ARTICLE

Manitoba Superintendents

Mentoring and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The role of the school superintendent is complex and challenging. The type of
leadership exemplified by school superintendents is crucial to their ability to respond
appropriately and adequately to growing diversity issues and economic, social and
community influences. Because individuals learn from the styles and/or characteristics
of others whom they would like to emulate, this localized qualitative study asked
superintendents to elaborate on the nature and characteristics of the people who have
most influenced their leadership style. Who were these mentors? What specific
characteristics were identified in the mentors? In what ways are these characteristics
evident in superintendents' own leadership styles? A critical lens of servant-leadership
was used to analyze the information gathered from Manitoba superintendents.

KEYWORDS *educational administration, leadership styles, mentor characteristics,
superintendent mentors, superintendents as servant-leaders*

Introduction

In the province of Manitoba, there exists little research data directly related to
the leadership style or mentor relationships of the 39 senior administrators/
superintendents who are the educational leaders of public school divisions.
Parker Palmer (1998: 21) speaks about the role of mentors in his book *Courage
to Teach*: 'Their power is in their capacity to awaken a truth within us, a truth
we can reclaim years later by recalling their impact on our lives'. Further,
Palmer speaks to their impact on the personal growth of the mentee when he
suggests, '[m]entoring is a mutuality that requires more than meeting the right
teacher: the teacher must meet the right student. In this encounter, not only
are the qualities of the mentor revealed, but the qualities of the student are
drawn out in a way that is equally revealing' (1998: 21). If we simply think of
a mentor as someone to whom we feel drawn who seems to know things about
life that we need to learn, it may help us to recognize that 'mentors can appear
throughout our lives, whenever we encounter a new transition' (Daloz, 1999:
204). Mentors are more than those who are formally positioned as such in an

organization. They may include any and all 'teachers' in our lives from whom we learn the truths that most impact our lives and shape whom it is we become. They are the people who help to set us on the paths of our lives underpinned by particular values that shape our future behaviors. Daloz (1999) suggests that mentors do three things for their mentees: they support; they challenge; and they provide vision. As such, their presence may have an incredible impact on the very ways in which superintendents lead school divisions, which is crucial to their ability to respond appropriately and adequately to growing diversity issues and economic, social and community influences. Much of the current literature advocates for educational leaders who can develop strong, effective, caring communities in all segments of society (Greenleaf, 1976, 1978; Hessel-bein et al., 1998; Sergiovanni, 1994; Spears, 1998b). Who are/were the mentors who influenced the lives of Manitoba superintendents? And have their charac-teristics influenced superintendents in ways that make their leadership styles congruent with current leadership perspectives? The following study identified the mentors of superintendents and their particular leadership qualities analyzed through the critical lens of servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 1970/1991). In addition, the study attempted to identify similar traits in the leadership styles of superintendents as they articulated how it was that their mentors had impacted their own leadership behaviors.

Context of Study

The leadership paradigms of the 19th and 20th centuries suggested three particular beliefs about leadership: that leaders were born and not made; that good management made successful organizations; and that one should avoid failure at all costs (Bennis and Goldsmith, 1997; Block, 1996; Hickman, 1998). Such beliefs can stifle the opportunity for others to assume leadership, or to attempt something new and different in the face of challenge.

Much of the current literature on educational leadership advocates for a more participatory/transformative style of leadership because of the increasing diversity of challenges facing educational leaders:

> In these new postindustrial educational organizations, there are important shifts in roles, relationships, and responsibilities; traditional patterns of relationships are altered; authority flows are less hierarchical; role definitions are both more general and more flexible; leadership is connected to competence for needed tasks rather than to formal position; and independence and isolation are replaced by cooperative work. (Murphy and Seashore-Louis, 1999: xxii)

In addition, leadership theory advocates for *authentic leadership* in education, based on a foundation of stewardship, moral/ethical imperative, and servant-leadership (Gabler and Schroeder, 2003; Naested et al., 2004; Parkay et al., 2005; Short and Greer, 2002; Wilen et al., 2005). Authentic leaders are moral leaders who understand their own values and beliefs.

The term 'servant-leadership' was introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf in an essay entitled, *The servant as leader* (1970). Greenleaf worked with educational, business and industrial organizations (Spears, 1998a) to develop caring, inclusive, and effective communities (Greenleaf, 1976, 1978; Spears, 1998b). Spears (1998), the Executive Director of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center, clarified ten characteristics of servant-leadership that provide the conceptual framework for his study. *Listening* refers to a deep commitment to listening to others and to oneself (Autry, 2001; Bennis and Goldsmith, 1997; Frick and Spears, 1996; Greenleaf, 1970/1991b). A good servant-leader exemplifies the second characteristic, *Empathy*, if s/he strives to understand and empathize with others in a supportive rather than a patronizing way (Block, 1993; Spears, 1998). If a servant-leader holds the characteristic of *Healing*, s/he has the potential to heal one's self and others (Gardiner, 1998; Sturnick, 1998). In fact, Secretan (1996: 95) states, '[m]entoring, one of the essential components of learning, is a gift to oneself as well as to others. The act of mentoring is the act of self-healing'. Secretan (1996: 91) further explains:

> Each day, we alter each other's biochemistry, and as a result, we create happiness or sadness, elation or depression, mediocrity or greatness in those with whom we communicate. We all have immense powers that can heal or wound each other's souls- with every word we utter.

The fourth characteristic, *Awareness*, involves self-reflection, through listening to what others tell us about ourselves, through continually being open to learning, and by making the connection from what we know and believe to what we say or do (Bennis and Goldsmith, 1997). In her discussion about educational mentors, Gold (2004: 38) clearly articulates this sense of awareness:

> Mentoring offers a great opportunity for reflection for both mentor and person mentored. While working with others to match their actions to values and to articulate their educative values, the mentors will automatically find themselves searching back to their own motivations and driving forces.

The servant-leader who has the ability of the fifth characteristic, *Persuasion*, can convince others through language and action, rather than coerce compliance (Frick and Spears, 1996). Those who have the gift of *Conceptualization* have the ability to vision, to dream, or to 'get the big picture'. Frick and Spears (1996: 217), describes conceptual talent as: '[t]he ability to see the whole in the perspective of history- past and future- to state and adjust goals, to evaluate, to analyze, and to foresee contingencies a long way ahead. Leadership, in the sense of going out ahead to show the way, is more conceptual than operating. The conceptualizer, at his or her best, is a persuader and a relation builder'. *Foresight*, the seventh characteristic, is the ability to foresee or know the likely outcome of a situation (Greenleaf, 1970/1991b). The servant-leader also provides *Stewardship*, holding the institution in trust (caring for the well being of the institution and serving the needs of others in the institution) for the

greater good of society (Block, 1996; De Pree, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1992). The servant-leader is *Committed to the individual growth of human beings*, the ninth characteristic, and will do everything s/he can to nurture others (De Pree, 1989). Finally, the servant-leader is committed to *Building community*, and seeks to identify some means for constructing society, either by giving back through service to the community, investing financially in the community, and/or caring about one's community (Pinchot, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1994; Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1998).

This study determined the extent to which these servant-leader characteristics, which are indicative of current leadership perspectives, were identified in the mentors of superintendents in the province of Manitoba, and whether or not these particular characteristics were/are replicated in the day-to-day leadership style of the Manitoba superintendents. A previous paper, 'First Conversations with Manitoba Superintendents: Talking the Talk' (Crippen and Wallin, in press), presents findings/analysis of the personal servant-leadership traits found in each of the superintendents' narratives and may be found in Table 1.

Methodology

Because the research questions of this study are subjective and depend on the individual leadership context and personal educational philosophy of those within the study, the methodology of choice is qualitative in nature. Creswell (1998: 15) defined qualitative research as:

> an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

It was intended that all five Manitoba female superintendents and an equal number of male superintendents were to be interviewed to obtain data related to their leadership practice and experience. However, due to illness, one female superintendent was not a part of the sample. A total of nine superintendents were interviewed and are randomly identified as S-1 through to S-9. In an attempt to corroborate the responses of the informants, questions were asked on two fronts: (1) personal leadership experiences (outlined in the previous paper); and (2) mentorship experiences. Questions related to process, decision making and leadership style were asked in order to gather a sense of how these superintendents lead and whether or not their leadership practice aligned with the 10 characteristics of servant leadership. Respondents were asked to provide examples from practice that would corroborate their espoused leadership style in an attempt to address the limitation of self-response; however, it must be acknowledged that the study remains exploratory and perceptual in nature because of this limitation.

Table 1 Characteristics of servant-leadership in superintendents

	Listening	Empathy	Healing	Awareness	Persuasion	Foresight	Conceptualization	Stewardship	Growth of others	Building community
S-1	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S-2		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
S-3		X	X			X	X		X	X
S-4	X					X	X	X	X	X
S-5	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
S-6	X			X	X	X	X		X	X
S-7						X	X	X	X	X
S-8	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
S-9				X		X	X	X		X

Notes:

X indicates the characteristics of Servant-Leadership found in each of the superintendent's narratives.

An empty cell indicates no significant evidence of that particular servant-leadership characteristic.

On the second front (the findings which are presented in this article), inform-ants were asked to describe a person or person(s) whose leadership they had admired and what it was about that leadership that they have tried to emulate in their practice. Once again examples were elicited to gather data from the narratives that aligned with the 10 characteristics. The data from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed according to qualitative research guidelines (Moustakes, 1988; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Tageson, 1982). Reductive analysis (the identifying, coding and categorizing of data into meaningful units) was used to identify themes and patterns in the data. Each narrative was analyzed for evidence of servant-leadership characteristics, proxy events or qualities related to each characteristic. Commonalities and/or anomalies were deter-mined through careful comparison of the examples provided by informants.

Findings

Findings from the study related to the characteristics of servant leadership are presented below. Table 1 presents the indicators from the first part of the study and identifies the specific servant leadership characteristics that superinten-dents included in their narratives relating to their leadership style. Table 2 provides a visual representation of the mentors' servant leader indicators (Spears, 1998) described within each superintendent's interview. Table 3 is a compilation of both tables. Table 3 provides a visual presentation of congruence between the mentor characteristics and those that were reflected within superintendents' espoused leadership styles.

Mentors

It should be noted that the study did not distinguish for the participants who should be included in the list of mentors; rather, it was deemed important that the question remain open for superintendents to list all those who had posi-tively impacted their leadership styles. Therefore, it was not surprising to find that many superintendents spoke of both personal and professional mentors who they have tried to emulate in their lives, which is consistent with the broader definitions of mentorship that are used in this paper, and offer a more extensive and nuanced understanding of the personal impacts that a mentor can have on the lives of those mentored.

Some American research may provide additional information about the frequency of mentors. Chapman (1997) writes that half of all first-year US superintendents have mentors. As well, Chapman (1997: 37) compared the like-lihood of the presence of mentors for superintendents, by gender: '59.5 percent of female superintendents had mentors, while 48 percent of male superinten-dents had mentors' in comparison to Kowalski's (2006) more recent report which states that 77 percent of male superintendents and 83 percent of female superintendents have mentors.

Table 2 Characteristics of Servant-Leadership in Mentors.

	Listening	Empathy	Healing	Awareness	Persuasion	Foresight	Conceptualization	Stewardship	Growth of others	Building community
S-1		O			O	O			O	
S-2	O	O			O	O	O	O	O	O
S-3		O				O			O	O
S-4				O						
S-5	O	O					O	O	O	O
S-6	O			O	O		O	O		
S-7	O	O			O	O				
S-8	O	O		O	O				O	O
S-9	O			O					O	O

Notes:
O indicates the characteristics of servant-leadership found in each of the superintendent's mentors.
An empty cell indicates no significant evidence of that particular Servant-Leadership characteristic.

Table 3 Compilation of Tables 1 and 2

	Listening	Empathy	Healing	Awareness	Persuasion	Foresight	Conceptualization	Stewardship	Growth of others	Building community
S-1	X	O	X	X	X O	X O	X	X	X O	X
S-2	O	X O			X O	X O	X	X O	X O	X O
S-3		X O	X			X O	X		X O	X O
S-4	X			O		X	X	X	X	X
S-5	X	X O		X		X	X O	X O	X O	X O
S-6	X O			X O	X O	X	X O		X	X
S-7	O	O			O	X	X	X	X	X
S-8	X O	O	X	X O	X O	X O	X	X	O	X O
S-9	O	O		X O		X	X	X O	O	X O

Notes:

X indicates the characteristics of Servant-Leadership found in each of the superintendent's narratives.

O indicates the characteristics of servant-leadership found in each of the superintendent's mentors.

An empty cell indicates no significant evidence of that particular servant-leadership characteristic in the Mentor or the Superintendent Narratives.

Overall, it appears that mentors are common in the lives of Manitoba super-intendents, regardless of gender, since both male and female superintendents spoke of the role of significant others, personal and professional, over the course of their careers. The first superintendent, S-1, indicated an admiration for a former female superintendent, but that overall, '[n]o-one had really taken me under their wing.' S-2 mentioned three mentors: a Grade 12 history teacher who eventually became a superintendent; the first female superintendent in Manitoba; and mother. S-3 listed two specific mentors and a group of people: the female President of the Winnipeg Teachers Society; a male superintendent; and other women who were school administrators of high schools and elementary schools. S-4 mentioned five mentors: mother, grandmother, mother-in-law and two former male superintendents. S-5 also spoke about five mentors: a male principal, mother, male superintendent, female historian and the President of the Winnipeg Teachers Association, who was a former superintendent. S-6 named five mentors: two male high school principals, two former male super-intendents and a female high school principal. S-7 recognized three mentors, all of whom were educators: a male principal, a male superintendent, and a female professor. S-8 identified four mentors: mother and father, a female professor and a former male superintendent. Finally, S-9 named two mentors: a former male principal and a former male superintendent.

Of the 30 mentors named, there was a split of 16 male mentors and 14 female mentors. Seven of these mentors included family members/parents. The remainder was all educators, mostly at the administrative or executive/senior administrative level. Gender lines were crossed in the selection of mentors, that is, males selected female mentors and females selected male mentors, as well as selecting mentors of their own gender. One superintendent did not identify any mentor (although s/he did identify someone whose styles/he admired), and three superintendents identified five mentors. S-3 named two specific mentors plus 'several other school administrators' which may or may not have been beyond five mentors in total.

Mentor Characteristics

The superintendent narratives regarding their mentors were analyzed for evidence of servant-leadership characteristics. The findings, as indicated in Table 2, are exemplified below.

Listening

Secretan (1996: 47) suggests that we must pause to hear the needs of others: 'To truly listen, we must shut down our mental chatter and genuinely, and non-judgmentally, listen to each other'. Five of the superintendents suggested that listening had been an important characteristic of their mentors that they hoped to emulate in their own practice. S-2 suggested that mentors had 'a willingness

to listen.' Daloz (1999: 114), the author of *Mentor: Guiding the journey of adult learners*, describes the importance of listening to one's mentor:

> The most important thing he learned over the years about his work was how to listen. For him, listening well meant actually trying to enter the world of the other person, see through his or her eyes as clearly as possible, without making assumptions or judgments. In the act of listening, one could not only understand better how to work but listening like that is teaching in the profoundest sense.

Such ability was most clearly articulated in the comments of S-6 who said the mentor 'talks and watches' and elaborated:

> One of the traits was his marvelous ability to listen, there was never a time I ever had to meet with him that he would just totally absorbed in himself, even though I knew he was, you know, a very busy man, but it was as if you were the entire world for a while with him.

In addition, S-7, S-8, and S-9 noted listening and calmness as traits they admired in their mentors.

Empathy

The second characteristic of a servant-leader is *empathy*, whereby the servant leader strives to understand and empathize with others in a supportive rather than a patronizing way. S-1 identified the trait directly when s/he described a mentor who had 'empathetic listening skills'. S-2 suggested that his/her mentor(s) demonstrated a 'caring for others'; S-3 included 'caretakers and caring for individuals and deep belief in the underlying goodness of people'. S-5 identified the belief in a mentor who was 'personable and humanistic' and S-7 said his/her mentor was 'kind-hearted, compassionate'. S-8 also alluded to the ability to empathize and be supportive when s/he suggested that the mentor 'accepted people openly without judgment.'

Healing

No specific mention to the characteristic of *healing* was found in the mentor references.

Awareness

The characteristic of *awareness* was expressed in general terms. Three superintendents (S-4, S-6 and S-8) identified humor as a key trait of their mentors as it taught them to see the ironies in human nature and to think about how their own actions needed to be evaluated in the face of those ironies. S-6 described his/her mentors as those who had a '[g]reat sense of humour, dealing with stress, well prepared in public, with a focus on PD'. S-8 described how his/her parents had helped him/her to develop awareness:

> She was a very wise woman. She just lived a good life and had a good moral conscience and constantly made you stop and think about what you were doing and

why you did it. . . . She taught me a calm approach to working with people using research as a basis, and then dialogue with them on what matters about teaching. Non-judgmental, accepting. Dad had a sharp mind, a lot of debating, a lot of discussing . . . encouraged us to sit around and talk about great things from life to politics to religion to whatever, and it helped me become a critical thinker. An honest man of high integrity who made me realize you get into positions of leader-ship- you can remain friendly with people that you know, you shouldn't remain very close friends because it can become a conflict of interest.

S-9 referred to the mentor's awareness of the moral nature of working with children and adults within a culture of trust and learning:

Stretched me beyond what I thought was possible. You don't have to be right all the time. Being an advocate for children and working with staff on setting high expec-tations and pushing people in your role as leader. He had the ability to listen, a calming effect, a building of trust. He pushed people out of their comfort zone and insisted that we be learners and talked about education and about learning.

In each of these cases, the mentors had stimulated the superintendents' abili-ties to become reflective practitioners and critical thinkers, not only for issues they encountered, but of themselves as they made decisions about how they would lead in the future.

Persuasion

Servant-leadership emphasizes that *persuasion* occurs through actions or language instead of coercive behavior. S-1 used terms that alluded to the use of persuasive behaviors by describing effective mentors as those who could provide 'conflict resolution, equitable, fair, consultation'. S-2 spoke of a mentor who could 'debate, consider options'; the mentor of S-6 was 'willing to bend or change the rules' rather than coerce people with rules that no longer reflected current reality. S-7's mentor focused on 'what they were there for- the vision', whereas the mentor of S-8 was keen and 'respected the right to an intellectual disagreement, not a personal disagreement'. In each case, the mentors incorporated the use of fair procedures that acknowledged and accommodated difference as people worked towards the vision of the school division.

Foresight

Foresight, or the ability to foresee the outcome of a decision, was alluded to by four superintendents. S-1 spoke about a mentor's use of 'process' when working with the community because the mentor had been able to foresee that without the inclusion of effective processes, appropriate outcomes would never have occurred. S-2's mentor was 'creative, dynamic, charismatic, and knowledgeable with expertise' which had helped him/her to be successful in determining the appropriate courses of leadership action. One of S-3's mentors had a 'cognitive self-confidence' that had allowed him/her to foresee consequences of actions. S-8's mentor 'recognized positions of leadership are not the same as positions

of friendship- there's a separation' which had allowed him/her to foresee (and therefore circumvent) particular challenges to leadership with a clearer sense of 'objectivity'.

Conceptualization

Conceptualization tends to describe those mentors who are visionary, thoughtful, and who work to build relationships with others to further their vision. Three superintendents spoke of their mentors as having this characteristic. S-2 described his/her mentor as 'risk-taking, step outside the box and was willing to take a position and move forward and was a visionary'. S-5 also referred to a mentor as being a 'risk-taker who did move out side the box'. S-6 described mentors as having 'a living mission, a vision and know what they believe'.

Stewardship

Characteristic #8 involves service to others without a need for personal reward or gain. S-2's mentor 'worked hard' to make situations better for others. S-4 recognized a mentor's qualities of being 'humble (humility), not authoritarian, personal, honesty, integrity, and acting on a belief system and the leader in the background' as s/he worked on behalf of those within the organization. S-5 recognized the mentor 'was not on a pedestal—the same as everyone else' as they all worked towards the school vision. S-9's mentor seemed 'unconsciously competent' as s/he moved a school division's community towards achieving its goals without the need for personal gain.

Commitment to the Growth of People

S-1 recognized the strength of mentors in terms of their ability to 'encourage and empower' and to be involved in 'coaching/mentoring'. S-2 said his/her mentor was 'well educated and encouraged students to explore the world and instilled confidence . . . had the ability to care for students as individuals and scholars'; in fact, this was 'someone who tapped me on the shoulder' and had encouraged him/her to become an educational leader. S-3's mentor 'never put people down', 'had a passion for doing what's best for kids', was 'encouraging and supportive' and promoted 'a reinforcement of self-esteem' for all those with whom s/he came into contact. S-5's mentor helped others grow by having an unfettered faith in them, as s/he 'believed you could do anything if you set your mind to it'. S-8's mentor was 'a learner and had an enthusiasm for learning' and promoted this learning within others. One of S-9's mentors was an advocate for children and made decisions based on what was best for children. In each case, these mentors promoted learning for others and used their roles to empower others.

Building Community

Four superintendents spoke of the value their mentors placed on building community, either in their discussions of team-building (S-2 and S-3), their

institution of collaborative and participatory processes (S-3), their ability to be 'knowledgeable of staff and knew them' (S-5), their recognition of the responsibility they had in this aspect by virtue of their role as leader (S-8) and their ability to promote trust and have high expectations of others (S-9).

Congruence between Mentor Characteristics and Superintendent Leadership Style

The findings for determining the congruence between the superintendent's leadership style and those traits admired in their mentors are provided in Table 3, which is a compilation of Tables 1 and 2. If a table cell contains both an 'X' (superintendent leadership style trait) and an 'O' (mentorship characteristic), then there is evidence that superintendents are actually using characteristics in their own leadership style that they identified to be characteristics they valued in their mentors. However, it must be reiterated that the findings are based on self-report, with a description of particular behavioral incidents that were used to confirm the presence of these characteristics.

S-2 exhibited the most coherence between personal leadership style characteristics and mentorship characteristics, as evidenced by the alignment of seven characteristics. Interestingly, this respondent was also the only one of the nine superintendents whose narrative included more mentor characteristics (eight) than personal leadership characteristics (seven). The remaining superintendents' narratives included more personal leadership characteristics than mentorship characteristics, and were aligned as follows: (1) the comments of S-1 were suggestive of nine personal leadership characteristics and four mentorship characteristics, sharing three characteristics in common; (2) the comments of S-8 were suggestive of eight personal leadership characteristics and seven mentorship characteristics, sharing five characteristics in common; (3) the comments of S-5 were suggestive of eight personal leadership characteristics and five mentorship characteristics, aligning on all five of the possible shared characteristics; (4) the comments of S-6 were suggestive of seven personal leadership characteristics and four mentorship characteristics, aligning on all four of the possible shared characteristics; (5) the comments of S-3 were suggestive of six personal leadership characteristics and four mentorship characteristics, aligning on all four of the possible shared characteristics; (6) the comments of S-4 were suggestive of six personal leadership characteristics and two mentorship characteristics, sharing one characteristic in common; (7) the comments of S-9 were suggestive of five personal leadership characteristics and five mentorship characteristics, sharing three characteristics in common; and (8) the comments of S-7 were suggestive of five personal leadership characteristics and three mentorship characteristics, with no alignment between characteristics. Overall, the characteristics with greatest congruence between espoused leadership style and mentor characteristics in order of most frequent to the least frequent are: building community (five); persuasion,

foresight, stewardship, and growth of others (four); empathy, awareness, and conceptualization (three); listening (two); and healing (none), which did not appear because no superintendent mentioned this as a characteristic of his/her mentor(s).

Discussion

Kowalski (2006: 372) states, '[m]entors provide encouragement, help build confidence, and demonstrate friendship, mutual trust, and advice to career development'. The findings in the nine narratives revealed that all but one superintendent had a mentor(s), and even this superintendent could name someone s/he admired as a leader, even though s/he did not consider the person to be a mentor per se. Both genders described personal and professional mentors.

The 10 servant leader characteristics originally identified by Spears (1998) have been further broken into two forms of character manifestations by Powers and Moore (2004: 3), described as inner characteristics and outer characteristics:

> The first can be described as inner characteristics or commitments. These inner characteristics lie near to the core of the servant-leader's being. They are deeply held beliefs or soul imprints about the highest calling of leadership and are not as readily observed at the behavioral level in comparison to what we have labeled the outer characteristics or practices.

Powers and Moore (2004) name the *inner components* of servant-leader characteristics as: building community, commitment to the growth of people, foresight, conceptualization, and awareness. Given that there are 10 characteristics that could be mentioned by nine superintendents, there is a possibility that 90 indicators of servant leadership could be mentioned by participants, of which five characteristics times nine superintendents = 45 indicators (50 percent) could represent inner characteristics. The outer characteristics include: listening, empathy, healing, and persuasion. If all four characteristics were alluded to by all nine superintendents, there are 36 possible indicators of outer characteristics (40 percent). Stewardship is considered the connector of the two groups, for a potential total of nine indicators (10 percent) of the whole. In total, 45 indicators of servant leadership were identified by study participants, which represent half of the total possible indicators. Of this total, 22 indicators reflected inner characteristics for a total of 48.8 percent; seven indicators reflected stewardship, for a total of 15.5 percent and 16 indicators of outer characteristics were represented, reflecting 35.5 percent of the total indicators.

Of the 10 servant leadership characteristics, two of the inner characteristics, foresight and conceptualization, were discussed by all the superintendents in the study as being qualities they valued in their mentors. Eight superintendents identified building community in their mentors' leadership style, and seven

Table 4 Inner, outer and stewardship characteristics

	Traits	Total possible responses and percentages	Total actual responses	Percentage of actual responses by group	Percentage of responses in total
Superintendent leadership characteristics	Inner traits	45 50% (45/90)	39	86.7% (39/45)	63.9% (39/61)
	Outer traits	36 40% (36/90)	15	41.7% (15/36)	24.6% (15/61)
	Stewardship	9 10% (9/90)	7	77.7% (7/9)	11.5% (7/61)
Mentor characteristics	Inner traits	45 50% (45/90)	22	48.8% (22/45)	48.8% (22/45)
	Outer traits	36 40% (36/90)	16	44.4% (16/36)	15.5% (7/45)
	Stewardship	9 10% (9/90)	7	77.7% (7/9)	35.5% (16/45)

superintendents discussed mentors who focused on the growth of others. A comparison between the traits identified in the mentors and the traits exemplified by the superintendents is presented in Table 4.

Overall, the superintendents exhibited a much higher percentage of indicators describing inner characteristics for their own leadership style (63.9 percent) and for the stewardship characteristics of mentors (35.5 percent) than what the representation of all possible responses would suggest for each category respectively (50 percent and 10 percent). In addition, percentage rates were nominally higher for indicators discussing the inner traits of mentors (48.8 percent) and stewardship in personal leadership style (11.5 percent) than the comparative possibilities (40 percent and 10 percent, respectively). Outer traits were mentioned much less often both for personal leadership style (24.6 percent) and mentor characteristics (15.5 percent) than their comparative rate of 40 percent.

It may be that these differences represent a move towards a more collaborative, inclusive, supportive leadership style that is commonly upheld in educational systems today and may have been less obvious in the leadership styles of mentors. However, it may also be that in order to determine whether or not mentors exhibited these inner components, superintendents would have to understand exactly how these 'big picture' characteristics were exemplified within the context of the mentors' behavior. These inner characteristics are likely more easily identified in personal reflective self-report than they are in outward behavior, precisely because they offer the internal rationalizations for

why people act the way they do. The high percentage of mentor stewardship characteristics described in the narratives of superintendents may in fact reflect the outward manifestation of the inner characteristics of mentors. The outer traits of servant-leadership were less often represented in the narratives than what was possible for personal leadership style and even less for notable mentor characteristics. Interestingly, these four characteristics (listening, empathy, healing and persuasion) require direct interaction and communication with people, which may not in fact be a primary role of the superintendent who is (usually) physically and emotionally more removed from large groups of people who face the day-to-day dilemmas of schooling. Conversely, the inner components (awareness, foresight, conceptualization, commitment to the growth of others, and building community) are less intimate, more removed from the immediacy of personal relationships, and often are characteristics that allow a superintendent to 'manage from a distance' as facilitator, rather than as direct participant. Such a role might complement the view that the superintendent must be an authority figure whose responsibility is to implement the will of the school board; it may also account for the persona of superintendents as being isolated at the 'top' of the school system. However, this is incongruous with the large number of responses in relation to building community, stewardship, and commitment to the growth of others. What is more likely is that these findings connect to the working reality of superintendents who are overseers of the school division, functioning most closely with a small select administrative team (assistant-superintendents, principals, vice-principals, consultants) to provide the direction and vision for the school division. The perspective of this 'inner circle' may often be more global in nature, and is based most strongly in a superintendent's ability to develop the inner traits of servant leadership. Superintendents are expected to be the visionary leaders or 'conceptualizers' of their divisions; they need foresight developed through experience to make wise decisions; they are the divisional leaders who encourage educational learning and promote the growth of others and ultimately safeguard the learning community. The evidence from these superintendents certainly does not preclude the idea that mentors and superintendents utilize the outer traits of servant leadership, but it does suggest that these traits are perhaps not as immediately relevant to the actual role requirements of superintendents and are therefore not the focus of their attention, either in their own leadership style, or in what they admire in others.

Conclusion

This small study provides evidence to suggest that a broader and more personally relevant definition of mentorship is valuable for gaining insight into the qualities and characteristics of superintendent leadership that people wish to emulate in their own practice. This is because the primary spheres of influence on leaders are both personal and professional in nature, yet learnings from both

spheres are reflected upon and incorporated into superintendents' leadership behavior. It appears that superintendents are able to articulate and reflect on the value of multiple mentors' characteristics, and apply them to their own situations. Further, the findings in this study do not necessarily align with past research that would suggest that females are more likely to have mentors than males. Although this study is small in scope, both males and females were able to pinpoint individuals whose leadership styles they admired and would like to emulate. What is perhaps necessary now is to refine the findings of the study by discussing whether or not there were differences by gender on who was named as a mentor, whether the characteristics of mentors mentioned by respondents might reflect particular gendered assumptions, and/or what evidence there might be of gender discrepancies in the perspectives of male and female superintendents on the value of particular mentorship characteristics. Such a discussion is the focus of a third paper currently underway.

Superintendent leadership style characteristics and mentor characteristics were over-represented by inner characteristics and stewardship, and under-represented by outer characteristics. Potential reasons for such a finding have already been provided, and primarily were resolved by considering the actual role responsibilities and work environments in which superintendents work. The fact that all 10 servant-leadership characteristics were exemplified in super-intendent leadership style, and nine of the 10 characteristics were alluded to in mentorship characteristics most admired by superintendents suggest that there has been a move to support a more growth-oriented, moral, and stewardship-based leadership paradigm currently being advocated in education. The fact that healing was mentioned only sparingly in personal leadership characteristics (three times) and not at all in mentor characteristics is curious, but may be evidenced in the high percentages of stewardship mentioned, whereby people serve in often self-sacrificing ways for the well-being of others, possibly at the expense of their own wellness. In this way, stewardship may be a means of providing healing to others, or to the organization, but it may be that more needs to occur in the area of self-healing for superintendents whose work environments are often stressful and over-busy. In addition, the very fact that mentors provide such meaningful guidance to these superintendents might be a form of healing in itself, even though it may have not been articulated as such.

The study also offers much potential for future research. For example, the focus of this research was to find positive examples of servant-leadership characteristics within the leadership styles of superintendents and their mentors. However, a further analysis of the data might offer negative examples of these characteristics that would support more authoritarian forms of leadership. In addition, participants were asked to describe mentors whose leadership characteristics they wished to emulate. Future research might also ask questions related to negative role models in order to elicit further reflection on the qualities least admired as guides for leadership behavior. In addition, further

study that utilizes triangulated data supported by those with whom the super-intendents work and/or the mentors themselves would add to the richness of the findings.

Finally, the findings add to the research on the value of mentoring. Chapman (1997: 37) speaks directly to the development of effective superintendents by suggesting that 'the most positive step that can be taken to increase the competency levels of future superintendents is through effective mentoring programs'. It is worthy to note that the Manitoba Association of School Super-intendents is presently delivering a program to its membership that may provide opportunities for the nurturing of mentor/mentee relationships. Gold (2004: 37) believes 'the mentoring conversation works towards the person mentored reaching a conclusion about leadership activities that best fits the organization, the values, the context and the issue'. And, Murphy (1992: 108) emphasizes that 'ongoing induction and professional development,' 'mentor-ships' and 'peer interaction' is critical to increasing the effectiveness of educational leadership. The findings of this study suggest that both personal and professional mentors could potentially be a source of learning for superin-tendents, but the most valuable relationships almost always occur when an intrinsic connection is made on a personal, rather than on a formally imposed, level. In addition, mentorship includes both technical and moral competencies that are promoted within the confines of a relationship, but there is carry-over of those competencies to the leader's own work situation. These findings suggest that although formal mentorship programs need to be part of the leader-ship preparation milieu, particularly as they relate to the technical competen-cies related to superintendent leadership, they must be designed with great care, as the mentors alluded to in these discussions were most often admired for the moral values they upheld. Obviously, putting what is needed into practice and making it a reality remains the challenge for those committed to effective educational administration.

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