

FOSTERING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE FOR WOMEN IN EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA: A CASE STUDY OF THEIR
PERCEPTIONS OF THE
JEAN E. WINSAND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
School of Education in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2005

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Communities still look upon universities for leadership because university coordinated programs are regarded as catalysts for change. My study is an exploration of a university-coordinated forum that provides a gendered space for women to excel in school leadership. My research, conducted as a case study, explored ways in which women as participants of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII) are fostering a community of practice among aspiring and practicing educational administrators in Western Pennsylvania. By focusing on women's perceptions, this study helps reshape and document the collective voices of women in educational administration in Western Pennsylvania in order to provide formative feedback for the Institute. Using communities of practice as an analysis tool, my case study focused on the broader picture of professional development by addressing the how, why, for whom and by what means the JWII affects its participants. This case study used mixed methodology research design and is framed within constructivism. All past and current attendees of this forum were my informants. For data collection, I used informal interviews, a pre-survey with 7 open-ended questionnaire items and a demographic section, and a final original survey instrument with 94 structured Likert-type rating scale and 9 open-ended items. I used forum agendas for document analysis and also collected data through participant observation of the annual conferences. Major findings show that although the JWII is serving multiple cohorts well in fostering women school leaders it still lacks racial diversity and has difficulties attracting young professionals because of

systemic and policy constraints. Overall, the JWII is attuned to issues of social justice as it provides a gendered space for practitioners to acquire and share knowledge and skills relevant to their practice in the schools.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study in many ways is a living testimony of God's unconditional love, grace and faithfulness to me. I am humbled by the completion of this degree and I give all the PRAISE and GLORY to HIM.

A study of this nature could not have been accomplished without the support of individuals, colleagues, family members, Christian family, departments and faculty members. First I would like to express my gratitude to the Fulbright Program that funded the first two years of my doctoral program. Secondly I would like to thank the Department of Instruction and Learning (DIL) in the School of Education for supporting me throughout the program. Without their financial support, this doctoral degree would never have materialized. Their concern, caring, and thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated. Thank you very much DIL for everything because I could never have made it through without your financial assistance. I appreciate your efforts in providing me with a caring and nurturing environment.

This study was supported through research grants obtained from the School of Education, the Department of Women's Studies at the University of Pittsburgh as well as through supplies and stationery provided by the Tri-State Area School Study Council where the Jean Winsand International Institute is located. Thank you all.

A research of this magnitude would never have been possible without the support, encouragement and guidance of several people. I am greatly indebted to the Directors of the Institute, Dr. Charles Gorman and Dr. Kent for all the support and for allowing me to use the Institute as a case study for my research. They encouraged me to explore issues that would provide insightful feedback to the Institute as it continues to reshape its programs and foci.

Thank you for helping me to talk to the conference attendees, to frame my study, and providing me with the historical data about the Jean E. Winsand International Institute.

Conducting this research in a culture different from my own was challenging, enriching and at the same time very gratifying intellectually. I would like to thank all the attendees of the Institute who responded to my survey instruments and provided me with a lot of insights and very rich data. Thank you very much for believing in me and for all the encouragement during the annual conferences. Those smiling faces you drew at the end of the surveys and your support kept me going. Thank you for sharing your experiences. I enjoyed working with all of you and have made very good friends along the way.

A study of this nature is never easy and I would like to thank my academic advisor and dissertation committee member, Dr. Bickel for your sincere and scholarly advice and guidance throughout my doctoral program. I am greatly privileged to have Dr. Porter as my research advisor. Her solid grounding on issues of gender, educational leadership and communities of practice helped me a lot in conceptualizing, and framing my study. Thank you for having been my mentor, advisor, friend, and colleague. I appreciate all your efforts.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my other committee members. Dr. Eichelberger, thank you very much for the extra mile you put in and all your contributions to my doctoral journey from the beginning in doctoral core right up to the final defense. A big thank you for all the support and encouragement you gave me Dr. Eichelberger. Dr. Rubinstein, thank you for all the endless hours you put in as you helped me to develop my instruments as well as your help with the data processing. I appreciate the many ways you have journeyed with me as one of my dissertation committee member. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Dr.

Carol Stabile who was on my initial committee for my overview but moved to another university. Thank you Carol for your contributions.

Being away from home, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my Christian family for all the spiritual support, being there for me and believing in me. A big thank you goes to all my friends at Bellefield Presbyterian Church, Albright Community UMC, First United Methodist Church in Corry, Bible Study Groups, ISF, and PRISM for the emotional and spiritual support rendered. Thank you Dr. Turner, Dan and Glen for all the help. Sincere expressions of gratitude also go to Amy Meyer, Alice Kaylor, Brian Yoder, and all my other friends and colleagues who helped with the editing. Thank you all.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my sons, my siblings and all my family for all your support and encouragement. It has been a long, tedious, and faith-filled journey and it's always refreshing to know that GOD is Great ALL the time.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to three very special men in my life and my sister. I dedicate this dissertation to my late and beloved husband, friend, mentor, and confidant, LOVEMORE, D. MATAMBANADZO for all the support and encouragement, to my late father, TAURAI KENNETH MUCHETO for giving me the initial education, to my late brother, TIMOTHY MUCHETO for the close relationship we had, and last but not least, to my late sister and friend, SYLVIA MAKUMIRE-nee-Mucheto for who you were in our family.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is through my listening to the experiences of other women that I could see the emerging social patterns of my own life. Through listening to other women's words I found my own voice, and saw my career as an educator ... in school administration.

Patricia A. Schmuck (1996).

1.1.BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Despite widespread concern to ensure women's adequate representation as administrative leaders in education, their advancement from teacher status to the principalship and above continues to be a topic in many equity debates (Davison & Cooper 1992; Riehl & Byrd 1997; Yoder 2001). Although women occupy more leadership positions than they did a decade ago, women leading schools at the secondary school level or running school districts in the United States are still unusual (Young & McLeod 2001, p. 463). Although numerically women dominate the workforce in the field of education, its leadership continues to be dominated by males, despite growing evidence showing that women are willing to take up such leadership positions (Brunner, Grogan & Prince 2004; Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Ross, & Chung, 2003).

One of the reasons why women's career mobility continues to lag behind those of men is because of the glass ceiling (Blake-Beard, 2001; Brunner, 2000b; Marshall 2004). The glass ceiling, as a concept, refers to obstacles faced by those women aspiring for middle management and any subsequent upward mobility into senior management or higher echelons of

administrative positions (Akande, 1994; Ehrich, 1994). “Glass ceiling” basically denotes a whole spectrum of variables or circumstances that range from simple things like how and where information on leadership openings/positions is communicated to prospective candidates, composition of interview panels including the type of questions asked, organizational structures and procedures, etc. For a long time, the concept of glass ceilings operating in educational administration has dominated the focus of research on women’s status and their underrepresentation in positions of power and authority. Glass ceilings as barriers are blamed for inhibiting women from accessing leadership positions in organizations and for negatively impacting their career goals.

Suggestions are that women can minimize the negative impact of glass ceilings and make positive and sustainable breakthrough by engaging in mentoring and networking relationships. However, little empirical research evidence is available to inform us on the effectiveness of formal mentoring when compared to informal relations elsewhere. Therefore, the purpose of my study is to address issues and types of formal and informal relationships resulting from the Jean E. Winsand Leadership development program and to document the informants’ practice and leadership development experiences.

In addition, my study’s focus is to identify the perceptions of women in educational administration involved in the Jean E. Winsand International Institute’s professional development about the impact the program has had on them. Specifically, this study explores issues of formal and informal relationships established during these one-day JWII conferences and the ways they have created and sustained networking opportunities for these women administrators. Further, this study also looks at the attendees’ chances to be mentored or to mentor, and benefits of role models. In a nutshell, the study explores the when, how, and by what

means these women are fostering communities of practice. Based on the informants' perceptions, this case study also looks at the relevance of the knowledge that they share and are exposed to during these yearly one-day conferences to their practice in the schools. It is also the objective of this study to describe what these women administrators have to say about how their personal experiences gained through the Jean E. Winsand International Institute have translated into influencing their career prospects and practice in the schools.

According to Fullerton (2001), the very essence of using men as a yardstick to measure how women fare in administration creates a knowledge gap and an illusion about what we need to know on the characteristics of women in leadership. For example, prior to 1980 most research studies on school administration were confined to white, male, urban administrators to the exclusion of women (McLay & Brown 2000; Shakeshaft, 1987), and used men as benchmarks to advance and promote women's understanding of what leadership entails. Such approaches/strategies can create some incongruence in women's sense of self as women and what is expected of them as leaders. By basing most current knowledge on the experiences of men to the exclusion of women, the resultant content generated is inevitably distorted unless it deliberately incorporates women's experiences and research into conceptualizations and explanations of reality (Hartman, 1999).

It was not until 1980 that significant research studies started pointing to the nature of women's problems as administrators. Although becoming a principal is a somewhat predictable career step for many Pre-K- 12 educational administrators, often times, taking up this position involves both professional training and engaging in personal transformation (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). Therefore, preparing effective school leaders is much more than just recruitment, preparation for licensure and placement but involves participating and engaging in continuous

career long professional development (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). Although professional socialization is important for role conception, role identity, and acquisition of leadership knowledge and skills for school leaders (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003) little is known about how professional development compensates and advantages women in attaining administrative positions in education as well as in developing their leadership competencies.

Earlier studies about women in educational administration have been concerned more with either comparing women administrators to male administrators or with research on women's advancement barriers. Critical to my study, therefore, is the exploration of women as educational administrators and their perceptions about how the professional development they engage in can help and equip them to operate in administrative settings in education. Although gender issues have been explored over time, on the contrary, equity problems have not been resolved (Drake & Owen 1998; Gardner, Emoto, & Grogan, 2000). Arguments put forward in this debate ascertain that we can only have more women administrators if research continues to focus on women in school administration at both organizational and individual levels of those interested in school leadership and superintendent positions. My research therefore is an effort to contribute to the accumulation of this research data about women's lived experiences as administrators through exploring ways they have used JWII's professional development forums to help build their careers in school leadership.

Literature does acknowledge that research findings on gender and school administration during the past decade and a half have provided insights into how women lack the same career opportunities as men (Ortiz, 1982) because of stereotypes attached to women's identities and leadership as well as because of the socialization process (Carter, Glass, & Hord, 1993). Using Europe as a reference point, Bhavnani (1997) alludes to the fact that women's lack of

opportunities for personal and career development is key to their continued marginalization in higher management positions; for that reason issues of training opportunities are gaining more and more prominence in the discourse on women.

Foci on women's issues have not been static because over the years, research studies on gender and school leadership have been evolving and focusing more and more on the role of external barriers such as recruitment strategies that favor men ahead of females; selection criteria for promotion; evaluation and reward systems; norms and expectations of school and school districts. Furthermore, studies on gender and administration have discussed demographic differences between males and females. For example research findings have shown that females who first enter administrative positions in education are generally older and have more teaching experience (Gates, et al., 2003). Previous studies have also documented that the majority of women in school leadership tend to be confined to elementary school leadership and yet recruitment for higher administrative positions are drawn from those in secondary schools (Riehl & Byrd, 1997).

In addition, studies related to professional development and school administration have tended to focus on administrators' roles in the professional development of their teaching staff and very little on the administrators' professional experiences (Ciske, 1999). However it has been only recently that there has been a shift in thinking and now arguments are being made that effective and efficient school leadership is instrumental in effecting the students' overall academic performance (Women's Caucus 2005 Annual Spring Conference) thus giving impetus to the current focus on administrators' professional development as a new genre for research.

The growth of educational leadership development programs is not new. Prior to 1980 in North America, Europe, Australia and some parts of Asia, professional development for

administrators was generally offered as one or more of three basic types, i.e. as attendance at national conventions of an individual's professional association, or as an advanced degree in graduate studies primarily for salary increment purposes, or as participation in staff development through coordinated government curriculum or instructional programs (Yee, 1997). However, as intimated by Yee (1997), the above approaches to professional development have had limited effectiveness and reduced potential to develop school administrators' leadership capabilities. Observed flaws of such programs include their limited capacity to help administrators thrive in the job; their failure to help administrators to engage and implement on-going and complex school reforms and improvements (Yee, 1997).

Generally, leadership development programs are designed and implemented as a response to the needs expressed by administrators. This quest explains why school administrators participate in professional development and training programs beyond what is officially required. Ideally, positive impact of a professional development is determined by how it helps to cultivate experiences and activities deemed consistent with problems, pressures and demands experienced by principals in the schools. Therefore, success of school leadership programs seems to be closely tied to the extent that they address real life workplace problems experienced by administrators.

Since 1980, literature discussing women's issues has also shifted from quantifying women's under-representation in educational administration to underscoring the need, importance, and benefits for better support. This has given rise to the current debates about the importance of mentoring, role models and networking as plausible facilitating factors for greater numbers of women to prepare for administration (Sobehart & Giron, 2002; Logan, 1998) because leadership does not take place in a genderless vacuum (Yoder, 2001). Studies have also

shown that through socialization, society has deliberately conditioned men and women to believe that women are not as capable as men to hold positions of leadership (Skria, Reyes & Scheurich 2000), yet current literature is in fact demonstrating the effectiveness of women as leaders (Helgeson, 1990).

Globally, since the 1970s, focus of the discourse on women in educational administration and their level of under-representation in leadership positions has evolved on how to improve women's education, their employment opportunities, and advancement in their career paths especially into leadership positions. For the past three decades and in the face of all these shortcomings and disadvantages, women have aggressively taken leadership roles in defining fundamental aspects of their lives, including the negative effects of glass ceilings. Women as a group characterized by experiences of being discriminated against in their career pursuits have been instrumental in influencing how we define reality, conceive knowledge and exercise leadership. This has happened both through collective leadership of women as a social force and through the efforts of many individual women giving shape to this movement in its diverse forms (Hartman, 1999).

This case study therefore aims to explore women educational administrators' perceptions about the impact that the Jean E. Winsand International Institute's professional development initiative is having on their overall performance as leaders in education. More specifically, my study intends to understand the ways that women in educational leadership are taking action and conceptualizing their own professional development through the Jean E. Winsand International Institute and the extent to which they value such involvement. In a nutshell, my study targets women administrators in Western Pennsylvania and explores how they are fostering communities of practice through participation in the JWII.

Communities of practice are gaining increased prominence as important concepts because of the belief that participants can learn and gain positive experiences. As a concept originally defined by Wenger (1998), communities of practice are linked to organizational learning because as members interact and do things together, they in turn learn from each other as they negotiate new meanings inherent in their practice. Although the process of learning is not essentially different, as members share their competencies with new generations, communities of practice reproduce their membership through opening up their practice to new comers. There are benefits involved for establishing communities of practice and since communities of practice are interconnected to the wider world, the emphasis of learning shifts from a focus on an individual to groups and organizations (Burk, 2000; Buysse, Sparkman & Wesley 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In line with the importance of informal learning inherent in communities of practice and their contribution in training professionals, women's professional development of the Jean E. Winsand International Institute (JWII), which is the focus of my study, is no exception in its efforts to foster a community of practice among its cohort of attendees.

In education, more women are aspiring to and taking up leadership positions as members of school organizations and are increasingly creating and fostering opportunities for administrators, and teachers to make professional connections with colleagues and share experiences in their efforts to promote professional growth. As more women move up administratively, they are encouraged to have professional and collegial connections, establish relationships, networks, share best practices with each other, share tips, train one another, etc. and help improve school practice. The whole purpose of communities of practice is to create, support, and sustain knowledge-based learning communities whose impacts are positively linked to organizational performance and behavioral change (Bray, Lee, & Smith, 2000; Lesser &

Prusak, 1999; Lesser & Storck, 2001). In addition, focus on women's leadership is prompted by the premise that their potential to proceed beyond middle management remains a central theme for research in management literature and is still considered as critical in organizational performance and effectiveness (Pounder & Coleman 2002).

The intentions of my study are in line with reflections made by Bhavnani (1997) that with the increase of women's training programs and their promotion of women's personal development, there is a need to analyze the values underlying such programs. So it's inadequate to merely allude to the existence of women-only programs without paying attention to what goes on in these initiatives. This underscores the need to make deliberate cases for women-centered provisions or initiatives by defining more clearly their characteristics including knowledge or content of what is provided, and strategies of how it is imparted. So, values and ideologies informing designs of women specific initiatives ought to be explored including the structures within which they are offered and the role of evaluation in redesigning and redefining them in response to the changing contexts during implementation (Bhavnani, 1997). My study therefore, will strive to do just that and make a case for the Jean Winsand International Institute as a female-centered initiative whose goals are to promote and support women's advancement in educational leadership.

Literature on the impact of mentoring established that a limited network of educational contacts constitutes some of the barriers inhibiting women administrators' career advancement (Burke, McKeena, & McKeena, 1994; Daresh & Playko, 1992). In education, while the elementary school system has made progress in advancing women to school leadership, their marginal representation at high school levels and beyond continues unabated because promotion to the upper levels of administration tend to be made from those appointed at secondary school

levels. This justifies the need for more preparation and placement of women and minorities in such positions. In fact advancing women and minorities to superintendency, for example, is one of the major challenges facing education profession today (Glasscock, 1998).

Mentoring has been connected to numerous positive outcomes in organizations (Grogan & Crow, 2004; Vincent & Seymour, 1994; Samier, 2000) including more promotions (Blake-Beard, 2001). The benefits of mentoring have influenced the inception of many formal and informal initiatives to help redress the inequalities that disadvantage women in realizing their administrative goals. However, a cautionary note by Blake-Beard (2001) is that while we acknowledge the benefits of mentoring, the creation and success of such initiatives are not without their share of challenges and should be implemented in the context of other efforts.

Blake-Beard (2001) alludes to recent statistical representation of women provided by the US Department of Labor as of 1996. Females constitute 46 percent of the United States workforce and women in managerial positions have increased from 32 percent in 1983 to 41 percent in 1991 with more prospects of future gains promised in the years ahead. However, in spite of all these impressive gains, women still face artificial barriers of attitudinal and organizational bias that impede qualified female candidates from advancing in significant numbers into the upper echelons of organizations (Hall-Taylor, 1997; Marshall, 2004). So a tokenism situation then emerges where a negligible number of qualifying females make it to the top of the administrative hierarchy.

Furthermore during the past decades, research on gender and school administration has provided insights into the under-representation of women in educational administration (Young & McLeod, 2001). As more women prepare for administrative positions in education, they are receiving greater encouragement to consider leadership roles. My research study therefore will

try to find out if involvement in the leadership development forum offered through the Jean Winsand professional development forum has helped women to establish environments conducive for their career development.

Brunner's (2003) work supports the need for more research because much of the literature related to women and superintendency for example, alludes to barriers women face when seeking positions with a negligible number of studies done on methods for success of those aspiring and those already in administrative positions. Also, Linehan (2001) indicates that very little empirical research has been conducted on networks and suggested future research to report on personal and career benefits of networks whether they compare males, females or both genders.

Current research articles assert that more women are choosing leadership roles in today's society. Although more women are seeking administrative position, the numbers of female administrators are increasing slowly (Young & McLeod, 2001). According to the US Department of Education (1992), women administrators are confronted with other impediments like the lack of role models, mentors, informal networks and peer acceptance. Yet since the 1990s literature has underscored the importance and benefits of such initiatives, and their role in the initial and continuing professional development of educational personnel (Oliver & Aggleton, 2002).

Recent debates on women's advancement into leadership in education have underscored the importance of professional development as one of the strategies that can be used to promote equity, and to make power and other resources previously extended only to men accessible to women as well. Professional development of school leaders has become an increasingly important issue in the debate about school change and efforts to improve students' learning.

Because the needs of school leadership appear to be outstripping the ability to educate those leaders, it becomes necessary to implement professional development.

Arguments are that past school leadership preparation has been confined for the most part, to certification and employment of school administrators and has not necessarily addressed the practice of leadership competencies for principals and teachers in the schools. Thus the model is becoming less and less relevant to the changing needs of school societies. In recent years, availability of learning opportunities outside the classroom has increased dramatically. At the same time, assessment and evaluation of these opportunities have also increased (Ritchie & Genoni, 2002). Therefore understanding what comprises a valuable or effective program is now vital; hence the reason and justification of why I conducted this case study.

Leadership development as a process is assuming even greater importance because of the growing complexity of education and with its increased tendency towards specialization there is greater need for leaders to have coping strategies in order to meet these changes (Women's Caucus 2005 Annual Spring Conference). Stemming from this debate on leadership there has also been increased popularity in the United States, United Kingdom, and worldwide on ways that experienced school leaders and administrators have served as mentors in programs (Daresh, 1995) or as part of an enculturation process meant to help novice leaders acclimatize during their first years in administrative posts. Assuming leadership position demands acquiring knowledge about role identification and role performance and many programs have been incepted and implemented to help with this transitional process. Some studies have also been done to establish whether such programs are addressing the leadership deficiencies of their intended clientele. However debates over how to specifically tailor these programs to meet unique development needs of women remains a less studied aspect of leadership development and

warrants additional consideration. Therefore this study intends to address this knowledge gap by using the Jean E. Winsand International Institute as a case study to identify issues of professional development and the ways past and current attendees are fostering communities of practice among women in educational leadership in Western Pennsylvania.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There is a general consensus that since women are under-represented at administrative levels, especially at secondary and central office positions (US Dept of Education 1992), professional development can be one of the strategies used to help promote women into administrative roles by giving them added skills for understanding the complexities and difficulties they may face as administrators. Yet very little is known about the benefits or effectiveness of such programs. Thus evaluations of professional development programs have been very scarce because studies done about women in educational administration have been concerned more with either comparing women administrators to male administrators, or with research on barriers impeding women's advancement.

This case study of the Jean E. Winsand International Institute (JWII) is a response to the scarcity of literature on how aspiring and practicing women administrators foster a community of practice and aims to investigate women attendees' perceptions about the role and place of this Institute and its impact on their overall professional development and practice in school administration. My study is a response to the knowledge gap. What is needed are alternatives/solutions to help narrow the career opportunity gaps between males and females

because “knowing about” and “doing something about it,” I believe, are complementary in the struggle for women’s emancipation and their fight for advancement.

Past studies on gender and administration have discussed demographic differences between males and females. Additionally, previous researchers have also documented that the majority of women in school leadership tend to be confined to elementary school administrative positions. On this point, studies on professional development and school administration tended to focus on how administrators play a role within the professional development of their teaching staff and not necessarily on how administrators experience professional development themselves (Ciske, 1999). Although research about women seeking professional development to address their careers is still scarce, women cite the promise of professional growth and challenge as the main reason they return to graduate school because their primary concern is to remain professionally alive (Dulan, 1996). This makes professional development a necessary undertaking for aspiring and practicing female administrators hence the justifications on why I want to explore the long and short term effects of the JWII on its participants over the years and ways the attendees are fostering a community of practice among themselves.

Additionally, my study is also prompted by the growing impact of women in the workforce that continues to stimulate research on women and leadership (Pounder & Coleman, 2002). My case study, therefore, aims to explore women educational administrators and their perceptions about the impact that the JWII’s professional development initiative is having on their overall leadership development and advancement to administrative positions. Since the inception of JWII more than 20 years ago, other than the informal verbal feedback that the Institute receives, no formal evaluation has been carried out to establish the extent to which the JWII is fulfilling the career and personal needs of its attendees. No systematic and documented

research has been done to evaluate this program for its content, outcomes, strategies and organizational commitment, etc. In addition since some previous studies on women and school leadership have documented perceptions from males' perspectives, Fullerton (2001) argues that the practice of using men as a yardstick to measure how women fare in administration creates knowledge gaps and illusions about what we need to know about the characteristics of women in leadership. So gender-related realities that affect workplace accomplishments and work satisfaction can be most authentically learned from women and with more and more women becoming principals and superintendents, a growing consensus is that support strategies should be redirected towards helping those who enter the field of school leadership to succeed and advance thus making career mobility and advancement ongoing research concerns (Logan, 1998; Sobehart & Giron, 2002).

Communities still look upon universities for leadership because university-coordinated programs are considered to be catalysts for change (Logan, 1998). My study is an examination of a university-coordinated program whose main purpose is to support women using both formal and informal structures and at the same time, utilizing women-centered approaches. Since its inception more than 20 years ago as a grassroots forum, the JWII has not had wide publicity and registration seems to have reached a plateau. Additionally, it cannot continue to operate this way and this might be where the Institute is right now hence the need to study it as a case study.

My study is also a response to what Balukas (1992) advocated for that, whatever the type of professional development, the educational community needs to be able to address the individual and institutional benefits of attending such learning forums. For the JWII, although some informal evaluations have been conducted, so far little is known about whether it is succeeding in achieving its goals. Also little is known about whether the JWII is increasing

women's leadership skills and knowledge, and almost next to nothing is known about its effectiveness. Although some informants have been attending since its inception more than twenty years ago, others have stopped participating. Therefore, this case study is a follow-up to questions raised by Balukas (1992) on how much is known about the characteristics and effectiveness of institute designed management programs intended to promote the professional development of women in and those aspiring for administrative positions.

Literature posits that currently there are more possibilities for women to advance into top level school administration than before, therefore now is the opportune time for university educators to develop and implement new advancement strategies that level the playing ground for women and men by promoting high expectations for all persons who enter the profession of school leadership (Logan, 1998). Against this background and since there is limited knowledge on how professional development benefits women either those aspiring or practicing as administrators, I am hoping that the results of my study can make an important contribution to the on-going debates about women in educational leadership.

My study explores how one of the many established professional development programs, the Jean E. Winsand International Institute, has impacted the participants involved. Key will be my examination of current and past participants' perceptions about what they did and did not like about the program; nature and benefits or otherwise of support systems availed to them; opportunities to mentor and be mentored; networking; curriculum and strategies used in the women's conference and the extent to which they are in line with the day to day practices of the participants' administrative work; what has kept the regular attendees coming back while others have not been coming back; how comparable the program is to other professional development;

and given a chance what would they do differently and why. So the purpose of my proposed research study will be to:

- Examine the nature of professional development and support systems available through the Jean E. Winsand International Institute's program.
- Establish the perceptions of past and current Institute's participants about the impact of this professional development program on them.

In order to do this, I will use these three research questions to help frame and direct my inquiry as stated:

1. How do women administrators involved in the JWII define its place and significance in their overall career development?
2. How does the Jean E. Winsand International Institute foster a community of practice?
3. In what ways could the Institute provide more services to aspiring and practicing women administrators?

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is general consensus that since women are under-represented at administrative levels, especially at secondary and central office positions (US Dept of Education 1992) professional development is one of the strategies to help promote women into administrative roles and give them added skills for understanding the complexities and difficulties they may face as administrators.

Since there is limited knowledge on how professional development benefits women, the results of my study can make important contributions to the on-going discourses about women in educational leadership. Furthermore, benefits of my study will include a better understanding of the types of professional development activities in which women in educational administration participate and the extent to which their professional opportunities match their need; what methods are best for professional development; and how such administrators determine if their professional development activities are beneficial to their practice. Such information will not only influence our conceptual understanding of professional development issues but should also influence the inception as well as effective and efficient implementation of such programs.

After all, research literature states that effective leaders generally seek out activities that will increase their skills and abilities and ultimately improve the quality of their institutions like schools and districts. My findings about the Jean E. Winsand program as an alternative response to the marginal representation of women in educational administration can make effective contributions to:

- help fill the knowledge gap about evaluating gender specific programs.
- help in learning more about initiatives of professional development meant to advance the status of women into education leadership.
- provide insights for other professional organizations interested in replicating what might have been achieved by the Jean Winsand Institute.

In fact, learning more about what works or not in helping women engage in meaningful professional development as they build their career paths is in line with recommendations made by the US Department of Education in 1992. I also believe that it is important to determine what activities women in educational administration engage in to achieve their professional

development, and what external and internal forces shape their professional development because these might influence future planning and implementation of professional development programs.

Outcomes of this study are also important because they can influence the decision making process pertaining to the forum's sustainability and resource allocations by the department under which the Institute falls. The results matter because of the Winsand family's continued attachment and financial contributions to the forum. In a nutshell, my study will contribute insights into the significance of event-based and gender-specific professional development. It is my hope that findings of this study will also provide feedback to the organizers and coordinators and might help shape future programming.

My case study that explores the JWII's efforts to foster communities of practice for women in school leadership in Western Pennsylvania fits into the broader concepts of knowledge management, situated learning, and communities of practice discourse. Using this Institute as a case study, my foci is on how women participants are building, promoting and engaging in learning related to their areas of interests as administrators. My study's reflections are based on the Jean E. Winsand International Institute (JWII) as an informal forum that supports women's leadership development by offering professional development as part of its concerted support for on-going national efforts to increase women's representation in administrative positions.

Professional development is generally used to define the acquisition of new knowledge and skills useful for both present and future job placement (Mathias and Jackson 1994 in Ciske). Ruohotie (1996) refers to all formal and informal activities and functions directed at the maintenance and enhancement of professional competencies as constituting professional development (Ciske 1999, p.6). For the purposes of my study I am using professional

development in a broader meaning that involves all the learning opportunities that engage a principal's creative and reflective capacities to strengthen practice. Ideally it is a continuous life-long process that addresses both the personal and organizational needs of an individual.

Issues of attitudes and expectations also influence the outcome of professional development programs. For example, it can be argued that individuals who freely choose to attend professional development programs learn more than those who are required to attend them, implying that benefits are maximized if attendance is voluntary as opposed to being mandatory. Furthermore, people who are more committed to their careers tend to respond better to professional development. While the majority of studies dealing with professional development of educators focus on classroom teachers, an increasing focus on principals and higher administrators has been noted too.

1.4. THE JEAN E. WINSAND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

The Jean E. Winsand International Institute (JWII) is a program attended by practicing and aspiring women administrators. It is a forum meant to provide support and help advance women into school leadership positions. It is very gender specific in that the participants are exclusively women. As a women's program its purpose is to better serve their administrative and related educational interests. As an institute, it falls under the Administrative and Policy Studies Department in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh as one of the many leadership programs offered through the Tri-State Area School Study Council. Two Departmental staff who also have other responsibilities help to coordinate and oversee the forum. The Institute does not have its own support staff but shares and makes use of designated support

staff from the other departments within the Tri-State Area School Study Council in the Department of Administrative and Policy Studies.

The Jean Winsand International Institute started off informally as a forum that brought together women in administration as well as those aspiring for leadership. It afforded them opportunities to talk about their professional concerns, especially issues of women's under-representation in school leadership positions as well as on problems of working in a predominantly male dominated arena.

The Institute, conceived by the late Dr. Jean E. Winsand, was initially implemented as an informal gathering and during its infancy, forum meetings were usually convened during lunch hours or over dinners. Participants included some women administrators who would bring along some of their teachers. Women who were superintendents during that time were also invited to participate. Through these gatherings, younger and more experienced women would come to Dr. Winsand and she, in turn interacted with them. However, being informal, no minutes were kept and there were neither administrative nor hierarchical structures. Such meetings were held twice a year and over time the attendance expanded, making it necessary to formalize and institutionalize them.

Formation of the Institute was prompted by Dr. Jean E. Winsand's concerns about the under-representation of women in leadership/educational roles. Central to Dr. Winsand's concerns were her interests in women's success and progress, and it was her desire to make sure that women had opportunities to gain good professional experiences about educational leadership roles. It was around about 1992 that she helped to start and sustain what was formally known as the Women's conference which fell under the auspices of the Tri-State School Study Council, to be later renamed the Jean E. Winsand Institute in 1999 in recognition of her contributions as a

pioneer, and founder of this forum. Cumulatively, what led to the formation of this women's caucus were Dr. Winsand's deep concerns about women's representation in school leadership positions, the need to get more and more women into administrative roles, as well as her deep concerns for schools to improve. Although in existence for three years under its current name, in reality the Institute has been in existence and serving the interests of aspiring and practicing educational administrators in Western Pennsylvania for more than 20 years.

As alluded to by one of the pioneers of this women's forum, Dr. Jean E. Winsand was unusual because although she was not an administrator herself but a reading specialist, who wrote extensively on reading curriculum, she was perceived by many younger administrators as a mentor. She established a good rapport through the frequent visits that she made to the schools where she held informal meetings with teachers. Over time as a confidante, she established and earned a very strong reputation for herself which spread quickly resulting in streams of women coming to see her. Respondents indicated that Dr. Winsand possessed unique qualities of positioning herself and being accessible to those who needed her help. Over time, she became a mentor to a wide range of women involved in school administration.

While this female caucus started off as a task-centered initiative, these women's meetings as part of the Institute's activities, have continued to be informal although the Institute itself has become more formal and has evolved into being more of a women's conference. Additionally this task-centered program has accorded women attendees opportunities to interact, share experiences and resources. However, since different people have different needs, it was intimated that at times it has become difficult to strike a consensus on the future priorities of the Institute because of the diverse and complex needs of participants.

During that same time period, (when the women's forum was formed) more women were beginning to get administrative positions in education. This led to major developments and prompted the program's evolution from being informal into being organized as formal meetings. It would be accurate to say that beginnings of this women's caucus were informal and discussions covered various professional issues specific to women as administrators in education. The clear message at that time was that men were not invited, and this seems to be changing slightly because currently some men attend the conference and its key organizers who keep it going are men. As it continued evolving, the forum started to recognize and award women who had acquired powerful reputations and those considered outstanding as women administrators.

Focusing on the Jean E. Winsand International Institute as a case study and tracing how it has evolved over time can be categorized into three main stages of change. Stage 1 appears to have focused more in building a sense of connection among aspiring and practicing women administrators. In stage 2 leaders engaged in building a critical mass of women in administration. Stage 3 is the current reflective period of determining how the Institute can move beyond critical mass and how best to utilize this forum to equipping women to meet the new challenges of educational administration.

The Jean E. Winsand International Institute is an interesting case to study because ever since it was established more than 20 years ago, it has been able to attract participants and has also been able to sustain itself. Yet very little is known about why participants keep coming back while others no longer participate or how, when, and by what means it has impacted its participants. Since it started as an informal forum and grew into its current formal structure, it is my belief that it is a good case to study because:

- The Jean Winsand Institute combines both the formal and informal structures.

- The Jean Winsand uses women-centered approaches.
- Of its importance of having emerged as a grassroots forum.
- Issues addressed have evolved overtime and will provide insights into how issues peculiar to women have been articulated.

The Jean E. Winsand International Institute is about supporting women. Keeler in Education Week (November 10, 1999) situates support by saying that, “if women educators are to increase their representation at the top level of their profession, they must have help from those who have gone before.” A new study (Keller, Education Week March 18, 1998), confirms what many superintendents have been complaining about for years, namely the scarcity of administrative applicants and the emerging trend whereby fewer and fewer candidates are filing for the principal’s job. The problem is likely to grow. The U.S. Bureau of Statistics, as cited by Keller (1998), projects a 10 percent to 20 percent increase in school administrator jobs through 2005. Yet despite this projected shortage, women are still under-represented as evidenced by the statistics provided in the 2002 Census.

1.5. DR. JEAN E. WINSAND

This brief description about Dr. Jean E. Winsand is based on the remarks made during her memorial service held on Wednesday December 19, 2001 at the University of Pittsburgh as well as on an article titled “Empowerment, Winsand Lectureship honors women in education” that appeared in the Fall 2003 Pitt magazine (a University of Pittsburgh publication). The remarks

made as a tribute to her are reported here verbatim for purposes of capturing, documenting and creating a record for future references.

“Jean came to the University of Pittsburgh as a student in the Experiential Teacher Fellowship Program in 1968. She was a member of the team of teachers from the Churchill Area School District (now Woodland Hills). In 1970, she became a member of the faculty in the Department of Reading and Language Arts. Later she was selected to be the School of Education’s Director of In-service and continuing Education.

In the late 1970s, Jean served as the director of the Pittsburgh Teacher Corps project, a teacher preparation program that acquired national attention for its work in the Madison Elementary, Milliones Middle, and Schenley High Schools in the Pittsburgh School District. This recognition was based on the implementation of an Evaluation and Monitoring System of student performance in mathematics and science.

In the 1980s, Jean served as the coordinator for School Improvement Projects promoted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. She continued her work with the department through the implementation of the Pennsylvania Framework for Reading, Writing and Speaking (PCRPP II) in several school districts, including Woodland Hills, as the court-ordered desegregation plan was implemented. Jean continued through her career to work with the Department of Education and recently served as the editor for the development of the soon to be released Pennsylvania Literacy Framework.

In the mid-80s, Jean and Chuck Gorman were selected to lead the Tri-State Area School Study Council. Her leadership was instrumental in changing the image of the Study Council from an administrator-focused organization to one that addressed the needs of teachers, counselors, supervisors, administrators, and others as they served the students in Western

Pennsylvania. Her vision was to make the voice and presence of women in leadership roles a major change in our schools. She viewed these changes as being overdue and critical if our schools were to serve students more effectively.

Jean also wanted to broadcast the voices of children. She did so through her leadership in establishing writing assessment processes in school districts long before the Department of Education began to evaluate student writing through the Pennsylvania System, of School Assessment. Throughout the time she served the Study Council, Jean promoted a variety of student writing activities. She read and analyzed thousands of brief essays that students developed from prompts and organized the feedback so teachers could develop instructional strategies to improve student performance. Her contribution to student writing in Western Pennsylvania is one of the legacies she earned through her career as an outstanding teacher.”

This excerpt shows her active involvement and advocacy for quality education and student academic outcomes. In an article that appeared in the University of Pittsburgh’s Fall 2003 Pitt magazine and as a tribute to her contribution, the article reflects and illuminates on those early meeting times that: “It’s a crisp Friday night in the late 1980s, and a team of educators gathers around a table at Edgewood Country Club, roughly 10 miles from the University. The occasion was a weekly dinner.” The writer alludes to the benefits of attendance because of the lively and memorable conversations and Jean’s important contributions about women and their rights. Her concern was on the domination of male administrators in the schools. Although reshaping reading and writing programs was her special area, she was a Tri-State team member responsible for instituting regional school improvement that are still in place up to this date and was a role model (DE., Fall 2003, Pitt Magazine p. 46-47).

Through interviews and as I probed more about Dr. Jean Winsand, the co-directors spoke highly of her and her accomplishments. I was made to understand that Dr. Winsand was a recognized expert in literacy promotion and understanding particularly in areas of writing in Pennsylvania. She was selected to author a Pennsylvania literacy framework for children. As a lead researcher, she was well recognized. Her involvement coincided with the exciting times in Pennsylvania when the state adopted standards driven education. Pennsylvania pioneered the introduction and implementation of literacy in the USA and Dr. Winsand was part of that exciting pioneering period.

To validate the unique qualities of Dr. Jean Winsand, her husband, Orville Winsand, as cited in the Fall 2003 magazine, had this to say that “Dr. Jean Winsand’s calling was women’s rights” because “she was concerned that many of the administrators in the schools were men.” (DE., Fall 2003, PITT Magazine). In the same article Orville Winsand went on to say of his late wife that; “she was enthusiastic about whatever she did...she had passion for so many things...One of the things was her work with the study council, which took her to countless public and private school systems in the tri-state area.” He concluded by underscoring the value of establishing the Jean E. Winsand Tri-State Lectureship Series in Education that “It would make Jean very proud to see that the University has honored her in that way. At the conferences,” he adds, “so many women come up and say, She was a model for me.” The Jean E. Winsand Tri-State Lectureship Series in Education was established as a tribute to the Dr. Jean Winsand’s commitment to the professional growth of women in education and will annually feature women speakers who have shown vision and leadership (Fall 2003 Pitt Magazine, p. 46-47).

1.6. SUMMARY

This chapter presented an overview of the background to the study and included the research questions. The rest of the study is organized as follows. Chapter 2 presents the Review of Literature. In Chapter 3 on Research Design and Methodology, I present the research methodology and outline the research design, methods, procedures, data presentation and analysis. Chapter 4, Reaching a Diverse Audience, discusses the characteristic nature of forum informants and uses race, gender, age, previous, current and ultimate career positions, geographic locations based on current positions and length of participation in years for analysis. Here publicity issues are used to present ways the JWII is reaching out a diverse audience. Chapter 5, Enabling Career Development, addresses research question one about the place and significance of the JWII in attendees' overall career development. I use responses from questions 1, 2, & 7 to guide my inquiry. Chapter 6, Fostering a Community of Practice, addresses research question 2 on how the JWII is fostering a community of practice among educational administrators. I use research question 3 to help frame my inquiry. In Chapter 7, Revitalizing and Sustaining Service, I use questions 4, 5, 8 and 9 to answer research question 3 about ways the Institute could improve services to enhance women's experiences. Within the same chapter, I present Conclusions and Implications of the study.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

All of our women were emphatic about the need for more empirical literature as well as stories related to women and leadership.

Helen, C. Sobehart & Kara, L. Giron (2002).

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Consistent with Sobehart and Giron's (2002) advocacy, this case study captures and documents the Jean E. Winsand International Institute's attendees' perceptions based on their experiences with its women and school leadership development forum. This case study on women's representation in educational leadership is grounded in feminist theories of leadership, communities of practice literature, situated learning framework, social learning theories. My study utilizes what Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998) refer to as "theory triangulation," since its theoretical framework uses multiple perspectives. First, women's lower participation may result from differential sex roles and occupational socialization (Shakeshaft, 1990). Underscored is the premise that women have neither been socialized to aspire to nor prepared for administrative positions and, because of socialization bias, they have been excluded from the networks that predominantly advantage their male counterparts (Ehrich, 1994; Johnson, 2001).

Second, school systems mirror how most organizations in societies are structured to exclude women from higher-level jobs. Third, male dominance in society leads to manifestations of covert and overt forms of discrimination which limit women to subordinate

positions both in public and private economies (Vanda, 1989). Therefore, as suggested by Shakeshaft (1990), women perceive themselves as having fewer opportunities and reciprocate by limiting their aspirations and behaviors thus resulting in a cycle of differentiated socialization of educational leadership.

Feminism is used to summarize and integrate women's knowledge and experiences (Letherby, 2003). Basically, feminist epistemologies connote women's ways of knowing and focus their research on women's lived experiences. Shulamit 1992 posits that feminist theory builds on the premise that there is an imbalance of power relations between men and women at all levels of society and this influences perceptions of what is deemed important in the world. Key to feminism is the notion that there is no one truth, no one authority and no one objective method of creating pure knowledge (Shulamit, 1992). The main target of feminism is to change people's perceptions and attitudes about women. Therefore, feminism examines ways in which knowledge is generated and how it is selectively used to legitimate certain types of people to the exclusion of others, including traditional ways of knowing (Evans, 1995).

Several conceptual interpretations provide us with insights on why women are under-represented in administrative positions in education. Kreps (1974 in Vanda 1989) examines women's status in higher education, drawing on human capital theory, attributes the differences in women's and men's advancement to women's lesser investment in academic careers. Initially women were blamed for lacking appropriate graduate education to qualify for these positions. Women were also blamed for failing to prepare themselves for administrative positions in education.

In addition, the type of higher degrees one earns also influences one's promotional prospects. However, those women attaining higher degrees rarely earned administrative

credentials at the same rate as men. While statistics indicate a greater percentage of women obtaining masters degrees, most were not in administration, supervision and finance even though such specialized and advanced degrees are believed to be instrumental in executing administrative duties effectively (Thompson, 1999). My study on women's issues of representation in educational leadership is grounded in feminist theories of leadership and communities of practice literature. There are many attempts to categorize feminists theories and few efforts to link different feminists theories to educational issues (Acker, 1994). Women's under-representation can be explained further by three theoretical perspectives.

First, women's lower participation is a result of differential sex roles and occupational socialization process. Stressed here is the belief that women have neither been socialized to aspire nor prepared for administrative positions. Generally, women have been excluded from the networks that predominantly advantage their male counterparts ahead of them. Second, school systems mirror how most organizations in societies are structured in ways that exclude women from higher-level jobs. Administratively, many organizations are hierarchically structured with the majority of women visible at the base of this pyramid and a very negligible number visible at the apex. Third, history has shown us that over time, males' dominance in society has led to the manifestations of covert and overt forms of discrimination which limit women to subordinate positions both in public and private economies. So over the decades, women have been socialized to function in these subordinate roles.

As critiqued by Shakeshaft (1990), women perceive themselves as having few opportunities and therefore reciprocate by limiting their aspirations and behaviors. Such behaviors may result in a cycle of differentiated socialization of educational leadership among women. Furthermore, the manifestation of gender gaps in educational administration leadership

might be a direct outcome of power relations between men and women and also a product of the patriarchal system operating in our societies (Mannathoko, 1999). Varied explanations have again been advanced to provide insights into women's under-representation in educational administration. It appears the reasons have not been significantly different over the years.

Women's career mobility is further stifled because schools systems, just like other formal organizations in our societies, are structured in ways that tend to exclude women from higher level jobs. These organizational structures therefore disadvantage women's career planning. For example, conditions like recruitment and selection procedures are largely managed by men who in turn ensure that more men are promoted ahead of female aspirants, or we create a scenario of "tokenism and the isolation of a few women who get promoted" (Riehl & Byrd, 1997, p.46). Conditions like these prevent other women from seeking and obtaining administrative positions even if they aspire to such roles (Sherman, 2000) because practice on the ground is a continuous reminder of their limited life chances.

Hall-Taylor (1997) analyzes the causes and factors attributing to women's under-representation by using a gender-centered approach. The fundamental tenets for this gender-centered approach uses sex and gender differences as well as organizational culture and practices approach-based theories to show how systematic barriers in the labor market and organizational practices impede women's advancement. Mannathoko (1999) on the other hand, approaches this discourse by using different gender paradigms and inequality theories and describes women's situation in terms of liberal feminism's view of unequal opportunity structures. She also uses Marxist explanations of women's positions to be part of a complex class system made up of exploitation both in terms of gender and social class (Mannathoko, 1999).

To Mannathoko, theories of gender oppression therefore describe women's conditions as a result of direct power relationships between men and women-in which men effectively implement those interests reinforcing their control and oppression of women and the examples are the radical and socialist feminism. Also theories of difference at times referred to in terms of biological determinism, view women's situation as different from men and maintains that biology determines gender and society merely reflects what nature has determined. However, what I see as common to all these approaches and the themes running through all of them are issues of socialization; androcentrism; organizational cultures and practices; as barriers leading to inequality, exploitation and subordination of women. So the key concerns in this debate of under-representation of women are issues of equity and difference (Evans, 1995) thus making this discourse more inclined towards feminism.

2.2. OVERVIEW OF FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

Feminism as a perspective is multifaceted. Since there is much feminism, it is difficult to define the concept hence the absence of a uniform definition for feminism although some commonalities are present across the different types of feminism. Generally, feminism assumes that an imbalance of power between men and women at all levels of society exists and that such disparities in the distribution of power, influence our perceptions of those who are in authority. Furthermore, feminism also assumes that the way females are socialized leads to the creation of inequalities and teaches them to be subordinate and subservient to males.

Liberal feminism's explanation of gender inequality begins with pinpointing the sexual division of labor and prevalence of separate private and public spheres of social activity.

Women's primary location is confined to the private sphere and men to the public and socialization prepares them to assume their adult roles and work in the spheres appropriate to their sex. Gender inequality therefore, is created by a system that restricts women's access to the public sphere.

The purpose of feminist criticism therefore is to provide mapping and changing of attitudes and conditions and to reform a new language which is woman-centered and free from patriarchal constraints and oppression. Therefore, the focus of feminism is to change people's perceptions and attitudes about women. The prevalence of androcentrism in society is blamed for women's continued under-representation in decision-making positions. Not only does feminism advocate for a shift in power structures both in society and its organizations, but as a perspective, it further examines ways to generate knowledge and its use to selectively legitimate certain types of people.

Generally feminisms posit that understanding the world, society and ourselves, rests on theories and knowledge generated historically by men of certain nationalities and economic classes. So male-dominated and culturally specific theorizing and knowledge creation have generally resulted in the exclusion of women and other groups. Feminist scholars have argued that knowledge based mainly on males and culturally specific experiences is deficient because it represents a skewed perception of reality and is therefore only partial knowledge.

Thus the male-centered approach to theorizing has produced particular views of many issues including those affecting women. Such views rely on androcentric assumptions that women's work is biologically determined and therefore is or should be home-based and restricted to nurturing and domestic chores. So the ultimate aim of feminist theorizing is to deconstruct and redefine concepts previously defined from a male perspective and generally

accepted as factual (Letherby, 2003). Such a strategy would generate theories from a view of the world through feminist lenses. The key standpoint in this dialogue is exploring the possibilities of a feminist knowledge to produce a better and truer picture of reality. Through feminism, women use such perspectives to deconstruct traditional knowledge bases and build new ones which hopefully will influence policies and actions affecting their lives.

Feminism although perceived by many people as a comparatively recent phenomenon of the 1960s and 1970s, in fact originated much earlier than this. Weiner (1994) traces its origin to many decades ago and states that it has evolved over time. From its use of the term “Womanism,” a concept commonly utilized to describe sex equality issues. Around the nineteenth century, the term later change to “The Women Question” which also signaled what Weiner (1994) refers to as a “pre-feminist consciousness” rather than today’s conception of feminism as a political movement. Based on this, it appears that every era in human history has dealt with women’s inequality issues. This debate therefore has traceable historical antecedents that show how historically women have been grappling with equity issues and raising them against their male counterparts.

To date, the struggle of equity is still a captive topic on many gender agendas and forums. So our historical record bears testimony to the very existence of feminism over time. Through feminism, women have been prompted to prioritize the different aspects of their struggles against forces of their times. Current categorization of the different brands of feminism is grounded in ideological inclinations although collectively they share a common commitment to issues of women’s advancement and status change in societies. So the very differences among the feminist theories are a result of their ideological orientations.

Weiner (1994) categorized the perspectives with more influence and impact on education to be –Equal Rights in Education-as referring to liberal feminism, patriarchal relations- as referring to radical feminism; and class, race and gender: structures and ideologies –as referring to Marxist/socialist feminism. There is no simple way of categorizing feminism especially today because of the shifting nature of how issues of women’s inequality are conceptualized and articulated and also because of the influence of the on-going paradigm shifts brought about by the different authors’ ideological and cultural orientations.

Current advocacy in addressing women’s issues emphasize the creation of feminist consciousness which is defined by Weiner (1994) as entailing the need to understand what has caused women’s subordination in order to campaign and struggle against it. So it’s important for women to understand origins of inequality in order to be aware of it, to act, and to do something about it. It is therefore not my intention to summarize the differences between feminism because since their forms are a result of ideological and political value positions they cannot be attributed to anyone dominant discourse.

2.3. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

By focusing on equal opportunities for women and men, liberal feminism’s concern is for women to receive equal educational opportunity. This entails opening job opportunities equally to women so that they can achieve positions of power in government and business. Concerns, therefore, are on instituting non-discriminatory laws and policies as ways of according women equal opportunities in all aspects of life. Sex discrimination is viewed as unjust because it denies women as a group, equal rights to pursue their own self-interest as well as freedom and

opportunities similar to those granted to men as a group. Feminism therefore, is about the advancement of women and liberal feminism as discussed by Evans (1995) centers on “sameness/equity mode” (p.28) connoting an equality of opportunity case.

Some of the proponents of liberal feminism underscore the importance of procedural fairness while others in the same camp would go for more. However, not all liberal feminists agree on the basic tenets and like other schools of thought, also have variations. Otherwise, the major aim of feminism focuses on equality. In concurrence, Evans (1995), points out that sex equality therefore requires equal participation by women in the public and private realms. Taking a radical feminist perspective, Richards in Evans (1995, p.36) believes that “there are excellent reasons for thinking that women suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex . . .” Reasoned philosophically, “women are not treated equally with their male peers, that this is wrong and that change is required” (Evans 1995, p.37). However as observed by Evans (1995) early feminism faded because of its reliance on legal change. Legal change, it is asserted, cannot rescue women from the different types of inequalities.

Furthermore, feminism should not be viewed as a movement to support women unconditionally since justice is involved. In fact, it should be about support for a movement against injustice instead of a movement for women. This, therefore, entails how unconditional support for women is rarely a feminist aim although its major thrust is about the advancement of women. Discourses of feminism generally evolve around justice, want structures of justice and uphold “culture of the just” (Evans, 1995).

Radical feminists view society as oppressive to women and regard institutions as vehicles used by men to dominate women and result in gender oppression. So gender oppression then is perceived as a system of patriarchy and although patriarchy is least noticed, it is the most

important structure of inequality. Radical feminism also argues that education can work as a leading force for social transformation and feminist believe women should learn to develop a critical consciousness of why and how social transformation is necessary for their own liberation and should strive to work as agents of social change.

2.4. MENTORING EXPERIENCES

In many fields, young and inexperienced personnel learn much from older and more experienced ones (Akande, 1994). Thus mentoring is considered as a viable means to career advancement and beliefs are that it is essential for women's professional development in administration. Mentoring as discussed in literature has limitless potential to improve women's chances for career success in administration (Cheetham & Chiver, 2001). Commonalities that I drew through review of literature on mentoring mostly provide insights into the benefits of establishing mentoring relationships. Thus research on the nature of such relationships highlights the numerous things mentors do for their protégés especially providing the much needed emotional support and confidence (Akande, 1994; Gibb, 1994), as well as sponsoring the protégé's career by nominating him/her for promotions. Mentors have been known to provide their protégés with opportunities to demonstrate their competences too. Research findings have singled out the lack of mentoring among females as one of the factors impeding their advancement into administration.

Women are generally excluded from both explicit and implicit mentoring experiences. Explicit experiences as discussed by Ehrich (1995) generally refer to recommendations made for awards, scholarships and publications while implicit are those experiences that occur when male

academics share knowledge with their male counterparts outside the classroom and outside the boundaries of the organizations to the exclusion of females. These by virtue of them being informal and done in informal settings like pubs or clubs tend to exclude women. Literature has coined the terms of explicit and implicit mentoring as factors causing women's marginal representation in educational administration. Therefore, males are privileged by these practices. Thus women as administrators or aspirants into leadership positions become victims of such practices since it appears they tend to be filtered out of both explicit and implicit mentoring. As exemplified by Ehrich (1995) principals also have a tendency to delegate various administrative tasks like timetabling and chairing committees to male teachers to the exclusion of their female counterparts- a clear case of how women fail to gain relevant administrative experiences.

Furthermore, literature illustrates women's lack of mentoring in instances when women are excluded from various "buddy systems" based on clubs, or in old boys associations, or informal gatherings. Unfortunately, much of the mentoring and information sharing takes place in such settings which, on the contrary, are inaccessible to women aspirants and administrators. Against all this uneven backdrop, interest and research into mentorship is further stimulated because of the favorable outcomes that mentoring holds for organizations, protégés and mentors. Thus leader supported mentoring has been singled out for offering prospective leaders a pathway towards a more effective and more egalitarian organization (Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996).

2.4.1. Potential Value of Mentoring

There is a lack of a general consensus on what mentoring as a concept entails although common characteristics can be drawn. Originally it depicted a mentor as a father head figure whose role

was to sponsor and guide a younger individual-known as a protégé (Ehrich, 1995). However, such a view is increasingly being challenged because of its failure to accommodate different arrangements involving peers, subordinates, and others (Carter, 1994). In other words, what is argued for are instances where individuals' relationships are not confined to one mode of relationship but can be ascribed to multiple mentoring relationships. Thus a more encompassing and inclusive perspective of mentoring often refers to relationships between junior and senior colleagues or peers entered into in order to provide a variety of career-related and professional development. Mentors have capabilities to cultivate and foster nurturing environments that accord protégés opportunities to develop professionally and better situate them to competently compete for leadership positions in organizations (Gay, 1994; Woodd, 1997).

Different authorities use different modes to categorize mentoring relationships. While Ehrich (1995) uses three types of categories i.e. traditional, institutional and professional; Carter (1994) uses the term developmental functions which are further sub-divided into career functions and psychological functions and Akande (1994) sees mentoring relationships as passing through phases such as initiation, cultivation and separation. Career functions basically refer to those aspects of mentoring that enhance one's learning of particular skills and knowledge including political and social skills required for one to succeed within an organization. So these tend to be knowledge and skills specific according to the career one is pursuing.

Initiation in Akande's (1994) context denotes the onset of mentoring relationships while cultivation period refers to the "deepening bond" with between mentor and protégé. Ideally, this same phase is punctuated by rapid strides in career because of the input of skilled assistance being rendered. Separation is the stage of finality when protégé feels comfortable enough to assume independence for career development or when mentor is unable to continue providing

support and guidance. Assumptions made here are that an individual is benefiting from a mentoring relationship with a senior and more experienced individual. The protégé is advantaged to the formal structures of the organization and is also accorded access to latent social and political dimensions central to the functioning of such organizations (Carter, 1994). Psychological functions relate more to interpersonal relationship coined on mutual trust and increasing intimacy offering acceptance, conformation of self worth and facilitative support (Carter, 1994; Woodd, 1997).

Mentoring as a process is playing a prominent and progressive role because of its capacity to bring about greater equality in the workplace (Southworth, 1995). For example, some case studies show us how mentoring can help women to break through the “glass ceiling” to management including facilitating recruitment and promotion even of black and minority ethnic staff. Oliver and Appleton (2002) also point to anecdotal evidence of the empowering effects of positive mentoring relationships between women although such empowering power is not conclusive. In any professional careers networking is integral to an individuals’ success because of its ability to accord individuals opportunities to be in contact with a variety of colleagues for the purpose of mutual work benefits.

However, while such benefits are discussed in literature women rarely benefit because of the difficulties they experience in securing traditional mentoring relationships. Such difficulties might be a result of unavailability of same sex mentors since women are in the minority in educational administration. In addition, the women’s lack of traditional mentorship experiences is again blamed on the prevalence of male sexism, sex-role stereotyping etc. As observed by Ragins (1996) the few women who occupy these upper levels are overburdened with mentoring

requests and cannot accommodate all women. This forces the women aspirants to approach men for mentorship.

Furthermore, research done by Ledvinka & Sarpello (1991), as reviewed by Linehan (2001), note that women may be so adept as men in forming networks, but in some cases they are less effective because they are not well integrated in organizations. In concurrence, Davidson and Cooper (1992), while acknowledging the usefulness of networking of females as a useful support system; however, its effectiveness might not be as visible because of the few numbers of women in senior positions and the need for them to learn how to successfully break into the male-dominated networking system. The rationale behind this is that more benefits will be gained from networks in already established male dominated groups because power in organizations is still predominantly held by men.

Studies conducted in business and comparing men and women's experiences on mentoring, have also identified tensions in cross-gender relationships, including problems of gender stereotyping, sexual tensions in the mentoring relationships and office gossip about mentor-mentee pairings. In response to these problems, and in line with recent research, debates have advocated for women to mentor other women although Ehrich (1995) is quick to point out the inadequacies of same-sex mentoring for women in improving career prospects.

Analysis of the potential benefits of mentoring relationships although exploring the convincingly positive outcomes of mentoring, does not always guarantee success and the literature gives us little indication of what exactly a mentor can do for a learner. It is also against such debates that my study in its explorations of the professional development of the Jean E. Winsand International Institute's forum will try to establish opportunities or lack of them for mentoring and the participants' views on the issues pertaining to mentoring.

2.5.COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Communities of practice is a form of socialization because, as noted by Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998), knowledge acquisition through communal learning is a social process and an aspect of community development. As a model for professional development, and as a framework, communities of practice recognize that knowledge is generated and shared within a social and cultural context (Buysse, Sparkman & Wesley, 2003; Lesser & Prusak, 1999) making it a social construct. As a sociological construct, communities of practice refer to the enculturation of individuals as group members.

Communities of practice places learning in the context of an individual's lived experiences or participation in the world (Wenger 1998). Derived from a social learning theory and grounded in constructivism, components of communities of practice include community, identity, practice and meaning as elements of this process of learning. From a conceptual perspective as discussed by Wenger (1998) communities of practice has assumptions and foci. Key is establishing what matters in learning. Thus since individuals are social beings knowledge that is subsequently acquired concerns attaining competencies that come about as a result of participating and being involved. These processes in turn generate meaning. As espoused by Wenger (1998), both engagement and potential to experience the world are integral to the learning process because if such experiences are meaningful, then individuals gain meaning. This learning is practice-centered and practice-oriented because it is through active involvement in practices that individuals negotiate and construct social identities and as they acquire practical competence, and interpersonal meaning. Transformative learning as discussed by Wenger involves membership in communities. Therefore, although learning takes place through engagements in actions and interactions according to Wenger (1998, p. 55) it "embeds this

engagement in culture and history” and the resulting learning reproduces and transforms the social structure in which it takes place. It is through socialization that new comers gradually become legitimate members of the communities of practice once they learn the practice, language, and connections of the communities they belong to, and this happens as they gain access and engage in interactions with established members (Hildreth, 2004; Brown & Duguid, 1991). Through participation and engagement, group members develop a sense of belonging and group identity that, in turn, facilitate them to adopt a view of themselves as members of a community (Lesser & Storck, 2001; Wenger, 1998).

Wenger also talks about active participation and reification as two sides of the same coin and as complementary. That is while active participation is for identity formation, engagement reification shapes our experiences. There is an almost blurred interplay between these concepts because they are tightly interwoven, and appear to be seamless yet they give meaning to a variety of experiences and ensure continuity of meaning across time and space (Wenger 1998).

Alluding to practice within the realm of communities of practice (CoPs), Wenger associates its role as a source of coherence which is promoted through mutual engagement and to Wenger (1998) membership is a result of engagement that defines that community and an individual’s sense of belonging. Practice as a concept has three dimensions namely mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. To Wenger (1998, p. 74) “community of maintenance” is an intrinsic part of practice and mutual engagement creates relationships among people. If sustained, mutual engagement connects participants within a community. So in a way as discussed in literature CoP is about forming sustainable interpersonal relationships.

Joint enterprise as a characteristic of CoP is a source of community coherence and helps to keep individuals together through a collective process of negotiation (Wenger 1998). An

integral part of practice is how participants create mutual accountability relationships. Shared repertoire refers to how the participants develop and get accustomed to routines, ways of doing things, stories and concepts thus produced by the community overtime and have subsequently become part of its practice. Joint enterprise as discussed by Wenger (1998) refers to the “discourses by which members create meaningful statements about the world, as well as the styles by which they express their forms of membership and their identities as members” (p. 83).

Legitimate peripheral participation connotes conditions and process of how individuals become members of a CoP. Thus Wenger talks of peripherality and legitimacy as types of modifications necessary to bring about effective participation. It is through LPP that newcomers are accorded space to engage as they learn and get a sense of how and what the community is all about. Legitimacy accords newcomers as sense and feeling of being members. So as they interact and other group members reciprocate, these newcomers begin to develop a sense of trust and belonging and this helps them to gradually move from the periphery towards the center. However, as noted by Wenger (1998) CoPs are not always and not necessarily in harmony all the time and their evolution is influenced by the politics of both participation and reification. The generational differences as discussed by Wenger (1998) add edge to the politics a result of the distinctive perspectives that successive generations bring to bear on the history of a practitioner. Such dynamics represent continuity and discontinuity which in turn propels the practice forward (Wenger 1998).

In a nutshell, communities of practice are about informal learning and strategies used to establish a network of people who come together to share knowledge; solve common problems, exchange insights, stories, frustrations (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Through professional interactions, they create, share, apply and acquire new organizational knowledge and build

identities through negotiating meanings of their experiences of membership in social communities (Lee & Valderrama, 2003; Lesser & Prusak, 1999).

2.6. NETWORKING

Empirical research literature on interpersonal organizational networks is still limited because very little empirical research informs our understanding about the effectiveness of formal mentoring in comparison to informal mentoring relationships and their implications for women involved in such relationships (Blake-Beard, 2001). Yet one of the most frequently reported problems in some studies' findings have been the continued exclusion or limited access of women and racial minorities for example, from informal interaction networks. Women to a large extent have been excluded from the "old boy" network which as argued by Linehan (2001) is traditionally constructed by individuals who hold power in organizations. These deliberate attempts are made by males in positions of power and authority to exclude females from joining the "old boy" network.

Although mentoring has been connected to a number of positive organizational outcomes (Blake-Beard, 1998) women have not had many opportunities to benefit from these processes. Because of the underscored benefits of mentoring, many organizations have and continue to create formal mentoring programs geared to address the inequalities faced by women in a variety of working environments. However, marginal inclusion and participation of women in some of these mentoring initiatives have merely reinforced some of the existing stereotypes of males' negative attitudes towards females.

Furthermore, male institutions have also tended to develop exclusively male customs and traditions that as argued by Linehan (2001) perpetuate the old boy network thus further safeguarding such institutions from female intrusions. Observations made have been that women are still less integrated within the important organizational networks and yet these internal networks are critical in influencing human resource decisions like promotion and acceptance (Ragins, 1996; Namkivell & Shoolbred, 1997). Women's continued and limited access to networks has been a factor towards women's under-representation in educational administration.

Networking as discussed in Linehan (2001) is essential for success in pursuing professional careers. Networking basically entails engaging in contacts with a variety of colleagues for the purpose of mutual work benefits. The importance of networking is also supported because of its dependence on informal interactions that at times involve favors, persuasion, and connections to people who already have influence. Because of this, it is important for women to penetrate male networks more if they wish to be sufficiently visible and win organizational promotions. Against this background since my study focuses on a predominantly female organization, I intend to explore what these JWII participants have to say about the life chances and benefits of excluding men in their networking during these yearly conferences and whether this has or has not benefited them and if so how.

Research findings investigating the differences between men's and women's access to informal networks at work revealed that men had better network relationships and better access to their mentors than their women counterparts. Studies of networking still delineate this concept to its original meaning of "male club" or "an old boy network." However current research findings still continue to affirm that the old boy network is still strong and still instrumental in excluding women from participation. Networking which in some circles is

referred to as “male bonding” usually takes place after work hours, or during sporting events, in clubs and bars that are rarely frequented by females and places where they are generally excluded. Being a minority group, women then feel isolated by their male colleagues.

Also the exclusion of women from leadership and influential positions further perpetuate the prevalence of exclusive male customs, traditions and negative attitudes towards females in positions of power. A major problem faced by token women in leadership has been their lack of networking and support systems for themselves. To most women, a lot of business is discussed and useful including influential contacts are usually made when males network informally. Therefore, it becomes necessary for women to try harder and take individual responsibility for their own careers.

Networking is an important tool and can be instrumental in advancing women’s career aspirations because this same tool has been successfully utilized by men to get to where they are now in positions of power. Networking whether formal or informal has the potential to enable women to engage in information sharing, career planning and professional support and encouragement, greater visibility with senior management and career and personal development (Linehan, 2001). Regardless of the potential benefits of networking, women’s most significant barrier in career development is their inability to access male-dominated networks.

Furthermore, networking is indispensable for women, especially when one considers that women generally may not have had the benefit of mentoring in their careers (Jackson, 2000). Thus both networking and mentoring can facilitate career and professional development. Networking is useful at all stages in career development while mentors are useful especially at the beginning of careers. Mentorship as a professional development tool for educators can be

instrumental in promoting and supporting both the beginning teachers and novice head teachers (Ehrich, 1995).

2.7. SUMMARY

This chapter presented literature review on a number of issues used to frame this study. Communities of practice as a conceptual and analysis tool for this case study was also looked at. In my next chapter on my research design and methodology, I present details on data collection methods and procedures including the presentation and analysis used in the study.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Study what interests and is of value to you, study it in the different ways that you deem appropriate, and use the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system

Abbas Tashakkori & Charles Teddlie, (1998).

3.1.INTRODUCTION

My focus and decision to conduct this case study on issues of women and school leadership spans back to my growing up, and attaining my education in an environment where academic competition was rife, when very few girls were in school and males dominated both the teaching profession and administration in secondary schools. The few female employees in the education system during my schooling were school secretaries and domestic science teachers. It was the same time period in my culture when most girls were denied access even to elementary education. As I journeyed in my education, and realized the declining numbers of girls proceeding with their education, I started to question and develop interest and insights into my immediate cultural and societal value system. The colonial infrastructures of that time relegated women and girls to the private sphere and privileged men's and boys' education ahead of women and girls in terms of access to education. For the few of us who proceeded with our education opportunities were very limited in terms of further education, areas of specialization, and career prospects.

Curriculum in secondary education was assigned more on gender lines than on academic excellence or capabilities. So the majority of women and girls of my time had to grapple and struggle to access education from multiple angles and for me it was:

1. the colonial system that provided inferior type of education for blacks and I had to excel academically in order to gain access not only as a black person but more so as a girl child. The quota system of quantifying this access to quality education disadvantaged women more than their male counterparts in terms of life choices and career options. The bottlenecks instituted at the different levels of the education system limited women's and girls' access to schooling.
2. the societal system of my time was and is still very patriarchal and women were and are still invisible and under-represented in administrative positions. In my country elementary, secondary schools and higher educational institutions are categorized and graded as good and poor schools. This grading system is based on the quality of education offered, as well as the students' performance based on examinations results at the national and international levels and on several other variables. These grades define and give schools their identity and reputation. By ascending order, grade one school is the best and an ungraded school is the worst or poorest in terms of quality of education and remuneration of administrative personnel because everything is based on this grading system. Even students' life chances and career prospects are determined by this categorization of educational institutions. For example a principal at a grade one school gets more in salary and benefits than a principal at a grade 2 secondary school and the ungraded one gets the lowest remuneration for the same type of work yet because of the academic streaming of students, he/she gets the worst underachievers. The education

system is examination-oriented and the system uses academic streaming. I grew up at time when women were not promoted into administrative positions and although women dominated the teaching force in elementary schools, unfortunately in many schools they were only expected to teach the lower grades. The few women promoted into administrative positions were appointed as principals in ungraded or grade three schools mostly located in rural areas. I remember in my high school, the only female on the teaching staff was the domestic science teacher and the other female employee was the school typist. That was it.

3. I grew up in a culture that was and is still fairly conservative and rigid in terms of educating women and girls. I was fortunate and privileged to have had a father who defied societal and cultural dictates and encourage me and my siblings to excel and maximize on education. So I had what many girls did not have, an opportunity to pursue education. I was also fortunate to have a husband who saw the academic potential in me and encouraged me to advance my education. I attained a Bachelor of Education, a Master of Education and attended numerous professional development education course and seminars while at the same time raising a family and being a full time teacher in a secondary school and later as a teacher educator in a teachers' college that trained elementary and secondary school teacher. So my late husband Lovemore Matambanadzo again did not succumb to cultural and societal pressure and instead encouraged and supported me as I explored and realized my potential at a time when it was almost a taboo for married women to advance their education and careers. My husband was a blessing and I still feel greatly privileged to have had him for the more that 21 years that we were happily married.

All this brief account marked the beginnings of my interest on issues of women and girls, social justice, human rights, race and race relations, education and society. The more I looked and analyzed the more I developed a passion and a sense of connection to the plight of women and girls. Having been raised in a family that valued education and having had a father who resisted the dictates of culture and society on the education of girls, I maximized on my advantage that many girls did not have and worked hard to excel in an educational environment that was critical, harsh and unsupportive of girls' and women's education.

As a doctoral student at a research university, I also had the privilege of a very supportive and insightful academic advisor who helped me to gain more insights into issues that I had passion for. Furthermore, I worked very closely with my research advisor as I navigated the issues of women, girls and social justice. This whole exploration helped me to draw parallels between women and leadership in the USA vis-à-vis women and leadership globally and in my country of origin. This short context helps me to situate myself in this case study, to expose my passion and where I am coming from as a researcher as well as to express my voice in this discourse on gender, professional development and school leadership. This is important for me and the readers because the debate on women and school leadership is usually framed as though there were clear demarcations between issues of women and school leadership in the USA and issues of women and school leadership elsewhere. What is important is the context of the issues being explored. Researcher's passion for an area under study might not affect the results because the reality and what the researcher interprets is based on the informants' constructs and this is true for this case study because I am using the informants' perceptions for my findings.

In recent years, researchers in educational administration have begun to work towards what Fennell (1999) refers to as "changing the lens" of how to study women's experiences in

organizations. Advocacy to investigate women's issues from women's perspective is gaining prominence. It is important to develop research paradigms that move beyond using men as yardsticks and as subjects of research to measure and explore issues that affect women. Current advocacy is to explore and analyze women's experiences as perceived by women themselves. Therefore, this study explores the JWII's contributions as illuminated from women's experiences as attendees of its professional development forum. Research design of this case study is influenced by the emerging trends underscoring the value of designing and conducting research from the perspective of women so that such research is for women rather than just being research about women. However this study will not lose sight of the assertions made by Letherby (2003) on the importance of balance in doing such research. Letherby (2003) posit that: although feminist research strives to reveal what is going on in women's lives and men's too, because to fully understand women's issues we need to also understand what men are thinking and experiencing (p.6). These assertions have influenced my selection of the Jean E. Winsand International Institute as a case study for my research since it is predominantly a female initiative to benefit females already in administration or those aspiring for administrative positions in education.

This section of my case study provides the rationale for my research design and methodology. My study is conducted as a case study because I am using the JWII as my unit of focus for conducting the inquiry. I conducted this study as an exploratory case study and used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect, analyze, and present findings. I used the qualitative research design method to develop a grounded theory that will help me to examine effectively event-based administrators' professional development as perceived by women informants. More specifically, in using this research design approach, the study will attempt to

discover, develop, and verify through systematic data collection and analysis how women conceptualize and evaluate their professional development for leadership offered through the Institute. The Jean E. Winsand International Institute offers professional development in the form of a one-day annual women's forum. Through relationships-building the main purposes of this Institute are to provide professional and social networking support systems for aspiring and practicing school administrators in Western Pennsylvania. My study explored this cohort of attendees' perceptions and experiences as participants of the forum.

This study follows both a positivistic and a constructivism research paradigm. To the constructivist, learning is a social construct and through interactions and sharing experiences, knowledge is constructed and shared within a social setting. Constructivists recognize the importance of social interactions in the construction of values, belief, and identities that ultimately produce meaning. In this methodology section, I present the relevant sections that details how the study was conducted. This study relies heavily on self-reports collected through self-developed pre-survey and main survey instruments as well as informal interviews, documents analysis of forum agendas, and the researcher's participatory observations during the JWII's one-day annual events.

3.2.MIXED METHODOLOGY RESEARCH DESIGN

Since the 1980s there has been increasing debates about qualitative and quantitative research strategies including their underlying presuppositions as though one or the other should emerge as superior (Newman and Benz, 1998; Creswell, 2003). The kind of dichotomy assumed by this discourse is generally rejected because research as noted by Seale (2004) is an interactive

process involving both inductive and deductive procedures that enable researchers to move from ideas to data and vice-versa. Since both inductive and deductive processes operate at different points in time blending the feedback loops maximizes the strengths of both methodologies (Newman & Benz, 1998). Mixed methodology means combining qualitative and quantitative methods within a single research method (Seale, 2004). In this study I used mixed methodology because I took the position as advanced by Newman and Benz (1998), and Creswell (2004) that these two philosophies are neither mutually exclusive nor interchangeable but are instead perceived as interactive in a methodological and philosophical continuum.

By using mixed methodological design, this study will have the advantages of combining graphic depictions and narrative descriptions and present the research in a more holistic manner (Newman & Benz 1998). I also decided to blend the two philosophies as a strategy to underplay the dichotomy assumed by such debates and instead accord my research study to benefit from the strengths of each approach. In the real world of inquiry, both qualitative and quantitative paradigms coexist and together they form an interactive continuum (Newman & Benz 1998). In mixed methodology design, validity is more likely to be built into studies if researcher is open to both paradigms instead of precluding one or the other. I am also influenced by the argument that in every research study, both qualitative and quantitative strategies are almost always involved at least in some degree because of multiple constructed identities. Therefore my study is framed from the constructivism paradigm and uses mixed methodology for data collection, analysis, and reporting. This research is carried out as a case study because there are advantages of blending several sources of data to achieve triangulation.

3.3. THE JWII AS A CASE STUDY

Most effective case studies require integration of data and knowledge from various sources and are usually conducted in order to improve action and make better decisions.(Scholz and Tietje, 2002). In addition, case studies rely on both qualitative and quantitative research methods and utilization of these multiple methods helps to increase the transparency and especially the reliability and objectivity of a case study (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). For many decades case studies have been used for teaching and research and recent trends show that case studies are increasingly gaining respect as research strategies. Specific use of case studies generally depends on the type of problem to be tackled as well as the discipline because the more complex and contextualized the problem is, the more valuable the case study is.

I chose to use multiple methods for generating data because as underscored by (Yin, 1994) most of the time, case studies are used in areas needing exploration of biographic, authentic, and historical dynamics and perspectives of real, social, and natural systems. I opted to research the JWII as a case study because case studies can be both exploratory and descriptive (Yin, 1994). Case studies can also promote the understanding of complex problems and use such research findings to support and influence decision-making. Case study as an inquiry approach helps in investigating contemporary problems within a real-life context because understanding problems and their subsequent solutions require integrating a myriad of mutually dependent or pieces of evidence likely to be collected ((Scholz & Tietje, 2002). Since problems are not normally confined within disciplinary boundaries, case studies generally require an interdisciplinary approach and their embedded intrinsic value, provide valuable insights (Scholz & Tietje).

As a research method, case studies generally use multiple sources of information and integrate data from a variety of sources. I used triangulation. Basically triangulation is a process used to validate and substantiate interpretations of research findings by using multiple methods for data collection, interpretation, and reporting. For this research study, I used more than one method in looking at my research questions and this helped me to cross-check results for consistency, enhance confidence, and address reliability and validity issues of my findings and overall conclusions (Seale, 2004). Through triangulation, unexpected patterns, interconnections between concepts and ideas may emerge from the data during the analysis stage that might not have been initially conceived during design (Seale, 2004). Quality and use of research findings is generally not based on its reproducibility but rather on whether or not the meanings generated by the researcher are valued. As a process, triangulation serve a dual purpose as both the end point and starting point of further analysis (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). Case studies are linked to pragmatic approaches to learning and within the functionalist view; case studies are starting points for an open process of argumentation.

3.4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

My study is influenced by a number of discourses on positivism, feminist epistemology, feminist methodology, as well as constructivism, and phenomenology. This study is also influenced by the interpretivist approach that considers individuals' experiences as important foci for research. Since reality is a social construct, phenomenological perspectives believe in the existence of multiple realities and multiple interpretations from different individuals that are all equally valid.

There are many questions surrounding feminism since the Women's movement of the 1960's. These include ongoing debates concerning the inclusion of women in leadership roles as well as the role of women in research (Ardovini-Brooker, 2001). Frequent questions asked are whether feminist research is typically distinct from other mainstream research. Ardovini-Brooker (2001) contends that if one believes that feminist research is research about women, by women and for women, then one may conclude that there are distinct methods that feminists use to study the oppression of women. Also if one concedes that there is a direct relationship between feminist consciousness and feminism, then this might imply that there is distinctly feminist research. However other authorities believe that feminist scholarship can be best articulated if we also take cognizance of men's lives too and understand what they are thinking and experiencing (Letherby, 2003).

Ardovini-Brooker (2002) argues that regardless of what the political ideologies of the researcher are, the research methods –which are the tools we use in research- remain the same as those used in mainstream research. Instead of just examining the political ideologies, Ardovini-Brooker (2002) suggests that it is also necessary to examine the goals of the research, the assumptions made by the researcher, the methods used by the researcher, and the resulting epistemology because these are the foundations of research and fundamentally add up to whether research is feminist or not.

Ardovini-Brooker (2001) posit that feminism grants voices to those who have been silenced and if “we are to finally hear the plethora of silenced voices, then we must listen to their perspectives.” In order to understand women's experiences, “we must listen to their words, their language and their meanings. Who better to know these things than the insiders themselves?”

Women it is argued, have “less distorted view of reality ... than merely a different view or a one-sided, male-centered view...” (Ardovini-Brooker, 2001).

Feminist researchers make assumptions that in order to categorize research as feminist, it must address issues concerning the oppression of women and children by granting voices to those being studied and in the process, create what Ardovini-Brooker (2002) refers to as “gynocentric epistemics” that is “...a knowledge centered on women’s realities that bring forth new knowledge.” In responses to the limitation of mainstream research, feminist research assumes that: First, there is a pervasive lack of information about women’s worlds. Second, there is a bias in the under representation of women researchers. Third, there is a need to reconceptualize previously investigated phenomenon to include women’s experiences. Fourth, the kinds of research questions that are asked have crucial implications both for the results and for practical action.

In a nutshell what constitutes feminist research is the framework within which it is located and multiple techniques can be used as long as they support the feminist goals. Although there is no distinct feminist method, there are certain commonalities distinctive of feminist research method. These, as noted by Ardovini-Brooker (2001), include reflexivity in the process of doing the research; situating the researcher within the question and topic; subjectivity and granting voices to those being studied and recognizing the presence of multiple voices and not necessarily just one woman’s perspective. This influenced my decision to use the total population of the JWII as my informants instead of a sample. This has an advantage because I was able to capture their multiple perspectives on issues that they have passion for. Furthermore feminist research locates the researcher at the same critical plane as those being studied. It also attempts to make sense of the world by producing generalized knowledge-claims based on

experiences. It is against all this that my research study seems to fall within the realm of feminist methodologies.

Women have ways of knowing and understanding reality, and feminist epistemology proposes alternative theories of knowledge that legitimate women as knowers and desist from analyzing research from men's perspective only. The goal of feminist research is to provide explanations for the social phenomenon affecting women's lives in order to promote a better understanding of themselves and their lives in this gendered world. In addition, research is generally done from a particular location within the social system and for women therefore the standpoint is that of being underrepresented in such a social system. Arguments are that research and theory must situate social actors within their everyday worlds and unless research begins from within the ordinary lives of women, then the knowledge thus constructed will be alienating, divorced from the actual experiences and redundant too. Therefore, exploring existing relationships between social structures and everyday lives are important in comprehending women's experiences (Ardovini-Brooker, 2002).

A final way of looking at feminism is that it is both theory and practice and also a framework that informs women's lives in order to understand their oppression with the aim of trying to end it (Letherby, 2003). This has positive implications in that women have been able to put in place strategies, support networks, and forums to share best practices as they address issues that affect them. Feminist research means the researcher becomes part of the process of discovery and should understand ways of attempting to create and effect changes based on women's documented experiences and narratives (Letherby, 2003). Ardovini- Brooker (2001) views feminist research as praxis because through it, useful knowledge can be generated and used to bring about changes.

Interpretive as discussed in literature refers to the extent the researcher tries to make meaning of a situation from the informants' point of views instead of imposing the researcher's point of view. Because of this, it is necessary for researchers to use subjective methods and utilize their own interpretation to better understand what is happening in the social setting under study. Perceived this way, again my study can be informed from the interpretive perspective. What follows in this chapter is an explanation about the methods, design and procedures used in conducting this case study. Before conducting the study I got approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Pittsburgh (**SEE APPENDIX A- IRB Approval**).

3.4.1. Sequence of Data Collection- A Flow Chart

Figure 3.1 sums up how the study was carried out. This section highlights the sequence of data collection for this case study and spells out the activities and time lines. The first stage involved situating the context of the study.

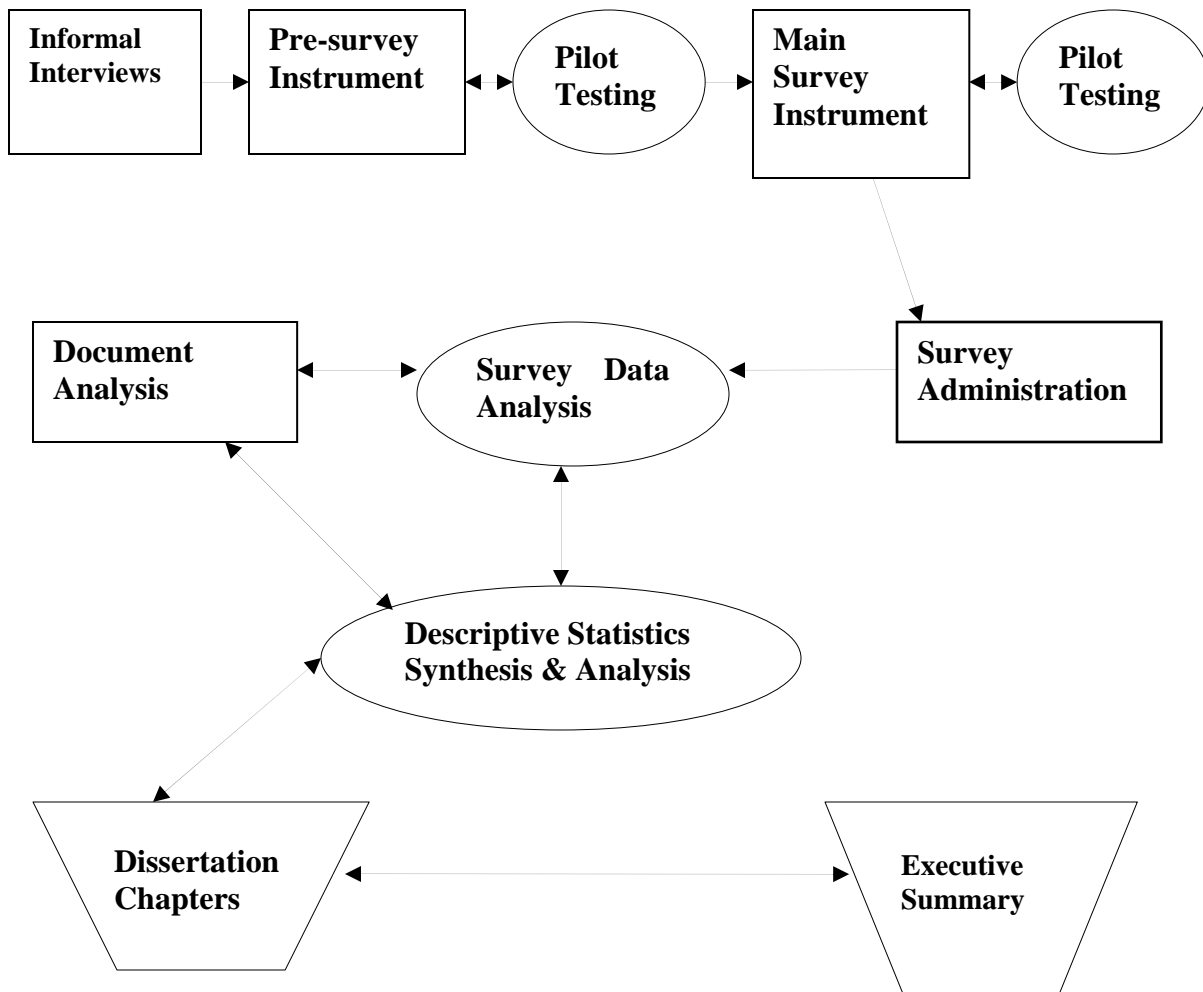


Figure 3-1. Sequence of Data Collection- A Flow Chart

Using semi-structured interview questionnaires and working within the framework of an interview schedule, I conducted informal interviews. The purposes of these interviews were to generate a bank of questionnaires items to use in structuring and developing the pre-survey open-ended questionnaire. I conducted the informal interviews just after the JWII April 2002 conference and the whole interview process took place over a period of two months.

3.4.2. Informal Interviews

In order to establish the context of this study and better understand what is involved in the JWII forum including its history, I conducted informal interviews with the current co-coordinators and co-founder of the Institute as well as a pioneer member of the forum. I also conducted informal interviews with the Director for Leadership Development at Duquesne University who is also involved with the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) and American Association of School Administrators (AASA) to better understand issues and the historical context of women and school leadership in Western Pennsylvania. **(SEE APPENDIX B- Interview Protocol for Background Information).** Through these interviews, I wanted to establish the kind of discourses that shape and continue to shape issues of women as educational administrators from a local, regional, and national perspective. In both cases, I used interview schedules with semi-structured questionnaire items to direct my inquiry. Outcomes of these informal interviews helped me to narrow down the focus of my case study. Out of these interview responses, I was able to develop and construct an open-ended pre-survey instrument. These informal interviews marked the beginning process of generating questionnaire items for my instrumentation.

I started making connections with the Jean E. Winsand International Institute when I was first invited to attend their April 2002 annual conference. This prompted my interest in the Institute and I wanted to learn more about this networking forum and its role in fostering communities of practice for those in educational leadership. Using participatory observation, I was able to attend the round table discussion topics, mingle with attendees and interact with some of the conference participants. I was informally introduced to this group of administrators by my research advisor. Using information gathered through informal interviews and

participatory observation, I constructed a pre-survey whose purposes were to generate questionnaire items for my main survey instrument.

3.4.3. Pre-survey Instrument

The next step involved the construction of the pre-survey instrument and this had seven open-ended questions and a demographic section. I worked closely with my research advisor Dr. Porter (**SEE APPENDIX C- Pre-survey Instrument**). Administering pre-survey instruments was intended to generate a bank of questionnaire items that I used to compile my main survey instrument. After the initial structuring I pilot tested my instrument among my colleagues in the School of Education, Department of Administrative and Policy Studies for clarity in terms of content, instructions, flow, response time, relevance and appropriateness of items. A number of my colleagues in my program during that time held administrative positions in the different school districts and were conversant with the kind of issues that my instrument focused on. Using their comments and feedback, I modified the instrument. General concern was on the length and I revised the instrument accordingly.

Before the April 2003 conference, I advised prospective participants of the study by mail and informed them of the following details: 1. criteria for participation, 2. purpose of study and 3. contact information of the researcher. On the conference day (April 24, 2003) and before administering this pre-survey, I had the opportunity to give a ten-minute introductory presentation about the study, its aims and the rationale for conducting this study about the Institute. I was able to share with them how important this study was for the future of the Institute as well as with whom, by what means, and how the results were going to be utilized. I also asked for the conference attendees' consent to participate in the study as informants. After

the talk, I administered my pre-survey to all the participants who attended the JWII April 24, 2003 conference as they registered for the conference. However for those already registered, I followed them up as they participated in the Hot Topics Round Table discussions that usually take place during the first hour of the sessions from 8:00 am-9:00 am. Attendance that day was 70 and I asked these respondents to complete the pre-surveys whenever they had time during the sessions and to submit the completed questionnaires to me before the end of the day. Out of the 70 conference participants of that day, 34 turned in completed pre-surveys- an almost 50% response rate. Since this was qualitative data, I used NUD*IST to create the broader themes and concepts. I created the node tree, analyzed, categorized and grouped responses according to the emerging themes and trends.

My pre-survey had 7 open-ended questionnaire items and a demographic section.

Items asked for information about:

- Overall goals and what prompted attendees to participate.
- What keeps them coming back to the JWII forum.
- Comparison of the JWII forum to other professional development programs including distinct and major features that attributes to its uniqueness.
- Key things learned through the JWII and their relevance to their professional and personal lives.
- Suggestions on way the Institute can refocus itself for effective professional development.
- Ways to make the Institute more of an international community of women in school leadership.
- Priorities in reshaping the future of the JWII.

- Demographic data.

(SEE APPENDIX C -for exact contents of the instrument).

Since data from this pre-survey were qualitative in nature, I used key themes and categories to analyze and group items according to the emerging trends. Analysis of this data helped me to generate questionnaires items for my main survey.

3.4.4. Self-developed Survey Instrument

My initial final survey instrument had 60 structured, 16 open-ended and a demographic section that had 11 questionnaire items. I worked with the committee and before pilot testing my survey, I emailed it as an attachment to the director of the JWII. I wanted him to establish length, content coverage and clarity of instrument for the targeted response population. **(SEE APPENDIX D-for draft survey)**. Because my informants are already busy as administrators, the director felt my instrument was too long and might affect the response rate and he suggested that I shorten it. **(For E-mail comments-SEE APPENDIX E)**. After revising the draft pre-survey, I had it checked for content coverage. In developing this instrument I worked with my committee and also very closely with Dr. Rubinstein in the Measurement and Evaluation Department to further develop and refine the instrument without compromising the focus and quality of research data to be collected. I had several meetings with her in developing the final survey instrument. I then pilot tested the final survey by administering it to two of my JWII colleagues whom I had met during the JWII April 2003 conference for content, clarity, and response time. I pilot tested it to my classmates as well who are administrators in the different school districts. Based on their comments and feedback, I finalized my survey instrument. What follows is a description of my survey instrument.

My main survey instrument had 9 major questions with a number of questionnaire items under each one of them. Questions 1-6 were structured and had a Likert-type rating scale built in using very important to unimportant, major goal to not a goal, strongly agree to strongly disagree, very appealing to not appealing alternatives. Respondents had to answer all the questions by ranking them accordingly. I did not include a non-response or neutral option because I wanted to get as much of their perceptions as possible and be able to talk convincingly about their experiences with the JWII's professional development. In addition, questions 1-6 also had an open-ended option for each section while questions 7-9 were unstructured. My instrument had a demographic section at the end. Without counting the demographic questionnaire items, the whole survey instrument had 94 structured and 9 open-ended questionnaire items. The demographic section had 12 response items. On a separate page, I asked those who responded to indicate if they were interested in participating in follow-up interviews. **(SEE APPENDIX F for details about survey instrument)**. Out of the 185 surveys administered between April 2004 and November 2004, I received a total of 102 completed questionnaires. Before the April 2004 conference I asked for permission to share the results of my pre-survey. I e-mailed the Director for his approval so that I could have 10 minutes of sharing **(SEE APPENDIX G-for permission letter and APPENDIX H –for introductory letter that I mailed out before the April 2004 conference)**.

The breakdown for data collection is as follows:

In April 2004 during the annual conference, I distributed the survey to those present using a self-prepared checklist that I compiled. I used identifiers to help make the follow-ups easier. For those not present during the April 2004 conference, I used two ways to administer the

instrument namely, by regular mail and also by e-mail using the email addresses supplied by the Institute. For each I used cover letter when sending out the surveys (**SEE APPENDIX I- for sample of survey cover letter**). However my e-mailing strategy did not work well because it coincided and occurred more or less at the same time period of computer virus alerts and many people deleted unsolicited e-mails especially if they involved attachments. I only got three responses and had to revert to regular mailing and targeted those who had not responded to my e-mails.

3.4.5. Survey Administration

In my initial mailing, I sent out 185 questionnaires between April 18, 2004 and May 9, 2004. I got 46 completed surveys, 8 declines and 17 returned mail. I sent out my first reminder between August 3, 2004 and August 24, 2004 and received 35 completed surveys, 1 decline and 6 returned mail. Between September 21, 2004 and October 12, 2004, I sent out my second reminder to those who had not responded. I received 17 completed surveys, 4 declines and 1 returned mail. I dispatched my third and final reminder between November 5, 2004 and November 26, 2004. This generated only 4 completed surveys, 2 declines and 5 returned mail. For each survey administration, I allowed three weeks in between and felt this was long enough as a turn around time. For each reminder, I also enclosed the survey instrument and a cover letter. (**SEE APPENDIX J and K –for Samples of Reminder Letters**). With each survey mailing, I also enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope. From these 4 survey mailings, I received a total of 102 completed surveys, 15 declines and 29 returned mail. For those who declined, most provided a reason why they did not want to participate. (**For the reasons why some of the informants declined to participate -SEE APPENDIX M**). As I received each

batch of surveys back I entered the data into excel spreadsheets and processed the qualitative data manually. At the same time I also wrote thank you letters. (**SEE APPENDIX L- for Sample of Thank You Letter**). For the quantitative data analysis using SPSS, I worked very closely with my committee members as well as with Dr. Rubinstein in the Measurement and Evaluation department for statistical analysis.

3.5. SECTIONS OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

3.5.1. Motivating Factors

Question one of my survey instruments asked the informants to indicate what motivated and influenced their decision to attend the JWII very first time. This section of my instrument was made up of 12 structured questionnaire items and 3 open-ended ones. I used a four point Likert-type scale and asked the informants to rate their responses according to how important each questionnaire statement was in influencing their decision to attend by indicating whether they were: Very Important (VP) = 4; Important (I) = 3; Less Important (LI) = 2; and Unimportant (U) = 1.

3.5.2. Perceived Major Goals

Using nineteen structured and one open-ended questionnaire items, I asked my informants to rate the items according to how they perceived them as “major,” “minor” or “not a goal” of the JWII. I used a three point Likert-type scale and asked informants to rate their responses according to

the extent they perceived the suggested items as being a: Major Goal (Ma) = 3; Minor Goal (Mi) = 2; and Not a Goal (NG) = 1.

3.5.3. Perceived Gains

Question 3 of the main survey instrument had 17 structured questionnaire items and 1 open-ended item, and elicited information about the gains that the attendees made through their participation in the forum. Using a four point Likert-type scale, informants ranked the extent to which they “Strongly Agree”=4; “Agree”=3; “Disagree”=2; and “Strongly Disagree”=1 on each one of the statements provided.

3.5.4. Ways the JWII Should Grow/Expand/Change

Question 4 had 25 structured questionnaire items and 1 open-ended item at the end of the section that asked for suggestions about the future image of the JWII in relation to how it should grow and change. Using a four point Likert-type scale, I asked informants to rank the extent to which they “Strongly Agree =4; Agree =3; Disagree =2; and Strongly Disagree = 1” with each one of the statements provided.

3.5.5. Strategies to Internationalize and Enhance Professional Experiences

Question 5 had 11 structured items and 1 open-ended item. In this section, attendees ranked “appealing ways” that the institute can enhance their experiences if it internationalizes itself. Using a four point Likert-type scale, attendees ranked each item according to the extent to which

it was: “Very Appealing = 4; Appealing = 3; Less Appealing = 2; and Not appealing = 1” to internationalize the JWII’s forum.

3.5.6. Ways the Informants First Learned About JWII

This part of the questionnaire has 10 structured and 1 open-ended questions. There are two parts to this section. Attendees had to indicate the different ways they first learned about the Institute by selecting the suggested options. In the second sections attendees selected what they perceived as significant strategies for publicity purposes. I also asked my informants to indicate what was or has been the least meaningful features of the forum by giving reasons on why they regarded them as least meaningful. So I had an open-ended question that asked informants to suggest what they saw as least meaningful features of the JWII.

3.5.7. Top Priority for the Forum

This was an open-ended question and asked informants to suggest a priority of forum issues. I also had an additional open-ended questionnaire item where I asked informants to provide any additional comments and recommendations not covered in the survey.

3.5.8. Demographic Data

The last section of the instrument asked for informants’ demographic on: race, gender, age, previous, current positions held and their geographic positions and number of years in those positions. I also collected information about their next and ultimate career positions. Data were

collected about their period of participation in years. On a separate sheet I had asked informants to volunteer for in-depth follow-up interviews. Since I collected a lot of data, I did not conduct these interviews as initially intended but just made only a few telephone calls to follow-up on some historical aspects about the Institute. However, 33 had indicated their willingness to be interviewed.

3.5.9. Documents Analysis

This study included document analysis for data collection. Although the Institute has been in existence for more than 20 years now, I was able to get agendas for conferences held in April 2002, April 2003, and April 2004. **(SEE APPENDIX N- for copies of conference programs).**

3.5.10. Summary of data collection

For the whole data collection process for this case study, I sent out the initial survey followed by three reminders. Out of the 185 surveys sent out, I got 102 completed ones –a 55.1% response rate. The main survey instrument was administered between April 2004, and December, 2004. Other sources of data for this research included a semi-structured interview with the director of the Institute, document analysis of forum agendas. I reviewed conference programs for 2002, 2003, and 2004 to establish the nature of content, methodologies and activities as well as issues covered over this period and their relatedness to the debate on women's leadership development. I wanted to establish the discourses that shape and continue to shape issues of school practice and performance. Also, exploration of content analysis is meant to establish trends related to specific issues of support explored in the themes.

3.6.DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This case study uses mixed methodology for both data collection and analysis and uses simple descriptive statistics to analyze and report the findings. For the qualitative data, the study uses a grounded theory framework to find concepts and their relationships. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis were done using appropriate software. For demographic data and all the structured questionnaire items, SPSS software was used to establish frequencies while for the qualitative data I did it manually and developed categories of similar text units. The primary sources of data were surveys. Open coding was used. Open coding is a process in which data are broken down, examined and assigned to categories representing emerging ideas that illuminate women administrators' perceptions on their professional development. This established commonalities in the life experiences, and perceptions regarding professional development and approaches used by the Jean Winsand International Institute.

Data analysis was on-going, open and inductive. I also used constant comparative method. To carry out the analysis of my data, I started by identifying working categories within which I situated specific data units using communities of practice as an analysis tool. I modified these units as I worked through each of them. I preferred to use this comparative pattern analysis in order to illuminate recurring patterns in the data. So in my data analysis I searched for patterns that converge into categories as determined by dimensions of communities of practice and consistent with my research questions. This had an advantage of enabling me to subsequently discuss and present my findings within the categories that I would have developed more inductively.

Since the study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature, I used triangulation. Triangulation in this instance refers to the use of a combination of methodologies in studying the

same phenomena and data collection from several sources. For this study, I preferred triangulation because it allowed more ways of data gathering. This, as argued by Tashakkori & Teddli (1998) is advantageous because it allows researchers to collect and evaluate data and check the accuracy of the findings. Quantitative data analysis was used for demographic data and all the structured questionnaire items on the survey instrument. With the support of my committee and working closely with Dr. Rubinstein, I transformed my data into data files for computer analysis. Thus I organized the data into files, created a coding system by assigning values compatible with computers. I assigned numbers according to each response. The coding helped to turn the responses into standard categories (Fowler, 1993). This helped to create categories that grouped answers. I initially used Microsoft excel to organize my data and made data entries according to the sequence of my survey instrument. I had separate coding system for the demographic section.

This process was followed by cleaning up the data and checking to establish accuracy. Using SPSS, outputs were created and the subsequent frequencies were used for the descriptive statistics. Qualitative data analysis was used for the open-ended responses. Using simple descriptive statistics data are presented and substantiated where necessary by means of illustrative informants' excerpts and literature. So I used quantitative data to validate and qualitative data to elaborate further on my findings.

3.7.VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

Meaningfulness and use of multiple approaches in data collection are key in producing quality research. For this study I used multiple sources and made use of triangulation. Source

triangulation included analyzing quantified data and checking it against qualified excerpts of the informants' outcomes of interviews and qualitative data. Using communities of practice as an analysis tool helped me compare with literature to enhance the validity of the study. I am influenced by assertions made by Creswell (2003) that combining qualitative and quantitative research designs improves research, and validity is more likely to be built into studies when the researcher is open to both paradigms rather than precluding one or the other. The quality of research improves through integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods because both paradigms co-exist. Therefore, it is possible to combine both qualitative and quantitative research as long as practice is the basis of inquiry. Issues of reliability and validity are important because they impact on the objectivity and credibility of research.

3.8.DESCRPTION OF THE JWII'S ONE-DAY CONFERENCE EVENTS

In this section, I will describe the context of this study by giving a synopsis of the events that take place during this one-day forum. The Jean E. Winsand is a one-day conference held at the University of Pittsburgh and brings together administrators and a few teachers. Although the agendas vary from year to year, typically the one-day program events are divided into segments. The kick-off starts with registration and a continental breakfast usually around 7:30 am to about 8:00 am. Attendance is not free and those interested in participating can register in advance or on the day of the event and pay a registration fee either as individuals or a group. Group discounts encourage cluster of people to come. In addition, attendees earn 4 hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit. Each year has a key theme that frames and influences what is included in the Hot Topics Round Tables, keynote speaker, and other participating resource

persons. For example, in 2002 the overarching theme was “Jean Winsand Institute for Women in School Leadership: Lessons in Leadership and Results” and some of the hot topics covered knowledge base, skills, issues of practice, policy. In 2003 the theme was “Jean E. Winsand International Institute for Women in School Leadership: Moving Toward an Accountability Mindset.” The theme was consistent with the on-going debates on accountability and ways to implement such mandates especially at the school level.

Scheduled for the day is a brainstorming and seminar kind of discussions titled: Hot Topics Round Tables that last for an hour or two depending on the number of scheduled topics. The hot topics evolve around issues deemed important by the attendees because conference participants contribute by submitting them well before the conference although the final selection rests with the Institute’s organizers. Example of topics that have been covered in the past include “Using Multiple Assessment Data to Improve Student Performance; Team Building with a Set-in-Their-Ways Staff; Administrative movement up the career ladder: How is it different; Emerging role of the principal; How to reach and involve parents of non-performing students” **(SEE APPENDIX N- for more Round Table Topics).**

Based on the conference agendas, a wide range of issues covered include administration, supervision, curriculum, student behaviors and performance, school and community partnerships. The central issue is knowledge sharing and disseminating and building relationships through connections. There is a facilitator and moderator for each round table topics session to help guide and direct the discussions. These sessions are conducted as round tables in the sense that participants rotate and have opportunities to participate in more than just one round table. It is during these sessions that both old-timers and new-comers have opportunities to interact, share experiences, knowledge, meet new people, socialize and learn

from each other in this informal social gathering. Sometimes there is a mid-morning break or sessions can proceed without any break.

Within the morning, there is a session attended by the whole group and this usually involves an invited speaker or consultant as a guest expert in an area under focus. This person has expertise in areas of direct relevance to any level of the education system. For example in 2002- the resource person spoke on “Navigating the Rapids of Change-From management to Leadership in a Result Oriented School- Functional and Strategic Skills Necessary for Leadership in an Age of Accountability” and a second presentation was on “Leadership Secrets of Avalon: CEO” In 2003, the consultant talked about “The Sanders Value Added Assessment System: A Longitudinal Tracking System.” Highlights of the forum are the lunch and recognition sessions. Networking through interactions takes place throughout the day but is more prominent at the round tables as well as during lunch.

In 1999 the Tri-State Area School Study Council under which the JWII falls, authorized an annual award that is presented to an exemplary woman in education whose achievements are widely recognized. It was not until 2003 that the award was renamed and became the Jean E. Winsand Distinguished Woman in Education. Recipients of this award are as follows:

1999 Awardee: Dr. Helen Faison, Pittsburgh Public Schools.

2000 Awardee: Ms. Louise Brennen, Pittsburgh Public Schools.

2001 Awardee: Dr. Velma Saire, Quaker Valley School District.

2002 Awardee: Dr. Donna Durno, Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

2003 Awardee: Dr. Linda Croushore, Mon Valley Ed. Consortium.

2004 Awardee: Dr. Rita Bean, University of Pittsburgh.

2005 Awardee: Dr. Shirley Biggs, University of Pittsburgh.

3.8.1. The Researcher as a Participatory Observer: A Reflection

This brief reflection is based on my involvement as I conducted participatory observation and is based on the outcome of my participation and informal interactions with the conference attendees. This account is also based on what transpired during the women's annual conferences held at the University of Pittsburgh. I attended the 2003 and 2004 conferences as a participant. In 2003, I helped with the registration as I distributed my pre-survey instruments while in 2004, I was able to participate in one of the Hot Topics Round Tables. In 2004, the Institute hosted two international scholars from German who are also involved in a joint research project on 'Women and Educational Leadership.' The collaborative partnership in this research project is between the University of Pittsburgh in the USA and the University of Augsburg in German. From the USA, my research advisor is the Principal Investigator for this joint research venture.

Sitting at the same table with the two German international visitors, what was apparent from the exchange of ideas was that although opportunities are increasingly being availed for women to move into leadership positions, however some of the gains made continue to be stifled by the limited initiatives/programs meant to promote women's career advancement into leadership positions. Also in the on-going discussions, it was clear that principals, as part of human enterprise, are viewed as more critical in effecting positive changes in the education system thus underscoring the necessity for women to be more involved at this level of authority.

As an initiative, the general feeling among those who spoke re-emphasized the important role that the Jean E. Winsand International Institute currently plays because of its continued focus on practicing and aspiring women administrators and also because of how it has continued to provide women with opportunities and a safe environment and forum to deliberate on issues that affect them in their everyday practice. It is true to say that while attendance seems to be

stagnant as pointed out by some attendees, collectively, these women administrators believe that making the JWII more international will help promote its effectiveness and might attract more participants and allow Dr. Winsand's legacy to bloom and benefit all women regardless of their geographical locations because that was her wish. Through the Jean E. Winsand International Institute, some of the conference participants I informally talked to, believe it has the potential to develop life and career objectives of women, which they asserted, are ways to accomplish greater sense of personal and professional identities not only within the USA, but also globally too. While both males and females administrators are part of the JWII, on the contrary, women outnumber men; a question I might probe more in my survey.

Basically the JWII is perceived by its participants as an association of women colleagues and friends that offers a safe and comfortable environment. It also accords both practicing and aspiring women administrators, opportunities to take risks, learn new ideas, engage themselves in deep conversations and in the process, develop new relationships, important enthusiasm in leadership as a career, and intrinsic motivation. The hot topics round table covered during the conference were regarded by many of the attendees as empowering because these sessions helped them to assess their own personal skills and abilities and enabled them to generate and maintain self-concept and understanding. Knowledge sharing is integral to the procedures of the JWII. The belief is that there is need to be able to give as well as take knowledge so as to remain a member in good standing within one's area or domain of operation. This is evidenced by the expertise of guest and key-note speakers invited to this forum. So by including prominent and cutting edge leadership practices through inclusion of guest speakers and presentation of distinguished woman in education, such procedures help situate, recognize and create awareness about some of the potentials open to women as administrators.

Discussions around the communities of practice which the JWII is part of, evolves around the usefulness and transferability of skills acquired. Looking at how the JWII has evolved over time, it resembles an example of a community of practice that has been self-forming and is more informal than formal as a grassroots forum. However as intimated by Dr. Gorman informal organizations also need a coordinator for them to run smoothly and efficiently. Participants stressed the importance of rapport because it leads to real collaborations. Furthermore, inclusion of common work-related issues as some of the hot topics prompted in the attendees, the desire and will to learn from each other which in reality are the very driving forces behind these communities of learners. Since most of the attendees are geographically dispersed, the face-to-face contacts they have during these JWII conferences accord them opportunities to interact, engage in dialogues and meet in person thus reinforcing their collaborative links to others. Most attendees believe that the hot topics sessions are usually lively and engaging because of how they normally deal with the very skills that leaders genuinely need to acquire in order to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently. However it was clear that because of shortage of time, attendees do not always learn everything they need to within the timeframe of the duration of the conference-an indication/pointer to the issues that I might want to pursue more in my survey.

Reporting on the research program for women in leadership in German. Dr. Hildegard Macha and Mr. Wolfgang both from the University of Augsburg-German, stressed the importance of peer consultation which as they elaborated, is a subtle way of communities of practice. Also what I seem to have grasped from their account is the importance of professional development which ideally should be integral to the development of leadership skills because of the belief that people within the organizations have the onus to change themselves. However distinct differences noted between the USA and German scenarios were the problems of school

structures whereby although both strive to promote leadership skills, on the contrary and unlike their German counterparts, those in the USA rarely provide job embedded professional development. The German structure is further enriched by the implementation of collaborative protocols that promote communities of practice which basically means sharing and working together- a strong component very fundamental to how the JWII operates.

Analysis and collaboration work coupled by inclusion of learning experiences, Dr. Macha and Mr. Wolfgang Bauhofer intimated how these naturally generate and sustain communities of learners because of the way they focus on the negotiation of identity and knowledge through discussions, debates and activities as well as the shared production. So in a sense, peer consultations are important because they ensure collaborations, they build good relationships and ultimately achieve a multiplier effect. Peer consultations should also instill a sense of trust within each other and promote teamwork. The push for more international representations as the future image of the JWII seem to be unanimously endorsed by those present. From the deliberations, group members from German and the USA appear to work collaboratively together and were very comfortable sharing and evaluating their work within the broader perspective of educational administration in general and women and educational leadership in particular.

Although I was unfortunate not to have met Jean Winsand personally, I seem to have developed a sense of who she was including some insights based on the lunch hour speeches that were delivered by her husband- Dr Orville Winsand; Dr Charles Gorman; Dr. Harry Faulk; and Dr. Linda Croushore. On numerous occasions, internationalizing the JWII was echoed and reinforced by different speakers as one of Jean's desires for the future of this forum. During her time, she had a lot of international friends and also supervised a lot of international students.

Therefore going international will complete the cycle of this important forum. Dr. Winsand's deep involvement in the Tri-State as pioneer leaders together with Dr. Gorman contributed and became instrumental in changing the image of the Tri-State Area Study School Council from being administrator-focused organization to one that addressed the needs of teachers, counselors, supervisors, administrators and others as they served the needs of children in Western Pennsylvania-a more inclusive image. Of significance was her vision of making the voice and presence of women in leadership roles a major change in these schools- a fundamental reason that led to the inception of the JWII. To Jean, she believed that changes to incorporate women's advancement into leadership were long over due and critical if at all these schools were to serve the students more effectively.

For me, the conference came at the right time because I was able to meet people who had personally been involved with Dr. Jean Winsand as friends and colleagues and provided me with an open window and some leads on whom to approach next as my informants. For example as I refine my list of informants, I plan to source information from those persons involved as key speakers during her memorial who talked about Jean's involvement with: Jean and the School of Education; Jean and the Department of Instruction and Learning; Jean and the Network of Women Administrators; Jean and School Leadership Organization; Jean and the School Leadership Development Program; Jean and Tri-State- areas that I was totally ignorant of when I did my initial proposal. This will give me a broader perspective to help ground my focus within these contexts.

3.9. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the methodology for data collection, analysis and presentation. The benefits of using mixed methodology design were explored. I also presented the procedures and spelled out the instrumentation and how I developed them including ways I established credibility of both my instruments and my study. In Chapter 4, I focus on ways the JWII can reach a diverse audience. Demographic data and responses to question 6 are presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

4. REACHING A DIVERSE AUDIENCE

“A day away from our schools to connect with other women and to rejuvenate/regroup.”

JWII Participant

4.1.INTRODUCTION

This excerpt exemplifies how some of the attendees feel about the Institute and the value they attach to the time that they spend with their colleagues during this one day event. In Chapter 3, I discussed the mixed methodology framework and the different instruments and data sources that helped direct my inquiry. I also spelled out the research questions that helped frame the focus of my case study. This chapter on how the JWII is reaching a diverse audience will describe the characteristic nature of the informants as derived from the demographic data collected using the survey instrument on race, gender, age, geographic locations of current positions, summary of career issues based on current positions and ultimate career aspirations, and number of years as attendees of the forum. The chapter will also summarize the major findings and give suggestions on how the JWII as a professional development forum for school leadership can reach out to a diverse audience.

The size and quality of a program can be determined in some sense by the caliber of its participants based on the attributes that they bring into the program. For this case study, it is important for me to establish who the participants of the Jean E. Winsand International Institute

(JWII) are. Therefore the purpose of chapter 4 is to explore the characteristics of those who were both past and current attendees of the JWII. Knowing who the members are matters because this influences what is offered, how business is conducted within the Institute, and what will contribute to the Institute's longevity and sustainability. By using demographic data collected through a self-reported survey instrument, I was able to identify basic characteristics of aspiring and practicing school administrators involved in the JWII's professional development and leadership forum.

My approach to exploring demographic data is consistent with other scholars' comparative studies done in the area of women and educational administration, and whose purposes have helped explain the characteristic differences between male and female administrators. Studies in this area consistently and convincingly show the disparities between men and women's career patterns and their advancement (Baker, Graham, & Williams, 2003) by documenting the barriers that slow down and at times prevent women's upward mobility- a term referred to as the "glass ceiling." Thus glass ceilings exist and hinder women trying to move beyond mid-level administrative positions (Blake-Beard, 2004; Davidson & Cooper, 1992). However, my study is not necessarily comparing and contrasting disparities between men and women. Since I am using communities of practice dimensions as an analysis tool, focusing on the characteristics of both novice and mature participants involved with the forum becomes imperative because of their possible implications for the future of the Institute and its role in helping them to develop to their full potential as a learning community. Therefore, establishing attendees' characteristics becomes integral to the discussions done in this case study.

In this chapter, I compiled informants' responses from several complementary sources. First was a questionnaire sent out to the whole population of 185 past and current attendees of

the JWII through e-mail and regular mail. Out of this total population, I received 102 completed surveys which is a 55.1% response rate. For exploring and discussing my results, I used informants' responses as well as the outcomes of the informal interviews that I conducted with the institute's administrators. In this chapter of my case study, I will present and discuss the research findings of my data that I collected through:

1. Pre-surveys administered during the JWII April 2003 annual conference.
2. Main surveys conducted between April 2004 and November 2004.
3. Analysis of documents such as annual conference agendas.

In order to supplement quantitative data, my analysis builds on additional data collected through follow-up interviews with those informants who voluntarily indicated their willingness to participate in follow-up interviews on the survey research instruments. A total of 33 of the informants who returned the surveys (32.4%) voluntarily indicated but only a few of them participated because I had collected substantial data and needed follow-up on a few clarifications about the history. Later just a few participated in the follow-up telephone interviews. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality of informants, the demographic data section appears at the end of my survey instrument on a separate sheet of paper.

4.2.DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

A number of previous research studies that explored women and school leadership or women's status in educational administration, used demographic variables to measure and map out women's journeys into educational administration (Spencer & Kochan, 2000) and to "understand where people are coming from when they give their opinions..." (Brunner, Grogan, & Prince,

2003, p. 31). Over time, and as discussed in literature, demographic data have helped substantiate the following enduring professional issues: women take longer to land their first leadership appointment, they are not well represented administratively especially beyond the elementary school leadership, they continue to earn less than their male counterparts holding the same administrative positions and women in administration have not yet reached critical mass. So, although there are numerous opportunities for women at lower levels, their chances apparently diminish at the upper level positions.

To determine the descriptive characteristics of the JWII attendees, I collected the following key demographic variables: race, sex, age, and the number of years they have been attendees of the institute. Furthermore, I used previous and current career positions, and ultimate career aspirations as important dimensions of my demographic analysis. Looking at the attendees' positions helps to reveal their perceptions about what is of concern to them as participants. It is neither the intention of this case study to explore their career paths nor how informants developed their career patterns since my research questions do not cover these specific areas. Establishing career patterns and pathways of the forum's attendees might be an interesting focus for future research about the Institute and its role in developing school leadership competencies among aspiring and practicing administrators. My study's focus is limited to issues that directly address my research questions as explored and analyzed using dimensions of communities of practice.

Collecting and determining attendees' ultimate career aspirations was important because it helped me isolate specific aspects of their professions that are of importance to them as a group of practitioners and educators. I also asked my informants to indicate the number of years they have been participants of the JWII in order to reveal the characteristic nature of this cohort and

whether the institute is experiencing any significant changes in terms of trends in participation. I also wanted to find out whether attendees have consistently attended the forum for the whole period, i.e., for more than the twenty years that the Institute has been in existence. This extra layer of analysis helped clarify the nature of anticipated and actual relationships established within this Institute, as well as gauge the consistency and time line of the attendance.

In addition, looking at the length and consistency of attendance provided insight to assess whether the institute as a professional development forum is still attracting the same cohort of participants or not and why. I wanted to determine their levels of involvement in this professional development forum because these are directly tied to communities of practice literature about mutual engagement, joint enterprise, shared repertoire, and the establishment of viable personal, collegial, and professional relationships. The outcome and observations of this investigation is important as it reveals implications on how the Institute is perceived in the region, its reputation over the years, its responsiveness to contemporary issues about women's school leadership, and professional development. Findings in this chapter will be presented under the following: race of the informants, gender, ages of the attendees, geographic locations of the participants, how informants first learned about the JWII including publicity methods perceived as most significant, current and ultimate career positions, and total number of years as participants of the forum.

4.2.1. Race of the Informants

Numerically, information on women and school leadership have shown that whites constitute the majority of those holding administrative positions while African Americans and people of other races continue to be underrepresented at administrative levels (Brunner, Grogan, & Prince, 2003;

Irby & Brown, 1998). Even at the teacher level in a Research Report to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education titled “Teacher Preparation and Selection in Pennsylvania: Ensuring High Performance Classroom Teachers for the 21st Century,” Strauss, assisted by Bowes, Marks, and Plesko, (1998) in reference to the ethnicity of Pennsylvania classroom teachers, posit that the majority of them were predominately white. Making reference to statistics, Strauss, assisted by Bowes, Marks, and Plesko, (1998) noted that in the 1980’s black classroom teachers constituted about 6.5% of the statewide total which decreased to about 5.5 % in the 1990’s. The majority of such teachers were located in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh-areas that were under the federal commission order to increase the representation of black classroom teachers (Strauss, assisted by Bowes, Marks, and Plesko, 1998). So what is happening within the Institute is not necessarily an isolated occurrence but is in fact a reflection of regional and national trends of under-representation of minorities in teaching and administrative positions. In line with the need to diversify and increase representation of other races, and because this Institute has been in existence for more than twenty years now, I explored the extent of racial representation among its participants.

Figure 4.1 shows that 91.3% of the informants who attended the JWII were white while only 7.6% are African American. Other races are represented by an even smaller percentage of 1.1%. Numerically, minority representation within the JWII is even smaller than the national and regional figures if I compare them to those given by Strauss, assisted by Bowes, Marks, and Plesko, (1998).

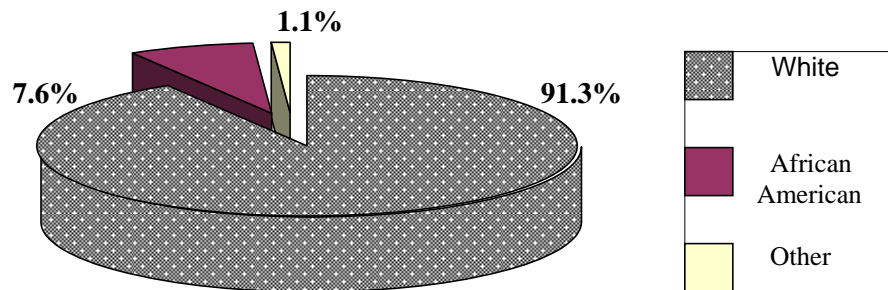


Figure 4-1. Race of Participants

Based on this data, the majority of those who are involved with the JWII are clearly white females. The racial demographics shown in this study are no different from data discussed that showed the marginal gains made and using racial representation, noted that the overall public teaching force was essentially no more diverse in 1999-2000 than it was in 1987-88. It also highlighted how policies in some ways, can exacerbate instead of mitigating racial inequality existing in a society. All this redirects dialogue on social justice issues because current discourses about policy patterns seem to emphasize high-stake accountability for children, teachers, and administrators yet is silent or marginalizes social justice concerns with the consequences of giving lip-service to equity concerns (Marshall, 2004).

So the Institute's lack of diversity is best understood in the context of the broader social system operating within the larger society. The Institute is yet to diversify and integrate racial groups. However, the under-representation within the JWII's forum seems to mirror the ongoing and prevalent racial imbalance that exists in educational leadership and other professional fields. My findings pertaining to the lack of racial diversity within the JWII as a professional development forum seem to support and further confirm trends established in some of the documented literature about women and school leadership. For example, earlier studies

conducted about women and school administration have also shown that whites make up a large number of those who are in school leadership positions while African Americans and other races continue to be marginally represented in such positions (Marshall, 2004).

Outcomes of my case study also reaffirm earlier findings in Kelley's (1992) study about the LINC program that also established the limited racial representation of its attendees. Out of the 48 female participants, only two were African American and one Native American. The same was true on a study conducted by Gallisath (1995) about women in leadership positions in community colleges in Iowa where a significant number of women and minority students are enrolled. On the contrary, the administrative positions fail to represent and mirror the diversity of the student body because out of the 15 community colleges districts, none of the colleges had minority leadership. In summary, my study's findings seem to be consistent with results established in earlier studies and reinforce concerns pertaining to the imbalance of racial representation among participants who attend some of the professional development programs that are mounted to promote and support women's upward mobility into administrative positions (Gallisath, 1995; Kelly, 1992). In analyzing possible strategies to redress some of these racial imbalances, some authorities underscore the need to restructure authoritative opportunity structures that privilege and accords power to some while denying it to others (Hill, 2005). This study's demographic results on race seem to be consistent and reinforce the magnitude of this problem of under-representation.

Observations continue to be raised that "the racial and ethnic stratification in the education system in American schools is even more striking than the gender stratification" (Wesson 1998). Thus Wesson (1998) elaborates and alludes to the supposed resistance to gender and minority integration in leadership positions despite the presence of a pool of highly qualified

and suitable women of all races. In terms of racial representation of those in attendance, leadership development programs of this nature have generally shown that local, regional, and national trends are negatively skewed and in most instances, fail to reflect and embrace the changing and evolving racial dynamics of our contemporary society.

Representation of African American and Hispanic principals in middle schools is the highest at 9.3% and 2.1% respectively (Wesson, 1998). Unfortunately, this high administrative representation is not replicated at the highest levels of K-12 administration and policy making positions, namely the high school principals, superintendents, and the school boards where minorities are more likely to be missing (Wesson, 1998). The JWII's limited racial diversity among its attendees is not necessarily unique but consistent with the historical, policy connotations and marginal representation observed by Wesson. Since 1985 in the USA, 78% of newly hired teachers were women, of whom 92% were white, 5% were African American, 2% were Hispanic, and 1 % Asian. Therefore, lack of diversity in the JWII might not necessarily be an isolated case but seems to be consistent with Wesson's observation that the proportion of minority teachers seems to be declining, yet there is an increase in the number of women in the teaching profession.

An article by Brunner, Grogan, and Prince, (2003) titled "Leadership on the Line-For Women," provided evidence that reinforces the prevailing racial and ethnic imbalances. For example, regarding racial composition of their sample for this national study done for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), Brunner and others (2003) established that whites were in the majority and represented 92% of their respondents while their black counterparts were a mere 5.2%, which although very small, has actually been "the largest

percentage” they have ever had when compared to their other research findings on racial representation.

Having a pool to draw from is very important and while I might advocate for diversity among the attendees of the institute, current comments about the USA’s unimpressive and stagnate graduation rates, as discussed in an article titled ‘Focus Now on Getting Kids Finish Degree” Pope, (2005) noted that although 54% of students entering four-year colleges in 1997 had a degree six years later-unfortunately fewer Hispanics (44%) and Blacks (39%) did. The whole point of raising this discussion is merely to show that much as the Institute might want to reflect the changing racial compositions in the schools, unfortunately if minority students who graduate are so few, then the pool to recruit from is fairly limited. A probable course of action for the School of Education might be to intervene and make efforts to generate interest among those who are enrolled in student teachers preparation programs within the school itself or collaborate with neighboring educational institutions.

This is no surprise. What is mirrored in my findings coupled by what is reported in literature does in fact point to national race structures and the problems of racial inclusions in the United States today, as there is still a very large dominant group of white individuals in schools and it’s something that needs to change (Grogan, 2003). In reference to an article titled “Moral Imperative for a Diverse Teaching Staff,” arguments for diversifying the public teaching force have to do with the moral need to continue dialogue on race, ethnicity and gender in America, and this entails a departure from talking about what is of value in a democratic society and the need to be more proactive in our actions to resolve this (Shen, Wegenke, and Cooley, 2003).

In summary, the JWII as a professional development forum is no exception to this racial inequity because school systems nationally are responding slowly to the need for diversity in

leadership and are still yet to mirror the changing demographics of the student body (Merle in a SSTA Research Center Report # 00-08). Currently 34% of the nation's 52 million public school students are African American and Hispanic yet African American hold less than 5% of superintendent jobs out of an estimated 15,000 districts across the country while Hispanics make up less than 2% of superintendents across the nation with yet entire districts that do not have superintendents of color (National School Boards Association as cited in Marshall, 2004). Although population projections indicate that by 2020, students of color will make up approximately 46% of the school age population (Miller as cited in Marshall, 2004, p.7), unfortunately school leadership has been slow to reflect students' racial compositions as shown by the under-representation of minorities in administrative positions (Merle, 2000) and the hard lessons for minorities seeking top school jobs regionally and nationally (Hill, 2005; Marshall, 2004). In addition research has indicated that minorities, especially Asian Americans, are less likely than whites to enter teaching (Gordon as cited in Shen, Wegenke, and Cooley, 2003).

4.2.2. Gender

I included the gender variable as a means to determine who the prominent attendees are. This variable helped me to determine whether there have been any perceived gender shifts with regards to the nature of attendees who are attracted to the Institute vis-a-vis the history behind the inception of the institute. Out of the 102 completed survey questionnaires, 83 (81.4%) which is more than three quarters of those who responded, were females. Although the forum serves both male and female administrators in Western Pennsylvania as indicated by those involved with the Institute, the majority of those who indicated their sex (81.4%) on the survey instruments were females. This may indicate that to some extent, the Institute is still perceived as

being a female only audience and female focused leadership development forum. More discussion on the gendered perception of the JWII will be done in Chapter 5 where I will explore my research question one stated: **How do women educational administrators involved in the JWII define its place and significance in their overall career development?**

For the purposes of this demographic data, only 19 informants (18.6%) which is a very small number, did not indicate their gender. Based on the outcomes of this survey information, the majority of the JWII attendees are females. The few men who attend this forum include the organizers, the widower of Dr. Jean Winsand, guests of honorees, keynote and guest speakers. I will explore specific gender related issues when I address my research questions in the appropriate sections of my subsequent chapters 5, 6, and 7 of this study.

4.2.3. Age-ranges of Attendees

Within the demographic data of my case study, I explored the age ranges of the participants. This is because there are serious implications for its continuity, sustainability, and its regeneration efforts, including the extent to which the Institute enables attendees to engage in intergenerational exchanges. Looking at the age ranges of participants will help establish any institutional efforts being made to encourage the younger generation to aspire and move into administrative positions. This is important because disseminating information from the current generation of aspiring and practicing school administrators to the upcoming generation of school administrators can be logically done if new and seasoned participants have opportunities to capture, articulate, and learn from each other. This is embedded in the characteristics of communities of practice literature and the role of core and peripheral members, who over time, become more vested with the organizational activities and as they develop legitimacy, gradually

and increasingly assume central roles in their participation in the forum. Thus generational differences as discussed by Wenger (1998) add edge to the politics of generational representation by ensuring that successive generations' distinct perceptions have a bearing on the history of the practice. It is through the dynamics of continuity and discontinuity that propels the practice forward (Wenger, 1998). There is need to invest in continuity as noted by Wenger (1998) because this connects new and younger generation of practitioners to the history of its community and thus enabling a CoP to reproduce itself. Reflecting on this discourse, it is apparent that in a community, both seasoned and new members need each other as they interact in the forum and this realization prompted me to explore the attendance patterns of past and current participants of the JWII's forum. It is the shared history of learning that characterizes CoP.

Since it was important to establish the age ranges of attendees who were more attracted to the JWII's forum, I asked my informants to indicate the age ranges they fall into on their survey questionnaires. Figure 4.2 shows the results of my informants' responses about their age. Data in Figure 4.2 show that few attendees of the JWII (5.7%) are within the 25-30 years age range while 7.9% fall in the 31-35 years age range. Cumulatively, only 24.8% are 25-40 years old. This small representation of the younger generation might have negative effects in terms of the life span of the institute because regeneration might not be feasible if the young professionals in the field of education continue to be under-represented and do not participate in this forum. Cumulatively, a high percentage constituting 68.5 % is in the 46-61 years and beyond category. Several interpretations can be derived from these statistics and might also provide the bigger picture and long term effects on the JWII.

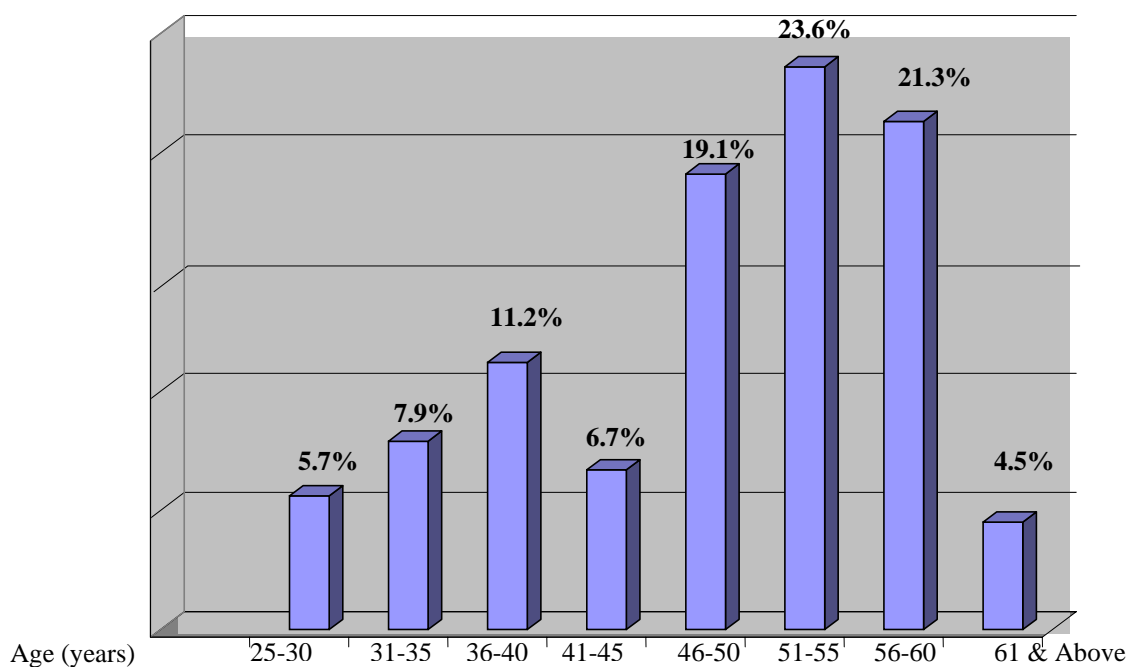


Figure 4-2. Age-Ranges of Participants

First, what these data show is the gross under-representation of the younger generation when compared to the 46 years plus category. This marginal participation of the younger generation might potentially create some serious sustainability problems down the road if left unabated. Illuminating from the gender data, the majority of the forum's attendees are women. As validated by Singh and Vinnicombe (2003), women-only training plays a crucial role in the development of females for the next generation of leaders. The JWII's failure to attract younger members who would numerically replace those retiring might even threaten the continuity of the Institute and might adversely affect the regional and national efforts to increase female representation in educational leadership beyond the elementary levels. There is need for equity efforts geared to support and encourage young professionals in education to aspire to and take up administrative positions.

I also believe that once this current cohort of attendees that falls within the 46-60 plus years age-range leave and retire, the institute's sustainability might generate a lot of uncertainties about the continued presence of the JWII as a professional development forum. However, what is presented here is consistent with assertions made by Strauss, et al (1998) on the aging of the Pennsylvania teaching force where as many as 60 % of the classroom teacher force state-wide may retire soon. We might be talking about the younger generation whereas in reality the current teaching force has few more years in the classrooms.

In addition, the Rand study referred to the superintendent and principals as an aging group not because they have been in these positions for longer periods but that they assume such positions when they are already in their 50's, and will spend fewer years in principalship than before, resulting in shorter career spans. A community of practice is about passing on the history and sharing knowledge that is of value, and if the JWII fails to make use of accumulated experiences of this current cohort, some of this legacy might be lost. Therefore, there is need for the Institute to embark on an aggressive recruitment drive through graduate/professional schools, and student teaching programs.

These findings are not unique to this study. Elsewhere, documented evidence shows that the younger generation is generally under-represented in some informal programs of this nature (Alpizar & Wilson, 2005). Contrary to this general trend, Warren's (1990) study confirmed and noted the increase of younger women in Massachusetts entering administrative positions, earning more doctorates, and hoping to advance from their positions within four years, although it confirmed the under-representation of women in educational leadership positions. Over time owing to the JWII's weakness in membership, the forum might miss out on current developments that are in favor of increasing women's representation. As pointed out by Logan

(1998), changes taking place in today's schools are opening up a window of opportunity for more women to move into educational administration. Thus the forum leaders should be concerned with their limited opportunities to recruit and mobilize young professional women.

As the current cohort that has been well organized and connected to the Institute might be retiring, most of the oral and undocumented information about the JWII will be lost together with its identity such as its history and legacy. Therefore, there is need for the Institute to take advantage of the presence of the current cohort by documenting its history, mission and relevant information that can be passed on from one cohort to the next. In addition, the Institute might want to strategize ways to reach out to young professionals and create a pool of women who are ready to assume leadership responsibilities by sustaining the national efforts already in place to support and advance women into administrative positions.

Possible explanation to this under-representation might be understood in the context of the current structure that seems to exclude assistant principals and teachers from participating because of the times and days that the forum is held, the costs involved, and the limited dissemination of forum information. Such limited participation among this category of professionals might be a result of what was suggested by some of the informants as reflected by these excerpts that: "Assistant principals, do not always have access to the JWII seminars. The districts pay for principals. Assistant principals would love to come even if they had to take a personal day or a professional day and pay out of their own pockets. Information is not always disseminated."

In some sense, although this category of attendees might want to attend, unfortunately current policy issues in the school system hinder teachers and assistant principals from participating. As long as these forums continue to be held during week days without making

provisions for alternative days like holding some of them on non-working days, and as long as information about these forums is not widely disseminated, the chances of increasing attendance might be minimal. Since teaching is the main gateway to school administration, an understanding of the factors that encourage teachers to move into administrative positions is crucial (Rand, 2003). Therefore, the Institute needs to look at ways to accommodate this category, to put in place effective ways of disseminating information, and possibly to have alternative sessions.

To reinforce the kind of reasons why non administrative participants might not attend, another informant had this to say: “You cannot get aspiring female administrators to attend because they are not able to miss work. It appears that only administrators can get the time to attend.” All this underscores the need to revisit the program structure, so that younger professionals may attend.

4.2.4. Geographic Location of the Participants

If the JWII is meant to service Western Pennsylvania, from how large of an area are the attendees drawn? This became my focus as I explored the geographic locations of the participants. Based on the information collected and because the Institute falls within the Tri-State Area School Study Council, this then becomes the catchment area or location from where new recruits are drawn. In this section, I want to establish where most of the JWII attendees are drawn from and at the same time examine the geographic representation of the participants as determined by the location of their current positions. I used counties in Western Pennsylvania as my unit of analysis to establish the level of geographic representation of the informants who

participate in the forum since it has been in existence. In the analysis of this data I encountered some missing data and therefore findings presented here excluded this data.

1. Out of the 102 respondents, about 33 informants did not specify the location of their current positions. Therefore I could not use all the 102 in mapping out their locations within Western Pennsylvania but had to plot and use 73 locations provided.
2. Others provided insufficient details. Examples include:
 - Use of abbreviated terms to identify their institutions instead of writing the names of the locations in full.
 - Identification of schools by level e.g. middle, elementary, without giving the exact name of the schools or school districts.

Therefore, I excluded such data in analyzing and determining the geographic locations and dispersion of the JWII attendees within the Western Pennsylvania region. Based on those who provided complete information, figure 4.3 shows where past and current participants of the JWII are generally drawn from. Using a Google search for a map of Western Pennsylvania, I imported this map and based on attendees' responses, I then indicated the numerical representation of the JWII's attendees' geographic locations of their current positions in these counties.

Figure 4-3 shows the geographic dispersion of the JWII's informants based on the locations of their current positions. Although the forum is supposed to benefit administrators and other educational personnel in Western Pennsylvania, a good number of the forum attendees are chiefly drawn from the Allegheny County (43) with a handful drawn from Beaver County (10), Washington (5), Butler (4), Fayette (3), Indiana (3), Mercer (2), Clearfield, Venango, and York (with 1 each). The rest have very negligible numbers with some counties where the presence of the JWII is not even there.



Figure 4-3. Geographic Representation of the JWII's Attendees

Limited participation based on representation in counties is a clear signal and indication that the Institute is not reaching out to the clientele that it is supposed to serve. The Institute is servicing about 10 counties, less than even half of the total number of counties that constitute Western Pennsylvania. If the attendance of the JWII has reached a plateau, as echoed during interviews, and if the Principals Academy which also falls within the many School leadership programs offered through the Administrative and Policy Studies has participants from more than eighty counties (Tri-State Area School Study Council Display Bulletin Board), then it might help if the JWII liaises with this program to map out an aggressive membership and publicity drive so as to keep the institute active, more participatory, and relevant to its clientele. Having slightly over 50% survey response rate for this study, shows that the current cohort of attendees value

and have passion for the JWII and would like to see it grow and change in response to the current educational challenges. I will explore more of their perceptions about the future of this Institute in chapter 7 of this study.

My second phase in analyzing this geographic location as a variable also helped me to roughly determine the concentration, or cluster areas, where the JWII attendees are drawn from. The ultimate outcome of this process helped me to determine the adequacy of leadership services, support, and outreach including the level of visibility of the Institute as a leadership development forum within the geographic boundaries of Western Pennsylvania. Looking at the geographic details is indeed important for me as I establish the extent to which the Institute has been accessible to the intended beneficiaries.

The Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy is one of the many administrative programs offered within the School Leadership under which the JWII falls and currently includes participating educational administrators from about 83 school districts, 11 Intermediate Units in 11 counties (Tri-State Area School Study Council Bulletin Board). Qualitative data presented here allude to the attendees' beliefs about the positive impact if the JWII collaborates and works closely with the Principal's Academy. Some had this to say as intimated in this excerpt: "make a connection with the Western PA Principal's Academy- Dr. [name supplied] & Dr. [name supplied]." It would make sense for the Institute to work closely with these groups and be able to recruit more participants. Furthermore, collaboration and partnership are some of the aspects that current attendees believe can help in getting more participants. For example, some of the informants' excerpts suggested the need to: "make connections to existing organizations like the Women's Caucus-Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA)-to draw more women." Therefore potential participants can be reached and recruited if the JWII works closely

with different forums in its attempts to increase membership and reach out more. **How then did the informants first learn about the JWII?** Based on the informants' responses, the next section focuses on how the attendees first learned about the Institute and also suggested significant ways to disseminate information about the Institute.

Table 4-1 shows that the majority of the attendees first learned about the institute through the Tri-State Study School Council (51.0%) and also perceived the Tri-State Study School Council as a significant mode of publicity (36.3%). 37.3% first learned about the JWII through invitations from the Jean Winsand International Institute as well as from peers where they work. Although Principals and assistant principals work directly with teachers in the schools, unfortunately they were ranked at the bottom of both columns at 2.9 % and 3.9 % respectively as not active in recruiting and communicating JWII information.

Table 4-1. Summary of How Informants First Learned About the JWII

Mode of recruiting and disseminating information about the JWII	Way informants first learned about the JWII		Publicity methods perceived by informants as most significant
	%	Ranking	% Ranking
Invitation from Tri-State Study School Council	51.0	(1)	36.3 (1)
Friends and colleagues at other school/districts	37.3	(2)	24.3 (4)
Invitation from the Jean Winsand International Institute	36.3	(3)	22.5 (5)
My peers where I work	36.3	(3)	31.4 (2)
Invited by assistant superintendent/superintendent	33.3	(4)	29.4 (3)
Tri-State Newsletter	29.4	(5)	22.5 (5)
From my former professor and/or advisor	17.6	(6)	17.6 (6)
From my mentor	9.8	(7)	9.8 (7)
Tri-State website	4.9	(8)	2.9 (8)
Invited by assistant principal/principal	2.9	(9)	3.9 (9)

One way to increase principals' participation might involve collaborating with the Principal's Academy –based on the geographic locations of participating counties as posted and displayed on the Tri-State Information Bulletin Boards- is well represented and visible in the different counties. However, the same principals who are not disseminating information and are inactive in the JWII's forum, are the very same administrators who are fairly active in the Principal's Academy. The dividing line might be made less apparent if invitations about the JWII are also sent to the Principals Academy, a concern raised by one of the informant's excerpt: "Why isn't it a priority for all principals and superintendents to attend to promote quality leadership?"

In socialization literature about school leadership, principals and administrators play key roles in the socialization of new and aspiring school administrators. Such administrators are referred to as gatekeepers because of the way they provide socialization opportunities. However, in this study, principals are rated the lowest in both categories as key informants and as potential and significant disseminators of information. Friends and colleagues at other schools and districts were instrumental in disseminating information. These connections and establishment of personal and professional relationships are perceived as important for disseminating information. I will explore the issues of relationships building in Chapter 5.

In addition, the Tri-State website was ranked second from the last in both categories (4.9% and 2.9% respectively), an indication of its limited effectiveness as a communication and publicity forum. This is contrary to the integral role and effectiveness of technology and internet for education, connection, and information management and dissemination. Although the Jean Winsand International Institute tied at third position (36.3%) with role of peers (36.3%) on how informants first learned about the Institute, the majority of the attendees ranked the role of peers

(31.4%) as the second most significant publicity method while the JWII was fifth with 22.5% responses-a reflection that it is an insignificant publicity tool. Assistant superintendents and superintendents (33.3%) invited participants to the forum and are equally significant for disseminating information as represented by 29.4%.

A possible explanation on the reasons why the superintendents are more involved with the forum than the principals might be best explained in terms of attendance, levels of prior connections with the Institute, and personal invitations from Dr. Winsand. Later in the subsequent chapters and consistent with dimensions of communities of practice, these social interactions and connections are significant in disseminating information. Peers are integral to the social learning that takes place in professional development environment. Thus I will explore further and in greater depth, the role and relevance of peers in chapter 6 where my focus is on how the JWII is fostering a community of practice among educational leaders.

4.2.5. Previous, Current, and Ultimate Career Positions of Informants

Within the demographic section of my research instrument, I asked informants to indicate their previous, current, and ultimate career positions. Collecting this kind of data provided detailed information about the nature of attendees attracted to the Institute. One of the purposes of the forum is to support practicing women administrators and also encourage women to aspire and take up leadership positions. The forum serves more as a support network for women in leadership. Therefore looking at their previous and current career positions, and what they perceive to be their ultimate positions might reveal the role of the Institute.

For this section, although I had planned to map out career patterns by plotting attendees' previous positions, current positions, their next step, and ultimate positions, some incomplete

data and inconsistent use of position labels made the categorization and mapping process complex. Therefore, my discussion in this section will be limited to attendees' previous, current and ultimate career positions. To categorize career related data, I clustered responses according to known positions categories as used in the school system. I created the "other" category which I used for all the miscellaneous and unidentifiable positions. In addition although some informants gave qualifiers for the different positions, others did not. For example, the principal category represents all principals regardless of whether they are identified as-high school, K-12, elementary, junior high, middle school.

Table 4-2 shows that many of the current participants of the JWII are already in some leadership positions and have administrative responsibilities in the fields of specialty. The majority of them are in education and provide leadership in schools and other education related activities that have direct relevance to students' learning. This career related data as shown in Table 4-2 in part is fragmented and does not seem to show a clear pattern of the career trends of these informants.

Table 4-2. Previous, Current, and Ultimate Career Positions of the JWII's Attendees

Positions	Previous	Current	Ultimate
Superintendents	2	9	10
Assistant Superintendents	8	7	3
Principals	7	-	9
Assistant Principals	18	8	-
College/University Teaching	-	-	12
Administrator/Supervisor	3	6	-
Directors/Coordinators of Curriculum & Instructions	3	6	2
Curriculum	3	2	-
Director of Elementary Education	2	-	1
Directors/Coordinators of Special Education	8	2	-
Program Coordinators	-	3	-
Assistant Coordinators	-	1	-

Table 4-2 cont.

Director/Coordinators Student/Pupil Support Services	3	5	-
Consultant	2	1	-
Teachers	17	8	-
Graduate Students	1	1	-
Retirement	-	1	8
Doctoral Studies	-	-	2
Others	10	21	25

Of significance is the number of attendees who would like to end up teaching in colleges and universities. Thus 12 attendees would like to ultimately end their careers in colleges and universities. Cumulatively, 22 attendees would like to become Superintendents (10), Assistant Superintendents (3), and Principals (9). Reflecting on these findings, most of the attendees continue to be interested in education although a handful (8) just wants to retire. Informants' data on previous positions held show that a large number (17) were teachers while (18) were assistant principals. Historically attendees' information about previous positions show the forum had assistant principals and teachers as attendees, a situation that has since changed because of systemic problems. Having looked at these career related issues, I later focused on attendees' length of participation in the JWII's forum.

4.2.6. Period of Participation in the JWII in Years

Duration is important because it brings with it consistency and continuity. Table 4.3 shows the total number of years that attendees have participated in the JWII's forum. Although the Institute has been offering this leadership development forum for more than twenty years now, data presented in Table 4.3 show that attendees have not consistently participated for this whole period.

Table 4-3. Total Number of Years at Attendees of the JWII

Years	Frequencies	Percentages
1	24	27.3
2	21	23.9
3	17	19.3
4	7	8.0
5	5	5.7
6	4	4.5
7	2	2.3
11	1	1.1
20	7	8.0

Programs are generally mounted to benefit attendees and some authorities believe that duration of attendance also contributes quite significantly. Based on what this data show, the Institute seems to serve a layered cohort of attendees. Although the Institute has been in existence for more than 20 years those who have attended the Institute for only 1 year constitute the largest percentage of 27.3% while 23.9% have been forum attendees for only two years. In addition, 19.3% have participated for 3 years while 8.0% have been involved for only 4 years. Cumulatively, the majority of the informants, 78.5% have been attendees for only 4 years yet the forum has existed for more than twenty years. Only a small cumulative percentage of 13.6% have participated for five to eleven years. Interestingly, although this is a one time study, the

Institute has a small core cohorts (8.0%) whose participation has been consistent for the past twenty years.

Questions to raise pertain to why some attendees no longer participate and at the same time a small number of committed participants is still attracted to the forum. This might probably be addressed when I look at my research question three stated: **In what ways could the Institute provide more services to aspiring and practicing women administrators?** Focus of this inquiry will be guided by the informant's perceptions about issues, content, forum structure including ways they would like to see the Institute grow and change in ways that would enhance their experiences especially as the forum evolves into an international forum as envisioned by Dr. Jean Winsand.

4.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

On the basis of demographic data presented in this chapter, I can make some conclusions about the Institute's role in reaching a diverse audience. The Institute as a professional forum is experiencing recruitment problems in terms of racial and generational representation. A majority of attendees are white females and well represented in the 46-61 plus age-range. The demographic picture of the JWII is indicative of the demographic nature of educational personnel in the school system. While some aspiring administrators and teachers might want to attend, unfortunately they cannot leave classes, and districts do not cover their costs. Therefore there are systemic barriers that impede the forum's capabilities to diversify and increase attendance that are beyond their jurisdiction. Other informants' reasons for limited and inconsistent forum attendance are exemplified by these excerpts:

The time of the year is difficult with testing schedules. Another time would be easier to attend.
Limited ability to attend sessions.
I have not been able to attend sufficiently.

Although the JWII has been in existence for more than 20 years now, data pertaining to the number of years the informants have attended the Institute show that on average, there are very few participants who have attended this Institute for the duration of its existence. The majority of attendees have been involved with the Institute for just about 4-5 years. This has serious implications in terms of continuity and sustainability of the forum. However the forum has a small but strong cohort of attendees who have consistently participated for more than 20 years the forum has been in existence.

Results in this chapter also show that the Institute is serving multiple layers of cohorts of attendees, based on age-ranges, career positions held, geographic locations, periods, and consistency of attendance. In line with the characteristics of communities of practice about legitimate peripheral participation where some members are core while those who are new start off at the periphery and gradually move to the center as they become more and more acquainted with group members, the JWII has a cohort of dedicated attendees who seem to be the core of the forum and have consistently and diligently attended for the past twenty years. Further research could be conducted to follow-up on those who are no longer attending as part of on-going efforts to revitalize the Institute.

While the Institute is reaching out to some parts of Western Pennsylvania, other areas are thinly served. Geographically, the Institute is reaching out to some counties with the largest number drawn from Allegheny County. The Institute might also want to revisit its program structure, the way it markets itself, and modes of disseminating information, including the need to collaborate with the other local and regional professional development programs as it strives

to attract more participants. Without aggressive recruitment of young groups of professionals and teachers from which administrators are derived, although those who responded value the Institute, its sustainability beyond the current cohort might be affected if regeneration of the forum is not addressed on a regular basis.

Most professional development initiatives advocate for collaboration and forming partnerships and the JWII might want to explore the feasibility of this as a strategy to attract more participants. Based on the geographic locations, the Institute is confined to a few counties and barely covers half of the counties in Western Pennsylvania yet the Principals Academy is fairly visible in the same region. What is needed right now is an aggressive and strategic recruitment plan and a proactive membership drive to help bring in more people into the fold of educational leadership as women continue to honor and promote Dr. Jean Winsand's legacy and vision in order to "reach a point of critical mass and make the system better" (Evans 2003, p. 35).

Attendees' peers, friends and colleagues as well as superintendents were instrumental in inviting first time attendees and the same channels were considered to be significant modes in disseminating information to current and prospective participants. If principals and key administrators are integral to the socialization process of aspiring and novice school administrators, then the number of women and minorities in the gate keeping positions as discussed by Wesson (1998), may not be enough for the task of sponsoring and socializing women and minorities into educational administration positions in any substantial way. Lack of diversity in numbers and membership are tied to public policy issues that seem to have shifted from equity concerns to learner outcomes.

The JWII is about professional development for educational leadership and Chapter 5 of this case study will explore how the JWII as a leadership development forum is enabling career development. The purpose of chapter 5 is to address my research question one stated: **How do women educational administrators involved in the JWII define its place and significance in their overall career development.** In trying to situate the place and significance of the JWII in the attendees' professional life and their practice in the schools, I will present and discuss data drawn from at least four major sub-sections of my main survey instrument. I will use the outcomes of informants' responses on questions 1, 2, 3 and 7 to address the demands of this question. Using the dimensions of communities of practice as drawn from literature for analysis and illuminating on the attendees' experiences with the JWII, I will discuss how the Institute is enabling these attendees' career development.

5. ENABLING CAREER DEVELOPMENT

“Women’s support organizations should serve as vehicles for the growth of women at initial administrative career stages as well as for women in top level positions.”

Beverly J. Irby, & Genevieve Brown, (1998).

5.1. INTRODUCTION

These observations by Irby and Brown (1998) underscore the need for women to support each other regardless of whether one is a beginner or has moved high up in the hierarchical structure because both categories need support. While several potential pathways to educational leadership exist, many principals and superintendents start their careers as teachers and most administrators are generally drawn from the ranks of teachers (Wesson, 1998) and becoming a school administrator is a major step in the professional life of an educator. Although this career path is somewhat predictable, often times, few fail to realize that becoming a principal involves both professional training and engaging in personal transformation (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Browne-Ferrigno, 2004). Therefore, exposure to role expectations and role identities of this status becomes integral to this transition process and this does not happen naturally but might need intentional professional socialization and orientation. This is where leadership forums such as the JWII play a significant role in effecting smooth career transition.

Although women constitute the majority of those in the field of education, on the contrary, they continue to be disproportionately under-represented in educational leadership

positions, especially those beyond elementary school leadership (Sloan, 1999, Marshall, 2004). This section of the study will explore informants' perceptions about the major goals of the JWII and what motivated them to attend this professional development forum for school leadership the very first time. This is consistent with assertions made by Browne-Ferrigno (2003), that:

Research on multiple cohorts of aspiring and practicing principals engaged in professional development provides perspectives on the benefits ... by clarifying issues related to role socialization, professional development, and leadership capacity building." (p. 468).

Chapter 4 focused on demographic data and explored ways the JWII can reach a diverse audience. Thus, chapter 4 explored the characteristic nature of the cohort of the JWII attendees and used race, gender, location of attendees as determined by their current positions, previous, current and ultimate career positions including the total number of years they have been attendees of the forum as analysis variables.

Over the years too, many suggestions have been given on ways to support women's efforts for their upward career advancement. Thus fundamental efforts to increase women's representation in school leadership especially beyond elementary school levels has been the focus of on-going research on women and school administration and include the rationale and benefits of implementing professional development programs for aspiring, novice and seasoned educational leaders. Therefore the role, place, and significance of professional development to facilitate, advance, and support women's upward mobility into educational leadership has been the spotlight of past and current research studies on women and educational leadership both locally, nationally and internationally. In the area of women and school leadership, support groups for women administrators are and continue to be critical because "without such support groups, women leaders may have limited opportunities to interact with women colleagues and

limited access to women who may effectively serve as mentors, confidants, role models, and sponsors” (Irby & Brown, 2000).

Past and current research studies continue also to advocate for and in fact underscore the professional benefits that women gain by participating and engaging in women’s support groups (Enrich, 1994; Kerl & Moore, 2001; Hackney & Hogard, 1999). The Jean Winsand International Institute which is the focus of my research, is a program attended by both practicing and aspiring men and women administrators and its inception more than twenty years ago, was a response prompted by the under-representation of women in educational administration in Western Pennsylvania. Offered annually as a one day event in the form of a women’s forum, implementation of this professional development program is designed to provide support and help advance women into school leadership positions. As a professional development initiative, its purpose is to better serve women’s administrative and related educational interests and concerns. Therefore, my research conducted as a case study of the JWII, is simply a spin-off from suggestions made by Irby & Brown (1998) that “women’s support organizations should serve as vehicles for the growth of women at initial administrative career stages as well as for women in top level positions.” Thus the main purposes of my discussions in this chapter serve as a follow-up to recommendations made by Irby & Brown (1998) on the need for:

- a). women’s support organizations to become actively involved in promoting activities that would accord women administrators networking opportunities and career advancement;
- b). women’s support organizations to publicize information about membership meetings and networking opportunities because “carefully constructed and implemented mentoring

experiences serve as effective professional development not only for aspiring and novice principals but also for veteran principals” (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004: 471).

c). continued research to be conducted about support groups and activities for women administrators with particular focus on whether or not such groups are meeting the needs of their women members.

My goal is to build on to what is already known by exploring the place and significance of the JWII in women’s professional development for school leadership and reflect on the extent to which the Institute as a women’s support group is basically fulfilling observations summed up about the role of women’s organizations and the extent they are expected to serve as a vehicle for the growth not only for novice women administrators but also for those in top level administrative positions (Irby & Brown, 1998). I am conducting this case study in order to establish the role of the JWII as a women’s support group, and help swell the information about women and professional development for school leadership as I explore the extent to which the Institute is meeting the professional needs of its clientele.

My Chapter 5 is an outcome of what my informants as attendees of the JWII’s one day annual event have to say about it by documenting their perceptions about the place and significance of this institute in their overall professional development for school leadership. Thus I will look at the role and functions of the Jean E. Winsand International Institute (JWII) as a professional development program for women in school leadership as reported by my informants and consistent with recommendations outlined above. My discussions ensued in this chapter are based on my informants’ self reported experiences with the JWII as derived from their responses on questions 1, 2, and 7 of my main survey instrument. I am using my research

question one to organize my data and direct the focus of my inquiry. My research question is stated as follows:

Research Question 1: How do women educational administrators involved in the JWII define its place and significance in their overall career development?

In answering my research question one, I present and critique data drawn from at least four major sub sections of my main survey instrument. I used the outcomes about motivating factors, perceived major goals of the Institute, gains made, and least meaningful features of the JWII, to probe, focus, and analyze my informants' perceptions as they define the place and significance of the JWII.

Motivating factors:

1. Question 1 of my survey instrument asked informants to indicate what motivated them to attend the JWII for the very first time. I had twelve closed-ended questionnaire items and using a four point Likert-type rating scale, I asked my informants to rank each one of them according to the extent to which they were important in influencing their decisions to participate in the forum. In addition, question one also had one open-ended option and this generated qualitative data to augment the ranked quantitative data.

Perceived major goals of the JWII:

2. Question 2 asked the informants to indicate what they perceived to be the major goals of the JWII. This question had nineteen structured questionnaire items and using a three point Likert-type scale, I asked the informants to rank each one of them according to the extent they considered them as major goals of the Institute. This section also had one open-ended option for qualitative data collection.

Least Meaningful Features of the JWII:

3. Question 7 as an open ended questionnaire item, asked the respondents to identify those features of the JWII which were least meaningful and had to provide reasons to support their opinions.

So, I used responses to questionnaires items 1, 2, and 7 to organize my data presentation and discuss my results. In this chapter, data presentation and discussion of findings are as follows:

First, by making use of both the quantitative and qualitative data, I focused on the most significant factors about what motivated my informants to attend the JWII for the very first time. For the quantitative data, using a four point Likert-type rating scale, I determined the significance of each response item based on whether the average or mean score was 2.5 and above since the “agree” option is 3 and the “disagree” is 2. I used the in between as my cut off point to determine what I considered significant outcomes for this study. Where I used numbers and percentages, any frequencies which were more than half the total responses were deemed to be significant.

Secondly, looking at what they perceived to be the major goals of the JWII helped me to establish the kind of insights and prior knowledge that attendees of the JWII are bringing into their professional development. Adopting this approach might help me determine the extent to which the attendees have what Wenger (1998) refers to as a common understanding of what the JWII is all about as a forum for a community of learners or practitioners in school leadership including their overall understanding of the Institute’s roles and functions and its relevance to issues of women and educational administration. This is important for my study because

focusing on programs meant to induct, expose or effect role transition, as argued by Normore (2004) helps to shape and expand professional orientation, knowledge and skills expected of administrators to lead schools.

Establishing the place and significance of the Institute as determined by my attendees' perceptions of the Institute is very important to me because of the comments made by Fontaine & Millen (2004) that: "when people choose to participate in a community, they typically do so because they feel they may have something to gain, learn, or benefit from... and most people go to look for some piece of explicit or tacit knowledge... an idea or solution." Implied in this quotation is the notion that people attend programs because they have preconceived ideas and expectations about the likely and potential gains in terms of prospective and positive outcomes that might affect them as individuals, or community members, or as part of the larger organizations. Consistent with this, my focus in this chapter is to show how the attendees value what goes on in the Institute by looking at motivating factors, major goals, gains made, and least meaningful features as a framework for analysis.

Furthermore, Fontaine and Millen (2004) allude to the collective gains and community benefits that are realized if attendees have opportunities to connect, interact, and collaborate with others because social engagements of this nature facilitate interactions that potentially increase individual members' awareness and access to their colleagues and other community members' collective expertise and experiences. All this ties up well with the importance of transfer of training. Usability and transferability of acquired knowledge is fairly fundamental in alleviating and solving real life and job related problems. Therefore, the ability to utilize and apply recently acquired knowledge to real life job related scenarios are integral determinants of how worthwhile experiences offered through a given program are. Normore (2004) best sums up these issues

about program values and says development and implementation of administrators' training programs as a form of professional development for school leadership in essence should help administrators fit into the social system of schools both professionally and organizationally.

By exploring the motivating factors that prompted them to be first time attendees, perceived major goals, gains made, and least meaningful features of the Institute, this chapter will attempt to show the interplay among these variables, the sum total of which is presented at the end of my chapter five as a summarized conceptual framework. Additionally, I use direct quotes in the form of excerpts where relevant to help elaborate emerging trends and further augment discussion of my findings. My strategy to present my findings in this manner is meant to facilitate the effective exploration and analysis of my collected data at two levels.

First, by identifying those factors influencing their decisions on whether to attend or not, I was able to make fundamental rationales that these attendees are coming in with expectations and this might help me to examine the nature of anticipated learning expectations and outcomes that they are bringing into this informal and experiential learning process including ways they expect to benefit. Thus they are coming into the program with some professional needs and expectations of what they want to gain which they assume the Institute can potentially address and deliver. I felt whatever information I collected can only be meaningfully contextualized and understood from the attendees' perceptions of their involvement with the JWII hence the use of the total population of current and past members of the Institute as my respondents.

Secondly, by asking attendees to indicate what they perceive to be the major goals of the Institute, I presumed that they are coming in with some working knowledge, insights and awareness about the institutional roles and deliverables that the Institute ought to fulfill as well as an understanding of the different ways the Institute might support their overall professional

growth and career development. In addition, by targeting some questionnaire items to examine my informants' perceptions about specific and major gains made as participants of the Institute, I hope to explore the varied nature of their benefits as individuals, community and organizational levels as self determined and reported by the attendees. I felt it necessary to explore these aspects because these have important implications for the Institute since clarity of expectations, as argued by Normore (2004), has benefits and going by past experiences, has been known to have helped facilitate teachers' transition into school leadership which if successfully done, constitutes one of the major components of leadership development process.

In summarizing my informants' perceptions about the place and significance of the JWII in their overall career development, I will present a conceptual framework depicting the relational interactions between motivating factors; the perceived major goals of the Institute including ways these translate into actual and significant professional gains over time. After all it is the recipient that determines what the reward is (Conley & Underwood, 2003) hence the necessity to determine my informants' professional and career gains over time.

Institutes are not static; they tend to evolve over time. Consistent with participatory model of program development, and in delineating program activities, it becomes necessary to embrace and accommodate the participants' input. Therefore for this study, it is important to hear and learn from my informants, especially at this crucial time when the forum is gradually evolving into an international institute for the professional development of women in school leadership.

It is through involvement and opportunities to connect, interact, and collaborate with each other that attendees collectively gain community benefits (Fontaine & Millen, 2004). Thus the ability and opportunities to engage seem to be a catalyst in this experiential learning process.

Also the ability to interact has an added advantage of increasing individuals' awareness and access to the community members' collective expertise and experiences.

5.2. MOTIVATING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED ATTENDEES' DECISIONS

Question one of my survey instruments asked the informants to indicate what motivated and influenced their decision to attend the JWII very first time. This section of my instrument was made up of 12 structured questionnaire items and 3 open-ended ones. In this section of my chapter, I will report on the responses drawn from the structured and unstructured questionnaire items. I used a four point Likert-type rating scale and asked the informants to rank their responses according to how important each questionnaire statement was in influencing their decision to attend by indicating whether they were: Very Important (VP) = 4; Important (I) = 3; Less Important (LI) = 2; and Unimportant (U) = 1. Only the questionnaire items rated as most important will be discussed here. I determined the significance of the responses based on whether the item got more than half responses or had an average score of 2.5 and above because "important" option is = 3 while "less important" option is = 2. Thus the mid point between these portion is 2.5 hence my criteria to use 2.5 to determine the significance of responses. At the same time, I will allude to and explore some of the least perceived issues to show any conflicting and competing conceptualizations vis-a-vis impact of such processes and procedures in the literature about women and school leadership.

Data will be presented in an aggregated fashion and basically what it means is that, I will collapse and merge or combine the "very important" and the "important" options to represent and reformulate a category that ideally will depict my informants' positive responses while the

“less important” and “unimportant” options will connote my respondents’ negative and insignificant factors. I considered it important for me to establish the place and significance of the JWII because as noted by Bhavnani (1997), programs are offered to benefit those attending by meeting their particular and specific professional development needs. In this case study, exploring motivating factors is designed to do just that-establishing my informants’ professional needs and as I weight them against what they perceived to be their ultimate gains-all this done so that I can see whether what they came looking for was eventually fulfilled or they got it through participation in the Institute’s professional development training.

Fontaine and Millen (2004) assert that individuals tend to affiliate with programs where they feel they have something to gain and in this section of my case study I want to find out my informants’ projections about the short and long term benefits that might have influenced their ultimate decisions to participate in the JWII professional development for school leadership. Against all these suggestions and through conducting this research study, I want to find out why my informants chose to become participants of the JWII’s one day professional forum initially.

In this section, I will present the responses for the whole section and later just present the most important data. I will present the results with highest percentages first as I discuss the various reasons that prompted these attendees to participate in the forum. Table 5.1 shows the motivating factors that influenced forum attendees’ participation. The data are presented in the order the items are listed on the survey instrument. Key motivating factors were: centered on learning about educational issues, developing networks, competencies and skills, relationship building, and supporting and promoting Dr. Jean Winsand’s legacy.

Table 5-1. Summary of Motivating Factors

	Unimportant %	Less Important %	Important %	Very Important %
1. Learn more about current educational issues.	0	1.0	31.7	67.3
2. Learn more about how women attain administrative positions.	4.9	33.4	23.5	38.2
3. Develop networks with other women educators in the region.	1.0	9.8	31.4	57.8
4. Have opportunities to network with both men and women administrators in the region.	1.0	9.8	40.2	49.0
5. Find appropriate/good mentors.	11.8	39.2	30.4	18.6
6. Build personal relationships.	4.9	22.5	40.2	32.4
7. Acquire special job related skills.	3.9	24.6	38.2	33.3
8. Learn more about career advancement into leadership positions.	6.8	31.4	34.3	27.5
9. Improve my management and communication skills.	4.0	21.7	40.6	33.7
10. Become aware of leadership opportunities.	4.0	25.7	37.6	32.7
11. Get support in developing awareness about my own leadership styles and behaviors.	6.9	20.6	43.1	29.4
12. Support and honor the legacy of Dr. Jean Winsand and her work to promote women.	9.9	22.8	26.7	40.6

Based on these results, some aspects of the forum are strong motivators while others are not as strong in influencing their decisions to be first time attendees. Subsequent sections in this chapter will focus on the significant motivators as perceived by the informants.

5.2.1. Knowledge Related Factors

Reasons for what motivated the informants to attend the JWII for the very first time an analysis of their responses show that attendees were motivated to participate because they regarded it as a forum where they can get current information about educational issues. Figure 5-1 shows that

their decisions to attend were prompted by their desire to get updates on current educational issues.

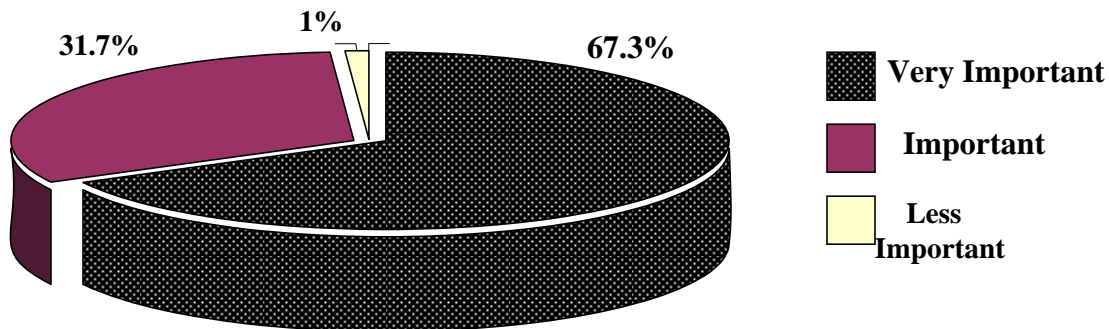


Figure 5-1. Learn About Current Educational Issues

Learning about current educational issues is important because it keeps the educators abreast of educational issues and they remain current. This is important for their practice. Based on the frequencies of the informants' perceived motivating factors that influenced their decisions to attend the JWII the very first time, 67.3% of them considered gaining knowledge about current educational issues as a very important motivating factor in influencing their decisions to attend while 31.7% considered it as important determinant; moreover only a small representation of 1% considered issues of being updated on current educational issues as less important. Cumulatively, the majority of the informants (99%) were motivated to become attendees of the JWII because of their desire to keep abreast of current educational issues and this inspired them to attend the Institute for the very first time. Therefore being updated on current educational issues is what they wanted and this motivated them to become first time attendees of the Institute. I also looked at whether being updated on current educational issues was considered to be a major goal of the Institute.

Deducing from these significant frequencies, the majority of the attendees seem to perceive the JWII as a place where they are being updated on current educational issues. These

positive perceptions seem to intimate the Institute as a relevant forum because of its critical role and appropriateness in disseminating useful information which tallies with educational reforms being implemented in the schools. Documents analysis also validates how knowledge gained is consistent and responsive to the educational reforms. For example some of the issues covered during the hot topics round table discussions include: “Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum: Traits of an Effective Reader; Why Full Day Kindergarten and Early Literacy; Reading Literacy Coaching Tips” all relevant areas that are consistent with the advocacy to promote literacy as mandated by the No Child Left Behind as well as “Standard Based Supervision, Evaluation and Rating” that addresses issues of accountability and high stake testing in the schools **(For more examples, SEE APPENDIX N on JWII Conference Programs).**

Outcomes of the attendees’ responses as a reference point position the Institute as a resource forum for educational updates because of how it helps disseminate crucial information on education and its practice as shown in Table 5-1. With so many changes going on in the schools and as reforms and new mandates are introduced from time to time, the Institute seems to be a relevant resource center as evidenced by the fact that a good number of the informants are coming to this forum expecting to learn more about current educational issues.

In support of the important role of the Institute in updating attendees about current educational issues, qualitative data on educational issues and gleaning from their perceptions of what should be the top priority of the JWII, the following excerpts depict the different attendees’ overall expectations about knowledge and skills by saying that they were motivated to attend because they wanted to:

Gain current information about current issues
Share problem-solving of current situations/from other administrative units

Keep participants informed about current educational issues
I enjoyed the keynote speaker due to the fact that a totally different
perspective to NCLB was offered.

Based on these excerpts, attendees are attracted to the Institute in search of a myriad of education related issues all of which have direct relevance to policy and mandate issues including the practice of school leadership. Analysis of the above excerpts deal with educational content, structure, strategies, and policy issues of educational reforms and accountability in the schools. Therefore, the outcomes of these perceptions show the extent attendees value what is offered through the JWII's forum. One can easily conclude that the Institute serves an important role in disseminating vital information that has direct relevance to schools and the education system. The search for knowledge and the desire to be updated on current educational issues are key factors that prompted their participation in this professional forum.

Additionally, these exemplifying excerpts show that attendees perceive the Institute as a place where they can get updates not only on current educational issues but also regard the Institute as a forum where they can acquire additional information that would contribute to their performances in schools' practice in general and the education systems in particular. Based on informants' expectations and by validating their experiences with the JWII as reflected by their responses, the Institute appears to be held in high esteem because it helps attendees to keep abreast of contemporary and current educational issues that impact them as individuals and their jobs in the schools. Other than developing leadership skills, the overall embracing and educational functions of the JWII as highlighted by one of the informants' excerpt are to: "focus on effective strategies for quality leadership that improves student achievement and tactfully addresses improving teacher quality" a notion supported by their hot topics round table discussions that target student performance, supervision and special education components (**SEE**

APPENDIX N for JWII program details). Through being exposed to best practices and information about the characteristics of good schools, in a sense the Institute positions itself well by performing this very critical role of helping participants become effective practitioners, who will in turn, mold good schools.

Looking at this evidence, attendees seem to have dual benefits at the different levels as individuals-through job related issues, as a community of practitioners in education, as a community of women in educational leadership, and as advocates for good schools. The following excerpt helps to validate my analysis pertaining to the place and significance of the JWII in the attendees' overall career development for school leadership that: "Continue providing up-to-date information about educational issues that impact our schools, jobs."

School leadership is about careers and in my analysis about motivating factors, of importance is what attendees had to say about specific career-related factors and the significance of relationships in professional development forums. Among the key motivating factors that prompted their desire to attend the JWII, networking seems major in influencing their decisions. Therefore in the next section, I look at what they had to say about networking opportunities, how that contributes to their understanding of shared experiences, and why that matters as I continue to be guided by characteristics of communities of practice as my tool for analysis.

5.2.2. Making Sense of Shared Experiences

Individuals make sense of what is expected of them either by trial and error or by learning from those who already have experiences so that they do not have to go through the painful process of experiencing frustrations. Some studies (Hite, Williams, & Baugh, 2005) have shown the benefits and positive effects of networking relationships especially for women in and those

aspiring to administrative positions. Alluding to communities of practice, and social learning theories, individuals learn through sharing experiences. Such kinds of learning experiences are a result of networking and mentoring opportunities. In line with networking literature that underscores the potential benefits of networking opportunities and connections, my case study's results seem to confirm some of the earlier findings about the reasons why individuals participate in professional programs because they want to develop networking relationships with colleagues as exemplified by these excerpts:

To establish networks that promote female administrators and professionals.
Networking opportunities for the experienced administrators and opportunities
for aspiring administrators.

Establishing relationships through networking is at the center of their expectations and this matters to them as they joined the forum in search of professional support from other educational leaders in the region. This is significant because earlier literature points to women's lack of professional support network as one of the many impediments for their career advancement (Kerl & Moore, 2001; Ibarra, 1993; Moody, 2001). Consistent with the positive impact of networking opportunities and based on the outcomes of my informants' responses, I had to explore the nature and type of networking opportunities within the JWII professional development forum and networking expectations that prompted the current and past cohort of attendees to become first time affiliates of the Institute.

5.2.3. Networking Opportunities

Data presented in Table 5-2, and results of prior research findings, have shown the potential benefits and effects of mentoring, networking relationships, and the ways that personal

engagements can serve both career and psychosocial functions (Eastman & Williams, 1993). 57.8% of informants consider the opportunities to develop networks with other women educators as a very important motivating factor while an additional 31.4% perceived networking with their female colleagues as important in compelling them to become first time attendees of the Institute.

Table 5-2. Networking Opportunities

Networking Opportunities	Unimportant %	Less Important %	Important %	Very Important %
3. Develop networks with other women educators in the region.	1.0	9.8	31.4	57.8
4. Have opportunities to network with both men and women administrators in the region.	1.0	9.8	40.2	49.0

Cumulatively, a majority of 89.1% of attendees became first time forum participants in their quest to develop networking relationships with other female educational administrators in the region. This shows the extent to which their desire to connect with other women administrators influenced their decisions to be forum participants.

In addition, 49% of those who responded positively rated the JWI's potential and capacities to create opportunities for them to network with both men and women administrators in the region as a very important determinant while 40% rated this potential as important in influencing their decision to be first time attendees. Cumulatively as represented by 89.2%, the attendees' first time involvement with the JWII professional development forum was promoted by their desire to develop networking opportunities with both men and women administrators in the region. Based on these results, the informants consider the Institute as having the potential to accord them opportunities to develop and establish networking relationships with both men and women in educational administration in the region.

Deducing from these responses, and validating the critical role of the JWII in fostering networking opportunities, the following excerpts further attest to the value pertaining to the place and significance of the JWII in their overall professional development as it accords them opportunities to: “network with colleagues;” as they get “networking support.” They believe and would like to be in a situation where they can “begin networking early so that more women attend the conference,” and acknowledge the positive benefits of networking as self reported that: “it’s great to network with other female administrators.” Issues of networking will be explored in greater depth as I look at the eventual gains made as attendees of the Institute.

School practice is about being able to lead and this requires some level of proficiency in leadership skills. Such skills do not just come about but involve engaging in initial training opportunities that are later complemented by participating in on-going leadership development forums. Analysis of my data show the dire need to develop job related skills as a key and major influencing factor.

5.2.4. Developing Job Related Skills

Other than getting updates and the opportunities to network, informants were prompted to become first time attendees of the Institute because of their desire to develop specific job related knowledge and skills as part of either preparation for, or on-going support for career advancement. So involvement in the forum seems to be tied and somewhat influenced by the attendees’ eagerness to develop and enhance their career growth through acquiring career related skills and individual management skills. Results of my case study seem to be positively skewed and support the significance of job related skills as fairly strong motivators in attracting first time

participants to the JWII professional development forum. This is tied to the importance of practice which again is integral to the debates about learning communities.

As shown in Table 5-3, 33.7% of the informants view the potential to improve their management and communication skills as very important in influencing their decision to become first time attendees of the forum while 40.6% considered it as important. Thus, a total of 74.3% first came to be part of the Institute because they wanted to develop individual management and communication skills. Alluding to some of the key skills that leaders should be proficient in, the ability to have communication and management skills have always been rated as fairly important in the school system. Therefore, attendees seem to be knowledgeable about what makes an effective leader hence their desire to develop such skills through the Institute's forum.

Table 5-3. Acquiring Job Related Skills

Motivating factors	Unimportant %	Less Important %	Important %	Very Important %
Improve my management and communication skills	4.0	21.7	40.6	33.7
Acquire special job related skills	3.9	24.6	38.2	33.3

Not only are individual skills integral to the proficiencies of educational leaders but job related skills also play a pivotal role. Reflecting on the informants' responses, 33.3% of the attendees and 38.2% were attracted to participate because to them, possibilities to acquiring special job related skills were instrumental in their decisions. An aggregated percentage of 71.5% of those who responded became first time participants and these favorable percentages are a reflection about the importance of the JWII as a leadership forum that helps its attendees acquire job related skills for leadership performance. To support and validate the place and significance of

the Institute for their overall professional development through acquiring job related skills, the following excerpt reinforces informants' responses by spelling out their expectations:

Program should be specifically designed around management issues in making difficult decisions in the face of the need to be in a pleasant atmosphere particularly distinguishing between management and leadership roles.

Thus attendees were prompted to be part of this Institute because they seem to have specific individual and professional related needs and deficiencies in some prerequisite skills that are central to their functioning in the schools. It is against this background that the Institute needs to be responsive to attendees' expectations and positively contribute to the welfare of the education system. So leadership development seems to be a key motivating factor.

5.3. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Effectiveness of schools and ultimate students' outcomes continue to be tied up to the levels of leadership climate created and orchestrated by those in authority. With accountability taking more and more of a center stage in education, school leadership continues to evolve and reshape itself in response to these educational expectations. New strategies for school success and its relatedness to educational accountability continue to make leadership a central focus of research in the field of educational administration (Holtkamp, 2002). There is a general consensus that administrative leadership in schools is key and quite integral in creating effective schools and this validates the importance of quality leadership in realizing effective schools. In line with this fundamental role of school leadership in creating effective school environments, my case study explored the informants' responses about leadership issues that were important in motivating them.

5.3.1. Acquiring Knowledge About Leadership Issues

Results of data presented in Table 5-4 show three significant domains of leadership development that were instrumental in motivating the informants to participate in the JWII professional development forum. Closer analysis shows that informants opted to become members because they wanted to learn more about how women attain administrative positions. Cumulatively, 61.7% of this cohort regarded issues about how women attain administrative positions as instrumental in motivating them to become first time participants while a small number of 38.3% considered it as a less important and unimportant motivating factor.

Table 5-4. Acquiring Knowledge About Leadership Issues

Motivating factors	Unimportant	Less Important	Important	Very Important
Become aware of leadership opportunities	4.0%	25.7%	37.6%	32.7%
Learn more about how women attain administrative position	4.9%	33.4%	23.5%	38.2%
Learn more about career advancement into leadership positions	6.8%	31.4%	34.3%	27.5%

This information seems to support and is still grounded in the vision of its founding members about the role of the JWII in equipping and supporting women's professional development for leadership through helping them to gain insights about how to acquire leadership positions in schools. In addition, 70.3% of the respondents decided to be involved with the JWII forum because of their desire to develop awareness about leadership opportunities while an aggregated number of 61.8% of the respondents expected to learn more about career advancement. Thus, leadership issues discussed so far were important motivating factors in influencing these attendees' decisions to be first time affiliates of the JWII.

Since leadership development was a significant variable in how they perceived the role and place of the JWII in their overall career development for school leadership, these outcome trends seem to validate earlier findings about leadership development that continue to justify the value of programs by rationalizing the importance of professional development for leadership development. Those who responded seem to envision the JWII as a forum that accords them a shared space to develop insights, leadership skills and become acquainted with issues of women and school leadership development.

In summary, those who decided to be involved with the JWII perceived it as a forum that has the potential to help them develop an awareness of leadership opportunities, learn more about career advancement into leadership, and learn more about how women in particular attain administrative positions. Deducing from these frequencies, one can make some general inferences and tentatively conclude that these attendees of the JWII other than having a desire to be updated on current educational issues, of significant importance to them too, is their desire to acquire knowledge on career related issues. Informants' dual motivation for attending is a result of their desire to want to learn more about general career opportunities, and their interests in career related knowledge about women and leadership development. It is through the JWII's professional development forum that attendees want to acquire specific insights about career options including specific information pertaining to how women attain leadership positions.

5.3.2. Searching for a Supportive Environment

Data in Table 5-5 show that an aggregated percentage of 67.3% participants of the JWII are motivated to attend as a way to support and honor of the legacy of Dr. Jean E. Winsand and her

work to promote women while on the other hand, less than half of the participants totaling 32.7%, perceived this issues as a less important and unimportant motivating factor.

Table 5-5. Creating a Supportive Environment

Motivating factors	Unimportant	Less Important	Important	Very Important
Get support in developing awareness about my own leadership styles and behaviors	6.9%	20.6%	43.1%	29.4%
Support and honor the legacy of Dr. Jean Winsand and her work to promote women	9.9%	22.8%	26.7%	40.6%

Furthermore, 72.5% of the informants believe that through the JWII they might develop competencies in leadership styles and behaviors, while a small number of attendees (27.5%) considered them less and unimportant motivators. Again, this underscores the attendees' desire for personal growth on issues that resonate well with the development of personal leadership styles and behaviors that are transferable to school practice.

Overall, more than half of the respondents acknowledge the importance of the JWII as a supportive environment for developing awareness about their leadership styles and behaviors and through the Institute's forum, attendees anticipate developing a shared understanding about Dr. Winsand's legacy and her work in promoting women. This fits well within the broader concepts of communities of practice and the importance of developing a shared understanding because these help foster unity, formalize their sense of identity, and membership in the forum.

These findings are not unique for this study because elsewhere Singh and Vinnicombe (2003) validate some of the positive attributes of women-only programs in that they offer women an opportunity to build effectiveness in their positions by according them a clearer conceptualization of their own skills, styles and personal goals as a prerequisite preparation for

building their confidence and enthusiasm as they assume more senior roles-which is congruent with those that motivated and influenced those involved with the JWII to participate.

5.4. LEAST MOTIVATING FACTORS

Although literature alludes to the positive contributions of mentoring for school leadership development, my case study's findings based on the current cohort of the JWII did not seem to validate earlier findings in this area where mentoring takes a center stage in the development of women's leadership. A number of studies on women and school leadership provide a lot of convincing evidence on the positive roles that mentoring plays in advancing women into leadership positions because quite a number are of notion that engaging in mentoring relationships, aspirants to leadership positions get to know the nuts and bolts of this level of leadership responsibilities (Nankivell & Shoolbred, 1997; Burke, Mckeen, & McKenna, 1994). As posited by Eastman and Williams (1993), mentoring functions can be grouped into two broad categories depending on the functions they serve i.e., they can serve career and psychosocial functions. Basically mentoring functions for career development is about establishing professional relationships that might enhance the learning process. Mentoring is about exposing individuals to the ropes of the profession and making them knowledgeable about what is expected of a given career and the responsibilities involved in preparation for advancement. Foci and purposes of mentoring entail helping individuals develop insights into what the potential job is all about (Sherman, 2005).

Figure 5-2 shows that forum attendees considered mentoring as a less important motivator. This seems to be contrary to findings that mentoring is closely associated and enhances professional development for school leaders (Ehrich, 1995; Daresh, & Playko, 1992).

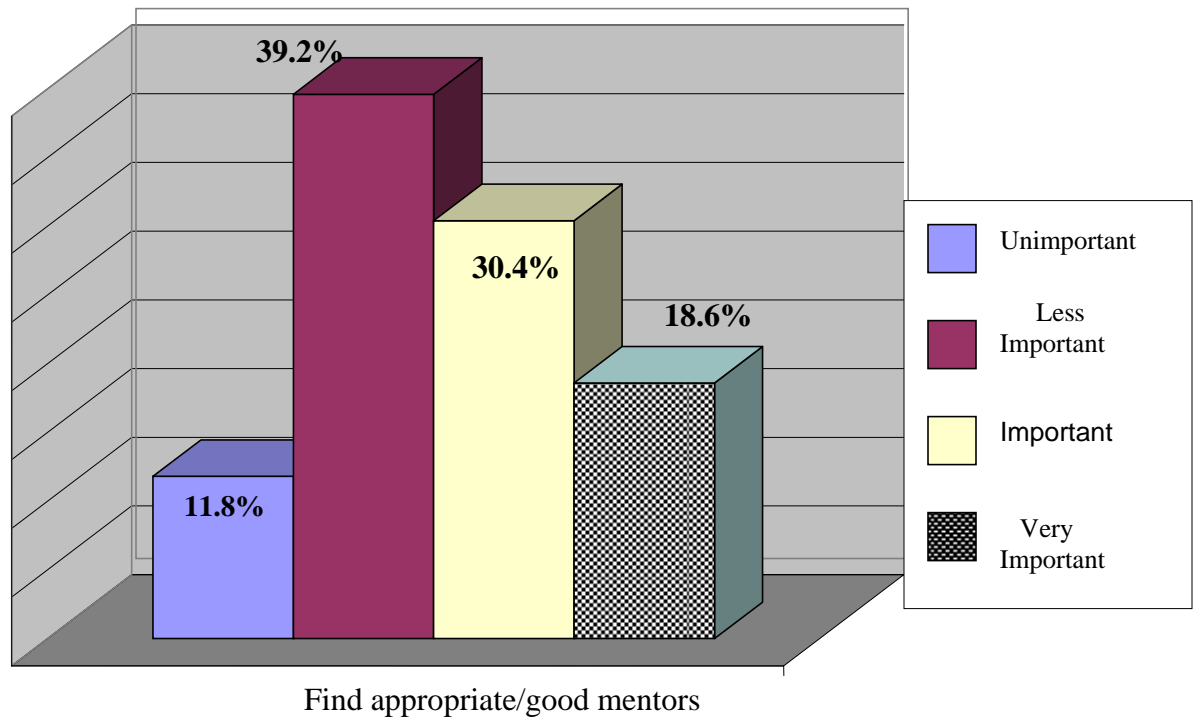


Figure 5-2. Mentoring Relationships

In this study, forum attendees became first time attendees in search of other aspects of professional development. However, looking at the outcomes of my informants' perceptions about the role of the JWII in connecting them to appropriate and/ good mentors, this did not seem to have been a key factor in influencing their decisions to participate. For this case study probably a genuine explanation might be connected to the demographic data whereby most of these attendees are already in administrative positions and were recruited in most cases by their superintendent or assistant superintendent. Those who came in through their personal relationships with Dr. Jean E. Winsand already had her as their mentor hence the insignificance of this variable as a motivating factor as exemplified by these two excerpts that: "Jean was my

mentor; Jean herself encouraged my attendance at what was called Women's Leadership Institute prior to her death."

I believe that since attendees were already connected to some of their educational leaders, they already had mentors before assuming membership. This might be an interesting area to review further in order to establish why this process of mentoring was not really important as a motivating factor in this study, yet elsewhere in literature it is one of major processes linked to professional development for leadership (Hansman, 1998; Samier, 2000). Also, since some are already working towards their retirement and although they might want to remain in the field of education, they are in fact looking at ways they could contribute within the JWII by mentoring others. Forum organizers might want to maximize and work closely with this cohort that is willing to mentor upcoming professionals. The following excerpts help to validate what attendees see as their contributions in promoting leadership development:

As a woman in leadership, I want to share my experiences with women thinking about taking on new challenges; able to give recommendations to new leaders in administration for their professional development; I am very interested in developing specific strategies for mentoring new leaders and aspiring leaders.

Using these excerpts as reference points, it appears that quite a number of the current cohort of attendees of the JWII are probably looking for individuals to mentor and seem to constitute a core group who have accumulated valid experiences and would like to share as they induct aspiring and novice educational administrators. These observations have positive implications for the Institute because this group could help in putting together a more viable and realistic mentoring and networking program based on lessons learned from the field of administration. Although mentoring might not have been significant in influencing their decision to attend, on the contrary, the possibilities to engage in networking relationships was a key in motivating

them. Giving advice to staff developers, literature alludes to the importance of working with the stronger people first and build capacities.

Probably the forum organizers might want to consider possibilities to use this cohort of attendees' leadership field reflections as some of the forum activities. The JWII might want to explore the feasibility of working closely with this voluntary cohort of attendees as it revitalizes the JWII to boost membership. Other group members could only be inspired if key people who in essence make up the core group, are energetic and enthusiastic because best professional development happens casually as participants share with each other what they are learning on an on-going basis. Underscored is the importance of being connected.

Having looked at what prompted my informants to attend as I explored the place and significance of the JWII in the attendees overall professional development for leadership, my next stage was to establish what they perceived to be the major goals of the JWII. This has important implications because after establishing why they came it's logical to look at what they expect to gain through participation and determine the deliverables based on the informants' perceptions about what they gained in these forums. The next segment of my discussion will explore what the informants perceived to be the major goals of the JWII as a forum for women in school leadership.

5.5. PERCEIVED GOALS OF THE JWII

In this section, I asked my informants to indicate what they perceived to be the major goals of this Institute. By spelling out what prompted them to be part of the JWII, they might have some sense of what the JWII is all about and the function it serves within the women and educational

administration discourse. Using nineteen structured items and one open-ended questionnaire items, I asked my informants to rate the items according to how they perceived them as “major,” “minor” or “not a goal” of the JWII.

I used a three point Likert-type rating scale and asked informants to rank their responses according to the extent they perceived the suggested items as being a: Major Goal (Ma) = 3; Minor Goal (Mi) = 2; and Not a Goal (NG) = 1. Only the high frequencies of the rated questionnaire items as perceived by the informants will be discussed here. To establish and determine those responses that are significant for this study, I used the averages of the responses as my cut-off. Since I used a three point scale for this section of my study, any responses with 2.5 and above mean scores are significant. My rationale to include this aspect of inquiry was based on the assumption that an individual cannot just join a forum without necessarily knowing the kind of anticipated returns or benefits because these help to determine and establish the extent to which what they are looking for is a close fit to what their professional needs are. This strategy helps to verify the presence of a match or mismatch to their overall development and professional growth.

With this strategy it is my assumption that a clear understanding about the major goals and functions of the JWII as a professional development forum and as an initiative that supports and helps women move and assume leadership responsibilities in school administration will help them to maximize and engage in purposeful and collaborative learning. By determining their perceptions and understanding about the major goals of the Institute as a leadership development initiative and as a forum for professional growth, I looked at the extent to which it provides support for both aspiring and practicing school administrators. Additionally, I continue to

address the demands of my research question about the role and significance of the JWII in their overall professional development for educational leadership.

Consistent with my mixed methodological approach, in my presentation and discussion I will augment these quantitative trends by incorporating the qualitative comments on the survey as discussed by my informants. Use of qualitative data is meant to further elaborate, support and complement the quantitative and abstract representations of my data. By clustering the items according to the purposes served, I will present what I consider to be significant findings under the following themes: shared knowledge and skills, building a sense of gendered identity, establishing a supportive environment, building critical mass, fostering professional and collegial connections, and least perceived goals.

5.5.1. Sharing Knowledge and Skills

Over the last decade, teacher education seems to have drawn extensively on social learning theory in designating key elements of the learning process because supportive arguments underscore the benefits of engaging in shared learning as individuals engage and develop knowledge and establish connections (Sherman, 2005). Professional development as a career long learning process falls within a continuum because it generally takes place overtime as individuals strive to fulfill their personal goals, aspirations, and institutional purposes and cannot be pursued in isolation. Professional development is about acquiring knowledge, skills and behaviors that will bring about real change and improve the practice.

Figure 5-3 shows that an overwhelming majority of the attendees of the JWII constituting 91.2% perceive sharing new ideas, best practices and lessons learned about education and school

leadership as one of the major goals of the JWII. Additionally, 68.6% view learning by sharing experiences through face to face interactions as a major goal.

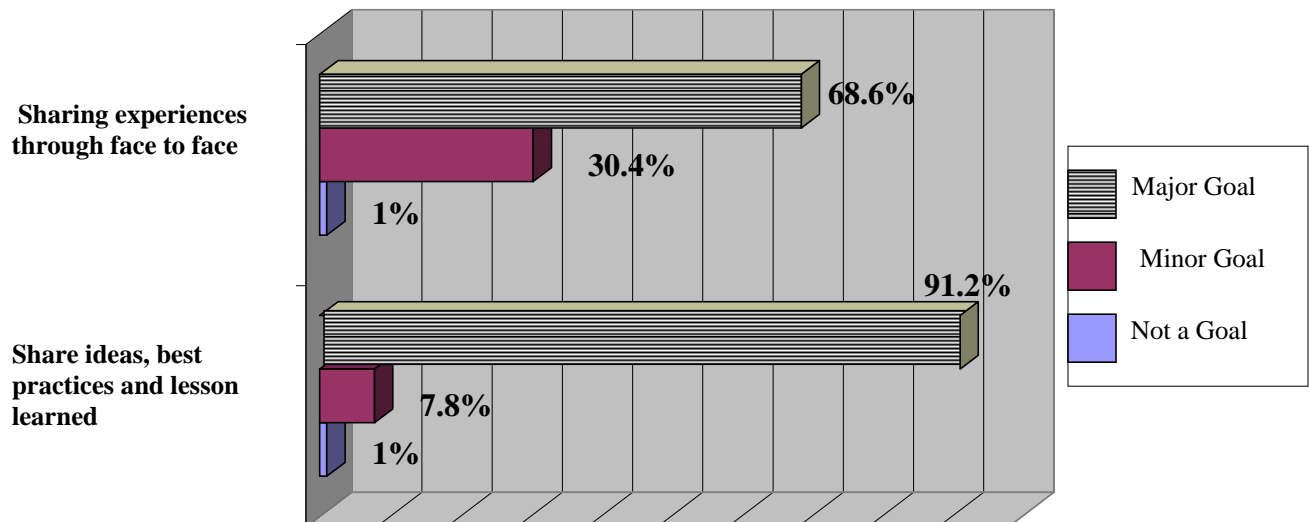


Figure 5-3. Kinds of Shared Knowledge and Skills

Underscored in this is the assumption that individuals are driven to participate for some intrinsic value and expect to get useful experiences as a result of their involvement and from having opportunities to share. Fontaine and Millen (2003) validate the collective benefits of sharing by singling out the community benefits that are realized if participants have opportunities to connect, interact, and collaborate with each other. In line with these findings, the informants in this case study expressed also how they regard the ability to share experiences through face to face as well as the ability to share ideas, best practices and lessons learned as some of the key goals of the Institute. Therefore, attendees value the process of acquiring knowledge and skills including the nature of knowledge that the Institute is expected to disseminate to those in attendance. These results seem to reinforce observations and discussions that identify major characteristics of communities of practice as also rounded in shared learning as a social activity which is key to effective learning.

These findings show that attendees do not consider themselves as passive recipients of the program but expect to be involved and very engaged in the learning episodes of the program. This is important because it has lasting implications on both the delivery system as well as the nature of content covered. At the same time, it raises questions pertaining to the type of issues that they are concerned with as aspiring and practicing administrators. Thus the ability to actively engage themselves through sharing seems to be a catalyst in the learning process as favorably viewed by those who responded. Also the ability to interact as espoused in literature, has an added advantage of increasing individuals' awareness and access to the community members' collective expertise and experiences. Elsewhere, usability and transferability of this acquired knowledge becomes fairly fundamental in alleviating and solving real life and job related problems. Thus people want to know how the new knowledge and experiences is transferable into the realities of practice out there.

5.5.2. Building a Sense of Group Identity

It is through exchanges and interactions that individuals become active participants in the learning process. Also through interacting, those involved develop some kind of connection and are able to relate to issues of interest under focus, and to draw themselves together as they constitute a community of learners. Against this observation about learning process and the importance of engagement, development of both individual and group identities come into play. Therefore, this section of my discussion looks at the significant issues of developing identities. Figure 5-4 shows that more than three quarters of the informants making up a significant percentage of 84.2% consider the opportunity to be able to build a sense of group identity among

women educators in the region to be one of the major goals of the Institute. The Institute should help them connect with other women so as to foster a sense of group identity.

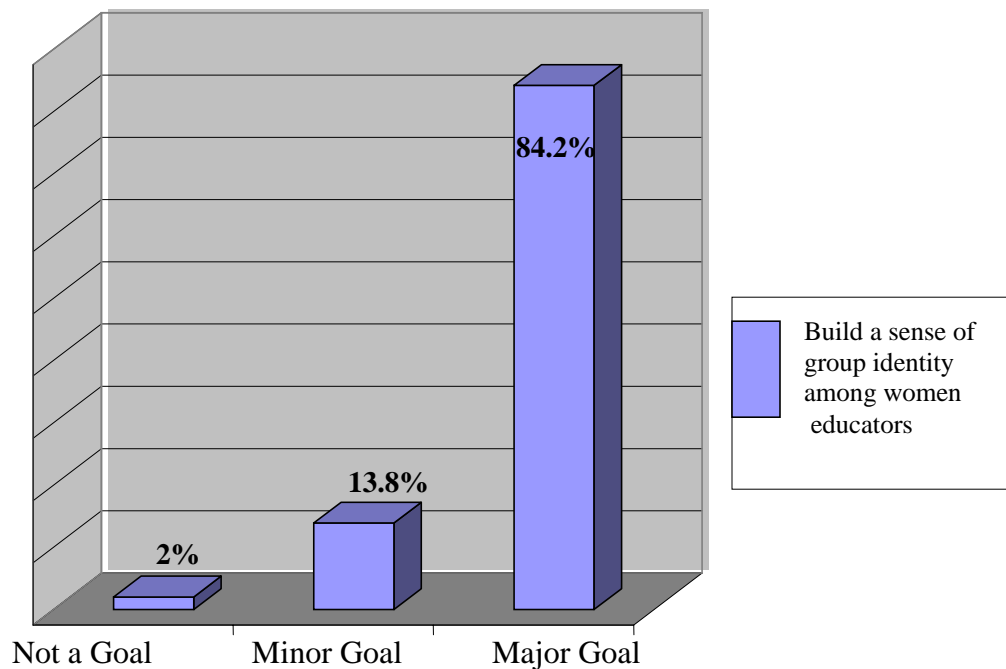


Figure 5-4. Building a Sense of Group Identity

This seems to be consistent with the basic characteristic of communities of practice whereby individuals have a sense of identity with the rest of the group members and through the type of professional and practice related issues also have a shared interest. For this to happen a common understanding must manifest and individuals must feel a sense of being supported. Therefore creating a supportive environment is critical in providing a viable professional development program.

5.5.3. Establishing a Supportive Environment

Figure 5-5 shows that the majority of the informants see establishing a supportive environment through fostering a supportive climate for women in educational leadership as a major goal.

Further, supporting Dr. Jean Winsand's vision of providing women a voice and a presence in school leadership roles and supporting new/ongoing networks that can meaningfully address women's issues also constitute the major goals of the JWII.

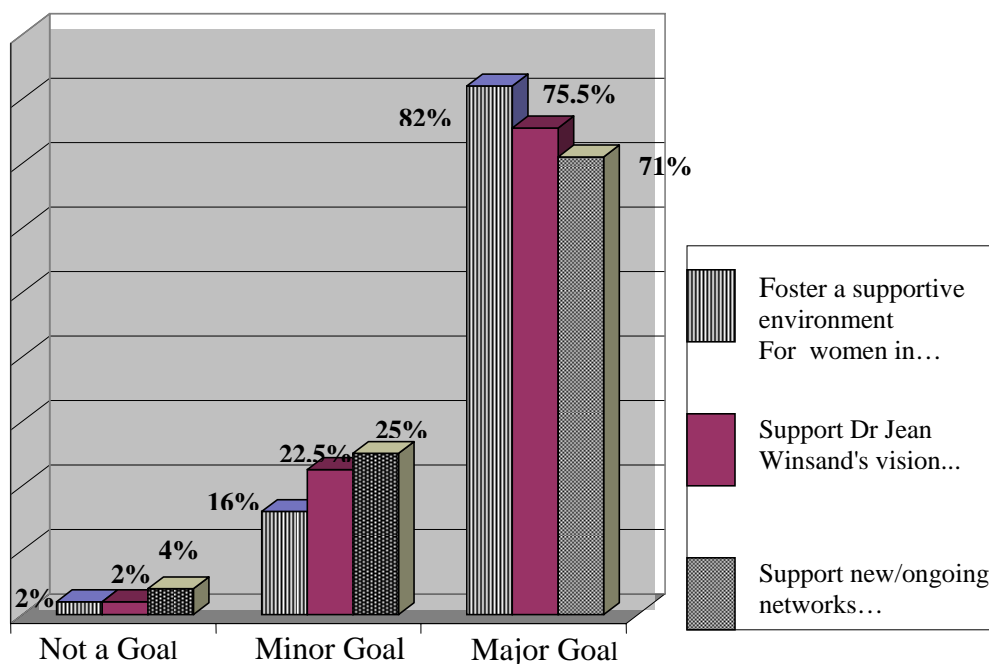


Figure 5-5. Establishing a Supportive Environment

A majority - 82% of the informants expect the JWII to create a supportive environment for women in educational leadership; while 75.5% regard supporting Dr. Jean E. Winsand's vision of providing women a voice and a presence in school leadership roles as a major concern of the institute; and 71% are of the notion that the JWII should support new and ongoing networks that can meaningfully address women's issues. Deducing from these results, three dominant issues seem to stand out.

First, there is the importance of advancing the legacy and sharing this important history which potentially creates a common understanding of what the Institute stands for including its purpose and type of its clientele. Secondly, the significance of the Institute is fairly apparent as

it provides a gendered space by creating a supportive and conducive environment. In addition, the Institute seems to be of significance in the professional growth of its attendees because of the manner it is helping the participants to connect as they network with each other. So individuals have opportunities to develop both personal and group relationships.

5.6. WOMEN AND EQUITY ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Women and issues of equity continue to be the focus of current and past research because parity has not yet been realized. Deriving from these responses participants perceive the major goals of the institute to involve building critical mass by increasing women's representation in educational leadership positions including other levels as well and also through the on-going efforts of continuing the national scope of leadership training for women. Table 5.6 presents the major goals of how the Institute can continue to build a critical mass of women in school leadership.

Informants' perceptions as revealed in Table 5-6 show that building critical mass remains one of the major goals of the Institute. For example, 81% of the attendees see increasing representation of women in educational leadership as the major focus of the Institute, while 72.3% consider that increased representation of women in leadership roles should, in fact, happen at all levels and not necessarily be confined to educational administration only. 61.8% of the informants assert that continuing with the national scope of leadership training for women should constitute one of the major goals of the JWII.

Table 5-6. Building Critical Mass

Perceived Goals	Not a Goal	Minor Goal	Major Goal
Increase representation of women in educational leadership.	3.0%	16.0%	81.0%
Increase representation of women in leadership roles at all levels.	4.0%	23.7%	72.3%
Continue with the national scope of leadership training for women.	5.8%	32.4%	61.8%

Such findings appear to be consistent with empirical evidence elsewhere depicting the dire need to continue with the critical mass building for women in educational leadership because although gains have been made, on the contrary, women continue to be under-represented beyond the elementary school leadership (Young & McLeod, 2001; Wolverton, 1999).

Attendees seem to have a common understanding of the Institute and what it stands for. They also seem to be familiar with what the initial vision, and purpose of the JWII of responding to the national need for increasing women's representation as they connect through this Institute. To validate how these attendees seem to have a shared understanding of the Institute based on their history and initial vision, they had this to say based on this excerpt that: "to do what was always intended ... increase representation of women in educational leadership (beyond the principalship ...onto the superintendent)."

Against these expressed opinions on the need to continue to make women an important part of the administrative profession it is clear that the vision and purpose of the JWII as initially coined during its inception does not seem to have shifted. Building critical mass as perceived by informants continues to influence the major focus of the forum. Through establishing

connections, participants might benefit from such fostered collegial and social relationships. What type of connections are perceived as major goals of the Institute?

5.6.1. Sharing Understanding of the JWII

Shared understanding can come about through clarity of what attendees perceive as major goals of the JWII. Based on informants' responses I was able to relate to what they saw as professional and collegial connections which helped to promote a shared understanding about the purposes of the JWII as a forum for professional development.

Table 5-7, on professional and collegial connections, shows that 79.4% of the informants regard the ability to help aspiring and practicing women administrators make acquaintances and establish contacts through networking as constituting one of the major goals of the JWII. In addition, 67.6% of current and past cohort of participants perceive the JWII as a forum where they expect to make professional connections with colleagues in educational leadership.

Table 5-7. Professional and Collegial Connections

Perceived Goals	Not a Goal %	Minor Goal %	Major Goal %
Help aspiring & practicing women administrators to make acquaintances & establish contacts through networking	2.9%	17.7%	79.4%
Make professional & collegial connections with colleagues in educational leadership	2.0%	30.4%	67.6%
Provide opportunities to listen to recognized regional speakers	6.8%	31.4%	61.8%

Over half of the respondents (61.8%) are of the notion that the Institute might accord them opportunities to listen to recognized regional speakers. Major issues emerging from these

responses show the extent to which the informants have shared understanding about the role and purposes of the Institute as a professional development for school leadership.

5.7. LEAST IMPORTANT GOALS

This section of my results show attendees' reflections on issues perceived as least meaningful goals of the JWII as represented by the frequencies of their opinions. Items discussed here had the least responses. Although networking with both men and women prompted them to be first time attendees of the forum (See Table 5.2), attendees do not consider "support professional development of male and female administrators in the region" to be a major focus of the JWII's forum. Results in Table 5-8 show that helping women find role models and mentors (51%), developing personal relationships and trust (54.5%), helping women define their career goals and pave their career paths (58.4%), and gaining content knowledge about how schools operate (57.4%) were not perceived as major goals. Possible explanations to some of these factors might be tied to how many of these attendees are already in established leadership status as shown by the demographic data discussed in chapter 4.

Table 5-8. Rethinking About the Place and Significance of the JWII

Perceived Goals	Not a Goal	Minor Goal	Major Goal
Provide opportunities to listen to reputable national speakers	7.7%	34.5%	57.8%
Support professional development of male and female administrators in the region	8.9%	39.6%	51.5%
Help women find role models & mentors	4.9%	46.1%	49.0%

Table 5-8 cont.

Develop personal relationships & trust	7.9%	46.6%	45.5%
Help women to define their career goals & pave their career paths	8.9%	49.5%	41.6%
Gain content knowledge about how school operate	15.8%	41.6%	42.6%

Based on the excerpts provided, informants might have had unfavorable experiences during these one-day sessions and suggested regional experts as potential keynote speakers, nature and format of content and structure. For example these excerpts demonstrate their expectations:

The speakers should be chosen from the female administrators.

Topics should be:

1. how to achieve the goal
2. What sacrifices must be made
3. How do we continue
4. Problems and issues that are characteristic to female educational leaders.

These excerpts highlight dissatisfaction with specific organizational, structural and content details. In addition, alluding to the least meaningful features of their involvement with the JWII that tie to the issue of speakers, this excerpt explains what was least meaningful to them: “Speakers emphasizing research unless it is an optional session.” In addition, other informants alluded to the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the current mentoring and networking opportunities and suggested the need to:

Establish a mentoring relationship by actively setting up a program to connect mentors with mentees. Could be done through internet/emails etc-not as effective.

While acknowledging the benefits of connections and establishing relationships, some of the informants do not see much of this process going on as shown by these excerpts: Need more

time to connect on a personal-professional level with others.” In essence some of the informants want to:

Establish networks and promote female administrators and professionals.
Encourage pilot programs and try ‘new’ methods of teaching. Promote academic rigor and career and technical educational opportunities. I would like to see rapid and real networking efforts. A one-shot deal is not effective, nor does it allow enough participations. There needs to be some means to make the event more personal-as one rarely meets anyone the way it is set up.

In view of these concerns raised, forum organizers might want to revisit its structure and respond to issues raised as it improves its program structure and content. In summary it is this interplay of motivating factors, perceived major goals and eventual gains made that can tell the whole story about the place and significance of the Institute in the attendees’ overall professional development. Further analysis of qualitative data showed that although informants concurred on some issues, there are areas, however, where they did not seem to look at things the same way. Thus some would like to see the Institute continue as a gendered space while others prefer to see the forum focusing on, leadership for both men and women to promote effective school and students’ academic performance. How then do informants perceive the JWII?

5.8. PERCEPTIONS OF GENDERED FOCUS

Singh & Vinnicombe (2003) in their article underscore the benefits of women only programs as an essential part of women’s leadership development. In support of the idea about the importance of women supporting each other, Hansman (1998) argues on how a woman’s career development may be enhanced and is dependent upon the helpful relationships forged through acquaintances with more experienced colleagues. Since there were very few women in school

leadership, the forum was formed as a support network for aspiring and practicing women administrators to connect and to help each other move into educational leadership.

Presentations of cited excerpts show that although some informants believe the forum should continue as a women-centered forum, others want it to serve both men and women, not just a women only audience. While some informants see the forum as a gendered space for women in leadership, others want it to include both men and women administrators and shift foci to school leadership and students' performance. Using selected excerpts what follows is an exploration of dilemmas and incongruencies about the future role and form of the JWII. Using qualitative data, I reconsidered whether the JWII should be woman-centered or primarily for women and whether it should remain a memorial institute in support of Dr. Jean Winsand's vision and legacy.

5.8.1. Woman-Centered: The Typology of Dilemmas and Incongruencies

This section discusses current conflicting views about the forum's image as perceived by the informants and the consistence with which it remains or is drifting away from the initial conceptions that led to its inception. Initially the inception of the JWII was in response to the marginal representation of women in school leadership. Qualitative data were used to establish the place and significance of the JWII for aspiring and practicing school administrators' overall professional development. Selected excerpts show attendees' perceptions about forum's preferred audience, content, equity issues, distinctiveness of the Institute, resource persons.

<p>Yes: Preferred Audience Refocus on the audience-get [names supplied] involved so it's designed for women-sessions should not be always designed for education in general. There are too many men here. Having men contradicts the purpose. ...increase emphasis on factors involved for women leadership...</p> <p>It's for women, there is nothing out there for us locally" Focus on the female administrators. Meet the real needs of aspiring local, regional future female administrator.</p> <p>Many of my colleagues quit coming because this has become a male dominated and male designated conference...I would have responded quite differently when I first started attending years ago but this is becoming less and less about women.</p> <p>One feature of the JWII that has been least meaningful is the support for professional development for both males and females. The primary focus gave women a voice and a presence in the school leadership role.</p>	<p>Maybe:</p> <p>I am turned off when women whine about closed doors because they are women. Develop good skills and be capable, competent leader and the doors will open.</p> <p>I don't feel the emphasis should be women- It should be on leadership skills.</p> <p>Women need to be viewed as best candidates and equals. I worry that having 'women's conference' continues to devote that women are less. I would like to see the conference continued in her honor but not just specifying that it is primarily for women.</p> <p>Very few men attended the last one-why isn't it a priority for all superintendents to attend to promote quality leadership?</p>
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These sampled excerpts show conflicting perceptions about the features and nature of the forum. Implied by some of these quotes are the historical roots of its inception as a female oriented support network. As noted in communities of practice literature, value and identities are formed through social interactions (Barab & Duffy, 1998; Johnson, 2001; Kilpatrick, Barrett, & Jones, 2003) and tend to evolve over time. What is happening within the Jean E. Winsand International Institute is not unusual because as noted by Wenger (1998) CoPs are not necessarily in harmony all the time and their evolution are influenced by the politics of both participation and reification. Thus the dynamics of continuity and discontinuity as revealed by Wenger propels the practice to move forward. So although the forum has been in existence for more than 20 years now, and although it still has a small group of committed patrons that has

loyally been attending all the yearly forums since inception, a majority of attendees have participated for 5 years and less (See Table 4.3). With this undocumented heritage, newcomers might miss out on the historical context that led to its formation.

As noted by Barab and Duffy (1998) cultural heritage helps define a community because the shared experiences make up its collective knowledge base that is continually renegotiated as members interact. Also heritage accords a community of practice legitimacy, helps members to develop a sense of self in relation to the community through enculturation (Barab & Duffy, 1998). Implied here is that although communities evolve over time it is important to capture and document the historical heritage and context because this promotes continuity and consistency about the shared understanding of the Institute. However regardless of these incongruencies, the forum is still attuned to leadership development issues and overall school practice.

<p>Yes: Distinctiveness of the JWII JWII is distinctive in that it honors our beloved mentor Dr. Winsand. It honors women leaders across Western PA. It is validating to have a conference that honors women leaders.</p> <p>Honoring Jean and embracing the region's support for women in educational leadership are the most important components to me.</p>	<p>Maybe:</p> <p>Help women and (men) become better educational leaders.</p>
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Both excerpts acknowledge the immense contributions of Dr. Winsand for leadership development. However although some feel women should be the preferred audience, on the contrary the dissenting voices want the focus to be more on skills development that would help women (and/or men) compete for administrative positions.

<p>Yes: Resource Persons and Expertise</p> <p>Speakers should be chosen from the female administrators. “Topics should be: how to achieve goals. What sacrifices must be made, how do we continue, problems and issues that are characteristics to female educational leaders.</p> <p>Focus on <u>women</u>, not men speakers Speakers should be chosen from the female administrators.</p> <p>Have female presenters/speakers/organizers.</p>	<p>Maybe:</p> <p>There are so many great national speakers-Why must we exclusively have only females-and/or females talking about gender issues in other countries. It narrows the audience to those only interested in these topics.</p>
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Qualitative data point to the persistent incongruencies on how women educational administrators are defining the place and significance of the JWII for their overall career development. Indeed there are positive and negative spin-offs that can be maximized with a mixed audience. The value of leadership development and school practice is a commonly occurring theme. However differences in perceptions normally happen as women uncover assumptions, and perceptions could radically shift (Ettling, 2001). Experiences in other women’s regional professional development conferences, inclusion of men as resource persons is highly commended as cited here: “it is always wonderful to observe that men are invited to share their wisdom at our annual conference” (Women’s Caucus Manual, 2005), and in order to build quality systems there is need for: conversations with both male and female leaders truly committed to the life path of education and building the best system they could for all students (Women’s Caucus Manual, 2005). Reflected here are individual and system wide benefits that can be realized if both men and women interact at this level and if professional development targets their unique professional expectations.

The JWII has evolved over time and as noted by Wenger (1998), communities often reach a stage where they need to reconsider their development process and sometimes even their overall direction because demands and actual behaviors of communities of practice are constantly shaping both as newcomers replace old timers and as demands of practice force the community to revise its relationship to its environment which in this case might be the education system. So tensions like these might not be a bad thing because competing ideas can be the sort of improvisational sparks necessary for igniting organizational innovation (Brown & Duguid, 1991) and a good way is to involve the members in a renewal event—an acknowledgement of where they have been, where they want to go and ways to take care of their legacy (Wenger, 1998).

Against these conflicting views about the JWII and although quantitative data show the importance of Dr. Jean E. Winsand's legacy for this forum (See Tables 5.5; 7.1 & 7.2) using qualitative data, I explored reasons and the extent of informants' passion in promoting Dr. Winsand's legacy and her regional support for women in educational leadership in Western Pennsylvania.

5.8.2. JWII as a Memorial Institute

The question is on whether the Institute should continue to honor Dr. Winsand and her legacy. These excerpts exemplify the informants' perceptions about the future of the Institute

YES:

Those who did not know Jean may not “connect” to the true purpose of the JWII.

It’s critical to honor and keep Jean’s memory alive.

It is so critical to keep Dr. Winsand’s memory alive in such a significant way.

Jean’s priorities of learning and nurturing women in leadership must prevail...they are timeless.

Increase recognition for Dr Winsand and promoting her values/goals.

Promote Dr. Winsand’s ideals. Focus on good leadership in honor of Jean.

To continue to honor Jean Winsand, address, and support female administrators.

MAYBE:

I would like to see the conference continued in Jean’s honor but not just specifying that it is primarily for women.

These excerpts show that a majority of these informants want Dr. Winsand’s priorities of learning and women in leadership to prevail because they are timeless. Although most of the attendees look at the positive outcomes of the Institute over the years, a majority of those who have strong and unwavering affiliations with the Institute support and continue to participate because of their long standing, personal relationships established with Dr. Winsand in different capacities and at different stages of their career journeys. The issue of creating and sustaining personal relationships are key to effective CoPs because sustained interpersonal engagements constitute core characteristics of a shared practice and this as noted by Wenger (1998) creates mutual accountability among participants brought about through a collective process of negotiation. These findings show how this cohort identifies with the forum, and issues of identity are central to communities of practice. The following excerpts show what this group of participants says about the type of personal relationships that they value and that continue to influence their commitment to the forum including the reason why they think the Institute should continue to honor Dr. Winsand.

5.8.3. Role and Impact of Personalized Relationships

Jean was my mentor!! I would do anything to honor her.
Personal-Dr. Winsand was on my dissertation committee.
Personal invitation from Dr. Winsand.
I was on the ground floor getting it started.
Through my personal relationships with this very special woman, I perceived Jean as continually striving to increase representation of women in educational leadership. She is the reason why I became an Assistant Superintendent and an Acting Superintendent for a long time before I retired.
This institute shall always be meaningful to me due to my personal relationships with its namesake and my mentor.
Through personal relationship with this very special woman, I perceived Jean as continually striving to increase representation of women in educational leadership.
I felt supported and included and encouraged by Dr. Winsand.
I knew Jean personally. I supported the institute to honor her.
Jean herself encouraged my attendance to what was called women's leadership institute prior to her death.
I knew Jean personally and support the institute to honor her.

Attendees seem to have unquestioned background assumptions about the Institute. Stressed and appreciated here too are the benefits of personal relations and how they were instrumental in giving attendees a strong sense of being supported and feelings of personal and social connectedness. Legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) explains learning conditions and ways newcomers learn to function in a community (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lesser & Prusak, 1999). Also in CoP literature, learning from LPP standpoint explains the evolving process of how a learner in a community of practice starts off as an outsider and through participation and active engagement, learns to speak the language, acquires the community's subjective viewpoint (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989) as the individual gradually move towards the center. Using this premise as my analysis tool, and deducing from these testimonies, it seems Dr. Winsand was instrumental in the enculturation of those pioneer women administrators. So the forum seems to be significant because the characteristic nature of community of practice is generally shaped by how collectively, individuals as community members, share beliefs and understanding over an extended period of time in pursuit of shared

enterprise. These excerpts show the value and role of personal connections and relationships. Relationship building is critical to the effectiveness of social interactions and fostering communities.

5.9. SUMMARY: THE PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JWII

This section sums up informants' views about the place and significance of the JWII on the overall professional development of women for school leadership. Based on attendees' perceptions on what motivated them to attend the very first time coupled by what they regarded as major goals of the forum, findings show evidence of stronger professional interests and commitment to the forum as well as to the professional development. Informants seem to hold a set of fairly strong beliefs and values as evidenced by sampled excerpts cited in this chapter. In addition, attendees were prompted to participate in search of collegial and professional relationships. Constructivism as the framework for social learning theory regards social interaction as integral to social construct and considers learning to take place in a social context. Results show consistencies between the motivating factors and what they perceive to be the major goals of the Institute. From comparison of informants' motivating factors against their perceptions of the forum's major goals, there is congruence between their expectations and what the forum offers. In some sense informants have a shared historical understanding of the forum, some sense of identity and belonging.

Attendees continue to bring in a gendered view of why they decided to become first time attendees of the Institute that are consistent with their shared sense of leadership interests at the micro and macro levels. In summary, these results depict the JWII as a place to enculture

aspiring and practicing administrators to learn leadership issues, share community knowledge about women and education in relation to career development, develop insights into leadership opportunities and get advice pertaining to how to attain those administrative positions. Informants are in search of a supportive environment through networking and sharing experiences and best practices for their overall leadership development. In addition, most of the forum attendees perceive the forum as a place to get updated on current educational issues, and gender specific information. Although mentoring seems to be supportive of professional development for school leadership, on the contrary, a majority of this cohort did not rank it as significant to their professional needs. Interestingly, there seems to be some discerning voices about the nature and form of the Institute. Although some attendees want the forum to maintain the gendered foci of professional development and leadership issues, others want more participation from men. Figure 5-6 shows a summary of the congruent aims and outcomes about the place and significance of the JWII on the overall professional development of its attendees

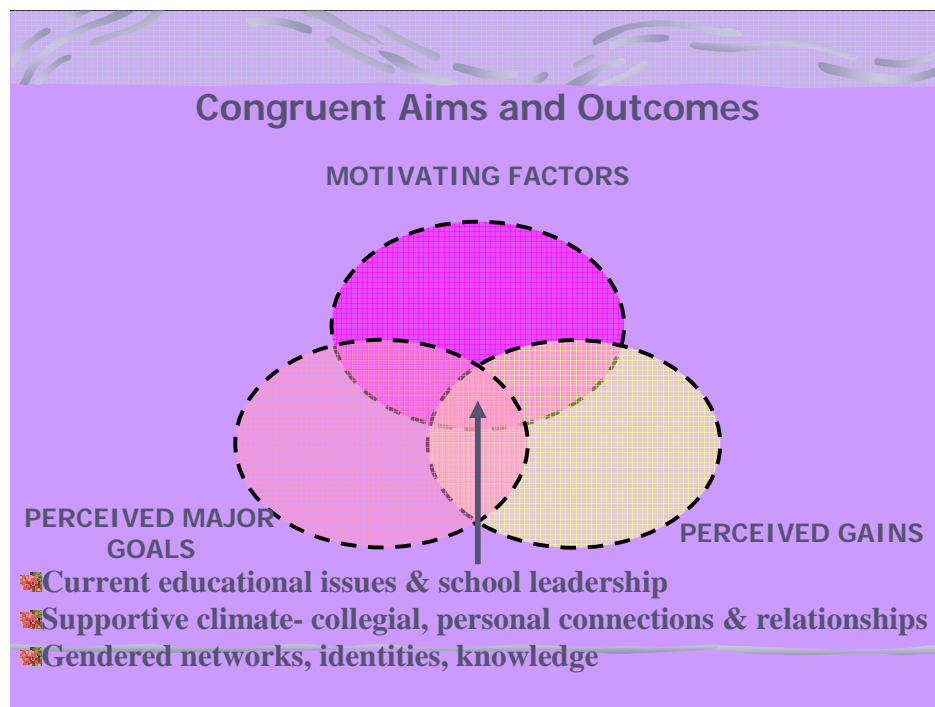


Figure 5-6. Congruent Aims and Outcomes

based on motivating factors, perceived major goals, and perceived gains.

Drawing from the place and significance of the JWII, there is consistent congruence in terms of what motivated attendees' participation, against what they perceived as the major goals of the Institute when compared to what they ultimately gained by being involved. Three things stand out which are consistent with communities of practice as summed up in Figure 5-6.

- Knowledge based through being updated on current educational issues and school leadership.
- Supportive climate that is collegial and fosters personal connections and relationships.
- The forum is perceived as fostering gendered networks, identities and knowledge.

A community of practice is about knowledge acquisition, its dissemination and skills development needed to improve practice. Through the forum attendees are updated on current educational issues and school leadership that are related to their practice. In a way the consensus of these three areas show that the JWII is somewhat a community of practice. However, the Institute falls short of effectively fostering this forum as a community of practice because some of such forged relationships do not seem to continue beyond the one-day event and do not appear to be sustainable. For the remainder of the year, there is no provision for contacts and connections although attendees expressed the advantages of sustained relationships. Other than the one day forum, there is nothing built into the JWII that allows continuity and sustainability of relationships thus established during the forum.

These findings show that the JWII plays a significant role in women administrators' professional development. In view of what motivated informants to be first time attendees coupled by what they perceived to be major goals of the forum, in chapter six of this case study, I will discuss attendees' experiences with the JWII in terms of gains made. Chapter 6 will

address research question 2: **How does the Jean Winsand International Institute foster a community of practice?**

6. FOSTERING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR WOMEN LEADERS

For those who prepare future leaders, the power of socialization to mold and shape behavior must be recognized.

Martha, B. Hudson, & Ronald D. Williamson (2002).

6.1. INTRODUCTION

Communities of practice is about learning within the context of a community and involves socialization to expose those targeted to the rubrics of leaderships. Schools are dynamic social institutions. School leadership has always played an integral role in how schools function and is one of the key facilitating factors needed to ensure the effectiveness of schools and successful of implementation of school reforms. With accountability mandates, school leaders are being held accountable for students' performance by being expected to increase their academic achievement levels. As noted by Sparks (2003), skillful leaders matter and are critical in transforming schools because they are integral to the implementation and transformation of reforms into quality teaching in all classrooms.

Although there has been an unprecedented growth in personal development programs within the context of women-only training, apparently very little has been written about the assumptions underlying the approaches used, nor has there been detailed analysis of their value in bringing about change for women (Bhavnani, 1997). In education, communities of practice (CoPs) originated as a response to several barriers to professional development and their creation

as a model for professional development was meant to support learning environment and practice (Buysse, Sparkman, & Wesley, 2003). Learning within the context of CoPs is practice centered in approach because it targets developing individuals' capabilities. By being practice-centered, this means the subsequent content coverage is determined by interest of participants who will then proceed and share important issues. In addition, and through a process of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) as a characteristic of communities of practice, learning is seen and becomes a social and situated activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

LPP is a social process of establishing relationships between newcomers and old-timers within a profession through activities, identity formation, artifacts and community knowledge and practice. It alludes to how newcomers are engaged, learn, and develop a sense of belonging as they gradually become full participants in a sociocultural practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Limited studies have used dimensions of communities of practice to analyze women's professional development programs as support networks and ways communities reproduce themselves through learning associated with practice. Therefore, my interest to explore the JWII as a professional development forum was prompted by this scarcity.

The JWII, is predominantly a women-centered professional development forum both by design and as revealed by my demographic data. A purpose of my explorations here is to establish how those involved with the Institute are building a community of practice. I will use some components or dimensions of communities of practice as initially discussed in literature to explore the actual, most significant components of the JWII in fostering community of aspiring and practicing school administrators. Through the use of legitimate peripheral participation as defined by Lave and Wenger (1991) this section of my dissertation explores how the JWII is fostering a community of practice.

In Chapter 5, my focus was to establish the place and significance of the JWII in the attendees' overall career development. I used the outcomes of my survey research questions 1, 2, and 7 to analyze and situate the role of the Institute for their professional development and practice. Based on their responses, while there are a number of very significant benefits and gains made through participation such as being updated on current educational issues, there are also manifestations of emerging tensions in their overall perceptions about the forum's future.

In summary, to a large extent attendees continue to perceive the JWII forum as still attuned to what Marshall (2004) refers to as addressing equity concerns. Although some are strong advocates for women's concerns about school leadership and want the JWII's forum to continue to give them a gendered space, some want to see incremental changes while others want radical changes in the ways the program is organized and implemented. In summary, I can say the JWII is still considered as an institution with a vision and mission to advance women into educational leadership and continue to build critical mass of women for educational leadership. An increasing number of participants acknowledge gaining knowledge and skills that relate to their practice in the schools, along with helping them gain confidence and competencies in their abilities to lead.

After looking at what motivated my informants to become first time attendees of the JWII, coupled by what they perceived to be the major and minor goals of the JWII, in this section of my study I discuss how the JWII is fostering a community of practice. I will examine attendees' perceptions regarding selected efforts being made by the Institute to foster the forum as a community of practice for women in school leadership. In my explorations in this section, I will be guided by my second research question: **How does the Jean Winsand International Institute foster a community of practice?**

6.2. PERCEIVED GAINS

Finding out the nature and extent of shared values and visions for participants who differ in their JWII experience is important for my study because such attributes contribute in building norms, behavior, and identities which are an essential part of what communities of practice are all about. I chose communities of practice as an analysis tool because of its being grounded in social constructivism which, as discussed by Kilpatrick, Barrett, and Jones (2003) and Wenger (1998), casts learning as a social construct that takes place in a social milieu. The philosophy underpinning communities of practice is mostly attributed to social learning theories and constructivism.

Communities of practice as a concept is increasingly gaining prominence. Lave and Wenger (1991), define community of practice as informal communities and networks of people who belong to the same trade or are in the same professional practice, or have the same interests and whose purposes go beyond just being together. Evidence of connectedness within organizations enables those involved to generate, share, and transfer knowledge among their respective members as they interact in “learning episodes,” a process that impacts their performance and ultimately improves their practice (Barab & Duffy, 1998; Johnson, 2001).

Lave and Wenger (1991) in their analytic approach to learning, refer to legitimate peripheral participation as learning that is not just confined and situated in practice but learning that incorporates and is “integral to generative social practice in the lived-in world” (p.35). Peripherality as discussed by Lave and Wenger (1991) involves “multiple, varied, more –or-less-engaged and –inclusive ways of being located in the fields of participation defined by a community...” and “changing locations and perspectives are part of actors’ learning trajectories, developing identities and forms of membership” (p. 36). Thus legitimate peripherality is

complex and depending on the levels of active participation within these social structures, it can be empowering or disempowering. Since legitimate peripheral participation is an analytical viewpoint and a way of understanding learning, communities of practice are increasingly influencing the learning episodes that take place in a growing number of organizations, be they in the private or public sectors.

All theories of learning are based on fundamental assumptions about the person, the world, and their relations, and LPP as a dimension of CoP denotes a framework that brings together theories of situated activity and theories about production and reproduction (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In essence, an individual's participation in CoP is "always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning ... understanding and experience are in constant interaction-indeed, are mutually constitutive" (Lave & Wenger, 1991 p. 51-52). Snyder (1997) regards communities of practice as effective for knowledge transfer and competence development.

For the purposes of this study, I am going to confine myself to those characteristics that helped me to critically look at my data. I will be guided by some common features of communities of practice arising from literature and these include ways the informants develop identities, connections, relationship building, a sense of belonging, and an understanding of the Institute. Other aspects I will focus on include members' perceptions about the levels of involvement and ways they interact and learn from each other through mentoring and networking including acquisitions of knowledge, skills that are transferable to their practice. Thus I will focus on issues of legitimate peripheral participation on how new members are incorporated and gain a sense of legitimacy in the forum.

Consistent with issues of women and their representation in educational leadership, the advocacy of those already in positions of leadership should be to help other women to climb up the administrative ladder (Logan, 1998; Irby & Brown, 1998). Members of school and professional organizations are increasingly creating and fostering opportunities for administrators, teachers and others to make professional connections with their colleagues in order to share experiences as a proactive approach to promote professional growth. As more women move up administratively, they are encouraged to have professional and collegial connections, establish relationships, network, share best practices with each others, share tips etc. As posit by Bray, Lee and Smith (2000) the purposes of communities of practice are to create, support, and sustain knowledge-based learning communities, and improve organizational performance.

Explorations of the JWII's efforts to foster a community of practice for women in school leadership in Western Pennsylvania enrich the broader concepts of knowledge management, situated learning, and communities of practice discourse. In this section, I will discuss how women participants are building, promoting and engaging in learning related to their areas of interests as administrators and how they are striving to establish and share community knowledge that is closely connected and transferable to their practice. Data presented and discussed in this chapter comes from a variety of sources.

The first source is my pre-survey which had seven open-ended questionnaire items that I conducted in April 2003 to generate closed-ended questionnaire items and to establish the context of the Institute under study. I will make reference to the outcomes of question 2 of the pre-survey that specifically asked informants about what keeps them coming back. To augment the discussion, additional reflections made in this chapter are also based on the outcomes of the

informants' responses on question 3 of the pre-survey which asked attendees to indicate what they think makes the JWII unique or particularly valuable when compared to other forums and kinds of professional development they have participated in.

Second, I will use the attendees' responses for question 3 of the main survey instrument administered between April 2004 and November 2004 that asked informants to indicate their perceived gains made over the years as attendees of the JWII. Question 3 of the main survey instrument had 17 structured questionnaire items and 1 open-ended item, and elicited information about the gains that the attendees made through their participation in the forum. Using a four point Likert-type rating scale, informants ranked the extent to which they "Strongly Agree"=4; "Agree"=3; "Disagree"=2; and "Strongly Disagree"=1 on each one of the statements provided. For the quantitative data, I will discuss only the significantly rated questionnaire items as ranked on the four point rating scale.

For consistency, I will use the same format of aggregating the responses i.e. I will collapse the positives in order to create a positive category of frequencies. Anything above 2.5 average or mean score is significant for this study. Throughout the discussions, I will make use of both qualitative and quantitative data to elaborate, capture and report informants' perceptions on how the JWII is fostering a community of practice. Third, I also analyzed conference and programs and outcomes of informal interviews. I used findings derived from these data sources to discuss issues presented in this Chapter.

6.2.1. Gaining Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies

Data presented here discuss informants' perceptions about gains made over the years as attendees of the forum. Table 6-1 shows that most of the attendees gained knowledge related to

education generally and schools in particular. Analysis of this variable shows that informants strongly agree that they gained knowledge. By combining the strongly agree and the agree options for each variable, cumulatively, 97% gained knowledge about educational issues, an enhanced knowledge base of leadership related topics and skills (90.8%), insights into data driven school improvement (75.5%), more confidence in abilities to lead (73.7%), and “No Child Left Behind” (66.7%).

Table 6-1. Gains on Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies

Areas of Potential Gain	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Gained knowledge of educational issues.	0	3.0	62.0	35.0
Acquired an enhanced knowledge base of leadership related topics and skills.	2.1	7.1	62.2	28.6
Gained insights into data driven school improvement.	2.1	22.4	60.2	15.3
Developed more confidence in my own abilities to lead.	4.1	22.2	51.5	22.2
Gained useful knowledge/insights about “No Child Left Behind.”	1.0	32.3	52.1	14.6

So not only does the Institute cover and expose attendees to general educational issues but the forum also enables those involved to develop skills and competencies that can impact their performance in school practice.

These are positive outcomes and what this forum offers as reported by informants directly relates to the school reforms and practice. Since school effectiveness and overall student performance has been tied to good leadership (Yee, 1997), not only is knowing how to lead schools important, but having the right skills and know how is equally important in managing schools. Against this backdrop, this study looked at the gains made in relation to leadership skills acquisition which helps school practice. Table 6-1 shows that attendees acquired an enhanced knowledge base of leadership related topics and skills. In addition, informants made

specific gains pertaining to individual development. For example, through participating in the forum attendees became more confident in their abilities to lead and were more aware of their leadership capabilities and behaviors as reported by 73.7% in Table 6.1 about confidence and abilities to lead.

In support and to elaborate further about these acknowledged gains made over the years and as self reported by the attendees of the Jean Winsand International Institute, here are some excerpts of what informants had to say about the nature and value of knowledge gained:

I keep coming back because I learn new information...
the opportunity to learn from others in an informal setting
Topical issues in education.
The content of the sessions have been in my work as a curriculum person
There are no black and white solutions to problems in education.
Knowledge base regarding educational issues can only grow
through shared experiences and research
No Child Left Behind-can never hear too much as we are accountable to this initiative.
Learning about current educational topics.

It is through the JWII that they are exposed to the varied and myriad solutions to problems on education. Deriving from these excerpts, attendees continue to participate because they learn new information related to their practice in the schools. Still validating the nature of perceived educational gains made by the attendees of the JWII, here are some more excerpts of how the informants feel about the nature and value of knowledge gained through involvement in the professional development forums and what they see as the role of the JWII in the process:

I am impressed with the Value Added concept. I will be looking forward to the State adopting this concept. ...continue providing up-to-date information about educational issues that impact our students, jobs...promote the exchange of new ideas/information on education...continue to serve as an a leader/advocate in/for public schools-thus ultimately serving in the best interest of ALL students.

Based on these results as indicated by the informants, the JWII seems to expose attendees not only to current educational reforms but also to other strategies that can help improve educational

practice as evidenced by how the qualitative data show their appreciation of the “Value Added Assessment” and how this should be used to influence educational policy statewide. Furthermore, this cohort of participants perceive the JWII as a resource forum where they can be helped to keep abreast of educational issues and also see the Institute as an advocate for public education. For example some of the round table discussions focused on “Yes- urban schools can get outstanding PSSA scores; How to reach and involve parents of non-performing students; Academic standards for alternative high schools.”

Drawing from the communities of practice literature, the JWII as a professional development forum is helping to disseminate meaningful educational information that directly speaks to the practice and policy issues of the school system. Attendees gain knowledge on No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and data driven school improvement that are consistent with national accountability issues and students’ performance. It is clear from their perceptions that informants are acquiring relevant knowledge consistent with their practice in the schools.

Furthermore, what is happening in the JWII seems to be consistent with the idea that in communities of practice, educators generate and share knowledge within a social and cultural context (Buysse, Sparkman & Wesley 2003; Lesser & Prusak, 1999) in order to improve educational practice. Not only is knowing how to lead schools important, but having the right skills and competencies is equally important in managing schools. Against this backdrop, my study looked at the gains made in relation to leadership skills acquisition, which comes under the umbrella of school practice. In exploring the knowledge gains, I also looked at gains that foster a sense of community through participation in the forum.

6.2.2. Developing a Sense of Community

Community building is integral to the fostering of communities of practice. Consistent with this, my case study examined the extent to which through the JWII informants feel they are part of a community. Based on the frequencies, data presented in Table 6-2 show how the participants see themselves as involved in community building. Most of the informants (92.4%) have a strong sense of being part of the community and 89.9% agreed that they share experiences with peers. However, fewer attendees have a sense of belonging as evidenced by 51.5 % who agreed and only 15.2% who strongly agreed. Base on demographic data discussed in Chapter 4, most of the JWII attendees are in some leadership positions in education which means that they share similar careers and experiences. These results show that the JWII as a professional development forum is performing an important role by providing a learning forum for these educational practitioners to share and develop a sense of community identity.

Table 6-2. Informants' Sense of Community

Areas of Potential Gain	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
Gained a sense of being part of a community of women who share similar career interests.	2.5	5.1	65.1	27.3
Shared experiences with peers.	1.0	10.0	50.0	39.0
Developed a sense of identity as an educational leader.	4.1	14.1	57.6	24.2
Developed a sense of identity as a woman in educational leadership.	4.1	21.2	54.5	20.2
Become connected to a network of people who can help me to advance and grow.	4.5	23.3	55.0	17.2
Developed a sense of belonging	2.0	31.3	51.5	15.2

As aspiring and practicing school administrators, they view the forum as creating and giving them a gendered space where they are able to interact and share lessons learned through personal experiences. Using Lave and Wenger's definition of what a community of practice is, it's not just having a group of people in the same field, but in fact, members have a shared set of interests and are motivated to do something about them.

These gains are fundamental as they reflect some of the characteristic nature and value of communities of practice. Looking at the data as presented in Table 6-2, informants perceive themselves as part of a larger community of educational leaders. In addition, these findings seem to show how the Institute is helping those involved with its forum to develop a sense of self as well as a sense and a feeling that not only are they members of a community of women administrators, but they also have a sense of belonging to a broader community of educational administrators that embraces both men and women. This is an indication that they seem to be increasingly integrated into relationships and networks that define a particular community - in this case - school administrators. Derived from these data outcomes the forum seems to provide this cohort of attendees with a space and opportunities to construct and deconstruct their multiple identities.

The level of sharing shows the development of a set of relations and interactions that are integral to the effectiveness of communities of practice. In addition, since the informants are in education (as shown by the demographic data) and appear to have similar values (as shown by their advocacy to honor and sustain Dr. Jean Winsand's legacy and contribute to women, and support to school leadership), this membership seems to be consistent with Lave and Wenger's (1991) statement that membership in a community of practice is self selecting; most of the attendees are women aspiring to be and practicing as administrators, a profession they have been

affiliated with for a number of years as shown by the demographic data on years in current and past positions. Gaining a sense of being part of a community of educational practitioners again provides a common platform and context, a common ground, as well as a shared understanding of the profession including the nature of issues that they have interests in.

6.2.3. Sharing Understanding of the JWII Through its History

Promoting and honoring Dr. Winsand's legacy as discussed in the Chapter 5 and 6 is integral to informants' continued participation. History of the life of an organization is very important because it provides a general or common understanding of what the Institute is all about, what it values, its purposes, etc. Also, history defines the key business of an organization, and at the same time, portrays its identity in terms of what it stands for. History is about standards, meaning, and creating a common ground. Not only that but history sets a legacy and provides pointers that spell out a community's values, purposes and, at the same time helps those involved to frame the kind of issues that are of interest to them, including those in which they have vested interests. History is important because it helps organizations to prioritize and define what they deem to be major or key concerns and relevant business of an organization.

What is evident in the data is the presence of strongly held values about Dr. Jean Winsand's legacy and her contributions, since she initiated this forum. Such strongly held values are congruent with successful communities of practice. Dr. Jean Winsand's legacy continues to provide a very strong and common understanding of what the JWII is all about. Although the Institute was formed more than twenty years ago, responses show that current attendees hold some very strong values that are in step with the initial image of the Institute.

Through history, community members develop a sense of identity, including what the organization stands for and what it values. Legacy also provides meaning and a common ground which, in essence, becomes a springboard for the development of some general and shared understanding. It is through history that members develop some form of shared focus or passion for those things they are concerned with. Attendees of the JWII have a shared history as evidenced by the way they allude to the importance of promoting Jean's legacy, including the reasons why they strongly advocate honoring Jean's legacy.

6.2.4. Gaining a Sense of Belonging

A sense of being part of a community is realized if an individual can identify with the organization he/she participates in. Feeling a sense of belonging is integral to communities of practice. Although ranked in the bottom third of the most responses (See Table 6-2) informants did develop a sense of belonging in the JWII as shown by their cumulative percentage of 66% (slightly more than half of the respondents). Developing a sense of belonging is also key to communities of practice discourses. What is clear about concerns raised by these voices relates to issues of restricted access to the forum that, in turn, limits attendees' levels of engagement and the establishment of relationships within the Institute. The Institute might want to look at actions to address these concerns because they are consistent with other limiting factors identified in Chapter 5.

6.2.5. Developing Identities and Connections

Legitimate peripheral participation as outlined by Lave and Wenger (1991) refers to the process by which newcomers learn and gradually get more involved as they become more acquainted with the group's activity. The process indicates that newcomers start at the periphery, and as they gain more trust and as they get more and more involved and interact, they begin to reciprocate and become more and more active participants. As they get more engaged, they reciprocate through contributions and gradually move towards the center of the group where the core is.

Wenger talks of people being in the periphery and gradually they develop confidence, and a sense of trust, and as a result, make contributions. This entails being engaged, moving from being in the periphery of the group to being an active participant. Wenger (1998) points out that as new people learn the practice of the community that they joined, they then assist in the practices and in the process, gradually develop trust, identify with the group, and develop a sense of belonging. As they continue to learn from the old timers, or those who have identified with the group for longer periods, they gain more confidence and become fully involved in the practice of that group. In a way it's all about enculturation of how new members develop and participate fully, hence the observation by Hildreth (2004) and Wenger (1998) that communities of practice are constantly regenerating. For this case study I also looked at what attendees had to say about the JWII's enculturation process.

Interactions are very fundamental and face-to-face and professional contacts and connections are key to making individuals legitimate. For the JWII, face to face contacts occur during roundtable and hot-topic discussions as well as during the keynote speaker sessions, which usually have a follow-up in the form of question and answer sessions. Furthermore,

attendees in the JWII have opportunities to share and interact, which help to forge strong relationships through participation. Participants are able to share experiences as they deliberate on focused topics. Members participate in these group discussions, which gives them a sense of connectedness. For example, converging on one venue for a day gives them opportunities to meet, and the lunches offered help them to enjoy the social occasions and informal conversations that take place.

6.2.6. Building Relationships in Communities of Practice

Forming relationships is integral to the formation of communities of practice because relationships are tied to how individuals develop a sense of trust and identity that, as highlighted by Wenger, help define communities. In this case study, participants alluded to the importance of the face-to-face contacts in which they engaged during the round table discussions. These face-to-face interactions that occur during the round table discussions as suggested by Hildreth (2004), help to forge strong relationships. The topics have direct relevance to social, contemporary, and educational issues affecting the education system at that time. The following excerpts exemplify a number of participants' perceptions of the Institute which demonstrates their sense of relationships:

I attend to broaden my knowledge base as well as meet other women in my professional choice.
I received a call encouraging me to attend
I am hoping to build a network of other successful female leaders.
Network with female colleagues, spend time with my mentor
and friends who are in administration.

However, what is not apparent is the mode of building such relationships and ways that can be used to sustain them. Attendees perceive that the size of the group as attendees of the JWII,

facilitated them to talk with as many peers as possible; smaller discussion groups help them to foster relationships. On the subject of group size, one informant had this to say:

“The size of the group makes it personal. Informal collaboration time:
access to experts in a small group setting.
The opportunity to learn from others in an informal setting.
Keep the break-out groups. The value lies in its size-it is small,
manageable, and more personalized.
I like the small discussion groups. I really like the size of the group.
I would like to see less lecture and more round table discussion groups.”

Summing up ways the JWII is fostering a community of practice among its attendees, findings presented in Figure 6.1 show that the JWII is fulfilling an important role in a number of ways. The Jean Winsand International Institute fits into the definition of a community of practice in that it informally brings together educational administrators who, share the same interests and seem to be facing similar issues. They share the same vocabulary and language, and learn in a social context, while they engage in organizational capacity building as participatory members.

My analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data reveal that aspiring and practicing administrators in Western Pennsylvania who attend the JWII have strong desires for professional and collegial connections which they believe will help them gain both domain and tacit knowledge. In simple terms, domain knowledge refers to documented knowledge that is easily accessible to those who want it, whereas tacit knowledge refers to knowledge that is hard to transfer, difficult to quantify, and highly personal. Assigning knowledgeable members to lead the discussion groups helps establish connections and facilitate learning to take place across different levels of expertise.

Table 6-2 shows the nature of identity gains that attendees made by being involved with the Institute. Identity levels are multi-layered because participants see themselves as represented in three categories. First, they have gained a sense of being part of a community of women who share similar career interests (92.4%), an indication that they identify with aspiring and

practicing women administrators in Western Pennsylvania, giving them a gendered sense of who they are. Secondly, attendees have developed a sense of identity as an educational leader (81.8%). Informants first regard themselves as women in administration-a group identity- and later as educational administrators. They seem to perceive themselves as having dual identities all evolving on leadership and school practice.

However, what is interesting is their responses about their sense of identity as educational leaders which had higher aggregated frequencies of 81.8% compared to their responses about their sense of identity as a woman in leadership which had lower aggregated frequencies of 74.7%; yet responses about their sense of being part of a community of women who share similar career interests had aggregated frequencies of 92.4%. (Table 6-1). This reflects their sense of belonging to the JWII as a community of women administrators with shared professional interests.

6.3. LEAST GAINS

Table 6-3 shows the issues that were ranked as informants' least meaningful gains.

Table 6-3. Least Perceived Gains

Least Gains	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly Agree %
I feel like a legitimate member of the JWII	8.0	33.0	42.0	17.0
I have learned about interviewing skills and tips	3.1	54.1	31.6	11.2

Although having a gendered sense of self seems to show the JWII's role in helping this cohort to construct their identities, however, informants do not feel like legitimate members of

the Institute. In addition, they do not seem to have learned about interview skills and tips. Considering their ages and current positions, probably this might be irrelevant since they are already in administrative positions as demonstrated by the demographic data presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

In summary, the JWII is providing what Ritchie and Genoni (2002) refer to as career enhancing functions and a sense of professional identity and competencies thus enhancing individuals and community capacities-known as psychosocial functions. These support an individual's sense of self-worth and belief in their capacity to work effectively in their chosen profession. In addition, psychosocial functions also refer to an individual's self-assessment and perceptions and a sense of belonging that involves multiple levels of involvement through professional activities, peer support networks, knowledge and ability to apply skills in the workplace and an awareness of issues affecting their area of work and profession (Ritchie & Genoni, 2002). Career functions basically refers to acquisition of skills and beliefs needed to successfully perform in the respective work.

Through the JWII, the current informants seem to be fostering a community of practice because attendees consider themselves as part of a community. Informants engage in social learning through sharing experiences and through this process, they seem to have acquired a shared language. Furthermore, they seem to have developed networking relationships some of them being gender-specific. By enjoying a shared legacy, they continue to be linked to the JWII as they share information some of which is gender-specific. Based on the informants' responses on my survey question 3 pertaining to self-reported gains, Figure 6-1 summarizes the nature of the gains in relation to the dimensions of communities of practice and the processes used to effect those gains.

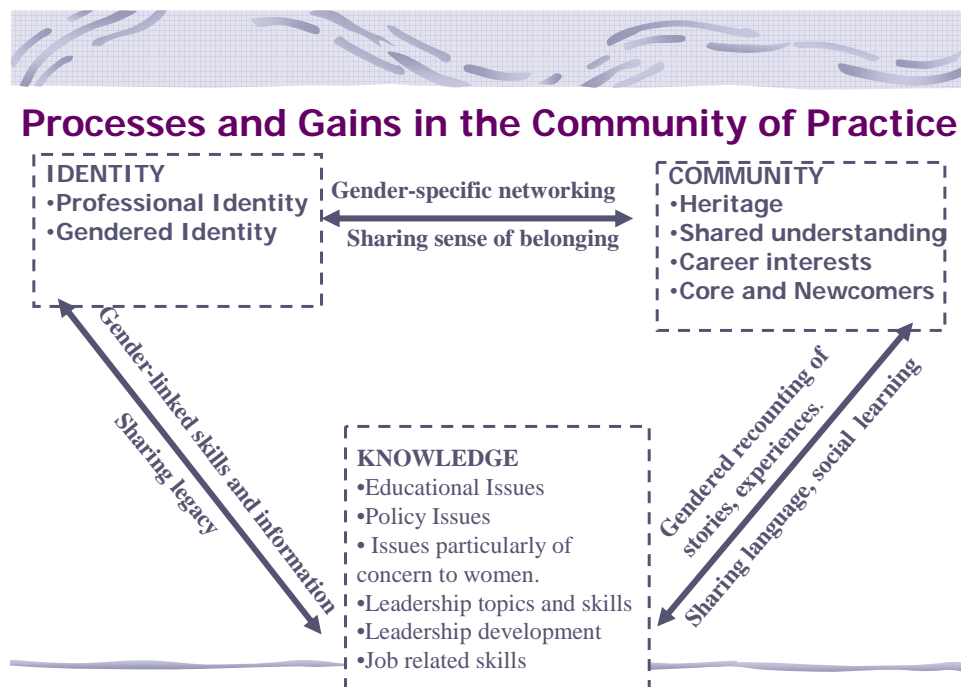


Figure 6-1. Processes and Gains in the Community of Practice

This figure sums up how the JWII is fostering a community of practice. In reference to communities of practice literature and taking cognizance of the dimensions of communities of practice, the JWII seems to be fostering a community of practice because attendees have established for themselves a community of professional practitioners in educational administration. Based on their perceptions, the informants regard themselves as a community because they have a shared heritage grounded in Dr. Jean E. Winsand’s work and her role as empowering and advocating for women’s advancement as reflected in this excerpt:

“...the occasion is a weekly dinner. Everyone who shows up can be sure of three things: The conversation will be lively, the evening memorable, and, most importantly, Jean Winsand will have a thing or two to say about women’s rights. ...her calling was women’s rights. She was concerned that many administrators in the schools were men....”
 (FALL 2003 Pitt Magazine).

The forum brings together educational practitioners whose interests seem to evolve around their careers. For example, most of the attendees are in education and hold administrative positions. Furthermore, as reflected on the number of years these informants have been attendees, a distinctive trend shows that some have been attending for as long as the forum has been in existence while others have had between 1-5 years of active participation. So, both the old-timers (who have been coming since the inception) and new-comers (who have just joined a few years ago now) have opportunities to participate, interact, and informally engage in career, social and professional related conversations during the yearly event. **(SEE APPENDIX N - on Conference programs)**. These characteristics define the situatedness of learning within communities of practice where new people learn from those who have been members for longer periods. So they are involved in social learning as they engage in gendered recounting of their stories and experiences.

Legitimate peripheral participation refers to the art of being engaged and participating as a learner. If I go by the definition of CoP where learning takes place in a participatory framework (Wenger, 1991) based on the informants' response and through gendered recounting of their stories and experiences during the Hot Topics Round Tables, participants seem to share a language specific to their profession and gender. By gathering for a one day event, not only have the informants been able to acquire knowledge that has direct relevance to their professional practice in the schools, they acknowledge to have acquired relevant job-related skills.

Furthermore, a wide array of knowledge gained relates to educational issues, policy mandates, general and gender specific leadership knowledge and skills through learning as a community. A group can regard itself as a community if its members have a sense of identity as professionals as well as women in leadership. This case study has shown that through gender-

specific networking informants have developed a sense of being part of a community of the JWII forum because they continue to share a legacy and its history. It is through gender-linked skills and information that attendees acquired knowledge. These attendees have dual identity as women in educational administrators and as educational administrators. Thus there is a sense of gendered identity and professional identity.

6.4. SUMMARY

These results of my case study have revealed that the JWII is significant in attendees' professional development by helping them participate in a meaningful and beneficial community of practice. The following conclusions can be drawn from the data collected on the gains made by the informants as attendees of the Institute.

- Individuals perceive themselves as part of a network of aspiring and current educational administrators. Most have established some form of connections with their colleagues, friends, experts in their fields of interest, and with old timers of the forum through the JWII.
- Although most of the forum attendees seem to have developed a sense of trust and identity through the connections they have established, however, they do not have a strong sense of belonging.
- Most informants' beliefs are to continue promoting the values of connecting with others as they continue to honor and support Dr. Jean Winsand's legacy.
- Through participating in the JWII's forum, individuals seem to have developed common interests in educational and leadership issues and are keen to explore how these continue

to affect them as women. Therefore, during these forums, attendees share common understanding of the issues that affect women, in general, and those that are specific to their advancement into administrative positions in education (**SEE APPENDIX N- for the multidisciplinary nature of the Hot Topics**)

- Informants also believe that the JWII can equip them with skills and knowledge necessary to advance them into leadership positions as well as update them on current educational reforms and innovations that should help them to keep abreast of educational developments. Coverage of data driven and results oriented assessment is consistent with the current national mandates of High Stake Testing and accountability issues in education.
- Additionally, informants seem to have developed a common language, as demonstrated by their use of Dr. Jean E. Winsand as a reference point of this Institute; they are conversant with the issues of women and school leadership, and are striving to promote and honor her legacy.
- While the informants are clear about the origins of the JWII, a majority still feel it should remain as a women-centered forum yet others believe the forum should involve both men and women and not necessarily target women only. Such a shift seems to be consistent with the perspective that for sustainable changes to occur, both men and women need to collaborate in this broader change process.

The JWII is fostering a community of practice because through gendered recounting of stories and experiences and through gender-specific networking and gender-linked skills and information, attendees seem to have established a community for themselves as they share a legacy of Dr. Jean E. Winsand. Through engaging in social learning, and sharing a sense of

connection, informants seem to have a common understanding that is grounded in their career interests as they develop professional and gendered identities.

This section of my case study has shown that the JWII is fostering a community of practice through sharing knowledge and expertise, social skills, legacy and a sense of identity. In addition, the Institute seems to be fostering a community of practice among its attendees as they engage in gender-specific networking, gender-linked skills and information and gendered recounting of their stories and experiences. The chapter has also shown that the current informants regard themselves as a community because of what they share-understanding, career interests and ways they bring together core members and new-comers. They have a heritage and history that defines them and this makes the forum and its attendees a community.

Having looked at the self reported gains as perceived by the informants and ways the Institute is fostering a community of practice, Chapter 7 focuses on the attendees perceptions about the future of the Institute and their expectations based on data collected on questions 5, 8 and 9 of my main survey instrument. Chapter 7 will explore ways to revitalize and sustain services. In the same Chapter, I will draw conclusions and recommendations based on informants' perceptions. In Chapter 7, foci of the discussion will attempt to answer my research question 3: **In what ways could the Institute provide more services to aspiring and practicing women administrators?**

7. REVITALIZING AND SUSTAINING SERVICES

“Make connections to existing organizations...foster collegial relationships locally and internationally among women educators...I would like to work with principals in a professional development capacity – such as with the Western PA Principals”

JWII Participants.

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This excerpt sums up the attendees expectations and professional benefits that should be forged through participation in the forum. Key is the sense of relationship building through collaborations, partnerships with other organizations. Implied in this excerpt is the sense of identity formation with other colleagues in the profession. Added to this is the national and international visibility that informants believe should help shape the future image of the Institute. Suggestions provided here address the bigger picture of continuity and sustainability hence the advocacy for more connections with other professionals within the country and internationally.

Although becoming a school administrator is a major step in the professional life of an educator (Ponder, et al., 2001), documented evidence collected through research studies show that women take longer to land their first administrative position (Grogan, Bruner, & Price, 2004). Although women are in the majority in education, are well represented in elementary school leadership, and have high enrollments in graduate programs, they continue to be under-represented at the high school leadership and central administration. Indeed, gains have been

made in advancing women into educational leadership. Unfortunately, equity issues in leadership still persist because women leading secondary schools and school districts in the USA are still unusual (Young & McLeod, 2001).

Professional development has been suggested as one of the strategies that can be used to help advance women into administrative roles (US Department of Education, 1992) because of its potential to acculturate and accord women opportunities to be professionally socialized through engaging in a variety of profession related processes and activities. It is through professional development that new recruits and aspirants for leadership positions can learn and be exposed to the rubrics of their trade. As more and more women are assuming positions as principals and superintendents, it is necessary to help and redirect support strategies towards those entering the field of educational administration to succeed and advance (Logan, 1998). This upward mobility has facilitated administrators to share ideas, practices, and experiences to promote professional development and growth.

The JWII fits into the broader definition of communities of practice because it brings together aspiring and practicing school administrators who have developed and share a common understanding of Dr. Jean Winsand's contributions to women and school leadership. Attendees had opportunities to share experiences, gain knowledge and skills that are transferable to their practice in the schools. Through the survey, attendees expressed how they were able to establish collegial and professional relationships through networking, building connections through face to face interactions. Informants also developed layered professional identities, generally as educational administrators, and specifically, as members of a community of women in school leadership.

Role models, support and encouragement, as well as support networks are some of the key components that make women's support groups for professional development effective and viable. Support groups for women administrators are critical because limited involvement in such groups, might potentially limit women leaders' opportunities to interact with other women colleagues and might also limit their access to potential women mentors, confidants, role models and sponsors (Irby & Brown, 1998). In a study on developing a "profile of success" of practicing female principals and superintendents in Massachusetts, Warren (1990), showed that professional development can help increase the number of women in administration.

Although informants' perceptions show that the JWII is fostering a community of practice, based on gains made however, more can still be done to enhance the experiences of those participating in the forum. From the results discussed in Chapter 6, the JWII, as a professional development forum for aspiring and practicing school administrators, is fostering a community of practice because its attendees are educational practitioners who converge for this one-day event to interact, connect, and share information. On the other hand the JWII is not a fully fledged community of practice because attendees are not centrally connected to the Institute and face difficulties to sustain any collegial and professional relationships formed during the one day forum. There is evidence of individual development and community building.

As referenced by past and current cohorts of forum participants, the JWII accords them opportunities to engage into and form collegial and professional relationships through networking opportunities, and develop a sense of identity with the forum as they continue to share experiences and best practices. In view of the self-reported gains made, the purpose of this Chapter is to establish components of the forum that are important for their professional growth. This chapter will focus on suggestions made by informants about professional development

strategies that are appropriate for their future growth, including ways the forum can become more relevant, productive, and able to meet their current and future professional development needs.

Learning, as discussed by Logan (1998), is formulated around issues that matter to the learners. Communities of practice is centered and based on collective expertise (Buysee, Sparkman & Wesley, 2003). Based on attendees' perceptions as discussed in Chapter 6, learning within the JWII's forum is about women and school leadership, educational reforms, leadership development, networking, accountability, and students' academic performance. Generally, individuals participate in activities through which they believe they have something to gain that is valuable to their profession and the education system in particular. Against this thesis, the focus of my Chapter 7 explores the myriad ways informants would like to see the institute grow, expand, and change; especially as it evolves into an international Institute. The future priorities as expressed by the informants will constitute suggestions for the JWII.

This Chapter is about maintaining what is working within this forum and at the same time, identifying the necessary improvements in-line with assertions made by Daresh, (2004) on the need for "practitioners and researchers to turn their attention toward the improvement of leadership development and support" (p.496). Since school districts and several educational agencies have expressed the problems of high attrition rates among practicing administrators coupled with increased reluctance among educational practitioners to pursue careers in school administration (Daresh, 2004), there is a need to explore more effective approaches for the development of educational leaders (Daresh, 2004) which is in-line with the JWII. This section of my case study provides comprehensive suggestions based on the informants' perceptions about the future priorities of the JWII.

My discussion in Chapter 7 attempts to address the demands of research question 3:

In what ways could the Institute provide more services to aspiring and practicing women administrators? Key concerns here pertain to the different ways the Institute can revitalize and sustain itself. Professional development for school leadership is generally held in high esteem as a way to help support women aspirants and those already in educational administration.

If attendees perceive themselves as beneficiaries of professional programs, it then follows that they must be satisfied with what the program offers. In line with this premise and for this case study, I asked for informants' suggestions about areas that would help revitalize and sustain the forum as part of on-going efforts to make the Institute more relevant to the expectations of the participants and the changing demands of school leadership in this 21st century. I found it necessary to collect this kind of information with the hope that outcomes of their perceptions might also influence the nature and structure of subsequent programs offered by the Institute and at the same time, give the Institute an added advantage of making it consumer friendly by addressing the expressed and real educational needs and professional interests of its attendees. Therefore, I asked for my informants' suggestions and recommendations on ways they would like to see JWII grow, change, and expand in the future.

In addition, since the JWII is in the process of internationalizing itself, I also asked my informants' opinions about what would enhance their experiences with the Institute as it evolves into an international forum. The JWII as a professional development institute strives to embrace and foster a community of practice, and since communities of practices are only effective if they function in ways that best suit the interests of the members (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Sparkman & Wesley, 2003), I had to obtain and capture their feedback, and document

their multiple voices and perceptions about ways they want to see the Institute grow, expand, and change.

Supporting some concepts of constructivism on the importance of community knowledge, Lave and Wenger (1991) posit that communities of practice generally develop around things that matter to those people involved. Therefore, if the JWII is to grow and continue to be relevant to the very intricate issues of women and educational leadership, cater for both aspiring and already practicing school administrators, advance and sustain the vision of Dr. Jean Winsand, then it becomes imperative that it takes cognizance of its members' understanding of what is important to them and what they want to see happen in creating an enabling professional development environment.

Regularity and frequency is important for communities of learners (Burt, 1997), because these fundamental factors ensure that organizations are indeed helping the intended population as well as other group members in the manner initially envisaged. To address the demands of research question 3, I use informants' responses to questions 4 and 5 of my main survey instrument. Question 4 had 25 structured questionnaire items and 1 open-ended item at the end of the section that asked for suggestions about the future image of the JWII in relation to how it should grow and change. Using a four point Likert-type scale, I asked informants to rank the extent to which they "Strongly Agree =4; Agree =3; Disagree =2; and Strongly Disagree = 1" with each one of the statements provided. Based on whether the item received more than half responses or had an average score of 2.5 and above because "agree" option is = 3 while "disagree" option is = 2. The mid point between these portion is 2.5, hence my criteria to use 2.5 to determine the broad agreements and disagreements of responses.

Question 5 had 11 structured items and 1 open-ended item. In this section, attendees ranked “appealing ways” that the Institute can enhance their experiences if it internationalizes itself. Using a four point Likert-type rating scale, attendees ranked each item according to the extent to which it was: “Very Appealing = 4; Appealing = 3; Less Appealing = 2; and Not appealing = 1” to internationalize the JWII’s forum. Based on whether the item received more than half responses or had an average score of 2.5 and above because “appealing” option is = 3 while “not appealing” option is = 2. Thus the mid point between these portion is 2.5 hence my criteria to use 2.5 to determine the level of positive and negative responses. To augment my discussion in this chapter, I used the outcomes of questionnaire items 8 and 9- which are open-ended- to collect informants’ suggestions on what they thought should be the top priority for the JWII as it continues as a forum for women in educational leadership. In addition, in this chapter my major findings for this case study, are summarized, conclusions drawn, and recommendations provided for the Institute.

While acknowledging that attendees involved with the Institute have made both personal and institutional gains, forum enrollment remains stagnant and seems to have reached a plateau. I will present both qualitative and quantitative data in an aggregated manner using the following headings: recruitment; suggested ways to increase membership; importance of history and legacy; establishing collaborations; evolving organizational formats; leadership skills development; establishing and maintaining professional connections; developing meaningful professional networks and mentoring. Finally since this chapter centers on the future of the Institute in terms of its longevity, this chapter will summarize the major findings, and suggest possible recommendations and areas for future research.

7.2. FUTURE PRIORITIES

Historically, the inception of the forum was prompted by the under-representation of women in school leadership as well the feelings of isolation by those who had moved into educational leadership positions. Thus, the desire to connect, support, and encourage each other as well as the desire to network and mentor each other prompted those affected to establish collegial and professional relationships. Therefore, the JWII began as an informal support group that served a dual purpose to help those women already in school leadership to connect and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for leadership development, and to encourage other women to take up leadership positions with the intention of connecting and supporting each other and create a critical mass of women in educational leadership. In existence for more than 20 years, the JWII appears to be experiencing regeneration and diversity problems within its participants. The remainder of this chapter explores suggestions on future priorities of the Institute.

7.2.1. Recruiting Attendees

This study shows that individuals benefit and profit from being involved, and this is a strong determinant in attracting prospective attendees. By affiliating with professional associations that promote professional growth, individuals gain some sense of security because professional organizations are places where individuals generally turn to in times of need, including enculturation (Logan, 1998). Through professional affiliations, members are able to connect and develop the requisite professional knowledge and skills that might facilitate them to acquire some professional edge as they build their careers (Ettling, 2001). Membership in professional development associations allows individuals to benefit from fostered collaborations and

partnerships that emerge as a result of one's level of interactions and involvement. Because of such positive outcomes, professional development organizations and policy makers now advocate for more collaborative and on-going professional involvement within organizations (Moore, 2003). The JWII is experiencing participation problems and is having difficulties attracting younger mid-level professionals into their fold. This has serious implications.

Low membership recruitment and mobilization within the JWII professional development forums, if left unabated, might consequentially affect sustainability efforts of the Institute once the current cohorts of the forum eventually move on or retire. Therefore, it is important to put in place an aggressive recruitment drive that can revitalize and promote sustainability of the Institute.

Drawing from the demographic data presented in chapter 4, the aging cohort of the JWII membership presents challenges in attracting a cohort of young educational practitioners to attend this forum. These membership problems as programmatic and institutional issues might threaten the future of the JWII's forums. This is not unique for the JWII because concerns about the age of aspiring and practicing educational administrators seems to mirror the demographic trends already raised by the Wallace Foundation. In a policy briefing titled "Beyond the Pipeline: Getting The Principals We Need, Where They Are Needed Most" evidence from three independent research studies showed that "The principalship is an aging profession .. not just because people hired into administration positions 25 years ago are getting ready to retire, but also because many schools are hiring first-time principals who are already close to retirement age" (American Association of School Administration, 2003, p. 6). In view of this, my survey instrument asked for informants' suggestions about strategic ways to attract, retain and increase forum membership within the region it serves.

The status of an organization can be determined by the size of its participants and the quality of their activities and programs, including its impact on individuals' ultimate performance. As expressed by those who responded, Figure 7-1 shows that encouraging more women in educational leadership roles in the region to attend, and increasing participation by both men and women who can help women advance in the field, should be the two foci of the Institute in its recruitment drive. Either way, implied is building critical mass because numbers matter for advocacy and influencing policy.

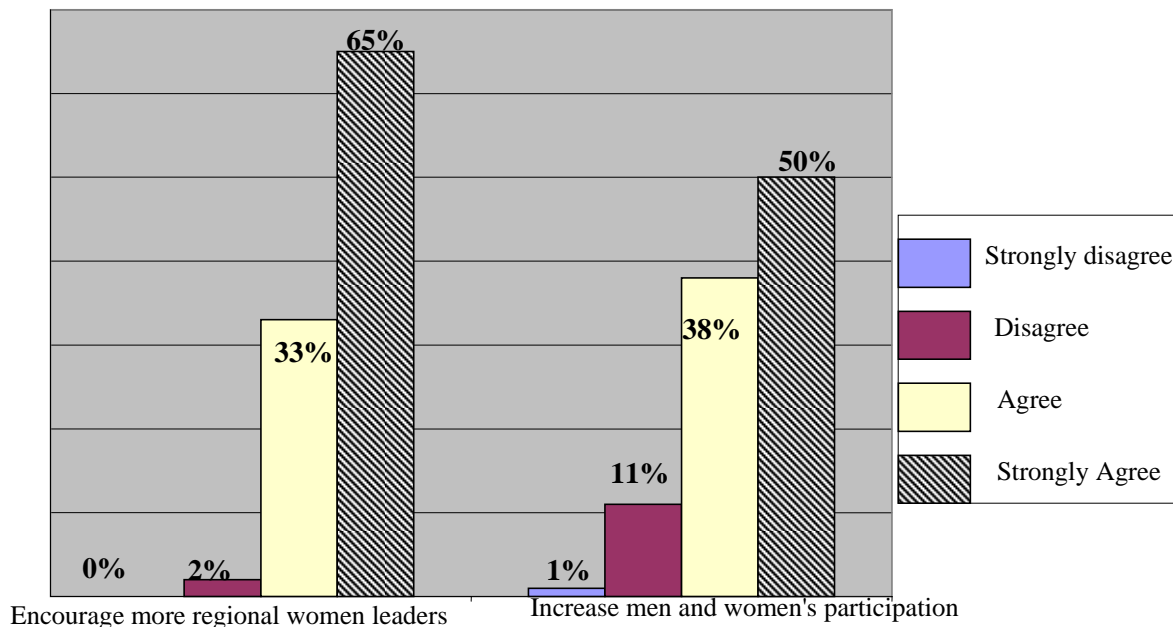


Figure 7-1. Ideal Strategies to Increase Membership

7.2.2. Sharing Understanding of the Legacy

In any educational setting, collegial relationships are important because of their potential to promote organizational change, growth, and development. In exploring the informants' perceptions about fostering and maintaining collegial relationships, attendees of the JWII want

the Institute to continue to promote, support, and honor Dr. Jean Winsand's memory and her accomplishments. In essence, attendees would like to see the continuation of this Institute in honor and support of Dr. Winsand. Since women are still the minority in school leadership, the understanding brought by these women's perceptions is still critically important in modifying professional development forums that resonate with their preferences and areas of interests.

However, while the Institute strives to address such preferences and suggestions, unfortunately without clear documentation of the Institute's accumulated history and legacy, there is danger of losing this shared repertoire once the current cohorts drop out. It is important, as noted by Sobehart (2004) in her forward remarks on the Leadership Challenge, "to capture the voices of pioneering women in educational administration while we still have them, so that we can send those voices into the future to women whom we may never know" (p.5). My research confirms the importance of capturing and documenting this valuable information because legacy shapes identity and future attendees need to have an understanding about the purposes and culture of this forum. Related to legacy is the notion of honoring Dr. Jean Winsand's memory and accomplishments.

Figure 7-2 shows that 58% of the current attendees strongly agree that the Institute should continue to honor Jean's memory and her accomplishments and a sizeable percentage of 38% also agree. They positively identify with what the Institute is all about and consider honoring Dr. Jean Winsand's memory and her accomplishments as the way forward for the Institute. Therefore, an aggregated percentage of 97% of my informants agreed that the Institute should continue to honor Dr. Winsand's memory and her accomplishments. Going by these results, it seems that participants value the Institute and its one-day activities, which are consistent with the vision and mission of why the forum was originally formed. These results also seem to re-affirm

attendees' consciousness about the leadership challenges and the kind of leadership contexts that prompted the creation of the Institute.

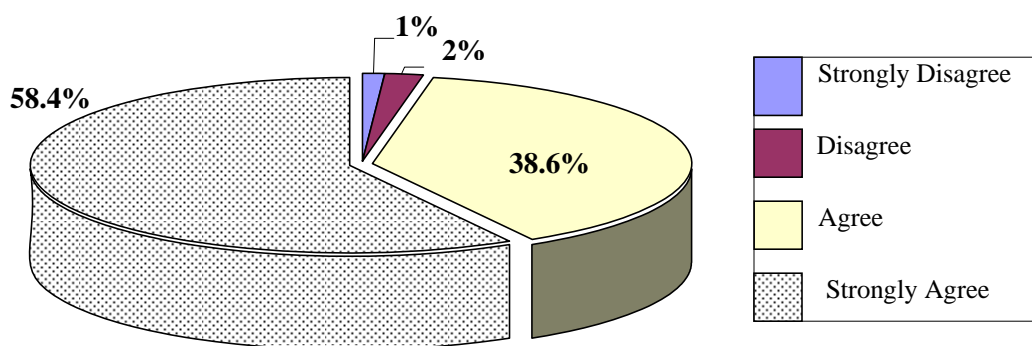


Figure 7-2. Honoring Dr. Jean Winsand's Memory and Accomplishments

By advocating sustaining the JWII, informants value this Institute's relevance to issues of women and educational leadership in general, and school practice in particular, and share a common understanding of women's leadership concerns. In addition and by insisting that the Institute should continue to honor Dr. Jean Winsand and her accomplishments, the attendees seem to have a shared set of interests and shared background knowledge and history about Dr. Winsand's work and her advocacy for women in school leadership, including the importance of promoting students' overall academic performance. Those who still attend the Institute do so because they believe in the forum and what it represents. Because of this kind of recognition for Dr. Winsand and her work, membership is still fairly self-selective in the sense that informants choose to be there because they value Dr. Winsand's contributions towards issues of women, school leadership, and students' overall performance. So the JWII might want to explore ways to reach out, increase attendance and ensure the continuity of this forum.

To further validate the worthwhileness and significance of this forum over time and based on the excerpts presented here pertaining what the top priority of the JWII should be:

Continue to honor Jean Winsand and to address/support females.

Supporting Dr. Winsand's mission for providing a voice and presence in school leadership roles for women.

I hope to see the organization grow as it continues to support women as instructional leaders.

Honor Jean's legacy. Promote Dr. Winsand's ideals.

Nurturing what Dr. Winsand began.

Honoring Jean and enhancing the region's support for women in educational leadership are most important components to me.

Increase recognition for Dr. Winsand and promote her values and goals.

These quotes give strong and clear message that forum informants want the Institute to continue as a gendered space for supporting women's advancement into educational leadership. Dr. Winsand and her work with women in educational leadership have significant implications for the Institute's future. It is apparent that Dr. Winsand's contributions continue to be held in very high esteem. It's unfortunate that her history and these significant contributions are orally available only and not readily accessible through other formats. If they continue to remain undocumented, there are serious implications that might affect the forum's identity and gradually erode its reputation. Over the years and by relying on narratives of this oral history as currently is the case, the significance of the Institute may fade gradually and eventually be lost as the years go by especially when new recruits who did not know Dr. Winsand personally become the JWII's new cohorts.

Indeed there is a very rich history here, which I believe should be documented so as to capture and accord Dr. Jean Winsand the recognition she deserves and is supported by the past and current attendees. If this rich history and Dr. Jean Winsand's contributions remain undocumented, there is a danger of losing track of its pioneers and their contributions towards women and educational administration including the legacy of all those who worked hard to

build a critical mass and promote women’s visibility in school leadership. Since the level of parity in school leadership has yet to be achieved especially beyond elementary school level, there is still need for more intentional efforts to revitalize and sustain the continuity of this Institute as a forum for leadership growth and development.

7.2.3. Fostering Collaborations

Based on the informants’ responses pertaining to collaborations, Figure 7-3 suggests strategies that can help establish and enhance effective collaborations. As a future priority for the Institute, results in Figure 7-3 show that attendees want the Institute to partner in professional collaborations, research and conference attendance.

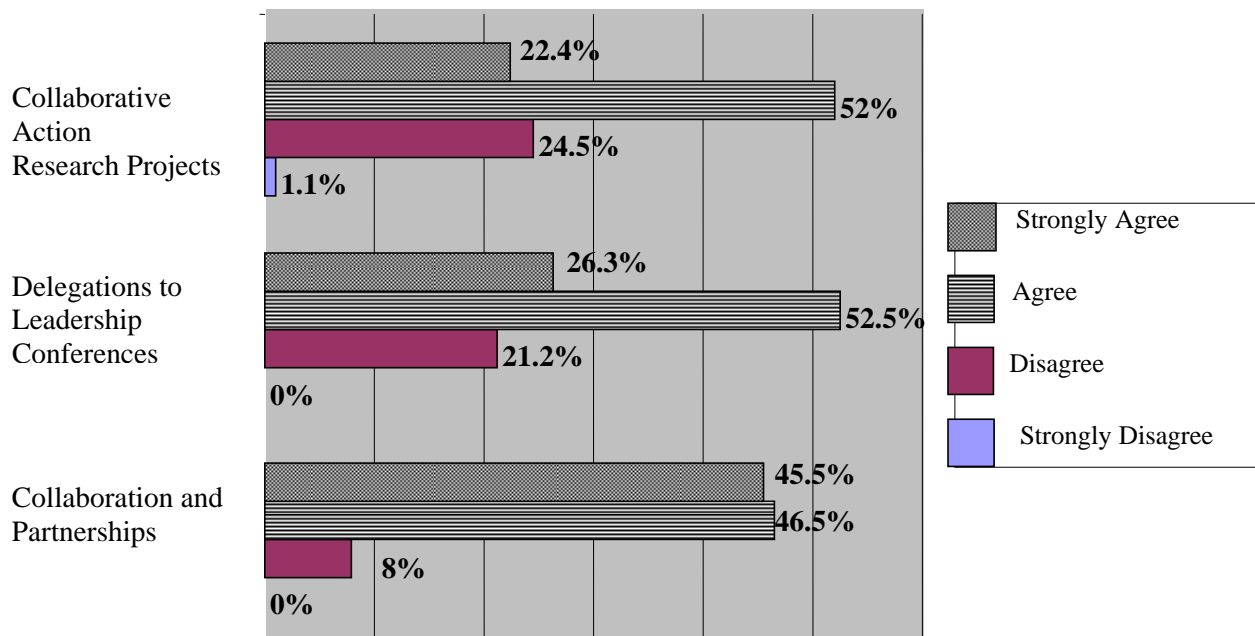


Figure 7-3. Key Collaborating Strategies

As shown in Figure 7-3 effective collaborative strategies can be done in three ways within the JWII group, as an outreach and as a professional development support forum through:

- Promoting collaborations and partnership with other leadership programs in the region as indicated by a cumulative percentage of 92%.
- Having delegations to local, regional, and international leadership conferences for women as indicated by an aggregated response of 78.8% of the attendees.
- Engaging in collaborative research projects as supported by an aggregated percentage of 74.4% of the informants.

A clear message here is the need for the Institute to work towards fostering collaborative relationships and partnerships with organizations whose foci are similar to the JWII's forum.

These findings seem to be in line with the positive attributes of women's capabilities to collaborate. Outcomes of my case study appear to be consistent with the importance of collaborations and partnerships as espoused in literature. Informants urged the Institute to establish lasting connections as reflected by these excerpts:

Make a connection to existing organizations like the Women's Caucus- Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) to draw more women. E-mail all districts. Foster collegial relationships locally and internationally among women educators...I would like to work with principals in a professional development capacity-such as with the Western PA Principals. Make a connection with the Western PA Principal's Academy- Dr. (name supplied) & Dr. (name supplied).

Partnering and collaborating are highly rated because they help women and organizations build capacity to generate, share, and disseminate knowledge and skills. Also, based on these excerpts, forum attendees already have individuals renowned for their expertise whom they consider to be potential resource persons who can enhance participants' experiences with the forum. This supports some qualifying concepts of communities of practice whereby within these informal learning groups there are layers of participants, i.e., core as experts and seasoned

members, while others are in the periphery and gradually move towards the center as they continue with the enculturation process- a process referred to as legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

This cohort of attendees expressed their desire to become part of other professional development programs for school leadership already in existence and urges the JWII to affiliate with such organizations. Attendees' interests in being part of collaborative efforts are, in fact, congruent with recommendations made by Irby and Brown (1998) that women's administrative support groups should be encouraged to form coalitions and collaborate with other state agencies and organizations.

Furthermore, the attendees suggested ways to continue to build international leadership forums through joint publications and dissemination of best practices. Table 7-1 shows that 44.6% see the ability to collaborate and develop joint publications as appealing while 33.7% see it as most appealing to them. Cumulatively, more than three quarters of the informants (78.3%) agree that international involvements through collaborations and partnerships are some of the priorities they want the Institute to implement.

Table 7-1. Strategies to Internationalize Professional Collaborations and Partnerships

	Not Appealing	Less Appealing	Appealing	Most Appealing
Develop joint publications and dissemination of best practices	3.0%	18.7%	44.6%	33.7%
Establish viable partnerships with international organizations	3.0%	25.7%	54.5%	16.8%

Although some had this to say that: "I feel we need to focus on the needs here in our own area, region and state in meeting state and general mandates and needs" because: "International administrators do not always relate to urban or suburban environment that we work in daily.

Often there is a disconnection which has been obvious in their presentations. I personally do not want to devote a day to discuss education in another country.” However others are in support of fostering international collaborations and partnerships as validated by this excerpt: “I love the international connections -I have been partnering with [country name supplied] and [country name supplied] –wonderful idea! Fabulous idea. Could [name of university supplied] assist with this?” Therefore by acknowledging the significance of collaborating in creating shared knowledge at an international level, attendees of his forum are interested in creating, disseminating, and sharing knowledge and best practices with colleagues elsewhere.

A number of those with dissenting perceptions do not see the value because content and strategies of such focus do not resonate with the type of contemporary educational issues they deal with in the schools and with their education systems in particular. Another possible explanation for the lack of appreciation about internationalizing the forum might be attributed to lack of prior international exposure and participation because those who acknowledge the value of fostering international collaboration and partnerships are already involved with global concerns in one way or the other. Also, because of the current challenges and demands of public education on educational personnel, some informants did not see the feasibility of collaborating and partnering with international organizations because foreign education systems are incompatible with the USA’s education systems and had this to say: “We need to concentrate on our own issues both at the federal and state levels. Public education is overwhelming and exhausting!” Contrary to a parochial focus and in support of international comparison of education systems, Pulkowski (2005:36) had this to say:

Comparing academic achievement is a relatively new phenomenon that is both a highly complex and sophisticated process. Yet, a review of the information that has been produced during the past two decades does identify countries that have high-achieving students. These international studies are beginning to provide a basis for determining what constitute world-class

achievement...Therefore careful attention should be given to educational practices in other countries, as well as other districts within the United States, to identify the practices that appear to work and result in high levels of student achievement.

So it matters to know other systems and prepare students appropriately so that they do not lag behind. However regardless of these few critics among the participants, the majority of the informants want this institutional forum to collaborate and partner with others, including the international level. Other than collaborating and partnering, and based on the attendees' responses, building professional connections appear to entice them to internationalize the Institute.

7.2.4. Retaining the Forum's Focus on Current Educational Issues

In Chapter five, attendees acknowledged that learning about educational issues prompted them to become first time attendees of the Institute. Addressing educational issues was again perceived as one of the major goals of the forum. On self-reported gains, attendees reported that by participating in the JWII's forum, they gained generalized and specialized educational knowledge, skills, and competencies. Knowledge sharing and skills development is integral to the functions of the Institute and is an aspect they would like to see continued. Some aspects of knowledge gains that they want the Institute to sustain includes updating forum participants on current educational issues. Deducing from these responses, addressing educational issues is of significant value as the forum revitalizes and sustains itself as an educational resource for re-education. Figure 7-4 shows the nature of knowledge concerns that are of significance to most of the informants, which should continue to be sustained in this revitalization process.

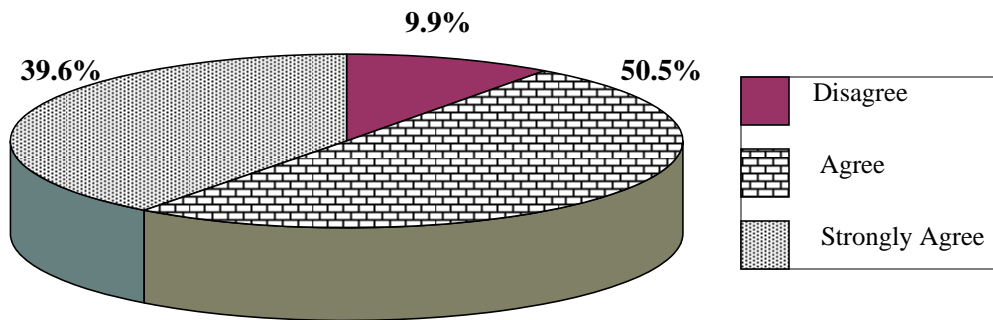


Figure 7-4. Retain Focus of Current Educational Issues

Inception of reforms and educational innovations involve effective dissemination and re-education of educational practitioners and those in school leadership so that they have a better grasp of what is expected of them. Based on the outcomes of informants' responses, it seems attendees consider the Institute as a forum where they can be updated on current educational issues and subsequently suggest that it continues to retain this focus. Figure 7-4 shows that cumulatively most of the informants (90.1%) positively supported the notion of being updated on current educational issues and would like to see the Institute retain this focus.

This case study shows that getting updates on current educational issues is one of the many aspects that should continue within the professional development for school leadership in the Western Pennsylvania region. On the international realm, this forum's cohort would like the Institute to engage in shared knowledge of international concerns. Figure 7-5 shows that a cumulative percentage of 73% want the Institute to share international and topical educational concerns while a small aggregated percentage of 27% saw this as less and not appealing. Therefore for more than half of these attendees, to rejuvenate and sustain itself, the Institute should focus on internationalizing educational concerns.

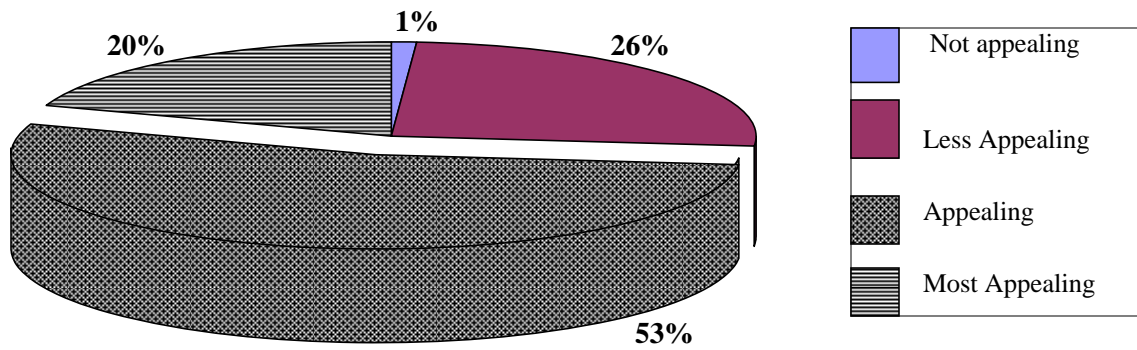


Figure 7-5. Internationalizing Topical Concerns

7.2.5. Developing Leadership

With continued initiation and implementation of school reforms, accountability of these reforms rests with school leadership as responsible agents of change. Within schools, vacancies for principal and superintendent positions are increasing at a time when more women than men are enrolled in preparation programs for educational administration (Logan, 1998). Changes taking place in today's schools open a window of opportunity for more women to move into educational administration (Logan 1998). Since education reforms bring a new governance structure, modify leadership practices, and emphasize accountability for results, it helps those involved to support each other through networking, mentoring, and collaborating. This might also be pointers to conditions that favorably advance gender equity and enable women to collectively strive to energize equity strategies (Logan, 1998). For this case study I explored the type and focus of leadership development that is of interest to attendees.

7.2.6. Restructuring Forum Content

Content and structure relate to issues of topics, sessions and alternative offerings besides the one-day event that the Institute currently offers. Figure 7-6 shows that the majority of the attendees (91%) would like the Institute to streamline the number of topics in order to provide more in-depth information. Thus while attendees seem to have benefited from the topics covered during these one-day forums, the majority of this cohort seems to believe that with more streamlining of topics, they would gain more in-depth information. In addition, 89.1% of the attendees would like the forum to offer specific sessions for those who have yet to reach their first leadership positions.

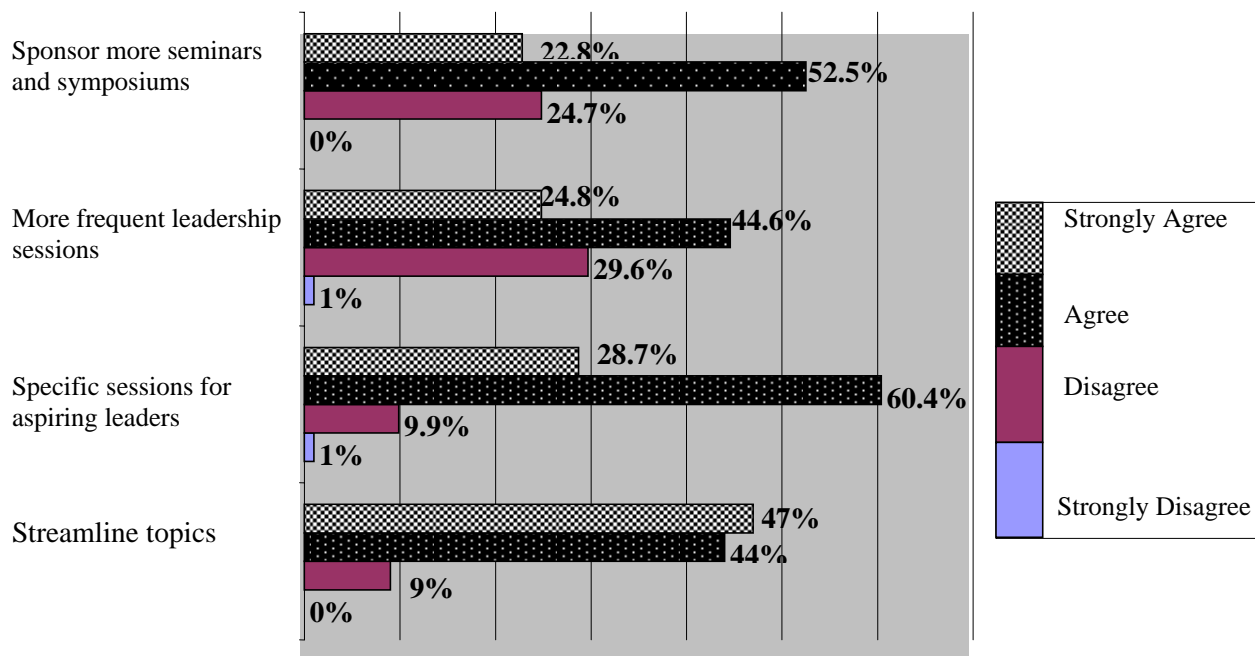


Figure 7-6. Content and Structure

Figure 7-6 shows that attendees have various professional needs and are at different levels of their professional development. Such a request shows that the informants consider the

Institute as a socializing forum, hence the suggestions for more focus on their unique leadership skills requirements. Other than the one-day event that the Institute currently offers in the form of a leadership forum, an aggregated percentage of 75.3% of its attendees would like to have more engaging opportunities through seminars and symposiums. Informants would like the Institute to sponsor more seminars and symposiums while 69.4% of the attendees would prefer to have these kind of leadership sessions offered on a more regular basis. Deducing from the informants' perceptions, the current one day event seems inadequate to effectively support and sustain these women administrators' professional development for educational leadership, and they would like more frequent activities.

7.2.7. Revitalizing the JWII Through Building Relationships

A community of practice is about relationships, establishing sustainable connections, networks, creating, sharing and disseminating knowledge, fostering conducive support for individuals, community and organizational development and growth. The ability to stay connected is integral to the functioning of a community of practitioners. The cohort's suggestions on ways to foster connectedness follow.

Communities of practice are about relationships that are a result of communicating and connecting. The JWII's professional forums can also be effective and enhance attendees' experiences if those involved have ways to stay connected for longer periods beyond the one-day event. Table 7-2 shows that although the JWII attendees are able to interact during the one-day event, they would like to have more lasting relationships that can be sustained beyond the one-

day event. An aggregated percentage of 91% understands and suggests that the Institute should establish a database and contact list, or a list serve.

Table 7-2. Staying Connected

Ways to Stay Connected	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Establish a database and contact list/list serve	0%	9.0%	58.0%	33.0%
Ask for our opinions as frequently as possible	0%	17.2%	61.6%	21.2%
Generate a JWII newsletter	0%	24.4%	42.9%	32.7%

These findings are supported by Irby and Brown's (1998), recommendations on ways to increase women administrators support through publishing and providing a directory of women's administrative support organizations. In addition, there is power in the use of technology because current trends show that most organizations and programs increase their visibility, and members stay connected through the use of the Internet because of its capabilities to transcend traditional and historic barriers as it advances women's goals and facilitate the exchange of important information (Glasscock, 1998). Therefore, technology and the internet are key assets in generating and disseminating information.

So technology and internet might be something that the JWII might want to consider further as suggested by many informants in the current cohort of participants. Participatory contributions seem the way forward for the Institute. As shown in Table 7.2, a cumulative total of 82.8% want the Institute to get formative feedback from them through soliciting their opinions on a regular basis. Collecting participants' feedback on a regular basis has important implications because the forum is conducted as a support network for those involved. It becomes necessary for the informants to express their professional needs and expectations, which might

help to influence the what, how, to whom, and by what means of institutional proceedings vis-a-vis attendees' needs and aspirations.

For the forum's future, attendees also underscored the need to generate a JWII newsletter, which might make the forum more visible as it captures and disseminates specifics of the Institute in its efforts to reach out and connect current and prospective participants. A total of 75.6% want the Institute to have a JWII newsletter. Thus, modes of communication and ways for institutional publicity are key in defining and determining the forum's visibility, hence the need to think about creating a web page for the forum as a marketing tool. In view of my informants' perceptions based on how the Institute could revitalize itself, key is the importance of staying connected. It's also equally important for the Institute to take cognizance of this cohort's concerns because listening to what women say about themselves and their experiences is the first step toward understanding women's leadership development.

Since the forum has been in existence for more than twenty years, the internet could be used to create a website for the JWII and to market itself as it educates those interested by spelling out its vision, mission statement, activities and forums, etc. This resonates with recommendations made by Irby and Brown (1998) about the need for women's support groups to publicize information about membership, meetings, and networking opportunities.

7.2.8. Promoting the Femeness of the Institute

Initially as a forum for women to connect, the JWII evolved into a women's conference held once a year. This was prompted by the complex issues of that time when few women were moving into administrative positions, and those who did had to grapple with isolation and loneliness because they did not enjoy as much collegial support as needed. So, over the years,

advocacy for women's role in school leadership continues to take center stage and programs have mushroomed that target women as the intended audience. In line with this trend of development, some informants want to see more of the femaleness dominating the image of the Institute, while others feel the forums should be more embracing - not accommodating one gender at the expense of the other. To this latter group, both sexes must complement each other, since as noted by some who want Dr. Winsand to be remembered in a broader role, as an educator who strived to promote and improve school leadership that would ultimately raise the quality of students who graduated from the school system. In the final section of this chapter, I am going to summarize, conclude, and suggest recommendations based on this study.

Potential benefits of some of the formal professional leadership initiatives that women attend are well documented, yet there is very little documentation of those that are informal in nature and coordinated by universities. Since my case study is an informal forum whose main focus evolves around a yearly one-day event conducted during the spring as a conference, I hope to contribute insights into the significance of gender specific professional development, as well as to provide feedback to the coordinators of the Institute. This feedback, as illuminated from the attendees' perceptions, can be used to help reshape future programs of the Institute and can also help situate emerging ways women are thinking about educational leadership for the 21st century.

My study is a deliberate and conscious effort to increase such literature that, in essence, should make up the knowledge base for female educational administrators (Sobehart, 2004). My study is significant because communities look upon universities for leadership, as university coordinated programs are considered catalysts for change (Logan, 1998). My case study is an examination of a university coordinated educational leadership development program for women

offered through the JWII. In this final section of chapter seven, I will sum up the major findings of my case study as reflected in each of my chapters, and then suggest recommendations for the Institute and for further research. Although several issues were raised, I will focus on the dominant outcomes based on my research questions and chapter details.

7.3. CONCLUSIONS

My case study of the Jean E. Winsand International Institute (JWII) explored the perceptions of aspiring and practicing women administrators' experiences with the hope of capturing and documenting their collective voices as part of formative feedback that would spiral back and influence the future activities of the forum. By focusing on women's perceptions, and using communities of practice as an analysis tool, the purpose of my case study is to help reshape and document the collective voices and experiences of women educational administrators in Western Pennsylvania as they strive to situate and frame their experiences. With the increase of women's training programs and claims that they promote women's leadership growth, analyzing the fundamental impacts of these programs is necessary and very important. Therefore there is a need to establish the various ways they benefit as attendees of this one-day event.

Communities of practice allude to the importance of regeneration where younger recruits learn the trick of the trade and this helps to ensure continuity of a community. Illuminating from the age-ranges and race issues, it seems that the Institute is facing regeneration and racial diversity problems because of the difficulties it is facing in attracting younger educational practitioners and minorities to participate in the forum. Regeneration might have serious implications for the institutional sustainability once the current cohort drops out. Lack of racial

diversity within the forum mirrors and is a reminder to the social justice and equity issues prevalent in the schools and society at large.

Program and systematic structures limit both participation by teachers as aspiring administrators and assistant principals as practicing administrators because they cannot get time off to attend, since the forum is held during working hours when schools are in session. Principals and other key administrators are important socializing agents for school leadership. With the current JWII's forum set-up, these categories of professionals will not be able to interact, share, and be in dialogue, yet they constitute a major pool from which administrators are drawn. The interplay between motivating factors, perceived major goals and gains made show a strong relationship because of the congruence among these three issues.

My results show evidence that the JWII is fostering a community of practice. By making reference to issues that affect them as women administrators, the Institute is striving to give attendees a gendered space as they develop gendered networks, identities and knowledge. Attendees, for the most part, continue to perceive the JWII's forum as still attuned to addressing equity concerns, and consistent with communities of practice literature. Through sharing experiences, best practices, expertise and knowledge the forum seems to accord these women a sense of identity, a shared understanding of the forum as a community of practitioners, and a platform to construct and deconstruct their identities and knowledge as they engage and interact in both formal and informal sessions throughout the day. By developing skills and competencies grounded in their practice in the schools and alluding to issues of women and school leadership, there is some mutual sense of purpose-to continue as advocates for the national scope to increase women's representation in school leadership and impact students' overall academic performance and their practice in the schools.

In summary, I can say the JWII is still considered as an Institute with an oral and undocumented vision and mission to advance women into educational leadership and it continues to support the regional and national efforts to build critical mass of women for educational leadership. Current attendees want to continue honoring Dr. Winsand's vision and accomplishments and seem to have a sense of shared repertoire that is consistent with dimensions of communities of practice. Most of the attendees are in education and what defines and connects them is the school practice, the national equity issues of women's representation in school leadership beyond elementary school principalship, as well as their interests in improving students' academic performance. The discourses dominating the forums are still framed within broader issues of building critical mass of women administrators. Therefore attendees are a community of practitioners who come together with a mutual sense of purpose to share experiences, expertise and best practices.

Result in chapters 5 and 6 show that my informants fulfill some of these elements because as peers in educational administration, they have developed a language that identifies them with the JWII, and seem to have developed group solidarity and cohesiveness cemented by their sense of purpose for school leadership as they share knowledge, skills and competencies meant to advance their practice. Having a gendered sense of self seems to show that the JWII is helping this cohort to construct their identities, values, and beliefs. In a nutshell, some forum programs meet the attendees' expectations while others fall short and attendees would like to see the Institute continue but embracing their professional needs not current being met.

7.3.1. Implications for the Institute

- History and heritage of an organization are important determinants of identity and enculturation is integral to the socialization process. Although the current cohort of attendees acknowledge the important role of the Institute, if such history is left undocumented much will be lost once the current cohort of attendees are gone.
- Serious and more aggressive strategies need to be instituted so that the international image of the JWII becomes more visible and clearly defines its outlook. Informants want more collaboration with similar programs and names were suggested and opportunities to engage in networking that can be sustained beyond the one day event and across regions.
- Incorporate and create a permanent mailing list and list serve as a separate entity from the other lists used by Tri-State Area School Study Council- facilitates faster communication that targets the intended audiences and constituencies.
- Learning in communities of practice is about interacting with others towards a common goal and individuals find themselves belonging to different communities of practice. Since informants expressed their desire to network across regions and increase regional and national visibility of the Institute, there is need for the JWII to affiliate, partner and participate in American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) and other such organizations in order to attract new attendees and boost the forum's attendance rates.
- Since attendance has reached a plateau and since some categories of educational personnel are not able to attend there is need to re-look at alternative strategies and offer more activities in addition to the one day event.

- Based on the geographic locations and demographic data, the Institute is confined to a few counties, barely covers half of the counties on Western Pennsylvania and school practitioners, yet the Principals Academy is fairly visible in the same region. Probably what is needed right now is an aggressive and strategic recruitment plan and a proactive membership drive to help bring more people into this forum of educational leadership as women continue to honor and promote Dr. Winsand's legacy and vision.
- To accommodate the discerning voices and in line with the dichotomies observed, the Institute might want to consider offering more sessions. While some might be offered as specific gender forums, others might be structured as open forums where both males and females attend and collaborate on issues of quality leadership, student performance, curriculum, regional and national policy reforms and share best practices.
- Connectedness and continuity of established relationships is integral to communities of practice. An important social aspect of communities of practice entails allowing experienced members opportunities to pass on the advice, knowledge and expertise to newer members through collaborating, sustaining networks and working together. This is not happening at a large scale. To connect participants, the JWII might start thinking of putting together a mentoring and networking database and creating a website for the Institute where the history of the forum is articulated, its vision and mission statements spelled out and future programs and upcoming activities posted.
- There are policy and systemic issues that stifle teachers' opportunities to participate.

7.3.2. Implications for the Department and the School of Education

- Although inception of the JWII was a response to the marginalization of women in school leadership, the way the Institute has evolved over time as an informal program resembles a community of practice. However informal forums also need a coordinator for them to run smoothly and efficiently. Perhaps the department and the School might look at possibilities to make the JWII more effective by intentionally streamlining its activities and having a coordinator who organizes its activities and embarks on an aggressive outreach and recruitment program. The coordinator with the concern of the department could work with the different school districts and from time to time offer symposiums and cluster meetings in collaboration with forum attendees and international partners.
- The power of technology and use of the internet has been well documented in literature and advantages highlighted include its capabilities to enable institutes and organizations to transcend distance, space, and historical barriers. Current informants want the JWII to establish a list serve and email list that will keep them connected on a regular basis. Therefore gaining access to each other could accord attendees opportunities to stay connected in pursuit of their goals and careers and in pursuit of networking contacts and opportunities. This could also be one of the many alternative ways and possibilities to rejuvenate the Institute. If implemented, the list serve could add a new dimension to the practice of women in school administrators. All this needs a budget and the School of Education might want to explore ways to support a venture of this nature including the staffing requirements, resources and office space for the Institute.
- Starting to document, organize and build a resource base that can be tapped into needs money and personnel that will focus on the issues of the JWII. A more systematic and

reliable approach is needed to create a network of people and the School might want to explore ways to support the implementation of this archiving process. By completing 102 surveys out of the 185 sent out, this cohort of attendees have passion for the JWII and would like to see it sustained in honor of Dr. Jean Winsand's legacy and her work not only with women and school leadership but also her work with the:

- School of Education, the Department of Instruction and Learning,
- School Leadership Development Program, and
- Tri-State within the University of Pittsburgh; as well as her contributions beyond the University of Pittsburgh in aspects concerning,
- Network of Women Administrators and
- School Leadership Organization. All these are areas that I was not able to get to, yet they help to define her accomplishments and contextualize the issues of women and school leadership.

7.3.3. Future Research

- Further research might be needed to follow-up on those who did not return my surveys.
- Also further research might be needed to follow-up all the pioneering group so that this authentic legacy is archived and made part of the Institute.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER FROM IRB



University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board

Exempt and Expedited Reviews
Christopher M. Ryan, Ph.D., Vice Chair

3500 Fifth Avenue
Suite 105
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: 412.578.3424
Fax: 412.578.8566
e-mail: irbexempt@msx.upmc.edu

TO: Annamore Matambanadzo
FROM: Christopher M. Ryan, Ph.D., Vice Chair *Chris*
DATE: 4/21/03

PROTOCOL: Professional Development for Women in Educational Leadership in
Western PA: A Case Study of Their Perceptions of the Jean Winsand Institute

IRB Number: 0304090

The above-referenced protocol has been reviewed by the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board. This protocol meets all the necessary requirements and is hereby designated as "exempt" under section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Exempt protocols must be re-reviewed every three years. If you wish to continue the research after that time, a new application must be submitted.

- If any modifications are made to this project, please submit an 'exempt modification' form to the IRB.
- Please advise the IRB when your project has been completed so that it may be officially terminated in the IRB database.
- This research study may be audited by the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office.

Approval Date: 4/21/03
Renewal Date: 4/21/2006

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Professional Development for Women in Educational Leadership in Western PA: A Case Study of their Perceptions of the Jean Winsand Institute.

Interview Questions for Background Information about the Institute and its Founding Members.

1. What prompted the founding of this Institute and during what time frame in terms of topical debates and era in the struggle of women for visibility and representation in educational administration was it inception? (Why was the initiative inception- what issues was it meant to address and why?).
2. From its origins how has the program evolved over time to be what it is and why?
3. What other professional development programs are offered through the Jean Winsand Institute?
4. Since Jean Winsand was a pioneer in this initiative, can you please provide me with the History of Jean Winsand (what can you say about Jean Winsand as a person and her personality) who she was since she ushered this concept of professional development? and over time who came on board-(if I am to write about her what information should I include?)
5. What unique characteristics can you particularly single out that you think made her more and more approachable by other women?
6. What type of problems did she face in bringing about this initiative including those working closely with her and how did she resolve them?
7. Most initiatives thrive for a short time and over time die a natural death. What do you think helped to sustain this so that its still operational up to date?
8. How do participants get to know about it? (looking at modes of publicity) and do you have any suggestions of how it can be made better?

APPENDIX C: PRE-SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Fostering A Community of Practice for Women in Leadership: The Jean E. Winsand International Institute for Women in School Leadership of the Tri State Area School Study Council.

We are conducting this survey to understand the value of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII) as part of professional development for women in school leadership. We are interested in learning about how former and current participants in the JWII define its significance in their overall career paths and daily practice. Findings from this survey will be reported in an aggregated manner and no individual names will be used. Individually identifying information will only be used for the purposes of clarifying written responses and compiling demographics of participants. We **appreciate** your feedback in helping us shape the future of the **Jean Winsand International Institute!**

What were the overall goals and motivations that prompted you to attend the Jean Winsand International Institute the very first time?

What keeps you coming back? What should we definitely keep?

When you compare the JWII to other forums and kinds of professional development, what are the major features that distinguish this ongoing event? What makes it unique or particularly valuable?

(Please continue on the reverse side.)

What are the key things you have learned through the JWII that have helped you in your professional and personal life?

In what ways would you like to see the JWII change, grow, or refocus?

What would you enjoy most about having the JWII become more of an international community of women in school leadership?

Which priorities or principles do you suggest we use to help shape the future of the JWII?

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA.

Please complete.

Title: Dr./Mrs./ Ms./ Miss/Other: ____ Name: _____

Complete Work Address: _____

Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number(s):

Work: () - **Home:** () - **Cellophone:** () -

Current Position:

Location:

Number of years in current position: ____

Immediate previous position:

Location:

Number of years in immediate previous position: ____

I hope my next professional step will be to become . . .

My ultimate career aspiration is to . . .

Year you first attended a JWII (or formerly the Women's Conference): ____

Total number of years, including this one, that you have attended: ____

We will use the responses to this survey to construct and conduct a detailed follow-up survey. It will be

sent to all the participants who have taken part in a JWII or its predecessor.

Please indicate which of the following survey formats you would prefer to respond to:

On-line survey ☐ Paper survey ☐ Either ☐
(with prepaid return envelope)

THANK YOU FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THIS RESEARCH ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FORUM.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. What motivates aspiring and practicing women administrators to attend the JWII?

Check (x) your most important reasons for attending to be primary factors and those less important reasons for attending to be secondary factors for each of the motivating factors listed below.

Motivating factors	Primary factor	Secondary factor	Not a factor
1. Learn more about current educational issues			
2. Learn more about how women attain administrative positions			
3a. Develop networks of colleagues			
3b. Exposure to opportunities to network with both men and women			
4a. Find appropriate/good mentors			
4b. Build interpersonal relationships			
5. Acquire special job related skills			
6. Get ideas about career planning			
7. Support and honor legacy of Dr. Jean Winsand and her work to promote women			
8. Become aware of opportunities in a male dominated field.			

List other motivating factors not provided above. Please specify:

2. For each item, check (x) what you consider/perceive to be the major and minor goals of the JWII.

	Major Goal	Minor Goal	Not a goal
1. Build group identity			
2. Share new ideas, best practices and lessons learnt			
3. Engage in collective learning and practice			
4. Learn by sharing experiences through face to face interactions.			
5. Develop personal relationships and trust			
6. Increase representation of women in educational leadership			
7a. Help aspiring and practicing women administrators to establish acquaintances and contacts through networking			
7b. Provide support for networks that can meaningfully affect women's issues.			
8. Support professional development of women administrators			
9. Help women to seek role models and mentors			
10. Increase women's leadership skills and knowledge			
11. Help women to define their career goals			
12. Continue to promote Dr. Jean Winsand's legacy			

Any other major goals? Please specify:

3. In your opinion:

a. which features or aspects of the JWII are or were most meaningful/helpful to you and why?

b. which features or aspects of the JWII are or were least meaningful to you and why?

4. Indicate the relative/values of the things you learned through the JWII that have prepared you for higher level/administrative responsibilities.

	Very Valuable 4	Valuable 3	Less Valuable 2	Not at all Valuable 1
1. Knowledge of educational issues through shared experiences				
2. Content of yearly conference sessions				
3. Conceptual understanding of Value Added Assessment				
4. Learning more about the law “No Child Left Behind”				
5. Interview skills and tips				
6. Building network of resources				
7. Networking: learning names, faces and establishing potential contacts				
8. Gaining invaluable insights about how women move through administrative careers.				

Any other ways that the JWII has prepared you for higher level/administrative responsibilities? Please specify:

5. What have you achieved personally and professionally as a result of attending the JWII's professional development?

a)

Personally:

b). Professionally:

6. In what ways has the JWII helped you to build your career path? Please specify:

7. In addition to the yearly conferences, what other professional development features/activities/programs do you think should be added by the JWII? Check (x) the level of priority for each of the following:

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Not Priority	a
1. Generate a JWII newsletter					
2. Plan for multiple days in summer instead of spring					
3. Consider a summer institute in addition to spring					
4. Establish processes for mentoring to happen across the districts					
5. Have a program for those considering administrative positions					
6. Sponsor seminars and symposiums also					
7. Devote more time to develop meaningful networking					

Any other suggestions, please specify:

8. Indicate the extend to which you agree or disagree with the statements listed below on how you would like to see the JWII change, grow and refocus.

	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. Encourage all females in educational administration/leadership roles to attend				
2. Increase attendance				
3. Streamline number of topics to provide more in-depth information				
4. Continue to honor Jean Winsand's memory and purpose of helping women to succeed in administration				
5. Cover more job-related skills				
6. Promote more collaboration and partnerships with other leadership programs				
7. Have delegations to local, regional and international leadership conferences for women				
8. Engage in collaborative action research projects				

Any other suggestions not listed? Please specify:

9. What do you think the JWII should do to improve, attract and retain more participants?

10. How important would each of the following activities/programs extend the JWII to an international level?

	Very Important 4	Important 3	Less Important 2	Unimportant 1
1. Collaborate with other women administrators on educational research				
2. Develop short term exchange programs				
3. Invite women from other countries to attend the institute				
4. Invite speakers from other countries				
5. Include topics relevant to international issues				
6. Develop consultant relationships with women in other countries				
7. Develop joint publications and dissemination of best practices about training initiatives				
8. Bring in representatives from other states and countries for comparison				

9. Increase opportunities for scholars from a variety of countries each year.				
10. Establish viable partnerships with international organizations				

Any other ways that can help the JWII to learn from international administrators? Please specify:

11. How has the JWII helped you to:

a. gain a sense of connection?

b. foster a community of practice?

12. How did you first learn about the JWII? Please check (x) all that apply and put a star (*) at the ones most significant to you.

	How I first learned	The ones most significant
1. Tri-State website		
2. Friends and colleagues at other schools/districts		
3. Word of mouth		
4. Invited by assistant principal/principal		
5. Invited by assistant superintendent/superintendent		
6. Invitation from Tri-State Study School Council		
7. Invitation from the Jean Winsand International Institute		

Other ways you would like to see the JWII's programs publicized. Please specify:

13. Any other additional/general comments/suggestions/recommendations you would like to make about the JWII that would help shape its future to be of value to you?

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please complete all sections.

1. Title: Dr./Mrs/Ms/Miss/Mr. Other____ Name: _____

2. Race: White: _____ Sex: Female____ Male____
 African American: _____
 Others, please specify: _____

3. Current Position: _____ Location: _____

4. Number of years in current position: _____

5. Immediate previous position: _____ Location: _____

6. Number of years in immediate previous position: _____

7. I hope my next professional step would be to become _____

8. My ultimate career aspiration is to _____

10. Total number of years, (including this one) you have attended the JWII: _____

11. Indicate your age by selecting and checking () the appropriate age range you fall into:

25-30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	31-35 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
36-40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	41-45 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
46- 50 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	51- 55 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
56-60 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	60 years and above	<input type="checkbox"/>

I will use the responses to this survey to construct and conduct follow-up interviews with participants who have taken part in the JWII or its predecessor. If you would be willing to be interviewed, please write your:

contact telephone number: _____

and e-mail address: _____

THANK YOU FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THIS RESEARCH ON THE PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JWII.

APPENDIX E: E-MAIL COMMENTS ABOUT THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Ms. Annamore

I reviewed your letter and survey. I believe your survey is too long to the extent you may not get many responses. If you expect to get returns from at least one-half of those you survey, I suggest you consider how it can be shortened.'

Charles Gorman

--On Tuesday, March 9, 2004 7:29 PM -0500 annamore <ammst101+@pitt.edu> wrote:r

> Dr. Charles Gorman:

> Please find attached drafts of my

> 1. Cover letter for my instrument

> 2. Draft of my survey instrument

> 3. Draft letter that I plan to send to my informants before sending them
> the final survey instrument

>

> Please feel free to give me feedback on whether the instrument will

> capture the kind of information that will be useful for the Institute. I

> plan to send this forward letter sometimes this week. I have been working

> with Drs. Porter, Bickel and Tony on the instrument. I also need feedback

> from you. Once I get feedback from you, I can finalize on the instrument

> and pilot test it using some colleagues of mine who are at Indiana

> University. Thank you in advance.

>

> Sincerely

> Annamore

APPENDIX F: REVISED SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. When you first began coming to the JWII what motivated you to attend? For each motivating factor listed below, please indicate by checking (X) its importance in influencing your decision to attend the JWII.

Motivating factors:	Very Important 4	Important 3	Less Important 2	Unimportant 1
1. Learn more about current educational issues.				
2. Learn more about how women attain administrative positions.				
3. Develop networks with other women educators in the region.				
4. Have opportunities to network with both men and women administrators in the region.				
5. Find appropriate/good mentors.				
6. Build personal relationships.				
7. Acquire special job related skills.				
8. Learn more about career advancement into leadership positions.				
9. Improve my management and communication skills.				
10. Become aware of leadership opportunities.				
11. Get support in developing awareness about my own leadership styles and behaviors.				
12. Support and honor the legacy of Dr. Jean Winsand and her work to promote women.				
Other factors (Please specify)				
13.				

2. What do you perceive to be the goals of the JWII? For each goal listed below, please check (X) what you perceive to be major goals of the JWII, minor goals of the JWII, or not goals of the JWII.

	Major Goal 3	Minor Goal 2	Not a goal 1
1. Build a sense of group identity among women educators in the region.			
2. Share new ideas, best practices and lessons learned about education and school leadership.			
3. Learn by sharing experiences through face to face interactions.			
4. Develop personal relationships and trust.			
5. Increase representation of women in educational leadership.			
6. Help aspiring and practicing women administrators to make acquaintances and establish contacts through networking.			
7. Support new/ongoing networks that can meaningfully address women's issues.			
8. Increase representation of women in leadership roles at all levels.			
9. Help women to find role models and mentors.			
10. Increase women's leadership skills and knowledge.			
11. Help women to define their career goals and pave their career paths.			
12. Provide opportunities to listen to reputable national speakers.			
13. Support professional development of male and female administrators in the region.			
14. Provide opportunities to listen to recognized regional speakers.			
15. Continue with the national scope of leadership training for women.			
16. Gain content knowledge about how schools operate.			
17. Make professional and collegial connections with colleagues in educational leadership.			
18. Foster a supportive climate for women in educational leadership.			
19. Support Dr. Jean Winsand's vision of providing women a voice and a presence in school leadership roles.			
Other goals of the JWII (Please specify)			
20.			

3. Over the year(s) of participating, what have you gained by attending the JWII? Indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements.

Through attending the JWII:	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. I have gained knowledge of educational issues.				
2. I have shared experiences with my peers.				
3. I have learned about interviewing skills and tips.				
I gained useful knowledge/insights about "No Child Left Behind."				
I have not gained content knowledge related to leadership development.				
I have become connected to a network of people who can help me to advance and grow.				
7. I have not gained insights into how women advance in administrative careers.				
8. I have gained a sense of being part of a community of women who share similar career interests.				
9. I have developed a sense of belonging.				
10. I have developed a sense of identity as a woman in educational leadership.				
11. I have developed a sense of identity as an educational leader.				
12. I have acquired an enhanced knowledge base of leadership related topics and skills.				
13. I have developed more confidence in my own abilities to lead.				
14. I have not become more aware of my leadership capabilities and behaviors.				
15. I feel like a legitimate member of the JWII.				
16. I have not been able to get mentors who have helped me to develop and maintain a positive self-concept.				
17. I have gained insights into data driven school improvement.				
Other gains (please specify)				
18.				

4. How would you like to see the JWII grow/expand/change in the future?

In the future the JWII should:	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. Encourage more women in educational leadership roles in the region to attend.				
2. Increase participation by men and women who can help women advance in the field.				
3. Streamline number of topics to provide more in-depth information.				
4. Hold the institute in summer instead of spring.				
5. Hold two institutes: one in summer and one in spring.				
6. Sponsor more seminars and symposiums.				
7. Establish processes for mentoring to happen across the districts.				
8. Generate a JWII newsletter.				
9. Continue to honor Jean Winsand's memory and accomplishments of helping women to succeed in administration.				
10. Cover more job-related skills.				
11. Promote more collaboration and partnerships with other leadership programs in the region.				
12. Devote more time to developing meaningful networking.				
13. Have delegations to local, regional and international leadership conferences for women.				
14. Engage in collaborative action research projects.				
15. Have specific sessions for those who have yet to reach their first leadership position.				
16. Refocus on the "femaleness" of the audience and sessions should not be designed for education in general.				
17. Extend the time frame for round table discussions.				
18. Have a round robin so that participants can be engaged in more discussion groups.				
19. Establish a data base and contact list/list serve.				
20. Offer these leadership sessions on a more frequent basis.				
21. Focus more on the types of skills a woman administrator needs to be successful.				
22. Retain a topical focus on current educational priorities/policy e.g. accountability, NCLB, value-added assessments.				
23. Ask for our opinions as frequently as possible.				
24. Retain the personalized focus on honoring Jean's legacy.				

25. Keep an explicit focus on women in educational leadership.				
Other future directions for the JWII (Please specify).				
26.				

5. When you think of what would enhance your experiences, how appealing is each of the following modes of internationalizing the JWII?

Participants and sponsors of the JWII should:	Very Appealing 4	Appealing 3	Less Appealing 2	Not Appealing 1
1. Collaborate on joint research projects with other women who are educational administrators in other countries.				
2. Develop short term exchange programs.				
3. Invite women from other countries to attend the institute.				
4. Invite women from other countries as keynote speakers and discussants.				
5. Include international perspectives on topics of shared concern.				
6. Develop consultant relationships with women administrators in other countries.				
7. Develop joint publications and dissemination of best practices.				
8. Increase opportunities for scholars from a variety of countries each year to attend.				
9. Establish viable partnerships with international organizations.				
10. Use films and video productions to show what leadership looks like around the world.				
11. Provide opportunities to travel elsewhere and experience other educational systems.				
Other ways, please specify				
12.				

6. How did you FIRST learn about the JWII? Please check (X) ALL that apply and put a star (*) at the THREE most significant to you.

	How I first learned	The most significant three (3).
1. Tri-State website.		
2. Tri-State newsletter.		
3. Friends and colleagues at other schools/districts.		
4. My peers where I work.		
5. Invited by assistant principal/principal.		
6. Invited by assistant superintendent/superintendent.		
7. Invitation from Tri-State Study School Council.		
8. Invitation from the Jean Winsand International Institute.		
9. From my former professor and/or advisor.		
10. From my mentor.		
Other ways to publicize, please specify		
11.		

7. Which features of the JWII are least meaningful to you and why?

8. What do you think should be the top priority for the JWII as it continues as a forum for women in school leadership?

9. Please make any additional comments/suggestions/recommendations about the JWII not covered in this survey. Feel free to attach additional sheets if necessary.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please complete ALL sections.

1. Race: _____
White: _____
African American: _____
Other, please specify: _____
2. Sex: Female _____ Male _____
3. Current Position: _____ Location: _____
4. Number of years in current position: _____
5. Immediate previous position: _____ Location: _____
6. Number of years in immediate previous position: _____
7. I hope my next professional step would be to become _____
8. My ultimate career aspiration is to _____
9. Total number of years, (including April 2004) you have attended the JWII: _____
10. Indicate your age by selecting and checking (X) the appropriate age range you fall into:

25-30 years		31-35 years	
36-40 years		41-45 years	
46- 50 years		51- 55 years	
56-60 years		60 years and above	

In the fourth and final phase of this research, I will use the responses to this survey to construct and conduct follow-up interviews with a purposively selected sample of 10 participants who have taken part in the JWII or its predecessor. If you would be willing to be interviewed, please write your contact telephone number: _____ e-mail address: _____ and Name: _____

THANK YOU FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THIS RESEARCH ON THE PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JWII.

APPENDIX G: PERMISSION REQUEST LETTER

February 9, 2004.

Dear Dr. Gorman:

I am writing to ask if I can be allowed to share the outcomes of my pre-survey conducted during the April 2003 JWII's annual conference. Tentatively, this proposed presentation should not take more than 10 minutes at most.

The issues I plan to explore include:

Update conference attendees on the progress of my dissertation research-stage where I am at right now in my research process.

Share the outcomes of my 2003 pre-surveys.

Act as reminder forum for those who might still have not returned my main 2004 survey instrument.

If possible, I would also love to participate in one of the round table/small group discussions.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely

Annamore M. Matambanadzo

APPENDIX H: INTRODUCTORY LETTER



University of Pittsburgh

Tri-State Area School Study Council
Administrative and Policy Study
School of Education

4302 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-648-7175
Fax: 412-648-7185

March 18, 2004.

Dear informant:

Research Topic: Professional Development for Women in Leadership in Western PA: A Case Study of Their Perceptions of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII).

I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh and am using the Jean Winsand International Institute as a case study to conduct research for my PhD dissertation.

The purpose of the pre-survey that I carried out during the April 2003 Jean Winsand International Institute's Annual Conference was to generate questionnaire items which I am currently using to construct the main survey research instrument for my dissertation. I am happy to let you know that I got very useful and informative responses.

The purpose of this communication serves to let you know that within the next few days, I will need your assistance and corporation. I will be sending you my main survey research instrument and am asking you to fill in this survey questionnaire as part of your contributions in helping us to shape the future of the JWII. I plan to use all the current and past participants/attendees of the Jean Winsand International Institute as my informants. The questionnaire will have open-ended and closed ended questionnaire items and will also collect demographic data. Answering the whole questionnaire should take at least 30 minutes to complete.

For any further information on this study and to contact me, please use the contact address, phone/fax numbers and e-mail address listed above.

If you prefer to answer the survey as a hard copy, please indicate by e-mailing Annamore at: ammst101@pitt.edu. Otherwise, I plan to send you the survey and have you answer it electronically through your e-mail address.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE and HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE 2004 JWII CONFERENCE.

Sincerely,

Annamore M. Matambanadzo.
Doctoral Student in Administrative and Policy Studies.
University of Pittsburgh.

APPENDIX I: SURVEY COVER LETTER



University of Pittsburgh

*Tri-State Area School Study Council
Administrative and Policy Studies
School of Education*

5M01 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260
412-648-7175
Fax: 412-648-7185

Email: amms101@pitt.edu

April 18, 2004.

Dear informant:

Research Topic: Professional Development for Women in Leadership in Western PA: A Case Study of Their Perceptions of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII) at the University of Pittsburgh.

I am a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh and am using the Jean Winsand International Institute as a case study to conduct research for my PhD. dissertation. I am asking for your help to fill in this survey questionnaire.

My purpose for conducting this study is to better understand the value of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII)'s professional development for women in school leadership in Western Pennsylvania. I am interested in learning how the former and current participants of the JWII define its significance in their overall career planning, how it has helped them develop their career paths, as well as how participation in women-centered professional development may play a specific role in regional development. Through this research process, I am hoping to establish how attendees of the JWII are building, promoting and engaging in learning that is related to their areas of interests as administrators. Additionally, I am also hoping to find out the short and long term benefits of participation as individuals and collectively as a group of women administrators. Also, by focusing my research on women's perceptions, I want to document the collective voices of women educational leaders in Western Pennsylvania about the JWII.

Findings from this survey will be reported in an aggregated manner. Pseudonyms will be used in published documents. Individually identifying information will only be used for purposes of clarifying written responses and compiling demographics of the participants. In addition, findings from this survey will help contribute insights into the significance of gender specific professional development, provide feedback to the coordinators of the JWII and help shape the future of this Institute. As women continue to creatively address the challenges of educational leadership for the 21st century, participation in research studies such as this will continue to have a significant impact.

Please answer all the questions in this survey. I appreciate your feedback in helping to shape the future of the Jean Winsand International Institute!

For any further information about this study and to contact me, please use the contact address, phone/fax numbers and e-mail address listed above.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this exercise.

Sincerely,

Annamore M. Matambanadzo
Doctoral Student in Administrative and Policy Studies
School of Education, University of Pittsburgh

APPENDIX J: SAMPLE OF REMINDER LETTER



University of Pittsburgh

*Tri-State Area School Study Council
Administrative and Policy Studies
School of Education*

5M01 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260
412-648-7175
Fax: 412-648-7185

August 3, 2004

Dear Informant:

RE: *Professional Development for Women in Educational Leadership in Western PA: A Case Study of their Perceptions of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII) at the University of Pittsburgh.*

This letter serves to remind you that sometime in April/May 2004, I sent you a survey research questionnaire asking for your responses on issues related to the focus of my doctoral dissertation.

However up to this day, I have not yet received your completed questionnaire. I included you as one of my informants because I value your responses and regard them as making critical contributions about the significance of the Jean Winsand International Institute as a forum that supports the professional development of aspiring and practicing women in educational leadership in Western Pennsylvania. In addition, by sharing the results of my study with the Institute Directors, it is my hope that such efforts will help reshape and document the collective voices of women in educational administration in Western Pennsylvania in order to frame how they perceive and situate the JWII.

I know you are very busy and have a tight schedule but I am appealing to you to spend a few minutes of your valuable time to complete my survey questionnaire. In the event that you no longer have the initial survey questionnaire, I am enclosing a replacement.

If you have any other questions or need clarification, you can contact me at the above address or e-mail me at: ammst101@pitt.edu. Using the enclosed stamped envelop provided, please mail back the completed questionnaire by August 28, 2004.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation in this survey.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ann Matambanadzo".

Annamore M. Matambanadzo
Doctoral Student in Administrative and Policy Studies
University of Pittsburgh

APPENDIX K: SAMPLE OF REMINDER COVER LETTER



University of Pittsburgh

*Tri-State Area School Study Council
Administrative and Policy Studies
School of Education*

5M01 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260
412-648-7175
Fax: 412-648-7185

November 5, 2004

Dear Informant:

RE: *Professional Development for Women in Educational Leadership in Western PA: A Case Study of their Perceptions of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII) at the University of Pittsburgh.*

This letter serves to remind you that sometime in April/May 2004, I sent you a survey research questionnaire asking for your responses on issues related to the focus of my doctoral dissertation. Again in July as well as in September/October 2004, I sent you reminders requesting for your contributions to my study. However up to this day, I have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

I included you as one of my informants because I value your responses and regard them as making critical contributions about the significance of the Jean Winsand International Institute as a forum that supports the professional development of aspiring and practicing women in educational leadership in Western Pennsylvania. In addition, by sharing the results of my study with the Institute Directors, it is my hope that such efforts will help reshape and document the collective voices of women in educational administration in Western Pennsylvania in order to frame how they perceive and situate the JWII.

I know you are very busy and have a tight schedule but I am appealing to you to spend a few minutes of your valuable time to complete my survey questionnaire. In the event that you no longer have the initial survey questionnaire, I am enclosing a replacement.

If you have any other questions or need clarification, you can contact me at the above address or e-mail me at ammst101@pitt.edu. Using the enclosed stamped envelope provided, please mail back the completed questionnaire by Monday November 22, 2004.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation in this survey.

Sincerely

Annamore M. Matambanadzo
Doctoral Student in Administrative and Policy Studies
University of Pittsburgh

APPENDIX L: SAMPLE OF THANK YOU LETTER



University of Pittsburgh

*Tri-State Area School Study Council
Administrative and Policy Studies
School of Education*

4302 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-648-7175
Fax 412-648-7185

May 20, 2004

Dear

RE: *Professional Development for Women in Educational Leadership in Western PA: A Case Study of their Perceptions of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII) at the University of Pittsburgh.*

I wish to thank you for your help in responding to my dissertation survey research. I greatly appreciate your willingness and cooperation in acting as one of my informants in this endeavor. I am very appreciative of your participation in this survey.

I hope you are enjoying your summer break.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "AM Matambanadzo".

Annamore M. Matambanadzo
Doctoral Student in Administrative and Policy Studies
University of Pittsburgh
E-mail Address: ammst101@pitt.edu

APPENDIX M: REASON FOR INFORMANTS' DECLINES

Dissertation Data Entry-Declines and Reasons
December 22, 2004

Title of Dissertation: Fostering communities of practice for women in educational leadership in Western Pennsylvania: a case study of the Jean Winsand International Institute (JWII).

#	Reasons
1	I do not participate in the JWII. I attended once with a colleague-but I do not feel my input would be of any value. Sorry.
2	I never participated I the JWII.
3	Regrets-I have not participated in this Institute in over three years.
4	Dear Annamore- I never attended this program, workshops etc... I'm a school counselor not an administrator. I'm sorry that I couldn't help you.
5	I have not been a member of the JWII. Sorry.
6	I have not attended any programs for the last 3-4 years, so I don't feel that I can be helpful.
7	I was never involved with this program. I only attended the luncheon to honor an awardee! Sorry I can't help you out!
8	I have not returned the survey because I attended JWII only once. Therefore I cannot answer these questions. Please do not contact me again. Thank you.
9	I have not attended the JWII.
10	I don't know what this is-not involved.
11	Thank you for thinking of me in your quest for your doctoral on..... Unfortunately, I do not feel that my knowledge and expertise of the subject matter (Jean Winsand International Institute) is extensive enough to reply to your request. I wish you continued success in your pursuit of your doctorate.
12	I only attended 1 conference about 4 years ago. I don't feel that I can answer this survey properly, as a result.
13	I regret that I am unable to complete your survey, <u>but</u> I was never enrolled in JWII's professional development
14	I attended one brief seminar at JWII-I don't feel like I am in a position to complete the survey. My information would not give a realistic response.
15	I am sorry but I have only gone to one meeting and am not really a member-I am not able to fill this out. Good luck with your study.

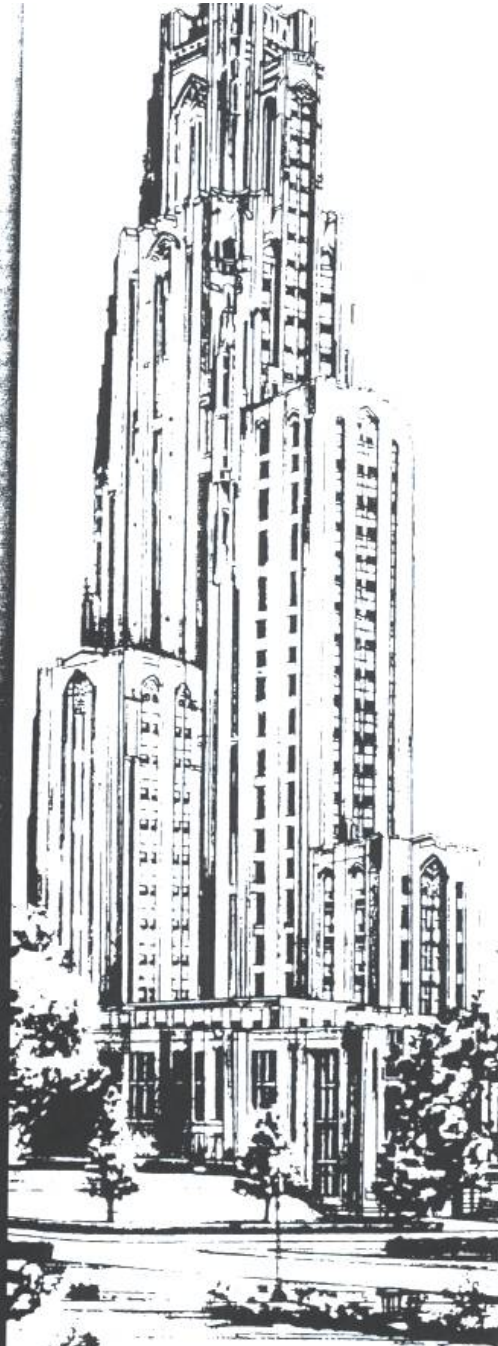
APPENDIX N: JWII CONFERENCE PROGRAMS

In-State Area School Study Council
School Leadership Development Program
Department of Administrative and Policy Studies
School of Education
University of Pittsburgh
In Cooperation with
The Southwest Pennsylvania
Women Administrators

Present
The Inaugural

JEAN WINSAND INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP AND RESULTS

April 18th, 2002
William Pitt Student Union
University of Pittsburgh



7:30	Registration and Continental Breakfast	ASSEMBLY ROOM
8:00-9:00	Hot Topics Round Tables —Join a moderator to discuss a topic <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negotiating a Professional Employee Contract—Dr. Diane Kirk, Superintendent, Peters Township 2. Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum: Traits of an Effective Reader—Dr. Charles Gorman, Professor, University of Pittsburgh 3. Special Education Students, Discipline, and the Police—Christina Lane, Esq., Andrews and Price 4. Using Multiple Assessment Data to Improve Student Performance—Dr. Blair Kucinski, Superintendent, Leechburg 5. Standards Based Supervision, Evaluation and Rating—Patricia Spisso, Elementary Principal, Mt. Pleasant Area School District 6. Administrative Performance Evaluations—Dr. Glenn Smartschan, Superintendent, Mt. Lebanon 7. Team Building with a Set-in-Their-Ways Staff—Dr. Mary Ravita, Assistant Superintendent, South Fayette 8. Time to Leave—Parting Ways with Grace—Mary Gail Korsmeyer, Esq., Peacock, Keller 9. Preventing Employee Sexual Abuse of Students—Dr. Chester Kent, J.D., Associate Executive Secretary, Tri-State Area School Study Council 10. The New Pennsylvania Literacy Framework—Dr. Charlene Trovato, Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh 11. What Are the Collaboratives for Learning?—Dr. Nancy Bunt, Executive Director 12. What is the Network for Effective Schools?—Dr. Mary Catherine Conroy Hayden, Executive Director 13. What is the Principal's Academy?—Dr. Otto Graff, Co-Director, University of Pittsburgh Principal's Academy 14. How Does the AIU 3 Cyber School Work?—Dr. Paula Calabreze, Associate Executive Director, Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 15. What is the Superintendent's Forum?—Dr. Susan Goodwin, Clinical Professor, University of Pittsburgh 	
9:10-10:10	"Organizing Leadership Teams for School Improvement" Dr. Anne Stephens , Superintendent, Brentwood. Former Superintendent in Ohio and Executive Director for School Reform in the Ohio Department of Education Introduction —Dr. Susan Goodwin, University of Pittsburgh	
10:10	Break	
10:20-11:20	"Navigating the Rapids of Change—From Management to Leadership in a Results Oriented School—Functional and Strategic Skills Necessary for Leadership in an Age of Accountability" Dr. Dennis Urso —Business Consultant, McNellis Company, serving a Fortune 500 clientele nationally and internationally; former Superintendent, Peters Township Introduction —Dr. Chester Kent, University of Pittsburgh	
11:30-12:35	Keynote Presentation—"Leadership Secrets of Avalon: CEO" Dr. Paula Butterfield —Deputy Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, Pittsburgh Board of Education Introduction —Dr. Susan Goodwin, University of Pittsburgh	
12:40	Lunch—Ballroom Recognition of Dr. Jean Winsand Dr. Charles Gorman: Dr. Donna Patterson and Dr. Bridget Gill, recent doctoral candidates advised by Dr. Winsand Presentation of the Faison-Brennen Distinguished Woman in Education Award —Dr. Charles Gorman, Dr. Susan Goodwin, University of Pittsburgh Honoree —Dr. Donna Durno, Executive Director, Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3	

ie Stephens—Dr. Anne Stephens received her college degree from West Liberty State College and administrative certifications from The University of Steubenville. She has a master's degree in reading from West Virginia University and a doctorate in education administration from LaSalle University. She has served as a teacher, Director of Special Programs, Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, graduate school professor, and Executive Director of Reform and Federal Student Programs at the Ohio Department of Education. She possesses extensive experience working with special education, personnel, school plant, curriculum, vocational education, and technology. Dr. Stephens has written and secured major grants for school projects. She is currently the Superintendent of the Brentwood School District. She has published *The M.E.R.I.T. Scholar Program for High School Students* and the *Handbook for School Administrators*. She holds professional affiliations with a variety of National and Ohio School Associations. Her professional activities include numerous presentations to school groups and associations. As Executive Director for Reform and Federal Student Programs in the Ohio Department of Education, she was responsible for a variety of federal programs on student achievement, directed the development of programs centered around research-based reform initiatives in Ohio's 611 school districts and over 100 community schools, and coordinated the development of programs for Ohio's 127 alternative schools, among her extensive duties.

Dr. Stephens is also married to another educator. They have one son, Daniel, who is a student at the University of Pittsburgh.

la Butterfield—Dr. Butterfield has had a rich and varied life as an educator for the past thirty-one years, from her early days teaching in an inner city high school in Washington, D.C., to a boarding school for Eskimos and Indian students in remote Alaska, to the wild west of Montana with stops in between. She has served as a middle school principal, high school principal, curriculum director, and superintendent. In 1998 she was named The Montana Superintendent of the Year. She holds a PhD in special education from the University of Maryland. Paula is a former Fulbright scholar, author, motivational speaker, and sculptor.

In August 2000, she became the Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

en Faison—Dr. Faison has been a vibrant force in education in Pittsburgh for the past 51 years. During her 43-year career in the Pittsburgh School District, she served as a teacher, counselor, vice principal, principal and assistant, associate, and deputy superintendent prior to her retirement in 1993. She was the first woman and minority to serve as a high school principal in 1968. Since 1993, she has served as a distinguished professor at Chatham College and was named Educational Department Chair in 1995. In January 1998, Dr. Faison was selected as Director of the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute Program. Dr. Faison served the profession through membership in professional associations and organizations, particularly in the areas of curriculum and supervision, educating black children and promoting administrative women in education. Throughout this period, Dr. Faison was deeply involved in civic and community life in Pittsburgh. She was a past chair and board member of the Negro Education Emergency Drive, on the board of Children's Hospital, a life member of the NAACP, a member of the Harriet Tubman Guild, on the board of the YWCA, an emerita member of the Board of Trustees, University of Pittsburgh, and a board member of the Pittsburgh Urban League Charter School Advisory Board and the Fund for Advancement of Minorities Through Education. Dr. Faison is the recipient of many honors and awards during her career. Among them are numerous awards for contributions to minority student education, the Dr. Martin Luther King Award and Outstanding Educator Awards from Hand in Hand, selection to the Executive Educator 100 List of Outstanding Educators in America, and recipient of the University of Pittsburgh Outstanding Alumna Award. In her honor, the Helen S. Faison Undergraduate Scholarship Program for African American Students was established in 1993 at the University of Pittsburgh.

uise R. Brennen—Louise Brennen has spent 47 years as a public school educator in the Pittsburgh School District, retiring in June 1997. She began her career as a 5th grade teacher in 1950 in Miller Elementary School, moved to 9th grade in Peabody Senior High School, and then served as elementary principal in Crescent, Boggs, Whittier, and Colfaz Elementary Schools. In 1974, she was promoted to the central offices as Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools. In 1981, Ms. Brennen assumed the duties of Associate Superintendent, Office of School Management of Elementary and Secondary Schools. In 1990 she rose to Deputy Superintendent of Schools and in 1992, Ms. Brennen became Superintendent of the Pittsburgh School System.

Over her many years in education, Ms. Brennen has received numerous awards including Citizen of the Year from Hand in Hand, Italian Heritage Society of America Distinguished Award for her achievements, dedication, and service in the field of education, University of Pittsburgh Distinguished Educator Award, and citations from the Senate of Pennsylvania for notable contributions in and effective advocacy for education and service. Over 1,000 educators and community leaders saluted her extensive contributions to the children of Pittsburgh and showered her with honors

Ms. Brennen's leadership accomplishments are too numerous to chronicle. She served under five superintendents—Marland, McCormick, Kishkunas, Olsen, and Wallace—before assuming the top post. Her career spanned a time of great social transformation in society and education that bridged two eras. She was deeply involved in efforts to desegregate the school system and promote cooperation, fairness, and understanding among students from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. She developed alternative learning programs and cooperative partnerships with the business community and community organizations. In the 1980s she led the planning for the Schenley, Brookline, and Greenway Professional Teacher Development Centers, the Instructional Teacher Leader program, Instructional Cabinets, the Prospect Multi-Cultural Center, the PRISIM program, and the magnet schools implementation. Because of her leadership Pittsburgh was recognized by the Middle School States Association of Colleges and Schools for being the first urban school in the country to accomplish regional accreditation for every elementary, middle, and high school in the district.

Throughout this busy career, Ms. Brennen found time for service to her profession. She was a member of AASA, NSBA, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, National Council of Women in Education, National Elementary Principals Association, Kappa Delta Gamma, Theta Chapter, and a host of other professional organizations.

Ms. Brennen devoted tireless efforts to serve the Pittsburgh community. She served as chair of the education division of the United Way of Allegheny County, as a member of the Mayor's Commission of Families, and on the Mayor's Advisory Committee to the Housing Authority, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development School Neighborhood Consortium, the Advisory Committee of the Adolescent Resource Network, Hand in Hand, and the George Washington Carver Committee. She was also a member of the Wilkesburg School Board, the Health Research and Services Foundation, The Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, and The United Way of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Donna Durno—Donna Durno has a broad experience in education. She has been a high school teacher, administrator, president of a state professional organization, superintendent of schools, state education commissioner, university instructor, and vice president of a chain of colleges. She serves currently as the Executive Director of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, a regional education service agency serving 42 school districts. While working in California, she was a Commissioner for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Dr. Durno's career is underscored by her commitment to seeing that all students have the best opportunity to learn.

After two years as Pennsylvania Commissioner of Basic Education, Dr. Durno became discouraged by the public's deepening negative perception of schools and the schools' fear of change. She resigned and began a year-long journey around the country to see for herself if there was hope for changing education in America. Using her own funds, she traveled 20,000 miles and taught students and exchanged ideas with teachers and administrators in 46 diverse schools in 19 states.

Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Dr. Durno was a wife and mother of three when she returned to college for her teaching degree. Graduating Magna Cum Laude with a BS in Home Economics Education from Seton Hill College, she began teaching at Norwin High School. She completed her post-graduate work with honors, earning an MED in counseling from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in educational administration from the University of Pittsburgh.



TRI-STATE AREA SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

PRESIDENT:

Dr. Susan Taylor

VICE PRESIDENT:

Dr. Ronald Mento

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:

Dr. Charles Gorman

ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,

SCHOLAR-PRACTICIONER IN LAW

AND EDUCATION:

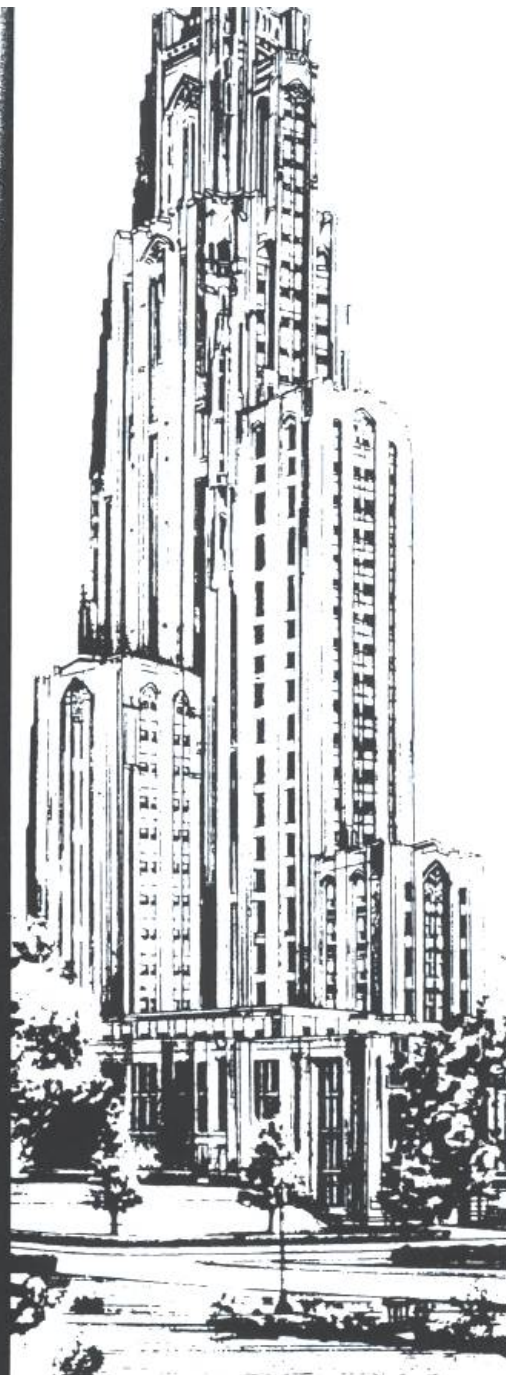
Chet Kent

Tri-State Area School Study Council
School Leadership Development Program
Department of Administrative and Policy Studies
School of Education
University of Pittsburgh
In Cooperation with
The Southwest Pennsylvania
Women Administrators

**Present
The Second**

**JEAN E. WINSAND INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN
IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:
MOVING TOWARD
AN ACCOUNTABILITY MINDSET**

**April 24, 2003
William Pitt Union
University of Pittsburgh**



7:30	Registration and Continental Breakfast—ASSEMBLY ROOM
8:00–9:00	Hot Topics Round Tables —Join a moderator to discuss a topic
9:05–10:05	Repeat—Hot Topics Round Tables <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative movement up the career ladder: How is it different? Dr. Peg Boden, High School Principal, Avonworth; Dr. Tricia Gennari, Assistant Superintendent, Penn Hills; Dr. Maureen Porter, University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Claudia Fahrenwald, University of Augsburg Multi-client feedback: Student and parent input into the teacher evaluation process. Dr. Glenn Smartschan, Superintendent, Mt. Lebanon The Ten Commandments of No Child Left Behind: Dr. Chester Kent, JD, Tri-State Area School Study Council, University of Pittsburgh NCLB, “Me and my AYP,” What is my strategy? Dr. Charles Gorman, Tri-State Area School Study Council, University of Pittsburgh No child left behind—Life on the PDE school improvement list: What can I expect? Mrs. Jo Ann Wells, Superintendent and Dr. Jackie Webb, Director of Instruction, Duquesne DEBE 426, 427 and 428: How will the evaluation process change? Dr. Lawrence Korchnak, Superintendent and Dr. Cheryl Griffith, Assistant Superintendent, Hampton How does Act 93, “Administrative meet and discuss,” work? Susan Roberts, Esq. and Barbara Rizzo, Esq., Peacock Keller What topics should go into a commissioned officer’s contract? Patricia Andrews, Esq., Andrews and Price Peer consultation—Strategies for building sustainable communities of practice: Drs. Susan Goodwin, University of Pittsburgh; Carol Wooten, Superintendent, South Side Area; Hildegard Macha, University of Augsburg; Wolfgang Bauhofer, University of Augsburg Emerging role of the principal: Dr. Otto Graf, Principals Academy, University of Pittsburgh
10:05–12:15	Introduction —Dr. Susan Goodwin—University of Pittsburgh “The Sanders Value Added Assessment System: A Longitudinal Student Tracking System.” Dr. June Rivers—SAS in School
12:20–1:00	Lunch—Ballroom Recognition of Dr. Orville Winsand for his support in the establishment of The Dr. Jean E. Winsand Tri-State Lectureship Series in Education Dr. Charles Gorman
1:00	Presentation of the Jean E. Winsand Distinguished Woman in Education Award —Dr. Charles Gorman, University of Pittsburgh Dr. Harry Faulk, Retired Associate Dean, Heinz School of Public Affairs, Carnegie Mellon University Honoree —Dr. Linda L. Croushore, Director, Mon Valley Education Consortium

Dr. June Rivers—Assistant Manager of Value-Added Assessment and Research. “Our methodology provides a safety net for kids. It lets educators make decisions about policies and practices that serve the interests of all students. Schools and teachers can thus determine whether students across the entire achievement spectrum are progressing at desired rates. Ultimately, when educators have meaningful diagnostic information about student progress, more students are able to realize their potential.”

June Rivers earned a BS in mathematics from Middle Tennessee State University, an MS in education from Trevecca Nazarene College, and an Ed.D. in educational leadership from the University of Tennessee. Prior to joining SAS in School in 2000, she worked with schools and school

da L. Croushore—Dr. Croushore is the founder of the Mon Valley Education Consortium, a private, non-profit, community-based local education fund (LEF) that has had a profound effect on the public schools and communities in the Mon Valley. The Consortium grew out of the original Mon Valley Commission as that body struggled to come to grips with the aftermath of the collapse of big steel. The Commission tapped Dr. Croushore to lead the education initiative in 1985, and she created the Consortium to answer the needs of beleaguered school districts and communities up and down the Monongahela River Valley.

Under her direction, the Consortium brought needed resources, boosted morale, and held out hope for a better tomorrow. Today, the Consortium has a staff of 11 full-time and three part-time employees at its office in McKeesport, plus another 10 at a satellite program in Clairton. The Consortium's annual budget is \$1.8 million, but the real impact of its work is measured in the resources—cash and in-kind—it has generated for students, schools, and communities in the 25 southwestern Pennsylvania school districts where it now is engaged.

Dr. Croushore has shaped and guided this effort. She has the extraordinary ability to rally others to the cause and instill in them the same commitment that burns in her. She is a sought-after speaker, presenter, and consultant. Her educational background includes work as a teacher and school administrator in McKeesport Area School District. She earned her BA at Grove City College (1968) and her M.Ed. (1970) and Ed.D. (1972) at the University of Pittsburgh. Her most recent honors include selection for the Stanford Graduate School of Business-Center for Social Innovation Fellowship (2001) and for Carlow College's Women of Spirit Award (2002).

Dr. Croushore and her husband Jack reside in White Oak. They are the parents of three children: Jeremy, Kristy, and Katy.

NATIONAL FOCUS PARTICIPANTS:

degard Macha—Dr. Macha is well known as a university leader, researcher, and innovative educator. She became certified as an upper-level teacher in 1974 in the fields of pedagogy, German, and philosophy (a regular college-preparatory school subject). In 1979, she dissertated at the University of Bonn on the topic of emotional education. She earned further recognition and professorial eligibility ("Habilitation") in instruction and learning with her 1989 research on "Theories of the Self." As a research associate at the University of Bonn she built an impressive resume with experiences in continuing education, particularly that geared toward women. She also completed advanced studies in "theme centered interactions" based on work by Ruth C. Cohn, eventually becoming certified in the field as a supervisor. After visiting professorships in Bayreuth, Koblenz, and Leipzig, in 1992, she was nationally selected to assume the chair of education and continuing education in Augsburg, one of the major universities in the federal system. Since 1996, she has been the leader of the Research Group for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at the University of Augsburg. She balances many working groups and actively pursues the following research priorities: theories of education and pedagogical anthropology, continuing education for women, e-learning, education within the family, and gender studies, particularly issues of embodiment and self-perception. She is excited about the evolving possibilities to expand her projects on continuing education for women leaders and her new projects on peer consultation. She recently served as dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, and since November has been appointed to serve as the University's advocate for gender equity and women's issues. She is looking forward to this weeklong exchange and having sustained dialogue about these topics with American colleagues. Dr. Macha and her husband, who is a professor of German linguistics in Münster, have successfully managed a commuter relationship for over a decade. They have two grown children. Her daughter has followed in her footsteps and has studied pedagogy and continuing education. Her son has taken off in another direction and is in business, although he has recently combined this with a focus on continuing education too.

udia Fahrenwald—Dr. Fahrenwald has an interdisciplinary approach to studying identity development and education. Her higher education began with French literature and philosophy at the Free University of Berlin and continued with the addition of theater studies in Munich. After that, she moved to Augsburg and contributed to the university as a research associate in comparative literature from 1992 to 1995. She earned a doctorate in philosophy and comparative literature from the University of Augsburg in 1998. Her dissertation was on Wittgenstein and modernity. In addition to family responsibilities, she has held many positions as an educator at the community college and other adult education sites. Her specialties have been in philosophy, literature, and intercultural education. She has greatly enjoyed opportunities to teach and meet students from many countries who came to study with her. Since 2000, her expertise has been sought out as a research associate at the Center for Pedagogy and Adult Continuing Education. Her current emphasis is on narrative identity, biographical learning, and educational theories. She has been collaborating with Dr. Maureen Porter since 1999 on the Transatlantic Research Program on Continuing Education for Women in Educational Leadership ("Frauen Machen Schule"). Dr. Fahrenwald has published in the areas of gender studies and deconstruction. She is a devoted walker, and particularly enjoys going out with their dog, Jesper. She is married and has two school-age children, Philipp and Marlene, who are accomplished piano players.

lfgang Bauhofer—Mr. Bauhofer brings a range of expertise and applied experiences to this international exchange. He studied in Düsseldorf and Freiburg and earned his terminal professional degree in psychology. He worked for many years as a clinical psychologist in a child and youth psychiatric center. He was the director of a state-credentialed after-school counseling and tutoring center. Their goals were to work holistically with parents, teachers, and youth to solve both personal and school problems. Since 1999 he has been a research associate at the University of Augsburg in the research group led by Dr. Macha. His major focus has been on new models of university-based continuing education for teachers. He has been developing a modular certification program for aspiring teachers that utilizes a constructivist, systemic approach to pedagogy. He is interested in uses of the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator as an aspect of successful continuing education. Currently he is involved in the conceptualization and implementation phases of a project on peer consultation ("Intervision") for male and female schoolteachers and leaders. Mr. Bauhofer is currently working to further expand this project in partnership with the Bavarian Academy of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers and School Administrators in Dillingen. (Last year the delegation had the chance to visit this grand former monastery complex in nearby Dillingen as part of the exchange.) He is married and has three children who are 3, 6, and 9 years old. Wolfgang reports that he has recovered from being the group driver on the blizzard-tossed road trip with the "loud and wild American women principals" who enjoyed the King of Bavaria Musical in Füssen (by the Neuschwanstein Castle). He looks forward to expanding on current international collaborations.

Dr. Maureen Porter—Dr. Porter has a long history of activism, scholarship, and teaching at the intersections of gender and leadership. She lived in Germany for two years (starting as a Rotary Exchange student) and has traveled widely as a student, researcher, and service-learning leader in Latin America, North Africa, the United States, and throughout Europe. Her earliest academic research was in neuropsychology, looking at gender differences in responses to prototype Parkinson's medication at the world-famous Harlow Primate Research Labs. She went on to earn honors majors in psychology, German literature, and women's studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. While a student she contributed actively to educational policymaking as the only undergraduate representative on the University Commission for Education, a member of the Meikeljohn Experimental College Advisory Board, German Club co-president, and the Honors College Student Leadership Council. This led to being granted scholarships to Stanford, where she pursued master's degrees in anthropology and a joint program in administration and policy analysis and social sciences in education. During her doctoral work, she was appointed to lead the master's program in her program for a year, and significantly revised both the gender studies stream and the internship component of the program. Her dissertation, which was based on over a year of fieldwork, looks at the policy and cultural challenges to leaders of a rural, Appalachian school district faced with state-mandated reform. In 1996, she was awarded National Rural Education Association's Dissertation of the Year Award. Apprentice relationships with powerful women leaders have profoundly shaped her life's work. She learned about community organizing from her 4-H leaders, served as the assistant to Dr. Ruth Randall (the first female commissioner of education for the state of Minnesota), shaped major university policy with Dr. Donna Shalala (then Chancellor at UW-Madison), worked on a White House paper on federal financial aid, and argued passionately in a very small room with Dr. Condoleezza Rice (as part of a year-long search for a new dean). Since she came to Pittsburgh, her applied scholarship has been on situated learning within communities of practice. Her journal articles, documentary film, and book chapters consistently push back the boundaries of what constitutes meaningful education policies and practices. Throughout, she has maintained a commitment to international perspectives on gender studies and feminist epistemologies. She currently serves as the women's studies certificate coordinator for the School of Education and anchors and defends the gender and education course. Dr. Porter is a widely sought out mentor and teacher, and has involved students in many levels of research and service-learning programs. A co-director of the research project, she led the delegation of women school leaders to Germany last year. She is looking forward to expanding this multinational research and exchange to include Ireland, England, and other countries. Maureen draws strength from being in love with her partner of nearly ten years. They are actively (and wearily) parenting two towheaded little girls.

Dr. Jean E. Winsand Distinguished Woman in Education Award

In 1999, the Tri-State Area School Study Council authorized an annual award to be presented to a woman in education whose achievements are widely recognized as being exemplary in education. In 2003, the award was named the Jean E. Winsand Distinguished Woman in Education. This award is symbolic of the type of leadership Dr. Winsand displayed through her work in the Tri-State Area School Study Council between 1985 and 2001.

- 1999 Awardee: **Dr. Helen Faison**, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- 2000 Awardee: **Ms. Louise Brennen**, Pittsburgh Public Schools
- 2001 Awardee: **Dr. Velma Saire**, Quaker Valley School District
- 2002 Awardee: **Dr. Donna Durno**, Allegheny Intermediate Unit
- 2003 Awardee: **Dr. Linda Croushore**, Mon Valley Ed. Consortium



TRI-STATE AREA SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

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**SCHOLAR-PRACTICIONER IN LAW
AND EDUCATION**

International Perspectives on Gender and Leadership—Dr. Maureen Porter

Farak Abdul Aziz Almutawa, and Annamore Matambanadzo, Pitt International Graduate Students in Administrative and Policy Studies and Dr. Maureen Porter, University of Pittsburgh, will join the Institute as part of our concerted effort to integrate international perspectives into our focus on Gender and Leadership.

(9:10 a.m. 10:00 a.m.)

Repeat Round Table Discussion Topics

(12:45 p.m.)

Lunch and Recognition

Jean E. Winsand Distinguished Woman in Education Award

Dr. Rita Bean M. Bean
University of Pittsburgh

Special Recognition

Ms. Mary Monsour
**Peters Township School District 2004
Pennsylvania & National NAESSP Assistant
Principal of the Year**

Cost: \$60 per person or \$200 for a District Team of 4 people
\$30 per person—Luncheon only

Registration: 3 Ways to Register—4 Hours of CPE Credit

1. By Fax—412-648-7185
2. By e-mail—fiumara@pitt.edu
3. By mail to Carol Fiumara, Tri-State Area School Study Council,
4H01 Posvar Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260

For further information contact Dr. Chet Kent at 412-648-7169 or ckent@pitt.edu

How do teachers learn to work with data?

Dr. Patricia Generai, Assistant Superintendent, Penn Hills; Dr. Mary Ravita, Assistant Superintendent, South Fayette

So you want to be a Superintendent—What's the job like?

Dr. Diane Kirk, Superintendent, Peters Township; Dr. Anne Stephens, Superintendent, Brentwood

YES—urban schools can get outstanding PSSA scores.

Dr. Deborah Rittenhouse, Director of Instruction, Uniontown

NCLB: Coping with accountability issues facing schools.

Dr. Susan Goodwin, University of Pittsburgh & Director of Instruction at Wilkensburg; Dr. Jan Glunk, Superintendent, Steel Valley School District

Math, Math, Math: Exchanging Views with an LRDC Researcher and School Director

Dr. Mary Kay Stein, University of Pittsburgh & Riverview Board member

How to reach and involve parents of non-performing students.

Ms. Jackie Foor, Mon Valley Educational Consortium

What does G.E.N.I.E. do—Sharing local knowledge on-line globally.

Dr. Maureen McClure, Chairperson, Department of Administrative and Policy Studies, University of Pittsburgh; Founder of G.E.N.I.E.

Reading Literacy Coaching Tips.

Dr. Margaret McMackin, Reading Literacy Coaching Specialist, Tri-State Area School Study Council

Gifted Student performance and NCLB—9:00 to 10:00 a.m. only.

Ms. Franny MacAleer, Consultant and President, Learners Link, Instructor, Duquesne University

Twenty-five Years of Early Childhood Kindergarten—Four at Midland: A Center of Excellence

Ms. Tami Turchich, Teacher

Why Full Day Kindergarten and Early Learning Literacy?

Dr. Charlene Trovato, University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Valerie McDonald, Superintendent, Avonworth

Academic Standards in an Alternative High School.

Ms. Amy Wodnicki, Director, Parkway Alternative Center

How one district improved the performance of rural disadvantaged kids.

Ms. Linda Nelson and Ms. Barbara Mehalov, Principal, Frazier School District
What do students do in an On-line Charter School?

Ms. Nancy Williamson, Pennsylvania Learners on Line (AIU)

How to put your best foot forward in a Special Education hearing?

Dr. Beverly School, Pennsylvania Special Education Hearing Officer

Math Coaching—The Time is Now.

Mr. Tim LaVan, Math Literacy Coaching Specialist, Tri-State Area School Study Council

Academic Standards and Special Education Students: Pipe Dream or Can It be Done?

Dr. Lynn Porterfield, Coordinator of Special Education, Fox Chapel; Albert Smochko, Elementary Principal, Western Beaver

Homestead Propel Charter School—How is it different?

Dr. Carol Wooten, Director, Propel Charter School, Homestead

So What's Your Focus—Curriculum Alignment or Student Standards Proficiency?

Dr. Shirley Golofski, Director of Instruction, McKeesport; Dr. Kathy Kwolek, Director of Instruction, Mohawk; Dr. Nina Zetty, Director of Instruction Bentworth; Dr. Billie Rondinelli, Director of Instruction, Moon

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