

Maintaining Emotional Balance

by Kenneth Leithwood, Doris Jantzi, and Rosanne Steinbach

Alienation is produced by workplace arrangements that divide or fragment the individual from the social entity. Alienation results . . . when a person's activity becomes a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

—Sandelands and St. Clair 1993, 441

Burnout is a label used to define the stress experienced by those who work in interpersonally intense occupations subject to chronic tension (Cunningham 1983), such as teaching. This form of stress manifests itself as a state of physical, emotional, and cognitive exhaustion, which produces feelings of alienation, indifference, and low self-regard (Huberman 1993). The most commonly used instrument for assessing burnout, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach and Jackson 1981), defines it in terms of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

Symptoms of burnout are both organizational and personal. Organizational symptoms include, for example, increased absenteeism, performance decline, and poor interpersonal relations with co-workers and, in the case of teachers, students (Cunningham 1983). At a personal level, teachers who experience burnout are less sympathetic toward students; are less committed to and involved in their jobs; have a lower tolerance for classroom disruption; are less apt to prepare adequately for class; and are generally less productive (Farber and Miller 1981; Blase and Greenfield 1985). Perhaps even more germane to school restructuring is the evidence, reviewed by Cunningham (1983), that teachers experiencing burnout tend to be dogmatic about their practices and to rely rigidly on structure and routine, thereby resisting changes to those practices.

Clearly, these symptoms are anathema to these changing times in schools. To be successful, school reform efforts require, for example, increased levels of commitment to school goals

(Fullan 1993) and greater sensitivity by teachers to the diverse needs of their students. Many school reform initiatives also demand an expanded, more flexible instructional repertoire on the part of teachers (Murphy 1991) and more collaborative working relationships with fellow teachers (Lieberman et al. 1988), students, and parents (Connors and Epstein 1994).

Whereas the effects of burnout undermine the success of school reform and restructuring efforts, the conditions in which teachers involved in restructuring often find themselves provide fertile ground for the development of burnout. These are conditions that may further exacerbate the effects of an already stressful job. Estimates place the percentage of the teaching population experiencing such stress at any given time as ranging from about 15 to 45 percent (for example Leach 1984; Schlansker 1987; Friedman and Farber 1992; Tuettemann and Punch 1992).

Beyond “business as usual,” however, restructuring requires teachers to adopt new and ambiguous roles outside the classroom, roles that often bring them into conflict with the traditional roles of school administrators. Engagement in these roles places considerable demands on their time and often leads to feelings of work overload. Many teachers also experience considerable stress as their expectations for how restructuring will proceed confront a far-less-than-ideal reality (Conley 1993; Louis and King 1993; Prestine 1993). This is the case especially for those exceptionally enthusiastic teachers who are often among the first to

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implement new practices associated with restructuring (Huberman 1993). These conditions are typically viewed as powerful contributors to teacher burnout (for example Cunningham 1983; Milstein et al. 1984; Byrne 1994).

Sustaining and institutionalizing school restructuring initiatives, then, appears to depend, in no small measure, on preventing burnout as a result of teacher participation in such initiatives. This article examines how those in school leadership roles may help prevent teacher burnout and contribute to the maintenance of “emotional balance,” in the words of the title. It is based on a study of transformational leadership and teacher burnout reported in greater technical detail in Leithwood et al. (1997).

Explaining teacher stress and burnout

This section of the article reviews prior research in response to four questions:

1. What factors other than leadership help explain teacher burnout and its avoidance?
2. What specific leadership practices are significantly related to teacher burnout and its avoidance?
3. What is the relative importance of school leadership as a factor in explanations of variation in teacher burnout?
4. How do leadership and non-leadership factors interact to explain variation in teacher burnout?

Eighteen empirical studies of teacher burnout were identified as germane to these questions. These were studies published between 1984 and 1995, with the exception of one study published in 1983. Each study included leadership among the variables investigated, although it was not always a central focus of the research, and in some studies it was a component of one or several more inclusive variables such as “social support” or “participative decision making.” Research methods used in the eighteen studies varied in terms of subjects, school level, sample sizes, and data-collection techniques. This is generally considered to be a good thing, especially when studies using different methods report similar results.

Results of the studies, all of which were concerned with burnout or a close proxy, were analyzed by coding the causes of burnout in relation to one of three major categories described below. A voting method (total number of positive, negative, or not-significant relations reported among variables) was used to assess the strength of the evidence supporting a positive or negative relationship between each cause of teacher burnout. We now turn to a summary of what these studies have to say about each of the four questions identified above.

Factors other than leadership explaining teacher burnout

Two categories of non-leadership factors, *personal* and *organizational*, were identified as influencing burnout in the eighteen studies. Also used as conceptual organizers in many of the studies reviewed, those categories encompass all of the specific, non-leadership factors influencing burnout identified in those studies.

Personal factors

A total of seventeen different such factors were identified in the studies reviewed. Nine of these exacerbate and eight reduce burnout. Each of these specific factors appears to fit within one of four subcategories: demographic characteristics, general personality factors, psychological traits, and motivational disposition. The first two of these subcategories are largely unalterable, and the remaining two alterable. The number of studies providing evidence about the contribution of each personal factor to teacher burnout never exceeded three. For ten of the seventeen factors, support was provided by only one study.

With respect to *demographic characteristics*, burnout is marginally less likely with younger, female teachers. It is also less likely for teachers with very little and quite extensive (more than twenty-four years’) experience. Length of teacher experience alone has not been shown to influence burnout. Demographic characteristics typically explain little of the variation in teacher burnout.

With respect to *general personality* factors, burnout is less likely for teachers with personalities that avoid the extremes of competitiveness, impatience, and striving for achievement. In reference to *psychological traits*, teachers with an internal locus of control and a strong sense of

According to [one] theory, self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy give rise to “capacity beliefs” . . . beliefs about one’s personal ability to cope with the challenges one is facing.

purpose in their professional and personal lives (the opposite of “anomie”) are less likely to experience burnout. Finally, the *capacity beliefs* of teachers, part of a larger set of motivational conditions discussed below, influence the likelihood of burnout. Teachers with high levels of self-esteem, positive self-concept, and professional self-efficacy are likely to be more resistant to burnout.

Organizational factors

Thirteen organizational factors were identified as increasing, and twelve factors reducing, the likelihood of teacher burnout. Each of these specific factors can be grouped together into one of three clusters: job demand (or pressure), social support, and organizational support. Of the twenty-five organizational factors, evidence of a significant relationship with teacher burnout was limited to only one study for seventeen of these factors. Student misbehavior received support from the largest number of studies for contributing to burnout (six studies). Support of friends, family, and colleagues and having an influence on decision-making in the school were identified most frequently as reducing burnout (seven and five studies respectively).

In relation to *job demand*, burnout is less likely for teachers who are without excessive demands on their time and energy, do not have to deal with constant and severe student misbehavior, and do not experience serious role conflict and ambiguity. Burnout is also less likely for teachers who do not experience significant pressure from others to change their practices and who do not perceive excessive societal pressure for change.

With respect to *social support*, burnout is less likely for teachers who receive such support from friends, family, and colleagues; have opportunities to share professional experiences; and do not experience feelings of professional isolation. Burnout is also less likely for teachers who receive recognition for their efforts and achievements.

Organizational support conditions reducing the likelihood of burnout include opportunities to change assignments or types of work and to work within flexible, nonhierarchical administrative structures. Access to adequate physical facilities that can be used in flexible ways and access to support personnel (also a form of social support) reduce the likelihood of burnout, as does having an influence on decisions, and job security.

Leadership practices explaining variation in teacher burnout

Leadership practices identified in the eighteen studies as significantly associated with teacher burnout were almost always treated “piecemeal.” Nonetheless, these factors clearly reflect behaviors associated with six of the eight dimensions of transformational leadership, as we have discussed it in earlier articles. (None of the factors contributing to burnout were related to vision building or the development of shared goals.) By “associated” we usually mean that transformational practices are well-suited to preventing the burnout factors from arising in the first place. The results of our review of such factors are summed up as follows.

- *Modeling*: practices associated with this dimension that contribute to burnout include inconsistent behavior, lack of follow-through, favoritism, and harassment on the part of leaders.
- *Providing individualized support*: addressed by this dimension of transformational leadership are burnout factors including low levels of structure and consideration by leaders, failure to provide essential resources, lack of administrative support, lack of trust in teachers’ professional adequacy, and lack of several different types of “support.” In these studies support was defined by the House and Wells (1978) taxonomy to include emotional, appraisal, instrumental, and informational support.
- *Providing intellectual stimulation*: the one burnout factor addressed by this dimension of transformational leadership was lack of knowledge on the leader’s part.
- *Building a productive school culture*: leaders valuing integration of staff, and staff assisting one another, were practices ameliorating burnout associated with this dimension of leadership.
- *Structuring*: nonparticipative, authoritarian leadership styles and low levels of structure and consideration are factors contributing to burnout explicitly eschewed by those engaged in the structuring dimension of transformational leadership.

By far the most support from the eighteen studies was available for factors associated with providing individualized support (eleven studies), whereas holding high performance expectations (four studies) received the next largest

amount of support. These results may be interpreted as helping to clarify the particular nature of the contribution that some dimensions of transformational leadership make to its overall effects.

In most cases, however, burnout factors do not capture the full range of intentions and practices for the leadership dimension to which they relate. Furthermore, there is no reflection in the burnout factors of the first two dimensions of transformational leadership concerned with direction setting. One may argue that this is hard evidence of their impotence in relation to burnout. Results from the qualitative studies that directly asked teachers to identify leadership practices that reduced or promoted stress (Blase 1984, 1986; Blase et al. 1986; Cherniss 1988) would seem to support this interpretation. In the case of the quantitative studies, however, their piecemeal approach to leadership may have resulted in these dimensions of leadership simply having been overlooked.

The relative importance of leadership factors

Our review of the literature suggested that leadership factors may have been underestimated in explanations of teacher burnout. First, many of the specific organizational factors (for example, organizational rigidity, hierarchical administrative structure), along with some of the alterable personal variables (self-efficacy) are either as easily conceptualized as leadership factors or are unarguably influenced by leadership factors. In particular, distinctions made between organizational and leadership variables often appear to be arbitrary. All but three of the thirteen organizational variables contributing to burnout (student misbehavior, pressure for change, and excessive societal expectations) could be considered as direct or indirect products of leadership and administrative practice. Indeed, some aspects of student misbehavior (those influenced by the development and systematic application of discipline policy, for example) and change (for example, the initiation of various “improvement” efforts by a principal) might also be viewed in this way. Similarly, among the twelve variables reducing the likelihood of burnout, only support of friends, family, and colleagues and sharing professional experience seem independent of administrative practice.

A second reason for suspecting that leadership factors may have been underestimated is

that a very high proportion of the eighteen studies that included leadership factors in their design reported significant associations between such factors and teacher burnout. Only Benson and Malone (1987) and Byrne (1994) failed to report such results.

These reasons notwithstanding, the associations reported between leadership and burnout are more variable and often weaker than associations reported between burnout and both organizational and personal factors. Aside from inevitable variation in results due to differences in research methods, these uneven and weak associations may be a function of confounding leadership and (especially) organizational variables in some studies (for example Mazur and Lynch 1989) and, in others, by redistributing leadership effects across factors not conceptualized as leadership (for example Russell et al. 1987).

Putting it all together: a model for explaining variation in teacher burnout

Figure 1 summarizes the factors and relationships making up a model for explaining variation in teacher burnout growing out of our review of research. The three major categories of factors associated with burnout and discussed above are incorporated in this model. In reality, these factors undoubtedly are related in much more interactive ways than could be captured in a simple figure such as Figure 1.

Personal factors are conceptualized as “mediating”—standing between and modifying—the effects of both leadership and organizational factors. This is consistent with the conclusion that Byrne (1994) drew from her data about both self-esteem and locus of control variables. In our model, “unalterable” personal factors have been eliminated, primarily because we were interested in factors subject to change, especially by school leaders. In addition, however, one of these subcategories (demographic) explained little variation in burnout in the eighteen studies.

Not included among alterable personal factors in Figure 1 is the subcategory “psychological traits,” defined in the studies reviewed as anomie and locus of control. In Figure 1, anomie, usually defined as a sense of meaninglessness and feelings of alienation, was considered to be an aspect of burnout rather than a factor contributing to burnout. Locus of control was reconceptualized, after Bandura (1986), as an aspect of self-efficacy.

With these changes, all personal factors in our model are subsumed by a comprehensive, social cognitive theory of human motivation (Bandura 1986; Ford 1992). According to this theory, self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy give rise to “capacity beliefs.” These are beliefs about one’s personal ability to cope with the challenges one is facing. A second “context” belief concerns the support one will receive from the environment in which one is working. Our model reconceptualizes the subcategories “job demand” and “social support” from the organizational category of variables in Figure 1 as beliefs about the relative supportiveness of one’s context for successfully meeting the demands of one’s job; a personal rather than organizational set of factors.

In addition to these two sets of beliefs, a person’s motivation, according to this theory, is influenced by personal goals, especially judgments about their achievability and the amount of change their achievement would entail. Finally, this theory also identifies as motivating, especially in the short run, positive rewards, sources of satisfaction and excitement experienced from day to day. These are “emotional arousal processes.”

Figure 1 not only predicts that the effects of both leadership and organizational factors will be mediated by personal factors but also that the effects of leadership on personal factors will be both direct and indirect, through organizational support factors.

Testing and refining the explanation of teacher burnout

The studies we reviewed told us a good deal about the causes of teacher burnout, the importance of school leadership in explanations of such burnout, and the types of leadership practices most likely to help prevent burnout. This section outlines an empirical study we conducted to further the knowledge provided by the eighteen studies, especially knowledge about the nature and effects of school leadership.

Data used for this purpose were provided by 331 of the 555 teachers (60 percent) in the business, technology, and health faculties of three community colleges selected to be within a three-hour driving radius of Toronto. Data were summarized using basic descriptive statistics and path analysis outlined in more detail in our original report (Leithwood et al. 1997). Path analysis provided estimates of the independent strength of relationships among the set of variables in our model (as depicted in Figure 1), and also indicat-

ed the proportion of variation in teacher burnout explained by the whole model and by each of its individual sets of variables.

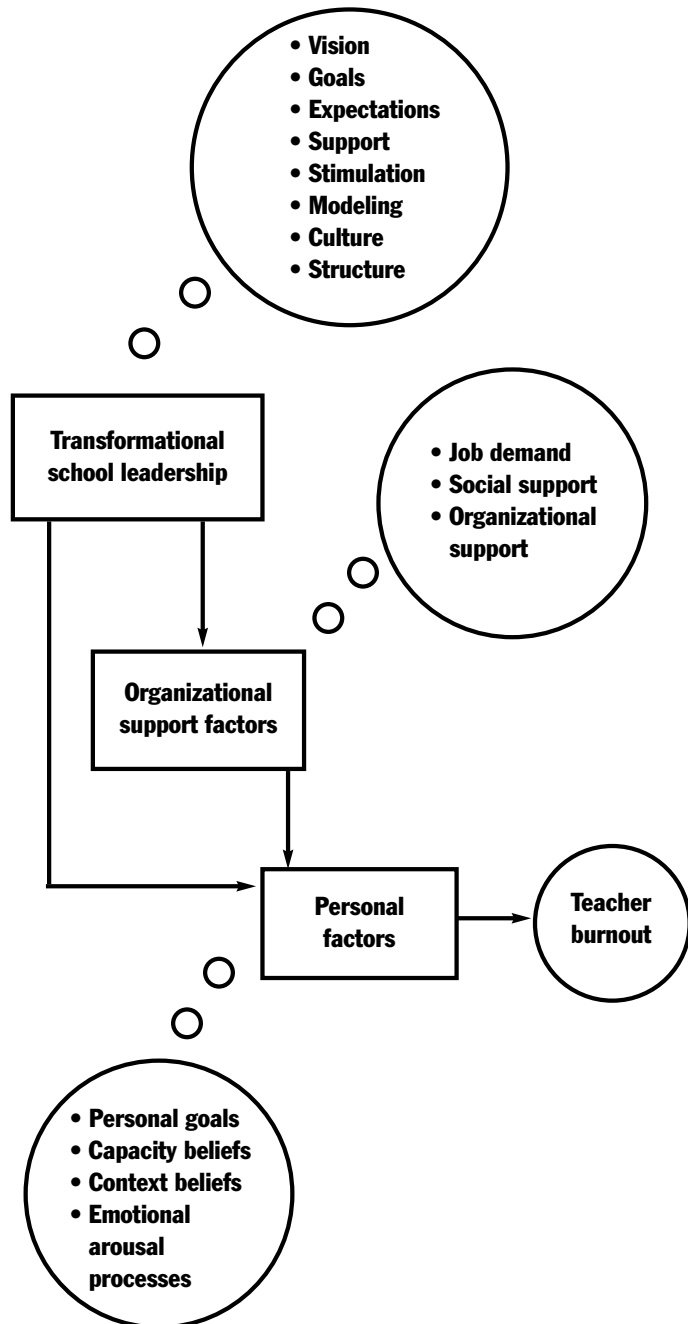


Figure 1: A model for explaining variation in teacher burnout

Results

Figure 2 provides a nontechnical summary of the results of testing a general as well as a more detailed version of our model of teacher burnout using a form of path analysis. These refinements of the model described in Figure 1 resulted from a preliminary analysis of the survey responses.

The three sets of variables (or causes of burnout) included in Figure 2 (leadership, organizational factors, and personal factors) combine to explain a total of 30 percent of the variation in teacher burnout. Although all relationships between variables in the model are statistically significant, some are stronger than others. The asterisks on the lines joining variables indicate this (* = weak relationship; *** = strong). So, as Figure 2 indicates, there is a weak relationship between personal factors and burnout, and a moderately strong relationship between leadership and personal factors. Strong relationships exist between leadership and organizational factors, organizational factors and personal factors, and organizational factors and burnout.

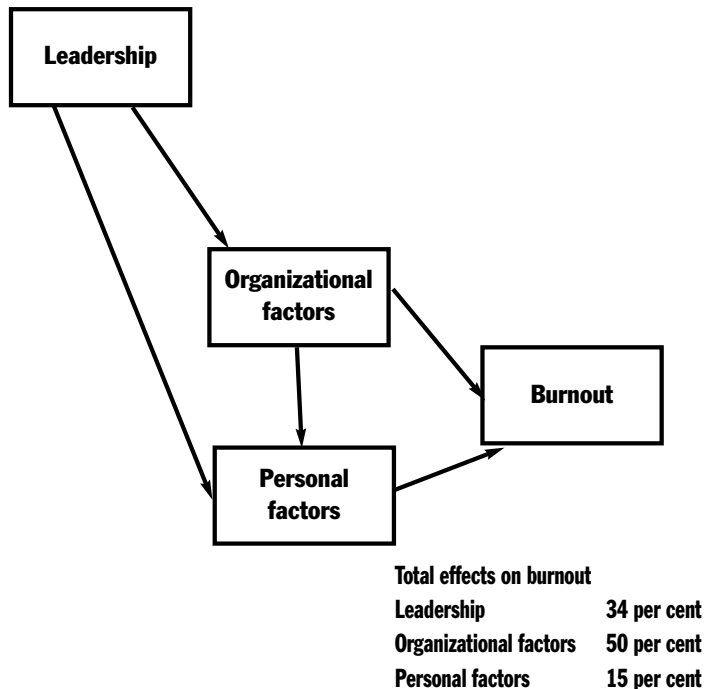


Figure 2: First empirical exploration of model for explaining variation in teacher burnout

In this model, the direct and indirect effects of leadership explain about a third of the variation in burnout accounted for by the model; organizational factors explain about half; and personal factors, about a sixth.

The model developed to this point explains almost a third of the variation in burnout among community college teachers included in the sample. Although the largest proportion of the variation remains to be explained, the power of this model compares favorably with the small number of other models for which comparable information is available. Surprisingly, only two of the eighteen studies reviewed in the first stage of our research (Byrne 1994; Brissie et al. 1988) provided this critical information. Byrne's model explained up to 29 percent of the variation in teacher burnout, and that of Brissie et al. about 44 percent. Unlike most other models, furthermore, ours is limited to potentially alterable factors. It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that teacher burnout is significantly *created by* and *ameliorated through* factors over which those in the school organization have some, or considerable, control. Furthermore, this seems largely to be the case whatever personal predispositions teachers bring to their work.

We also tested a more detailed version of the model in order to assess the independent effects of each of the four personal factors on burnout and to examine the effects of leadership and organizational factors separately on each of these factors. Of the four personal factors, results suggested that teachers' context and capacity beliefs were weakly but significantly and positively related to burnout. Personal goals were related weakly but negatively to burnout. Capacity beliefs had the largest total effect on burnout, followed by context beliefs and, indirectly through capacity beliefs, emotional arousal processes.

Both leadership and organizational factors have moderate to strong effects on teachers' context beliefs and personal goals. Organizational factors also have moderate effects on capacity beliefs and the largest total effects on burnout.

This evidence is in distinct contrast with that of Byrne. In summing up the most consequential aspects of her study, she argued for the prominence of personal factors, in particular self-esteem, which acts as "a critical and controlling factor in the predisposition of teachers to burnout" and which "functions as an essential mediator variable through which the effects of

environment-based organizational factors filter" (1994, 567). Our results indicate, however, that personal factors lag behind both leadership and organizational factors in their total effects on teacher burnout.

It is tempting to explain away these differences as, for example, a function of the two samples, kindergarten to grade 12 teachers in Byrne's study and community college teachers in ours, and while there is some justification for this explanation, it ignores an important conceptual issue largely unaddressed by models of burnout other than our own and Byrne's. This is the "constructed" nature of both leadership and organizational factors. It is not the "objective" condition of such factors that influences burnout: it is the teacher's personal evaluation of those conditions. So the same "objective" school structures, for example, may be interpreted by one teacher as overly rigid, thereby reducing choices for action and contributing to stress. Another colleague will view the same structures as providing the clarity and discretion needed to respond comfortably to the challenges of the job.

If teacher burnout depends on such a constructed reality, as surely it must, then models of burnout ought always to locate personal factors as mediators of the external environment, however that environment is construed. This means that, in the case of our own work, the model arising from our review of the literature (Figure 1) is correct in its assertion about the place of personal factors. Our path model (Figure 2) may be telling us that the specific factors that we conceptualized as organizational factors in this study might better be conceptualized as an extended set of context beliefs.

The underestimated effect of leadership on teacher burnout

The total effects of leadership on burnout were significant and moderate in our study, considerably more than personal factors and substantially less than organizational factors. These are effects of leadership, largely realized indirectly through their effects on organizational factors. In direct opposition to claims arising from Byrne's 1994 study, for example, this evidence further fuels our suspicion that prior research has underestimated leadership as a factor in the creation and amelioration of teacher burnout, probably because of inadequate conceptualization and measurement. Our results, however, are the out-

come not just of measuring aspects of leadership derived from any coherent view, but of using a transformational conception demonstrated, through previous enquiry, to have influence on most of the personal and organizational factors included in the model explaining burnout.

The direct and indirect effects of leadership explain about a third of the variation in burnout accounted for by the model; organizational factors explain about half; and personal factors, about a sixth.

The significant effects on teacher burnout suggested by our data still seem likely to underestimate the power of leadership, however, because of our inability to construct, from the available data set, adequate measures of each of the dimensions of transformational leadership. Instead, a single scale was constructed to represent such leadership, one largely composed of individual survey items reflecting each of the dimensions of transformational leadership. This means, for example, that the one dimension most frequently identified in prior research (for example Blase and his colleagues 1984, 1986a, b; Blase and Greenfield 1985; Blase et al. 1986) as strongly related to burnout, "individualized support," had little influence on the explanatory power of the leadership construct in our burnout model.

Summary and conclusion

This article began with concern over the fate of significant and potentially useful efforts at school improvement, efforts often given the label "restructuring." While initiatives traveling under this label are quite diverse, they typically share an implicit expectation that teacher-implementers are prepared to develop new capacities and will be committed to making the often poorly specified restructuring initiatives work in real schools and classrooms. Clearly, already overly stressed or burned-out teachers are unlikely candidates for such a challenge. And the conditions created by restructuring initiatives can exacerbate tendencies toward becoming overly stressed or burned out.

In response to this concern the article aimed to clarify the conditions giving rise to teacher burnout and to identify what can be done, especially by school leaders, to prevent burnout. This was done by reviewing recent empirical studies in

which leadership was explicitly included as a possible influence on burnout and its avoidance. From the results of this review a tentative model for explaining variation in teacher burnout was developed. Included in the model were personal factors, leadership, and organizational factors. Results were also reported of our testing and refinement of the model using survey data collected from community college teachers in Ontario.

What are the implications of these results for school leaders? As a way of organizing our response to this question, we adopt Maslach and Jackson's (1981) three dimensions of burnout: depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. In relation to each of these dimensions, we consider what school leaders might do to prevent teacher burnout, in light of the evidence reported in the article.

Preventing a sense of depersonalization

According to evidence reviewed in this article, a sense of depersonalization is likely when teachers assess the goals of the school to be incompatible with their own professional goals. Depersonalization is also a consequence of organizational decision-making processes that do not allow teachers to shape the means of accomplishing such goals, for example the policies and procedures guiding their work, the distribution of resources in support of their work, and the structures that surround it.

School leaders can prevent or reduce teachers' sense of depersonalization by

- developing with staff goals for the school that most staff believe meaningfully and authentically address the needs of their students;
- assisting individual teachers to develop meaningful and challenging individual professional goals that are compatible with the school's goals;
- creating shared decision-making structures and processes that encourage personal investment by teachers in the work and success of the school.

Fostering a sense of personal accomplishment

Teachers, we have learned in this article, are likely to experience a reduced sense of personal accomplishment when they judge as inadequate their own capacities to respond to the challenges they face: challenges presented by their schools' restructuring efforts, for example. A reduced sense of personal accomplishment among teach-

ers also arises from a belief that support available to them from other members of their school is less than they need. Lack of clarity about their own professional goals and the school's goals contributes to a reduced sense of personal satisfaction among teachers, as well, because it makes difficult the self-evaluation of one's progress.

School leaders are likely to maintain or enhance teachers' sense of personal accomplishment when they:

- Assist teachers in "setting directions," clarifying their individual professional goals, as well as the goals of the school. Personal accomplishment is enhanced especially when a small number of clear, manageable priorities is the result of such direction setting.
- Ensure that teachers believe they have adequate amounts of "individualized support": strong moral and instrumental support from school leaders and other colleagues in the school should they choose to undertake significant changes in their classroom practices. Perhaps the most powerful means of ensuring an adequate amount of support is to build a school culture that includes norms of mutual support among teachers, including the provision of honest, candid feedback among colleagues.
- Provide feedback to teachers with respect to their work, rewarding them for successful practices and for the risks associated with efforts to improve their practices. Such "contingent reward" may prevent a reduced sense of personal accomplishment by reducing the uncertainties teachers frequently have about the relative merit of their work due, in part, to the typical isolation of that work from the scrutiny of other adults (Hargreaves and Macmillan 1992).
- Provide teachers with the "intellectual stimulation" necessary to increase their professional knowledge and skill, in particular the knowledge and skill required for them to successfully implement those changes in classroom practices included in whatever restructuring and reform initiatives the school may be engaged in. Collaborative and collegial cultures typically lead to the informal sharing of ideas and materials among teachers, an important means of fostering growth in professional capacities.

Preventing emotional exhaustion

Among teachers, as we have learned in this article, emotional exhaustion is likely to be a consequence of finding little in their day-to-day work to stimulate their excitement and enthusiasm. Emotional exhaustion is more likely, as well, in work environments that make it difficult for teachers to achieve their primary source of satisfaction: observing students learning from their instruction and enjoying the process. Such exhaustion may also result from feelings that the whole organization, or key leaders within the organization, are holding unrealistically high performance expectations. While this dimension of leadership practice may exacerbate teachers' sense of emotional exhaustion, this is likely to be contingent upon, for example, the situation in which those practices are experienced and the state of teachers' existing expectations for themselves.

When teachers are already committed to significant restructuring, for example, and working hard to understand what it means for their own classroom practices, overly high performance expectations are likely to produce debilitating levels of anxiety and stress. Under such conditions, individualized support seems more likely to be helpful.

On the other hand, high performance expectations may be useful as a means of initiating change in circumstances characterized by teacher complacency, a widely shared belief among staff members in the superior quality of the instruction already being offered to students, or blindness to the special needs of a particular group of students in the school.

School leaders can minimize or prevent emotional exhaustion by

- helping individual teachers identify short-term signposts of progress in meeting their own and the school's improvement goals;
- rotating teachers' classroom assignments to ensure that the same teachers do not always have, year after year, especially difficult students to work with—students who present exceptional discipline and instructional challenges, for example;
- providing, as much as possible, adequate financial and material resources in support of teachers' work;
- personalizing performance expectations in light of teachers' individual progress and

needs for extrinsic motivation (many teachers will find such motivation to be irrelevant).

Hargreaves and Fullan, in arguing that teachers are engaged in a moral mission, suggest that in complex times pursuing such a mission can be "an emotional roller coaster Choosing demanding purposes and sticking with them in difficult times draws on every ounce of emotion teachers have. The pleasures and rewards to be gained from this kind of emotional engagement as a teacher are immense, but the risks of exhaustion and disillusionment . . . are equally great" (1998, 59). To know that there are ways in which those exercising school leadership can help their teaching colleagues to cope with these risks is an important source of hope in the face of what often seem like overwhelming challenges.

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