and increased professional interactions with them at full group sessions. They were more willing to be honest about their concerns and dilemmas and moved beyond problem solving to look more critically at their practice and their educational values. The diversity of experiences within the group was paramount. The constant facilitation of interactions by the researcher, as part of this community of researchers, kept the group focussed on leadership issues and the current research literature, both during the full group sessions and on an individual basis with each principal in the group. This action research process created the opportunity for increased professional interaction to occur between university researcher and the principals, which seldom occurs otherwise.

It was always important that the principals benefited from the *process* of being involved in the research rather than just benefiting from the research findings at some later stage as can be the case in some traditional research methods. Reciprocity, a mutual give-and-take, was therefore easily achieved between the principals and between the researcher and the principals and, through this reciprocity, a degree of reflexivity was also achieved. The principals had changed in the manner in which they conducted their professional interactions.

## (c) Educational Leadership Development

This research did not aim to put a recipe, as such, for excellent leadership into the hands of principals, but aimed to give the principals the skills, the attitudes and the behaviours to become more reflective about their practice and in so doing, help them to focus on the quality of education in their own schools. There was the strength gained from the support and affirmation of working closely with a professional colleague and the subsequent loss of feelings of isolation. There was a greater focus on the quality of education in their schools and on their own leadership styles and development. The principals became increasingly open to new ideas and growth which lead to further reflection on practice and then informed committed actions taking place. There was greater responsibility taken for self-development and therefore increased intellectual independence on the part of the principals. The concept of "leadership" denotes proactive action and these principals moved from being reactive and isolated, to proactive and politically empowered through belonging to the group of principals involved in the research.

Many of the changes related to the principals' leadership development were affective in that the change was apparent in their feelings, attitudes and confidence. This links to what Hargreaves and Fullan (1992, p. 7) were referring when they said "Teacher development... involves more than changing teachers' behaviour. It also involves changing the person the teacher is."

A category that was saturated early, during the preliminary study, was that partnerships reduced the isolation felt by principals. Many of these principals had experienced a loss of confidence in their ability to carry out their role successfully and one principal described it in this way:

> I'm always afraid, every time I stand up just to give a few notices at morning tea or staff meetings or something like that. "Am I going to say the right thing? Am I going to say something that someone is going to pick up on that I can't give them a good answer on?" (Robertson, 1995, p. 187)

At the end of the research this principal was talking to me about the confidence he had gained through his involvement in the programme. He said that he felt so empowered:

> This is where I have gone from one extreme to the other. If I had known then what I now know, I wouldn't have let them [the Board of Trustees] push me about. I would have felt so empowered, supported and emancipated, that ... I would have dealt with it quite differently. (Robertson, 1995, p. 187)

What he now had was confirmation that the way he was operating in his school met with the same issues and concerns of many other principals. One of the factors which led to the principals regaining their confidence was the positive affirmation that they received from their partner after their partner had seen them in action in their schools. The fact that they were meeting with these colleagues

and openly discussing their schools and their leadership, was one of the most obvious indicators that change had occurred. This *was* leadership development—a willingness to focus upon their leadership. I was often asked incredulously, "How did you find 12 principals who were willing to lay themselves open to development in this way?" These principals had the support and encouragement necessary for this to occur.

The principals all stated that they were focussing more on their own leadership because of the partnerships' programme. This was how one principal described it:

> The partnerships focus principals into leadership issues and seek evaluation. Although we may wear many hats in our schools we are the professional leaders and sometimes...other issues can take priority. (Robertson, 1995, p. 190)

The structure of this partnerships' programme gave them the opportunities to make their professional leadership their priority. One principal, in her final reflection, described her confidence in her leadership in the school. She told me:

> The biggest gain/change has been a move from a 'managerial' role to a 'leadership' role. Now I am comfortable with the day-to-day running of the school I can take a look at the bigger picture - Where are we going as a school? What do we want for the children here? (Robertson, 1995, pp. 192, 193)

There was a necessary amount of challenge to their previous ways-of-knowing due to the exchange of thoughts and ideas and the principals became more open to new ideas and professional growth. The focus on the quality of leadership within their school and the emphasis on looking specifically at their leadership actions, meant that the principals did make changes to their leadership practice in their schools. This came about because the principals now felt an ownership for the necessity to change. This is how one principal described it:

> ...you are developing very independent principals by causing them to reflect and do their own learning and since learning is change, change themselves...I think the strength of the system [this research model] is the expectation that each principal is responsible for her [sic] own development. We don't want clones. (Robertson 1995, p. 196)

The principals began to recognise the importance of utilising their partners' strengths to develop and meet their own professional goals. As they highlighted areas for development, they then naturally sought ways for development to take place. For the purposes of their evaluative feedback sessions and reflective interviews some principals chose to have their partners observe them taking senior staff meetings or watch as they conducted performance appraisal interviews with their staff. Three principals observed their partners taking full staff meetings; five principals attended the effectiveness reviews that their partners were involved in; two principals attended meetings of the Board of

Trustees at their partners' schools. The partnerships' model provided the link from the isolated professional development courses these principals attended, situated on an island divorced from the school and its culture, to the school setting where it provided a necessary framework for the achievement of professional and school development goals.

The self-development and increased responsibility for continued professional development and lifelong learning also led to a realisation of the wider picture of principals' practice in New Zealand. When I gave early findings back to the principals they were able to see their situation from another perspective and to "see the research as a whole." I wrote a conference paper (Robertson, 1996) based on their experiences which addressed the importance of leaders taking the time to climb the tallest tree to see if they were working in the right jungle (Covey, 1989). A rural teaching principal stated that he would continue with his partnership in the future because "It is too easy to go overboard in a school such as mine especially living on site. So I will need to be reminded to keep my head up or 'climb the tree".

Seeing the "whole" and "taking time to climb the tree" occasionally, heralded the beginnings of emancipatory actions being taken by the principals. When the principals were able to reflect on the actions of their partner and subsequently reflect on their own actions they began to realise that they did not have to continue practising in the way they had previously been doing. They experienced feelings of agency as they saw that changing the structures and the ways they had previously worked could empower them in ways they had not realised before. Another principal wrote the following in the margin of the same conference paper:

> Also I now think more about the whole situation and not just my own corner - I think because the group is diverse and we all know a lot about each other's problems therefore we started relating to other types of schools - this has turned to be a general view of all schools and problems experienced by them generally. (Robertson, 1995, p. 200)

I had been concerned at how often the principals voiced the dilemma that they were acting like the middle managers that Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) described in carrying out things for the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office which they did not necessarily understand or believe in. The programme gave these principals a feeling of united strength to deal with the problems, sometimes at the school level; sometimes at the regional or national level. They described a sense of freedom from the constraints of some of the official systems that they felt were inhibiting their educational leadership actions in the school.

In summary, through the support and affirmation and lessening of feelings of isolation by working closely together in their partnerships, the principals became open to new ideas and growth. They became willing to accept responsibility for their own leadership development, and in doing so, developed an awareness of the leadership actions and development of others around them. In this way then, the partnerships' model of professional development became institutionalised in their practice.

The Partnerships' programme established a framework, not only for the achievement of school and professional goals, but also for collaborative action research processes to develop.

## (d) Structures For Action Research and School Development

As the partnerships developed, many of the principals began to use steps of action, reflection, observation, data gathering, and evaluation of their practice. They then replanned their next steps of action. This process was easily recognisable to the researcher as the process of action research although the principals did not initially recognise or describe their processes as such.

It was after one year of the gathering and analysing of the data that the grounded theory indicated that action research practices were taking place in some partnerships. There was evidence that there were longitudinal goals and visions of desired outcomes that the principals were working systematically towards meeting, in collaboration with their partner. This meant that the processes had surpassed problem solving and had moved through at least three or four cyclical stages before the goals or outcomes were being achieved. One partnership's two year long process began with ideas gathered when they jointly attended a holiday course. Each of the other principals had specific goals for their own school. One principal had worked through the Education Review Office's Effectiveness Review process with his partner. Two other principals were working on the development of their deputy principals' leadership and performance agreements. A rural teaching principal was developing appraisal processes; another was developing resource-based learning philosophies throughout the school; another principal wanted to develop and implement a five year strategic plan of school development. The principals' partners were working with them to a lesser or greater degree on the achievement of these goals, depending on the level of involvement and regularity of contacts.

The principals had not set out to undertake pieces of action research. They had not been taught the process or theory of action research at the beginning of the research process. The theory and a model of action research—the model developed from an analysis of the data of their collaborative processes—was introduced at a much later stage when it became apparent that knowledge of a more formal structure could assist the principals to achieve their goals more effectively. The 'conscience' type effect of the partner kept them focussed and moving systematically ahead to achieve their goals. The reality of the principal's job has meant that principals get sidetracked by the short term issues and sometimes have difficulties maintaining the momentum to achieve their long term goals. The action research processes undertaken by the university researcher assisted the principals in the development of this framework.

In summary, a substantive theory of a model for principals' professional development has been presented through the narrative of these findings. The four categories of the theory—the enhanced critical reflection on practice, the increased professional interactions, the resulting leadership development and the supporting structure for action research processes for school development—were all developed from the study of the principals' work in their partnerships. The principals unanimously stated that their work in the partnerships' programme

had been an important part of their professional development. For all of the principals, participation in this programme meant a focus on their leadership practice. They said there were few other opportunities for this to occur.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

> Substantive theory in turn helps to generate new grounded formal theories and to reformulate previously established ones. Thus it becomes a strategic link in the formulation and development of formal theory based on data. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 34)

This research study was in response to the implications of a grounded substantive theory developed in 1990 (Robertson, 1991). Even as the last word of that previous research was being written, the next questions were being asked. How then, to establish a model which takes all the earlier substantive theory into consideration? How then, to get school leaders to be involved in professional development which acknowledged the realities of the daily practice of school principals and the philosophic, values and visionary elements in the principal's role? How could a model offer opportunities for values development and the resolution of value conflicts and have a strong emphasis on educative leadership? It became evident at the end of that research in 1991 that establishing individual professional partnerships between principals working in their own schools and combining it with regular support in a group workshop situation with a researcher could be a model that would take into consideration all of the substantive theory established in the earlier research. Many of those propositions were saturated again in this research. This is not surprising as Glaser and Strauss (1967) say that grounded theory is always only the beginning—never the final word.

There were two statements in the previous theory (Robertson, 1991) which were the key to developing this model and are at the basis of this formal theory. The first was that professional development had to acknowledge the reality of the principals' job conditions and their daily practice. The second was that the professional development programme should be provided by practitioners and consultants in partnership.

Missing from the earlier theory was how this would be accomplished. Missing was the emphasis on the change process. *How* do professional developers get school leaders to see that change in their leadership behaviour is necessary? Challenge is needed. This research study has shown that partnership supervision can provide that challenge as can other perspectives from members of the research group. The group was as important as the partnership—the variety of perspectives, the development activities provided, the skills and support provided through the group situation all served as professional development opportunities. The partnerships also needed continuing support and challenge from the researcher.

The saying "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink" had relevance in this research. Consideration was needed not only about how to get the school leaders to drink but how to actually get them to the water, to their professional development. For many of these principals the attendance at their Association's annual conference or their monthly meeting of the regional

principals' association, and perhaps a professional development seminar or workshop slotted in here and there when a brochure caught their attention, typified their professional development activities before their involvement in the Partnerships' programme. They told me they seldom, if ever, had had to confront their own leadership on those occasions. Therefore there was never any impetus to change when back on the school site. As one principal so avidly put it, it is imperative that a programme assists a principal to see a *need* to change, and to want to change, before change will take place:

> We get a bit long in the tooth for change and apart from all that, no matter who your partner is or where you work or anything, before you are going to change, you have to want to change. Nobody will ever change me unless I want to change. (Robertson, 1995, p. 283)

No one will ever change unless there is a disruption. The principals as professional partners provided this. The university researcher provided this. The partnership of the two together was an effective combination and my thesis was that both were necessary. The practitioner consultant, their partner in this study, provided the evaluative feedback necessary for development and the researcher improved the educative nature of the professional relationship that they developed by providing the challenges, the critical perspectives, the skills and the theory to support the principals' practice.

In summary, the research study set out to establish whether professional partnerships could assist in the leadership development needs of these 12 school principals. The findings have shown that these school leaders believed the partnerships' programme assisted them in many ways. These principals all got to the water *and* were motivated to drink. The question remains as to how we can convince all school leaders of the importance of such continuing growth and development.

If study programmes such as this are not set up to support principals could Goodlad's words written nearly 20 years ago in the U.S.A. become a portent for those in education in New Zealand *today*? These words signalled a new era *then* for educational leadership theory:

> We corrupted the educational process through over cultivation of the system. And now as we reflect on all this—and reflection is a luxury in which we too little indulge—we become dimly aware of something missing. That something is what motivated most of us to become teachers or educators in the first place...to put education at the centre again, [to]want to become educational leaders again, not mere managers. (Goodlad, 1978, p. 324)

Are his continuing words going to be the lament of school leaders in New Zealand in another 20 years *hence?*

> We have yielded to the pressures and temptations of becoming experts in fiscal and personnel management, public relations, collective bargaining, and the political process. Few of us are trained or

experienced in any of these, even though we must take responsibility for them. What we are trained and experienced in, most of us, is education—its traditional and emerging goals, its historical roots, alternatives, curriculum, counselling, instruction. (Goodlad, 1978, p. 331)

School leaders in New Zealand need to keep education at the centre with critical reflection on their practice. They need to hold fast to their educative leadership role and be wary about becoming "mere managers." These 12 school leaders believed that involvement in the professional partnerships' programme assisted them to achieve this.

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