

2012

Evaluation Change: Building Rural Teacher Capacity through International Partnerships

Peggy Gill
University of Texas at Tyler

Joyce Nuner
Baylor University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr>



Part of the [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), and the [International and Comparative Education Commons](#)

[Tell us](#) how this article helped you.

Recommended Citation

Gill, Peggy and Nuner, Joyce (2012) "Evaluation Change: Building Rural Teacher Capacity through International Partnerships," *School Leadership Review*. Vol. 7 : Iss. 1 , Article 9.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol7/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in School Leadership Review by an authorized editor of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.

Evaluation Change: Building Rural Teacher Capacity through International Partnerships

Peggy Gill, Ed.Dⁱ
The University of Texas at Tyler

Joyce Nuner, Ph.D.
Baylor University

Teachers for a Better Belize (TFABB) is a partnership of educators from North America and Belize who volunteer their time to improve the training of teachers and the education of children in the rural Toledo district of Belize. TFABB aids Toledo's primary-school teachers and principals with training, supplies, and facilities required to help their students achieve academic success and escape poverty. Toledo, in southernmost Belize, is the least populated and most remote area in Belize. In the 2007 midyear population estimate, Toledo had a population of 29,700 which included at least five distinct ethnic groups who have settled in Southern Belize. Punta Gorda, the largest town in the area, consists of many cultures, however, 64% of the population in the Toledo District is made up of the Mopan and Kekchi Mayas living in over 30 different villages (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2008). According to findings from the September 2007 Labour Force Survey, the unemployment rate in Toledo was 16.4%. This was the highest unemployment rate in the country. The rate among women in Toledo was even higher with one third (33.8%) of females in the labor force unemployed. Almost one fourth of youth were unemployed (24%) (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2008).

The high unemployment rate, multiple cultures and highly rural area provide the context within which the primary schools of Toledo exist. Most schools are set in small villages some of which are remote and difficult to reach. These schools are frequently small with teachers being asked to teach 2, 3 or even 4 grades in one room. Principals typically teach full time as well as serving as the school leader. Teachers for a Better Belize characterizes the education in the area as:

below that in other parts of the country. While 42 percent of all primary teachers in Belize are fully trained, only 24 percent of Toledo's 296 primary teachers have received full training. Over half of Toledo's primary teachers have no schooling or training beyond high school. Overall, Toledo's teachers face onerous conditions, including multi-grade classrooms (several grade levels in one room) and few supplies (TFABB, 2008).

Currently, there are 49 primary schools in Toledo. In general, the schools are sponsored by three groups: Roman Catholic Church, Methodist Church, and Belize government. The government provides salary support for all schools but each sponsoring group has a District Manager that oversees the operation of the schools. This District Manager appoints teachers and principals to the individual campuses. Each of these managers joined the partnership with TFABB to build teacher capacity in language arts.

ⁱ **Dr. Peggy Gill** may be contacted at pgill@uttyler.edu. Dr. Gill was the third Co-Editor for *School Leadership Review*.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine a three year teacher training plan at the end of the second year and identify ways to strengthen and/or improve the plan. For the past two years, Teachers for a Better Belize (TFABB) in partnership with the district educational managers in Toledo designed a plan to build primary school teacher capacity for teaching literacy in rural Belize. The goal was to introduce the Balanced Literacy approach which integrates reading and writing. This plan included three days of training each year in the summer for 20 Belizean teachers who would serve as coaches during the academic year, a week of intense training each summer for all primary school teachers in Toledo District, and three follow up days of training each year (tentatively scheduled for October, February, and May during the academic year) planned and led by the Belizean coaches. This general outline would continue for each of the three years of the project

Evaluation Model

Evaluation of the TFABB plan will use an ecological approach. An ecological model of school evaluation considers schools and their programs as living systems that co-evolve with societal ecologies. Schools cannot be understood without understanding the environment or larger social contexts in which they are embedded (Anderson, 2004). This perspective views all participants and events in the program in the context of mutual interaction and mutual influence. Rather than examining individuals and elements in isolation, we look to their relationship and how each interacts with and influences the other (Becvar & Becvar, 2003).

An ecological model of program evaluation situates the TFABB program (microsystem) within the context of the school, the village, Toledo District, and Belize. In the ecological model every system is embedded or nested within another system or systems which recursively influence each other. The ecological approach to evaluation allows us to explore and describe the embeddedness of the program as it is nested within the larger context. This gives us a better understanding of how changes in the larger systems lead to reformation of the goals, assessments, feedback and system response features of the program. If we see the evolutionary nature of all systems, we are not overwhelmed by the sense of “constant change” but see the inevitability of growth and development. The TFABB program and Toledo schools will not be seen as static but rather always in flux as we seek to improve.

The purposes and boundaries of a program’s evaluation emerge from examination of the relationships and mutual interdependence of the program with the local school, governmental and social policy, societal expectations, and the overall culture within which the school exists. The ecological model generates insights into ways of knowing and reasoning that empower us to pursue the types of information needed to generate a vibrant teacher training program that is both responsive to the observed needs and engaged in influencing the future of education and therefore society. (Banathy, 1996).

Program Goals as Boundaries of the Evaluation

TFABB identifies reading and writing (language arts) as essential to success in primary school. The identified goal of the TFABB 3 year program is to increase the capacity of primary teachers in Toledo District to successfully teach language arts. This establishes the boundary within which the TFABB plan will operate. Three overarching objectives delineate this boundary. TFABB seeks to (1) train teachers in best practice in reading instruction; (2) train teachers in best practice in writing instruction; and (3) Develop local teachers/principals to serve as literacy coaches.

The mid-plan questions include:

1. With which aspects of the approach are the teachers most comfortable?
2. What are the primary concerns of the principals about the approach?
3. Is there evidence of success in terms of teacher adoption of the program and student outcome?
4. How has the context of implementation altered the plan and are other changes needed?

Data Sources

Data collected include classroom visits/observations by TFABB volunteers and partners, teacher evaluations of TFABB training, student performance on the state assessment in Language Arts, and the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ). The qualitative data sources, classroom visits and teacher evaluations (open-ended questions) provided contextual detail for the SoCQ and the student performance in Language Arts on the state assessment

Mid Plan Question 1: With which Aspects of the Approach do the Teachers Feel Most Comfortable?

On the final day of training in the August, 2008 workshop, all participants were asked to fill out an evaluation form. Teachers were divided into training groups by level of instruction. Infant I teachers are generally equivalent to kindergarten teachers in U.S. classrooms. Infant II is equivalent to first grade, Standard I to second grade, Standard II to third grade, Standard III to fourth grade, Standard IV to fifth grade, Standard V to sixth grade, and Standard VI to seventh grade. Infant I and II have the largest number of teachers so these two groups were provided with individual training sessions, however all other training groups contained two teaching levels. To encourage participants to complete this form, classroom materials were provided to each participant who turned in the form. Participants returned 198 complete forms. Three fourths of the participants found the training very useful and over 96% found the training useful or very useful. (See *Table 1. Was the training useful to you?*).

Week-long workshops were given in summer, 2006, summer, 2007, and summer 2008. Each workshop presented the components of Balanced Literacy to the primary school teachers and principals. Before this training, the teachers had not been exposed to Balanced Literacy. After the summer 2008 workshop, participants were asked to indicate which components of Balanced Literacy they understood in terms of how children learn to read and write (*Table 2 Teachers Who*

Understand How to Use Balanced Literacy Reading Approaches). Shared reading was identified by 80.8% of the participants and was rated the highest in terms of teacher understanding. The

Table 1. Was the training useful to you?

Teaching Unit	n	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
Infant I and II	74	59	15	0	0
Standard I and II	42	32	7	3	0
Standard III and IV	39	28	8	3	0
Standard V and IV	52	39	12	1	0
Total		148	42	7	0

Table 2. Teachers Who Understand How to Use Balanced Literacy Reading Approaches

Teaching Unit	n	Traditional Read Aloud	Interactive Read Aloud	Shared Reading	Mini Lesson	6+1 Instruction	Student Journal	Word Wall
Infant I and II	77	30	27	28	22	26	27	27
Standard I and II	39	37	40	46	41	33	33	36
Standard III and IV	43	33	31	28	23	26	19	27
Standard V and VI	43	25	31	27	23	20	25	22
Total		139	154	126	123	123	120	129
		70.2%	80.3%	80.8%	62.1%	62.1%	60.6%	70.2%

second highest component in terms of participant knowledge was interactive read aloud with 80.3% indicating they understood this approach. Just over 70% of participants understood the traditional read aloud and the word wall. Understanding how mini lesson, 6+1 writing traits, and student writing notebook were all understood in terms of how children learn to read and write by just over 60% of the participants. It appears that most teachers feel they understand the components of Balanced Literacy. Shared reading and interactive read aloud, the components best understood, are most closely aligned with the traditional language arts instruction prior to training in Balanced Literacy. The traditional approach included choral reading and engaging the students by reading to them as the primary approaches, so teachers may feel shared reading (while certainly not choral reading) and interactive read aloud may be closer to their comfort level. In general, teachers believe they understand the components of reading (traditional read aloud, interactive read aloud, shared reading) better than they understand the components of writing (6+1 traits, Student writing notebook). The mini lesson, used in both reading and writing,

continues to be a bit of a challenge for these teachers. Infant I teachers seem the least knowledgeable about all the approaches except the interactive read aloud and the word wall.

Classroom Use

Participants who completed the third summer workshop are generally comfortable with using the traditional read aloud, interactive read aloud, shared reading, mini lesson, and word wall in their classroom instruction (Table 3). Consistent with the group's understanding, there is less comfort with using the writing process in the classroom with less than a third feeling comfortable using the 6+1 writing traits in their teaching. Infant I teachers were especially unclear about the 6+1 writing traits. These teachers are learning to use drawing as pre-writing activities and may not be aware of the connection between 6+1 writing traits and their activities. Of more concern is the low score in Standard V/VI. Students take the Primary School Exam (PSE) during the Standard VI year and good writing skills are an important expectation on this test. Students must complete a section on composition and letter writing on the PSE. Standard VI teachers may be focusing on the specific skills students need to complete the composition and letter writing rather than seeing the connection with 6+1 writing traits.

Table 3. I understand and feel comfortable using this approach or tool during my classroom instruction.

Teaching Unit	n	Trad. Read Aloud	Interactive Read Aloud	Shared Reading	Mini Lesson	6+1 Traits	Student Journal	Word Wall
Infant I and II	77	95	90	58	46	28	58	51
Standard I and II	39	30	28	26	24	17	20	26
Standard II and IV	39	27	27	29	22	16	16	25
Standard V and VI	41	29	31	30	30	10	23	24
Total		142	146	143	122	61	94	126
		71.1%	73.7%	73.3%	61.6%	30.8%	47.5%	63.6%

Future Training

As part of the evaluation, teachers were asked what they would like to learn about during future trainings. Teachers' main request was help with planning (annual, monthly, weekly, and daily). In discussions, the teachers expanded this to include activities to engage learners, classroom management, and evaluation of student work. It appears teachers want help with the management of teaching. They understand what to do; now they want help with how to do it.

Mid Plan Question 2: What are the Primary Concerns of the Principals about the Approach?

Principals are the instructional leaders on the campus (Ontario Principals' Council, 2008). The principal sets the tone for the campus and models the expectations. Student success is directly tied to the leadership on the campus. Richard Elmore (2000) describes five principles that lay the foundation for a model of leadership focused on improvement:

- The purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role.
- Instructional improvement requires continuous learning.
- Learning requires modeling.
- The roles and activities of leadership flow from the expertise required for learning and improvement, not from the formal dictates of the institution.
- The exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity.

The TFABB plan incorporates continuous learning, modeling, and shared leadership of the process. Do the principals embrace their role of improvement of instructional practice through the innovation of Balanced Literacy?

In May, 2008, TFABB hosted an in-service for principals and administrators. The purpose of this in-service training was to provide in-depth knowledge about the Balanced Literacy approach being introduced by TFABB. This workshop occurred after the initial training in August, 2006 and the second summer training in August, 2007. Follow up visits and conversations during the 2007-08 school year uncovered a lack of consistency and common understanding of the terms and approaches being introduced in the summer training. As a result, TFABB offered the May, 2008 training for primary principals and Toledo administrators. At the end of this training, participants were asked to complete the Stages of Concern Questionnaire.

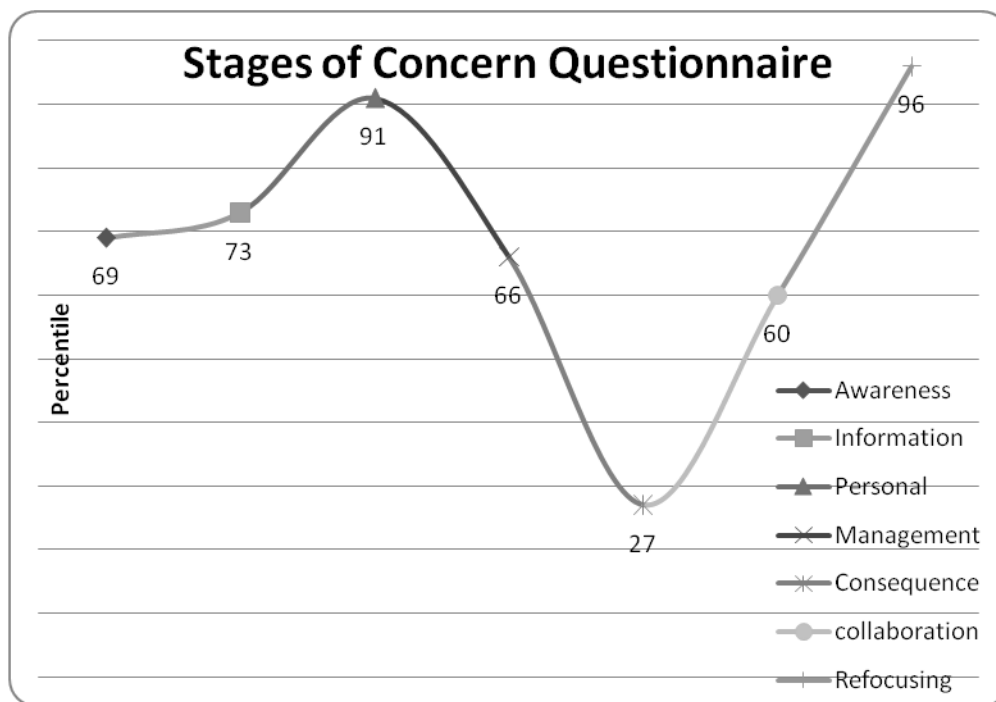
The Stages of Concern Questionnaire is a 35 item survey that assesses the intensity of concerns experienced as an innovation is adopted (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006)). This questionnaire is based on the belief that these concerns occur in natural, developmental sequence marked by stages. Even though movement through these stages is developmental, not everyone is expected to achieve all the stages. These stages include: (1) awareness; (2) informational; (3) personal; (4) management; (5) consequence; (6) collaboration; and (7) refocusing. The first 4 stages focus on internal concerns of the individual, and the last three stages focus on external concerns relating to how the innovation may impact their associates and their students. The awareness stage is indicative of knowledge of the innovation with little or no involvement in with the innovation. Characteristic of the informational state is a desire to learn more about the innovation with little concern for its impacts on the individual. The personal stage is characterized by knowledge that the innovation personally affects the individual principal accompanied by uncertainty as to the demands of the innovation, uncertainty as to the individual principal's ability to meet the demands and uncertainty as to the individual principal's role with the innovation. At the management stage, the concern is with the amount of time required to use the innovation effectively and efficiently. At the next stage of development, internal concerns shift to external concerns. The consequence stage involves focusing attention on the impact of the innovation beyond the individual. This stage is followed by collaboration with others and begins focusing efforts on using the innovation in coordination and cooperation with others. The

final stage of development is refocusing and looking for other ways to benefit from the innovation including exploring alternatives to the innovation. As one moves through the stages there is a decreasing intensity of internal concerns and an increasing intensity on external concerns related to the innovation. Although the stages are seen as developmental, everyone does not go through all seven stages.

Data Analysis

Results from the Stages of Concern Survey are reported in Figure 1. Interpretation of the data requires looking at the two peaks in the responses: Personal and Refocusing. The peak in Personal is generally reflective of a group that is struggling with what the innovation means to them. They are concerned how the implementation of balanced literacy will affect them. How will their role change? Will their success or failure with this innovation have a personal cost?

Figure 1: Stages of Concern Questionnaire



How will they be evaluated with this innovation? Because the next three stages are below this peak, Personal is most probably the developmental level of the group. In general, they are familiar with the innovation but are working through how this innovation of Balanced Literacy will impact them personally. More disturbing is the dramatically high peak of Stage 6. Normally, a peak in stage 6 indicates support for the innovation and a readiness to perfect the innovation. However, when there is a peak in Stage 2 Personal and a dramatic peak in Stage 6, it is generally a sign that the group has not truly bought into the innovation and have their own ideas about how reading and writing should be taught.

Discussion

When a group displays a strong concern about the personal ramifications of an innovation such as Balanced Literacy the facilitators must address underlying concerns. Generally this profile indicates a concern about institutional support and rewards for doing the job. The high score in Personal may also be indicative of self-doubts about the ability to do the job as well as a fear of lack of support from superiors. This profile is common in a principal who has little experience facilitating change on the campus. It is generally not helpful to reassure groups with this profile as even the most non-threatening attempts to discuss the innovation may increase concerns. Rather the focus has to be clearly on the personal concerns. Principals will need leadership training to increase their self confidence in their ability to facilitate the change process. In addition, communication between the managers and the principals should address the issues of support, evaluation, and expectations. Although in workshops and conversations the principals frequently express their concerns about time and conflicting responsibilities when discussing their campus leadership, this survey indicates the actual problem is more likely lack of confidence in their skills and discomfort with the level of support they will receive.

Mid Plan Question 3: Is there Evidence of Success in Terms of Teacher Adoption of Balanced Literacy and Student Outcomes?

Classroom Visits

TFABB volunteers visited classrooms in October and February of each year. In the classrooms visited, the traditional read aloud was being incorporated in many classrooms. Teachers seem to be comfortable reading to children throughout the day. Many teachers were using this approach to assist with transition times such as after lunch or after recess. Classrooms had the TFABB materials prominently displayed throughout the classrooms. Lower level teachers demonstrated their use of the jingles and rhymes that accompanied letter identification. A few rooms had small “library” areas. In general, there was strong evidence that teachers were incorporating components of Balanced Literacy in their classrooms.

Primary School Exam

Each year, Standard VI students sit for the Primary Student Exam. The results of this test determine whether a student may attend secondary school. Historically, Toledo primary schools have had the lowest scores of the six districts. In 2008, for the first time Toledo schools scored 5th highest in the country. When looking at only language arts scores, Toledo schools had the third highest scores in the country. This is an important external measure of the success of language arts teaching in the district.

Question 4: How has the Context of Implementation Altered the Plan and are Changes Needed?

An ecological model of evaluation requires looking at the systems within which the TFABB training is nested. Several factors have emerged in the micro system that constrain the effectiveness of the current plan.

Lack of Time Coaching

As envisioned, the coaches would work with other teachers and share their expertise and knowledge during the year. Coaches, who also hold either a full time teaching or administrative responsibility, could not be released to work with other teachers in the system. This limits the support teachers receive during the school year. During classroom visits, teachers expressed frustration that they do not receive ongoing support and training. Coaches expressed their frustration in not being able to work with other teachers because they have full time classroom responsibilities. The coaches are currently not able to “coach.”

Faculty Reassignments

Changes in faculty are not handled at the campus level so teachers may be assigned or reassigned without principal input. This creates a system of discontinuity. A teacher may be trained at the upper level during the summer training in August, only to be reassigned in September to an Infant classroom. This reassignment of teachers limits the effectiveness of the program.

Changes in the Larger System

In addition to constraints at the campus or school level, changes in the larger system have also challenged the TFABB plan. National elections in 2008 resulted in a change in all major governmental officials related to education. TFABB spent a year developing the relationship and buy-in at the national level for the Balanced Literacy program. With the change in officials, it was unclear the amount of support given to the TFABB program. Fortunately, the new District Manager (government) in Toledo was familiar with the program and continued to support the summer program in 2008. Even with the local support, these changes are a major impact on an all volunteer organization. The time and energy it takes to make the contacts and develop the common understanding is sometimes overwhelming to the leadership.

In reviewing the support given to TFABB over the past two years, it seems that while all officials are equally supportive of the need for TFABB, there is little help with the logistics of the program. The TFABB volunteers provide all the materials for the workshop, sort and distribute these materials, set up rooms for the training, including moving desks and chairs to accommodate the number of participants, clean the rooms, unlock and lock the rooms and make any needed copies of materials for the participants. This is all in addition to providing 7 hours training for each of the 5 days. Many of these tasks could be handled by the local managers.

In addition to changes in leadership, a new national curriculum and state adopted textbooks were introduced. The lower level curriculum was introduced in 2007 and the upper level curriculum was introduced in 2008. Teachers were now challenged with learning a new curriculum, aligning the new textbooks to the curriculum and using the components of Balanced Literacy.

The third change in the system was the entry of another provider of training. A Canadian program was approved to provide teacher training to all teachers in Belize in math and language arts. The Canadian program used a “Trainer of Trainers” model. They recruited 20 teachers for math and 20 teachers for language arts. These teachers were given training in the core areas and

expected to train others in the district. After negotiations, TFABB agreed to continue their language arts training and the Canadian program would provide the math training. Unfortunately, the trainings overlapped so coaches for TFABB had to choose between working with TFABB or the Canadian program in math. This competition for “teacher leaders” resulted in a decrease in the number of coaches working with TFABB.

Evolution into a Trainer of Trainers Model

In the debriefing sessions after the 2007 summer training, coaches explained their inability to work with other teachers because of their classroom responsibilities. Even if a teacher could be released from his/her class, travel in Toledo is difficult and travel between schools requires a large time commitment. TFABB volunteers recognized the need to reformulate the concept of “coaches.” One solution would be to hire someone to serve as a full time coach traveling between the schools providing ongoing support. There are 49 primary schools in the district and this option would need both government support and funding. At this time there is no funding for this option. A second option, ultimately selected by TFABB is to reframe the responsibilities of the “coaches” to facilitators/trainers. Rather than working with schools during the year, the coaches will attend a 2 to 3 day training in the summer, serve as co-presenters during the summer workshop, and plan/lead two or three follow-up in-services during the school year. This still provides local expertise in Balanced Literacy but does not overload the system.

Addition of Preschool Sessions

In the summer of 2007, TFABB added a section to address the needs of preschool teachers. A North American volunteer approached TFABB and asked to join the partnership and provide training to preschool teachers. The volunteer had worked with a small village and saw the need to address the needs of the preschool classroom. Only about half the schools in Toledo had preschools, but the government was working to add preschools throughout the country. Providing preschool training would also address the priorities of the local management. While training preschool teachers had not been a part of the original plan, it emerged as a need during the three year plan and TFABB was able to meet this need.

Curriculum Training

The new curriculum was a major change in the system that had to be addressed and pulled into the TFABB program. Because it was mandated by the government, teachers needed to see how the Balanced Literacy fit with the new curriculum. If teachers saw the curriculum and Balanced literacy as competing, they would be forced to follow the curriculum because of government expectations.

TFABB trainers were given copies of the curriculum, given a day of training in using the curriculum and asked to train the Toledo teachers to use the curriculum. Although this was a huge undertaking for the volunteer trainers, it did provide context to understand the challenges the primary teachers face. Because the training in the curriculum was added to the summer training, the amount of time spent on Balanced Literacy was cut in half. The original schedule gave time for teachers to plan their weekly schemes using their textbooks and Balanced Literacy

components. This time was deleted and the curriculum training inserted. Teachers were divided by experience level and given opportunities to work with the new curriculum and Balanced Literacy components.

While the training on the curriculum was important and added a needed dimension to the summer training, it was quite stressful for the volunteer trainers. Most trainers spend months planning their summer workshops. They identify appropriate materials and carefully plan their time to maximize learning. The request for curriculum training came only a couple of weeks before the workshop. This required trainers to redesign their sessions and select only the most essential information to present. It also required the trainers to develop afternoon activities each day to work with the curriculum. These activities could only be planned after the volunteers arrived in Punta Gorda and were given the overview of the curriculum. The evaluations from the participants were very positive and the workshops were well done. However, the last minute change was difficult.

Inclusion of New Partner

As TFABB volunteers recognized that both coaches and local managers were busy with the business of education in the district, they looked for a partner in Belize who shared their mission and could provide on-site assistance during the year. The Peace Corps was the logical partner for this next step. Peace Corps volunteers in Belize frequently have education as their primary project. There have been several calls from the national government to have Peace Corps volunteers in every school to provide assistance in teacher training.

Every Peace Corps volunteer may select a second project and TFABB approached the Peace Corps to ask that a volunteer or volunteers work with TFABB as partners. This partnership began in the winter of 2007-08 and has proved to be a positive step for TFABB. The Peace Corps volunteers manage on-site communication, support for coaches in planning the in-services, and feedback on the implementation of Balanced Literacy.

Revisiting the Plan

Teachers for a Better Belize is performing needed teacher training in Toledo District. It is clear that the efforts are having a positive effect on teachers and their students. Teachers consistently report they find the summer training very useful and student language arts scores on the Primary School Exam are improving in language arts. The context in Toledo is dynamic and this context clearly impacts TFABB's efforts. The changing government leadership, a new curriculum, new textbooks, a high turnover in teachers and other still unanticipated factors are not under the control of the TFABB partnership but must be considered.

Three themes appear from reviewing the overall evaluation data and the contextual information.

- Teachers are ready for specific implementation techniques of the Balanced Literacy approach that include planning, classroom management and appropriate activities.
- Principals need specific training in leadership, management, and change

- TFABB, a volunteer organization, must actively engage and expand local partnerships

First, the workshops have been successful. Teachers are using the components of Balanced Literacy and have understanding of their relationship to teaching reading and writing. They have expressed an interest in learning how to plan better, including how to manage the classroom). Because it has taken three summer workshops and two years of follow up to help teachers incorporate the components listed on the evaluation, it might be best to work on planning and classroom management in a language arts program. While some teachers may be ready for guided reading and the complete reading and writing workshop, TFABB should carefully consider what can be accomplished in this final year.

Principal Training

Based on the evaluation data, the principals in Toledo District need training in leadership, management, and change. This is an opportunity to connect with the University of Belize to develop a principal training program. TFABB does not have the resources to provide this program, but does have volunteers who can work with UB to establish a formal training program. This program will need to be designed with at least two tracks to accommodate both the principal who has a college degree and the principal who has little formal training beyond a high school education.

Actively Engage Local Partners

While the workshops and in-service training are successful, the endeavor is more than an all volunteer organization can maintain. Debriefing at the end of the August, 2008 workshop identified several changes that need to be made to continue the TFABB partnership. The local managers need to be more actively involved in planning and offering the summer workshop. To this end, TFABB will provide training for the lower level teachers (Preschool, Infant I/II and Standard I/II) and ask the local managers to assume responsibility for the workshop offering for the Upper level teachers. As part of this change, the local managers will be responsible for the logistics of the workshop. This move creates a partnership where both parties provide services and both parties benefit from the relationship.

TFABB will continue to work to develop the relationship with the Peace Corps. TFABB will offer to provide training to the Peace Corps volunteers in Balanced Literacy so these volunteers can work to train teachers on their assigned campus in Balanced Literacy. This might be another place where local teachers could be involved so each Peace Corps volunteer might have a teaching partner that also goes through the training. Belizean teachers have been quite clear that they want Belizeans as part of the training faculty and TFABB fully supports this need.

Conclusion

TFABB has been engaged in an international partnership with District Education Managers in Toledo, Belize and the Government Director of Education to provide teacher training in the area of language arts for two years of a three year plan. There is clear evidence of success in terms of

teacher knowledge of Balanced Literacy, teacher comfort with and use of Balanced Literacy and improved student performance. Several factors in the systems and subsystems have impacted the ability to complete the plan as envisioned. In revitalizing the partnership it is important to clearly delineate how each partner can/will contribute to the partnership. Additional partners such as the Peace Corps and University of Belize provide strength to the partnership and increase the likelihood of sustained impact.

References

- Anderson, G.L. (2004). Performing school reform in the age of the political spectacle. In B. Alexander, G. Anderson, B. Gallegos (Eds.) *Performance theory and education: Power, pedagogy, and the politics of identity*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Banathy, B. (1996), *Designing social systems in a changing world*. New York: Plenum.
- Becvar D. & Becvar J. (2005). *Family therapy: A systemic integration*. : Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Chronbach, L. J. (1980). Toward reform of program evaluation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Elmore, R. (2000). Building a new structure for school leadership. *American Educator* winter, 1-9.
- George, A., Hall, G., & Stiegelbauer. (2006). *Measuring implementation in schools: The stages of concern questionnaire*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Center.
- Ontario's Principal Council. (2008). *The principal as instructional leader in literacy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Statistical Institute of Belize <http://www.statisticsbelize.org.bz/>. Retrieved October 1, 2008.
- Teachers for a Better Belize retrieved 5/28/08 <http://www.tfabb.org>. Retrieved September 15, 2008.
- Wheatley, M. (2001). "Bringing schools back to life: Schools as living systems" in *Creating Successful School Systems: Voices from the University, the Field, and the Community*.(F. M. Duffy & J. D. Dale Ed.). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers Inc. 3-19.