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A BIOGRAPHICAL CASE STUDY ON TACIT KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

Warman T. Hall

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**A BIOGRAPHICAL CASE STUDY ON TACIT KNOWLEDGE
AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP**

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Education
Educational Leadership**

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Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Dedication

To Anjee, Serenity and Daniel. Without their love and support my studies would not have been possible.

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Abstract

This qualitative biographical case study explored tacit knowledge in relation to the professional practice of one educational leader in a New Mexico community college. Using a life story approach, within the confines of the biographical subject's professional career, archival document analysis, personal interviews and focus group interviews were conducted to examine the processes and events in the professional life of Dr. James Henderson that had a substantive impact on his longevity as a community college president.

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Chapter 1

Biography and Tacit Leadership

A brief introduction of the topic and study

The notion that mankind can learn a good deal of practical knowledge from the examination of noteworthy lives is not new. A modern classical education includes instruction in the field of history, and historical study has traditionally been based on the re-telling of stories from the lives of great leaders in our past. The dearest values and loftiest ideals of western society have been found, or projected into, these past lives in an effort to instruct students and future leaders in the qualities of personal character they will need to serve the greater good in their own careers. Thus, it is arguable that selected biography is our oldest form of leadership study.

The respected leadership scholar and historian, James MacGregor Burns, acquiesced that western society initially, richly developed the examination of leadership with biographies of great men from the past (Burns, 1978). He went on to note that the West lost its way while trying to develop leadership study into a cohesive field, largely due to our inattention to defining the structure of leadership in general terms. Burns' 1978 seminal work in leadership re-engaged our society and the academic field with an interest in the examination of leadership by bringing the study of leadership into the realm of formal social science and publishing his theories of leadership for a wider audience. Later scholars deepened our understanding largely by defending, rejecting, or manipulating Burns' ideas on transformation and transactional leadership, thus creating a modern field of leadership study. It is within the context of this modern field of study that my own study developed.

Statement and Context of the Problem

In this study, I used biographical case study approach to examine the aspects of tacit leadership and place-bound practice at play in the career of a long-tenured community college president. I chose tacit leadership as a focus for qualitative research as it is a concept that allows me as researcher to identify the multi-layered aspects of knowledge acquisition within the subject's career and inspect how that knowledge acquisition occurred over time (Nestor-Baker, 2001b). Dr. Henderson put his tacit knowledge into explicit action throughout his career, making the accumulation of tacit knowledge over time a function of place-bound practice. My study investigated tacit knowledge and place-bound practice cohesively, examining Dr. Henderson's long leadership tenure at San Juan College for evidence of tacit knowledge acquisition transferred into explicit professional practice within the context of his professional practice. As Dr. Henderson is still living at the time of this writing, the methods of personal interview allowed me to examine the subjective and highly personal aspects of tacit knowledge development and place-bound practice as Dr. Henderson and a select number of individuals recalled his career at the college. Focus group interviews including professional colleagues and San Juan College staff who worked with Henderson helped to identify the impact of Dr. Henderson's career on the local community and college. Document analysis allowed me to add general context to the personal stories discovered from interviews.

While the bulk of the current literature on leadership focuses on studies intended to refine the working definition of leadership in a myriad of leadership contexts, approaching the leadership ideal from the examination of one life-story meets with

limited scholarly interest when compared with popular interest in biography. This lack of academic enthusiasm may have nothing to do with scholars rejecting biographical study. There has been a steady growth in the number of studies that seek to compare modern concepts of leadership with the lived experiences of leadership practitioners and theorists (Alheit & Dausien, 2007; Armstrong, 2003; Bender, 1996; Denzin, 1989; Engs, 1999; M. Griffiths & Macleod, 2008; Inman, 1999; Martin, 2003; Oates, 1986; Smocovitis, 1999; Wraga, 2006). However, there is considerable difference between the academic and popular uses of biography. Public interest in biography is as great as ever, but for many it is driven by a voyeuristic impulse that was noted by Burns (1978) when he reflected that modern readers have come to know a lot about their leaders, but very little about what leadership is. Academic biographical study of leadership examines the interplay between leadership theory and the practical adaptation of those concepts as leadership is put into practice. Thus, writers of academic biography have been content to focus their studies on leaders who practice in contexts relevant to the study; or whose careers utilize some sort of reflective practice that allows their study to mesh with a discussion of theory (Armstrong, 2003; Bender, 1996; Denzin, 1989; Engs, 1999; Inman, 1999; Martin, 2003; Oates, 1986; Wraga, 2006). Popular biography will likely always find its motivation in the examination of well-known lives.

Purpose of the Study

As an educator, I have always been interested in processes that a person's career undergoes as an educational leader develops an intuitive sense of good practice now labeled tacit knowledge. One process by which a veteran practitioner may be granted the recognition of expert status is as he or she develops longevity, or tenure, at the same

school. Unfortunately, both the process of personal tacit knowledge development and the development of expert status are elusive to study, unless they are seen as a cohesive process linked by the study of one lived experience over time. This elusive quality makes biography a well-suited methodology for the study of tacit knowledge acquisition and place-bound practice in educational leadership (Danzig, 1997; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Jacobson, Brooks, Giles, Johnson, & Ylimaki, 2007; Kirby, 1992; Oplatka, 2007; Waterhouse, 2007; Wraga, 2006). Biography allows the researcher to focus conceptual notions such as tacit knowledge and expert practice on the professional experience of an individual's life story. Biography also allows the researcher to limit his or her study of rather complex concepts such as tacit knowledge and expert practice to one person's tenure, thereby developing a case study of these concepts, which might be generalized to a wider subject population in another study (American Council on Education, 2007; Bornstein, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2001; Peterson, 2008; Selingo, 2005). For the purposes of this study, a general explanation of biographical research must be defined in better detail, and will be provided later in this manuscript. This study focused on the professional career of one educational leader. At the time of the study's writing, Dr. Henderson is alive and still very much involved in the municipal community that he served as an educational leader. The aim of the study was not to provide a holistic account of Dr. Henderson's life story, but rather was intended to reconstruct his professional career within the context of that career's impact on the community and the development of a professional practice that utilized concepts of tacit knowledge and expert practice.

Scope of the Study

The purpose of this research was to study the career of a long-tenured community college president in northwestern New Mexico, focusing primarily on his tacit knowledge acquisition and the impact this knowledge had on his leadership practice over his career. Sources of biographical information included interviews with Dr. Henderson and other individuals within the local community who impacted the growth of the college and had a concurrent impact on the subject's leadership. Personal information pertinent to the subject's leadership is included in the study if that information is arguably of value in understanding the ways in which he impacted the community or exhibited a growing sense of tacit knowledge that affected his practice. Other sources of biographical information include archival data from the college and other sources of publicly available information from the local/state government and regional higher education association.

Site of the Study

Recent research indicates that rural community colleges are poised to survive changes in their funding structure and marketplace as they are more responsive to the developmental needs of their students and the demands of an evolving workforce (Black, 1991; M. Clark, 1997; Duree, 2008; Jensen & Giles, 2006). This flexibility and responsiveness makes the community college a crucial setting for repeated studies of its leadership dynamics (Piland & Wolf, 2003). A nearly universal "open door" admissions approach has garnered a close relationship between community college education and local workforce demands as secondary schools, employers, and local social services providers look to the college as a mechanism for job training. Simultaneously, the student demographic on campus, created by this open door policy, makes the need for

remedial study and prerequisite instruction a hallmark of community college missions (Vaughan, 1989). To borrow a business school axiom, community colleges already exist in a market much closer to the margin between success and failure than their four-year counterparts and are thus better positioned to respond to changes in that margin (Cross & Fideler, 1989).

Recent literature has focused either on quantitative market analysis or narrow-sample qualitative phenomenology (Eddy, 2007; Hardy & Katsinas, 2008). Taken together, these two approaches yielded some good data for practicing professionals, but have not produced any information that can claim to help the student of educational leadership understand tacit learning involved in good community college leadership. This trend indicates that research on community college leadership is in need of further study into detailed descriptions of leaders' experiences offered by qualitative research. Such closer scrutiny by qualitative research should yield clearer questions to guide future studies that can generalize on positive leadership traits in the profession. As in-depth leadership stories, biographical studies of community college leaders can help bridge the gap between broad market research and introspective phenomenological study. By re-creating the story of a community college executive career within the context of that career's time and place, I hoped to examine the intersection of an individual's career and the wider regional forces at work in community college leadership.

Need for the Study

Speaking from the perspective of a feminist lens of inquiry, Martin used historical documentation to reconstruct an understanding of women's experiences while running for office with the London Board of Education (Martin, 2003). In her introduction, Martin

emphasized four important uses for the perspective that history provides: history as a means to explore origins, history as a vehicle for alternative possibilities, biography as a view of social change over time, and the exploration of human aging related to social structure (Martin, 2003). For the purposes of this paper, Martin's second and third uses are of particular interest. In her quotation of Prentice on page four, Martin best summarizes the power of biography to examine social change in the hope of constructing alternative possibilities: "Perhaps only in the lives of single individuals is it possible to glimpse the complexity of motivation and experience that make up human history." Martin finds historical biography better able to map the entire terrain of a life and to examine that life as it is brought into the workplace. In this manner, historical biography becomes a sort of interview with the past, in which both the private and public factors affecting a professional life can be more comfortably analyzed for relevancy.

As tacit knowledge and expert practice are concepts so closely related to the construction of personal meaning, Martin's advice to not neglect the personal dimension of a life story is very relevant for the study of my study subject's career. While the purpose of this study was decidedly not to construct an exposé of Dr. Henderson's personal life, I was hoping to examine personal reactions and conduct analysis of the events that most impacted Dr. Henderson's professional life. I believe that these events, and the construction of meaning around them, are the nexus of creation for tacit knowledge and place bound practice. It was dually important for me to consider the precautions that must be taken to draw distinction between my voice as author and that of Dr. Henderson as the subject.

The need for this study is strong within the context of the region's history and culture. San Juan College, a state-supported regional institution of higher education, has grown dramatically over its 30-plus year history and remains focused on the needs of the local community. Additionally, the State of New Mexico changed the legal governance structure for community colleges during the same time period that San Juan College has flourished. In the media and within the community, much of the college's success and the statewide shift in governance law are anecdotally subscribed to solid presidential leadership. However, there is very little academic inquiry into the college's history, or presidential leadership on campus. San Juan College is also a major cultural center and the only complete public institution of higher education for the entire Four Corners Region of New Mexico. Historical examinations of the college and academic research on its structures and processes have just begun to show themselves in the professional literature (Black & Henderson, 1986; M. Clark, 1993; J. Griffiths & Degner, 1995; Moore, 1995; Ogilvie, 2002), and I hope this study will inspire further research centered on the college.

Conceptual Framework and Context

In addressing the problem of studying how tacit knowledge developed over the span of Dr. Henderson's career, I approached my research questions from the post-positivist perspective. Through a rhetorical and narrative style, I hoped to collect data that adds further detail to the existing story of the study subject's legacy at San Juan College. My personal perspective is also that of a resident of the Four Corners community served by San Juan College. I came of age in the area hearing about the work

that Dr. Henderson was doing at the college, and hearing many in the community voice a desire to know the story in better detail.

My interest in biographical research has a lot to do with the investigative nature of the work. Uncovering overlooked sources of information and bringing them to light for the public is a fulfilling practice from a social justice perspective and can do much to benefit other researchers of educational leadership in the region. A considerable portion of my study design was given to addressing San Juan College's relevancy to the regional history of higher education in New Mexico, so that the reader can clearly understand the relevancy of presidential leadership at San Juan College within this larger context of community college leadership in general.

In a wider educational context, some current research in educational leadership is focusing on the nature of tacit knowledge and expert practice within the context of a leader's role within their specific institutional setting (De Guzman & Guillermo, 2007; Howley & Harmon, 2000; Hoy & Miskel, 2003; Janson & McQueen, 2007; Nestor-Baker, 2001a). My study adds to this body of literature. A number of researchers investigate the interplay between tacit knowledge, expert practice, and leadership through the analysis of tacit and expert themes across the careers of several leaders in a range of educational settings (Academy of Human Resource Development, 2001; Burbach & Duke, 2007; McCauley & Brutus, 1998; Wasonga & Murphy, 2006). These studies are doing much to clarify our definitions of what tacit knowledge and expert practice mean, in general terms, to the educational field (Academy of Human Resource Development, 2001; Bordum, 2002). Other researchers focused their attention on case studies of relatively small comparative groups of educational leaders practicing their craft within

related fields of education. Such studies increase the field's understanding of factors that come into play in the development of expert and tacit leadership qualities for individuals within a specific arena of educational leadership: for example, the professional experiences veteran school leaders undergo at various stages in their career (Danzig, 1997; Hellner, 2004; Nestor-Baker, 2001b; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005b).

Arguably, the most limited area of research in tacit/expert leadership development is investigations focused on the experience of one individual. Phenomenological studies have taken this task on by studying the nature of tacit knowledge and expert development from the subject's perspective with strong consideration of the research subject's personal interpretation of experiences and their personal definitions of meaning (Racher & Robinson, 2002; Waterhouse, 2007). These studies provide valuable insight into the intrinsic processes an educational leader might expect to undergo within their own professional development (Jacobson et al., 2007; Oplatka, 2007). However, study of individual leadership careers for the purpose of understanding the subject's expert/tacit development would benefit from a biographical methodology. While phenomenological studies have an element of auto-biographical research inherent in their methodology, a biographical mode of inquiry approaches the subject's career from an external perspective. By providing context to personal meaning, this external biographical perspective is crucial in understanding an individual's story.

This is not to say that biographical studies of leaders are absent from educational research. Educational historians utilize biographical methodology in exploring the careers of educational leaders at nearly every level and variety of schooling imaginable. Scholars in educational leadership make wide anecdotal use of biographical information

on notable careers as supporting case studies for a range of research themes (Armstrong, 2003; Banker, 1987; Danzig, 1997; Daresh, 2007; Gardner, 1995; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Kirby, 1992; Rost, 1991; Waterhouse, 2007). In addition, research outside of education attempts to quench a public thirst for biographies on nationally and regional famous educators. However, whether in writing for a popular audience or used anecdotally in scholarly work, existing biographical research into the lives of educational leaders tends to focus on a time line of events in the subject's career as that career interacts with relevant social themes of national or local significance (Engs, 1999; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Oplatka, 2007; Wraga, 2006).

Research Questions

The objective of this study was the biographical research of an individual career for the purpose of analyzing the impact the subject's expert/tacit development had on the community; and conversely, the community's impact on the subject's development as an expert leader. This approach fills a vital need in the literature on educational leadership by blending a thematic focus on concepts of tacit knowledge acquisition and expert professional practice with a biographical methodology that examines a leader's relationship within his community of service.

In order to guide my inquiry, the overarching research question for this dissertation was: What processes and events in the professional life of Dr. James Henderson had a substantive impact on his longevity as a community college president? Three supporting questions rounded out my focus for inquiry. First: What lessons can the student of educational leadership take from the professional life studied? Second: Which aspects of tacit knowledge acquisition were evidenced by changes in professional

practice over time within the career studied? And third: What impact has Dr. Henderson's legacy at San Juan College had on the college's continued mission since his retirement?

Definitions of Terms

Tacit Knowledge. Commonly known as knowledge that is gained from experience, tacit knowledge is also knowledge that grows over time through lived experiences. The opposite of tacit knowledge is explicit knowledge, which is gained from study or instruction. For the purposes of this study, tacit knowledge is defined as knowledge gained from experience that guides behavior but is not readily available for introspection.

Tacit Leadership. Leadership where experience guides organizational behavior, but the practice of that leadership is not readily available for introspection. An important limitation of my study will be the shift from tacit to explicit as the details of Dr. Henderson's professional practice are uncovered and become available for inspection. While the differences between introspection and inspection can be subtle semantically, there is clear importance for my study in the distinction. While the leadership aspects I study were not readily available for introspection to Dr. Henderson and other study interview subjects themselves, this does not mean that those same leadership aspects cannot be readily inspected by an outsider. This distinction is an important strength for biography over autobiography as an outside researcher can investigate phenomenon that were tacit and not easily investigated by the subject. Thus, biography makes tacit learning and leadership available for explicit study by others.

Case Study. The gathering and organization of data on an individual or event for the purpose of investigating general factors or concepts in a specific context.

Professional Practice. The typical use of information and pattern of decision making that an individual undergoes in their professional experience. A prerequisite assumption for this study is that an individual's professional practice changes over time with the accumulation of tacit knowledge.

Expert Leadership. The recognizable and acknowledged efficiency of professional practice in leadership that is gained through tacit knowledge acquisition.

Place-Bound Leadership. Leadership that is studied within the context of and for the benefit of the institution or cultural setting within which the individual leader practices his or her profession. The opposite would be career-bound leadership wherein leadership is studied within the context of and for the benefit of a profession. Often, within the professional literature on the topic of place-bound vs. career-bound leadership, the distinction between the two is drawn based on the perceived basis of motivation for professional practice from which a given practitioner draws their inspiration to lead (Nestor-Baker, 2001b). In studying the professional practice of James Henderson at San Juan College I engaged a research subject who exhibited place-bound leadership. A hypothesis in my study is that the dynamics of group synthesis and positional longevity identified by Nestor-Baker in her study of place-bound superintendents can be examined within the practice of a community college president. (Nestor-Baker, 2001a)

Leadership. In this study, leadership was examined using the classic Burns (1978) definition of transformational leadership as a relationship where leaders and followers engage one another to higher levels of motivation and moral purpose. This

definition was used to assess the leadership or followership traits of study participants from the principal subject to focus group and one-on-one interview subjects.

Biography. A research tradition used to study the details of one person's life experience. Opposed to autobiography, where the biographical subject studies his or her own life experiences, a biography involves the outside perspective of a researcher who expounds on biographical research data to expose thematic elements or academic relevance in the life studied.

Career Biography. A biographical study that purposefully delimits inquiry to the professional or career aspects of a subject's life. For the purposes of my study, a career biography approach was utilized wherein the subject's personal life was not examined unless it was determined by both the researcher and subject that a given aspect of his personal life had relevance to the study of his career.

Key Study Assumptions

For the purposes of conducting this study, I assumed that my primary research subject would be able to recall the major milestone events of his career. As other study participants were interviewed, I assumed they too would be able to recall their involvement in Dr. Henderson's professional tenure and be able to expound on his tacit knowledge development over time. I also proceeded with the assumption that the college had archival material that would enrich the recollection of study participants. Related to research methodology, another assumption was that data from interviews and document analysis would be understandable using the standard processes of coding and interpretation. All participants were volunteers and permission was secured from the college to access archival materials.

The subject chosen for this study is an individual whose past professional contributions and regard in the community places him in the category of a respected expert. Regarding the study's central question of tacit knowledge acquisition, I assumed that Dr. Henderson possessed professional knowledge acquired by tacit means, as evidenced by the subject's standing in the community and supporting archival material. Based on this assumption, I attempted to determine how Dr. Henderson's tacit knowledge acquisition changed over time.

Study Limitations

This study's research design, selection of interview and focus group participants, site of the study and choice of biographical methodology were all affected by my bias as a researcher. As a resident in proximity to the college chosen as my study site, and a current practitioner of educational leadership, my selection of a study investigating the tacit knowledge development within a regionally respected career was not accidental. By opening my notes and interview recordings for review by the study's participants I added accountability to make sure that my voice in the study did not overshadow the voices of those interviewed and/or studied.

As a biographical case study of James Henderson's tenure at San Juan College, my study cannot be generalized. By not conducting a comparative study with another individual or another college, I purposefully limited my examination. My intent was to diversify my data collection to substantiate my findings by pairing a range of personal interviews and focus group sessions with documentary evidence in the college's archive, available personal archives, and organizational literature.

Summary

I chose to research the professional career of a subject who is still living and is active in his community. Through personal interviews within a biographic methodology, I gained insight into his personal theory of leadership and explored ways tacit knowledge acquisition changed that theory of practice over time. My intent was to construct meaning through the lens of Dr. Henderson's professional experience. In order to achieve my intent, I engaged a subject whose tenure in educational leadership is long-standing, and therefore was a good case study for understanding the factors that may contribute to the development of tacit knowledge over time within a professional career.

As a biographical case, this study was intended to join the larger academic conversation on leadership qualities that enhance educational organizations. My personal belief is that good educational leadership is closely related to tacit knowledge and that tacit knowledge best develops over a long stable tenure in administrative leadership. By studying the experience of a long-tenured community college educational leader in relationship to his particular educational organization, I hope to add to the body of work on tacit leadership in the profession of educational leadership in New Mexico and beyond.

A post-positivist perspective led me to examine my study's questions with openness to outside sources of information and not limit my study to "known" empirical variables. Using a biographical method, I have interviewed individuals who impacted the tacit knowledge acquisition of Dr. Henderson while examining the documented archival evidence that places the college in a critical role within New Mexico's development of an independent community college association. At the same time, I provided a forum for

Dr. Henderson's unique voice in the study, so that the reader might make relevant connections between the college's story and the subject's leadership experience.

Chapter 2

A Review of Current Literature on Tacit Knowledge, Leadership and Community

College Presidency

Introduction

The subject of this biographical case study was the presidency of Dr. James Henderson at San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico. A range of literature will be reviewed in order to explore the study's main research question: What processes and events in the professional life of Dr. Henderson had a substantive impact on his longevity as a community college president? The study's three supporting questions help to structure the review of literature by providing the basis for literature groupings and subsections of the review chapter. The question of which aspects of tacit knowledge acquisition were evidenced in changes in professional practice over time within the career studied are the underlying basis for the review's first section. In this section, literature related to tacit knowledge acquisition and expert practice is analyzed to assess their impact on the subject's career. Another of the study's supporting research questions examines the lessons a student of educational leadership can take from the professional life studied. This question guides the literature review's exploration of current research on leadership related to the subject's role as an educational leader within the local and regional and statewide higher education community. Finally, the impact of Dr. Henderson's legacy on his campus's continued mission was the motivation for investigation into literature related to community college leadership in a rural multicultural setting.

Literature Related to the Development of Expert Practice

In addressing the idea of expert leadership, this study defines the concept as: practiced leadership that utilizes the tacit knowledge from lessons learned in past experiences in order to make decisions in the present. This definition has developed from a focused reading of Peter Senge, Robert Greenleaf and James M. Burns with the objective of discerning the notion of expert practice that emerges from reading their most seminal works (Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 2002; Senge, 1990). With the possible exception of Burns' work in *Leadership*, none of these three men directly deal with expert practice as a distinct idea. However, grounding in their theories will be the basis that I have used for developing my own concept of expert practice. Certainly, other authors could be included in this focused reading, and some readers might object to the inclusion of one author or another that has been chosen here. Thus, the point is not to make the claim that Burns, Greenleaf, and Senge make for the best foundation for an expert leadership definition. However, the process of pulling their divergent ideas on the topic together and gaining a sense of expert practice from differing perspectives can lend weight to the definition of tacit leadership I have chosen for my own study. For my study, expert practice will be defined as a recognizable and acknowledged efficiency of professional practice that is gained through tacit knowledge acquisition.

In *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge (1990) does not use the term expert practice, nor does he directly address the role of an expert in his theory. Yet, his ideas on personal mastery and the structure of a learning organization do support the definition for expert practice I employed in this study. In chapter 9, Senge (1990) describes personal mastery as a process of growth in which we seek to refine our personal vision and see reality

objectively. Interestingly, Senge uses the artistic metaphors of creativity and practice to underscore his description of personal mastery, rather than the traditional use of academic study as a metaphor for expert development. It is his notion of a learner's ability to hold "creative tension" within himself that anchors Senge's ideas on the personal mastery process. Thus, Senge's expert would be simultaneously pulled by his developed sense of seeing reality objectively, while counter-pulled by a clarified personal vision of what might be. Senge's learner, then, can aspire to expert practice by using creative tension to develop personal mastery. In short, one must become the master of one's own professional development, before being recognized as an expert in the field. Holding the development and support of vastly differing perspectives is a trait in leadership that is becoming ever more important as educational leadership becomes more technologically and organizationally complex. Much research has been done on the emerging leader's need to recognize situations where they can learn and further develop a personal leadership style (Bicknell, 2008; Black, 1991; Carducci, 2007; Chieffo, 1991; Cross & Fideler, 1989; Duree, 2008; Elsner & Boggs, 2005; Fox, 2008; Jensen & Giles, 2006). This aspect of personal leadership development is very similar to Senge's notion of personal mastery.

Regarding the learning organization, Senge's ideas illuminate the type of environment that supports expert practice, as defined in this study. Rather than suggesting a quick fix for organizational self-improvement, Senge's learning organization is a system that seeks alignment between members of a team, and this process takes time. Central to Senge's ideas on system alignment and organizational improvement is his idea of metanoia. This shift of mind, as Senge describes metanoia, is a process that is

simultaneously personal and intra-personal. As more members of an organization go through the process of metanoia, the entire organization shifts into an environment where an individual's personal mastery is supported by the collective enterprise and true team learning develops. Herein, from his chapter on team learning on page two hundred and thirty eight, is Senge's link to the idea of expert practice: "... the discipline of team learning, like any discipline, requires practice. ... In fact, the process by which such teams learn is through continual movement between practice and performance, practice, performance, practice again, performance again."

In essence, expertise takes practice that is supported, over time, by an environment of mutual support within an organization that shares a strong vision. Thus, even Senge's ideas on systems thinking rely, to some degree, on the expertise that an individual gains through professional practice in a supportive environment. This, then, is the conceptual structure for understanding expertise in my study. Dr. Henderson's leadership was examined as a case study of professional expertise developed through tacit knowledge acquisition in community college presidency within the context of a local campus and city culture.

In discussing the practice of leadership, Greenleaf has substituted the word trustee for expert in his servant leadership work (Greenleaf, 2002). The notion that some individuals will naturally have better expertise in a given field, and thereby should be trusted to give advice and/or lead the rest of society is an underlying tenet of Greenleaf's ideas on trusteeship from page one hundred and forty (2002). To Greenleaf, however, the trusted expert's natural place in the lead is not automatic and their power should not be unrestrained. For an entrusted leader to exercise legitimate power, they must approach

their role with the spirit of servitude toward the whole enterprise. For my study's examination of expert practice, Greenleaf's recognition of expertise's role in the legitimization of leadership is crucial. While Senge's work (1990) can support the idea of expertise in good leadership through an interpretation of metanoia and its role in team building, Greenleaf has stated the direct link that recognized expertise has with the legitimate exercise of trusted leadership.

Focusing review of tacit leadership practice in the literature of leadership studies, Burns addresses the concept directly with the semantic label of "expert" rather than using the phrase "tacit" leadership (Burns, 1978). In his work, *Leadership*, Burns discusses experts from both an internal and external perspective. In the book's final section, Burns examined the external role of an expert who advises a given decision maker. In weighing the implications between theory and practice, Burns recognized on page four hundred and seven that a decision-maker must allow for and navigate the pitfalls of dissent among those who advise him (1978). Burns notes on page four hundred and eleven that a leader can effectively use dissenting advice from experts so long as "the political decision makers themselves are assured and collected personages who can distance themselves from multiple advocates and exploit their differences rather than be further divided by them" (1978). In essence, Burns was speaking of tacit leadership here when he recognizes that good leaders, through consistent practice, reach a point in their career where they can rely on the knowledge that they have accumulated through experience to make sound judgment in decisions based on input from contradictory outside expert advice.

How then, does a leader develop tacit leadership skills and reach the point of becoming an assured and collected personage? Burns offers some insight on this question much earlier in the book through his use of a Plato allegory while discussing the power of leadership in chapter 1 (1978). Plato's parable of the ship captain who was limited in the vital skills needed to pilot his ship, despite his otherwise powerful persona, was intended by Plato to demonstrate the well-rounded ideal of a philosopher-king. Burns put a modern twist on the tale by using this parable to demonstrate the limits of expert leadership by casting doubt on the trust between Plato's captain and his crew. From here Burns builds onward toward his ideas on legitimate power's basis in the trust and support of those being led. Long before the modern concepts of reflective leadership and tacit leadership were put to press, Plato recognized that ideal leadership followed the wisdom gained from practice and reflective study epitomized by an appreciation for the philosopher's nature. At the time he was writing his seminal work, Burns was likely not familiar with developing connections between his "assured and collected" leader and Polanyi's 1966 concept of tacit knowledge. As the connections between tacit knowledge and leadership grew over the next decade, the literature on tacit leadership has developed a good academic basis for identifying leadership practices that utilize tacit understandings to make decisions (Bordum, 2002; Connell, Klein, & Powell, 2003; Danzig, 1997, 1999; Durrance, 1998; M. Griffiths & Macleod, 2008; Guthrie, 1996; Hedlund, Antonakis, & Sternberg, 2001; Hedlund et al., 2003; Howley & Harmon, 2000; Janson & McQueen, 2007; Nestor-Baker, 2001a; Nestor-Baker & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Olesko, 1993; Rolf, 1987; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a; Sternberg & Horvath, 1999; Tschannen-Moran & Nestor-Baker, 2004; Wagner, 1987; Wasonga & Murphy, 2006; Zeira & Rosen, 2000).

From Greenleaf (1990), Burns (1978) and Polanyi (1966) emerge the idea that expert leadership develops within a supportive learning environment where the lessons of careful practice can develop into personal mastery and a recognized expertise. This expertise, then, is put into practice as a leadership position that symbiotically has service toward the follower as its greatest ambition and enjoys the trust of the follower in return. Expert leaders can draw on a wealth of tacit or academic knowledge, but also recognize the limits of their own expertise and will utilize the expertise of trusted followers.

Tacit Knowledge and Leadership

The fields of education and business have invested considerable attention on research into the effect that tacit knowledge has on leadership practice. The definition of tacit leadership used in this study has grown from a blending of the initial research by Polanyi (1966), who first identified the concept of tacit knowledge for study, and more recent work by Sternberg and Horvath (1999) who compiled further tacit knowledge research across several fields. Polanyi's work (1966) contributed to my definition of tacit leadership by postulating that tacit knowledge existed within experience and was possibly not measurable by standard practice of intelligence measurement. Polanyi described the tacit dimension of our knowledge as an indwelling of the things we know, or are aware of, but are unable to codify and define explicitly.

Polanyi's (1966) definition of tacit knowledge is foundational to the study of leadership. Later researchers would refine his definition and make it more applicable for leadership study (Danzig, 1999; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a). Tacit knowledge has come to be seen as a balance with explicit, or studied and codified, understanding and both are phases of our learning process linked by the process of professional practice

(Bordum, 2002; Burbach & Duke, 2007; Cianciolo et al., 2006; Connell et al., 2003; Danzig, 1997; Durrance, 1998; Guthrie, 1996; Hedlund et al., 2001; Hedlund et al., 2003; Howley & Harmon, 2000; Janson & McQueen, 2007; Nestor-Baker, 2001a; Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001; Nestor-Baker, Lippa, Tschannen-Moran, & Floyd, 2002; Nestor-Baker & Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Olesko, 1993; Rolf, 1987; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a; Sternberg & Horvath, 1999; Tschannen-Moran & Nestor-Baker, 2004; Wagner, 1987; Wasonga & Murphy, 2006). Sternberg and Horvath (1999) refined Polanyi's definition by describing tacit knowledge as procedural knowledge that guides behavior but that is not readily available for introspection (Sternberg & Horvath, 1999). Thus, for the purposes of this study, tacit knowledge will be defined as knowledge gained from experience that guides behavior but is not readily available for introspection. When we compare this definition of tacit knowledge to James Burns' paraphrased definition of the exercise of leadership as a situation where persons mobilize resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motivations of followers, the notion of tacit leadership emerges as leadership where experience guides organizational behavior, but is not readily available for introspection (Burns, 1978).

With my base definition of tacit leadership as leadership where experience guides organizational behavior, but is not readily available for introspection, it is first important to examine the use of the term introspection in the current literature before moving on to an analysis of current literature. In their use of the phrase "not readily available for introspection" Sternberg and Horvath relied on Sternburg's assertion in the book's epilogue that "as soon as knowledge is made explicit and even codified, it ceases to serve as an [equally] important source of individual differences" (Sternberg & Horvath, 1999

pg. 231). Within this perspective, tacit knowledge and tacit leadership are not readily available for study because we destroy some element of the subject's "tacitness" through the process of study. The durability of tacit knowledge is a concern if the objective of one's study is to identify some particular tacit understanding as a factor in professional success, or a marker of expert status. With this cautionary element in mind, this study relied on a large field of research that examines tacit quality in knowledge and leadership across several professions. Furthermore, the purpose of this study was the investigation of a career in community college leadership that has ended. As the subject chosen for this study, Dr. James Henderson is an individual whose past professional contributions and regard in the community places him in the category of a respected expert. I have not attempting to prove that my subject acquired tacit knowledge that made him an expert. Rather I assumed that Dr. Henderson does possess professional knowledge acquired by tacit means, as evidenced by the subject's standing in the community, and I attempted to determine how Dr. Henderson's tacit knowledge acquisition changed over time.

Roughly speaking, the research on practice-based tacit knowledge acquisition falls into two areas of focus with considerable crossover between the fields of education and business. The first group, research into the means by which tacit knowledge develops in an individual or an organization, has done a great deal to clarify the wide-ranging definitions for tacit knowledge (Burbach & Duke, 2007; Connell et al., 2003; Danzig, 1999; Guthrie, 1996). The research focusing on personal development of tacit knowledge is also a crucial link in my understanding of tacit knowledge acquisition within expert practice. In the second focus of current research, tacit knowledge scholars have investigated the ways in which these types of knowledge can and are transferred

from one practitioner to another and/or corporately shared by an entire organization (Academy of Human Resource Development, 2001; Burbach & Duke, 2007; Danzig, 1997; Durrance, 1998; Howley & Harmon, 2000; Janson & McQueen, 2007; Nestor-Baker, 2001a; Olesko, 1993; Raelin, 1997; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a). This literature review primarily focuses on sources that deal with personal development of an individual's professional knowledge and the transfer of that knowledge from one individual to another, rather than sources that address organizational uses of tacit knowledge.

The study of tacit knowledge is marked by key findings including 1) the development of personal leadership primarily through the transfer of tacit knowledge, and 2) a leader's use of tacit knowledge to deal with complex situations as an organization evolves once it has been learned through transfer (Danzig, 1999; Polanyi, 1966; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a). Another key theme in the literature on tacit knowledge is its transferability between individuals linked by their practice of leadership. While my study was not concerned with the transfer of tacit knowledge, tacit knowledge transferability is important to note in this literature review as the topic does address the nature of tacit knowledge and how various researchers believe it should be examined. The literature on leadership development through tacit knowledge transfer has three key theorists of note: St. Germain for her research on the transfer and nature of tacit knowledge in educational leadership (2005), Danzig for his ideas on the use of narrative storytelling and the development of balance between tacit and explicit knowledge (1997 & 1999), and Polanyi for introducing the idea of tacit knowledge to leadership research through his work on the philosophy of scientific discovery (1966).

Professional Development Through Tacit Knowledge

A group of researchers has been investigating potential professional development uses for tacit knowledge identified in expert practice that might be codified and used to train novice leaders (Sternberg & Horvath, 1999; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005).

Transferability is the term used by St. Germain to refer to that process by which an expert's experiences are collected through a research protocol and used in the professional development of a novice leader through codification and case study presentation. As my study demonstrated, the Sternberg position (1999) that tacit knowledge is not readily available for introspection and St. Germain position that some elements of tacit knowledge can be transferred from expert to novice are not as contradictory as they first seem.

A 2005 study of principal leadership by St. Germain and Quinn (2005b) is particularly useful in understanding the transferability of tacit knowledge. This study utilized a phenomenological methodology to compare the decision-making expertise of both novice and expert principals from all levels of K-12 education. The idea of transferability is taken up in the article as it discusses potential outcomes of the research. The authors put forth the notion that schools can use media technology to capture tacit knowledge from experienced practitioners and deliver these experiences as case studies for leadership students. Most interesting for the purposes of this study, however, is the article's conclusion that the study findings indicated that experience was less a factor in the development of tacit knowledge than was the practitioner's willingness to work collaboratively. In layman's terms, tacit knowledge develops as we interact with colleagues and clients - not through the isolation of individual study. The position could

be held, then, that reflective practice and the deepening of our understanding of one's professional self follows collegial interaction and the subsequent tacit knowledge that is gained from such interaction.

St. Germain's work is perhaps the most developed and longest standing example of an emerging body of work associated with tacit knowledge transfer. Other research in this area largely deals with the application of an understanding of tacit knowledge in the development of internship programs or for the building of corporate systems for professional development (Academy of Human Resource Development, 2001; Bordum, 2002; Burbach & Duke, 2007; Connell et al., 2003; Danzig, 1997, 1999; Durrance, 1998; Howley & Harmon, 2000; Janson & McQueen, 2007; Rolf, 1987; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a; Wasonga & Murphy, 2006; Zeira & Rosen, 2000). For the purposes of my study into the tacit leadership of one biographical subject, this body of work creates a setting where I as the researcher could investigate the professional leadership career of Dr. Henderson with the understanding that there is a continuum between tacit and explicit knowledge in expert practice. My intent was to investigate the environment, career and setting of Dr. Henderson's changing tacit leadership and learning over time, not to conduct an examination that will claim to pronounce Dr. Henderson an expert, or that his tacit knowledge acquisition was valid. In this context, St. Germain's position on the transferability of tacit knowledge and Sternberg's assertion that the tacit knowledge will be transformed into explicit understanding after introspective study are both valid as examinations of the general limits that tacit knowledge can be stretched before it is morphed into some other, more explicit form of knowledge. Again, the assumption and

limitations of my study place it within the range of inquiry supported by current professional literature.

Tacit Knowledge and Change in Professional Practice

The research of Danzig on the use of leadership stories in the training of novice educational leaders is extremely helpful for my biographical case study (Danzig, 1997). Much of my study's basis for explanation of tacit knowledge's power in the personal development of a leader was gleaned from Danzig's work on leadership stories. In his article, Danzig synthesizes information gleaned from 14 interview processes conducted by educational leadership students in conversation with secondary level school administrators. The data was filtered to develop a set of descriptors that identify the basic career path, key concepts, and critical events that typified the lessons on school leadership learned by the subjects and brought out through the interview process. This structure has suggested an interview methodology that guided my own research into the career path, lessons learned, and critical events that shaped Dr. Henderson's legacy on campus and within the community.

Additionally, Danzig's research opens some interesting discussion on the power of tacit knowledge in the formation of good leadership practice in education (Danzig, 1997). Danzig cited the work of several researchers in support of his assertion that "[career] stories enhance the understanding and growth in professional practice" (p. 123). Danzig highlighted his graduate students' support of this position by compiling the perspectives of his 14 research assistants during the project and focusing on their identification of the "small things," or apparently minor anecdotal details, of a particular

subject's career story that had critical impact on the subject's development as a leader. Danzig then translated that observation into the context of tacit knowledge acquisition.

In brief, Danzig asserts that novice leaders benefit from narrative stories about an experienced leader through the deeper and more detailed descriptions of professional practice that these stories provide. This improved description of professional practice helps the novice to overcome the inherent hesitance in decision making that results from a reliance on theory learned by formal study when lacking the experience to be gained by tenured practice. Thus, by sharing their stories, seasoned leaders can help the novice bring the realm of leadership into a holistic focus by balancing explicit knowledge learned through study with tacit knowledge learned through narrative and conversation. Much of Danzig's thought on the power of storytelling in leadership training comes from a discussion of reflective-practice research conducted by Schön in 1991 (Danzig, 1999). From Schön, Danzig constructs layers of practice from the story-sharing process; including the self-reflection of the storyteller and the synthesis that the story undergoes as the listener takes in the story's details and processes that narrative into their own practice (Schön, 1991).

In the article's conclusion, Danzig holds the telling of career stories up as a means for educational leadership to accomplish several goals (Danzig, 1997). University leadership preparation programs might use the telling of experts' stories as a means to teach the informal or tacit aspects of leadership to students. Expert leaders might utilize the telling of their own stories as a means of reflecting on their own practice in a search of continued relevance. Finally, the listener might revisit the expert's story as he moves from hearing the narrative to writing its record. In short, the systematic and purposeful

use of leadership career-story through case study can provide great insight into the tacit realm as well as enhance the more explicit realms of professional practice.

To fully appreciate my study's handling of leadership practice within the context of tacit knowledge, it is important to visit the philosophical origin of ideas that are at the foundation of my definition of tacit knowledge. While Danzig and St. Germaine have used the concept of tacit knowing to build their theories on its usefulness in the field of education, neither theorist goes beyond a basic utilitarian definition of tacit knowledge in their studies. This makes sense, as the field of leadership is pragmatic and appears to be driven by a need to use research to support professional practice in the field. However, in order to synthesize Danzig's balanced approach to understanding tacit vs. explicit knowledge and St. Germaine's focus on tacit knowing as a mechanism for the transfer of knowledge between practitioners, it is wise to return to the source of the theory.

In 1966 Polanyi published a brief collection of his ideas on tacit knowledge from previous study and lectures entitled, *The Tacit Dimension*, in which he advocated that a new philosophy of science was needed in order to save the on-going march of scientific discovery from the threats of Marxist and Positivist pragmatisms (Polanyi, 1966). Polanyi hoped that a society of explorers would emerge from the scientific community and take up the cause of scientific discovery for the purely philosophical purpose of answering the questions that hang on the edge of our current knowing. He further argued that mankind's greatest purpose and highest power was to go beyond the total relativity of existentialism and seek out the barely known questions on the edge of our knowledge in order to engage those questions with scientific passion.

Tacit knowledge plays into Polanyi's theory as the embodiment of the barely known question that drives scientific discovery forward. To use Polanyi's own words, "we know more than we can say" - both collectively and individually (1966 p.4). His theory cites psychological experimentation indicating our ability to preemptively sense the application of an electric shock after uttering certain words selected by an observer, even in the absence of the subject's ability to cognitively recognize a pattern between these words. Polanyi also supports his theory with historical evidence that Copernican thinkers in pre-modern Europe steadfastly insisted on a heliocentric pattern to the movement of planets, even though they could not prove their ideas until Newton discovered the laws of gravity. For Polanyi, this partially formed knowledge on the edge of our consciousness is not merely a type of Copernican stubbornness, nor is it a paranormal sensitivity to electricity. Rather Polanyi describes the tacit dimension of our knowledge as an indwelling of the things we know, or are aware of, but are unable to codify and define explicitly.

Polanyi's definition of tacit knowledge is fundamental to the study of leadership. Danzig, St. Germain and Quinn are all correct (Danzig, 1999; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a). Tacit knowledge is in a sort of balance with explicit, or studied and codified, understanding and Polanyi might say that both are phases of our knowledge linked by the process of storytelling described by Danzig (Danzig, 1997). St. Germain and Quinn were accurate in advocating that the field of leadership study should strive to measure and record the tacit knowledge of expert practitioners for posterity (St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a); such an effort would certainly be a major concern if educational scholarship is to live up to Polanyi's vision of a scientific society of explorers (Polanyi, 1966).

Polanyi's ideas also merge with another theorist on leadership. Gardner's (1995) landmark study of historically significant leaders as case studies on how leading minds operate speaks of a consciousness about issues and paradoxes of leadership that emerging leaders must develop in order to take up the mantle as the next generation of leaders. A synthesis of Polanyi's psychological study into the nature of tacit knowledge and Gardner's recognition of the need for a developing consciousness comprise the two halves of my study's questions of tacit leadership development within one individual's career in educational leadership.

Tacit Knowledge and Cross-Cultural Leadership

For my own study, the link between tacit knowledge and leadership was a crucial element in the understanding of Dr. Henderson's career in community college leadership. As will be discussed in others sections of this work, the northwestern region of New Mexico exists in a unique cultural and regional geography (M. Clark, 1993). Since my study took place in a community college that serves a rural community near the homeland of a large Native American population, I felt that it was important to take an approach that both exhibited and respected other ways of measuring and talking about knowledge (Henderson, 1991). This synthesis between tacit leadership and study of an educational leadership career within a multicultural setting requires grounding in recent research that addresses these two topics. Current literature on native and rural responses to tacit leadership indicates a common theme of cultural value for tacit traits in leadership (Eddy, 2007; Grigorenko et al., 2001; Howley & Harmon, 2000). Among native peoples in Alaska, Grigorenko (2001) found that response/scenario testing revealed a greater aptitude for practical or tacit ways of learning among Yup'ik tribal members than

conventional intelligence tests would indicate within the population. These results support the article's conclusion that "folk" knowledge is relevant in the study of intelligence and should be a part of general intelligence assumptions within heavily native population. It follows, then, that successful educational leadership within these communities should have a cultural respect and general aptitude for practical, tacit, ways of both securing and transferring knowledge. Furthermore, Grigorenko's discussion of pre-existing research on the function of tacit knowledge among blue collar factory workers supports recent work conducted by Howley and Harmon (2000) on the professional practices that secure success in rural schools.

Although Howley and Harmon's research is focused on leadership at the high school level, it does present some interesting insights into the structure of local power in a rural community that impacts an educational leader's practice in guiding the growth of a school setting and can be used as a reference for my study in community college leadership (Moore, 1995). Among other factors, Howley and Harmon unveiled the importance of an educational leader's relationship with local grassroots organizations and regional power structures, both political and cultural (Howley & Harmon, 2000). In summary, Howley and Harmon (2000) cautioned that a rural educational leader must balance his efforts to bring a global perspective and respect for the value of education to local students with the realization that rural communities filter their view of the larger world through the lenses of local perceptions and purposes. It would also be important to add to Howley and Harmon's insights the supporting notion that local communities also bring their own definitions of education and learning, not to mention distinct ideas on tacit knowledge.

Some of the tacit skills needed to stand at this proverbial balance point between global awareness through education and respect for local values are touched on by Eddy (2007). Eddy's work on the intersection of local politics and the leadership of rural community colleges echoes similar research findings from the previously discussed work by Howley and Harmon. In essence, the local community college president can no more hope to divest himself from the perspectives and concerns of the local power structure, or the implications of local tacit knowledge, than can the superintendent in Howley and Harmon's study (2002). To put it plainly, both Howley and Harmon (2002) and Eddy (2007) can be read to assert that an embracing of one's place within the local culture as an educational leader is the goal of any leader with a good sense of service to the community; so long as that leader is also able to push against the local perspective when the integrity of the college's educational mission necessitates. Again, an aim of my study is to explore how the career of one community college president can be a part of building a successful college in a multicultural region.

Supporting these varied themes on tacit leadership in education are a few voices from recent research on the issue of tacit leadership's role in education (Janson & McQueen, 2007; Nestor-Baker, 2001a; Nestor-Baker et al., 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Nestor-Baker, 2004). The common theme in these research efforts is that tacit knowledge is indeed a type of intelligence that is closely aligned with professional practice popularly perceived as expert. The authors also agree that continued research in the field is needed so that those professional traits that are today labeled as tacit can become explicit in the future so that the next generation of leaders can benefit from this

knowledge. They differ, however, on the means by which tacit leadership knowledge can be best made explicit.

One main camp emerging from this research is represented by Janson and McQueen (2007) who side with other researchers who believe that empirical processes and codification will best make tacit knowledge available to future leaders in education (Jensen & Giles, 2006; Olesko, 1993; Raelin, 1997; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a). To be fair, none of these scholars would suggest that tacit knowledge could be taught in the way that explicit lessons can be. Rather they advocate for various developmental models that seek to map out the terrain for emerging leaders to follow as they develop their own tacit knowledge base.

In another major camp of research is the work of Nestor-Baker and Tschannen-Moran (2001), supported by other researchers who believe that future study should focus on the organizational relationships and local contexts that surround fully developed tacit leadership (Burbach & Duke, 2007; Connell et al., 2003; Elsner & Boggs, 2005; Neumann & Bensimon, 1990; Stoeckel & Davies, 2007). These researchers contend that emergent leaders need to assess their assumptions and motivation to lead and embrace the lessons taught by their colleagues and subordinates. The distinction between the two styles of tacit leadership development is most clearly drawn by Nestor-Baker (2001) as she describes the very different processes that career-bound and place-bound public school superintendents undergo in their tacit knowledge development. In her research, she contended that place-bound superintendents seek to reinforce the relationships with an organization that foster tacit knowledge transfer, while career-bound professionals seek to establish processes and policies that can endure a change in leadership. While

Nestor-Baker labels neither of these career paths as better or worse for tacit knowledge development, she does concede that they do require very different professional visions. A critical goal of my study was to investigate the ways that Nestor-Baker's place-bound vs. career-bound dichotomy played out within the context of Dr. Henderson's career in community college leadership.

Using the literature, I hoped to place Dr. Henderson in the context of a place-bound leader whose base of support came from old concepts of trust and tacit knowledge sharing addressed recently by Nestor-Baker and Tschannen-Moran (2001). This trust and climate of tacit knowledge sharing develops over time, cultivated by a respect for local perspectives on tacit knowledge acquisition and a growing efficiency of professional leadership practice in a given setting. Such efficiency of professional leadership practice can be described as expert practice.

Practice and Tenure in Collegiate Presidential Leadership

Since the mid-1980's, the trend has been for increasingly shorter tenures among college presidents (Selingo, 2005). Within the professional literature surrounding leadership of higher education, a great deal of discussion and research has developed around the idea of explaining why the job of college presidency has become a short time endeavor in comparison to the profession a generation ago. Herein is a brief sampling of that conversation as consultants selling themselves as experts in the hiring of college presidents, ex-presidents, and others active in the field grapple with the idea.

In a recent article in the *Journal of Higher Education*, Meade-Fox (2010) highlighted several explanations that are being discussed as root causes of the declining average tenure of college presidents. This trend toward shorter tenures seems to have hit

an all-time low of 3-5 years (Meade-Fox, 2010). One of Meade-Fox's more compelling ideas is that the recent college president is called to take on a more managerial role in their leadership with less time devoted to the traditional tasks of being an academic involved in any research and program development taking place on campus. Increased managerial roles are described by Meade-Fox as a heavier involvement in institutional fundraising and nurturing relationships with state legislative bodies for public funding. Additional factors identified by Meade-Fox that have impacted current college presidential tenure include eldercare, or even childcare, obligations that might have been taken on a generation ago by a stay-at-home spouse but are left today as a major concern where both spouses work outside the home. The search process itself is a concern to Meade-Fox as he brings to light the concern that recently more complex search processes to replace a preceding generation of collegiate leaders has created an alluring market for ambitious candidates, often with hearty signing bonuses, that encourage a tendency to shop for other options when one's current position grows stale. This market is further stressed, again according to Meade-Fox, by a lack-luster effort on the part of college governance structures to develop strong internal talent when an opening in the presidency presents itself.

Other scholars and practitioners have weighed in on this discussion and added additional ideas as root causes for the decline in presidential tenure. In a recent commentary on the ordeal that the University of Colorado faced resulting in the resignation of its president and subsequent submission to an outside review of its faculty tenure process after controversial remarks by Professor Ward Churchill related to the September 11th terrorist attacks, Fogg touched briefly on an interesting connection

between stronger fidelity among faculty and a weakening of presidential power (Fogg, 2006). Fogg's thesis that very few groups within the campus knew why or how the mandated tenure review was proceeding was also symptomatic of the difficulties that a university can find itself in as competing interests attempt to fix the public's perception of an institutional failure with a weakened base of authority within the presidential office. In fact this void of presidential authority has led other practitioners such as Onear to postulate that greater legislative intervention in university finances, and other processes affected by financial management has been a factor in weakening presidential effectiveness and an overall change in the nature of job descriptions for the modern college president (Onear, 2007).

Thus, factors ranging from legislative intervention and fractured leadership in campus governance to a greater need for the president's attention on fundraising and a neglected effort to train other campus leaders to fill the position have contributed to a decline in presidential tenure. These stresses are apparent in the findings from a 2005 survey of college presidency conducted by the Journal of Higher Education (Selingo, 2005). Extrapolating data from the survey's 57% response rate, Selingo highlighted that the top three responses to the question of what issues are most on a college president's mind were fundraising, budget, and dealing with legislators, with fundraising being the leading response. While no previous similar survey exists for direct comparison, both commentary and research on the current state of the college presidency indicate that a shift from earlier tasks such as championing the importance of higher education and guiding campus research or instruction to recent focus on fundraising and dealing with legislative intrusion has contributed to a decline in tenure length (Basinger, 2002;

Bornstein, 2003; Little, 2005; Mead-Fox, 2010; Onear, 2007; Peterson, 2008). Most telling is the statistic highlighted by Basinger that only 100 of the 1,478 sitting 4-year college presidents in 2002 had been in office for 15 years or more. Indeed, as the trend of shorter tenure continues, the need for studies that examine aspects of past successful college presidencies will be needed to help identify aspects of campus leadership that have further contributed to the shortening of presidential tenures.

Cross-Cultural Practice in College Leadership

Before leaving the discussion of collegiate presidential leadership, it is important to touch on other contexts for culturally diverse understandings of expertise in leadership. In the recently published 3rd edition of *Cultural Proficiency: A manual for school leaders*, Lindsey, Robins and Terrell develop earlier publications by addressing some essential elements of culturally proficient leadership and examine some tools that school leaders can employ to refine their craft (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009). Most appropriate for a study of what it means to be a culturally proficient leader, the text includes a wealth of resources that help one develop a sense of how understanding power and privilege is a cornerstone of developing cultural proficiency. The text also discusses some essential elements for culturally proficient leadership that shed light on my understanding of developing leadership and tacit knowledge acquisition in a culturally diverse community college. In particular, Lindsey et al. (2009) established a continuum of cultural proficiency that a leader might progress through as he or she deepens their understanding of the essential elements. Such a structure might be a starting point for understanding a leader's tacit development of expertise over time within a career.

For a broader understanding of cultural perspectives on leadership in higher education, I briefly describe three works that have been formative in my understanding. Hale used his introduction of the textbook that he edited on making racial diversity work in high education to highlight six characteristics of institutions that have been successful in nurturing racial diversity on campus (Hale Jr., 2004). According to Hale these colleges: develop a minority recruitment plan, inform students of financial resources, cooperate with secondary schools, encourage minority students to transfer from community college to four year institutions, use support services to ensure minority student success, and create a warm and hospitable environment for diverse students (Hale, 2004). Building on this culturally fertile environment, Dimmock and Walker established criteria for “cross-cultural leadership” that discusses the environment of racial diversity in a more pointed way than is noted by Hale (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Using Hofstede’s four universal cultural dimensions of power/distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity and individualism/collectivism, Dimmock and Walker proposed a comparative framework for studying educational leadership (Hofstede, 1980). Dimmock and Walker’s framework of concentric circles of cultural influence provides a structure for developing questions to help analyze cultural changes that a school’s staff might be going through. For the development of expertise in the leadership of diverse schools, a practitioner can then be studied by analyzing his or her campus environment using the six characteristics introduced by Hale, while examining his or her personal professional development through the responses to questions about the change addressed by Dimmock and Walker’s (2005) cross-cultural leadership framework.

Literature Related to Community College Leadership

A good deal of recent literature on community college leadership focuses on the distinctive aspects and challenges that two-year colleges face (Elsner & Boggs, 2005; Jensen & Giles, 2006). There are many research and practice journals that focus on community colleges, which have created a field of literature examining leaders' experiences in higher education administration, focusing on the leadership traits found in the profession. For Esters, McPhail, Singh, and Sygielski, the traits associated with an entrepreneurial vision are becoming the hallmarks of good community college leadership. Duree (2008) and Fliegler (2007) focused on the development of technologically savvy skills for twentieth century leadership and Stoeckel and Davies (2007) drew attention to the reflective qualities of good community college leaders (Duree, 2008; Esters, McPhail, Singh, & Sygielski, 2008; Fliegler, 2007; Stoeckel & Davies, 2007). Some recent literature has even focused on phenomenological studies of community college presidents in colleges with distinctive features in their structure and culture such as Omoh's (2007) comparison of the servant leadership attributes of 13 community college presidents, Eddy's (2007b) investigation of role construction among campus executives and Ogilvie's (2002) connections between San Juan College's early growth and its presidential leadership.

From a historical perspective, community colleges have been in a process of change since the mid-1980's and may see their field of institutional competitors thinned as market forces impact institutional stability (Cross & Fideler, 1989; Eddy, 2005). This change is typically seen as an epoch phase in the progress of community college growth in the United States; with growth showing a foundational phase beginning in the 1920's, a peak phase from the late 1960's through the mid-1980's, and the current plateau phase

of growth post-1985 (Cross & Fideler, 1989; Vaughan, 1989). Community college leadership has also changed, as campus presidents since the peak phase of growth have noticed their job descriptions become more focused on financial solvency and market fitness than the roles their “pioneering” predecessors played in earlier decades (Eddy, 2005). The historical context of these works’ description of market trends in U.S. community college growth provides a context for the anticipated regional culture and time period selected for my study. The national growth phase between the late 1970’s and late 1980’s described by Cross and Fideler (1989) is the time period where northwestern New Mexico saw its fastest growth in community college development.

Another theme emerging from the literature comes from the attributes advocated by researchers as crucial to those administrators who wish to guide their institutions through the current phase of declining growth: flexibility and cultural sensitivity (Eddy, 2007; Esters et al., 2008; Malm, 2008). Even with the wide range of organizational structures under which community colleges fall, the executive responsibilities of the campus CEO may dictate a juggling act for the leader as they hold together the various roles of fundraiser, cultural attaché, political broker and community liaison (Eddy, 2005; Malm, 2008). The need for these various factors of campus leadership is generally attributed to the shrinking investment in community college funding by state governments in the face of increased competition in the market over the past two decades (Esters et al., 2008). Thus, campus administrators have been forced to seek other funding avenues and more specific market niches (Eddy, 2005; Esters et al., 2008). My own study attempted to look at the tacit leadership of one community college president within the professional climate existing during his tenure rather than the existing environment of

diminished funding and increased market competition. I interviewed Dr. James Henderson as an individual community college president as I looked for evidence in his career story that highlights the change in tacit knowledge that he underwent through years of practice. As a consequence, future researchers might be able to draw a connection between presidential experience and today's climate in community college leadership.

One key recent development in the study of community college leadership has been the feminist perspective in research. By using gender and power as critical lenses for the study of leadership, feminist researchers have added rich perspectives to our understanding of the way culturally responsive leadership develops in higher education. In the overview of *Women and Leadership*, Chin, Lott, Rice and Sanchez-Hercles shed light on the struggles that emerging female leaders face in developing their practice in a range of professional contexts that have been greatly masculinized over time (Chin, Lott, Rice, & Sanchez-Hercles, 2007). Interestingly, such an environment is available for study within the regional focus identified for my study. San Juan College's president since the retirement of long-time president James Henderson has been Dr. Carol Spencer; who has acted as Henderson's successor and the college's second president in nearly thirty years. Noting this momentous shift from masculine to feminine leadership will require a solid understanding of the feminist perspective on this change is crucial. By 2006, Dr. Spencer's third year of service succeeding Dr. Henderson at the helm of San Juan College, 28.8% of two-year college had presidents who were women and only 6.7% of two-year college presidents regardless of gender had been in office for 3 years; versus 20.4% reporting less than 3 years in office the same year (American Council on

Education, 2007). With San Juan College riding the crest of a nationally modest wave of change in leadership, I hoped to examine biographical evidence of tacit knowledge acquisition within a context very close to San Juan College. This geographic study environment has the signs of being a fertile ground to study career-long tacit knowledge acquisition within the context of local multiculturalism and transitions in the gender of community college leadership in the area. While the scope of my study is not to investigate the interplay of gender and leadership specifically, it may play into the multicultural contexts of northwestern New Mexico. Furthermore, it may be a focus for further leadership research in another study.

Rural Community College Leadership

The challenges unique to community colleges that exist in rural areas are articulately highlighted by Eddy and Murray as editors of their 2007 text on the topic (Eddy & Murray, 2007). After explaining the Carnegie Classification system, Eddy and Murray described the rural differential that makes rural community colleges distinct from similar community colleges in urban areas. The Carnegie socio-economic criteria of high poverty, low overall population and limited educational and job opportunities in rural areas is supported in Eddy and Murray's work, to be sure. However, the most distinctive criterion is the notion of a rural differential that sets rural community colleges apart from urban community colleges based on the multiple missions and high cultural profile status that rural community colleges deal with in comparison to their urban counterparts.

A couple of chapters from this book have been identified in current research as good discussion points for examination of leadership within rural community colleges. In chapter 3, Miller and Kissinger support the idea that a wealth of continuing education

courses and non-credit classes are vital to understanding leadership and institutional vision in rural community colleges (Miller & Kissinger, 2007). According to Miller and Kissinger, continuing education and non-credit courses are key to a rural community college's need to firmly connect with the economic, job market and cultural needs of what are often communities quite isolated from similar opportunities offered by colleges and universities in urban areas. The challenge for leadership in the rural community college is for those managing the college to understand that these programs are central to the rural community college mission, and not peripheral – as they might be to an urban college or university. Leist gets to the central issues of rural leadership challenges by giving advice on job descriptions for rural community colleges seeking new presidential leadership (Leist, 2007b). Leist urges the rural community college search committee to pay close attention to the college's geography, politics and regional culture in order to find a good fit for presidential leadership.

The position that rural community colleges face unique challenges for campus leadership is supported by concurrent research within the professional literature. Eddy published two supporting articles in 2007 and 2009 speaking to the leadership qualities needed for a successful career in rural community college presidency. Eddy encourages the potential leaders of a rural community college to prepare for a high profile position in a community that feels entitled to access, even in non-job related situations (Eddy, 2007). This research is further developed in 2009 when Eddy offers four specific areas in which rural community colleges need to look for finding good campus leadership: the ability to connect with local professional affiliations, developing relationships with other colleges and universities in the area, internal development of leadership talent, and openness to a

diverse background from which to draw potential leadership (Eddy, 2009). Leist also published supporting research in 2007 that involved a study of 15 senior leaders on rural community college campuses (Leist, 2007a). Leist used interview techniques to collect data, which he used to come to the conclusion that rural community college leaders must come to assimilate the college's local culture and community if their tenure is to be successful. Key elements of successful leadership in rural community colleges discussed by Leist included: the development of situational awareness in professional practice, a penchant for good story telling, and personal rural roots in the leader's own background (Leist, 2007b).

Regarding the need for further study of leadership challenges unique to rural community colleges, Williams, Pennington, Couch and Dougherty conducted a 2007 survey of the Western North Carolina's graduate program in community college leadership (Williams, Pennington, Couch, & Dougherty, 2007). Their study determined that preparation programs for instructional leadership in rural community colleges needs to focus more heavily on pedagogy related to helping instructors understand the needs of students with limited previous education and diverse cultural backgrounds. The study also noted that typical university faculty have a limited understanding of the particular issues facing rural community colleges and more research is needed to improve the general quality of leadership and instructor programs for these colleges. Additionally, a 2009 study of campus conditions and student needs at the New Mexico State University branch campus in Gallup, New Mexico brought into focus the importance of career ladder strategies and on-campus distributed learning for helping rural community college students meet their goals in a low population and high poverty context (Blanchard,

Casados, & Sheski, 2009). The article's authors raise important issues related to the educational background and remedial needs faced by rural community college students, and set the tone for future research on the impact that committed leadership can have on these campuses.

By setting my study in northwestern New Mexico, I hoped to study the tacit knowledge acquisition and professional practice of a community college leader who made an impact on this rural area. This brief literature review highlights some key areas to focus on when looking for campus programs that link my research subject's professional leadership and his impact on and collaboration with the local community.

Community College Leadership and Cultural Perspective

As my study was set in the Four Corners Region of New Mexico, it was important to examine literature related to collegiate leadership in cultural contexts where minority student perspectives are the norm. Situated near the Navajo Nation, the largest Native American reservation in the United States, the Four Corners Region is also enriched by the cultural perspective of a large Hispanic population. Existing within these cultural perspectives, community college leadership in the region would have to be practiced with sensitivity for, appreciation of and an understanding gained from minority ways of interpreting the world.

Working from the vantage point of defining good leadership for a multicultural age, Bordas wrote:

Multicultural leadership also entails changing organizational structures so that diversity becomes part of the framework and the standard way of operating. This requires a shift from hierarchical pluralism, which dictates that people must

conform to dominant cultural norms, to egalitarian pluralism, with values and norms that reflect a multicultural perspective. (Bordas, 2007)

A good deal of Bordas' work is directed at addressing leadership styles that emerge from communities of color. In fact, in her call to action on page one hundred eighty. three of the eight principles for multicultural leadership deal with understanding leadership styles in communities of color: community conferred leadership, a tradition of activism and working for the common good. As Bordas sees organizations move away from hierarchical forms of leadership, she sees them develop methods of collective and collaborative leadership that have been hallmarks of leadership in communities of color. Her call then is for organizations to embrace the democratic ideals of pluralism and diversity in shifting their work toward a multicultural context (Bordas, 2007).

In understanding how Bordas' multicultural and community of color centered ideals of pluralism and collaboration can be applied to higher education leadership, it is useful to turn to the work of Bensimon and Neumann on redesigning collegiate leadership toward teamwork (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). In their chapter on the work of team building, Bensimon and Neumann's work echoes a great deal of Bordas' call for a restructuring of the traditional hierarchical nature of collegiate leadership. Much of the burden for moving higher education toward a collaborative and teamwork focused norm, according to Bensimon and Neumann (1993), is placed on the shoulders of college presidents. Given the formalism that has become the norm in collegiate leadership, Bensimon and Neumann (1993) believe it will take powerful positional leaders who are willing to let go of traditional structures such as departmental segregation and top down control of the leadership agenda to make a shift to collaborative leadership teaming. For

the team oriented college president, Bensimon and Neumann conclude their team building chapter with the same metaphor of cultural perspective as a guiding theme for the work of collaboration that is used by Bordas to describe the underlying currents in multicultural leadership some 14 years later (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bordas, 2007).

This interplay between collaborative team building and multicultural leadership within minority cultures is an important context for the site in which I chose to examine tacit knowledge acquisition and community college leadership. Northwestern New Mexico has a relatively sparse population but does have a heavy influence from Hispanic, Native American and blue-collar Caucasian populations. Through my study, I used the work of Bordas as well as Bensimon and Neumann to guide my understanding of the local cultures that affected Dr. Henderson's professional development.

Summary

I examined the preceding range of professional literature on the topics of leadership, tacit knowledge and community college presidency in order to inform my study by laying out the context of current understanding on the environment in which my subject, Dr. James Henderson, practiced his own tenure of educational leadership at San Juan College in Farmington, NM. By understanding the existing research on tacit knowledge, its transfer and its development over time, I hoped to examine how these processes worked within Dr. Henderson's professional experience. Through researching the current ideas on expert practice, I hoped to gain a better context for my biographical inquiry into one professional's lengthy and successful tenure. By examining existing research on cross-cultural leadership and cultural perceptions of leadership I was looking

for key events and process in leadership culturally rich careers that can help me identify similar features in my own study.

As a researcher with no personal, practical experience working in higher educational, it was important that the literature review also contain some material on the concept and design of community college leadership. As Dr. Henderson's tenure at San Juan College was long and successful, I needed to be well informed on the goals and objectives of good community college leadership.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methods

Introduction

This is a qualitative study of the effect that tacit knowledge acquisition had on the professional practice of a community college president. The study's basic design was a biographical case study of Dr. James Henderson's long-tenured presidency at San Juan College. Data were collected using document analysis, primary interviews, and focus group interviews. The site of study was San Juan College and the communities in the northwestern corner of New Mexico.

The overarching research question for this study was: What processes and events in the professional life of Dr. Henderson had a substantive impact on his longevity as the president of San Juan College? Three supporting questions rounded out my focus for inquiry. First: What lessons can the student of educational leadership take from the professional life of Dr. Henderson? Second: Which aspects of tacit knowledge acquisition were evidenced by changes in professional practice over time within the career studied? And third: What impact has Dr. Henderson legacy at San Juan College had on the college's continued mission since his retirement?

Research Design

In constructing a design for qualitative inquiry, I found the work of Creswell to be very useful. (Creswell, 1998) Creswell's treatment of the five major traditions in current qualitative research helps to bring the breadth of qualitative study into a tighter and more manageable focus for the beginning researcher. In addition to his efforts to codify qualitative research, Creswell has provided some good guidance on best practices for

research design. In choosing a good research question, Creswell gives particularly strong advice in his repeated assertion that qualitative research has merit in its own right, tempered with the recognition that both traditions have similarities in basic structure. While defining good qualitative research, Creswell draws the distinction that both qualitative and quantitative research deal with cases and variables. However, their approaches to these elements are very different: quantitative research analyzes several cases to understand a few variables, and qualitative research often focuses on several variables from a few cases (Creswell, 1998, pp. 14-15). Of course, this relationship is not a hard and fast rule, and good qualitative research goes beyond this comparison.

Mode of Inquiry

A combined reading of Creswell and the work of Denzin and Lincoln clarifies that good qualitative research is an effort involving the examination of data within the context of a subject's natural setting and the researcher's position within a field of philosophical frameworks and a methodological tradition. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) Furthermore, the issue of researcher bias and acceptance of one's philosophical context are central themes in Denzin and Lincoln's work (1994, p.12). Understanding and declaring one's philosophical perspective, then, is the first step in defining a solid research question and designing a good study.

The construction of my study is further aided by the use of solid qualitative rigor, described by Tobin and Begley as an effort to approach the reliability, viability and generalization tests of quantitative study while remaining true to the naturalistic structure of qualitative inquiry (Tobin & Begley, 2004). These researchers conducted a literature review of scholarship on qualitative inquiry and determined that, while qualitative inquiry

is distinct from strictly positivist definitions of reliability, viability and generalization, these rigors can be emulated within qualitative inquiry. To refit the trinity of quantitative rigors for qualitative use, Tobin and Begley turn to a concept of qualitative “goodness” which holds that good qualitative research adheres to the rigors of clear epistemology, clear methodology, organized data collection methods, diverse representation of voice, interpretation and presentation of meaning, and stated recommendations for professional practice (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002; Tobin & Begley, 2004). For my study, an epistemology of standard qualitative practice was well suited to my research question as qualitative inquiry allowed me to examine Dr. Henderson’s interpretations of tacit knowledge acquisition and professional practice while keeping the study focused on the subject’s experience. By using a methodology of biographical study, I hoped to keep any findings from Dr. Henderson’s experiences embedded within the context of his professional life story.

Philosophical Research Perspective

A researcher’s voice can be measured by placing it somewhere between the authoritative tone of a positivist perspective and the Socratic tone of post-positivist or constructivist perspectives. Somewhere along this scale sits the researcher, with his or her research tradition and corresponding methodology, hoping to address a central question within a given study topic. In a metaphorical sense, the researcher, the subject and the audience position themselves around the question in much the same manner as dinner guests take their seats at a table. A study changes noticeably with any variation in the question or perspective of the audience, researcher or subject. My own philosophical perspective is that of skeptical inquiry from the position of a post-positivist framework.

To further define my position: I seek to borrow a sense of emergent academic truth from the post-positivist tradition and reject the positivist notion that only one truth exists in any given academic inquiry. This constructivist process of seeking an emergent truth is tempered by my use of skeptical inquiry as I examine the various themes and hypotheses that might emerge in the course of this study.

To adhere to sound rigor within post-positivist inquiry and remain open to emergent truth within the study, I turned to research practice within the nursing field. Ford-Gilboe, Campbell, and Berman have approached the notion of borrowing from a range of traditions, both qualitative and quantitative, as long as four fundamental issues are addressed by a study: quality of the data, investigator bias, quality of the research process, and usefulness of the findings (Ford-Gilboe, Campbell, Faan, & Berman, 1995). As stated earlier, I intended to approach my study from the vantage point of skeptical inquiry. While I intended to stay within the design tradition of qualitative research and rely on the methodology of biographical study, I intended to be open to a range of data collection methods in order to tap into the aspects of Dr. Henderson's experience that would help answer my research questions.

Research Ontology

Regarding the work of addressing truth in this study, I approached the wider ontology on the issue from the perspective of post-positivism. The intent was to investigate several strands of truth within the context of Dr. Henderson's career and determine their fitness with my research perspective as academic interest in Dr. Henderson's application of tacit leadership during his professional tenure. In general, ontology is taken to mean the study of being, or the nature of reality (Merriam-Webster,

2003). From the post-positivist perspective, my selection of truth strands, or stories, within the chosen context of one man's leadership career at a single institution does not negate the likelihood that there are other equally valid stories to tell and other justifiable limitations of context for a similar study. Yet, the aim of my study was to add to the wider field of research by constructing a study from a perspective that was personal to me and at the same time may resonate with the personal perspectives of other individuals who worked with Dr. Henderson, Dr. Henderson's own perspective, and perspectives of those who worked in collegiate leadership in communities in and around northwestern New Mexico.

Two works have been particularly helpful in my understanding of post-positivist qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). First, Bogdan and Biklen's fourth edition of *Qualitative Research for Education* places post-positivism within the general field of post-modernist philosophy, and second, Northcutt and McCoy's *Interactive Qualitative Analysis* provide critical detailed definitions of post-positivist methods.

From Bogdan and Biklen's discussion of qualitative research foundations within education, post-positivism is positioned as one ideological strand of research within a set of other qualitative approaches such as feminism and critical theory that pay particular attention to researcher positionality (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Building on work by Haraway, Bogdan and Biklen categorize approaches such as post-positivist by their attention to researcher position due to the general influence of postmodern philosophy; this rejects the older "positivist" ideal that the researcher can attain near-complete neutrality (Haraway, 1991). Again addressing earlier work within the field, Bogdan and

Biklen (2003) assert that the subject a social researcher is attempting to investigate is not directly knowable and must, as is also asserted by Willis, take into account both the impact that power plays in the research setting and the influence of the researcher's own theoretical or philosophical framework (Willis, 1977). For my study, this dynamic of power and relationship between the subject(s) and research was addressed by including the dynamic of power among the questions used for interview.

Research Epistemology

Some of the most interesting developments in research on the post-positivist tradition have come from the field of medical nursing research (A. Clark, 1998; Ford-Gilboe et al., 1995; Racher & Robinson, 2002). As constructivist studies in nursing and my study in educational leadership are both practitioner based, it would be good to address the epistemological similarities to identify concepts from nursing practitioner research that should be useful in my own work. This nurse practitioner research has proposed common ground between post-positivism and more constructivist qualitative traditions such as phenomenology for getting at data that is particularly useful in the nursing field (Racher & Robinson, 2002). Additionally, the 1995 work of Ford-Gilboe, Campbell and Berman highlighted recent efforts within the field of nursing research to define post-positivism as a distinct tradition by proposing a basis for mixed method research that straddles research paradigm, but maintains a respect for the tenets of paradigms in both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Ford-Gilboe, Campbell & Berman, 1995). However, because I needed to define post-positivism's strengths in relation to educational career biography, Clark's work was particularly useful. (Clark, 1998).

Clark asserted that contemporary empirical research is leaving the increasingly indefensible position of positivism for a post-positivist framework. Post-positivism's recognition of researcher positionality is a factor in this shift within the field. Yet, Clark holds that, while empirical science still maintains that post-positivist research should not consider metaphysical considerations, there is a growing sense among those drifting away from positivism within the medical field that a post-positivist position has a more realist handling of truth as it is being examined within the context of a given study. Clark states that a subject can be investigated through a post-positivist paradigm while allowing the researcher to deem non-observables to have existence and the capability of explaining the function of observable phenomena. This fundamental shift from the positivist position that only observed details can be deemed to impact a studied subject is a big part of my use of post-positivism for this study. A post-positivist researcher is seeking to uncover a relative truth within the predetermined contexts of his study, not establish an absolute truth. This research context was best for my study, as I sought to research Dr. Henderson's understanding of his own tacit knowledge acquisition and pair this subject-centered understanding with the impressions of other professionals who worked with him during their tenure in the local community.

To be fair, it must be noted that post-positivism does have its detractors, or at least those researchers who assert that a post-positivist must more specifically define their philosophical perspective to conduct qualitative inquiry. A core of respected authors have come to the position that post-positivist is a general term to denote an entire range of constructivist research traditions (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a, 2003b; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In addition to an argument over post-positivism as a general

classification for constructivist tradition, several researchers have delved into specific methodologies such as ethnography, grounded theory and some mixed method approaches to address lingering elements of positivist limitations within post-positivism; such as a simplifying aspects of human life in order to make life researchable and a tendency to seek out causation (Flick, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Due to this range in definition for post-positivist traditions for qualitative research, I chose to identify the philosophical perspective of my biographical study as post-positivist rather than constructivist. This philosophical perspective was chosen due to the emergent truth focus involved in post-positivist research, which kept my research grounded in the purpose of practitioner study – limiting theoretical extrapolation on my research questions. In short, I intend pragmatic use for my research, for it to be consumed on the practitioner level. I make some statements in a wider context and need to place limitations on my study that might restrict me from investigating “outside” factors. Yet, my intent was to develop a relative truth about the professional tenure of Dr. Henderson’s leadership and acknowledge my bias and positionality within the study. Again, the intended use for my study is practitioner reflection: exposing Dr. Henderson’s reflections on his own practice and providing some insight for other practitioners of educational leadership to use this research to reflect on application in their practice. Biographical methodology allows my research to be consumable by constructing the study in a known methodology that also allows for a constructivist approach to the research questions.

Positionality

From a critical realist ontological position within the tradition of post-positivist research, I hoped to understand the emergent reality of Dr. Henderson's career. As my study uncovered details of Dr. Henderson's leadership career, I subjected my claims about that reality to critical examination in order to facilitate a better understanding of the reality my study is based on. This ontological position created an interesting epistemological circumstance for my study as the objective truth of Dr. Henderson's tenure in higher education is viewed and interpreted by Dr. Henderson's perspective. Therefore, as a post-positivist researcher I used biographical methodology to probe that objective truth and construct a critically analyzed and subjective truth for my study.

On a personal level I am a resident of San Juan County, New Mexico who has witnessed community college leadership in the area since 1980 – both as an adult and adolescent. I have also been witness to the development of the area's higher education opportunities during Dr. Henderson's tenure and since his retirement from San Juan College. While I did not get the opportunity to attend the community college and have only personally met Dr. Henderson during the course of this study, I do consider myself somewhat of an insider to the story of the leadership at this community college. Since high school, I have followed the college's growth and Dr. Henderson's presence in the community with interest. Much credit has been given to Dr. Henderson within the local culture as the conceptual architect of a campus that is also popularly noted as a marker of progress in the county. It was with this curiosity about a person's career in educational leadership and a college's growth that I proceeded with my study.

As the researcher in a post-positivist study, it is important to state my positionality. I am an educational leader serving as a public high school principal in San

Juan County, New Mexico. As a high school principal in the same community as the site for my study, I was positioned to have insight on the community. This familiarity with the local community served as an advantage in approaching interview subjects as the community could identify my professional practice as a motivation for conducting this study. My experience in the community is limited however; I did not attend college in the county, I do not work in higher education, and my organizational interaction with higher education in the county has been from the perspective of a high school principal involved in dual credit programs between the community college and the local high schools. These limitations made it necessary for me to consistently seek clarification on details of higher education practice with which I was not familiar.

Methodology

A guiding model for biographical study. In a sort of poetic turn of fate, one of America's most controversial biographers, Fawn McKay Brodie, became the subject of a biography written after her death by a noted Mormon historian (Bringhurst, 1999). The irony is in the fact that Brodie made her mark on the landscape of American biography with her exposé of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) founder Joseph Smith. Using her connections in an established Mormon family, Brodie gained access to guarded church archives and used the information from those sources to piece together a highly critical biography on the founder of her own family's faith. This act ultimately earned her an excommunication and life-long animosity toward and from the LDS church. Yet, when Bringhurst, president of the Mormon History Association, turns the methods of biography on the great "heretic" of his church he does not use the opportunity to denigrate Brodie but, rather, uses her life-story to chronicle the modern development

of American biographical study. This feat is possible as Brodie's professional career is book-ended by arguably two of the most ground breaking and controversial American biographies in the twentieth century: *No Man Knows My History: the Life of Joseph Smith* and *Thomas Jefferson: an Intimate History*.

Bringhurst's study of Brodie is relevant to this study, because of the example of good intent and methodology that Bringhurst sets for an aspiring biographer (Bringhurst, 1999). From the beginning of his book, Bringhurst clearly sets his course by centering his research on one question: Why did Fawn Brodie find herself embroiled in controversy throughout her life? This key research question allows the author to piece together an exhaustive collection of interview-based and document-based sources on the subject and construct a very positivist oriented study in a readable and compelling style. My labeling of Bringhurst as a positivist is not casually done, but is advocated based on that author's own defense of Kendall's position that "the ultimate mission of biography is to 'perpetuate' the individual as that individual was in the days he or she lived (Bringhurst, 1999)." This is an attempt to define the true nature of a biographical subject's impact or relevancy, and in my eyes is a credit to the compelling nature of both Bringhurst's and Brodie's stories.

By paying attention to the unique interplay of Brodie as biographer, who then become the subject of a biography, I am reminded of the need for constant diligence in honestly identifying my motivations for biographical inquiry of Dr. Henderson. While, unlike Brodie, I do not have a spiritual or deeply emotional drive to expose hidden facts about Dr. Henderson, I am using biographical method so that I can reconstruct Dr.

Henderson's professional life for the purpose of studying tacit knowledge acquisition within that practice.

While most classical biography is concerned with the story of long dead figures from history, or perhaps the recent history of a past cultural figure, I am attempting to write a biography of a living person. While a life story approach would develop this study into a sort of case study on Dr. Henderson's career with a searching attempt to find relevance, I have opted to create a career biography on a living person. The differences are subtle but important between these two styles of biographical study. With a distinctly exploratory and constructivist structure, a life story study seeks to search out a wide range of influences on the study subject and tie those wide-ranging influences to whatever socio-cultural theme emerges as the study proceeds. This very constructivist approach is useful in developing a study where the subject is known, but the influences on the subject's life are less clear (Bringhurst, 1999; Danzig, 1997; Martin, 2003; Oates, 1986).

I am using the term "career biography" to denote a study which seeks to limit inquiry in the subject's personal life and focuses on certain known influences on a limited area of the subject's professional experience. As a post-positivist study, my career biography of a living subject's leadership begins with the limitation of professional influences on Dr. Henderson's career and seeks to explore the details, intellectual product and archived evidence of those influences on his or her experience. While both life story and career biography can cover the same story with very similar outcomes, the constructivist wide-ranging approach to gathering data would set a far different tone to the study than working within accepted limits.

Before moving on to addressing the methods used in this study it is worthwhile to touch on one piece of advice from Kendall. In Oates' edited collection of essays on the craft of biography, Kendall takes on the chapter devoted to methodology entitled *Walking the Boundaries*. In this essay, Kendall reports a belief that "the biographer does not trust his witnesses, living or dead" (Oates, 1986, pp. 44-46). Herein Kendall recognizes that lives often leave an incomplete and confused paper trail and/or the living sources on a life can often muddy the clear picture of the life being studied with personal prejudice, hatred or a number of other complicating emotions – to say nothing of the effects of poor memory. Therefore, Kendall would advocate that a biographer needs the skepticism of a detective to ferret out the facts of a life-story.

It was in the hope of achieving the scrutiny and researcher neutrality advised by Kendall and the objectivity of Bringham's study that my biographical look at community college professional practice in San Juan County, New Mexico proceeded. Notwithstanding that total objectivity and perfect fact-finding are likely not achievable, I desired to breathe life into the professional career of a community college leader who has recently retired, but is still very relevant to his college and community.

Thus, I utilized the methodology of biographical case study. By seeking to construct the professional life story of a regionally respected educational leader, I emphasized Dr. Henderson's career as a useful case study in understanding the impact that tacit knowledge and expert practice have on educational leadership. Additionally, Dr. Henderson's leadership served as a case study for understanding the historical context surrounding the development of community college education in San Juan County and the State of New Mexico.

Biography and the study of educational leadership. The recent public interest in biography as a form of literature has grown alongside a similar trend to utilize biography as a means of studying educational leadership. While few direct examples of this relationship exist, a researcher can draw from the similarities in recent work conducted in the fields of popular biography and educational leadership studies. In the prologue to his work *Biography as High Adventure*, Oates notes fellow biographer W. Jackson Bates as saying that the novel is no longer the prevailing form of popular literature. Biography is stepping in to the breach, portraying particular people and times the way great novels of the past did (Oates, 1986). Writing on the practice of qualitative research from the field of human sciences, in which we can include educational leadership, Creswell heralds the popularity of biography as a method of research among graduate students and social scientists in his textbook *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (Creswell, 1998).

This body of literature falls into three general areas of relevancy: current research on the uses of biography in the field of educational leadership; research related to community college development and presidential leadership in San Juan County; and contextual sources that serve to fit the story of San Juan County community college development and presidential leadership into the general history of community college growth in New Mexico.

The most common application of biographical method in educational research is the construction of life stories from interview and observation of experienced educational leaders actively working in the field (Creswell, 1998). Danzig examines the positive role these stories can have in making new knowledge more meaningful and useful for novice

educational leaders (Danzig, 1997). By studying the specific cases of working experts in the field, the participants in his study were found to be able to better connect theory to practice before they completed their formal learning. From the study, Danzig draws the conclusion that the novice leader is able to enhance his own learning through personal experience by having heard the stories of how experts used both formal and informal decision-making in their careers (Danzig, 1997 p. 10).

In my study of community college leadership and relationships within San Juan County, Danzig's approach was quite useful. By seeking out documented evidence of Dr. Henderson's involvement in the development of the State's current community college system and by interviewing other educational leaders whose careers intersected Dr. Henderson's, I hoped to reach some conclusions on the impact that Dr. Henderson's career had on the general climate of educational leadership practice in the region. However, the use of educational biography may not be the only means of working toward a better understanding of the development of tacit knowledge and expert practice, and it would be important to understand the context of my approach within the field of research. Thus, we must turn to other researchers focusing on the use of historical analysis and life story.

In addressing the shortcomings of most life-story writing in educational history, Armstrong offers a couple of key points: first he analyzes the problem of voice in historical biography, and second he examines several criticisms of the lack of historical method in educational life histories (Armstrong, 2003). Regarding the problems associated with voice, Armstrong discussed the role that both the author's voice and the voice of the subject play in developing good post-structural history. Armstrong discussed

most current methods of historical inquiry, with particular attention to the care that modern researchers take in assuring that the author's voice does not overwhelm the voice of the subject. Armstrong made good use of the poststructuralist philosophy put forth by Foucault and even conducted an extensive analysis of Foucault's focus on "how knowledge is used as power to enforce social order" (Armstrong, 2003, p. 10). In the end, Armstrong positioned himself as a "pragmatist" aligned with poststructuralist philosophy by stating that the current state of historical inquiry into education is unsatisfactory due to the overwhelmingly passive voice of modern educational history. (Armstrong, 2003, p. 14) Armstrong's preference would be to see biographical and historical research in education directly challenge or improve current practice.

Armstrong's position is a difficult mandate to follow. Of course, a strong voice in a biographical study does provide the audience with better focus on the themes that the study intends to propose and a strongly held position can promote further research as other academics either support, reject or modify the study's conclusions. Yet, my study focused on the career biography of a living professional and must respect the fact that Dr. Henderson's interpretations and meanings must be re-told in a respectful fashion. Thus, for the purposes of this study my own interpretations of meaning based on data collected through the study are reserved for the final chapter as to draw clear distinction between the perspectives of both research subject and author.

Site of Study

San Juan County comprises most of the land area that makes up the Four Corners region in New Mexico. The county's physical geography is largely high desert with the majority of its population residing along the San Juan and Animas rivers from the Navajo

Dam reservoir and La Plata basin in Colorado to Shiprock, New Mexico and points further west on the Navajo Reservation.

Farmington, NM is the largest municipality in San Juan County. The Farmington area has been economically dominated by the production of natural gas, oil and coal since the latter half of the twentieth century. Population growth since the mid-1950's has been linked to the fortunes of oil and gas production, with boom and bust phases of a generally growing residential population supplemented by a migratory influx of families who come and go with the availability of oil and gas jobs.

Culturally, the populations of Farmington and the surrounding towns of Bloomfield, Aztec and Kirtland are a blend of three major ethnic and cultural groups. Native American groups comprise roughly 20% of the county population, represented by Navajo centered in the western half of the county and a few Jicarilla Apache communities in the extreme east and into neighboring Rio Arriba County. The county's 25% Hispanic population is a mixture of generational Spanish-American who have resided in the county's eastern highlands at least since the State's territorial days and more recent Latin American groups (largely Mexican) who have joined the county resident population through work in the oil and gas industry. The roughly 55% Caucasian population of San Juan County began with an established agricultural community, but has grown significantly with the fortunes of the oil and gas industry. Distinct cultural groups within the Caucasian population would be a representation from Mormon groups and immigrants from neighboring western states (Farmington Daily Times, 2008; MacDonald & Arrington, 1970).

San Juan College is located in Farmington, NM, which is the largest city in the Four Corners region. San Juan College is the only institution of higher education in the area I chose for my study. With its nearest in-state sister institution of higher education in Albuquerque, San Juan College has singularly filled the role of post-secondary education in the northwestern corner of New Mexico. By partnering with Fort Lewis College to provide local access to a 4-year degree for San Juan College graduates and developing creative reciprocal tuition programs to make attendance at Fort Lewis affordable, San Juan College has positioned itself as “the college” to the county population. Additionally, the college’s leadership seized on the opportunity to join the early stages of the New Mexico independent community college movement in the 1970’s and 80’s to free itself from controlling forces under the direction of New Mexico State University. By creating its own board of trustees and tapping into local revenue sources, San Juan College has been able to grow under a leadership that has steadfastly held to its local base of support and remained a community college / technical training school in spite of recurring pressure to become a four-year institution (M. Clark, 1993; Moore, 1995).

These realities have mirrored a theme in recent research that community colleges are poised to survive changes in their funding structure and marketplace as they are more responsive to the developmental needs of their students and the demands of an evolving workforce (Black, 1991; M. Clark, 1997; Duree, 2008; Jensen & Giles, 2006). A nearly universal “open door” admissions approach has garnered a close relationship between community college education and local workforce demands as secondary schools, employers and local social services providers look to the college as a mechanism for job training. Simultaneously, the student demographic on campus, created by this open door

policy, has made the need for remedial study and prerequisite coursework a hallmark of community college missions. By re-creating the story of a community college executive career within the context of that career's time and place, I hoped to examine the intersection of an individual's career and the wider regional forces at work in community college leadership.

Participant and Document Sampling

I interviewed three primary participants for this study. I interviewed Dr. James Henderson as the primary subject in order to gain insight on his recollection and his leadership experience in northwestern New Mexico. I covered the study's themes of tacit leadership and expert practice as a part of interview questioning in order to gain Dr. Henderson's perspective on the impact these themes might have had on his career and how his acquisition of tacit knowledge may have changed over time. Additionally, I interviewed secondary subjects as participant colleagues to the study subject during their career in community college leadership in northwestern New Mexico. I sought individuals who served on the college's board during Dr. Henderson's tenure and were key players themselves in New Mexico's transition from branch-campus structure for community college governance to the existence of an independent community college system. Data from these secondary interviews was used to add context to the recollections provided by my study subject. Finally, I interviewed college presidents who served other colleges in the vicinity of my study site during Dr. Henderson's tenure. Although the nearest institution of higher education to the area of northwestern New Mexico, Fort Lewis College, is in another state and is a four year institution, interview data provided by a professional peer to Dr. Henderson provided context for Dr.

Henderson's recollections given that these two colleges share a geographic and cultural similarity and both presidents were likely to have counseled one another on issues of mutual importance. By triangulating interview data on Dr. Henderson's career, I stood an improved chance that my study would rely on more accurate data.

In addition to these individual interviews, I conducted a focus group interview. In order to investigate the possibility that Dr. Henderson's practice and tacit knowledge may have changed over time, every effort was made to seek out individuals representing the span of his tenure at the college. The focus group interview included staff that worked with Dr. Henderson during his tenure. In order to determine Dr. Henderson's legacy and how his leadership may have affected community relations over time, I sought to include in this group San Juan College staff that interacted with public school leaders, community partners and regional program. In order to protect the identity of focus group participants who are still employed at San Juan College, I have used pseudonyms in my study.

Foundational source documentation for this study included institutional records created by or about Dr. Henderson's career on archive at the college. I used these institutional records to seek out information that would help to identify key examples of Dr. Henderson's tacit leadership. For context, archives at regional newspapers were reviewed to identify contextual data that could support both the college and Dr. Henderson's importance to the local community. Coupled with this newspaper information were publications and records from the New Mexico Coalition of Independent Community Colleges that could shed light on the college's role in creation of New Mexico's current independent community college system. In order to draw

connection between participants, I asked interviewees for any correspondence that related to their working relationship with Dr. Henderson during his tenure.

Data Collection Methods.

The methodology of biography does not stand alone, but is supported by a pre-determined assortment of data collection methods that help the author examine his or her subject from multiple perspectives. For a living biographical subject two methods for collecting data are critical: analysis of documentary evidence by or about the subject and life story interviewing (Danzig, 1997; Martin, 2003; Oates, 1986; Prins, 1991; Waterhouse, 2007).

Document analysis. Document analysis was one of the most conventional methods for examining source material that I used (Baum, 1977; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a; Merrill & West, 2009; Oates, 1986). While life story interviewing and focus group interviews generated a great deal of data on Dr. Henderson's leadership career and tacit knowledge acquisition, a grounding in historical documentation provided context to data gathered through interview and provided another perspective for the major events in Dr. Henderson's career. Through the synthesis and analysis of historical source documents produced by or about Dr. Henderson, I determined the rough timeline and general themes of Dr. Henderson's career. These data from historical documentation provided a better picture of the context for Dr. Henderson's leadership and helped to give definition to the themes of tacit knowledge and practice within the story.

Through preliminary document research, I hoped to identify an objective set of milestone events in Dr. Henderson's career and use these events as a guide for the

interview process. The epiphanies, as they are described by Denzin, leave a mark on the biographical subject's career and are often the best guide to understanding how a subject's awareness or prejudices develop over time (Denzin, 1989). By having Dr. Henderson reflect on these events and theorize as to his recollection of each event's importance to his leadership, I established a database of stories related to career milestones and began constructing a chronology to give structure to my reconstruction of the subject's career story.

Secondary documentary evidence from regional and state level organizations related to the story, potential documentary data collection from within Dr. Henderson's personal correspondences and contextual document-based research allowed me to expand on the chronology and led to my identification of relevant patterns and themes within the biography that display Dr. Henderson's tacit knowledge acquisition over time. Dr. Henderson's career biography might become the basis for further research on important events and themes within a leadership career in a northwestern New Mexico community college. In addition, Dr. Henderson's career biography might be used in future research to develop concepts on the relevant practice of tacit leadership in similar settings.

Participant and focus group interview. Participant and focus group interviews also helped to build a solid basis for source evidence in my study (Baum, 1977; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Denzin, 1989). Since the story of Dr. Henderson's leadership in a northwestern New Mexico community college was within the context of a fifty-year history of community college education in the region, the story was also within the living memory of several prominent actors who took part in this piece of history. I had the unique opportunity to collect some of the first interview material on the subject of

community college leadership in the region, which might be of use to future research. With a careful balance between scripted questions that guide interviewees into specific aspects of the story and an openness to unscripted dialogue initiated by interviewee recollection, I created a career biography on Dr. Henderson that is informed by details of his own retelling of important milestones in his career (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This discovery oriented aspect of my research is crucial to my study as it removed the focus from any attempt at positivist-oriented claims of definitive and empirical evidence on the story, and respects the areas of truth that can be uncovered when a career in educational leadership is retold through the voice of human memory (Baum, 1977; Dunaway & Baum, 1984; Henige, 1982). In order to provide a well-rounded voice on Dr. Henderson, I interviewed colleagues and peers who worked with him; community members who had occasion to partner with him on projects that affected the college and some other community organization; and contemporaries in the field of Four Corners and New Mexico community college leadership.

My interview protocol began with an in-depth participant interview with Dr. Henderson, which gathered his career chronology and initial impression of his changes in tacit knowledge acquisition. Simultaneously or shortly after the initial participant interview, I conducted focus group interview sessions with professional staff that worked at the community college or secondary school district during his career. A second round of participant interviews was conducted with my main subject as well as professional peers from neighboring institutions who work with Dr. Henderson on issues of regional importance during his tenure.

As I proceeded, recent literature on writing biographies of living persons gave good guidance on matters of particular importance to this sort of study. In a 1999 article on her experiences writing the biography of Scientist G. Ledyard Stebbins Jr., Smocovitis published her experience writing biography on a contemporary peer to draw the distinctions relevant between popular uses of biographies of a living person and more academic pursuits. In this article Smocovitis also echoed the warning expressed by other authors that publishing a contemporary biography is often a source of tension between researcher and subject (Scott, 1996; Smocovitis, 1999). Critical to Smocovitis' theme is the understanding exposed by a 1996 article in the New York Times that while biographies of living celebrities are very profitable, they do come at a cost as the subjects of those writings are often hostile, resistant or dismissive of their biographer's work. For Smocovitis, the warning is that these same emotions can come in to play when writing about the lives of scientific or scholarly subjects if agreeable limits are not set and the themes of the study are not clear. My hope in this study was to engage Dr. Henderson in a retelling of his leadership experiences in community college education in the Four Corners Region, as they relate to tacit knowledge acquisition and application, the college's development within the context of the New Mexico community college market and the local culture of Farmington, New Mexico. Overall, the methods for data collection in my biographical study developed inductively as different focuses for interview and documentary evidence collection emerged over the span of the study.

To support inductive analysis, I employed a transcription service to transcribe all of my interviews with Dr. Henderson as well as the focus group interview with his staff. Transcription was not used for interviews with Dr. McLaughlin, Dr. Neibling, and Dr.

Jones. These interviews were brief enough that I was able to rely on interview notes and recordings to conduct inductive analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for my study followed the tradition of interpretive biography as outlined by Denzin, with an informed reading of Creswell's work on qualitative research design. (Creswell, 1998; Denzin, 1989). One of the key elements from Denzin's work on interpretive biography is that the aim of biography is not necessarily to uncover the "real" story of the research subject's life. Rather, the interpretive biographer is creating a new story based on the interplay between historical details from past life and one or more thematic foci that restructure the facts of that lived life into a new story (Denzin, 1989; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b). Prominent in this process of interpretive biography is the impact that major milestones in a subject's life, referred to as epiphanies by Denzin, have on the subject's developing understanding of their world and on the researcher's development of the biographical story. To Denzin, the biographical story of a subject is open-ended and available to multiple interpretations of meaning. Thus, it is important to develop the interpretive story of a given biography within the context of the cultural group to whom the story is being told (Denzin, 1989; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). To this end, evidentiary data gathered through both interview and documentary sources were analyzed through the context of tacit knowledge acquisition, leadership practice and the regional and institutional culture.

Standards of Rigor

In order to meet an acceptable standard of rigor, I have used the guidelines espoused by Creswell in chapter two of his text, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research*

Design. (Creswell, 1998) The eight points discussed by Creswell can be grouped into four that deal primarily with methods and four that deal with writing style.

Methodologically, Creswell (1998, p. 20) calls for qualitative research that collects and summarizes multiple forms of data; frames the study within fundamental characteristics of qualitative research; verifies the accuracy of data collection, data analysis and report writing; and finally analyzes data using multiple levels of abstraction. Simultaneously, Creswell calls for research to follow an accepted tradition of inquiry; begin with a single focus and then move toward discussing relationships between variables; use verisimilitude to write persuasively; and assure that the writing is clear, engaging and full of unexpected ideas (1998, p. 21). By using these thoughts on qualitative rigor, I sought to make my study acceptable to an informed audience. I kept my research within the framework of biographical case study, utilizing both interview and documentary data for consistent data collection methods, and employed at least two rounds of emergent data collection for accuracy verification by comparison. As an emergent study, my focus for interpretive biography was guided by themes as they emerged from interview and documentary data collection (Pope et al., 2000). The overarching themes of tacit acquisition and leadership practice helped to keep my study within the tradition of case study and allowed for the discussion of study variables to be compared and discussed as they emerged.

Other authors in the current literature on qualitative rigor have supported Creswell's call for inductive or emergent analysis alongside standards for validity and trustworthiness (Kidd & Parshall, 2000; Nunkoosing, 2005; Pope et al., 2000; Tobin & Begley, 2004). This literature holds that inductive analysis is typical of textual data and

that data collection and data analysis often happen simultaneously (Pope et al., 2000).

However, current literature also holds that emergent data needs to adhere to a form of rigor and “goodness.” The primary ways that a researcher can adhere to good rigor is through attention to authenticity of data, the trustworthiness of sources and allowing for multiple perspectives, or triangulation, of research data (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Considering interviewing as a data collection method, the current literature calls for the researcher to be cognizant of the power differential between interviewer and interview subject and assure that interview participants give true consent and are made aware of the study’s intended use of the data (Nunkoosing, 2005). Finally, focus group interview data analysis is supported by current literature in a way that supported my study’s intention of pairing focus group data with individual interviews and documentary evidence. Kidd and Parshall have researched the history of focus group interviewing and have determined that this method was not initially intended as a standalone method and should be paired with other methods of data collection (Kidd & Parshall, 2000).

Ethics and Timeline for Study Completion

Regarding institutional review board (IRB) and general ethics considerations pertinent to my study, I took care to gain consent from interview participants and to accurately record and report on their interview responses. All participants in my study were adults with a clear relevance to the study’s setting. Each participant was allowed to review transcripts of interviews and offer their feedback on the accuracy of my reporting on their words.

In addition to using interview data and writings by those participants, I researched document evidence that was related to the study setting. Institutional documents were

either public information or material archived by the college and accessed with proper permission.

Most directly my study conformed to the ethics guidelines established by the University of New Mexico's Institutional Review Board approval process. As a doctoral dissertation, my study proceeded under the guidance of my faculty chairperson and committee. The study proposal was completed in the fall semester of 2010 and submitted for IRB approval in December 2010. Under guidelines from UNM's office of graduate study my dissertation will need to be completed by May of 2014.

Summary

In summary, I conducted a qualitative study of the effect that tacit knowledge acquisition had on the professional practice of Dr. James Henderson as a community college president. The study's basic design was a biographical case study of Dr. Henderson's long-tenured community college presidency. I collected data using document analysis, primary participant interview and focus group interview methods. The site of the study was the leadership tenure of James Henderson at San Juan College and the subsequent impact on surrounding communities in the northwestern corner of New Mexico. Standards of rigor were addressed through Creswell's (1998) principles of good qualitative research. Data analysis followed the process of inductive analysis of emergent themes in the subject's life story in accordance with Denzin's ideas on interpretive biography (Denzin, 1989).

Chapter 4

James Henderson and Tacit Leadership

In the spring of 1980, James Henderson sat in the public viewing balcony of the New Mexico Round House as the State legislative body began the process of closing that year's thirty day session by lunch time. An unforeseen and adventurous road brought him to this setting. Experience taught him that the move from Arizona to lead the then branch campus of New Mexico State University in Farmington, New Mexico would entail new challenges and opportunities. However, no experience in his educational leadership career to that point or his graduate studies predicted he would be called on to lead San Juan College's efforts toward independent status within 3 years of moving into the office. Exhausting, but rewarding hours had gone into the effort to build local consensus for the college's independence and communicate that vision to the public of the Four Corners region. The community, businesses, and a mosaic of different leaders around the region rallied by Henderson to help in a campaign that now hinged on a legislative bill with little chance of making it to the floor for a vote that morning. Looking back on that morning thirty four years ago, James Henderson and anyone else living in the Four Corners could never have guessed at the phenomenal growth San Juan College would see from the unlikely victory that came through with a last minute vote of the legislature.

Introduction

In seeking to refine and defend his theory of transformational leadership, the noted presidential biographer and architect of modern leadership study, Burns, published a text in 2003 entitled *Transforming Leadership* (Burns, 2003). In this text Burns used interpretative biography to examine several world leaders throughout history for traits of

leadership. His intent was to determine if a wider selection of leaders exhibited the traits of transformational leadership that he had defined in his seminal work, *Leadership* (Burns, 1978). Interestingly, Burns titles his second chapter in *Transforming Leadership* as “Searching For The X Factor.” To Burns, this x factor was a multidisciplinary approach to leadership study that asks “can a course toward meaningful change be plotted that will give due weight both to the intentions and actions of people and to the situations they confront, to their wants and aspirations, their values and the conditions of their lives?” In short, to Burns, leadership is the x factor in tying together a wide range of historic causation; and leadership analysis can define transforming leadership within a complex set of historic causations (Burns, 2003, p. 22).

Burns describes transforming leadership as a matter of timing between the details of change within an organization, a leader’s charisma to motivate lasting transformational change, and a shared vision that helps a leader “define public values that embrace the supreme and enduring values of a people” (2003 pp. 25-29). Burns’ discussion of leadership as an x factor in historic causality and transforming leadership due to timing fits the structure of my own study’s examination of tacit leadership. For the purpose of this study I defined tacit leadership as leadership where experience guides organizational behavior, but the practice of that leadership is not readily available for introspection. In the introduction to this study I discussed the benefit of an outside examiner in studying the details of tacit leadership in an individual such as Dr. Henderson. Burns’ notion of complex historic causality follows the same structure as the difficulty in self-inspection within my own definition. A myriad of events, causalities, and experiences helped to develop experienced background in a leadership practice that exhibits tacit leadership. It

follows that a wealth of professional experience would move the tacit leader to conduct his practice with openness to inquiry. While the causality of experience that leads to tacit leadership is not readily available for inspection, a tacit leader would reflect back on his experiences when confronted with a new challenge in his current practice. If a tacit leader is also a transforming leader, then his experience leads him to take up leadership as a moral imperative to help define and embrace public values in synch with the timing of change within his transforming organization.

In this study I sought to show that Dr. James Henderson's professional tenure at San Juan College is an example of tacit leadership in action. When Dr. Henderson's tacit leadership is measured against Burns' ideas on transforming leadership, the biography of a transforming tacit leader emerges. Dr. Henderson's timing in his professional practice, his experiences in leading the college through its transformation from a branch campus to a regionally respected independent community college, and his vision to make San Juan College an institution of quality education for the people and cultures of the Four Corners region is examined through this brief biography.

Education and Early Career

All the while that San Juan College was developing into a local educational institution, Dr. Henderson was developing an expertise in educational administration. James Henderson came from a working class background and found his route to a college education through the G.I. Bill. According to Henderson's long term vice president John Niebling, "Henderson was the child of a miner. His father's hard work made a profound impression on Henderson. Hard work, honesty, thrift and moral values made a strong impression on him. Henderson was also a product of the GI Bill." - J. Neibling (Personal

Communication, June 26, 2012). These beginnings undoubtedly instilled in Henderson a strong work ethic and appreciation for the chance at a better life that education can offer poor and working class people. Henderson earned his doctorate in educational administration from the University of Arizona. The proposal process of his dissertation taught Henderson his first lesson in leadership when he was confronted on how well he knew the facts on a specific claim he was making during thesis proposal. Henderson made it a practice from that time forward to not make any claim before researching the matter and finding facts to justify his position. As with most graduate students from humble backgrounds, Henderson also benefited from new ideas and theories he was exposed to in class. However, even more valuable in Henderson's estimation was the ability to discuss these ideas and theories with fellow students from diverse backgrounds.

As Henderson himself put it:

I had the opportunity to take classes with good people and so forth and got a lot of help and a lot of information. And if you get somebody that is really what I think outstanding, they don't hesitate to sit down and talk a few minutes about anything. Such as, if you're really interested in something that has come up about in the class we didn't talk about in depth but you [were interested] and may not get the opportunity to really talk about your own ideas. ... I had a really good time during my doctoral process.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 05, 2011).

As Henderson reached his final couple of years in study, he was advised by professors at the University of Arizona to fast track his doctoral dissertation and take an administrative post at one of the local school districts. Dr. Henderson served at four

different school districts in western and southern Arizona, as well as teaching some courses at the University of Arizona as a graduate student. Henderson's first role in education was as an elementary and junior high school teacher in Douglas, Arizona public schools. After his graduate studies, Henderson served as the director of instruction for the Catalina Foothills Public School District and as superintendent for the Wilcox and Cochise public school districts. In each of these professional assignments, Dr. Henderson gained valuable experience that he would come to share with San Juan College at an important period in the College's development. In general, Henderson found the years of experience in Arizona's public school leadership to be good training for the skills he would later use communicating with superiors and subordinates on complex issues related to funding and program development. Additionally, Henderson would later look back and reflect that his time in Arizona taught him that a wise leader pays attention to the needs and wants of the local population he is serving.

In Arizona as a county school superintendent they never were very aggressive or whatever and I tried to strengthen [our position], and so we changed some legislation. Some people told me, "Well you'll never be able to get that done" and I got it done. And so I sort of had the practice of working you know, with some key legislators. I had a senator from, state senator from my area who was very powerful and he did the Sheridan Center Finance Committee and there and in the legislature and he was pretty powerful and along with a couple of my legislators, and the Principal [mentioned earlier] one of the legislators, so I got things changed that you know nobody ever dreamed... Yeah, so I had good

fortune and I just have to say that luckily, thank the good Lord, I had the right breaks, right contacts.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 05, 2011)

In summary, San Juan College was not taking a risk on an unproven leader when James Henderson was hired as the branch director in March of 1975. The College had developed and grown considerably and the timing was right for a community college anticipating great things in the near future to benefit from the capable leadership of a man who brought expertise and a will to serve to the position.

A sense of timing

As in the case of many successful partnerships, Dr. Henderson and San Juan College met one another at a critical juncture in each party's development. Dr. Henderson began his career in educational leadership in Arizona and successfully led two school districts and completed a doctorate before coming to Farmington, NM. The college itself saw considerable growth in its physical plant, expanse in its academic program, and a significant maturation in its governance structure before Henderson took over leadership.

According to the college's institutional history written by Ogilvie (2002), San Juan College began as the Farmington, NM branch campus of New Mexico A & M College in 1957. Over the years, both institutions would change their names to meet changing needs within their respective areas of influence. San Juan College would go through more than one name change before settling on its current moniker. New Mexico A & M College would rename itself New Mexico State University in 1960.

At first, courses were held in a few classrooms at Farmington High School in the old Tibbetts Junior High campus (Ogilvie, 2002). Ogilvie's work also points out that the

teaching staff was employed part-time, classrooms were provided by the high school and nearly all budgeted needs were met through NMSU; no structural needs were required other than a small closet, which was converted into the college's first administrative office. After the college's governance was formalized and enrollment continued to see steady growth for several years, the Farmington board of education turned an old Works Progress Administration building on Wall Avenue over to the college in 1965.

However, the greatest piece of physical growth the college saw prior to Dr. Henderson was the issuance of a local bond to move the campus to its own location on the northeast outskirts of Farmington in 1968 and construction of its first main addition to the original structure on that site in 1975 (Ogilvie, 2002). By 1969, the College was designated as an area vocational program with a two phase plan to develop a full vocational school within the College and construct buildings suitable for vocational education. According to Ogilvie, this construction funding from the New Mexico State legislature was the resource that moved the College from the old Wall Avenue building to a 600-acre property outside of town with room to expand. By 1972, local voters overwhelmingly passed a five-phase master building plan and initial three million dollar bond to begin the College's expansion with a 100,000 square foot "phase two" addition to the existing 2,000 square foot building which was designated phase one. Dr. Henderson took over as branch director in time to participate in the ground breaking on phase two of this master plan.

During this eighteen-year period of growth prior to Henderson's arrival, the College also saw a major growth in the academic programming offered to students. The first enrollment class in 1957 exceeded expectation with nearly 100 students showing up

in August of that year (Ogilvie, 2002). Initially, the College's core program of academic course work intended to help area high school graduates transfer to a four-year college was supplemented by non-credit earning adult education courses. At first these adult education courses were purely topical and included classes to pique the public interest within the limits of a small part-time faculty. Also from Ogilvie's work the historical record shows that the College gave community classes in conversational Russian, drafting, and photography among other topics. However, as the economy in the Four Corners region grew, the demand grew for a more vocational tone to the community classes offered.

Ogilvie's institutional history of the college notes that the New Mexico legislature provided a two-fold stroke of fortune for San Juan College in 1969. First, the legislature passed legislation stating that vocational schools could charge the same tuition as regular academic institutions. In addition to this legislative gift to all New Mexico vocational schools, the State Board of Vocational Education also recognized the NMSU branch campus in Farmington, NM as a full vocational school. This action allowed a mix of local funding, State funding and NMSU support to help start vocational classes in San Juan County the next school year. At first, nearly all of the vocational school's classes were held off campus. However, a wide range of offerings from welding and engine repair to drafting and business classes were offered within the first year. With phase two of the master plan completed in 1975, Dr. Henderson began work on phase three which expanded the space of vocational programming, extended campus building, and constructed a physical plant for campus operations.

Even with these vast changes in campus building projects and educational programs, San Juan College may never have seen the exceptional growth it went through under Dr. Henderson's tenure if it were not for some critical changes in the College's governance before he arrived. On November 30, 1959, the initial governance structure of San Juan College was set in an agreement between then New Mexico A & M College and the Farmington Board of Public Education (Ogilvie, 2002). This agreement called for the hiring of a branch director under the supervision of the Farmington Schools superintendent and a higher education advisor appointed by the parent institution. Farmington Schools was to provide the classroom space and allow their teachers to be hired to fill adjunct teaching positions within the college program. The college in Las Cruces was to manage the budget and supervise the program.

According to Ogilvie, by 1968, the outlying residents of San Juan County were voicing concerns that the branch college did not represent their needs well with all of the formal governance in the hands of either NMSU or the Farmington School Board. So, in late 1969, a county-wide advisory board replaced San Juan College's original governance structure with representation from the other three public school districts in the county.

With an expansion of this advisory board's membership in 1970 to a total of eight members representing all four county school districts, the balance of power in the College's governance shifted considerably to local control (Ogilvie, 2002). To be sure, NMSU continued to retain control of the budget and program approval for San Juan College, even during the advisory board days. However, a growing voice for local governance now had a formal place within the leadership structure for San Juan College.

In the summer of 1971, the push for local control boiled over into an all-out cry from some sectors of the San Juan County population to break ties with NMSU all together and establish a locally governed two-year college. The San Juan College advisory board facilitated this conversation by having one of its members preside in a public meeting on the topic of San Juan College independence that summer. Cooler heads prevailed that summer and the San Juan College advisory board continued to work with NMSU to keep the institution's funding and governance sound. The San Juan College branch director summed up the rationale for not seeking independence too early by cautioning the public that the College's vocation program could not be sustained without NMSU support since there was no provision in State law that allowed a two-year college to directly seek local funding support through bond election. Indeed, such a task would take multiple years and a change in State law.

Henderson led with a contagious drive toward excellence. Across multiple sources of participant interview data a theme emerges that a contagious drive toward a collegiate culture of excellence was pervasive under Henderson's leadership. One such interview participant is Mr. Ed Wood, a well-positioned personality in the story of San Juan College and Dr. Henderson's tenure at the college. Wood was the longest serving board member for San Juan College. He sat on the advisory board that interviewed and hired Dr. Henderson and did not retire from his seat on the college's board of trustees until after Dr. Henderson retired. From Mr. Wood's perspective, "Dr. Henderson was the type of campus leader who did everything he could to make his programs successful and consistently kept the board informed regarding the college's status and growth" – E. Wood (Personal Communication, December 19, 2011). Mr. Wood's comments are

consistent with other sources of data on Dr. Henderson's dedication to focusing the college's growth on the needs of the local community, which will be examined within this study separately. In Mr. Wood's recollection of the hiring process that brought Dr. Henderson to Farmington:

[During the interview phase of Dr. Henderson's hiring] he was the candidate who was the most enthused about our area. We were under the direction of NMSU and a lot of our funding was going to Las Cruces at the time. He [Henderson] really wanted to see the college succeed."

- E. Wood (Personal Communication, December 19, 2011)

A focus group participant identified as Stan recalls that a spirit of pursuing excellence permeated the administrative staff and was even transferred to the staff at large. Stan was also quick to point out that Henderson had great compassion toward students and would often go out of his way to interact with them and try to understand what they needed from the college. Often, Henderson's drive to make the college a symbol of excellence in the local area caused Henderson to develop some endearing traits that have become folklore among the administrative staff at San Juan College. Several focus group participants recalled Henderson's nearly relentless quest to rid the walls at San Juan College of scotch tape. A female participant working under Henderson in the college foundation, identified as Norma, noted that Dr. Henderson "hated [Scotch] tape and regularly expressed his belief that good information should be posted, but only posted in a way that made the college look like a first class operation" - 'Norma' (Focus Group, April 14, 2012). Nearly every focus group participant could recall a time where they either saw Dr. Henderson removing scotch tape from a wall or remember him

addressing someone directly about the need to keep the image of the campus looking top notch. Henderson would regularly take some time out of his busy schedule to walk the hallways in order to meet people and take the pulse of the institution. On these trips Henderson would speak with students, faculty and instructional staff, but also take the time to inspect the facilities, talk with custodians and groundskeepers, and even pick up trash. This level of attention to making sure that the entire institution held to the goals of providing a top notch educational institution to the Four Corners community became an expectation of the entire administrative leadership under Henderson and was an inspection practice that nearly everyone on campus came to expect. In the focus group interview several participant recalled the administrative team's early morning practice of leaving notes on staff members' desks well before any one reported for work. As Stan recalled the process:

I don't care if it is your own family member, you worked at the college, you took a lot of pride working at the college. I could remember Jim coming in early morning, remember Jim, he will be wearing shorts. This was our, at the time our head finance guy, Jim McLaughlin would be in his shorts or so, and perhaps I will be coming about 7:15-7:30, he would be running out of the door and I said, and to my amazement, I just had to ask to Jim, I said, you work out in the morning or what? "No, I come in real early in the morning to do some tasks." Well, come to find out what he did, he went across the campus, and he would go through the entire campus and he would find things as a flaw, if that light switch didn't work or if the paint was missing or whatever the case might be, and he would take a log

of things. Or leave you a note; I got a couple of notes on my desk as well matter of fact.

- 'Stan' (Focus Group, April 14, 2012)

An outgrowth of Henderson's tacit development of a culture that expected great things at San Juan College was the development of a standing monthly organizational meeting known as the College Association. These meetings were set up as structured input and feedback sessions for the entire college on ideas for the college's development as well as discussion on recent decisions. The College Association meetings followed somewhat flexible rules of order, but representatives from all departments in the college were typically expected. Faculty, staff, and the student association were all involved in these meetings. Two female participants in my focus group session who served at the college in the administrative assistant pool under Henderson, identified as Carrie and Mary, recalled that the forum was "somewhat open to general discussion, but Henderson set clear ground rules for ideas or feedback brought to the meeting" - (Focus Group, April 14, 2012). First, feedback on recent decisions was expected to include ideas for solutions, not just complaints about the decision in question. Secondly, ideas for changes to existing initiatives or new programs were required to include options; based on research data such as cost analysis and impact studies on existing programs. Thirdly, ideas for new programs needed to include a potential evaluation system and timeline to assess the idea's progress toward meeting performance goals. As the group recalled during the focus group interview:

[Carrie]: Yeah, it was a very good system, even though you know there were times we would complain and he made us go to those meetings and you know when you are real busy, it's like... I would complain, I don't want to go, I have got more important stuff to do, blah, blah, blah...but you don't realize the significance of it until you don't have it and those of us that stayed after he retired and that system went away, they did away with it and the internal levels of trust collapsed.

[Mary]: It was called a college association and under that we had the professional group and the staff group and the faculty group and they would make reports every week or was it every month?

[Norma]: Once a month.

[Carrie]: Once a month.

[Carrie]: And with the recommendation, as [Mary] said, and he would make a decision and it would come back and then everybody they had a voice even if it wasn't one he visited very often. They knew their 2 cents were getting to him.

[Mary]: Yeah, and one year I remember the faculty were kind of bubbling up and they wanted their own faculty senate, ... and so he said, okay fine, we will put in under president staff and you can report directly to president staff. Well, they finally figured it out another way. But the fact was that they were given that opportunity. They were complaining because they didn't have the faculty senate, [and Henderson said] okay fine have it, and then it didn't matter.

- (Focus Group, April 14, 2012)

In general, focus group participants recalled a few summary observations about Dr. Henderson's leadership practice that potentially inform my study's focus on discovering Henderson's leadership qualities that may have developed tacitly over time. All focus group participants recalled that Henderson held high expectations for the quality he wanted the community to see in a San Juan College education. This expectation of excellence was also expected from the people that Henderson hired to run college departments. As evidence, it was noted by several participants in the focus group that Henderson set an expectation that everyone was to attend graduation. In their recollection of Henderson's own words "graduates are what we are in the business of producing" and everyone was expected to recognize this in being at commencement to celebrate the event. A consistent and clear vision of what success looks like was fostered by Henderson. Focus group participants recalled several examples of Henderson's efforts to align the college's development through the Quality New Mexico program, including a campus wide celebration when San Juan College was recognized as the first educational institution to receive the New Mexico Zia Award and was invited to Washington D.C. for recognition in the Malcolm Baldrige Award competition. Focus group participants also noted that Henderson's nature was to be a quiet personality, but he carried great respect as his vision began to guide the college to success over his tenure. All focus group participants concurred that by the end of his tenure, Henderson was so respected within the community that everyone at the college wanted to work to meet his expectations. None of the focus group participants could recall any personal conversation with Henderson that gave them an insight into his personal life and world view. He was a distinctly private man when it came to his personal life, but his values to serve the

community and develop a community college that met their needs were clear to the organization, down to his final year in office. The focus group participants ended our session by stating that recent feedback from sessions conducted by the college's presidential search committee indicated that there was a strong desire both on campus and in the community to see Dr. Henderson's style of leadership return to the college.

Through the comments from focus group participants, some would indicate that tacitly developed and experience based learning was a continued aspect of Henderson's leadership style throughout his tenure as the President of San Juan College. As noted above, Henderson expected his staff to be involved in the community and look for experience that would help guide the college's programs. Henderson also instilled this expectation for community involvement in his leadership team. None of the participants in the focus group could explain where Henderson learned his leadership style, but they did note that his tacit experience was a tangible part of his success as a leader. In the words of focus group participant referred to as Carrie:

I would share this brief story which ties a little bit to what we are talking about. Probably 4 or 5 years before he retired, they decided that we are going to edit, rewrite the mission statement, several of us [in this focus group] were still there and so there is a committee and we are working on, you know, how would we redefine or how would we restate, so we invited him since it was pretty big deal and so in our conversation, someone asked him, why are you in this business? Dr. H why did you choose the business of higher education, community colleges in particular? And again this was one of these things, most people don't

question him about any of this stuff... anyhow and he kind of took a few minutes and he said “I am in the business to change lives.”

- ‘Carrie’ (Focus Group, April 14, 2012)

Henderson and the transformation of San Juan College

As Dr. Henderson was moving in to the office in 1975, the college was facing some pronounced growing pains. Student enrollment was growing, often by triple digits, each year and phase two of the master building plan had been scaled back due to inflation concerns (Ogilvie, 2002). Responding to a community cry for expansion to keep up with enrollment, Dr. Henderson successfully worked with NMSU to pass a mil levy raising \$1.9 million in November of 1975 to complete phase two the building plan.

In total the college’s success in securing funding for building projects was impressive between 1975 and Dr. Henderson’s retirement in 2002. Between local, State, Federal and private funding sources San Juan College received roughly \$62.9 million in funding for building projects during Henderson’s tenure. In addition to the five-phase plan that developed the main core of campus and established a separate vocational-technical facility, the college also gained a Child and Family Development Center, Health Science facilities, the James C. Henderson Fine Arts center, two branch campuses of its own within the county, a Computer Science center, Business Education facilities, and a Health and Human Performance Center all due to careful planning and cooperative funding.

Henderson’s leadership style was a crucial piece of the cooperative effort to transform San Juan College. During a focus group interview of several key staff who served under Henderson, the themes of approachability and data focus kept recurring

when the group was asked about Henderson's leadership style. A female participant identified as Carrie stated that Henderson always "made it a point to be approachable and let people talk with him about their ideas and concerns." She noted that meetings with Dr. Henderson often were preceded by staff waiting in turn to speak with him in the hallway, so that an assistant would have to come out and remind people that the meeting was scheduled to start - 'Carrie' (Focus Group, April 14, 2012). A male staff member identified as Stan concurred with this assessment and further added that Henderson was always asking for the data that a person was expected to have when proposing a new idea or program at the college. Stan stated that "approaching Henderson with an idea was no small thing, but Dr. H as we called him always listened and would give most ideas the nod for trial, if they were backed by solid data" – 'Stan' (Focus Group, April 14, 2012). When participants were asked where Henderson got these traits, or how he came to develop them, they all responded that his leadership seemed to be developed through experience and they could not identify one particular place where he might have learned to lead in this manner.

This building success was a collaborative effort to be sure. However, tacit knowledge in the areas of public communication and vision clarity that Dr. Henderson brought to the process undoubtedly helped sustain and focus what could have otherwise been piecemeal building. Henderson never passed up the chance to speak in the county and around the State to articulate a vision for a quality campus facility at San Juan College. He also actively ensured that his leadership team and staff upheld the image of San Juan College as a beautiful campus by taking care of the maintenance and custodial needs of the physical plant. The county community also came to see the building program

at San Juan College as a source of pride. Henderson worked with the college's student leadership organization in 1978 to begin a long lasting tradition to show off the campus' southwestern architectural theme by placing thousands of luminarias around the college on Christmas Eve.

It was also very fortunate that Dr. Henderson and his leadership team were able to translate this shared vision for quality facilities at San Juan College with the area's State representatives. The New Mexico State Constitution allows for capital outlay each year to support public projects after State programs and education are funded. A portion of this capital outlay funding is divided between the governor's office and each house of the legislature. As one could imagine, the competition is high for constituents to lobby their local representatives for funding to support pet projects through available capital outlay. Each year, Dr. Henderson and some of his leadership team would spend time in Santa Fe meeting with legislators to make the case for capital outlay funding to support facilities remodeling, expansion and maintenance at San Juan College – J. Henderson (Personal Communication, December 14, 2011). When interviewed, Henderson saw his ability to work with the area legislators as one of his strongest leadership traits. In a February 2012 interview, Henderson noted that he found that a big part of his work as president was “communicating the college's importance to superintendents and representatives in the area” and Henderson noted that he “enjoyed this role” and always “sought out opportunities to meet” with the influence makers in the county – J. Henderson (Personal Communication, February 11, 2012). Dr. Henderson's expertise in communicating the College's vision to the legislature, and the collaboration of several staff from the college,

would result in just over \$19.5 million in capital outlay funding for the College during Henderson tenure (Ogilvie, 2002).

Physical facilities were not the only area of San Juan College's growth to benefit from Dr. Henderson's tacit leadership skills. The College's first major recognition in the State came from its transformation from a branch campus of NMSU to status as an independent community college. Interestingly, it would be facilities planning that would be the catalyst for San Juan College's separation from NMSU. While the county discussed possible independence for quite a while in 1980, very little was done to push the issue along, other than some meetings and discussion within the advisory board. However, during phase four of the building plan the advisory board selected a local architect to design much of the work. The NMSU board of regents overturned the decision and hired an Albuquerque firm. At the next meeting of the San Juan College advisory board, Dr. Henderson was asked to leave the room for a short period of time while the board discussed the architect issue. When Henderson was brought back in, he was presented with a major challenge. The advisory board was going to open dialog with the NMSU regents about a process for San Juan College's independence from Las Cruces. Henderson was presented with the offer to stay on as the College's leader and help them through the independence process. With very little hesitation, Henderson accepted the challenge and pledged to see the community's vision for an independent college come to fruition – J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011).

The change in State legislation to allow for independent community colleges was underway when Dr. Henderson was called upon to be a major part of ensuring that the bill passed. Henderson and others knew that the bill must pass in the current legislative

session or they would lose the momentum to carry out the lengthy process that would be established to see independence completed. By keeping close communication with his area legislators and other key individuals in the legislative process, Henderson was able to see that the necessary bill got placed on the floor for a final passing vote within hours of the close of the legislative session that spring. As Henderson recalls the event:

Anyway long story short, I remember Jack Morgan coming out of that hearing room I was outside there and he had a smile a mile away and he said, "It's going out and okay". That went to a vote I think the next morning on the floor and it passed. And then on the house side you got to get the bill changed over and get them to pass it. I knew the speaker of the house, Sam Lumberton. He and I also had a mutual friend, an attorney named Byron Keating. Me and Byron were very close friends. I called Byron I said, "I need you down here." And he said "I'll be there, I'll come down." Well the next day they're you know passing the final bill getting ready for adjournment at noon and I looked around cause I had been sitting up in the gallery and I said 'Where's Byron?' And I looked down and he sitting on the stage behind the speaker where they put invited guests. Anyway at five minutes till 12:00 they passed that bill. Sam Lumberton had told me, "Don't worry about it we'll pass it." All I could say was say okay.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

By the summer of 1980, the advisory board had petitioned the New Mexico Board of Educational Finance for a feasibility process to become an independent community college.

Dr. Henderson's skills as a communicator and tacit leader would again be called on in the feasibility study portion of the road to independence. Once the feasibility study required by the State Board of Educational Finance was completed it needed to be presented in an open public meeting where both sides of the issue could be heard. Initially, the location for this public meeting was slated to be in Albuquerque. However, at the last minute the location was changed to a small room in Las Cruces. All of a sudden, the College's plan to caravan groups of students and county residents to the meeting fell apart. Henderson turned to several contacts within the Four Corners area who owned personal aircraft and a solid but much smaller contingent were soon on their way to Las Cruces for the meeting. When they arrived, NMSU representatives were surprised to see that they made it. Additionally, the room chosen for the hearing was much smaller, so the San Juan College contingent packed the room and the meeting went through with no trouble.

With few resources to fall back on in deciding how to meet the challenge of a last minute change to the process, Henderson came up with an original idea based on the tacit sum of his prior experience. It would be impossible for Dr. Henderson to examine the whole of his past practice and determine one single prior experience that led him to the decision to ask local airplane owners for help. The solution was not out of a textbook or some other explicit source for community college leadership. His efforts to build rapport with local leaders and call on their involvement for the good of the college led Dr. Henderson to an act of tacit leadership where his behavior was guided by experience that was not clearly introspective. In Dr. Henderson's words:

If you are sitting in and reacting with a group of people in a given situation, then you are going to learn something maybe because somebody is going to have some information that will be valuable and it will later contribute to the cause. And so consequently we don't go in there with the idea that we know everything but you try to bring together different points of view and a feeling that together you can work through it much better. It's amazing sometimes somebody will come up with an idea that no one around the table thought about. And, where do we get ideas? I mean where do you get them? A lot of them are just you and I or other people talking together and that's where you cultivate those ideas.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 16, 2011)

The final official hurdle for independence was a local election to form college districts in San Juan County for the purpose for representation on a board of trustees that would replace the advisory governance model. Dr. Henderson and the college leadership went to work speaking and doing whatever else they could to make sure that the public came out to vote. The vote passed by a landslide on November 17, 1981 and San Juan College was officially recognized as New Mexico's second independent community college. When asked about the effort that it took to achieve independence and maintain that status in the formative years of his career at San Juan College, Dr. Henderson indicated that that had a lot to do with bringing in the right people and holding everyone to high expectations:

I don't think most people would hesitate to indicate that my expectations are very high. But I do indicate to them why they were high. I've always said that

if I didn't think much of you, if I didn't think I had high expectations for us, you know, I mean it wouldn't be very good assignment [to work here], I wouldn't think. We are not in a business of just coasting along, we have got work to do and we've got to deliver.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 16, 2011)

After the college attained independent status, Henderson and his administrative team turned their attention to matching an ambitious facilities building plan with a plan to make San Juan College a school of distinction in the quality of education it provided to the Four Corners area. Helping move legislative and bureaucratic mountains to make the school independent might have been enough to secure Henderson a place in local history. Guiding the administration through a campus-wide building plan and working to secure funding during his twenty-seven years as leader certainly was justification enough for Henderson to be honored with his name on the college's performing arts center. Nevertheless, to James Henderson, the truly lasting legacy that he wished to leave San Juan College was for it to become widely recognized as a quality institution of learning that served the needs of its local people – J. Henderson (Personal Communications, November 16, 2011 & February 11, 2012).

Dr. Henderson and his administrative team met at least monthly during his tenure as director and then president. The leadership team also sponsored regular forum meetings, where the entire faculty and staff were invited to come and give input and propose ideas on improving the college's programming. At every one of the administrative meetings a standing topic for discussion was to report out on what the attitude of the local community was towards existing programs and what new ideas were

being talked about. As new ideas emerged and staff expressed a desire to pilot the idea, they were tasked with researching data on feasibility and cost effectiveness before being given the green light to proceed with pilot implementation. This policy of institutional creativity was a natural outgrowth of Henderson's relentless pursuit of quality in the services that the college offered. The president himself spent countless hours speaking writing and meeting with anyone who could help the college fulfill the vision of quality education in the Four Corners. Vice-presidents and divisional heads were challenged and encouraged to work hard to make sure that the day to day operation of their area of influence was up to quality standards. From grounds men to administrative staff, everyone was clear that they were first and foremost in the business of providing customer service to students and the public. All staff were encouraged that good ideas needed to be shared in the open, no matter how small they might seem at the time. When Dr. Henderson recalled the drive for quality programing that San Juan College developed during his tenure, one particular story came to mind:

I think it was one of those things that everybody was involved in some way or another. It didn't matter, I mean for example our grounds people, and we had coached them that if they were out and working on the grounds and somebody comes on campus looking for a particular room or if you can almost sense that, to go over and ask them, "can we help you?" And then take them to the room. And we had that in process with everyone. We had a certain janitor and he was one of our best P.R people out there. I mean he was really something and people would be very impressed when he'd make an effort to go and help or assist them. He was a very positive guy. We also did simple things like we had

little plaques in the restrooms and it said' "If you have any problem or if you are out paper or whatever call this number." And we had practice where somebody would be right over there if we got a call.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, January 7, 2012)

One such small idea that turned into a huge act of good will toward the community was the Possible Dream Scholarship program. Within the first few years of the college's independence, it became clear to staff that many segments of the local population fell into the income gap that did not qualify them for federal tuition assistance but their household income was too small to afford even the low costs at a community college. Staff began proposing and researching a plan where a family could begin pre-paying San Juan College tuition while a potential student was still in junior high. In 1986, the Possible Dream Scholarship program was launched. Local families would sign up and pay \$10 per month over five years so that the student would have two years of tuition paid for when they graduated from high school. If the student was accepted into a four-year institution, the funds were returned for use in textbook costs. By 1991, the first group of 11 students entered San Juan College as a result of the Possible Dream program. (Henderson, 1989).

In an effort to push back on some small but vocal community pressure to develop intercollegiate athletics at San Juan and to strengthen ties with local four-year colleges, Dr. Henderson reached across the State line and worked with Dr. Joel Jones at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado to develop an in-state tuition reciprocity agreement for San Juan College graduates to attend Fort Lewis. Although such action might appear to be against Dr. Henderson's guiding vision to build programs that meet the local

community's wants and needs, it is a great example of his tacit understanding that community pressure needs to be researched to make sure that it echoes the greatest want and need and is a feasible program for the college to manage. In 1984, a committee was formed to study the continued call for intercollegiate sports. After a poll was given with the help of a local bank collecting data in bank statements, it was determined that a majority of county residents were not in favor of adding athletics to the college's programs (Ogilvie, 2002). The college did, however, pledge to both educate the public on the implications of adding an athletic program and return regularly to research public opinion on the issue. As the college grew, the issue was re-visited, but the majority of constituents did not want to see tuition increases and the additional facilities funding burden put on the public to support an athletic program. It appears that the administration's efforts to maintain a robust intramural program and Dr. Henderson's efforts to work with Fort Lewis to provide access to low cost four-year education in the area were what the public wanted. From the recollection of Dr. Joel Jones, who was president of Fort Lewis College at the time, the partnership between San Juan College and Fort Lewis College grew out of a series of conversations that he and Dr. Henderson were involved in over the years.

From our first efforts to work together I immediately recognized experience-based skills in the way James Henderson worked within his community. He was able to not be overtly competitive with other institutions. Henderson knew his community exceptionally well. As he and I would talk about the politics of higher education in New Mexico, our conversations came to be centered on how the two colleges can work together.

- J. Jones (Personal Communication, June 26, 2012)

While there were likely dozens of successful programs started at San Juan College over the years, two bear particular mention due to their involvement in partnerships with corporations. In 1987, Dr. Henderson led an effort to develop a cooperative program with General Motors that came to be called the Automotive Technology Education Cooperative (ATEC). Students in the program worked on a two-year degree by studying 8 weeks in the classroom rotated with 8 weeks of hands on experience at a sponsoring dealership. Over the years the ATEC would grow to include involvement from Toyota and Ford and expand the vocational and technical department facilities considerably. And in 1989, the college embarked on a partnership with the local commuter airline, Mesa Air, to provide a pilot training program where students would gain classroom exposure to courses in communication skills with hands-on experience at the regional airport. This program may well be the first such venture involving a direct partnership between a commercial airline and a community college (Ogilvie, 2002).

Henderson had a constant drive to serve the local area. Within the data from multiple study participants is recognition that Henderson had a constant striving to understand, connect with, and serve the Four Corners region. One specific habit Ed Wood saw in Dr. Henderson's professional practice that supported his opinion of Henderson as dedicated to building a locally-focused college, was the times Wood, and others, saw Henderson go out into the community to find what county citizens and organizations wanted from San Juan College in the way of programs and offerings. According to Ed, "Dr. Henderson was very conservative in the college's tuition rate and was always attending meetings to see what the community needed from the College."

Wood also noted that Henderson was probably the most energetic candidate he and the other advisory board members interviewed for the job – E. Wood (Personal Communication, December 19, 2011). These efforts to continuously re-enforce the connection between the college and town were noted by nearly everyone interviewed and was a trait in Henderson’s leadership repeatedly noted in newspaper articles on Henderson and the college during his tenure (Fisher, 2002; SJC Editorial Staff, 1975, 1981). Passive polling the community for guidance and advice on the college’s vision is also recognized in the academic literature on community college leadership as a strong community college leadership trait (Eddy, 2007; Miller & Kissinger, 2007; Pierce & Pedersen, 1997; Williams et al., 2007).

In the interview, Ed Wood noted that Dr. Henderson ran very informative board retreats to go over plans the college developed from those outreach sessions and build a shared vision for potential bond campaigns to realize facilities and programs that might fulfill the community’s needs – E. Wood (Personal Communication, December 19, 2011). This revelation reinforced the bond between the college’s governance body and the shared vision Henderson was developing with the community. As the college grew, the local community changed, and the makeup of the board inevitably changed over time, Henderson was able to maintain a coherent vision of a community-focused education by translating the lessons and data he picked up tacitly over the years and renew that vision for subsequent boards of trustees. Ed Wood noted that this capacity to connect with the local community was recognized in Dr. Henderson even as a candidate for the position he would come to hold for some many years. During the interview, Ed recalled that Henderson was very enthused about working in the Four Corners area - compared to the

other candidates. Ed also recalled that Henderson impressed the hiring committee with his experience of working with people of varied cultural backgrounds in Arizona. During the interview, Wood recalled, “a lot of local people don’t realize that Dr. Henderson was hired after serving for several years as the superintendent of several school districts in Arizona. ... His [Henderson’s] enthusiasm for the area was also due to his upbringing in southwestern Colorado and his days as a rodeo cowboy in the area” – E. Wood (Personal Communication, December 19, 2011). When these anecdotal recollections from Wood about Dr. Henderson’s upbringing and rodeo days were mentioned to Dr. Henderson in a later interview, he verified that he was indeed born in Kline, Colorado and was on the rodeo club during his days as a student at Northern Arizona University - J. Henderson (Personal Communication, April 14, 2012).

During the focus group interview, two participants identified as Carrie and Mary recalled that Henderson was at every College Association meeting, unless a funding priority meeting took him off campus for the day. Both recalled that the climate of these meetings developed into a somewhat relaxed professional opportunity to network within the college, whereas the campus eventually grew so large that different departments did not have other regular opportunities to exchange ideas and even socialize in a professional setting. The remembrance of the focus group was that Henderson was typically silent at these meetings, allowing the rest of the organization to have the floor for feedback and proposal. Henderson would speak when his input was needed or it was clearly time for a presidential decision to be voiced, but made sure to let those present at College Association meetings know that the meeting was open to participation from all. Norma noted that Henderson always made sure to know where everyone stood on the

pertinent issues surrounding the college before stepping foot in the College Association meetings. According to Norma:

I think Dr. Henderson never went into a meeting that he had any control over, not knowing where people stood. He doesn't want to get up in front of a group and say 'you will do this' you will do that, you will do this, but before that group even meets he has talked with every member that's pivotal to what the decisions are going to be in the group. He either knows where they stand against or for, and he has... and he doesn't, I mean like yesterday, he is at Leadership San Juan, okay, he spends half or more of his time out in the hall, I mean we were like taking numbers to talk to him out in the hall because he... that's his style. He talks with people on the side to see where they stand and to gather information. I don't know where he learned that technique, but it's one I have learned pretty strongly that you need to do [as a leader].

- 'Norma' (Focus Group, April 14, 2012)

Several other focus group participants agreed that Dr. Henderson was very adept at "doing his homework" and making sure he had a good idea about nearly everyone's position on issues that might potentially affect the college's educational mission and standing in the community. This homework would typically include informal meetings with various constituents in the community and on campus; more formal meetings with individuals or groups who held a vested interest in upcoming projects; and Henderson's evaluation of both formal and informal reports informed by observations from his campus walks – (Focus Group, April 14, 2012).

Dr. Joel Jones provided some insight into Henderson's connection with the local community during the twenty or more years that he and Henderson worked in the same region. Jones recalls finding that he and Dr. Henderson shared a number of common goals of greater access to higher education and local funding support for building plans at their respective institutions that developed out of a tacit learning of their local communities' needs. As Jones moved into the president's office at Fort Lewis, he realized that a sound master plan for facilities development needed to be matched with a constant effort to look for programs that had the potential to draw students to a beautiful, but remote corner of Colorado. Over the years, he found several opportunities for both formal and informal conversation with Dr. Henderson on this topic. As Jones recalls, Henderson put a great deal of effort in securing a relationship with the Toyota Corporation to build up course offerings and eventually entice Toyota to sponsor a program in automotive technology. Jones recalls that Henderson saw this partnership with the corporate world as a means to provide better educational opportunities and eventual economic development to the community he served. As Dr. Jones stated in the interview, "from the time I first met him it was clear that Henderson already knew the Farmington area very well. He had a solid idea for vocational program building, including the corporate partners to make it happen" – J. Jones (Personal Communication, June 29, 2012).

In addition to educational programing goals, Jones recalls that both Fort Lewis and San Juan College had a central purpose to serve the needs of the region's Native American population. Due to its beginnings as a technical college established on property that historically served as both a U.S. Army installment and an Indian school, Fort Lewis

College was founded as a four-year college with the understanding that qualifying Native American students could apply for tuition waiver. San Juan College's geographic placement on the northeastern boarder of the Navajo Nation placed it as the local institution of higher education for a relatively rural community with a high percentage of Native American residents. Jones recalls that he found several opportunities to work with and learn from the insights Henderson developed regarding the local demographic population's educational needs. Jones recalled that Henderson always kept the needs of all types of area students at the forefront of his decisions involving programing and master planning. As Dr. Jones recalled in the interview, "I always noticed that non-traditional students and minority students never felt out of place at San Juan. Henderson worked very hard to make San Juan an attractive place for older students, vocational students, and the Native American population in the area" – J. Jones (Personal Communication, June 29, 2012).

Jones noted in the interview that their mutual goals of providing access to higher education in the region led Fort Lewis and San Juan College to a unique relationship. A series of executive conversations and joint meetings eventually led to a decision to create a San Juan County reciprocal tuition program at Fort Lewis. Through this program, qualifying students in San Juan County, NM would be admitted to Fort Lewis College on waiver as in-state tuition status. While the two institutions lived under different state regulatory mandates and distinct tax bonding structures, they were able to find areas where they could provide regional access to four-year education without the need for students to relocate to Albuquerque.

Another interview participant, Jim McLaughlin, served as a direct report member of Dr. Henderson's executive team at San Juan College for eight years. During this time McLaughlin served as the college's Vice-President for Business Affairs. According to McLaughlin, he came to work under Henderson when Henderson was already a twenty-year veteran in the field of community college leadership. As McLaughlin puts it, "Henderson was in a sort of second career having accomplished a major growth phase of the college's development. Henderson and the organizational leadership team's focus was now on maturing and developing the campus" – J. McLaughlin (Personal Communication, June 19, 2012).

McLaughlin's first recollection of his work under Henderson was that the entire leadership of the college followed Henderson's drive to continuously improve substantial connections with the community. This drive to make connections with the local area was focused by an extraordinary effort to stay in touch with the community. McLaughlin recalls that during leadership team meetings, Henderson would initiate a lot of open ended communications with the team in an effort to determine what was going on in the community. For McLaughlin, these weekly meetings were never old hat, they were always "fresh" with new ideas and initiatives being discussed and refined. It is McLaughlin's belief that these weekly meetings were a central piece of Henderson's drive to find new areas of partnership between the college and town. In McLaughlin's own words, "Henderson wanted us to be thoughtful of the impact decisions had on community and students. While the team would be a big part of developing ideas and connections, Dr. Henderson typically did nearly all of the contact work. He was the face of the college and worked directly with the decision makers in the area to solidify the

connections we were developing” – J. McLaughlin (Personal Communication, June 19, 2012)

Data-informed decision making in Henderson’s leadership vision. When asked about Henderson’s decision making process, Jones noted that “Henderson relied on a sense of informed intuition. After looking at various sources of data, he would use his experience and intuition to connect the dots” – J. Jones (Personal Communication, June 29, 2012).

In a focus group interview of support staff who worked with Dr. Henderson, participants noted that Henderson supported the development of new programs by empowering staff to grow sound research-based ideas into programs that would help the college serve identifiable student needs. During the interview meeting, Stan recalls noticing that Henderson was “measuring him up” when they discussed data on the college’s vocational program. As Stan weighed this first impression of Dr. Henderson against the next decade of working under Henderson’s leadership, he recalls that Henderson wanted people to work at the college who would take full responsibility for their decisions, good or bad.

I thought that was really neat in how he could really pull together data and pull individuals together to make key decisions, one of which was the cost per slot allocation time and we were redefining that and you know, he talked about money and funds and school budgets and you are asking for the school district to pay \$37.50 per student at the time, and you know, and we revamping that up because we want to add more programs and so we are talking about increasing that money basically or that slot allocation, how we went about doing that and orchestrating

that, so everybody felt comfortable, this is what we are doing... [With Henderson] everything is laid out on paper.

- 'Stan' (Focus Group, April 14, 2012)

Henderson offered both financial and organizational support for the growth of vocational programs at the college, but clearly articulated the expectation for positive change. Most notable to Stan, was Henderson's support for a major change in the way the college vocational program would track grades and daily attendance for high school students who participated in vocational classes. The change was supported, but regular data reporting was expected to ensure that the intended changes actually happened. In Stan's estimation, this expectation of results came from Henderson's assertion that a program leader at the college should have the power to make decisions about programs, be able to attract and develop good staff to support those programs, but also accept full responsibility for meeting the program's goals.

Henderson and a shared vision for community college excellence

Out of all the programs that Dr. Henderson had a hand in bringing to San Juan College none was more important to developing a vision of quality at the college than his guiding San Juan through the Malcolm Baldrige Award competition. During its first decade of independence, San Juan College grew with a focus on serving the people of the Four Corners as a high quality two-year college. As time moves along, initiatives tend to lose focus, growth can stagnate and a college can lose its relevancy to those it serves (Vaughan, 1989). In response, within the college's forum structure and the leadership team, Dr. Henderson began the practice of an informal book club that focused on literature related to organizational leadership and vision. The general idea was that staff

would take the time, now and then, to present on some idea they had read in the professional literature. Dr. Henderson and others expressed an affinity for Greenleaf's ideas and a group was even organized to take a trip and learn more about the Servant Leadership model at the Greenleaf Center in Indiana – J. Henderson (Personal Communication, January 7, 2012). However, the college did not hit on a program that would articulate the institution's overall ambition to seek quality until they began looking at the Malcolm Baldrige Award and its call for mission alignment in an organization.

San Juan College began its association with the Baldrige Award program not long after the State-level subsidiary, Quality New Mexico, was organized in 1991. Working through the Quality New Mexico system, San Juan College received New Mexico's second place trophy, the Roadrunner Award, twice, in 1995 and again 1997 (Ogilvie, 2002). This only whetted the staff's appetite to earn the prestigious Zia Award for excellence from Quality New Mexico. Henderson would use this drive to prove the college's excellence to leverage top effort from his staff in the final years of his presidency. In 2001, San Juan College became the first educational institution in New Mexico to win the Zia Award and be recognized as a national finalist for the Malcolm Baldrige Award. Dr. Henderson and the entire Quality New Mexico team at the college celebrated this accomplishment together. According to Henderson, "I think the main thing is to get your people ready so that you all can say, 'Well we don't have to end it right here, and say it's all through and put all away so to speak and we need to keep working keep practicing'" – J. Henderson (Personal Communication, January 7, 2012) .

A cooperative and inclusive style of leadership. It is an important distinction to note that leveraging of the Zia Award may have been received as merely another

administrative ploy at some other institution where a drive for excellence was not already a shared vision within the rank and file. It appears to me that, the simple fact that Henderson was at the helm for over twenty years during a period of phenomenal growth was enough to translate his solid work ethic and drive for excellence into the fabric of campus life. But the spirit of San Juan College was already evident when Henderson arrived in the mid-seventies. The local community looked on the college as a source of pride. As new programs were carefully weighed and added over the years, the local community came to expect great cultural programs, a strong academic program, and excellent service from their “Harvard on the Hill,” as I recall that the college was affectionately called well into the eighties. Even after Henderson left office, the notion continued to prevail at San Juan College that it was their mission to make life better for the citizens of the four corners. A number of study participants identified Henderson’s cooperative style in leading the college – (Focus Group, April 14, 2012).

In a June 29, 2012 interview, Dr. Jones recalls that his first direct professional contact with Dr. Henderson was during Jones’ time as the dean of faculty at UNM. As Dr. Jones recalled, the university wanted someone in the administrative team to serve as an ambassador in the Four Corners area. Jones agreed and soon found himself invited to an on-air interview with the local talk radio station. Jones’ understanding was that the interview was to be one-on-one. However, when he showed up at the station, Jones found that the broadcast had been set up as a forum on higher education in the region featuring him and Dr. Henderson on-air at the same time. During the interview, Jones recalled being very impressed with the leadership skills Henderson showed. Two attributes stuck in Jones’ mind regarding Henderson’s well developed skills as an educational leader.

First, Jones recognized that even as a relatively new campus administrator Henderson already had a very good understanding of his local community. During the interview, Henderson appeared to know the major political and cultural happenings in the Farmington community and had a good sense of where the then branch campus needed to position itself on these issues. Second, that first direct encounter between the two men left Jones with the distinct impression that Henderson was very good at not letting himself be overtly competitive between his campus and other institutions. When asked to clarify, Jones stated that Henderson showed a willingness to compete in a healthy way, but was able to set aside organizational agendas and work on mutual goals for the good of the community. In his own words, Dr. Jones noted “one of the first things I noticed about Henderson was that he did not posture himself as a competitor to myself or UNM in that radio interview. This is not something that can be taught to a leader, it is something they pick up through experience” – J. Jones (Personal Communication, June 29, 2012).

As staff members who worked directly with Henderson came and went over the years of his tenure, they felt a special connection to the school and an appreciation for Dr. Henderson’s leadership. According to the comments discussed earlier from focus group interviews, some staff, such as the participants identified as Mary and Carrie, described Henderson as an expert communicator with a drive to work hard. Others, such as the focus group participant identified as Stan, described Henderson as a leader who instilled a desire to work hard in his staff. Dr. Henderson’s accomplishments as an individual leader did not go unrecognized as he was called a pacesetter in 1995 by District IV of the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations; he was also presented with a national Phi Theta Kappa award in 1996 for his support of high quality community

college study; was recognized by his community in the fall commencement for his final year in office with a star designation on the International Star Registry for being one of the community's greatest stars (Ogilvie, 2002).

After our final interview for this study on February 11, 2012, while discussing local politics and my next steps for the study, I asked Dr. Henderson how he would describe himself as an educator. After pausing for a moment to consider the question, Dr. Henderson simply said, "earning a paycheck from the public to run a school or college was akin to a moral contract to serve the needs of the community every day" and that is all he ever sought to do - J. Henderson (Personal Communication, February 11, 2012). Henderson would go on to serve the Four Corners public after retirement, first as Chancellor Emeritus of San Juan College until 2003 and then as an elected San Juan County commissioner for two terms. However, it is a great testament to his connection with the local community that, after his twenty six years of service and leadership at San Juan College, Dr. Henderson can look back and see that his skills as a tacit leader helped to turn a local community's fledgling vision for community college excellence into something both tangible and noteworthy. As Dr. John Neibling, a long time vice-president under Henderson, put it during an interview when asked where Dr. Henderson's tacit knowledge and drive to lead came from:

My observation of Henderson is that tacit learning was prominent in his leadership style. I would call it tacit wisdom. Henderson's wisdom was based on his upbringing. He was a child of a miner. His father's hard work made a profound impression on Henderson. Hard work, honesty, thrift and moral values made a strong impression on Henderson's leadership career. He was also a

product of the GI Bill. All of this formed a personality in Henderson that was careful, but willing to take a risk when he saw great value in it to the college and community.

- J. Neibling (Personal Communication, June 29, 2012)

Dr. Henderson's tacit leadership practice did have a clear transforming influence on San Juan College and the Four Corners region. In comparison, Henderson's impact was not as wide spread as those presidents and world leaders studied by Burns (2003), but Henderson's leadership was nonetheless transforming to those he led. San Juan College was undoubtedly changed in governance, size and stature in large part through James Henderson's leadership. The change process at San Juan College was in itself transforming by Burns' (2003) standard. That change was not imposed on Dr. Henderson's followers. Rather, the students and staff at the college, as well as the local community at large, were transformed due to a collective shared vision that Dr. Henderson helped to bring into focus through tacit processes. Although those skills may not be easily inspected, it is clear that James Henderson's tacit skills as a community college leader did transform his college.

Chapter 5

Additional Findings

Findings from Publications About San Juan College

Information for this section come from published reports by San Juan College employees for regional educational organizations as well as histories and reports produced and published by the college. Henderson wrote a noticeable number of op-ed style pieces in regional association newsletters, professional reports and other similar publications (Henderson, 1989, 1991, 1996; Henderson & Wilson, 1970). Topics addressed in these pieces range from highlighting Dr. Henderson's commitment to minority education to his vision of technology's support in community college independence. By transforming the tacit lessons he gleaned from a long career in community college leadership into explicit advice for his colleagues and future professionals, Henderson's writings echo the call for the type of tacit-explicit transfer addressed in earlier chapters in the work of St. Germaine (2005) and Danzig (1999). Furthermore, his involvement in the professional literature is one indicator that James Henderson was a respected educational leader in the state of New Mexico and a visionary figure in San Juan County.

San Juan College's visible placement in the published reports of the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (NMACC) and the New Mexico Higher Education Commission give evidence to the claim that San Juan's move from branch campus to independent status was a large part of community college activity in the state during Henderson's tenure as college president (Black, 1991; Black & Henderson, 1986; M. Clark, 1993, 1997; Henderson, 1989, 1991, 1996; Henderson & Wilson, 1970). Some of

the clearest evidence of Henderson's impact on the NMACC comes from the reports that he and his staff completed and presented to the NMACC and the Higher Education Commission from the late 1980's through the end of his tenure in 2002 (Black, 1991; Black & Henderson, 1986; New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, 2001). These reports are evidence that community colleges in New Mexico had a strong sense of mission during Henderson's tenure at San Juan. In particular, the NMACC *Meeting Our Mission* report contains data that San Juan College enjoyed a particularly strong base of support in San Juan County. In that report 86% of San Juan College students reported success in their academic course completion and had 4,095 unique enrollments in community service programs through the college. (NMACC, 2001) The 2001 NMACC report was analyzed as a historical document in the context of national data on community college trends as provide by Kubala and Baily in their national study of community college presidency; Wattenbarger and Witt's 1995 study on the origins of the community college system; and Moore's 1995 study on San Juan College's innovation task force (Kubala & Bailey, 2001; Moore, 1995; Wattenbarger & Witt, 1995).

A relatively recent institutional history published by the college's printing services indicates that San Juan College held a place of respect and appreciation in San Juan County, and that the college's growth during Dr. Henderson's tenure was an outcome of both visionary leadership and community partnership (Ogilvie, 2002). While institutional history can show a good deal of bias toward their institution, Ogilvie's work is thorough and does investigate a variety of regional and community sources for information. This history indicates that the college was a small store-front branch campus of New Mexico State University when Dr. Henderson took over leadership in 1975. By

2002, when Dr. Henderson retired from the college's presidency, San Juan had relocated to a new site, constructed over a dozen major building projects, increased its enrollment and gained independent status under its own governing board. From this source, and the previously discussed literature, it is clear that San Juan College was a major presence among community colleges in the state and that San Juan College enjoyed a strong local basis of support. What is less clear is how much James Henderson's leadership influenced these outcomes.

One could point to construction projects, legislative efforts in the process of gaining independence or some other product of the work that James Henderson participated in and guided as evidence of his crucial role as leader during this time. However, the focus of this study is to gain a sense of how James Henderson led; and to do that I attempted to construct his professional life story at San Juan College building on literature associated with themes of tacit leadership, rather than focusing on physical attributes of the college's growth.

Findings from Interview with Mr. Ed Wood

One of Wood's most crucial areas of insight for my study was his position on the board while Dr. Henderson guided the college through the process of move from branch-campus to independent community college status. Wood noted that the desire to move away from governance under the control of New Mexico State University was already widespread within the board and on campus before Dr. Henderson arrived. Wood also noted that Dr. Henderson's ability to use his former experience as a superintendent in Arizona in connecting with the Four Corners area public school superintendents, who served as "advisory" board members during the branch campus phase, was a critical piece

of his success in carrying through with the groups' desire to see San Juan College be the first community college in New Mexico to achieve independent status. Ed Wood noted that Mr. Carl Zaffke, R.A. Stevens, as well as Dr. Henderson's predecessor Dr. William C. Ritter, were among some of the notable early staff members and others who voiced the idea of independent status. According to Mr. Wood, Henderson's monumental contribution to the effort was his willingness to work hard to make sure that the area superintendents were supportive of the change. In Wood's own words, "Henderson believed in hard work. He was committed to doing what it took to make sure that the local people had a good college that they could call their own. ... He was very good about checking in with all of the area superintendents who sat on the old advisory board" (Wood, 2011). This support was crucial since the switch from advisory board to college board would mean that the college's board would be publically elected and no longer subordinate to approval from the area superintendents. To make this transition smooth, Mr. Wood recalled that "He [Dr. Henderson] hand-delivered advisory board packets to the house before meetings and kept the board well informed" as the board moved from an advisory entity to a self-governing body . A testament to the success of this process is that a large majority of the advisory board members stayed on as college board members. Ed Wood added that Henderson never tried to surprise and always tried to inform everyone from the board room to his staff and those in the community. Henderson was also very conservative with funds, which endeared him to the generally conservative fiscal tone of the advisory board - E. Wood (Personal Communication, December 19, 2011).

Through the data gathered from interview, Wood provided some evidence of Henderson's tacitly developed leadership. Wood mentions Henderson's experience-based learning as a basis for his appreciation of the local culture in the Four Corners area. Wood also noted that Henderson successfully transferred his experiences learned as a K-12 leader to a leadership ability to communicate consistently and clearly, and make professional connections with diverse constituent groups as a college president.

Findings from Interview with Dr. Joel Jones

Dr. Joel Jones had unique insight into Dr. Henderson's tenure at San Juan College. Both men have had long careers as leaders in higher education within New Mexico and the Four Corners region. Not only did their careers run simultaneously in the same region but they had regular contact as professional peers over that time. Dr. Jones originally came to the southwestern United States to serve as the dean of faculty at the University of New Mexico; he was promoted to vice president until leaving the university in 1988. After his time at UNM, Dr. Jones accepted the presidency at Fort Lewis College and retired as Fort Lewis' president in 1998 – J. Jones (Personal Communication, June 29, 2012). Dr. Henderson came to Farmington, NM in 1978 to serve as the branch administrator of the Four Corners campus of New Mexico State University. In 1980, Dr. Henderson led that same campus, now renamed San Juan College, through a process to gain independent status. From 1978, until his retirement in 2001 Dr. Henderson served as San Juan College's president (Ogilvie, 2002).

Dr. Jones had a good deal to say regarding Henderson's use of leadership skills that had to be developed tacitly through experience. According to Jones, Henderson had an innate sense that his skills were best suited to the Farmington area and never wavered

from his commitment to that location. As Jones put it “Henderson could have moved fifteen times over his career, but he didn’t use Farmington as a stepping stone on his career path. He was committed to the place where he served. He truly wanted to be a part of making San Juan College succeed” – J. Jones (Personal Communication June 29, 2012). Finally, Jones also noted that Henderson showed exceptional tacit skill in keeping a coalition together in the face of a competing vision of the future for San Juan College. As Jones put it:

Henderson showed a tacit skill in being able to resist constituent groups who pressed their desire to see San Juan College become a four-year college, without alienating those groups from the community. He developed trust within his community. I never met anyone in the Farmington area who did not trust Henderson, even if they disagreed with him. This had to be a skill he developed tacitly.

– J. Jones (Personal Communication June 29, 2012)

Findings from Interview with Dr. James McLaughlin

When asked about Henderson’s use of tacit versus explicit learning to conduct his leadership, McLaughlin noted that Henderson relied quite a bit on tacit learning that was informed by explicit learning from reading professional literature. McLaughlin recalled that, more often than not, the regular leadership meetings included a discussion on a piece of professional literature that the group read together. While the selection of readings was fairly wide-ranging, McLaughlin recalls that Henderson kept the selections focused on a pursuit to find a simple but effective structure for the college’s development. Henderson did not solely select the readings for this professional book club, but the other members

of the San Juan College leadership team recognized that college development was their collective professional purpose and contributed reading material that empowered this purpose.

On a practical level, Dr. Henderson focused a lot of his reading on materials from the Quality New Mexico organization or other pieces associated with the national Malcolm Baldrige Award. This made sense for McLaughlin and the rest of the leadership team since San Juan College was committed to success through the Quality New Mexico process. In addition to branded reading material from the Malcolm Baldrige process or Quality New Mexico, Henderson also brought in readings from business improvement authors who looked at development from a less structural and more conceptual angle, such as Collins (Collins, 2001) and Senge (1990). As McLaughlin recalls, Henderson stated on more than one occasion that the college should stand for more than what state statute said it was. Through the writings of theorists such as Senge and business leaders such as Collins, Henderson likely wanted to build the vision that San Juan College could develop a tacit purpose that went beyond existing as a two-year college opportunity.

As McLaughlin recalls, Henderson spoke quite a bit about the college's purpose to serve the needs of the local community in moral or even spiritual terms. The writings of Greenleaf featured prominently in McLaughlin's recollection of Henderson's efforts to build a vision of connecting the college with the community on a spiritual or emotional level. McLaughlin was careful to explain that this drive was not expressed by Henderson in overly religious terms and was certainly not doctrinaire. Rather, McLaughlin interpreted Henderson's vision as a desire to see the emotional or spiritual sense of purpose in Greenleaf's ideas in *Servant Leadership* (2002) blended with the notion of

developing a learning organization akin to the practices in Senge's *Fifth Discipline* (1990).

Findings from Interview with Dr. John Neibling

Another member of the San Juan College leadership team, who served on that team during the same time as Jim McLaughlin, was John Neibling. Dr. Neibling served as a direct report to Dr. Henderson for 10 years. During this time, Neibling served as the college's Vice-President for Learning. Neibling also recalled the same influence of group professional literature reading on Henderson's leadership that was mentioned by McLaughlin. Neibling concurs that much of the way Henderson conducted his leadership of the college and management of the leadership team was influenced by a blending of ideas from Baldrige, Senge and Greenleaf. In addition to these authors, Neibling also noted that Henderson brought influences from Covey and Blanchard's *One Minute Manager* into the leadership team's discussion, but to a much lesser extent. In Neibling's own words:

“As Henderson would encounter new ideas in literature, he would filter these ideas through the tacit side of his experience. He liked the Malcolm Baldrige idea of aligning all systems in an organization toward quality service. Peter Senge's ideas, the ideas in *Servant Leadership* by Robert Greenleaf, and to a lesser degree Henderson would incorporate ideas from Seven Covey and Ken Blanchard's *One Minute Manger*.” When Henderson found wisdom in these authors, he would incorporate those ideas in his approach. He knew himself very well; new theories were something to draw from, but not to chase after. .

Neibling was quick to point out that Henderson's use of ideas from professional literature was to inform his own distinct practice. Neibling noted that Henderson consistently filtered these readings from professional literature through his own tacit experience. Specifically, as Henderson recognized wisdom in the authors he read, he would incorporate their ideas into his own professional approach. According to Neibling, Henderson was able to synthesize ideas from various readings so well because he knew himself very well. By understanding where he came from as a leader, Henderson was able to adopt new ideas without chasing after the latest leadership theory slavishly. To Neibling, this ability to discern the elements of a new idea that would work well with his own theory of practice was a hallmark trait in Henderson's tacit knowledge and leadership practice. In fact, Neibling described this quality as wisdom that Henderson used in his professional life.

More than any other interview subject in this study, Neibling spoke about Henderson's wisdom and the upbringing that help to develop his style as a leader. Neibling described Henderson as the biggest professional influence of his life, and spoke from the perspective of someone who had developed a professional relationship with Dr. Henderson that allowed Henderson to be comfortable speaking about his early years. According to Neibling, Henderson grew up in the household of a miner. The hard work that Henderson saw his father put in made a profound impact on Henderson's later development. Also according to Neibling, Henderson's opportunity to receive a college education came about through the G.I. Bill. As Neibling saw it, these early influences left Henderson with a profound appreciation for hard work, honesty, thrift and moral values. By the time that Neibling worked under Henderson, those early values had developed

into a leadership style that was careful, but willing to take risk when that risk held the potential for great value to the college and local community.

Neibling recognized other unique traits in Henderson's leadership. Due to his upbringing, Henderson understood people very well. According to Neibling, Henderson understood working class people because he was one of them and this was a unique trait among college presidents. Neibling specifically remembered that Henderson had a sort of mantra that acknowledged that college leaders truly earned their paycheck when they helped to make a better life for those they served. As Neibling recalled, Henderson constantly stated this mantra to those on his leadership team. In Neibling's own words, "Henderson understood the people because he was one of them. This is unique among college leaders. He had a mantra that he said often, 'if we can help make a better life for people and make this a better community, then we have earned our salary.'"

As the biggest professional influence on his career, Neibling recalled learning several key lessons from Henderson during his time at San Juan College. On a practical level, Neibling recognized great skill in Dr. Henderson's ability to read a room and determine where those in the room stood in response to the question of the day. This is an attribute of Henderson's tacit skill as a leader that was echoed in the focus group interview session. According to Neibling, Henderson was not only able to use his room reading skills with individuals, but was also able to bring his leadership team on board in the exercise of reading people and used their impressions of the "pulse of the community" to impart perspective on his personal observations of the same event.

On a personal level, Neibling noted that Henderson taught him to always remember whom one serves as a community college leader. Henderson was quick to

remind those on his staff that they served a publicly elected board. This responsibility meant that the ultimate service they were providing at the college was for the benefit of the community. This also meant that it was an obligation of the college leadership to make sure that the board learned about changes in the community's attitude toward the college from the college leadership. In other words, it was critical that the college leadership be aware of the community's needs so that the college could be responsive in serving the board for the benefit of the public. In Neibling's own words:

He was my biggest influence professionally. Community colleges are publically elected boards, Henderson taught me to never forget who we serve and that there should be nothing withheld from the board. He taught me to report even the things that I thought were too minor to trouble the board with. He would say 'don't let the public inform the board before the president does.' Henderson was also an expert in reading a room. Nothing escaped him about a group while he was observing them for the social dynamic. In weekly meetings and individual meetings, we could tell that Henderson was looking for our observations on the pulse of the community.

- J. Neibling (Personal Communication, June 29, 2012)

Findings from Interviews with Dr. James Henderson

In a series of five scheduled interviews from November 5, 2011 until February 11, 2012, I sat down with Dr. Henderson and asked for his recollection of events during his tenure at San Juan College. In addition to events related to his presidential tenure, I also questioned Dr. Henderson on events that led up to his time at San Juan College as well as his leadership experience after serving as the college's president. During each of the five

interview sessions, the events that Dr. Henderson recalled were brought back into a context of his tacit leadership and professional learning by questioning Dr. Henderson on how specific events impacted his professional development. This research approach led to the collection of data that was both biographical in nature and thematic in context. I will provide my findings from these interviews in two parts. First, I will provide data from interviews with Dr. Henderson that revealed a brief biography of his professional tenure as president of San Juan College. Lastly, I will provide data that sheds light on the major themes of tacit and explicit learning that Dr. Henderson underwent during his career as well as lesson learned from his career and his foundational motivations to engage in leadership.

Early career and graduate studies. In discussing his early career before coming to San Juan College, Dr. Henderson recalled that he learned a valuable lesson on researching his position before claiming fact. During finals after his doctoral study, Henderson was questioned by members of his dissertation committee on the need to go back and verify his opinion by researching publications authored by others who were established in his area of study. Henderson recalls that this friendly admonishment to be a careful researcher was something that he laughed about with the committee after he completed degree, but that it was a valuable lesson he took into his professional career.

You've got to have something in your own mind of how you're going handle things, how you're going to approach things and always look for good data, I don't want somebody to say 'Well I think.' I learned [this lesson] as a doctoral student in my finals with my committee. As I remember [during my defense], I said 'Well I think that ...' [The committee] said 'no, you don't think yet. You're

not there yet, you'll get your chance when you get the stamp.' They were wanting me to be able to justify [myself] and tell me that somebody else had something to do with that thought.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

In the same interview Henderson further commented:

I will tell you though there were good people that I had the opportunity to take classes with and so forth and got a lot of help and a lot of information. And if you get somebody that is really what I think outstanding, they don't hesitate to sit down and talk a few minutes about anything. Such as, if you're really interested in something that has come up about in the class we didn't talk about in depth but you [were interested] and may not get the opportunity to really talk about your own ideas. ... I had a really good time in my doctoral process.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

Beyond the one experience with his dissertation committee, Henderson also recalled that his doctoral studies offered him the unique chance to gain valuable perspective by participating in class discussions. Henderson stated that these discussions among doctoral students were valuable because they offered him the chance to see class readings and current events from perspectives that were different from many of those he had access to in his personal experience. Equally important were the opportune moments when he was able to seek out trusted professors for more in depth conversation on topic that came out of class meetings. These personal learning sessions with his professors

were a big part of Henderson's later practice of using casual conversation to fact check a variety of options surrounding events and decisions in his later professional practice.

As Henderson completed his doctoral program, he was recruited to serve as the superintendent for several small rural public school districts in eastern Arizona. As he recalls, Henderson found the job quite rewarding in spite of having several unique districts, with sometimes varied needs, to serve at once. As administrative experience, this period of time working in K-12 education afforded Henderson the opportunity to develop a better understanding of board dynamics. Henderson recalls that he drew on his K-12 experience often when he was called on to work with the college's board on important issues early in this higher education tenure. – J. Henderson (Personal Communication, January 7, 2012)

The move from branch campus to independent community college.

When Dr. Henderson got to Farmington, the campus that would eventually become San Juan College was a small branch campus of New Mexico State University. In 1975, the San Juan branch of NMSU consisted of 4 classrooms in space rented from a small strip mall. As Henderson quickly found out, the University's goals for the branch campus were limited. The branch campus was intended by NMSU to provide local post-secondary students with entry-level courses so that they could transfer to NMSU or another four-year degree granting institution.

As the branch administrator, Henderson could see that the oil and gas industry was showing great growth and that the local population had a strong interest in developing a vocational and technical school in the area. At the time, Henderson reported to an academic dean within the university administration structure at NMSU,

while serving on an advisory board made up of two representatives from each local school district in San Juan County. In interview, Dr. Henderson explained the governance structure before San Juan College gained independence.

I went ahead and really sort of helped to develop those folks so that we've got on a sort of a monthly meeting and so forth and they really come along pretty well in the school members of the school board and they were the ones that really sort of made the decision to take one to seek independence. They could see the need.

They could see a number of things were happening when you get an institution like New Mexico State that served us very well up here over the years, but was 400 miles away and here we are floating around as just sort of a branch. There are [local] interests in the academic side of things and [local] people are beginning to get interested in what I called technical education at the time – but was really vocational education.

So that whole development of the first board was our local responsibility. We had to set up a board on our own board and all the guys who served on that advisory, they were the initial board. I guess that's a perfect example of how you've got to learn... working with boards.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

Positioned at the fulcrum point between these two interests, Henderson attempted to bring both sides to an understanding that the campus needed to grow significantly in order to provide the services that both sides were requiring. He frequently traveled to Las Cruces and made reports to the NMSU faculty and administration that the Farmington branch was positioned to become the university's largest branch as the gas industry grew

over the next decade. To help the branch campus program grow and remain relevant to the population in San Juan County, he requested that the NMSU faculty senate approve additional courses. Unfortunately, this process was cumbersome and the NMSU faculty was not overly responsive to course needs 400 miles away. At the same time, Henderson appealed to the local advisory board that local bonds needed to be issued in order to help the branch campus' physical plant grow. Under its advisory board constitution, the local board found the task difficult to come to full agreement on issuing bonds; not all district had the same bonding capacity or the political will to see bonds passed for the college.

Well when I started here at this campus of course I had a lot of experience from public school. I had been a superintendent of schools and I had been a county school superintendent over several school districts. And so I had a lot of good experience already and when I got into higher Ed and started to really apply. I found this institution [San Juan College] as a branch of New Mexico State University. Now as a branch there are certain things that you are always limited to by whoever the person is in charge [at the main campus]. You are pretty well communicating just with them and you are going down to meetings in the main campus. As it went on and over the years a decision was made [by the San Juan College advisory board] to break off and go ahead on their own. That gets you into another process - but I'd work for boards before so that wasn't the problem. And so that gave me another whole challenge to be part of that and you know you're sort of starting from scratch and starting an institution and that was a little different experience.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

Eventually, the Farmington branch campus was able to secure certification from the state to open an area vocational school. However, several roadblocks still stood in the way when Henderson or his local board wanted to develop the campus or curriculum. Even with the vocational school certification, the NMSU was still not responsive to requests from the Farmington branch to add technical courses to its offerings. Technical courses were proving to be the most popular in the Farmington area, but the administration and faculty at NMSU still saw the Farmington campus as a branch that now offered vocational and academic courses for the purpose of having students transfer to Las Cruces. Finally, the tension between the local advisory board and the administration at NMSU came to a head when the advisory board authorized a building plan in Farmington and wanted to select a local architect to conduct the study. NMSU overrode the local decision and wanted an architect from the Albuquerque area.

Dr. Henderson vividly recalled that the advisory board meeting immediately after the disagreement with NMSU over an architect was very different from the typical pattern of advisory board meetings. After Henderson was asked to step out in the hall for a moment, the board president came out and told him that the board had decided to break away from NMSU. Henderson was asked if he was wanted to stay or ask NMSU for another assignment. Henderson made the crucial personal decision to stay and help the board in any way he could.

Henderson's decision to stay proved to be invaluable to the fledgling college as he put his tacit experience from previous work within New Mexico legislative procedures as the branch campus administrator, as well as his time working with the Arizona legislature as a county superintendent, to work for the Farmington campus. The first major obstacle

for the formation of San Juan as an independent community college was the need for a change in legislative statute that would allow for the formation of independent community colleges in New Mexico. Fortunately, Henderson had worked to develop a solid working relationship with the contingent of New Mexico state house legislators in San Juan County. Over his five years as branch campus administrator, Henderson found that he was called on several times to work with the local state representatives on issues that were important to both the advisory board and the voting public in San Juan County. In fact, Henderson recalled that the local state representatives said to him on at least one occasion that they wanted him to work with them on legislation needed by the college, rather than trying to work out the college's legislative needs with consultants and representatives from NMSU's part of the state. As Henderson recalled:

I'd built a pretty good reputation in the meantime, because even as a branch director they'd like for me to [lobby the state legislature on behalf the college], but they didn't have much choice because my legislators from up here [in Farmington] would always say, well don't care we want him [Henderson] to come down there [to Santa Fe] and we can be much more helpful. New Mexico State would have preferred to do their own lobbying and handle it themselves but... [Farmington] always got the short end 'cause first and foremost [their interest were] going to be the university. And they didn't want [local interests] to come in mudding water trying to get appropriations when you have five branches in the NMSU system.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 16, 2011)

Using his connection within the state legislature and some contacts within the State's higher education office, Henderson began a conversation with his predecessor at the Farmington branch, who had moved on to lead the State's regulatory body in charge of two year schools, and got the support to move ahead and have a bill introduced into the state senate to allow independent community colleges to operate. Initially, Henderson was encouraged by former State representative Meryl Taylor to wait until the 60-day legislative session so that he could have more time to help Henderson get the bill pushed through committee to a floor vote. However, as current attitudes toward the formation of independent community colleges were positive around the state, they decided to move ahead and attempt to introduce the bill in the current 30-day session. With Rep. Taylor's help, the bill was moved past committee and placed on the floor where it received a passing vote with 30 minutes left before the state legislature adjourned the session. As Henderson recalled a conversation with his board after they decided to seek independence from New Mexico State.

I understood why they wanted to do that and I said 'Well, I'll be as helpful as I can'. And there was a whole process that you have to start on to get that done statutorily and otherwise. And we had to get a key piece of legislation changed to enable us to do that. I mean it wasn't provided [in statute]. Quite frankly I have never talked much with people about this - but it happened to be a short session; it was a day before the session was supposed to adjourn.

During interview, Dr. Henderson was modest about his involvement in the political maneuvering that led to the last minute vote on the house floor to allow independent community colleges to operate in New Mexico. Henderson saw his role in

this story as a sort of contact person helping the people positioned in areas of influence make the legislative change needed to see the objectives of his board met. As Henderson recalled during a November 16, 2011 interview, there was a good deal of deal making and favors called in to get the legislation through at the last minute:

I was initially working the bill on the senate side and the senator there Jack Morgan and I talked to Jack, and he said, “Well,” He said, “We might be able to do it.” Well, coming to find out there was a senator called C.B. He was chairman of the senate finance and he was sitting on the bill. And Jack couldn’t get him to let it go. I knew that he and Meryl Taylor had been very close friends in legislature. So I call Meryl and I said, “Meryl, I need you to do a little favor”. I said, “We got this thing lined up here and I need you to call a senator C.B. and get him to let that bill get out on the floor.” And I said, “We’re going straight to the floor we can’t run it through committees, because we don’t have time.” And he said, “Well you’d never convince me that you’d get that done.” He says you’d never do it, but he said, “I’ll call him.” And so I had to go over on the House side to lay some ground work. Anyway long story short, I remember Jack Morgan coming out of that hearing room I was outside there and he had a smile a mile away and he said, “It’s going out and okay”. That went to a Senate vote I think the next morning on the floor and it passed.

And then on the house side you’ve got to get the bill changed over and get them to pass it... Well the next day the [State House of Representatives] was passing

the final bills getting ready for adjournment at noon and ... at five minutes till 12:00 they passed that bill.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

Henderson's all important reputation for good administrative practice would be used again, as San Juan College worked to overcome two more hurdles in its path to independent status. In addition to the change in legislation that had already been accomplished, it was also required of San Juan College to hold a public election among the San Juan County school districts and receive a 75% 'yea' vote on allowing the college to separate from NMSU. After the election, the college was also required to conduct a feasibility study and submit to a public hearing before the college could completely incorporate as an independent community college with their own board. Henderson recalls that the election was a significant hurdle, but that he felt confident the entire time that the voting public would approve of the college going independent. During an interview Henderson recalled:

I think we always worked hard with the community, building a very good reputation with the community and it was [this] that got the word around, and my talks with local people [that helped them] see the significance, so we had a lot of community support.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 16, 2011)

In the end, the vote carried San Juan College to an easy win with a yea vote well above the required 75%.

According to Henderson, the feasibility study and public hearing was a simple legislative requirement in order to show that the leadership of the college was ready to assume the role of independent governance. With guidance from the state higher education office and support from experienced consultants, the feasibility study was completed with relatively little trouble. However, Henderson's skills in connecting the community behind the college's plan would become very valuable once again when it came time to schedule the final public hearing. Initially, the hearing was to be held in Albuquerque as a central local for any interested parties around the state who might want to attend. The consultant hired by San Juan College to complete the feasibility report also took the time to meet with the NMSU administration. A couple of days prior to the hearing, everything seemed to be in order and plans were underway to have several interested people from the Farmington area travel to Albuquerque. Two days prior to the hearing, Henderson was notified that the hearing location was changed to NMSU's campus in Las Cruces. As Henderson recalled these events:

Then [San Juan's consultant] and I had talks and he had been down to Las Cruces and talked to the college president at NMSU to tell him what he was going to do [in writing San Juan's feasibility study] what he's hired to do and so forth. [The consultant] said well [the NMSU president] is most cooperative. I said 'yeah, but that is only today I said you are going to run into a snag sooner or later, because one or two those vice presidents will point out to him one detail or another and it will change his mind.' And that's exactly what happened.

Something that [NMSU] was depending on didn't deliver and [the NMSU president] was he was just fit to be tied. [I said to the consultant] that is why I told you that that is what you might run into. Anyway, long story short, - this is sort of an interesting piece - when we are going to have the [public hearing] meeting in Albuquerque that wasn't too bad, because people could get out to Albuquerque. Well, maybe a day or two days before they changed they moved to another location on campus in NMSU. All of that created a little different problem, so I went out and contacted seven local people that on their own planes that got seven private planes loaded them up with people and flew to down to Las Cruces.

I just so happened [we arrive in Las Cruces] right as the hearing was out to lunch - they were meeting in a room that wasn't that big and we brought all those people in there we just it couldn't have been worked better. Here they came back from lunch and asked where did all of these people come from. And so we go ahead with the meeting and got introduced to the person who was going to be making the presentation and he did a real nice job and they knew that without doubt I mean you could see the look on their face it was over there is nothing you were going to do at that point and so they passed it. New Mexico State accepted the report and away we went, but there is a lot of stuff that in between that has to be orchestrated to see those things happened right. Just like the transportation. I mean, you know, we didn't have the best road from here to Albuquerque. Those guys that owned private planes as helpful business people and they loaded them

up went down we probably had a minimum 25-30 people there and just by doing that I mean that made a tremendous difference.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 16, 2011)

Henderson recalls that he was not sure why the change was made, but felt it may have had something to do with individuals within the NMSU administration who took exception the meeting being in Albuquerque. The San Juan College consultant reported very cordial relations with the NMSU president and no significant opposition to the pending split by San Juan College. Nevertheless, the change presented a major problem in Farmington as those intending to attend the hearing to support San Juan College would not be able to make a 10-hour car trip to Las Cruces. After some quick conversation between Henderson, board members, and a few businessmen in the Farmington area, several private airplanes were rounded up and a modest group was deployed to Las Cruces in time for the meeting. In an interesting turn of fortune, NMSU had booked the hearing in a modestly sized room, anticipating that few people would attend and the Farmington contingent packed the facility. The hearing concluded with no public opposition to the independence of San Juan College, and the college's final procedural hurdle was passed. Henderson recalls that the bulk of the process, from the point where the advisory board told him they wanted to go independent to the final public hearing in Las Cruces, took roughly 6 months during the 1980 school year. In 1981, San Juan College was officially recognized as New Mexico's first independent community college. Henderson was retained as the college's first president and every member of the old advisory board stayed on to serve as the college's first board of directors.

Leadership during the college's growth years. When asked what process helped keep the college growing and attentive to student and community needs during the year he served as college president, Henderson indicated that the state-level of the National Malcolm Baldrige Award competition, known as the Quality New Mexico process, was a key component. Henderson recalls that the decision to join the Quality New Mexico process was made when a staff member at San Juan College who had served as an examiner for the national Malcolm Baldrige Award encouraged the administration to look into what the process involved at the state level. For Henderson, Quality New Mexico offered the college a way to focus its growth during a time of fast expansion in both program and campus. With its focus on goals alignment and the pursuit of quality service, the entire process, including the national-level Baldrige principles, fit what the college's leadership wanted San Juan College to be as it grew.

Henderson recalled that the Quality New Mexico process expectation went beyond the typical accreditation visit. As with an accreditation visit, the college leadership's involvement in the Quality New Mexico process included the submission of a report. However, unlike an accreditation report that had predetermined objectives for an institution, the Baldrige report wanted to see the goals that the college chose for itself and then required an explanation of their intended processes for achieving those goals. The visit by the Baldrige team was to see how well all departments and divisions of the college were aligned in their commitment to achieving the outcomes set forth in the reported goals. Henderson recalled that the maintenance and custodial staff made a great impression on the Baldrige team by staying attuned to the presence of visitors and asking if they needed directions or help in some other way. To Henderson, the maintenance and

custodial staff were well positioned to impress because it was already a cultural practice to offer help to visitors. The coaching needed to prepare most of the staff for the Baldrige expectations was minimal. The physical plant staff's attention to detail included posting signs in restroom with the number to call if the facilities were not in good order. Coupled with an already existing tendency for the custodians to take care of needs right away, this added signage, and several other details all over campus, helped the college impress the observers enough that San Juan College become the first educational institution in the state to earn the Quality New Mexico competition's highest prize: the Zia Award. As Henderson recalled the process:

Our organization was pretty well at one point in time really tied in to Quality New Mexico. And probably we were one of the earlier institutions that when they started Quality New Mexico that you know they approached us and so we got involved in it. And over the years that's another piece for gathering information and skills. But when you're going through their process you're actually using the Malcolm Baldrige. They have a whole deal; worked out and so we were the first education institution in Mexico that won the top award, the Zia award. That was really a highlight in my activity as president of the college. But you have to have everybody involved. Morale was high and I remember when we won the award, I took a group of our administrators and our board and we went down and we received the award. I had a couple of my staff people, one in particular, would actually go in and with a team and evaluate those people who were applying for the award. But you have to have an organization and people that are willing you know to get to understand and to get involved with it and to understand the

importance of it. And that's another piece of when I'm talking about picking up different things...

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

When asked what aspect of his tacit learning might have helped the college gain the Zia Award, Henderson pointed to a long-standing practice of holding weekly meetings with the college leadership and department heads. At various points, in five separate interview sessions with Dr. Henderson, he mentioned the all-important role that consistent and regular communication played in his efforts to lead the college. As Henderson himself put it:

We usually had some mechanism where you're getting certain groups or certain people together and I think you can use those opportunities to say what we're going to go on a new journey and we need to learn about that journey and it's important to us and how can we best use that and what would it do to help us be a better college. And then the other way too you know I may have come up with in a conference or something ... and it may even be that I'd send some people. On any given situation you learn something and sometimes those that are difficult and challenging. Sometimes I was involved in a difficult problem or situation is just reminding what did we learn from this so that you don't have to repeat it again. In other words you know I found that a lot of times I had to be a pretty good listener but there is always two stories and if you just jump out and you take one opinion over the next, you might find yourself later with being quite embarrassed 'cause that wasn't exactly the way you go to the other side, the way it appear to happen.

So you got to do the best you can to think that through and when you're through at the end of the day and weigh it you got to say, "Okay, it looks like to me this is the best way we better resolve this problem and move on because generally you know you don't have a lot of opportunity if you're working on a Problem right at hand, you're just trying to help [complete the task].

It's easy for people to cast and class somebody before they really know him. And before they know, what the situation is. I've always tried to not make snap decision because like I say I've been embarrassed at times when somebody is telling me, 'well that's just the way it is' and 'that's what happened' and then I got to go back and I said, "Well, I got to talk to the parties involved here and see what their perception." And sometimes you know other people that have observed or been around them and you can you know sort of quietly ask or how do you judge this individual or what's going on.

You can get a feel about your morale and how people are feeling and I spent a lot of time walking around managing and going, just dropped in on them so they wouldn't know when I was coming. If I had a problem say with the faculty member, I just go over their office and say, "You got any coffee, yeah, let's have a cup of coffee," and pretty soon you're off talking then they'll talk if they have something bothering them. And that is very helpful on my opinion for me 'cause a lot of people don't get out of their office and they don't get around, and they

don't talk to people and I always felt, if there was a problem and I'm walking on around on campus, somebody will pull me aside. They don't hesitate.

- J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 16, 2011)

To others involved in the leadership of San Juan College during Henderson's presidency, the central role of regular weekly meetings was emphasized during interview sessions. During the staff focus group interview all participants mentioned that Henderson was open to ideas for the staff, but that it was expected that these ideas be sorted out in a meeting. Both Dr. Neibling and Dr. McLaughlin noted that the regular weekly meetings with administrative staff were a key feature in the way the college was run under Henderson. It is also apparent, in each set of interviews that Henderson's use of meetings to keep the college leadership focused on the goals of the Quality New Mexico report was an outgrowth of his already existing, tacitly developed, drive to keep all parties well informed on any initiatives or policies under development at the college.

Leadership after college presidency. After retirement from the presidency of San Juan College in 2001, Dr. Henderson continued to serve the college as chancellor for a couple of years, offering his insight to help the college transition between administrations. In 2004, he won election for a seat on the San Juan County Board of Commissioners. Toward the end of his two terms of service on the county commission, Henderson was sought out by a group of local businessmen to sit on the board of an effort to develop targeted economic growth strategies for the Four Corners area called the Four Corners Economic Development, Inc. During the data collection for this study, Henderson was finishing his last term as a county commissioner and was heavily involved in helping the economic development taskforce look for other industries that the

region might encourage to grow in order to widen the economic basis for jobs in San Juan County. The fact that Henderson agreed to serve on the Four Corners Economic Development Inc.'s board as well as his decision to run for county office is an indication that his concern for the Farmington area transcended a basic professional obligation to the college. These continued roles of leadership in the area also stand as evidence of Henderson's stature as a leader and servant to the people of San Juan County.

Tacit leadership findings from interviews. During interviewing, Dr. Henderson provided a number of insights to his understanding on the interchange of leadership and tacit knowledge acquisition. During interview, Henderson recalled the following experience early in his career as an example of his professional focus and the recognition that practicing educational leaders in Arizona saw in him:

I started my career out of teaching, but I moved up pretty quick, in Arizona they elect their county school superintendents. And of course the district I was teaching in had a Principal that I got along extremely well and he was a legislator. In every county school they ran on a two year term [for superintendent] at the time, so he and the superintendents said, "We want you to run for county school superintendent" and I said, "Gosh I can't do that, I'm just finishing my masters at Northern Arizona university and I got to go back, go to the summer school and finish it," and they finally said, "Okay, well we'll let it go this, you know, well the next time around," The next two years they come to me and said, "we know you've not finished, but your name got around," and I said well okay, I said I got a couple of courses that I haven't finished yet, and they said, "Well you got contacts up there, you call and they'll give you a special study, just, they'll work

it out with you.” And so I did and called the right person up there and he said, “Oh yeah genuinely, I can set you up with special studies and you can do that course, rather those two courses and so I went ahead and ran and I was elected and, but I did quite a bit in Arizona with the legislature, not as strong as I did in New Mexico.

J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

From this interview recollection, Henderson showed that tacit learning was established very early in his career. Current literature indicates that tacit knowledge accumulation is experience-based and transferred through professional practice (Hedlund et al., 2003; Janson & McQueen, 2007; Nestor-Baker, 2001a; St. Germain & Quinn, 2005a; Sternberg, Okagaki, & Jackson, 1990). As a graduate student and a teacher, Henderson had tacit-based skills that were recognized by practitioner-experts at the time. As defined in Chapter One, tacit leadership is leadership where experience guides organizational behavior, but the practice of that leadership is not readily available for introspection. In studying the shift from tacit to explicit leadership practice in Dr. Henderson’s professional practice it is important to have identified that veteran or expert practitioners in Arizona recognized his abilities. As discussed in Chapter One, while the leadership aspects I studied were not readily available for introspection by Dr. Henderson and other study interview subjects themselves, this does not mean that those same leadership aspects could not be readily inspected by an outsider through the use of interview.

During the first interview with Dr. Henderson for this study on November 5, 2011, he was asked to think back through his day-to-day practice while he was president

at San Juan College. During this interview, I specifically asked Dr. Henderson, “how do you think that you acquired tacit knowledge, what did you do, was there some particular type of setting or event or meetings that that you recall getting the most learning out of?”

Here are his recollections on that topic:

Dr. Henderson: Well I think that quite frankly we started at the college and sort of adopted different ways that you can come at setting out what I call your foundation: what sort of drives you. Servant leadership has always being one that we've used. Now we've done all kinds of different programs by trying them out, transitional leadership, one minute manager, I mean you know there's a variety. But generally speaking I always thought that there is a lot of literature and a lot of books that had to do with [servant] leadership and so that's where you're going to gain a lot of your knowledge. And then, when we started finding out more about the program, we brought in some people from the servant leadership concept. I remember one of my board members, 'cause we sort of worked with them too, he and I went back to Indianapolis and at Brown Park and we spent a week there and a lot of it had to do with the servant leadership. So [in a person's career] you are always reading articles or reading something or reading books. I mean something that's helpful in gaining knowledge and so that's sort of how [our leadership team] got going.

Author: Well that's good to know I mean a lot of those are described as explicit forms of knowledge, things that are written in books and things that you might get from a program are pretty helpful. Were there things that would come up in your

day to day leadership up at the college that maybe didn't fit into that published or written realm, but might have been experiences that you went through. Things that you kind of learned about on the job that meshed with what you got out of Greenleaf and some of the rest of those authors?

Dr. Henderson: Well I think generally you always pick up some concepts, not only from Greenleaf but from others. And you don't just [read in order] one, two, three but you sort of pick some principles or some concepts that you think sounds pretty good. But you know all of us day to day, we are involved in problem solving and so you've got to sort of have a way to go about doing that. And I guess a lot of that [came from] talking with people or talking with administrators. My first line administrators and I usually had a meeting set up every week and if I had something [from reading professional literature] I had it on the agenda, at least a piece of it. And then I wanted primarily to hear from the administrators in the meeting and get them talking and so forth. That way I can make some notes. Anyway I'm reminded of a man I knew named Pete Ron. He was the secretary of New Mexico department of transportation. Pete always commented "You know your process of having an agenda and notes and talking with people.]" He said "I adopted that cause you deal with so many people during the course of the day that if you don't remind yourself, you forget." I always kept a little space on my [notes] sheet [of] things to do as a result of the meeting, [to remind myself if] I was supposed to do something.

Now there's another piece that I also found good. I think on a weekly basis I had all my administrators meet, probably four or five of them, and we'd come in to have a little early session. [We would] do some coffee and some rolls and sit there and obviously you're going to learn from that because somehow something is going to surface. If there is something we are anticipating or something we're trying to work with, we all then have the knowledge and can understand what and how each piece fits in [as a type of] cross fertilizing. And I always found those to be very good sessions.

Author: You know that's an interesting concept you bring up, you mention cross-fertilizing, I hear that in literature a lot. I guess what I hear you saying is that the tacit forms [of knowledge] that you recall to be the most typical one was a sort of job discovery, trial and error and as a team just sort of sharing experiences and kind of enriching one another's cadre of professional tools. Would that be a safe way to put it?

Dr. Henderson: Yeah. And you know occasionally we might have a book that we believed was pretty good, and so we'd all work with that book together. You know, read it and talk about it as we worked along.

J. Henderson (Personal Communication, November 5, 2011)

From this interview data it can be determined that Henderson utilized a shared approach to tacit knowledge transfer within his leadership team. As a professional practice,

Henderson valued the impact of work experience informed by professional literature. This blended practice is in line with sources of literature review in this study that indicate that conversations between leaders and professional coaching are suitable means to transfer tacit knowledge within an organization (Academy of Human Resource Development, 2001; Connell et al., 2003; Janson & McQueen, 2007).

Summary

As discussed in Chapter One, the overarching research question for this dissertation was: What processes and events in the professional life of Dr. James Henderson had a substantive impact on his longevity as a community college president? Again, my three supporting questions were as follows. First: What lessons can the student of educational leadership take from the professional life studied? Second: Which aspects of tacit knowledge acquisition were evidenced by changes in professional practice over time within the career studied? And third: What impact has Dr. Henderson's legacy at San Juan College had on the college's continued mission since his retirement?

In summary, data collected from interviews as well as publications on the college, indicate that Henderson used his desire to serve the community as his motivation for engaging in experience that provided him with tacit knowledge of good practice in community college leadership. Throughout his career, Henderson used professional literature to refine his tacit knowledge by engaging in group readings with his leadership team that supplemented their regular leadership roles. This process of tacit knowledge development refined and informed by professional literature helped the college's

leadership team keep the institution focused on the overall goal to provide the educational programs and services needed by the local community.

Chapter 6

Discussion of Findings

Introduction

Within the definition of terms included in Chapter One, tacit knowledge is defined as knowledge gained from experience that guides behavior but is not readily available for introspection. As an effort to study a biographical subject's recollection of events that are by definition 'not readily available for introspection' I hoped to shed light on my ability to correctly interpret the events recalled by the subject as tacit learning and determine if Dr. Henderson utilized tacit knowledge acquisition during his career. The bulk of professional literature on tacit knowledge was not something with which Dr. Henderson was familiar. An in-depth study of tacit knowledge acquisition was also not a project that James Henderson ever really devoted much time to in his professional tenure. Given these realities, it was necessary to devote limited interview time during my study's data collection period to allowing Henderson to recall the experiences that helped develop his practice. This lent my data collection to the interpretation of recollections within my study definitions. This recollection of milestone events in his career, allowed me, as researcher, to draw connections between the experiences that Dr. Henderson chose to recall and this study's working definition of tacit knowledge.

A lot of useful data came from interviews and a good deal of that data came from excellent anecdotes about Henderson's skill at leading the college shared by participants. Data from document sources were useful in keeping the timeline of Henderson's tenure in perspective as participant impressions of his leadership style and decision-making skills were shared. After recordings of the interviews were transcribed, the transcripts were reviewed for responses that related to experience-based learning. These data were then organized to fit the timeline of Henderson tenure by representing the data within my

study findings as chronological groupings from Henderson's early career, leadership tenure, and post-leadership phase. The response data fell into four basic categories on the timeline of Henderson's career: his career before service at San Juan College, early service at San Juan while the school moved to independent college status, service during the college's growth up to the time of Henderson's retirement, and leadership in the community after college presidency.

Making Meaning of Research Findings

Dr. Henderson's use of organizational focus as a major theme in his leadership style was apparent across the research findings in my study. In the focus group interview session with Henderson's staff, it was clear that he expected staff to buy in to the college's mission to provide education and services to the people living in the Farmington, NM area. From interview analysis, Dr. Henderson himself indicated that new ideas or initiatives proposed to the college leadership were expected to include thorough research into their fitness with the college's existing focus and program structure. The staff also noted that Henderson used the Quality New Mexico and Baldrige competitions to keep the college on track with its mission during a period of great campus growth. In separate interviews, McLaughlin and Neibling both mentioned that Henderson relied on regular report-out meetings to make sure that everyone involved in the college's leadership stayed connected with the community's needs for the campus. Both McLaughlin and Niebling stated that the college benefited from this organizational focus by growing in a sustainable way that allowed the college to reach a high market saturation within the Farmington area. Henderson himself noted that each new experience he undertook as the president at San Juan College taught him to keep connected with the

community's needs for the college. Through all for my interviews with Henderson he consistently stressed that clarity of vision was his purpose in leading the college, working with the board, petitioning the legislature for independent college status and guiding the college's growth.

This practice of organizational focus is a well-respected practice within the current literature on community college leadership (Shults, 2009). In general, the community college concept saw great growth nationally during Henderson's tenure. Community college leadership during this time was concentrated on finding a purpose for sustaining large scale building plans and program expansion. Dr. Henderson's tenure is a successful case study of this larger trend in the profession.

My research data also indicated that Henderson used prior experience to guide his decision-making. Henderson spoke about his prior experience as a public school superintendent as a time where he learned to work with a board of directors. This experience was practice-based, tacitly-developed learning that Henderson transferred from his early experience in Arizona to his tenure at San Juan College. Additionally, Henderson indicated that he began learning the crucial link between good school leadership and familiarity with the state legislative process early in his career. He also continued to learn through experience working with community leaders during his time at San Juan College. This tacit based learning aided Henderson early on in his efforts to help San Juan College gain independent status and later as he guided the college through its growth during the 1980-90's. Henderson's use of professional literature to develop and refine the tacit lessons he gained from experience was noted by McLaughlin and Neibling during their interviews. Both of these former vice-presidents recalled a number

of books that the San Juan College leadership team read together to further develop their collective leadership style.

The use of prior experience as a basis for tacit learning to affect leadership practice is a central focus for my research in this study. Henderson's use of experience based learning to develop his leadership style, is a case study of tacit knowledge acquisition within the larger context of research on tacit knowledge. As a methodology, biographical interviewing did allow me to access the tacit nature of Dr. Henderson's tenure.

Based on the interviews, I determined that Henderson devoted a lot of time in his tenure to connecting constituent groups and helping them develop a shared vision. As a place bound-leader, Dr. Henderson devoted his professional self to serving the two-year college needs of the Four Corners area. As opposed to a career-bound perspective on his tenure at San Juan College, Henderson chose to focus his energy on building the college into a place where he could serve the community. To be fair, career-bound leaders can be very effective in serving their current assignment. The difference is that place-bound leaders, like Dr. Henderson, allow themselves to be affected by their surroundings to the point that they see personal success as secondary to the success of the place and people they are leading. Henderson's continued service to the area as a county commissioner and the college's decision to name its new fine arts center after Henderson, are testament to the appreciation the local community has for Henderson's commitment to their college.

Comparison and Contribution of Findings to Current Literature

Outside of educational studies, tacit knowledge research focuses on the psychological and sociological aspects of tacit learning's impact on organizational structure and theory (Cianciolo et al., 2006; Durrance, 1998; Frowe, 2005; Guthrie, 1996; Hedlund et al., 2003; Zeira & Rosen, 2000). Educational research on tacit knowledge has focused on theories for the transfer of tacit knowledge from one professional to another or studies on an institution's ability to warehouse knowledge that was acquired through tacit means. Practice-based educational literature on tacit knowledge acquisition includes a good number of studies on educational leaders and their experience with tacit learning in a professional setting.

Typical studies on the tacit knowledge acquisition of educational leaders focus on four-year college presidents and or K-12 superintendents. Most of these studies focus on methodologies that attempt to look at an educational leader's tacit knowledge through the constructivist paradigm or lens. Through the use of wide spectrum sampling of professional peers or in-depth examination of an individual's recollection of professional practice, these constructivist studies have shed new light on the context or process of tacit learning within a professional career in education.

By taking a post-positivist approach and using the methodology of biographical interview and case study, my study attempts to look at the professional subject's use of tacit learning through the milestone events of his career within the assumption that tacit knowledge was indeed a part of Dr. Henderson's practice. By working from the assumption that tacit knowledge acquisition did occur and that Dr. Henderson was intentional in his practice-based learning, my study was able to use the concept of tacit knowledge acquisition as a basis for interview questioning. In essence, this study was an

attempt to use a biographical approach to have Dr. Henderson and those who worked with him during his tenure at San Juan College postulate on the link between major events in his tenure and the practice of learning by doing: tacit knowledge accumulation. Within existing literature, my study is a focused biographical case study of one professional's leadership tenure.

Implications for Practice or Further Research

As students of educational leadership begin their professional practice, it is good to have tangible studies of individual leaders who used tacit learning during their tenure. My study asked Dr. Henderson to look back on his career and filter the milestones of his time in the president's office through the lens of experiential, tacit-based, learning. The study's main implication for practice is the examination of the idea that, while tacit learning may not be readily available for introspection during a career, it can be studied introspectively through hindsight. A professional may not be fully cognizant of his tacit skills but it is possible to reflect on past experience and use another's perspective to clarify tacit learning. Dr. Henderson's reflective perspective on past practice also uncovered a mutually re-enforcing link between tacit knowledge and explicit study of professional literature. In short, Dr. Henderson's tacit knowledge of community college leadership from experience did not happen in isolation. Henderson's experiences, and the learning from those experiences, were re-enforced by informed study in the professional leadership literature and training available during his tenure. Conversely, Henderson's choices in explicit professional reading and training were guided by his experiences.

Further research on the mutual link between tacit learning and explicit study will be needed to determine if the links studied in Dr. Henderson's case is generalizable to

other careers in educational leadership. Inherently, tacit knowledge is developed through experience and future practitioners of educational leadership will need to go through the experience of leading a school or college in order to develop tacit leadership skills of their own. Further research is also needed on the link between tacit knowledge awareness and personal reflection. It is reasonable to assume that a leader does not need to wait to retire in order to reflect on tacit knowledge acquired through practice. Some further research might shed light on introspection techniques and practices for examining one's own own past tacit knowledge acquisition, while still active in a career.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was the biographical research of Dr. James Henderson's career for the purpose of analyzing the impact that Henderson's tacit development as an expert has had on the community in and around San Juan College. At the same time, this study attempted to ascertain the college and community's impact on Henderson's development as an expert leader. Approaching leadership and tacit knowledge study in this manner fills a vital need in the literature on educational leadership by blending the research focus of tacit knowledge acquisition and expert professional practice with a biographical methodology that examines a leader's relationship within his community of service.

In a broad perspective, my research has shown that biographical studies can shed light on the details involved in an individual's tacit development of leadership skills. The methodology of biographical research can be a very useful tool in helping inform educational leaders as they seek practical applications for their own practice based on tacit knowledge acquisition theory. By looking for milestone events in a leader's career

and asking that leader to reflect on tacit knowledge that help form the decisions related to those mile stone events, the researcher can inform his own practice and the practice of his research audience on best practices that encourage the sustained use of tacit learning to guide practice. In the case of James Henderson, it is clear that keeping the college's focus on services needed by the Four Corners community and using professional leadership literature to inform tacit knowledge was central part of his community college leadership. In the future, similar case studies will need to be undertaken and a broad base of data will need to be accumulated so that meta-analysis studies can be conducted in the attempt to make recommendations on the best practices for tacit learning in educational leadership.

This study was an attempt to use a biographical methodology to determine biography's usefulness in discovering the process of tacit knowledge acquisition in one man's career. In order to guide my inquiry, I focused on a set of research questions. The study's main research question was to determine the processes and events in the professional life of Dr. James Henderson that had a substantive impact on his longevity as a community college president. Through interviews with selected staff, I determined that Dr. Henderson purposefully used a blend of tacit skill and practice informed my professional literature to guide the decisions he made during his career. Through the analysis of both interview data and data gathers from publications about San Juan College, I determined that Dr. Henderson faced several events that shaped his leadership practice: including the watershed event in his career of guiding San Juan College through its transition from branch campus to an independent community college.

In addition to my study's main research question, I also focused on three supporting questions. First, by studying the lessons that a student of educational

leadership can take from the professional life of Dr. James Henderson I discovered that interviewing Dr. Henderson as a research subject caused me to reflect on the processes and events that have shaped my own practice in educational leadership. While the goal of my study was not to be introspective, I did find that systematic research of another person's career did lead me to search of events and processes in my practice that might be similar to Dr. Henderson's. With further study, it might be possible to determine if this process of introspection on the part of the researcher during biographical research on another person is an observable phenomenon. Second, by studying the aspects of tacit knowledge acquisition that were evidenced by changes in Dr. Henderson's professional practice over time I was able to see the impact that learning from experiences had on his growth as a leader. In essence, Dr. Henderson's desire to focus his practice on serving others led him to engage in a range of professional experiences, from which he gathered tacit knowledge. As Henderson gathered tacit learning from his part professional experiences, he used the explicit knowledge in professional literature to refine his expertise. This process of using explicit knowledge to refine tacit knowledge is an area of study that will need much further research to determine the way tacit and explicit learning support one another. A good deal of current literature highlights the distinctive or separate qualities of tacit and explicit learning, but very little research has looked into the possibility of a symbiotic relationship between the two (Connell et al., 2003; Durrance, 1998; Hellner, 2004; Raelin, 1997; Wasonga & Murphy, 2006). Finally, I also hoped to determine the impact that Dr. Henderson's legacy at San Juan College had on the college's continued mission since his retirement. By researching the college's history, it is clear that Henderson's vision to keep San Juan College focused on the needs of the

local community has been the mainstay of San Juan's continued success in the eyes of the college's constituents. The college continues to adjust its program and its campus structure to meet the evolving workforce readiness and college readiness needs of the Farmington area. The Leadership San Juan program continues to be a vital means to identify and support emerging leadership talent in the four corners area. And Henderson himself continues to serve the community by serving on the county board of commissioners and the board of Four Corners Economic Development, Inc. as both groups continue to seek out new ways to serve the public and diversify the economic basis of the community served by San Juan College.

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Appendices

Interview Questions

Introduction: This interview is being conducted to gain an understanding of your observations into the impact that tacit knowledge acquisition had on the career of Dr. Henderson as the presidential leader of a community college.

Think back through your time working with Dr. Henderson at San Juan College and how you observed Dr. H acquire tacit knowledge through his day to day practice of leadership.

Response:

Tell me about your understanding of what it means to acquire professional knowledge in tacit versus explicit ways.

Response:

- a. Which types of professional knowledge tended to come to Dr. H and the leadership team in tacit form (i.e. on the job discovery, or trial and error)?

Response:

- b. Which types of professional knowledge tended to come to Dr. H and the leadership team in explicit form (i.e. reading manuals or other professional literature)?

Response:

- c. Which type of professional knowledge was the more typical form of learning during your time working with Dr. H?

Response:

- d. Have you ever considered how Dr. H's professional knowledge that was acquired in tacit form might have been passed, or transferred, to another leadership professional?

Response:

2. Tell me about your experiences observing Dr. H acquire knowledge through tacit means early in your time working together.

Response:

- a. What tacit lessons did you learn from Dr. H during your time working together?

Response:

- b. Did these lessons remain valid as you transitioned from one job to another?

Response:

3. Tell me about your experiences observing Dr. H acquire knowledge toward the end of your time working with him.

Response:

- a. Did these lessons remain valid as the college grew and Dr. H became recognized as a veteran leader?

Response:

- b. How do you think being perceived as an "expert" impacted Dr. H's tacit learning?

Response:

4. Tell me about Dr. H's involvement with leadership in the city or region surrounding the college.

Response:

- a. What specific opportunities can you recall Dr. H. receiving to serve the region or city in a leadership capacity? Did you see him continue this service after retirement?

Response:

- b. Did you observe the professional knowledge that Dr. H gained through tacit means as an educational leader transfer to his off-campus leadership experiences?

Response:

- c. Did you ever observe Dr. H's off-campus leadership opportunities transfer ideas back to the college?

Response:

5. Tell me about Dr. H's involvement with Leadership San Juan.

Response:

Consent Form

The University of New Mexico Consent to Participate in Research

A BIOGRAPHICAL CASE STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF TACIT KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION ON THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT

07/13/2011

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Warman Hall, who is the Principal Investigator from the Department of Educational Leadership. This research is studying the processes and events that have impacted the acquisition of tacit knowledge in the professional career of a local community college president.

The Principal Investigator is a graduate student working on an educational doctorate in educational leadership. This research is being conducted as the dissertation portion of Warman Hall's doctoral studies. Warman Hall's dissertation chair is Dr. Alicia F. Chávez in the University of New Mexico's Department of Educational Leadership.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you may have knowledge relevant to the professional tenure of the study's biographical subject that may add important data to this research. 5-20 people will take part in this study.

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

What will happen if I decide to participate?

If you agree to participate, the following things will happen:

You will be asked questions related to your past professional relationship with the study's main subject. All interviews will involve open ended questions that allow you to give as deep a description for your experiences involving the main subject's leadership tenure as you are comfortable giving. Two focus group sessions made up primarily of past professional staff and individuals who were students at the college during the subject's presidential tenure will be involved in the study. Additionally, up to four separate individual interviews with peer collegiate and/or community leaders will also be involved in the study. Your participation is voluntary. Any data from focus group sessions will be used in such a way that individual identities will be protected. Participants in individual interviews will be asked to give permission for their names to be used in the study. Interviews and focus group sessions will be digitally recorded. All recordings will be destroyed after final approval of the dissertation document.

How long will I be in this study?

Participation in this study will take a total of 1 hour over a period of 1 day.

What are the risks or side effects of being in this study?

There are no known risks or side effects involved in this study.

There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks and side effects, ask the investigator.

What are the benefits to being in this study?

There will be no benefit to you from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that information gained from this study will help in the understanding of tacit knowledge acquisition and community college presidential leadership.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?

You do not have to participate in this study. If you do not feel comfortable or do not wish to participate, you can decline to participate further at any time.

How will my information be kept confidential?

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all study data.

Data from focus group sessions will be used in such a way that individual identities will be protected. Participants in individual interviews will be asked to give permission for your name to be used in the study. Those individual interview participants who are uncomfortable with your names being used in the study will be given the option of a pseudonym. Interviews and focus group sessions will be digitally recorded. All recordings will be destroyed after final approval of the dissertation document.

Digital information will be transcribed and entered into a locked file cabinet in the Principal Investigator's home. Warman Hall will have access to your study information. Data will be stored until final approval of the dissertation document, and then will be destroyed.

What are the costs of taking part in this study?

There are no costs to you involved in taking part in this study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

You will not be compensated for your participation in this study.

How will I know if you learn something new that may change my mind about participating?

You will be informed of any significant new findings that become available during the course of the study, such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participating in the research or new alternatives to participation that might change your mind about participating.

Can I stop being in the study once I begin?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point.

Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Warman Hall, or his/her associates will be glad to answer them at (505) 277-0441.

If you need to contact someone after business hours or on weekends, please call (505) 632-8122 and ask for Warman Hall.

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-0111.

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research subject?

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-0111. The UNM IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human subjects. For more information, you may also access the UNM IRB website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/HRRC/maincampusirbhome.shtml>.

CONSENT

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research subject.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

Name of Adult Subject (print)	Signature of Adult Subject	Date
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INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE

I have explained the research to the subject or his/her legal representative and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member)	Date
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