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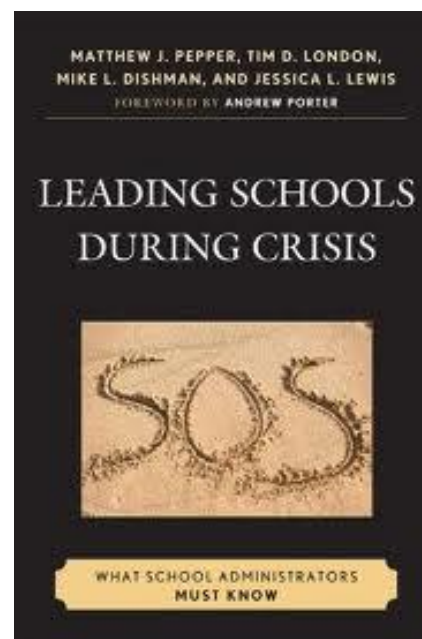
Pepper, Mathew J.; London, Tim D.; Dishman, Mike L. & Lewis, Jessica L. (2010). *Leading Schools During Crisis: What School Administrators Must Know*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield

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There are few constants in the world; but one of them is, of course, the inevitability of change. Perhaps there is no field that struggles more than education with the pressures and challenges of change. Through myriad predictable and unpredictable changes, schools are continually buffeted by external and internal forces. At times, these changes can promote progress in education, but many times change can rise to the level of a crisis—threatening, altering, and paralyzing the very foundational practices or principles of a school. Managing these situations of crisis is the ever



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present dilemma and struggle of educational leadership. The book reviewed here, *Leading Schools During Crisis: What School Administrators Must Know*, is composed of twelve case studies that powerfully depict the complex nature of leadership in education in times of crisis. This book is ideal for school administrators and students of education to reflect on and mentally prepare for the possibility, no, the inevitability of crisis in the schools.

According to authors Pepper, London, Dishman and Lewis, the scope of research on crisis in the field of education is limited and, what does exist, tends to focus on school violence. (p. 1) This book presents a contribution to the area of crisis management with a focus on education. The authors outline a conceptual and theoretical framework for understanding crisis in schools. They are successful in illustrating theory through practice by presenting a set of case studies that showcase successes, constraints, and failures in managing crises. The case studies present a diverse collection of experiences in a variety of challenging situations. The stories of real-life administrators are thought provoking and some even a bit controversial in their assumptions, descriptions, and conclusions; but they are still valuable in sparking dialogue about important issues in education. Each case study is followed by questions for discussion and reflection. The book will provoke students to critique, challenge, and question the assumptions of some of the case studies and authors.

The contents of this review include an overview of the themes and contents of the book. Next, a general critique and evaluation of the content, tone, and voice is provided. Finally, chapter by chapter summaries are included with a concluding analysis of each chapter.

The Book: Themes and Contents

Leading Schools During Crisis, What School Administrators Must Know is a collection of case studies detailing the way various school administrators dealt with a variety of crises in their schools. The book is not intended to be a step-by-step guide to managing crisis, but rather it is intended to help readers understand their own capacities and limitations in managing crisis with their

own school context. The case studies ranged in topics from “You’re Not Going to Need the Money This Year, Right?” (how a school operated without promised state funding) to “The Birds Were on Fire,” (how a school in close proximity to ground zero functioned and responded on 9/11). Other topics and themes touched on by the case studies, directly or indirectly, included systemic grade fraud, recovery after Hurricane Katrina, charter schools, school culture and identity, overcoming bureaucratic obstruction, rezoning of schools, integrating students from diverse backgrounds, school diversity, bilingual education, the burden placed on teachers to improve student achievement, power structures and politics, accountability pressures, and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The case studies show the reader how a crisis can originate and unfold through various stages. In understanding these phases of crisis, educators will be able to reflect on the areas in which planning for a crisis can be helpful, even though some crisis situations are inevitable and unpredictable. Readers will also be able to identify prominent issues in education and the implications of various policy decisions.

The authors divided this book into five parts including twelve case studies sandwiched by two theoretical chapters; Chapter 1 and Chapter 14. The first part of the book includes a Foreword by Andrew Porter, Dean and Professor of the Graduate School of Education in the University of Pennsylvania, and past President of the American Educational Research Association, a Preface entitled “Leading Schools During Crisis,” Acknowledgements, and Chapter One entitled “Understanding Leadership During Crisis,” which presents an introduction and theoretical framework for the book. Next, the authors categorize the twelve case studies in terms of how the crisis originated, employing a typology of four types of crisis:

1. External-Unpredictable, Chapters 2, 3, & 4
2. Internal-Unpredictable, Chapters 5 & 6
3. Internal-Predictable, Chapter 7
4. External Predictable, Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

The book concludes with Chapter 14, which reviews the lessons from each case study and how the cases relate to the theoretical framework introduced in chapter one.

Throughout the book the concept of school culture is explored.

Evaluation & Critique: Assumptions & Tone

Leading Schools during Crisis, What School Administrators Must Know is written for current and aspiring practitioners and students of educational leadership. While the authors do acknowledge that leadership in schools can include a collaborative team of teachers, aides and counselors, they conceptualize and define leadership to refer specifically to school principals and board members. This conceptualization of leadership can be limiting and has the potential of closing the discussion about the role of teachers in leading schools through crisis. The section would provide students and aspiring 'leaders' an opportunity to reflect on the important role that teachers play in creating systemic positive change. During a time of crisis, principals are likely to depend and rely on their teachers to carry out whatever emergency plan the school has in place. Further, the emergency could very well be one in which the principal's ability to lead is paralyzed, e.g. a school shooting involving the principal, in which case leadership might devolve to the teachers. The authors' understanding of leadership is linear and top down, thereby excluding an important and necessary perspective, viz., that of the teachers. While the case studies attempt to supplement this limitation with an in-depth description and narrative of how the crisis affected various elements of the school, its team, and its functioning, it nonetheless is still told from the perspective of what are thought of as the traditional school leaders; i.e. principals. If the case studies had included some perspectives of teachers or the school counselor, for example, aspiring school administrators and students of educational leadership would benefit from a more accurate and holistic picture of the complexity of educational environments and crisis situations. Additionally, some of the narratives tend to place a large amount of blame or burden on the teachers. The expectations or assumptions that teachers alone are responsible for student achievement are not interrogated by the authors.

Many of the case studies are inspiring, prompting conversations about important power dynamics in education. At the same time the tone or language of some of the narratives is troubling. While labels such as “at risk” and “crisis” can be questionable in that they predispose certain responses, the authors do succeed in illustrating that what can appear as a “crisis” can at times also lend itself to opportunities for growth and positive change. At the same time, the writing in some of the case studies, particularly Chapter 6, which deals with a school struggling to integrate Somali Bantu students, is laced with somewhat conservative and perhaps even prejudicial or racial undertones. For example, assimilation as something desirable is assumed without any interrogation by the authors. In some instances, the authors seem to adopt the perspective of the particular principals’ experience and at times use charged and leading words to describe the crisis situation. Specifically, readers may find that the language used in some of the narratives embraces or adopts certain ideologies (e.g. nativism, positivism, school reform, patriotism) problematizing issues that some may not define as a crisis but rather a challenge or opportunity. If you frame a discussion about crisis in a way that assumes a truth applicable to every context, you do not leave room for interrogation of this truth and thereby the possibility of finding creative solutions to challenges.

Another positive aspect of the book, is the reflection questions at the end of each chapter. The questions are very helpful in showing that this is not a closed conversation, and that there is still room to negotiate what crisis means and how to handle it. The reflection questions are divided into three sections: reflection on the reading, application to theory, and application on the job. Lastly, the real life situations provide good examples to begin a conversation and dialogue about what this should mean for school administrators.

Part 1: Theory (Chapters One & Fourteen)

Chapter One, “*Understanding Leadership During Crisis*” lays the foundation for understanding the twelve case studies. The chapter begins by explaining that educational leaders often encounter “dilemmas of significance”; when these are a true crisis this can be potentially catastrophic to

a school. The authors also acknowledge that the literature on how to handle a crisis in education is very limited. The only available literature is from the organizational or management fields. They contend that the field of education is completely different from the culture of nonprofits and management, but that components of these fields can be used to generate theory for dealing with crisis in a school context. The authors state that their goals for Chapter One are to modify lessons from these fields and “apply them to the context of twenty first century education.” Secondly, they aim to establish a theoretical framework to help in understanding the various case studies they present.

Chapter One is divided into five sections. The first section entitled “Crisis Management from a Business Perspective” provides an overview of the organizational and management approach to crisis. Second, “The Context of Twenty First Century Schools” explains how contexts of service industries increase the probability of a crisis. Third, “Moving from Common Notions of Crisis to a School Context” presents a three component definition of crisis in schools. A crisis is 1) an event or series of events that threaten a school’s core values or foundational practices, 2) is obvious in its manifestation but born of complex and often unclear or uncontrollable circumstances, and 3) necessitates urgent decision making.

Section Four, entitled “The Dimensions of School Crises” provides a typology of educational crises, i.e., the case studies are framed and categorized in terms of how the crisis originated. The readers present a useful table to help the reader understand the theoretical framework behind each case study and differentiate among them as well as understand the various lessons embedded in each one. The authors describe the differences between internal and external predictable crisis, and external and internal unpredictable crisis. Finally, “Leading Schools During Crisis” investigates the role of leadership during crisis. This section also defines and identifies four phases of crisis: 1) Detection of Warning Signs, 2) Preparation and Prevention (e.g., forecasting or practicing drills), 3) Damage control (e.g., communication with media), and 4) Recovery & Learning.

In sum, Chapter One is essentially the only theoretical chapter of the book. The only other chapter that revisits the authors proposed definition and theoretical framework of crisis is Chapter Fourteen. The chapter comes off extremely dense since the authors try to pack a great deal of information into one chapter. Considering the limited literature on crisis management in education, the authors' theoretical contribution is very valuable. It would have been helpful to break up some of the content and expand the theoretical discussion into more pages or more than one chapter. At the onset, the reader may find this chapter to be dry and dreary; this is unfortunate because the rest of the book and the narratives are actually quite interesting. Part II: Case Studies (Chapters Two-Thirteen)

External-Unpredictable Crisis

Chapters Two, Three, and Four are grouped together and cover external unpredictable types of crisis. The External dimension classifies "the crisis's epicenter" as located at a point that is external to "the immediate school community" (p. 9). Secondly, they are classified as unpredictable in that they originated with no way of foreseeing, preparing or anticipating the ramifications or form of the crisis.

Chapter Two, entitled "The Birds Were on Fire" focuses on the New York City principal of Manhattan Public School 234. The case study narrative reveals the experiences and struggles of Principal Anna Switzer, a ten-year veteran of the school, in surviving and responding to a terrorist attack. The authors examine the impact that an event as enormous and politically transforming as September 11th can have on a particular public school. Manhattan Public School 234 was situated about four hundred yards from ground zero. Switzer had to respond quickly and devise an urgent plan of action for evacuating the students to safety, communicating with parents and the district, and then over the course of two years to rebuilding and reestablishing the school in a variety of temporary school locations. Switzer had to figure out a way to address the pressing emotional and psychological needs of the students. Simultaneously, the demands and pressures to get things back to normal proved extremely difficult. The authors describe how Switzer succeeded in

prevailing and managing this very challenging environment of chaos and uncertainty, because she had established a strong and collaborative school culture. They identify several factors that contributed to Switzer's success. In an external unpredictable crisis, "it is imperative to provide constant and clear communication within a school community." Switzer was effective in communicating to the multiple stakeholders involved. Additionally, "making creative decisions" was instrumental. The authors describe how the evolving dynamics of the crisis and "the lack of any sort of experience to draw from" made it imperative for Principal Switzer to think creatively. They describe how creative decisions, breaking the rules, and thinking outside the box are critical in external unpredictable crisis situations. Other attributes identified by the authors were that Switzer's school had developed a strong culture of respect, collaboration, and a shared vision. This strong foundation facilitated a strong recovery and leadership from the entire school community.

Similarly, the narrative in Chapter Three, entitled "It Was an Area That was Highly Devastated—It ...Received Eight or Nine Feet of Water" relates to a New Orleans school recovering from and rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina. This case study engages us in appreciating "the hardships, accomplishments, and burdensome uncertainty that still looms over the city's public schools" (p. 36). George Washington Carver High School was situated in a community with high concentrations of poverty and a history of dysfunction throughout the school district (p. 37). Part of the challenge for Principal Vanessa Eugene was not just rebuilding a school after Katrina, but rebuilding a school that was already in trouble prior to the crisis. In contrast to the first case study, in this scenario, the school culture was already severely fractured before Katrina, with high turnover rates, and frequent "leadership voids" that further complicated the gravity of the situation. The authors describe "It is within this complex web of a troubled past and hopeful promise that Carver High School finds itself in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina" (p. 39).

One of the best features of this case study is that it showcases how sometimes amid the gravest catastrophes, there are people willing to step forward and be an agent of

change. For example, Principal Eugene was not the principal of Carver High School prior to Katrina; however, she was a long time resident of the community, and when she heard of the devastation of a community she knew well, she returned to New Orleans to help rebuild the school. The hurricane completely devastated entire school districts, the school was “submerged by over ten feet of water,” it destroyed buildings, houses, and disenfranchised entire communities (p. 41). Schools were later reopened and created under a Recovery School District (RSD). The RSD struggled to open the schools as there were too few teachers to fill the positions. There were also not enough students willing to attend. The authors summarize that Carver High School embodies the three core features of a crisis. Principal Eugene was handed the school just a month prior to its opening, and thus had to operate with extreme urgency and quick decision making. The authors describe that part of the success of Carver High School in rebuilding is that despite the troubled history of the school, the community in which the school was situated was strong and united.

Another example of external unpredictable crisis is illustrated in Chapter Four. This chapter, “A Student [Came] Down and Said, ‘There’s a...Guy in the...English Classroom with a Gun’” showcased how yerrifying and unpredictable leadership can be. The vignettes in this case study were powerful. The reader feels a part of the story as if watching an action packed film. This case study illustrates the struggles experienced by Principal Bryan Krause in handling a situation of school violence. On September 27, 2006, the principal of Platte Canyon High School in Bailey, Colorado received a report that there was a person in a classroom with a gun, not that someone had taken several students hostage (p. 53). Unfortunately, the hostage situation resulted in one student death. The authors describe the ways in which Principal Krause was successful in maintaining the safety of the majority of its students, and also the reality that even when one does everything one can, tragedy can still occur.

An important lesson from this study is the importance of collaborative leadership. According to Principal Krause “The staff knew what they were doing and when the SWAT team showed up to the high school—I said room

206 and they knew where to go and the staff knew exactly what was going to happen” because of the drills and plan the school had in place. Interestingly, despite the fact that most literature on crisis management in education is focused on school violence, one is never truly prepared for such a crisis. For example, Principal Krause was aware of the possibilities of crisis, and even had an emergency plan in place, however, he still acknowledges that “schools and communities can get lulled into complacency when it comes to safety” (p. 56). In other words, not until it happens does one begin to appreciate the importance of forecasting and planning in order to “minimize the damage” of a crisis (p. 54). Similar to other case studies, the principal had to make quick and urgent decisions, taking into account multiple pressures and factors to ensure the safety of all his students. In addition, the case study depicts how most people believe that a crisis will not happen to them, even though Bailey, Colorado is a rural community less than an hour’s drive from Columbine High School. Principal Krause opined, “I believe people moved to a community like Bailey so that events like this do not occur” (p. 54). Thus, the authors successfully reveal the weaknesses in schools and how even the best schools can experience a crisis. The story is a testament to the fact that crises can transgress socio-economic, cultural, racial boundaries.

Internal-Unpredictable Crisis

Part 2 of the case studies consists of Chapters Five & Six, which deal with Internal-Unpredictable crises. In contrast to the chapters summarized above, the epicenter of these crises is located in events that occurred within the internal environment of the school. Additionally, they are categorized as unpredictable because the school leaders had no warning signs that helped them anticipate and plan for the crises. These chapters were some of the weakest of the book. The authors failed to maximize the potential of these case studies to identify and interrogate the huge role that race (in Chapter Five) and nativism (in Chapter Six) played in the case studies at hand. The result is two case studies whose analysis is incomplete. Still, these chapters are perhaps the most valuable in that they are the most likely to occur to school leaders given the growing era of accountability and the increasing diversification of

America's public schools. To that extent, the book presents a realistic picture of the types of crisis that are likely to emerge and the likely resistance and discourse that will unfold.

Chapter Five, entitled "I Thought, 'Oh, God. This is Bad.' Then I Found Out It was Much, Much Worse," deals with the topic of systemic grade fraud. This chapter differs from the other case studies in that it focuses on the experiences of a school superintendent rather than a principal. Another distinction is that the authors use pseudonyms to maintain the anonymity of the people involved. Greenacre, the school district in question, is described by the authors as "a small school district located in the rural mid-south...with approximately 30 percent of the county's households below the poverty line" (p. 74). In addition, the school district had acquired a bad reputation for low academic achievement and low scores in state-wide testing. Gwen Richardson soon intervened. When Richardson became superintendent of the school district, she began conducting regular observations of the schools and eventually made significant changes and adjustments, earning the district various honors and a "distinguished schools" status (p. 78). Eventually, however the achievements of the district were cast into question by the discovery of systemic grade changing by the teachers of Greenacre High School.

The authors describe that contrary to the previous case studies, this scenario illustrates a principal's "failure to recognize or lead during a time of turmoil, ultimately requiring his superintendent to intervene" (p. 73). The chapter depicts the ways in which cultural, racial, and organizational dynamics play a critical role in education and the evolution of a crisis. The reflection questions at the end of the chapter are useful, but could be improved with a reflection question about the role that race played in this case study. This case study involves a white superintendent overseeing a district where more than 99 percent of its student body and more than 75 percent of the faculty is African American. Clearly, the role of race and the power relationships involved merit interrogation and identification to better understand the context in which the systemic grade fraud occurred, and to best determine what a successful course of action in this situation would entail.

Chapter Six, entitled “He Kept Returning to She Cost Me a Cow! How HW Smith K-8 School Struggles to Integrate Somali Bantu Students” deals with student diversity in schools. This case study depicts the challenges and struggles of one elementary school in successfully integrating a refugee student population. H.W. Smith Elementary School, situated in Syracuse, New York, is known for its student diversity in. Under the leadership of Principal Birnkrant, the school evolved into a multiethnic, educational and informational center for the immigrant community. The students of H.W. Smith Elementary “represent forty different languages and thirty separate countries” (p. 93). The authors describe the efforts of Principal Birnkrant to build an inclusive school environment with a variety of immigrant populations. However, he faced a “true crisis” with a recently arrived group of Somali Bantu Students (p. 94). According to Principal Birnkrant “The staff is discouraged, ’banging our head against the wall’...this is the first ethnic group that is not Americanizing well” (p. 105).

This chapter was problematic and laced with nuances of intolerance towards foreign students. In much of the text, the authors illustrate that Principal Birnkrant and H.W. Smith Elementary, went to great lengths to integrate previous migrant populations, and that a core value of the school was one of inclusion. The reality, however, is that the text reveals a value of assimilation, rather than true inclusion. For example, the case study reveals that despite the school’s efforts to teach the students tolerance and respect and address racism when present, this new group of students was different and more challenging. Unfortunately, the reasons given to distinguish the students from prior waves of immigrants contain prejudice in and of themselves. For example, the case study depicts the Bantu Somali students as different in their “unwillingness” to assimilate, in their “insistence on special treatment,” in that they “arrived with less educational preparation” (p. 94), in “their style of dress and pace of assimilation,” in that “[the Bantu girls] have not adopted Western dress,” in that their parents “show very little interest in learning English” (p. 104), and in that some of them “bring with them violent backgrounds” (p. 96). All of the examples illustrate prejudice and intolerance.

The authors should have done a better job in distancing themselves from the voices of the case study principals, particularly in this chapter. They could have utilized this opportunity to showcase the way world views can collide in educational contexts. Instead, the tone and voice of the piece was very conservative and nativist. Additionally, the authors utilized charged or biased language in framing and telling the story. The authors may have done this to depict for the reader why and how the refugee student situation evolved to the level of a crisis, but I think they would have been more effective if they had remained a little bit more neutral and simply told the story from a third party perspective. For example, when describing refugee students the authors state “More challenging is that many students bring with them incredible physical and emotional baggage associated with a refugee’s past” (p. 93). First, the word “baggage” has negative connotations thereby problematizing students with a difficult past. The term invites one to conclude that those who have “baggage” should be avoided and stayed away from.

In contrast, if we say that someone has had a difficult past and has suffered a great deal, struggling with many physical and emotional issues, one is likely to feel empathy for them rather than disdain. In short, when one is a victim of abuse or violence, one would not state “that person has baggage,” as such a statement implies that one ought to avoid that person. Moreover, the authors seem to be defending others’ perception that the students were a problem, when they could have simply described the context of H.W. Elementary and that in this particular school it became one. This is just one sentence, among others, in which the reader may detect a subtle bias toward refugee students or toward the (in the words of the authors) “failed, war torn nation of Somalia” (p. 94). A more effective approach could have included an analysis of how the school had a built-in bias toward this group of immigrants, and therefore this bias might have been a factor contributing to the students becoming a crisis for the school. In other words, the language the case study legitimizes the principal’s perspective, thereby making it less likely that readers will entertain alternative theories about the source of the crisis.

The authors conclude by stating that this chapter was different from prior case studies in that the source of the “crisis” was internal, deriving directly from the immediate school community (p. 106). Additionally, this crisis is considered unpredictable given that the school considered itself prepared to handle a new student population, but was nevertheless taken aback and “surprised” by the developing challenges.

Internal-Predictable Crisis

Chapter Seven is the only chapter illustrated with an internal-predictable type of crisis. The chapter is entitled “I Think That We Finally Have the People that We Need to Get the Job Done,” and it focuses on the issue of annual teacher turnover. This chapter illustrates the challenges faced by Sallie Pinkson, principal of Johnson Elementary School who was able to build a “culture of high-quality teaching and learning” despite losing a significant number of teachers (p. 113). The authors describe that while most schools face frequent teacher turnover, it doesn’t necessarily rise to the level of a crisis. They argue that teacher turnover is critical because it can prevent “the solidification of the school’s core values” and the carrying out of a school’s “fundamental task of helping students learn” (p. 114). The authors describe that part of the crisis was a lack of academic rigor, low student achievement, and an environment of complacency in an impoverished Chicago school that had a history of high teacher turnover. Principal Pinkston was successful in that she utilized the issue of teacher turnover in a strategic way. She began to remove teachers who were not contributing to student achievement and ultimately developed a positive school culture with a rigorous learning environment, simultaneously reducing turnover to “a more manageable level” (p. 115). An important lesson from this chapter was the realization that “effective change” takes time. Having a long-term vision instead of just addressing immediate problems is important. The authors note that reform efforts can bring about certain solutions, but that “it requires several years and significant investments of time and resources to take root in the school” (p. 125). A second important lesson is the importance of teachers in student learning. “The teachers hired and lost play a crucial role in determining student

outcomes” (p. 125). One drawback of the chapter was the stress on the importance of accountability of teachers in avoiding teacher turnover. While accountability of teachers is important, the way in which the accountability era has imposed itself on schools has placed an enormous amount of burden and responsibility on teachers without the added support they need. This perhaps is part of the reason why many teachers feel alienated in today’s schools. Thus, a discussion question about accountability and its pressures and what role that has played in teacher turnover would have been useful.

External-Predictable Crisis

The majority of the case studies are classified under the External-Predictable crisis headline. They are presented in Chapters Eight through Thirteen. Again, they are grouped together because the source of the crisis came from the external community outside the school. The crisis may have been imposed by an external policy or event. In addition, the authors classify them as predictable, in that the schools had ways of forecasting or anticipating the development of the crisis.

In Chapter Eight, entitled “Very Typical Teaching Within a Large District--Dysfunctional and Comfortable” the authors describe the way Sobrante Park Elementary School survived the pressures of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to successfully recover and increase student achievement. This case study focuses on the story of Principal Marco Franco of Sobrante Elementary School. The California school, located in the urban district of Oakland, is poor with more than 80 percent of its students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. Sobrante struggled to maintain adequate yearly progress, but the external policy of NCLB quickly transformed Sobrante’s struggle into a “a full-blown crisis” (p. 132). This case study is unique in that it is perhaps the most likely type of crisis that educational leaders will face. The lessons conveyed by this narrative are very valuable. The reader will be able to reflect on Principal Franco’s strategic decisions and dilemmas in transforming a difficult situation into one of opportunity. The reader may or may not agree with the conclusions or assumptions of Principal Franco, but the case study provokes readers to reflect on what they would

have done or reflect on their own educational context. The case study reveals the ways in which Sobrante became one of ten schools that “successfully recovered from the accountability crisis” (p. 131). The authors reveal the challenges in educating within an extremely impoverished area. They state “additional student support resources are a necessary component of success in inner city schools” (p. 133). Further exacerbating the crisis was a significantly low level of parental involvement. In response, Franco decided to focus the school’s efforts on small wins—to chose one goal towards improving their instructional program and try to do that one thing really well. As with the other case studies, my one critique is that the principal’s values or policy decisions are not particularly interrogated or discussed in the analysis or reflection questions. The tone of the chapter traverses the conservative edge once again. Depending on your perspective on education, this will determine how much you enjoy the book. My recommendation is to use the chapters and their implicit lessons or problems as tools for critique and discussion.

Chapter Nine is entitled “There Weren’t Enough Affluent White Kids to Spread Out.” The focus of this chapter is on the way in which district rezoning and accountability pressures affected Manual High School. According to the authors, “as a result of a decision by the Denver, Colorado, school board in the mid-1990s Manual High School, a seeming model of ethnic integration and high achievement, was transformed into a neighborhood school serving almost exclusively poor students” (p. 147). This case study illustrates how a school, under the leadership of Principal Nancy Sutton and Lead Teacher Mr. Nicotera, struggled to provide a quality education to a transitioning student body consisting of a majority of students classified as low-SES (socioeconomic status) students. Manual High School’s minority population increased from “58 percent to a 95 percent” within two years of a new student assignment plan. The result was that achievement test scores dropped dramatically. The authors note that in the past, the aggregation of student scores had masked a significant student achievement gap between low SES students and high SES students. Despite the school’s efforts, the school was ultimately closed in 2006. This case study is classified as external predictable because, the

rezoning and accountability pressures were external, but the heated debate over what was going to occur at the school presented time for the school to prepare and anticipate the problems that were unfolding.

The narrative in Chapter Ten, “If You Want to Do Good, But You Don’t Want to Fight for It, Then Go Raise Puppies,” tells the inspiring story of the way Jeremy Kane, Principal and founder of Lead Academy, overcame a multitude of bureaucratic and logistical barriers in opening a charter school in Nashville, Tennessee. The authors describe how his struggles are classified as a crisis. Nashville, Tennessee is not a friendly or receptive environment for charter schools. In fact, Kane discovered this from the onset of planning the development of Lead Academy. Kane is described as a young twenty-seven year old graduate of Stanford and Vanderbilt universities, who was ambitious, hard working, and innovative. Despite the unwelcoming environment in Nashville, he worked hard to achieve his dream of a high performing school for underserved or failing students. The school was designed to contain “a college focus, with homerooms named after local universities and a requirement that a student be accepted into a four-year college or university in order to receive their high school diploma” (p 166). His hard work, research, experience, community organizing, and networking resulted in the opening of Lead Academy in July, 2007. The narrative describes the struggles he confronted over the span of three years in trying to open the school. From obtaining timely consideration of his application, to facing the district’s attempt to block his charter application, to funding issues and trying to find a building to house the school, the barriers were external and predictable. Kane had the experience and knowledge of the type of bureaucratic obstruction tactics districts used to block the implementation of innovative educational ideas. This case study was inspiring and illustrates the importance of building a “broad and diverse base of support” and fighting for what you want (p. 178).

Chapter Eleven, entitled “You’re Not Going to Need That Money This Year, Right? How Franklin Career Academy Operated Without Promised State Funding” also tells the story of a charter school (p. 181). In contrast to Lead Academy in Chapter Ten, Franklin Career Academy

(FCA) was the first charter school to open in the state of New Hampshire. As such, it did not have the benefit of knowing about the barriers it could face from its immediate community. The school struggled to obtain state funding and eventually had to close its doors four years after opening (p. 181). The school opened with the intent to address Franklin's high drop-out rate. The school would focus its efforts on students who were considered "at risk" for dropping out. William Grimm, chair of the board for FCA was able to secure \$660,000 for planning and initial equipping of the school. Unfortunately, this success was undercut when the Franklin City Council refused even to read Grimm's charter school petition. They stated that they were "concerned that if Franklin kids went to the charter school, the district would lose the state funding as the money would follow the kids" (p. 184). Grimm and the other board members eventually obtained permission to spend the operational money on opening the school, but even then they struggled to operate with limited funding. The authors describe this crisis as resulting from Grimm and FCA's board "lack of strategic forecasting," which included failing to anticipate the hurdles that charter school practitioners face. The authors categorize this case as external predictable, because of the "well documented and blatantly political opposition charter schools petitioners faced between 1996 and 2006" (p. 193).

"You Begin to Make Progress After Three Years, and, All of a Sudden, That is Taken Away from You. How Woodland Elementary School Survived a Rezoning of 95 Percent of Its Students and Parents" tells the story of Dr. Noris Price, Principal of Woodland Elementary. The school is located in Sandy Springs, Georgia, known as a residential community of "suburban affluence" (p. 202). The residents there are described as having an average household income that is 100 percent above the state's average. When the county rezoned 95 percent of its students, there was vast community upheaval. According to the authors, "there was a negative perception in the community about what that meant for the school, and concerns about how 'my' child's education will be impacted by interacting with children from a different background of their own" (p. 202). The authors describe the ways Principal Price was able to take a perceived crisis

and turn it into “a catalyst for change” (p. 202). Diversity was not necessarily welcomed at Sandy Springs. In response, Price initiated neighborhood outreach programs.

The goal was to reach affluent and low income parents to get more involved in the school and develop programs to increase student achievement as well as change the image of minority students. Some did not appreciate Price’s efforts and about “20 percent of faculty retired or resigned” but Price viewed this turnover “with optimism” (p. 207). She capitalized on the departures to hire teachers who were receptive to her vision. Price reports that her crisis evolved from “trying to create basically a new school in an existing building without most of the existing staff” (p. 210). Her efforts paid off, and by reframing the crisis to help her implement positive change, Woodland was recognized in 2004 as a Georgia School of Excellence, receiving the Parental Involvement School of Excellence Award from the National Parent Teacher Association. Woodland also received the Outstanding PTA and Outstanding Principal Award from the Georgia PTA (p. 218). The narrative is once again “external predictable,” since the rezoning resulted from decisions coming from Fulton County (the external community of the school) and since Price was able to anticipate the transition of new students into the school.

The last case study of the book illustrates the way Principal Barry Fried, an administrator of nearly two decades, and John Dewey High School “Fought to Uphold Its Identity Despite Threats of District Policy” (p. 221). The chapter, “It Was like a Steamroller. We Sort of Saw Things Coming and We Couldn’t Prevent...It,” depicts another example of external predictable crisis. The authors relate that the John Dewey High School was known throughout the nation for its strong reputation of being “one of the nation’s premier high schools” (p. 222). The authors describe that the school enjoyed low drop-out rates and high college attendance rates. The curriculum and culture at John Dewey is one that encourages intellectual and creative freedom allowing students to choose their own classes and encouraging self-paced study. Principal Fried, however, felt that the culture and tradition of teaching was at risk when the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) and the New York

City Department of Education (NYCDOE) began a series of restructuring and rezoning efforts. Apparently, the overcrowding of students in schools, coupled or resulting from accountability pressures from NCLB (which forced many school closings in NYC) resulted in many students being left without a school to attend. In response, the NYSED and NYCDOE began to transfer these students to other schools. While John Dewey was prepared and had received new students in the past, the principal describes that the school was not prepared for “200!” (p. 226). The result was a restructuring of the school curriculum to offer “coursework emphasizing the basics” because many of the students were coming from low performing schools (p. 230).

According to the authors, the school is still struggling to maintain its reputation as a high performing school while incorporating the new students. The tone of the chapter might strike readers as once again conservative and even offensive. As a minority person myself, I was bothered by the tone of the narrative and the way the crisis was problematized. For example, the authors write that “Students at perpetually under-performing and dangerous schools were given the right to transfer schools, and successful schools such as John Dewey High School were required to accept them” (p. 223). Also, when describing the arrival of new students into the school, the authors use the following words “the pedagogical ideologies of many long-committed teachers were shaken by the realities of the new type of student flooding into the school” (p. 225). Again the use of loaded language such as “flooding into the school” promotes alarm and fear of underperforming students among teachers. Schools are supposed to serve the needs of the students, not the other way around. The repeated use of the language of fear throughout the book is problematic and a weakness of some of the case studies.

Finally, Chapter Fourteen is the second theoretical chapter of the book. The purpose of this chapter is to revisit the typology of external/internal and predictable/unpredictable types of crisis illustrated in Chapter One. Most importantly, it summarizes six principles that were common throughout the case studies and are categorized as integral components of responding to crisis situations: 1) Respond to a Crisis Before It Becomes One, 2) Identify

Truly Immediate Priorities, 3) Let Time, Efforts, and Resources Flow in Proportion to Your Prioritization, 4) Communicate, Communicate, Communicate, 5) Be Flexible, and 6) Do Not Personally Succumb to the Crisis. These are individually described and examples are revisited. Moreover, the chapter also illustrates leadership principles that were evident throughout the external and internal case studies as well as lessons of predictable and unpredictable crises. This chapter is a valuable summary.

Authors Pepper, London, Dishman and Lewis propose new ways of thinking about crisis management in education. The case studies are real and illuminate important issues about the culture of schools and the complex and diverse problems that school administrators face. I recommend the book as a tool for dissecting the multifaceted dilemmas in education. The book's weakness is its tone and conservative language, but it is nevertheless valuable in that it can help readers pinpoint theoretical, racial, and ideological foundations of educational issues.

About the Reviewer

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