



Community Case Studies in Collaborative Leadership

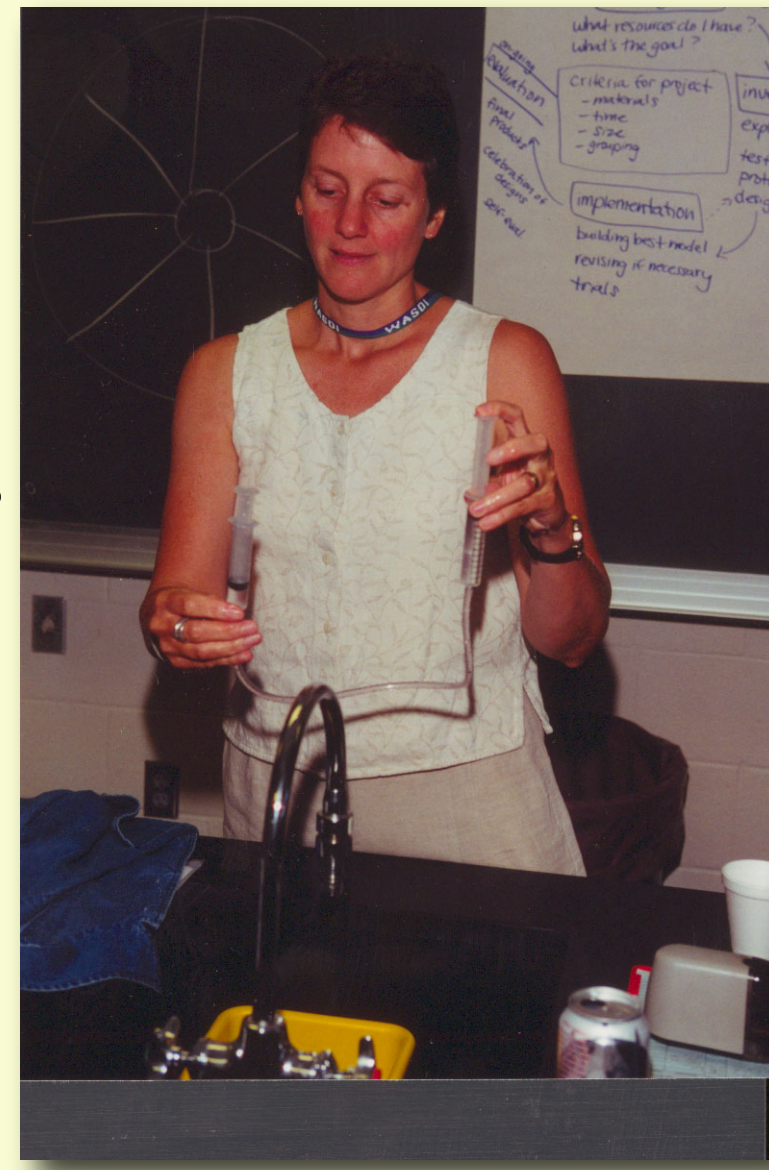
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Introduction

This case is the second in a research series examining the key characteristics, actions, and beliefs of collaborative leaders. The project is designed as a study of leadership orientation and practices of Chippewa Valley region leaders involved in the Education and Human Sciences arena. The understanding of the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices of these individuals are crucial guidelines to the development of undergraduate and new professionals.



Background

Collaborative Leadership

- Collaborative leadership is the intentional and skillful management of relationships that enables others to succeed individually while accomplishing a collective outcome.
- Collaborative leaders ably facilitate the involvement of two or more people in a group working toward a shared outcome in a manner that reflects collective ownership, authorship, use, or responsibility.
- Collaboration is not the outcome or goal. Collaborations are processes that, when successful, align people's actions to accomplish a goal or solve a problem.
- Collaborative leaders possess knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to carry out leaderful actions such as optimizing assets, seeking new solutions, sustaining focus, promoting trust, or setting and monitoring goals and progress.

Collaborative leaders perform definable behaviors (McKibben, 2004, Rubin, 2002) such as:

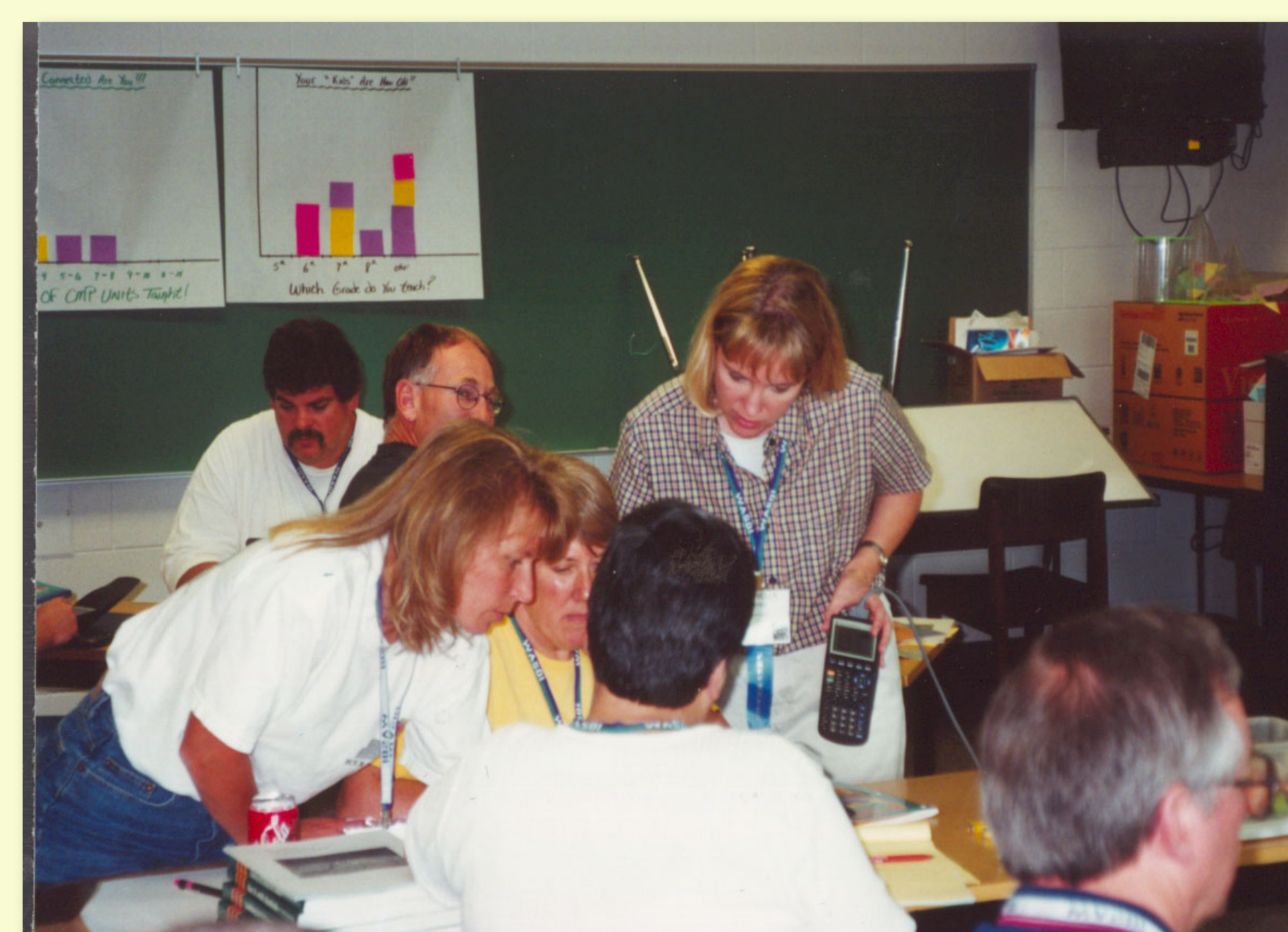
- advocating for people, ideas and organizations in inclusive ways
- facilitating open group discussion, problem solving and decision-making
- exercising sound judgment and political skills working with many constituencies
- promoting systemic and long term vs. symptomatic and short term change
- seeking creative global as well as local actions and solutions
- sustaining ideas, trust and collaborative focus in changing circumstances
- accepting responsibility at professional and personal levels
- helping partners to set clear obtainable goals and celebrations along the way

Subject

The subject of this study is an active regional staff developer serving as a liaison with area schools. The subjects' background includes involvement as a former teacher, administrator, as well as a school board member. The subject is an active community member in the Eau Claire area.

Focus Questions

- What are the actions displayed by collaborative leaders?
- What are the actions/responsibilities of non-leaders in a collaborative setting?
- How do leaders communicate within a community?



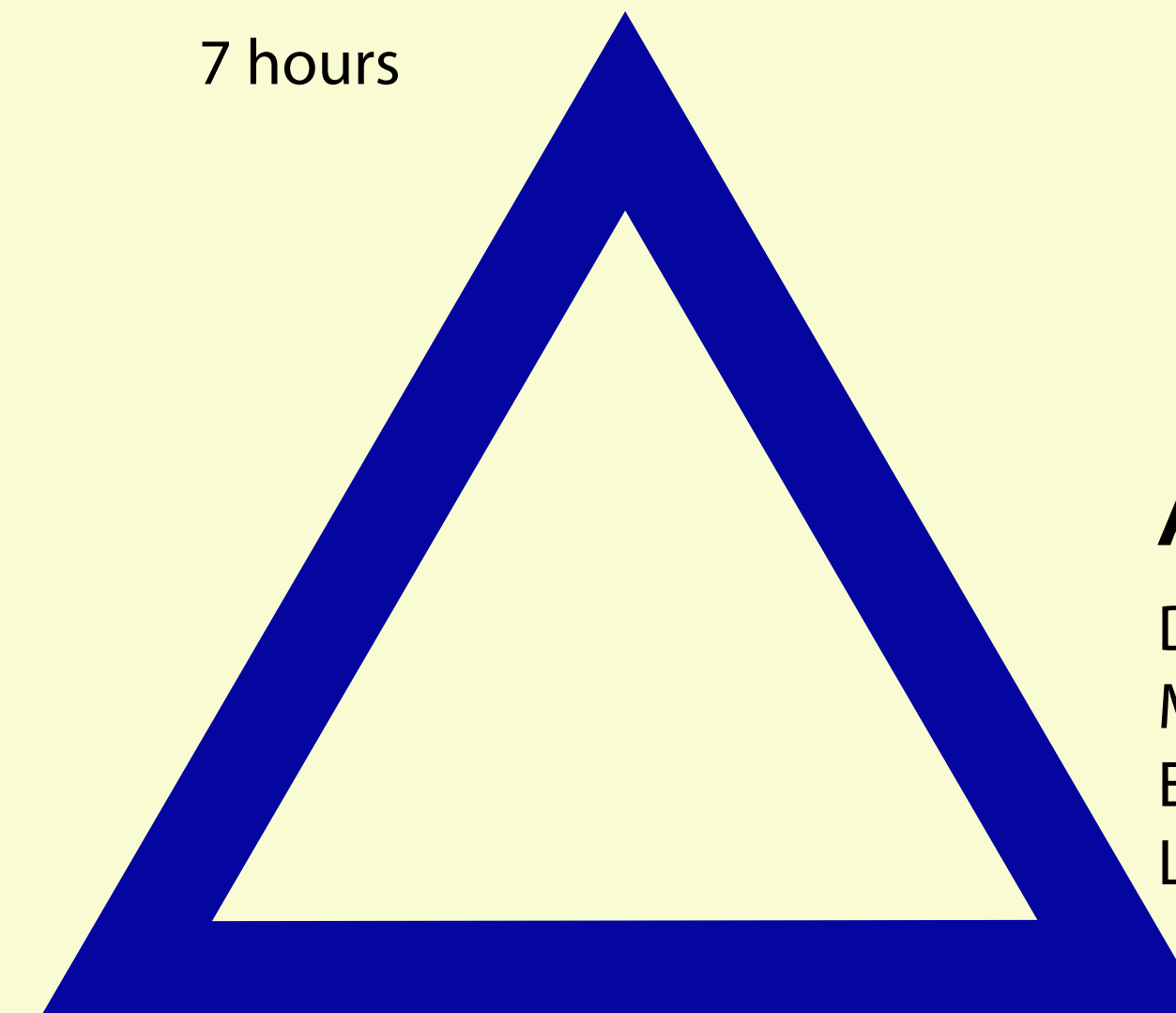
Methodology

Grounded Theory Approach

- Inductive – theory emerges from data rather than being applied to data
- Goes beyond description to seek underlying explanations, mechanisms, relationships
- Must fit the phenomenon and accurately represent the reality of the research setting
- Should offer understanding of underlying mechanisms that are understandable by subjects and other participants in the setting
- Should provide enough generality to account for variations in the setting and be applicable to multiple contexts
- Should be bounded; the conditions under which the theory applies and provides a rationale for action in the setting must be clear

Interviews

7 hours



Observations

7-10 hours

Constant Comparative Methodology

- Generates empirical categories by identifying similarities and differences in successive data and labeling the categories with construct titles that form assertions about explanatory mechanisms
- Employs triangulation across different data types (interviews vs observations vs workplace artifacts) to strengthen and challenge empirical bases for assertions
- Leads to theoretical sampling in which existing assertions provide focus for additional data collection
- Quality of methodology demands clearly visible, systematic, rigorous, and auditable analytical processes



Leaderful Actions

- **Motivates Personal and Professional Growth** – encourages individuals to seize opportunities.
- **Constantly Pushing Individuals to Take Risks** – suggests and persuades people to step-out of their comfort zone.
- **Personal Communication**- is a central tool using direct and verbal communication between her and others.
- **Facilitates a Shared Vision**- through mediation, motivation, discussion, and organization.
- **Solution Orientated Strategic Thinking**- anticipation and experience allow herself and the group to overcome obstacles that/could arise for the group.

Conclusion

Although the recent study was conducted in a non-school setting, the leadership characteristic exhibited by our subject are similar to those found in previous research of a middle school setting (Quinlan, Xiong, & Hollon, 2006). We were able to gain deeper insight into the role, communication, and risk taking leadership strategies of our subject. We will continue examining these leaderful actions this summer where the subject is working daily with professionals who are not already in leadership positions. This data will then be analyzed again using our constant comparative methodology.

Acknowledgements

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Sources

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“No one likes to be an assumption — everyone wants to be significant.”