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Barbara M. Havel Bohach
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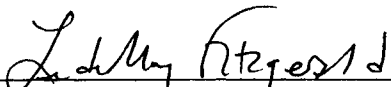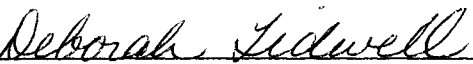
Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved :

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December 2004

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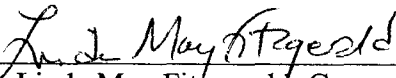
EDUCATIONAL CHANGE PROCESS:

A CASE STUDY OF A RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT'S READING REFORM

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

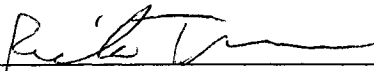of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

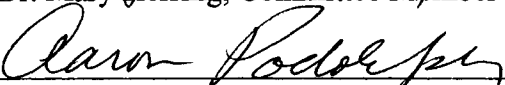Approved:

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December 2004

ABSTRACT

Beginning reading instruction is the subject of much debate in educational fields as well as in the political arena. The product of such debates is often a push to reform reading programs and teachers are targeted as the ones to carry out these reforms. If reading educators have been actively involved in a reading change process, what are their concerns about change and the influence of mandated legislation?

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine how teachers and administrators initiated and implemented a balanced reading innovation. It also investigated how the Concerns-Based Adoption Model identified teachers' concerns during the implementation of the innovation and the impact of "No Child Left Behind" legislation. Leadership also emerged as a key aspect of change in this study.
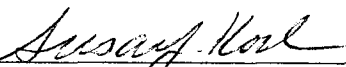
Results of this study will provide insight into educators' responses to reading reform and how that translates into their current instructional decision-making processes and student learning. It also provides insight for change facilitators and the importance of recognizing individual stages of development within a change process.

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my children, Adam, Emily, and Garrett and
to my husband, Mark. Thank You.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe sincere thanks to my family: my husband, Mark, who always had confidence that I would finish even when the task seemed insurmountable; my children, Adam, Emily, and Garrett, who gave me quiet and space when I needed it; my parents, Richard and Carolyn, my mother-in-law, Dorothy, and sisters, Ann and Aimee, who watched my children as I attended classes and did research; and the rest of my seven siblings who knew my stubborn nature would "never give up."

My gratitude also extends to Helen, Ann, Liz, and Jennifer, who assisted me in my research and dissertation. Thank you, Whispering Pines administrators and faculty for your willingness to share your time, your opinions—your story. Yours is research worth sharing for you represent the heart of caring teachers. My appreciation also goes to members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Rick Traw; Dr. Deborah Tidwell; Dr. Mary Herring; and Dr. Aaron Podelofsky. Your suggestions, questions, prompt feedback, and willingness to give of your expert advice and precious time were critical to my success. I also wish to acknowledge Dr. Judith Finkelstein, my advisor. You always knew how to guide me Judy—thank you.

Most of all, I owe Dr. Linda May Fitzgerald, my committee chair, thankfulness and admiration. You always knew how and when to challenge me and to push me when I needed it most. Thank you for the "pep talks" and the "tea meetings." Mere words cannot express the respect I have for you. Under your tutelage, you helped me to think, to grow, and to reflect as an educator. Dr. Linda, you are amazing. Thank you for touching my life.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Teaching and learning are critical to our individual and collective survival and
> to the quality of our lives. The pace of change has us snarled in complexities,
> confusions, and conflicts that will diminish us, or do us in, if we do not enlarge
> our capacity to teach and to learn. At the same time, teacher-bashing has become
> a popular sport. Panic-stricken by the demands of our day, we need scapegoats
> for the problems we cannot solve and the sins we cannot bear.
>
> Teachers make an easy target, for they are such a common species and
> so powerless to strike back. We blame teachers for being unable to cure social
> ills that no one knows how to treat; we insist that they instantly adopt whatever
> 'solution' has most recently been concocted by our national panacea machine;
> and in the process, we demoralize, even paralyze, the very teachers who could
> help us find our way (Palmer, 1998, p. 3).

Education is notorious for being caught between political platforms, legislative

edicts, and public criticism. From "Back-to-the-Basics" in the early eighties to the

current mandates of "No Child Left Behind," controversy has surrounded the teaching of

reading for decades. From parents to politicians, attention is once again focusing on

specific ideologies and methodologies for reading instruction (Reutzel & Mitchell, 2003).

Instead of following clearly marked trails as to the best methods of instruction, teachers

are often pulled in different directions by conflicting information (Allington, 2004;

Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2000; Lyon, 1998; Lyon , Fletcher,

Torgesen, Shaywitz & cc., 2004; Krashen, 2004; Troy, 1998; Zemelman, Daniels, &

Bizar, 1999), products (Harcourt Achieve, 2004; Houghton-Mifflin, 2002; Scholastic,

2002, International Reading Association, 2002) and legislation (Allington, 2002a;

Bennett et al., 1998; Coles, 2000; Coles, 2003).

As schools look to current resources and materials for teaching young children

how to read, curriculum change decisions become difficult and complicated.

> Textbooks for much of this century have been the linchpin of the curriculum. Indeed, despite demands for teacher involvement in determining the specifics of the curriculum and for curriculum reform, textbooks are the curriculum. ...Few districts are prepared either philosophically or administratively to spend hundreds or thousands of dollars to design their own curricula. Most monies that are spent under the category of curriculum development are allocated for purchasing textbooks and related support materials (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, pp. 357-358).

Schools have often based curriculum on textbook choices rather than choosing textbooks to implement a chosen curriculum. Reading instruction has often been strongly influenced by changes in textbook adoption (Banton-Smith, 2002) and few districts or even states consider the complexities of the curriculum change process. Rather, the process is more often referred to as a "basal reader adoption process" (Farr & Tulley, 1989, p. 248), and it is often an administrative committee or a selected group of teachers who choose the text that becomes the curriculum.

How to teach reading has been one of the most debated curriculum issues throughout the history of public education and the debate still continues today. "American Education, and especially reading instruction, is once again under attack" (Allington, 2002a, p. 3). Pearson (1997) feels that current emphasis on early reading instruction has come "full circle back" to issues and questions researched over thirty years ago (p. 431). In recent years this debate has been referred to as the Reading Wars (Goodman, 1998; Lemann, 1997; Wingert & Kantrowitz, 1997) and textbooks and curriculum materials have reflected this conflict of ideology and pedagogy (Sulzby, Hoffman, Niles, Shanahan, & Teale, 1989).

As a product of this conflict, choosing a new reading curriculum is no easy task and can involve change at a number of levels. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) report:

At least three dimensions are at stake in implementing any new program: (1) the possible use of new or revised materials, (2) the possible use of new *teaching approaches,* and (3) the possible alterations of *beliefs.*

All three aspects of change are necessary because together they represent the means of achieving a particular educational goal or set of goals. Whether or not they do achieve the goal is another question depending on the quality and appropriateness of the change for the task at hand. My point is the logical one that the change has to *occur in practice* along the three dimensions in order for it to have a chance of affecting the outcome (p. 37).

Statement of Purpose

The International Reading Association (IRA) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) adopted a joint position statement advocating developmentally appropriate practices on learning to read and write for young children. Although they specifically note that, "teaching practices associated with outdated views of literacy development and/or learning theories are still prevalent in many classrooms" (IRA & NAEYC, 1998, p. 1), the call for accountability based on test scores render these position statements barely audible (Garan, 2004).

Pearson (2002) believes that if advocates of a heavy skills and phonics orientation are able to influence federal, state, and local policy in addition to the educational publishing industry, then there will be substantial shifts in reading pedagogy. Using his criteria for measuring change, "range of materials, range of pedagogical practices, role of the teacher, role of the student, and underlying theory of reading and reading acquisition," (p. 469), Pearson feels that the greatest changes may occur at the very earliest stages of learning to read. The greatest changes here would impact the underlying model of reading and reading acquisition. He also contends that the role of

the teacher would then be to simply transmit the received knowledge of the field, as reflected in research-based curricular mandates, to students.

On the other hand, if those who are pushing for ecological balance in their approach to teaching reading prevail, the teacher will not simply be the transmitter of mandates. Teachers of early reading will, "facilitate learning by establishing authentic activities, intervening where necessary to provide the scaffolding and explicit instruction required to help students take the next step toward independence" (Banton-Smith, 2002, p. 470). The two proposed scenarios indicate that early reading instruction seems to be, as Regie Routman (1996) put it, at a crossroads.

Allington (2002a) reports that politicians and experts complain about poor academic performance by children and then criticize educators and accuse them of being unwilling to address these performance issues. Roller (2000) describes the current U.S. governmental policies on reading as "volatile and explosive" (p. 626). President Bush proclaims that schools are afraid of accountability and the National Reading Panel targets only programs with scientifically rigorous research as authenticated methods for teaching reading (Allington, 2002a). Secretary of Education Rod Paige proclaims that the quality of our education system must reform and change to meet the economic demands of the world. Paige believes that the world is catching up [to the United States] economically and educationally, and,

> We simply cannot forfeit our economic security. We cannot let others control our destiny....The need for literacy in reading and mathematics is a prerequisite for almost every job and the quality of our education system is directly responsible for the level of our economic success" (U. S. Department of Education, 2004, p.1).

Mandated methods demand that their use must teach "all children to read by third grade" (No Child Left Behind, 2002) and packaged programs that have been scientifically-proven to teach children to read will be funded by federal monies (Allington, 2002a; NCLB, 2002).

Incentives for accepting federal dollars come at a time when state funds are stretched beyond their limits and budgets have to address reforms in early reading instruction. One solution that is being touted as a "fix" for America's reading problems is the broader use of scripted reading curriculum materials; in essence, a "teacher-proof" curriculum. However, Allington (2002b) points out that this solution fails to recognize teachers as the primary resource for developing reading proficiency in children. "Enhanced reading proficiency rests largely on the capacity of classroom teachers to provide expert, exemplary reading instruction—instruction that cannot be packaged or regurgitated from a common script because it is responsive to children's needs" (p. 747). Effective teachers make the difference when it comes to children learning how to read (Taylor & Pearson, 1999). Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, and Morrow (2001) found no support for boiling down literacy instruction into one or two critical components nor the particular package of components favoring either a skills approach or a whole language approach to reading instruction. As Pearson (2002) argues, "Teachers who are faced with the variations in achievement, experience, and aptitude in today's classrooms apparently need and deserve a full tool box of pedagogical practices" (p. 471).

Researchers find that exemplary teachers teach differently than their less effective counterparts. Considering this, Roller (2000) argues that current legislative mandates encourage a simplistic, prescriptive response to teaching literacy that simply satisfies the public and results in instruction that is less responsive to individual student needs. The International Reading Association (IRA) Position Statement (2000) professes, "Every child deserves excellent reading teachers because teachers make a difference in children's reading achievement and motivation to read" (p. 1).

Research Questions

This case study of one rural school's reading curriculum reform process was guided by the following questions:

1. How was a reading curriculum innovation *initiated* in this school district?

    a. How did the district determine the reading curriculum innovation?

    b. What role did administration play in determining this new reading innovation?

    c. What role did teachers play in determining the new reading curriculum?

2. How was the reading curriculum innovation *implemented* in this school district?

    a. What role did administration play during the implementation of the innovation?

    b. What were teachers' reactions to implementation of the reading curriculum?

    c. What do administration and teachers say about mandates such as No Child Left Behind?

3. What are first through third grade teachers' present concerns about the reading curriculum innovation?

    a. What are teachers' current stages of concern with the innovation?

    b. How do teachers' individual stages of concern reflect implementation concerns with this innovation?

4. What elements of a leadership framework emerged through this reading reform innovation?

<u>Definition of Terms</u>

Terms used in this study include:

Accountability--annual progress as measured by standardized test scores

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)--Accountability formula and timeline to measure yearly student progress over twelve years for all students to become proficient (intermediate and high levels) in the state

Balanced Literacy Instruction--teaching philosophy and practice that balances instruction with skills and meaning; in this study will be referred to as balanced reading

Basal Reading Program--a collection of student texts and workbooks, teachers' manuals, and supplemental materials for developmental reading instruction

Beginning Reading--skills and strategies for children in grades 1-3 that enable them to comprehend the printed word

Effective Reading Instruction-- enhanced reading proficiency through being responsive to children's needs as they become readers

Effective Reading Teachers-- teachers who provide expert, exemplary reading

    instruction based on reading research that is responsive to students' needs

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB)-- Reauthorization of the Federal

    Elementary and Secondary Education Act signed into law on January 8, 2002

Relational Trust- alternative conceptualization of interpersonal exchange

Scientifically-based Reading Programs-- programs supported by the government

    that are based on "scientific evidence" and "proven" to work

Semi-structured Interview –open-ended interview questions that allow further response

    expansion

Thick Description--term coined by anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, to describe the

    layered, rich and contextual description of an event or social scene (Geertz, 1973)

Word Works -- materials that provide explicit and direct instruction in the alphabetic

    principle, phonemic awareness, phonics, and word structure.

<u>Significance of the Study</u>

    Since the No Child Left Behind mandate is recent and focuses on changes in elementary reading curriculum, there is little research on its effects and its impact on teachers who are already involved in a curriculum change process. Researchers report that mandated changes often lead to change in form rather than substance. Substantive systemic change, on the other hand, requires patience and perseverance (Hall & Hord, 2001). Without real attention to the complexities involved in curricular changes, reforms have often failed. It is not surprising then, that reading education is often characterized as a pendulum swing in the debate on how to best teach reading (Pearson, 2002; Taylor,

Nelson, & Adelman, 1999). Since the NCLB legislation directs attention specifically toward reading instruction, I chose to focus my research on the reading aspect of balanced literacy even though balanced literacy also includes writing, listening, and speaking. My interviews, observations, and analysis of documents address the context of teaching balanced reading within first through third grade classrooms.

In order to acquire an understanding of systemic change and influences upon it in regard to beginning reading curriculum, this study focuses on one district's curriculum change process. Quantitative research methods have grown out of a scientific search for cause and effect that seeks to explain interactions in a theory. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, treat uniqueness of individual cases as important to understanding. Knowing the particulars of a case is an important aim (Stake, 1995). Case studies are often used to describe many educational change processes (Fullan, 2001a; Goldenberg, 2004; Sarason, 1995) and to look at analysis from an inductive rather than deductive perspective. In order "to sharpen the search for understanding, qualitative researchers perceive what is happening in key episodes or testimonies and represent happenings with their own direct interpretation and stories" (Stake, 1995, p. 40). As a qualitative researcher my goal is not to limit my explication to defining variables and developing instruments for data gathering and reporting. Rather, my purpose is to be:

> an interpreter in the field to observe the workings of the case, one who records objectively what is happening but simultaneously examines its meaning and redirects observation to refine or substantiate those meanings...The aim is to thoroughly understand (Stake, 1995, p. 8-9).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review begins with a look at major trends in an attempt to learn

from the past. As George Santayana (1905) taught us,

> Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness...those who
> cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. In the first stage of life the
> mind is frivolous and easily distracted, it misses progress by failing in
> consecutiveness and persistence. This is the condition of children and barbarians,
> in which instinct has learned nothing from experience (p. 284).

Educators need to critically examine the efforts of the past in order to build

knowledge and to sustain educational progress. In the review of literature I discuss four

aspects critical to this case study: reading instruction at the elementary level, the

reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind

Act of 2001), an explanation of the theoretical framework concerning the Concerns-

Based Adoption Model in relation to change, and general principles of the change process

contributing to a culture of change.

For many years reading instruction as well as teachers' and local school districts'

rights to determine instructional methods for reading instruction went relatively

unchallenged (Roller, 2000). Recently, however, an increased effort to force change

places higher expectations of accountability on school districts and classroom teachers.

When teachers are working through their own change process within the reading

curriculum, we do not know the relationship between forced change and teachers'

concerns about change, with an eye toward their ultimate acceptance and implementation

of an innovation.

<u>Reading Instruction</u>

The state of reading instruction during the past ten years resembles a tug-o-war game with players on each side pulling as hard as they can in opposite directions. Reading instruction has been referred to as the "Great Debate" (Chall, 1967) or more recently as, the "Reading Wars" (Goodman, 1998; Lemann, 1997; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Allington and Woodside-Jiron (2002) state, "The profession and the public are again engaged in a vociferous, and sometimes rancorous, debate about how to best develop the reading proficiency of beginning readers" (p. 196). Public press and political perception promote a dichotomized view of reading instruction with an either/or approach (Manzo, 1998), even when research has found no perfect method (Duffy & Hoffman, 1999), no silver bullet, (Spiegel, 1998), and no proven program (Allington, 2002b). To search for a single solution, as Spiegel (1998) puts it, "is fruitless" (p. 120). In a synthesis of six major U.S. research studies from over thirty years of research, Cowen (2003) finds common ground within these studies that gives credence to implementing a balanced approach to reading instruction.

<u>Bond and Dykstra's First-Grade Studies</u>

Research demonstrates that expert teachers produce readers regardless of the reading series or prescribed method (Allington, 2002a). Bond and Dykstra's (1967/1997) seminal research is one of the earliest comprehensive studies on how children begin to learn to read. Since research on reading in the 1960s was "so vague, contradictory, and incomplete as to encourage conflicting interpretations" (Graves & Dykstra, 1997, p. 343), a comparative research design was employed to examine alternative reading approaches

of the day (Bond & Dykstra, 1967/1997). Using six types of instructional materials or methods as experimental treatments in more than one project, researchers compared a variety of popular reading programs of the time. The results found that "children learn to read in a variety of materials and methods" (Bond & Dykstra, 1997, p. 416). Classrooms using an integrated approach of systematic phonics that combined reading and writing for meaning, surpassed those simply using mainstream basal programs. Bond and Dykstra found that a more balanced reading approach produced better beginning readers (Cowen, 2003).

Chall's Study: The Great Debate

While Bond and Dykstra were comparing first-grade reading programs, Jeanne S. Chall (1967) was conducting a comprehensive and scholarly analysis of research on classroom reading instruction practices. Her research investigations included classroom observations, personal interviews, and documentation and analyses of a variety of existing reading programs in the 1960s (Cowen, 2003). In terms of the reading instruction debate, one of her primary questions was whether or not children learn better with beginning methods that stress meaning versus the learning of the code (systematic phonics). Reviewing over fifty years of relevant research, she reported that, "in grades one through three, systematic code outcomes were stunningly better in word recognition, spelling vocabulary, and reading comprehension" (Cowen, 2003. p. 23). Although her investigation reinforced the need for teaching phonetic skills, Chall (1967) did not promote teaching these skills simply for skills' sake, but she asserted that a measure of

balance is required. "No program can do all things for all children, and no program can be all things for all teachers" (p. 310). Chall (1980) emphasizes that

> the existing evidence seems to indicate that each stage of reading requires a different balance of skills versus application with the earlier levels needing relatively more direct teaching of skills. But even here, applications are needed through listening to stories, through oral reading of stories and plays and the like. Thus, although the skills are necessary for most children, and a stronger emphasis on skills is needed in the earlier grades the humanistic aspects must not be forgotten even then (p. 58).

Becoming a Nation of Readers

Even with these two critical reports giving support for a balanced approach to reading instruction, political concerns stemming from economic recession translated into educational criticism with the releasing of a highly critical report from the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). U.S. Department of Education's *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983), released a "frenzy of education reforms, including the formation of yet another reading synthesis study to determine once again why the youngest children were not all reading on grade level" (Cowen, 2003, p. 30). Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkenson's (1985) report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* (BNR), investigated three areas of inquiry on language learning. The areas considered were (a) linguistics, (b) child development, and (c) behavioral science. This report stressed the importance of a balanced reading approach with phonics being an important component but also concluded that children should read words in meaningful texts. Anderson et al. (1985) found that the average amount of time devoted to sustained reading of connected text in a first grade classroom was only 7 to 8 minutes. Up to 70% of the allocated

reading time was spent completing worksheets and workbooks during independent seatwork (cited in Reutzel & Cooter, 2000). BNR reports that an integrated approach to reading instruction supports beginning readers and emphasizes that developing interest and motivation helps to create lifetime readers (Cowen, 2003).

Beginning to Read

More recently, a fourth research synthesis has been referred to as the "sequel" to Chall's 1967 research regarding beginning reading. Marilyn Jager Adam's (1990) research study, *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print,* was not to outline a best method, since research continually indicated that no one particular method proves to be more effective than another; instead, her intent was to "establish principles and goals that would enable teachers, publishers, and other interested stakeholders to develop a method of instructing children that included a balance of code emphasis and meaning emphasis" (Cowen, 2003, p. 41). Ultimately, Adams's (1990) research revealed that although phonemic awareness and phonetic knowledge are critical to beginning reading success, good readers do more than simply decode words. Effective readers must develop an understanding of words (spelling, meanings, and pronunciations) and be able to read them with fluency in a variety of contexts. To develop good readers, Adams (1990) describes four key components that need to work in synchrony when learning to read. The components are (a) phonological processing, (b) orthographic processing, (c) meaning processing, and (d) context processing. These four processes can be joined together in a balanced approach to teach beginning readers. Following publication of this

document, the importance of phonics in early reading has been acknowledged and Adams

has called for balance in reading instruction that leads to understanding (Cowen, 2003).

<u>Preventing Reading Difficulties (PRD)</u>

Most recently, results from two U.S. studies have had an impact on current

reading directly as well as through their influence on legislation. In the first, concerns

rising from a realization that higher levels of literacy will be required for its citizenship in

the future, the U.S. government launched a major national literacy report, *Preventing*

Reading Difficulties in Young Children (PRD) (Snow, et al., 1998) sponsored by the U.S.

Department of Education and National Academy of Sciences. Disparity in reading

achievement and the need for a highly literate society served as catalysts for studying

effective interventions for young children at risk of not learning how to read. Snow, et al.,

(1998) recommended best practices to prevent reading difficulties for young children:

- use reading to obtain meaning from print,
- have frequent and intensive opportunities to read,
- be exposed to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships,
- learn about the nature of the alphabetic writing system, and
- understand the structure of spoken words (p. 3).

The study indicated that progress in reading beyond the initial level requires:

- having a working understand of how sounds are represented alphabetically,
- sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts,
- sufficient background knowledge and vocabulary to render written texts meaningful and interesting,
- control over procedures for monitoring comprehension and repairing misunderstanding, and
- continued interest and motivation to read for a variety of purposes pp. 3-4).

PRD is clear about their recommendations, but like other studies, it does not recommend specific instructional approaches, materials, or texts. At the beginning of the document, PRD presents a definition of balanced reading instruction:

> "Balance" could mean splitting one's time evenly across activities designed to practice the alphabetic principle and activities designed to support comprehension. "Integration" means precisely that the opportunities to learn these two aspects of skilled reading should be going on at the same time, in the context of the same activities, and that the choice of instructional activities should be part of an overall, coherent approach to supporting literacy development, not haphazard selection from unrelated, though varied, activities (p. viii).

Although the committee's recommendations target first through third-grade readers who are at risk of failure in reading, the researchers conclude that the components are necessary for all children's literacy development (Cowen, 2003). In fact, the study not only defines balance in reading but also points out that all children require exemplary instruction from knowledgeable and skillful teachers.

Echoing this finding, the International Reading Association (IRA) Position Statement (2000) stated, "Every child deserves excellent reading teachers because teachers make a difference in children's reading achievement and motivation to read" (p. 1). Recent research commissioned by the Teacher Training Agency at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom sought to apply research on general teacher effectiveness to that of the teaching practices of effective teachers of literacy. Although the United Kingdom has the explicit requirements of a National Curriculum, there were still differences in student achievement although the same content was taught. Since the materials and requirements for teaching literacy were essentially the same for all students, the main variation between the teachers was their pedagogy. Effective teachers

of literacy taught differently than their less effective counterparts (Wray, Medwell, Fox, & Poulson (1999); Wray, et al., 2000).

National Reading Panel Report

Finally, reading instruction became an important political issue during the 1990s evidenced by the introduction of the Reading Excellence Act (H.B. 2416) to the U.S. House of Representatives on November 7, 1997. This marked the beginning of legislation focused on reading (Cowen, 2003). Most state governments had already established state literacy standards and instituted high-stakes testing as a measure of accountability, but the federal government felt it a matter of national concern to scientifically answer questions about instructional approaches to teaching reading. In 1997 Congress established a national panel to assess the status of research-based knowledge on the teaching of reading, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read (National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000).

This fourteen-member panel formed subgroups to study five literacy areas and to answer questions about which of the following areas improves reading achievement and reading comprehension:

- Alphabetics
  -Phonemic awareness instruction
  -Phonics instruction
- Fluency
- Comprehension
  -Vocabulary instruction
  -Text comprehension instruction
  -Teacher preparation and comprehension strategies instruction
- Teacher education and reading instruction
- Computer technology and reading instruction (NRP, 2000, 2-3).

The panel developed and adopted a set of rigorous research methodological standards to guide in screening the research literature relevant to each topic area addressed by the panel. This selective process identified only experimental or quasi-experimental studies as valid research-based data. Once the studies were selected, a detailed analysis of each study was undertaken (NRP, 2000).

This NRP report supports the significance of phonetics in early reading instruction and also emphasizes the importance of identifying words automatically when reading. This skill leads to greater reading fluency. By developing fluency, the child's ability to read with comprehension grows as well as the child's confidence and motivation for reading (Cowen, 2003). Although highly criticized by some (Allington, 2002a; Coles, 2000; Cunningham, 2002; Roller, 2000; Yatvin, 2002), the NRP's report influences reading instruction in schools today; therefore it cannot be dismissed. What's more, although the skills were separated in terms of research focus, they do not make an argument that these skills should be taught separately. Rather, NRP established that an integrated approach and a balance of all of these skills would increase reading achievement (Cowen, 2000).

With growing numbers of studies and reports, research has found over and over again that there is no one best approach to reading. Pearson (2002), a well respected reading researcher, notes that teachers often talk about, and more importantly, enact more balanced approaches.

Balanced Reading Program

One recent empirical study examines the effect of balanced reading on reading

achievement. Guthrie (2001) found that balanced reading instruction significantly

predicted reading achievement, after statistically controlling for parental education. The

study demonstrated that classrooms with balance in the manner in which reading

instruction incorporates skills with opportunities for real reading experiences, showed

higher reading achievement than did classrooms with low levels of balance. In his

conclusions, Guthrie (2001) stated, "... increased support should be given teachers within

the school. Differences in student reading engagement and reading achievement were

more attributable to the teacher than to schools" (p. 156).

If teachers are the key to making certain students receives balanced instruction,

much depends on a teacher's ability to make instructional decisions based on the

individual needs of students within the context of the classroom (Wharton-McDonald,

Pressley, Rankin, Mistretta, Yokoi, & Ettenberger, 1997). A balanced reading program

provides a framework for teaching reading to children. "Balanced literacy programs,

which include reading and writing, are easily defined with three important words: *to,*

with, and by" (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000, p. 402). The major elements are shown in Table

1 for balanced literacy in first through third grades

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) explain that the elements of a balanced literacy

program are not fixed and separate. Activity in classrooms moves smoothly around the

elements but each element requires a different level of support from the teacher and level

of control or independence from the children. Paez (2003) refers to the "food groups"

Table 1.

Major Elements in Balanced Literacy Instruction in Grades1-3

Reading TO Children	Reading WITH Children	Reading BY Children
Teacher Read Alouds	Shared Reading Experience	Readers' Theater
Small-Group	Shared Rhythm and Singing Experience Language Experience Guided Reading	Sustained Silent Reading School & Class Libraries

(Reutzel & Cooter, 2000, p. 402)

(Hall & Cunningham, 1998) of balanced literacy instruction when explaining a framework for instruction: (a) word study, learning about spelling patterns or high-frequency words; (b) shared reading, teachers and students reading a text together with the teacher modeling reading strategies; (c) guided reading, small-group reading instruction at student's reading level; and (d) independent reading, reading by one's self. Teacher read-alouds surround this framework allowing for modeling and sharing of quality literature (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). [Writing is also included in this frame but is not being addressed in this study.]

A balanced literacy program that defines components assists teachers in making instructional decisions based on individual needs. Paez (2003) states, "Using a balanced literacy approach can be difficult. There is no scripted manual in which teachers can find out what to teach each day. Much of the instruction is driven by assessment. Teachers must know their students' strengths and weaknesses and use this information" (p. 759).

Consequently, balanced literacy instruction, in theory, requires no manual. However, publishing companies have materials available for schools to help guide instruction (Harcourt Achieve, 2004; Scholastic, 2002; Wright Group, 2001).

<div align="center">No Child Left Behind</div>

President George W. Bush stated, "We believe education is a national priority and a local responsibility." Federal legislation signed into law on January 8, 2002 represented a reform plan that proposed extensive changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act enacted in 1965 (United States Department of Education [USDE], 2002a). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) promises an "accountable" education system, expanded options for parents, increased flexibility and local control, and finally, an emphasis in teaching methods that are scientifically proven to work. NCLB vows that all students will be at grade level by the end of third grade and is confident that if educators use the best materials, scientifically-proven instructional methods, and the textbooks aligned with state standards, students can succeed (USDE, 2002b).

In what has been referred to as "historic" and "landmark," President George W. Bush signed the reauthorization of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act on January 8, 2002 (USDE, 2002a). Now referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act, this new bipartisan legislation authorizes $26.5 billion for federal spending on elementary and secondary education. This is a significant increase over previous legislation (USDE, 2002a). Within this K-12 legislation four reform principles resonate: "stronger accountability results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for

parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work" (Bush, 2002, p. 1).

This legislation, touted as a "New Era in Education" (USDE, 2002a) outlines expectations for several areas of public education, but one that is an especially targeted goal is that of reading achievement. States must immediately create their own standards for what children should know and learn in reading, and students' progress will be measured by tests in grades 3-12 that evaluate students based on these standards. In addition, the Reading First funding promises to ensure that every child in public school learns to read at or above grade level by the third grade (Bush, 2002). With the availability of these funds also comes the promise of "stronger accountability for results" (USDE, 2002a).

According to American politicians, part of the bargain for accepting federal education dollars has always involved submitting children to testing (Allington, 2002a). Testing attempts to keep schools honest and to make certain that tax dollars are well spent. Tying accountability to assessment is the perennial pledge in the world of education (Abrams & Madaus, 2003; Boaler, 2003). Bush (2002) refers to accountability as a way of guaranteeing results and improving schools. In terms of legislation, this means that Washington will provide funding to states so that they can design and implement tests. These tests will reveal if students are making progress, and they will show educators what is working and what areas need improvement. Secretary of Education Rod Paige states, "There is no way to authentically have high-quality teaching without appropriate tests. We can only measure a teacher's success through the

improvement of his or her students" (Renwick, 2002, p. 24). This seems to be an actuality of today's consumer society, and it places additional burdens on assessment programs and educators.

In addition to the testing requirement, No Child Left Behind also promises to fund curricula and teaching methods that work. In statements about the new legislation, the USDE (2002a) reports that Reading First, an earlier federal program for beginning readers, is now designed around a comprehensive knowledge base of the skills shown to teach children how to read. This legislated program reflects the mandate from Congress that only "scientifically based research" on how children learn to read, completed by the National Reading Panel in 2000, be supported for use in the classroom.

Classrooms must now reflect the findings of the National Reading Panel who applied an objective research review methodology to "undertake comprehensive, formal, evidence-based analyses of experimental and quasi-experimental research literature relevant to a set of selected topics judged to be of central importance in teaching children to read" (NRP, 2000, p. 1). These instructional conclusions were based on only reviewing research that met certain rigorous quantitative standards like those used in medical or psychological research. It was felt that the efficacy of materials or methodologies used for teaching reading had to be subjected to the same robust research methodologies (NRP, 2000, p. 5). In essence, the studies had to attain standards meeting a narrow definition of "scientific" research, in order for it to qualify as worthy of further analysis by the Panel. Cunningham (2002) points out that the methodological standards did not "arise from the reading research, but rather were imposed upon it" (p. 51).

In terms of narrowing the analysis, the Panel also had to limit the number of studies identified as relevant to reading (more than 100,000 published since 1966) in order to complete the task it was assigned (NRP, 2000). Consequently, the Panel studied the following areas in terms of reading and reading instruction:

- Alphabetics (phonemic-awareness and phonics instruction)

- Fluency

- Comprehension (vocabulary instruction, text comprehension instruction, teacher preparation and comprehension strategies instruction)

- Teacher Education and Reading Instruction, and

- Computer Technology and Reading Instruction (Report of the National Reading Panel, 2002; Cunningham, 2002).

The improvement of children's reading achievement is a major goal in the United States (USDE, 2002a). With energy and efforts largely spent on developing scientifically-based reading programs, little is mentioned in terms of individual teachers during the enactment of this reform movement even though research points to teachers as critical players in what makes a difference in student reading achievement. Instead, the current reform movement seeks to define effective teaching in terms of standardized test scores, scientific-based programs, and mandates that *all* children will be able to demonstrate their proficiency by the end of third grade (Bush, 2002).

Concerns-Based Adoption Model

"Change is a double-edged sword. Its relentless pace these days runs us off our feet. Yet when things are unsettled, we can find new ways to move ahead and to create breakthroughs not possible in stagnant societies" (Fullan, 2001a, p. 1). In this view, Fullan recognizes that change can be a promising catalyst for examining new ideas and possibilities. Kotter (1996) argues that change can be transformational, but it is not as simple as providing a few in-service training sessions. Transformation implies a substantive conversion rather than a temporary fix and change has to be viewed as a process. According to recent reforms directed toward school improvement, the anticipated product of reform, teachers must change. In the recent report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children,* researchers concluded that quality classroom instruction in primary grades is the single best weapon against reading failure (Snow, et al., 1998). The role of individual teachers is an important factor in the teaching of reading, and change facilitators need to be cognizant of fact. Realizing this critical change factor, the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall & Hord, 1987) provides a theoretical stance for acknowledging the process of innovation from an individual perspective. Hall and Hord believe that there is a personal side to change that is frequently ignored.

CBAM, as a theory, emerged from research and practice opportunities Hall, Hord, and colleagues engaged in during the 1970s (Hall & Hord, 1987). During that period, school personnel began questioning the value of innovations introduced into schools. Often, during evaluations of innovations' impact on schools, the results reported to be of

"no significant difference." Seeking what else might influence the success or demise of an innovation, Hall and Hord (1987) proposed that there was more to an innovation than simply delivering the materials. The researchers hypothesized that there was a process at work when it came to implementing an innovation that called for teacher change.

Following carefully observed and documented change processes and data from related studies, Hall and Hord (1987) compiled a large research base for documenting the different stages and levels of change teachers were experiencing. Grounded in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, CBAM is based on the following assumptions:

- that change is a process that takes time,
- that change is achieved in sequential stages,
- that individuals are the primary concern of change efforts, and
- that the stages of change involve both perceptions and feelings of individuals concerning the innovation as well as their skill in its use (McCarthy, 1982).

CBAM as a theory of innovation states a particularly important precondition for successful change: adopting a change involves understanding how teachers perceive change so that the facilitators can adjust accordingly. "In too many cases in the past, it appeared that change facilitators based their interventions on their own needs and time lines rather than on their clients' needs and change progress" (Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 5).

Using fourteen years of research and observation, Hall and Hord (1987) developed and authenticated a sequential look at a dimension of change (see Figure 1). As a change model, the CBAM acknowledges that all too often teachers are given mandates with little support. When a concerns-based approach is applied, facilitators work in concert with teachers in order to support their emerging and developing needs.
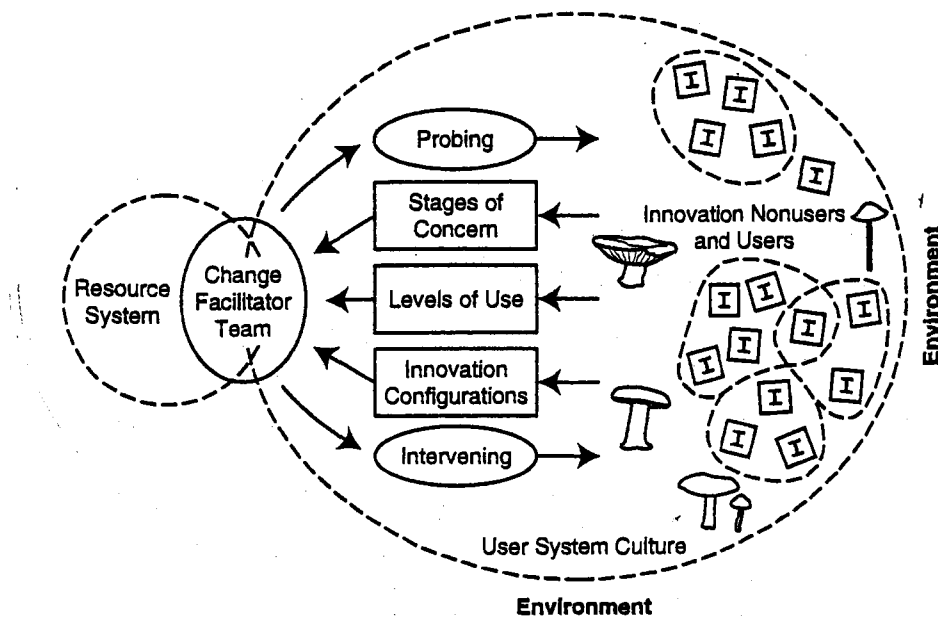
Figure 1. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model.

A change facilitator team engages in probing and intervening to assist with the change

process as members of the user system go through various stages of working with an

innovation. The *innovation configurations mapping* asks three questions about what the

innovation should look like for users, the *stages of concern* refers to specific

points that users go through as they enter or work with an innovation, and *levels of use*

identify if and how an innovation is being used. In the environment of the user change

culture, users and nonusers exist and it is the job of the change facilitators to aid in

moving all users toward change. The mushrooms represented in the illustration stand for

issues that inevitably come up in change and can grow, like mushrooms, either harmless

or poisonous (Hall & Hord, 2001).

The concept of concerns about an innovation recognizes that change is not only

process; it is also recognized as individual progress.

> The composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought and
> consideration given to a particular issue or task is called concern. Depending on
> our personal make-up, knowledge, and experiences, each person perceives and
> mentally contends with a given issue differently; thus there are different kinds of
> concern.
> ...To be concerned means to be in a mentally aroused state about something. The
> intensity of the arousal will depend on the person's past experiences and
> associations with the subject of the arousal, as well as how close to the person and
> how immediate the issue is perceived as being. (Hall, George, & Rutherford,
> 1979, p. 5).

In order for real change to take place, according to the CBAM, the leader has to

focus on seven types of concerns that adopters may have as they are going through the

reform process: (a) Awareness, (b) Informational, (c) Personal, (d) Management,

(e) Consequences, (f) Collaboration, and (g) Refocusing (Hall & Hord, 2001). Each

stage has important implications as to the success or failure of an innovation, and they

cannot be forced (Ellsworth, 2000). Each of these stages range from "self" type

concerns, which are focused more on the teacher, to "task" concerns, which focus on

logistics and scheduling in relation to the reform, and conclude with "impact" types of

concerns, which deal with making the reform more successful (Hall & Hord, 1987).

Each of these Stages of Concern address affective dimensions of the change process, and

recognizing concerns coupled with the allowance for understanding the interventions and

adaptations that change facilitators make in the change process, allow CBAM to be a

useful conceptual framework for supporting change (Hall & Hord, 1987).

At all levels change is "highly complex, multivariate, and dynamic" (Hall and

Hord, 2001, p. 4). Whether change is at the district level or at the individual level, the

process follows a number of principles that summarize predictable elements of change:

1. Change is a process, not an event
2. There are significant differences in what is entailed in development and implementation of an innovation
3. An organization does not change until the individuals with it change
4. Innovations come in different sizes
5. Interventions are the actions and events that are key to the success of the change process
6. Although both top-down and bottom-up change can work, a horizontal perspective is best
7. Administrator leadership is essential to long-term change success
8. Mandates can work
9. The school is the primary unit for change
10. Facilitating change is a team effort
11. Appropriate interventions reduce challenges of change
12. The context of the school influences the process of change (Hall and Hord, 2001, p. 4-16).

A philosophy that recognizes change as a process also has to acknowledge the

aforementioned principles if realistic changes are going to occur.

Educational Reform and the Change Process

Recent public and governmental interest in early reading instruction has continued

to add fuel to the perennial fire about the best way to teach young children to read.

Although reading researchers have always exchanged professional discourse and debate

about teaching reading amongst themselves (Aaron, Chall, Durkin, Goodman, &

Strickland, 1990a; Aaron, Chall, Durkin, Goodman, & Strickland, 1990b), Rayner,

Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, and Seidenberg (2002) contend that recent heated arguments

about the most effective method of teaching have polarized the teaching community.

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige has announced that President Bush's extraordinary reading reform initiative will:

> transform reading instruction from the fads of the past into the most focused, early reading initiative we have ever undertaken. The program's focus on scientific evidence, including the essential elements of proven reading instruction, constitutes a recipe for success. We can now ensure that *all* children will be given the tools and instruction they need to read well by the end of third grade (USDE., 2002b, p.1).

Media headlines report of programs fitting these reform guidelines. The *Baltimore Sun* newspaper, for example, reports that a program was rated "No. 1 by a national panel of reading experts convened by the *Baltimore Sun*. Open Court, with its heavy emphasis on phonics, has a beefy body of research to back it up" (cited in Coles, 2000, p. 53). Although the supporting evidence consisted of one study, initiatives translate into political platforms for top policymakers endorsing the reform (Coles, 2000).

Fullan and Stiegelbauer's (1991) change model identifies conditions affecting the implementation of change. This model identifies three factors that interact with the implemented change: (a) Characteristics of Change [Need, Clarity, Complexity, & Quality/Practicality]; (b) Local Characteristics [District, Community, Principal, & Teacher]; and (c) External Factors [Government and other Agencies] (p. 68). In reading reform mandates, such as NCLB, a clear need has to be established so that the implementation is warranted. The change also has to seem reasonably possible. Addressing the second factor, the local district and participants have to see reason and agree on the direction of the reform. Finally, external factors such as the government and mandates affect the implementation process.

Kotter (1996) shares one fundamental insight about transformations in general: change does not come easy for any number of reasons. Therefore, Kotter proposes an eight-stage process for creating change that builds upon eight basic errors that often undercut transformational efforts. The eight stages or steps are:

a. establishing a sense of urgency
b. creating the guiding coalition
c. developing a vision and strategy
d. communicating the change vision
e. empowering the broad-based action
f. generating short-term wins;
g. consolidating gains and producing more change
h. anchoring new approaches in the culture (Kotter, 1996, p. 21).

The first half of Kotter's 8 steps help to change the "status quo" in organizations, then stages 5 to 7 provide an outline for the implementation of the new change model. Finally, the concluding stage seeks to make the changes bond within the organization. Critical throughout this whole plan of change, however, is the concept of leadership vs. management. Leadership, believes Kotter, is what is truly needed for successful transformational change in today's fast-paced world.

Echoing Kotter's call for leadership in the change process, Fullan (2001a) proposes a framework for creating an environment or culture for change. Comprising of five components of leadership, Fullan's components "represent independent but mutually reinforcing forces for positive change" (p .3). These components consist of: (a) moral purpose; (b) understanding change; (c) relationship building; (d) knowledge creation and sharing; and (e) coherence making. Surrounding these components are leaders who have hope, enthusiasm, and energy. These are the people who bring commitment to its members who ultimately make things happen: more good, than bad (Fullan, 2001a).

The components referred to by Fullan (2001a) are supported through other change literature. Relationship building and coherence making, for example, align with longitudinal research on Chicago School Reform. "Recent research shows that social trust among teachers, parents, and school leaders improves much of the routine work of schools and is the key resource for reform" (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, p. 41). Basing investigations on theories of social capital, researchers developed a theory termed "relational trust" and analyzed its impact on three schools involved in the Chicago School Reform in the early 1990s (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The concepts of social capital and relational trust add a human element to reform. Newmann, King, and Youngs (as cited in, Fullan, 2001b) conclude that the "knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teachers as individuals is obviously important and can make a difference in individual classrooms" (p. 64). However, it is equally important that the organization must change as well as the individual.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) present longitudinal field-based study of school change. Three different Chicago communities were analyzed in terms of relational trust in the schools and the likelihood of organizational changes that would conclude with improved levels of student learning. Using surveys, observations, interviews, and analysis of student academic achievement in the early 1990s, researchers were able to develop and support an argument that "growth of relational trust in a school community fuels these multiple strands in the school change process and thereby contributes to improved student learning" (p. 121).

A barrier to this happening, however, may result from mandates. Change initiators need to be cognizant of change principles that recognize "Change as a process; not a product" (Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 4) and implemented with regard to what has been effective in light of the change process. Reform cannot be simply mandated, if it is to be change that matters. Reform also has to consider all of the stakeholders, but in particular, the teacher who is a critical player in this process (Hall & Hord, 1987; Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). Success of reading reform will depend upon many factors:

> In an era of high-stakes testing in schools and with a sense of urgency to show short-term results, leaders in a culture of change require a quality that all long-term effective leaders have—the capacity to resist a focus on short-term gains at the expense of deeper reform where gains are steady but not necessarily dramatic (Fullan, 2001a, p. 63).

Research shows that the support of central administrators is critical for a change in district practice. "Teachers and others know enough now, if they didn't twenty years ago, not to take change seriously unless central administrators demonstrate through actions that they should" (Fullan, 2001b, p. 81).

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In this study I sought to examine the case of one school district's change process and the influence of national policies on early reading instruction and their impact and influence on recently implemented reading curriculum. Although generally confined to the realms of literacy discourse within the educational community, recent anxiety surrounding the reading performance of America's schoolchildren has provoked national concern. With reading being placed high on the political agenda, the attention of the nation has been directed at early reading instruction (Bush, 2002; Song & Miskel, 2002). This recent attention has left school districts searching to reform curriculum or target programs promising to produce results that will raise student achievement (Vogler & Kennedy, 2003).

Since change (i.e. the learning of a new teaching method) is a process, not an event, and requires on-going observation to understand what actually takes place, the design of this study is a focused qualitative design. Merriam (2001) states, "Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (p. 5). Consequently, the selection of a qualitative research methodology was critical in accomplishing the purposes of this study:

- to capture the story of one district's progression through the development and implementation of a reading curriculum

- to examine the influence of state and federal mandates instituted during this innovation process

- to survey teachers' concerns directly related to adopting this particular reading reform

- to examine factors of leadership that have emerged through this reform process.

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative research is used to understand the uniqueness of a particular study and qualitative researchers try to discover and portray multiple views of a case, since a case will not be seen the same by everyone (Stake, 1995). Meaning is constructed through the eye of the researcher as people's thoughts and experiences are investigated, and the uniqueness of individual cases and contexts are important to understanding (Eisner, 1998; Stake, 1995).

Bogdan and Biklin (1982) outline the characteristics of qualitative research thus:

- Investigation has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.

- The research is descriptive and collected in the form of words or pictures, rather than numbers.

- The process of the research is as important as the product.

- Researchers tend to analyze their data in an inductive manner.

- Meaning is the greatest concern of the qualitative approach.

Study Design

I chose a case study approach for my study because it seeks to explain particular events and situations (Stake, 1995). Therefore, since I sought to understand one school district's journey in the selection, initiation, and implementation process of a reading curriculum, its impact on teachers in first through third grade classrooms, and the influence of federal legislation on the innovation, the design of a single case study was appropriate. This study sought to understand teachers' thoughts and perspectives on reform and the process of change through a reading curriculum. I sought to develop "what" and "how" questions about the meaningful change. Palmer (1998) laments that the usual assumption driving most reforms is "that meaningful change comes not from the human heart but from factors external to ourselves, from budgets, methodologies, curricula, and institutional restructuring" (p. 19). However, I chose to examine change from an internal perspective based on participants within the process. Therefore, an inductive method of analysis, the essence of qualitative research, was employed. The purpose was not to establish objective facts about the social world of curricular change; rather, the aim was to explore how my research participants understood, or made sense of, the topics in which I was interested (Peck & Secker, 1999).

Setting

This study took place in a rural school district located in the upper Midwest serving approximately 9,000 people. Since the area contains a wide area of flat fertile ground, the primary industry has traditionally been farming in this area. However, recent economic challenges have forced many families off of the farm and into the factories that

have located in Adamsburg, a city of approximately 5,000 people. These factories

provide employment for the blue-collared workers who live here and raise their families.

The families are 98% Caucasian and those qualifying for free or reduced-priced lunches

varies from 27% to 43% dependent upon the attendance center. School buses have to

travel to four elementary schools in four different towns. Two of these towns are twenty-

five miles away from the main center in Adamsburg and the other is ten miles away.

The main administrative and educational center is home to 565 seventh through

twelfth grade students in the whole district and approximately 381 Adamsburg pre-

kindergarten through sixth grade students and 334 other students from all outlying

schools. The average class size is approximately 18 students per classroom at the lower

elementary level.

Participants

I utilized interviews as my primary source of data. My participants included the

district superintendent, an elementary school principal and ten first through third grade

teachers from two different schools in this district. The school superintendent is male

and has been at the district for six years. The female principal is a former teacher in this

district, and she has been an elementary school principal in the district fourteen years.

The ten first through third grade teachers are all female and their teaching experience

ranges from six to thirty-four years. Levels of education vary as well with three teachers

holding a masters degree, three teachers holding a BA plus 30, and four teachers with a

BA plus recertification credits (Table 2). The teachers' ages range from late twenties to

late fifties. All teachers have taught elementary reading for at least two years. Eight of

Table 2.

Teachers (Grades 1-3) Involved in the Reading Curriculum Innovation

Teacher	School	Grade	Ed. Level	Years Taught
Angela Lyons	Forrest Hills	1	BA	6
Tammy Eastwood	Forrest Hills	1	MA	11
Vickie Rogers	Emma Rose	1	BA	12
Becky Nim	Forrest Hills	2	BA+30	26
Tara Flaten	Forrest Hills	2	BA+	16
Terri Buhler	Emma Rose	2	BA	10
Yvonne Paulson	Forrest Hills	3	MA	31
Karen Baylor	Forrest Hills	3	BA+48	31
Lana Taylor	Emma Rose	3	BA	34
Paula Franks	Forrest Hills	1-2 (reading)	MA	20

the ten teachers were working in the school at the initiation of this innovation and nine of the teachers will continue to teach in the school during the next school year.

Teachers (listed by pseudonyms) were selected for their experience in working with the reading innovation in first through third grades. The participants represent teachers at each of the grade levels in two different schools within the district. I chose two teachers at each grade level and the early elementary reading specialist from the main center and all first through third grade teachers at the outlying school that was ten miles from the main center. These schools were reasonably close together so that I could interview and observe classrooms. All participants read and signed the human subjects review form (see Appendix A). Pseudonyms were used for all teachers, administrators,

the district, and school buildings so as to retain a level of confidentiality for the purposes of this study.

Data Collection Procedures

Since the primary method of this research is to provide a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of one school district's change process in relation to a reading innovation and to examine reactions to current literacy legislation, a qualitative method, in a natural setting, with purposive rather than random sampling was employed. I utilized interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents, as I "pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all that exists" (Stake, 1995, p. 37) in one school district's reading curriculum change process. As a qualitative researcher, I addressed the uniqueness of the individual case and context as important to understanding the particularity of this situation. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) that were tape-recorded and then transcribed. Each interview took approximately 45 minutes to an hour and was held at a location convenient to the interviewee. A tape recorder was used with permission from the participants.

Observation field-notes provided a contextual setting to observe balanced reading instruction in action. Observations confirmed information attained during the semi-structured interviews and added to support to comments made by teachers regarding literature in the classroom. Descriptions of classroom aesthetics provided evidence that classroom teachers valued children's literature from their former curriculum but were also working to integrate the balanced perspective into their reading program.

Announcements, handouts, and minutes from the research groups and then meetings with elementary faculty provided historical documents as secondary sources for the study (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998). This data yielded rich results on one specific model for implementing change, data on individual teacher's reactions to the local curriculum change as well as federally mandated change in the teaching of beginning literacy, and provided information on how the change process worked in one school district.

I interviewed participants using a semi-structured interview protocol (Wepner & Tao, 2002). Semi-structured interviews provided a comfortable protocol for data gathering as I posed the initial questions and allowed interviewees to expand on their responses. This format provided a venue that took on a conversational tone and allowed interviewees to elaborate on concerns or issues (Frana, 1995). I had found this protocol to be effective in conducting a qualitative case study on grouping and reading instruction in a neighboring school district.

Using this research experience, I located a school in the midst of a curriculum change process and became interested in teachers' perceptions and reactions to current changes in reading instruction. Within this context, I also examined the influences of mandated reading reform, in particular, the NCLB legislation, teachers' stages of concern (Hall & Hord, 2001) with the process, and then change principles in general as they related to educational change. In my analysis categories were not assumed a priori; rather, the work was inductive (Bogdan & Bilkin, 1998) thus shaping the questions as categories emerged.

After tape recording ten teacher interviews and using notes with two administrators, my student assistant and I transcribed the interviews. The transcripts ranged in length from eight pages to twenty-five pages of data with most yielding fourteen pages.

Examining the data, I used a constant comparative method, where data from the interviews and my documents are compared. This is consistent with the inductive process of qualitative research (Merriam, 2001). From this analysis, broad categories emerged as I pieced together the chronology of change. Using these categories, I then examined the data line-by-line for specific categories and employed a process of posting notes on similar ideas and thoughts from each participant. This allowed me to identify the following areas: (a) change process and balanced literacy (innovation); (b) No Child Left Behind Legislation mandates; (c) concerns with the innovation; and (d) leadership within the change process.

Interviews

All semi-structured interview data were audio taped and transcribed. The semi-structured interviews consisted of open-ended questions that allowed interviewees an opportunity to respond and expand on their answers. With these questions, respondents were allowed to make comments and even go beyond the questions that were asked (Stake, 1995).

I continued to collect and to analyze data over a nine-month period (August 2003- April 2004) as themes emerged and a formal analysis and theory were developed near the

end of the study. Bogdan and Biklin (1998) refer to this as a constant-comparative method.

I also used a procedure referred to by Hall and Hord, (2001) as "one-legged" interviews. These interviews happen informally as contact is made with teachers in the hallways or classrooms as they go about their daily schedules. These informal queries provide the researcher with information about what is going on in terms of the innovation. Questions in these cases are generally open and allow respondents to expound on how the innovation is impacting their teaching. An inquiry such as, "How is the reading program going for you this year?" invites a response that often reflects present concerns or satisfaction. In effect, "one-legged" interviews are spontaneous conversations that happen "on-the-go" and yield rich data as to the continuing ups and downs of a change process.

Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes were also used to create an accurate portrait of the school, teachers, and administrators in this setting. Descriptive fieldnotes represented my best effort to "objectively record the details of what has occurred in the field. The objective is to capture the slice of life" (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998, p. 122) and paint a rich picture of the setting so that I was able to make analytical sense out of the study.

The classroom observations provided a detailed portrait as I recorded student and teacher exchanges during balanced reading instruction. Fieldnotes allowed me to reflect back on my observations so that I could provide details that would enhance the telling of my qualitative study. These notes provided me an explanatory backdrop or setting for

my research and reflected stages in teachers' change development. As I sat in unobtrusively in classrooms, I could record details about interactions and movements within the classroom as well as the organization of the classrooms. These objective observations, such as the presence of children's literature books in the classroom or the placement of phonics charts, validated statements that teachers made during interviews.

Survey Questionnaire

Using a survey questionnaire developed by Hall, et al., (1979), I determined teachers' Stages of Concern (SoC) with the reading innovation in its third year of implementation. This instrument has been evaluated for reliability and has been shown to have "high internal validity" (p. 10). In determining validity, the researchers used "inter-correlation matrices, judgments of concerns based on interview data, and confirmation of expected group differences and changes over time" to investigate the validity of the SoC Questionnaire scores (Hall, et al, 1979, p. 12).

Archival Documents

While accumulating this data, I used an analytical inductive method during data collection as well as in the final analyses. An administrator at the site as well as one of the teachers from the literacy research team allowed me to use their notebooks so that I could verify events and create a thick description of the innovation process employed by this school district (Geertz, 1973). All internal and external documents were accessed as aids in recreating a more complete and accurate qualitative inquiry (Eisner, 1998) of the change process. Preserving the accuracy of events this four-year period was critical to this study. Consequently, member checking was employed as I continually consulted two

members of the original curriculum committee as to the accuracy of my recreated timeline of events during this change process (Bogdan & Biklin, 1998).

Trustworthiness of the Study

The primary purpose of case study as one form of qualitative research is to understand the particulars of a situation or issue being investigated. The following strategies were used to ensure the reliability of this study:

Triangulation

Multiple sources of data were used to determine the history of the initiation and implementation of this case study, teachers' stages of concern about this reading innovation, and the impact of federal legislation during this period of time. The interviews that were conducted and documents provided the administration and teachers served as the primary sources of data for this study.

Member Checks

The raw data in the form of transcripts was available to each participant who asked to review the data to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered during the interviews. At least one interviewee, who played an active role in this innovation, read the dissertation in its entirety to make certain of its accuracy.

Researcher's Biases

My status as a teacher educator, who teaches literacy courses and works with pre-service teachers, may create a personal bias against recent legislation and its system for determining teacher accountability.

Delimitations

My own personal bias regarding recent NCLB legislation emerged during the study. As a believer in the importance of classroom teachers, I empathize with the pressures of the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) expectations legislated by government. I have personal biases against the accountability measures based on standardized test scores for determining the proficiency of young students.

Limitations

One limitation of this study has to do with qualitative case study research in general. Case studies are not necessarily generalizable to the general population. This is a case study of one school in a rural area. Therefore, findings may not be generalized to other school communities due to a variety of factors.

A second limitation is the fact that this study took place in the rural Midwest and reflects the demographics at the time of this research. Results reflect a school district with a 98% blue-collared Caucasian population. Consequently, the results could reflect a set of characteristics that are uniquely shaped by these factors and not allowing the study to be generalized to school districts representing a different set of demographics.

Time may also be a limitation, but my purpose was to examine teachers' reactions to a reading innovation change process in first through third grade. I also wanted to investigate their reactions to the reauthorization of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act of 2002 at the *beginning* of this mandated change. Since K-3 reading teachers are now familiar with this Act during its second year of implementation, this research was timely.

Introduction to Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

This case investigates teachers in their schools and classrooms and tells the story of change. An analytical inductive process was utilized to describe and to develop a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives on this particular reading reform process. Since inductive reasoning is the essence of qualitative research and progresses from specifics to broader generalizations, chapter four addresses questions specifically at the level of a school's involvement in a reading innovation process during the initiation and implementation stages. It then moves on to investigate how federally mandated change and its accompanying accountability expectations are addressed during a reading innovation process.

Chapter five proceeds to answer questions concerning teachers' concerns about the reading innovation. Using Hall and Hord's (2001) Stages of Concern (SoC) Questionnaire, individual teacher's concern levels about the reform process are addressed. Finally, chapter five explains general change principles at work in educational change with examples from interviews, documents, and fieldnotes.

Finally, chapter six offers a summary, conclusions, and suggestions for future research on continuing a successful change process.

<u>References to Data Sources</u>

In the following chapters, direct quotations from interviews will be cited by month and year of the interview, but the names of all interviewees are pseudonyms so as to preserve the confidentiality of the interviewee. Since personal communications are not forms of recoverable data, these are not included in the reference list (American Psychological Association APA, 2001).

CHAPTER 4

READING REFORM: RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The results of the data collection and the interpretations of their implications are

presented according to four research questions. The first two questions are addressed in a

chronological narrative that is organized in terms of phases of a change process. Chapter

four tells the story of the initiation and implementation phases of change and presents the

administrators' and teachers' roles and reactions to change during this innovation. Since

the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001interrupted

the implementation phase of this curriculum innovation, chapter four also examines the

reactions to and impact of these legislated mandates and accountability requirements.

Chapter five presents a broadened view of the change process and addresses this change

process in its third phase. By analyzing a Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) for

each teacher in this study along with interview data, interpretations are presented in terms

of the current status of this change process. These questions pertain to current concerns

with the innovation and the change principles involved in this reform; therefore, chapter

five is organized topically rather than chronologically.

<u>Initiating a Reading Curriculum Innovation</u>

Utilizing a framework for curriculum development that, according to a veteran

third grade teacher in the school district, "was unlike any process used in the past to

decide new reading curriculum" (September 2003), Whispering Pines embarked on a

journey to redefine reading instruction at the elementary level. This reading innovation

was implemented at the first through eighth grade levels at Whispering Pines School

District. This particular case focuses on implementation at the first through third grade levels in two of the schools in the district.

According to the school superintendent, Mr. Garrett (March 2004), a building principal, Mrs. Barth (April 2004), and a classroom teacher, Mrs. Franks (August 2003), Whispering Pines began its reform of the district reading curriculum during the fall of the 1999 – 2000 school year. As a college instructor who frequented the district as I supervised student teachers, I became curious about the reading program that was being implemented into the school. As my quest for information about this program progressed, the conversations about the change process surrounding this innovation fascinated me. Instead of focusing my research on the reading program itself, I decided instead to develop a qualitative query of the change process at Whispering Pines and to examine how recent mandates from policymakers impacted this reading program and impacted the larger change process.

<u>Determining a New Reading Curriculum</u>

I have worked as a college supervisor in the Whispering Pines School District for the past ten years, and I have also developed a professional, collaborative relationship with Paula Franks, one of the elementary teachers. Mrs. Franks's elementary students and my pre-service teachers have and still continue to work on projects together throughout the school year. I have witnessed changes at a variety of levels. Most obvious were changes in the security procedures, causing me to enter the glass-encased administrative office that faces the lunch area and dutifully sign-in, placing the bright chartreuse sticker on the left hand side of my chest announcing my presence as a

welcome guest in the school. I have also peripherally witnessed changes in the elementary reading program. The school has been vested in this change process during the past four-and-a-half years. Mrs. Franks, a veteran faculty member, described this reform as a process that was unlike any of the curriculum selection processes in the school's past. Assuming the role of a participant-observer in my research, I decided that this is the story of change that needed to be told.

As elementary principal at Forrest Hills, Mrs. Barth had documented the initial change efforts with notes from meetings and memoranda announcing speakers or presentations from the literacy team on the results of their research on best practice. I obtained notebooks from three years of planning and implementation so that I could piece together the chronological order of events in the curriculum change process (see Appendix C).

The Beginning of an Innovation: The Story.

On a blustery March day when the weather just couldn't make up its mind as to whether to snow or to rain, I patiently waited outside the superintendent's office and inhaled the eucalyptus smell from a nearby vase of flowers. I went over my semi-structured interview questions (Bogdin and Biklin, 1998) and hoped that I was heading down the right path for this interview. Since I had been engaged as a participant-observer and interviewer for the past six months in the district, I had now decided that I needed to connect with Mr. Garrett so that I could obtain his perspective on the innovation that I was researching. The door to Mr. Garrett's office opened and someone left and walked

down the hall away from where I was sitting. Mary, the secretary, informed me that Mr. Garrett could see me now.

As I stood up, the superintendent's door swung open and a friendly gentleman in his fifties greeted me at the door with a smile and a firm handshake. He led me into the office where a small round table with two chairs provided an easy atmosphere for exchange. Beginning with an informal conversation about the weather and then proceeding on to his educational background, Mr. Garrett took me back to six years ago when he first assumed the position as superintendent.

Set in a northern Midwest rural school district of approximately 1,539 students, Mr. Garrett was just beginning his first experience as a public school superintendent during the fall of 1998. As a geographically large district for this state, Whispering Pines contains four elementary schools in four different towns. Two of the towns are twenty-five miles away from the main center in Adamsburg and the other is ten miles away. The main administrative and educational center is home to 824 seventh through twelfth grade students in the whole district and approximately 380 Adamsburg pre-kindergarten through sixth grade students. The elementary-middle school building at the main center was built in the early 1990s and is located in close proximity to a high school complex. The outlying centers have their own administrative staff with whom Mr. Garrett stays in contact with through board meetings and curriculum initiatives (see Table 3).

As promised during his job interviews and eventual acceptance of his post, Mr. Garrett quietly assumed his position and sought to make no extreme changes or demands during the first year in his role as superintendent.

Table 3.

Administrators Involved in the Reading Curriculum Innovation

Administrator	School Responsibilities	Years of Service
Superintendent Garrett	Whispering Pines District	1999-Present
Principal Barth	Forrest Hills School	1999-Present
Principal Uglum	Mallen/Green Waters Schools	1999-2001
Principal Paulson	Emma RoseSchool	1999-2001
Principal Uglum	Green Waters/Emma Rose Schools	2001-2002
Principal Smith	Emma RoseSchool K-12 Curriculum Director	2002-2003
Principal Paulson	Green Waters/Mallen Schools Title I Director	2002-present
Principal Kearney	Emma Rose School K-12 Curriculum Director	2003-Present

The first year I was here I didn't want to make any changes, I just went around the schools to see what was going on. I wanted to see how reading instruction was delivered. I also looked through purchase requests and I started to question why there were different requests for each building. There were four different sites and I was getting four totally different requests. This is one district and there were all different types of instruction in reading going on. (March 2004)

Mrs. Barth, the elementary principal at the Forrest Hills Site, confirmed this

statement made by Mr. Garrett.

Don just went around to the different sites and walked in and out of classrooms to get a feel for the reading curriculum at the elementary level. He found that every classroom seemed to be doing something different. There was no consistency in the instruction that was going on in the classrooms. (May 2003)

Paula, one of the teachers at the Forrest Hills site, also confirmed this impetus for change.

She said, "We had the same textbooks, but we didn't all teach it the same. People were

growing more diversified as new things were coming in [to the field]" (August 2004).

The observations of actual practices and purchase requests provoked conversations between the superintendent and the three principals at the four sites. It was time to develop a purposeful reading curriculum that would focus and direct reading instruction at the elementary level. Mr. Garrett stated,

> I decided that we had to really find out what was designated as "best practice." Each teacher, of course, thought that what he or she was doing was best, and you know, good teachers are successful—no matter what. We needed to do research. (March 2004)

After a year of reading surveillance, September 1, 1999 marked a significant challenge from the superintendent as Mrs. Barth recorded it on a small post-it note in her notebook:

> I envision a reading program that is comprehensive and sequential, we know what to teach at each level, we can readily access scores and we are able to dissect and change our strategies with our students. We may not get this completed this year...

This yellow post-it marked the beginning of the district's plan.

Although Mr. Garrett articulated his visions for a new reading curriculum, the district did not have a particular program in mind for adoption. This note, so to speak, was the district's wish list. Administration knew what it wanted, but they didn't have a clear path to getting there in the fall of 1999. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) report, "at least three dimensions are at stake in implementing any new program: (1) the possible use of new or revised materials, (2) the possible use of new *teaching approaches,* and (3) the possible alterations of *beliefs"* (p. 36). This district was ready to look at all the possibilities for developing a new reading program. Table 4 organizes the innovation process into three phases according to the primary emphasis of a new reading program during the school years.

Table 4.

Whispering Pines Change Process in Phases

Phases	Year	Innovation Emphasis
Phase I	1998-1999	Covert Observation
	1999-2000	Research
	2000-2001	Initiation/Development
Phase II	2001-2002	Implementation
	2002-2003	Implementation
	2003-2004	Implementation
Phase III	2004-2005	Implementation/Institutionalization

The challenge went out on a fuchsia colored announcement to all pre-kindergarten

through sixth grade teachers and reading teachers in the junior high:

> A district goal this year is to coordinate our Reading Program. The first meeting
> was held on Wednesday, September 1. The second meeting will be held on
> Wednesday, September 15. Decisions will be made this year in regard to Literacy.
> We encourage you to attend so that you will have a say in the decision-making
> process. The focus will be to determine and implement the best practices in
> reading instruction. (September 1999)

The aggressive agenda set by the district was to begin a rigorous examination

of the data on the district's current program. Every two weeks, teachers and

administrators met from approximately 4:00pm to 5:30pm to set up an Action Research

Plan to identify the school's current practices and then match those with research on best

practices in reading instruction. With the course set for each month of the year, Kari

Frugel, a consultant from the Area Education Agency (AEA), an organization funded by

the state to support schools with materials and services, equipped teachers with an

armload of data collection sheets for their first meeting. The teachers were to complete a survey that answered the following:

1. What are you presently doing in your classroom with regard to reading instruction?

2. What resources are you using?

3. What are you doing to assess reading?

4. Where do you want to go from here?

With all teachers involved during the initial assessment on the current state of the district's reading program, the reform process was going to demand a great deal of teachers' time. This is something that had not happened in the past and some of the teachers were not really certain of why the process was happening at this point in time. Yvonne, a third grade teacher in the district for over twenty-five years, for example, acknowledged:

> Well, it maybe started from the administration because it was time to replace texts. That's where we always start. The textbooks are worn out and it's time to replace them. So this time they did do a different way of approaching it. In the old days, we'd bring in all the sample sets and flip your way through them and whatever one looked the prettiest or "caught your eye" was usually the one that was chosen without really looking at how the skills were taught or what was taught. This time I feel that it was done much more in-depth in that we had a real feel for the program before it was totally adopted.

Another teacher thought that the reform had probably come from some state assessment where the school wasn't "cutting the mustard." She believed that they [administration] were trying to figure out how to improve reading scores.

Documents reveal that in order to be in compliance with the Iowa Department of

Education's requirements, school districts had to specify that long-range goals be written

to address student achievement in reading, mathematics, and science by September 15,

2000. The exact goals for this school state:

> The goals we are trying to attain for this district-wide action research project were
> established by the Board of Education on June 24, 1999, as two long-ranged
> goals:
> - All student exit third grade with third grade reading level
> - Coordinating reading programs

With the task clearly in front of them, the district knew where they had to go, but it

needed to find a way to get there.

<u>Fall semester 1999</u>

The agenda was set and monthly topics were established that outlined the mission

for the coming year. Data collection ensued as the AEA organized a modified Action

Research Process Plan to help guide teachers' research on determining best practice for

the teaching of reading. The long-range goals were tied to the Whispering Pines'

Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and the definition was as follows:

> District-Wide action research is cooperative disciplined inquiry. All school staff
> works together to improve student learning. The phases of the action research
> cycle are built into the district's school improvement plans and into the decision-
> making system. In brief, the following processes and tasks are built into the
> collective work:
>
> 1. Selecting an Area of Focus: Scan, Then Focus Inquiry
> 2. In phases 2, 3,and 4: Collect, Analyze, and Study Information
>
> 3. Study Professional Literature throughout the Process
> 4. Select and Design Support for Future Actions
> (Whispering Pines' Archived Notes)

At this point in the process, the sights had been set on reading and Paula, a sixth

grade teacher at the time, reported that they [faculty] started out as a whole staff for a

year studying the District-Wide Data. Following this were speakers and meetings with

discussion groups focusing on best practices in reading. The intensity of this regimen did

not come without a cost, however. Mr. Garrett reported:

> When we began it took a lot of meetings and the predictable question came up,
> such as 'Are you going to pay us for all this extra time? This is not allowed by the
> union.' So I didn't require it. Those that will get really interested will drive it
> forward. (March 2004)

Consequently, some of the faculty had dropped out of the every two-week routine but

according to Mrs. Barth, there were plenty of teachers who wanted to have a voice in

what was going to happen as far as reading instruction was concerned. Overall, she was

pleased by the faculty's response.

At the first through third grade level, five teachers remained as active participants

(see Table 5) and moved into phases two, three, and four in the Action Research Plan.

Each grade level group from across the district brainstormed together to ultimately target

four areas of study: (a) best practices, (b) developmentally appropriate practices, (c) data

collection, and (d) assessment. Then an invitation was extended to *all* elementary and

junior high teachers to locate and to read information specifically related to the first two

targets. This professional literature was to be submitted and then distributed for

discussion and study meetings that would take place in January.

Each meeting commenced with a small group discussion about articles focusing

on developmentally appropriate and best practice in reading. Finally, the discussions

Table 5.

Teachers (Grades 1-3) Involved at the Beginning of the Innovation

Teacher	School	Grade	Involvement
Angela Lyons	Forrest Hills	1	No
Tami Eastwood	Forrest Hills	1	Yes
Vickie Rogers	Emma Rose	1	No
Becky Nim	Forrest Hills	2	Yes
Tara Flaten	Forrest Hills	2	Yes
Terri Buhler	Emma Rose	2	No
Yvonne Paulson	Forrest Hills	3	No
Karen Baylor	Forrest Hills	3	Yes
Lana Taylor	Emma Rose	3	No
Paula Franks	Forrest Hills	1-2 (Reading)	Yes

concluded with grade level sharing of the key concepts identified through the articles to the large group. Thirty-four teachers participated in this group review of the literature and findings were synthesized following the meetings.

<u>Spring semester 2000</u>

A new millennium began with renewed attention on reading research. The Primary teachers were focusing on word attack while the Upper Elementary and Junior High were engaged in specific reading and comprehension strategies. The January 5, 2000 agenda outlined the discussion as study groups continued to hone the data on best and developmentally appropriate practice in the reading research. Reading notes documented that each grade level was beginning to focus on the question, "Now what?

Where do we go from here?" Some grade levels wanted to specifically focus on reading standards and to move on to locating a basal reading series while others wanted to collect more data on what they [Whispering Pines] were already doing in terms of best practice.

As the spring semester progressed, more research articles were shared until the teachers seemed to be at a saturation point. Mrs. Barth stated:

> The grade level study groups seemed to be finding that the information was repeating itself. One teacher declared that if they were finding the same information over and over again, they must have reviewed the literature to a point where they should now be able to identify best practices according to the research. At this point we were ready to move on to the next agenda.

This next memorandum focused on data collection. The faculty and administration were involved in looking at data and collecting baseline information from Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED), and surveys on literacy practices in kindergarten through sixth grades. Parents were also surveyed during spring conferences on various factors having to do with literacy.

While this data was being collected, the grade level groups continued to meet and to discuss options for a new reading program in light of their research. Mrs. Franks, a veteran teacher with her masters degree in technology and a high interest in determining the best program for children, commented:

> From our studies of best practices during the year, it was the decision that it appeared that things were moving toward a more balanced literacy. Everything before was taught whole group instructions. All students, no matter whether they were good readers or poor readers, were taught the same material at the same pace. Teachers were feeling like we were leaving kids behind and not challenging students. The balanced literacy looked like it was going to be a way that we could start looking at each student's needs and where he/she was and go from there. So that's where we picked that. (August 2003)

This concern about moving to a more balanced practice that involved small

groups was expressed over and over again. A second grade teacher confessed:

> What we came from was whole class but even when I did whole class, after a
> couple of years, I found myself still dividing the kids up and kind of giving them
> extra reading. And I kind of did the different levels, because for most kids that
> [reading material] was just too difficult. (October 2003)

And a teacher at the first grade level reported her anxiety about teaching with the

whole group in the past reading program:

> Well, we did the whole group lessons where everybody was doing the
> same book and they all chorale read around the area. I'd say, 'OK, now on
> page ten… Everybody turn to page 10. OK Bill, it's your turn to read.' Then
> Bill would read and we'd talk maybe about a word that he stumbled on and
> how could he have figured that out, but it was again, pointing out errors
> that Bill made even though it probably would have been an error that maybe all of
> them would have made…and I'm assuming that Bill is thinking, 'Why did I say
> that word? Now she's pointing out the fact that I made a mistake on that word.'
> You just did it because that's the way it was done, and that's
> sad to say because I now know that the way we do it [guided reading] is so much
> better for kids. (December 2003)

There was no doubt that Whispering Pines was ready for a dramatic change in the reading

curriculum. They weren't yet ready, but this time it would be more than a simple

textbook replacement.

Fall semester 2000

Armed with a year of research and an acknowledgement from the AEA that Ms.

Floyd had taken them as far as she could, the administration found a consultant who

could lead the district to a better understanding of balanced literacy. Through networking

with other administrators, Mr. Garrett had heard about a woman who might be able to

facilitate the reading curriculum change. Angela Jackson (pseudonym) had experience in

researching and teaching balanced literacy. She had also led teacher workshops in other school districts throughout the state.

> We had her work with our teachers for two years. She helped so much as we developed and learned about the program. Most teachers were so excited about "her way" of doing things, and the others would come when they want to come with us. This is a program that takes kids where they are and moves them forward. (Garrett, March 2004)

During our interview Mr. Garrett also remarked, "We've pulled the staff together across the board. I'm not involved directly now, but the teachers are hungry for more. If one provides the tools and the money to do what they need to do then, then change will happen."

The fall of 2000 marked a real commitment to the innovation. The district made an investment in the process of educating both faculty and administration in addition to providing appropriate materials. Mr. Garrett commented,

> Well, we invested $200,000.00 in developing a reading curriculum that would unite all centers. We're continuing to add to that curriculum as we supplement with upgrades and continue to develop and maintain balanced reading. (March 2004)

With this serious investment, administration took an active role in the initial stages of the change process, and while the superintendent gradually moved out of participating in monthly meetings, he did provide the means to educate both faculty and the administration on balanced literacy. Although still in the initiation phase, both groups worked together as they learned more about balanced literacy. The main focus of the year was to develop an understanding of balanced literacy and how it translated into classroom practice.

At this initiation point in the change process, one of the biggest commitments was investing in a consultant who was not associated with the AEA. This expenditure on the part of school district was to educate the whole elementary faculty about balanced literacy. Now that the research had pointed out the direction for their new reading curriculum, teachers and administration had questions about how this would exactly look. One comment that was recorded during this time in a survey spoke directly to this stance, "I have not observed or seen enough to make a decision regarding balanced literacy. I do believe that there needs to be a 'balanced literacy' approach. I just have not seen the structure that is needed for it to be successful." It was clear that the research during the first year had certainly educated the faculty and administration, but there would be much more that had to take place before the new curriculum was to be implemented. With a clearer focus and mission, Mrs. Barth jotted down the following:

Components of a Vision

- A vision features a compelling picture of what the school can become in the future
- A vision is feasible and attainable
- A vision is connected to and articulates deeper values and hopes for the future
- A vision needs to be translated into actions and plans that can be and are implemented

Then, at the very bottom of the yellow legal pad list and designated with a penned asterisk, "A vision will die if not regularly communicated. Putting a mission down without action will be counterproductive."

With the task at hand, the administration set about locating schools where a balanced literacy curriculum was already in place. During these queries, one teacher's

name surfaced as a possible mentor for Whispering Pines. Angela Jackson had the

experience, the knowledge, and the personality to answer the questions that were being

asked about putting balanced literacy into practice.

In November of 2000, the teachers and administration in the district knew what

they wanted, but they had to figure out how to achieve this vision. Accordingly, Ms.

Jackson spent three days at the school modeling a variety of balanced literacy

components for all kindergarten through eighth grade classroom teachers. The

administration hired substitutes for classroom teachers, and Ms. Jackson's model lessons

were staggered throughout the first two days of the in-service. The lessons were forty-

five minutes in length with fifteen minutes designated as a questioning opportunity

following the lesson. The third day of her in-service provided still more opportunities for

teachers and administration to question the balanced literacy components and the

modeled lessons from the previous two days.

With this opportunity to witness balanced literacy components in action, Ms.

Jackson also began with the challenge to reflect on their [faculty's and administration's]

changing literacy beliefs by comparing those from the fall of 1999 to the fall of 2000. The

former list consisted of thirty-two succinct skills (see Appendix D) while the latter list

reflected a broader perspective:

> The Whispering Pines Community School District believes:
>
> - All children can develop strategies to become lifelong independent
>   readers, writers, thinkers, and problem solvers
> - All children of various learning styles will be engaged daily in reading,
>   writing, speaking, and listening through balanced literacy

- The teacher will be a facilitator of learning, use a variety of teaching techniques and materials at appropriate instructional levels, and elicit a variety of student responses
- Literacy skills and strategies will be modeled and directly taught in flexible groups of varying sizes
- Training of best practices in literacy will be provided for teachers on a continuing basis
- Balanced literacy instruction will be based on reading to, with, and by students using strong, direct connections between reading and writing
- Real-life connections will be made through a balanced literacy approach
- On-going, diagnostic assessments will be used to insure development and progress toward student and district goals
- Family and community involvement is essential to the success of our students
- Our literacy goals, progress, and achievement must be communicated with students, parents, and community

With a newly articulated belief system and research on best practice, some teachers were already attempting to implement aspects of balanced literacy. Teachers commented on this during an open-ended survey on how their new knowledge was driving instruction. Remarks ranged from, "It has made me want to change my daily schedule and my teaching practices," to "not able to implement because of combined classroom, room constraints, and lack of books" (November 2000).

Administration realized that the change process was taking hold. It was time to find the "paradigm shifters" and "idea champions" who would be interested in making substantial changes in practice (Sparks, 1993). Mr. Garrett commented on this as well:

> I believe the secret is a core group of teachers. Success follows a few leaders. Identify the leaders--this helps change happen. Just find out the leaders with respect and paint the picture of change and put them there. (March 2004)

Administrative questions forwarded on to Ms. Jackson inquired:

> How can we organize a decision-making group of teachers to look at these materials and compare them with our list of beliefs? How will we release the

team to allow time to do this? What structure could they use to work through this task? The key thing is to have people who will base the decision on the beliefs we have stated collectively. Who will be willing to take that kind of responsibility?

As Christmas and the end of the semester rapidly approached, a bulletin urged all Whispering Pines Elementary and Junior High Reading Teachers to attend a special meeting at 4:00 p.m. on December 21 to meet again with Ms. Jackson. This memorandum stated:

> I know this is a busy time for you, but we need your input. If we are going to implement what we have learned and discussed, decisions need to be made. You will have an opportunity on the 21st to ask Angela questions and to let us know your beliefs, if they have changed through this study process.

Spring semester 2001

Fullan (2001a) believes that change cannot be mandated or as he puts it, "…you can't bulldoze change" (p. 9). Now that the canvas of change had been sketched, in Mr. Garrett's eyes, it was time to paint the change agents into it. The first in-service of the new year outlined the criteria for the Literacy Advisory Team. Faculty were urged to consider the following factors when nominating colleagues to become members of this team:

- Active participant in literacy review meetings
- Well-read in current research and best practices
- Willing to give time, energy, and commitment
- Objectively uses district beliefs to support the decision-making process
- Understands and represents the K-8 literacy continuum

Paula reported that:

> We had one meeting where everyone nominated someone they felt would be a good member for the committee. And then the principals took those nominations and chose the one who appeared to have a lot of nominations as well as looking that it was spaced out for all grade levels and the outlying centers. This way we'd

have representation at all grade levels and centers. So they were somewhat teacher picked and then done by principals. Those people did the visitations. Those people met with the company representatives and after the company presentations were given, we looked at different materials. We also met with Angela Jackson during this process so we could continue to consider what balanced literacy should look like and what you might look for in a good program. (August 2003)

The nominations were made and then the principals selected actual team membership so that a balance of teachers was represented from each of the centers. The core selection team consisted of ten regular classroom teachers, three Title I teachers, and three principals. Table 6 outlines the literacy advisory team [pseudonyms].

Table 6.

Literacy Advisory Team Members (2000-2001)

Team Members	Position	School
Mrs. Barth	Elementary Principal	Forrest Hills
Mrs Uglum	Elementary Principal	Mallen/Green Waters
Mr. Paulson	Elementary Principal/ Curriculum Director	Emma Rose District
Mrs. Jones	First Grade Teacher	Green Waters
Mrs. Nim-	Second Grade Teacher	Forrest Hills
Mrs. Baylor	Third Grade Teacher	Forrest Hills
Mrs. Franks	Sixth Grade Teacher	Forrest Hills
Mrs. Weis	Second Grade Teacher	Mallen
Mrs. Johnson	First Grade Teacher	Green Waters
Mrs. Silverton	Fourth Grade Teacher	Emma Rose
Mrs. Fox	Title I Teacher	Forrest Hills
Mrs. Schaefer	Title I Teacher	Emma Rose
Mrs. Winters	Title I Teacher	Green Waters

Prepared with their philosophy and questions, the team set out to visit school

districts that had already committed to a balanced literacy program and to consider

materials that aligned with their newly articulated belief system (see Appendix E). The

questions asked at each visit reflected concerns that teachers had involving training,

implementation, budget, support staff, and materials. The school supported these visits

during March and April by hiring substitute teachers and making overnight

accommodations due to the distance that needed to be traveled for all day visits at the

sites.

In each of these schools, the team had the opportunity to witness balanced literacy

in action. As teachers and administrators, they asked hard questions about strategies that

they were observing in the classrooms, texts that were selected for leveled books,

assessment that was used for benchmarking students, and assessments that were utilized

for determining achievement levels. Paula reported, "We looked at schools that were

using it [balanced literacy] and visited them and asked, 'What do you think? How's it

going? How do you do it?'" (August 2003)

Amassing a wealth of information from their observations and queries of four

different school districts, the committee narrowed the large number of options by

reviewing sets of sample materials.

> It really didn't take them [the committee members] that long to decide on
> materials that reflected our belief system. It was funny to see them quickly page
> through and look for elements of balanced literacy and then cast them aside when
> a series made claims that didn't seem to follow through in their contents. They'd
> say, "Where's the shared reading?" or something like that. They really knew
> what they wanted when the company representatives came in to present their
> materials. I think that it really threw some companies who could not answer their
> questions. (Barth, March 2004)

The committee reduced the selection to three presenters who would expound on their products: Wright Group, Rigby, and Scholastic.

With the materials whittled down to three companies, the kindergarten through eighth grade educators rated each series on nine primary criteria with several defining qualities. The rating document was entitled "Whispering Pines Literacy Review" (see see Appendix F), and the goal was to choose products that would reflect the balanced literacy components and support some of the curriculum materials that were already in place. As one teacher's written comments stated, "I am thinking about the pros and cons of changing to another style. I'm trying to incorporate new with tried and true. I'm trying not to throw the baby out with the bath water" (November 2000). In this same spirit, the faculty sought to find materials that specifically considered: (a) literacy circles, (b) individual reading choice, (c) read alouds, (d) modeled think alouds, (e) theme related units, (f) accelerated reader choices, (g) author studies, and (h) models of quality writing.

Primed with information from a semester's worth of observations and selections, Ms. Jackson visited Whispering Pines School District at the end of the semester to help synthesize their research and to set an agenda for the fall semester's work. Leveled books were being ordered from a variety of companies. Mrs. Barth commented, "Rigby, for example, had a lot of things we were looking for, but we didn't want to just use Rigby materials because we saw good things in other series. The teachers went with materials from The Wright Group and even some different companies. No one company did it all for us" (March 2004).

During my exchanges with teachers, several commented on the fact that the Rigby

Company provided a manual for the teacher.

> We have a Rigby manual. There was a lot of discussion about that. Do we get a
> manual or not? The feeling was that some teachers say that we do not need a
> manual, but when you are pushing a whole lot of teachers, a whole stack, into a
> new program --we decided it was going to be too difficult to expect them to just
> hop into this and not have some guidance. So we did purchase Rigby manuals.
> (August 2003)

Since so many materials were ordered at the end of the year, a library aide was hired for

the whole summer just to catalog, label and organize book baskets so that teachers could

find them. The balanced literacy program required thousands of leveled books for guided

reading and big books for shared reading.

Finally, the program also required professional reading. Whispering Pines

District ordered recommended reading for all its teachers. Every teacher in every school

received *Mosaic of Thought* (Zimmerman & Keene, 1997). The primary teachers

requested *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children* (Fountas & Pinnell,

1996) and *Word Matters* (Fountas & Pinnell, 1998), while the upper elementary teachers

obtained *Guiding Readers and Writers: Grades 3-6* (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001) and

Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding (Harvey &

Goudvis, 2000). Teachers in special education and Title I ordered books they thought

best fit their learners. The district invested a grand total of $5,080.60 for the summer's

professional reading.

Summary of Phase I

Hall and Hord (2001) report that a never-ending quest to improve schools drives

theoreticians, researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, parents, and the business

community. All have a stake in educating our children. However, at the local school district level, this claim goes beyond rhetoric and visionary thinking; it has to be translated into actions that will meet students' learning needs. This is especially true in determining how to best address the teaching of reading.

Considering these factors, Whispering Pines district set about determining its curriculum without a clear vision of the innovation at the inception of this process. Instead, the district focused on a need for change, and then proceeded to examine research to set as a foundation for the next reading curriculum. Unlike curriculum change of the past, a list of textbooks was not chosen prior to the faculty's involvement in the curriculum process as is typical in traditional curriculum change processes (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998).

Instead, this district engaged in research prior to the adoption of an innovation. Truthfully, faculty as well as administration had little idea of what the innovation would look at the beginning of the change process.

<center>Initiating a Reading Curriculum Innovation</center>

Determining the Reading Curriculum Innovation

There are a number of reasons why groups or individuals begin change. In schools, these reasons vary from political reform to educational research or even personal ideologies. Whatever the reason, "someone or some group for whatever reason initiates change, which may be more or less defined at the early stages" (Fullan, 2001b, p. 50). Table 4 outlined stages that evolved as Whispering Pines instituted a reading innovation and identified the emphasis at each of the three phases of the change process.

Whispering Pines' initiation process involved administrators and teachers researching and learning about research-based practices for teaching reading. Through sharing of professional literature, teachers and administrators focused on balanced literacy as the primary innovation for teaching reading. Through observations of schools using balanced literacy and the modeling of balanced practices, teachers were not only told how to plan for balanced literacy, but they were shown as well.

Administration's Role in Determining New Reading Innovation

From the beginning of Mr. Garrett's tenure as superintendent, the notion of a change initiative was present, but he was careful in his design for change. According to Mr. Garrett, the previous administration was very "top-down" and little trust existed between the administration and the faculty. He felt that he had to be cautious during his first year and not ride in with his own personal agenda for change (March 2004). Consequently, 1998-1999 was a time for securing support and selecting a focus. Using observation as a way to discover more about the schools within his district, Mr. Garrett found that reading instruction was delivered differently at each school in his district, and the purchase order requests confirmed his suspicions. Some schools were teaching whole group with the literature-based basals, others were using computerized testing of novels with Accelerated Reader, and still others were ordering materials from "Companion Reading" with worksheets and drill-and-practice software. He found little consistency with instruction and began to initiate change at the district level. The administrators and school board met in the spring of 1999 to create a plan that would facilitate change in a team effort during the fall of 1999.

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│                         │
│  Relevance              │
│     (Practicality + Need)│          ┌──────────────────────┐
│                         │   ══════► │                      │
│  Readiness              │    ══════►│     INITIATION       │
│     (Capacity + Need)   │           │                      │
│                         │           └──────────────────────┘
│  Resources              │
│     (Availability)      │
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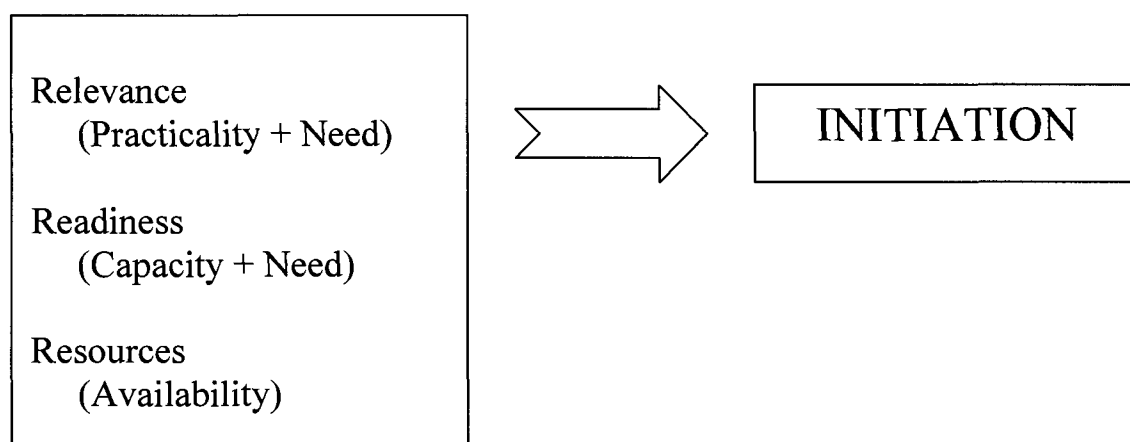
Figure 2. Considerations in Planning Adoption (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 63).

Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) remarked that initiation is the process that leads up

to and includes the decision to go ahead with implementation. Ideally, this process

includes a combination of the three R's known as relevance, readiness, and resources (see

Figure 2).

Relevance includes the interface between need, the practitioner's understanding of

the innovation, and what it has to offer the teachers and the students. Interestingly,

Crandall et al. (as cited in Fullan and Steigelbauer, 1991) found that "the greatest success

is likely to occur when the size of the change is large enough to require noticeable effort,

but not so massive that typical users find it necessary to adopt a coping strategy that

seriously distorts the change" (p. 63). Relevance is a delicate balance.

Teachers' Roles in Determining New Reading Curriculum

One year of observation and informal data collection had taken place and teachers

were expecting a change in reading curriculum. On the first of September in 1999, the

principal documented that 35 of the 60 elementary faculty came to a meeting expecting to

find information on a new reading series (Barth, March, 2004). Mrs. Paulson, the third

grade teacher at the Forrest Hills Center explained:

> It was time to replace textbooks. The textbooks were worn out so the
> administration got us together. Usually, in the old days, we'd bring in all the
> sample sets and flip through them and whichever one 'caught your eye' was
> usually the one that was chosen. We didn't really look at HOW the skills were
> taught or WHAT was taught. This time I feel that it was done much more in-
> depth. (September 2003)

All of the teachers and administrators that were interviewed expressed a need for

changing the reading curriculum. Table 7 presents the different reasons that teachers

cited for needing a change. Need for an innovation was established early with teachers

mentioning dissatisfaction with the old reading curriculum as the primary reason for the

need to change. A first grade teacher, Mrs. Eastwood, from the Forrest Hills Center,

commented on her feelings about the reading curriculum:

> When I was in school years ago, it was the three groups—you were either in the
> buzzards or the bluebirds, and everyone knew who was in which group. I am not
> sure that those even hit our needs, but they thought it did. And I don't think it is
> humane having everyone in one group, you know, because they are not hitting
> everybody or hitting all of the individual needs. But that is what everyone was
> doing. That was all I knew. (October 2003)

Another first grade teacher from the Emma Rose school commented:

> I can recall in the past years doing reading lessons where the struggling kids hated
> reading. One year I had a little boy who cried every time it was reading time. He
> would have done anything to avoid his reading time. It was terrible for them to
> have to read in front of everyone and stumble through it. (December 2003)

Finally, a second grade teacher said, "We had whole class reading, but even when we did

whole class, I found myself still dividing the kids up. I kind of gave them extra reading at

different levels because for most of my kids it [old literature-based series] was just too

Table 7.

Reasons Cited for Needing Change in the Reading Curriculum

Types of Reasons for Change	Total	Administration	Faculty
Inconsistency of Instruction	3	2	1
Old Textbooks	2	0	2
Instructional Dissatisfaction	5	0	5
Mandates	2	0	2
Total	12	2	10

difficult" (October 2003). Administrators, on the other hand, felt that inconsistency

between schools and classrooms within schools was the most critical reason to institute a

change.

Once need had been established across the district, practicality and capacity for

change needed to be addressed before change could be initiated. At the district level

administration decided that in order for an innovation to be feasible, elementary faculty

had to be involved in the curriculum selection process. Mrs. Barth stated that all teachers

were invited to participate in the research process for an innovation that would meet

students' needs in reading. During these beginning meetings during the change process,

twenty-five of the sixty elementary faculty, the superintendent, and building principals

participated in a process of researching articles to share in groups. During an interview,

Mr. Garrett stated, "This was one district and all different types of instruction was going

on. Everyone was doing something different so I decided that we had to find out what

was designated as "best practice." Each teacher, of course, thought that what he or she was doing was best. We needed to do research" (March 2004).

If teachers were involved in the research process, there would be a better chance for "capacity to use reform" (Fullen & Steigelbauer, 1991, p. 63) because teachers would have clearer understanding of the innovation and be able to initiate change. With the relevance and readiness met, the final consideration for initiation was resources. Resources address the provision of support as part of the change process. Whispering Pines invested $200,000.00 in developing a reading curriculum that would unite all centers. This directed the budget for the 2000-2001 school year to provide resources for the chosen innovation. Using the Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) criteria, Whispering Pines had the best conditions for change at the launch stage.

<u>Implementing a Reading Curriculum Innovation</u>

With a newly organized book room at each school housing over a thousand zip-locked guided reading books, colorful 24" by 18" big books, alphabet cards for word sorts, and teachers' manuals, Whispering Pines had all the materials ready for balanced reading implementation. Although writing is a component of balanced literacy, the district had not begun teacher education on this piece of the balanced literacy puzzle. Mrs. Barth commented, "We felt that we wanted teachers to feel comfortable with other components first and then bring in writing. That is our focus for the 2003-2004 school year." According to Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) at least one of the three dimensions was in place for implementing the new program: the possible use of new or revised

materials. Two more dimensions needed to be addressed: the possible use of new teaching approaches and the possible alteration of beliefs.

<u>Fall semester 2001</u>

The professional books had been read over the summer in preparation for the fall's initial implementation of balanced literacy. One teacher reported, "Well, we had some discussion on those [professional books] so we had some ideas when we started" (September 2003). These beginning of the year workshop discussions focused on how balanced literacy is implemented and reflected in classroom practice. Angela Jackson returned for the August workshops and focused on comprehension instruction in the balanced literacy classroom. Dr. Robert Craig and Dr. Phyllis Olson continued this conversation with an October in-service entitled, "Living in a Literate Classroom: The Process of Reading Comprehension." The objectives were outlined as:

- Assist teaching faculty with their work with developing students' reading comprehension.
- Learn about some research on reading comprehension.
- Think about the future of our students' literacy learning.
- Take an idea and use it in our classrooms as soon as possible.
  (Whispering Pines In-service, October 24, 2001)

The agenda outlined an information-intensive workshop for the elementary and junior high faculty with the intention of focusing instructional attention to the task of teaching comprehension within balanced reading. The teachers came away with a notebook full of research, lists of ideas, and models on how to teach comprehension within this new curriculum. Also, a specific directive was put forth at this meeting: "Take an idea and use it in your classrooms as soon as possible." The dabbling of the initiation period was

over, and teachers were to begin implementing shared reading and guided reading into

their classrooms.

Acknowledging the fact that there would be apprehension surrounding the

change, the teachers were told that they did not have to use all of the materials during the

first year, even though they had been purchased (Franks, August, 2003). One teacher

who served on the original committee stated that:

> The committees were set up to select the books that we were interested in and
> then to decide who to help implement it [balanced literacy] into the schools...you
> know, do we get some classes for the teachers so they learn how to use this stuff?
> We decided that we would implement it the first year by just letting teachers
> "dabble." They could pick and choose through the books to see what they'd like
> to teach for that year or they didn't have to do any of it if they didn't really want
> to, but ...then our in-services were geared around that [balanced literacy] you
> know, like shared reading. You know, "This is what shared reading is, this is how
> you could do it in your classroom. Here are some ideas, go back to your
> classroom and try this." Then we'd meet maybe three weeks later and find out,
> "Well, how did it go? What lessons did you teach? Were there some lessons that
> went really well in your classroom that you'd like to share? Or were there some
> things that went really bad that you think—oh now what do I do?" You would
> then do the next component. (December 2003)

Teachers were encouraged to try to incorporate some of the ideas and strategies into their

teaching during this school year. For example, The Rigby set, stated one teacher, came

with, not only these little leveled books but also with *Word Works* (Rigby, 2001), a

writing component, and a whole lot of other pieces, which people were kind of gradually

picking up in their teaching.

Teachers also responded that this encouragement assisted them as they learned to

ease into the new curriculum that involved balancing reading instruction. Mrs.

Eastwood, a first grade teacher, reported, "It seems like we're hitting it more than what

we were before... It was very overwhelming the first year. I just couldn't do everything the first year. You know, you try but you can't. It was overwhelming to go from one reading group to six" (October 2003). This new grouping paradigm was perhaps the biggest change for the teachers in this school district. Although some had taught using small groups before, it was nothing like this new model of balanced literacy and guided reading.

One teacher reported that, "Well, at first we taught in groups, like I do now, but the groups were low, middle, and high. You stuck to the same group the whole way through elementary, you know" (October 2003). Another veteran teacher spoke of the change as she reflected on the fact that she went from individual reading groups to whole group. Before she strictly followed the basal and now when working with the guided reading where you're [teachers] trying to find the areas where students have individual weaknesses and work to make them more well-rounded readers. She testified that this was "hard and takes a lot of time." (September 2003)

There was also a definite gap in the prior knowledge that different faculty members brought to this new reading curriculum. While some teachers had remembered when they had taught using small group instruction, there were younger teachers who never taught reading in anything but a large group. Their knowledge of small group instruction reverted back to their own childhoods. "I remember...years ago when I was in elementary school, there were three groups. You were in the buzzards or in the bluebirds and everyone knew who was in which group. I am not sure that those even hit our needs, but they thought they did" (October 2003).

This "knowledge gap" as well as the influence of previous experiences in teaching

and learning with small groups shapes the change process. Hall and Hord (2001) state

that even when change is presented simultaneously to every member of the organization,

the rate of making the change and of developing the skill and competence in using it will

vary individually. This acknowledgement was present during the initial implementation

of the balanced literacy innovation at Whispering Pines District. The idea of flexible

groups and a purposeful process of assessment that informed instruction was a relatively

new concept for many faculty.

However, as teachers worked through the process of working with guided

reading groups, 5 out of 10 teachers felt a sense of déjà vu with a return to reading

groups. Mrs. Baylor remarked,

> When I started, it was very similar to what we are doing now. We grouped kids
> together and tied in the reading, the writing, and the spelling, but then we went the
> other way and language was pretty much implied like we just expected they
> [children] knew it. Now we are back with grouping and reading, writing,
> spelling, and phonics are more of a component, which I like, but the advantage is
> that we now have a nice variety of books. It is much easier to put your to put our
> hands on books at the right level than what it used to be. (September 2003)

Practices in education have been criticized for the back-and-forth rhythm that they seem

to produce. Teachers have often felt that the phrase, "what goes around; comes around"

describes innovations in education. Hall and Hord (2001) acknowledge this perennial

pursuit for reform, but they bring out a critical, and often unnoted, aspect of change:

> Despite all the focus on structures and strategies and other features of schools that
> could be changed, little attention has been given to the most powerful factor:
> people. What change is really about is *people* and their implementation of new
> practices in their classrooms, schools, school districts, and states (p.27).

The fact remains that real change depends upon the individual's ability within an organization to change. Hall and Hord (2001) contend that, "change begins and ends at the individual level" (p. 7).

The fall semester ended with teachers adopting the elements of balanced reading that they felt comfortable with teaching. Mrs. Nim's students were gathered on the rug while she read a large non-fiction book about weather. They engaged in lively discourse about colorful photographs and diagrams and captions explaining the causes of lightning. Shared reading felt comfortable and teachers felt fine with this component of balanced literacy. Guided reading, on the other hand, provoked management challenges. This component required students to manage their time without the teacher-directed contact of whole group instruction. Mrs. Rogers, a first grade teacher voiced her frustrations:

> They say you just model your centers, and I model them and model them and model them and the minute I walk away they are standing next to me. Yes, modeling is what you are supposed to do and yet, there are those kids in first grade who are not independent enough to not have a teacher with them. (December 2003)

As requested, most teachers taught using components of the innovation but challenges and struggles existed in the beginning of this implementation. Mrs. Knutsen, a second grade teacher at the Emma Rose School admitted, "I totally understand it but I find myself crutching back to the old, because it obviously wasn't all bad. It worked. It was what we had and it was successful for many years" (December 2003).

It was becoming apparent that Hall and Hord's (2001) observations were astute, "Change begins and ends at the individual level" (p. 7).

<u>January 2002</u>

Although not a primary concern with the teachers at the time, legislation signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush focused attention and accountability directly on reading instruction. With the NCLB Act, federal spending on elementary and secondary education was tied directly to stronger accountability for proven methods of instruction (Bush, 2002). The aim of NCLB is that all students will be at grade level by the end of third grade, stating confidently that,

"if educators use the best materials, scientifically-proven instructional methods, and the textbooks aligned with state standards, students can succeed" (NCLB, 2002).

At the time of this landmark legislation, Whispering Pine's teachers were immersed in learning a new curriculum and did not give much thought or credence to the renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Tammy Eastwood remarked, "I guess I didn't feel any pressure, and it was constantly said at our in-services between ourselves, 'Remember, leave no child behind!' and then everybody giggled and rolled their eyes" (October 2003). Another teacher commented:

> One of the goals is that *all* [italics added for emphasis] third grade students will read at the third grade level when they get through third grade. That's impossible. There's no way. Anybody who has any kind of special education background and who knows the population knows this.
> That's the goal, the dream…we're never going to make it. This is impossible. Legislators should be here so they know what is possible and what just is not. (September 2003)

I asked a third grade teacher if she felt any pressure in teaching reading since fourth grade was the year students were to be measured according to the NCLB legislation and she replied, "I probably should have felt pressure, but I did not. I mean I

just feel like I am working, and they are working about as hard as they [students] can"
(September, 2003).

Whether the initial legislation seemed too insurmountable to even warrant
attention at the time or if it seemed too far removed from their individual classrooms, the
teachers were involved in their own local challenges with change as the year progressed.

Spring semester 2002

Teachers began to use the balanced literacy program on varying levels. Most
adopted some aspects of balanced literacy such as shared reading since this teaching
framework was familiar to the teachers.

> When we first started teaching everyone sat in a group and had the same
> book. Shared reading is a large group. The kids sit on the carpet, and I
> read the story and then we talk about it. We learn about the index and table of
> contents and things like that in a whole group. (October 2003)

Shared reading generally consists of the teacher reading a book with enlarged text and
illustrations. As the teacher reads the story to the children, opportunities are taken for the
teacher to model metacognitive strategies for comprehending text. In one class period
that I observed, Mrs. Eastwood, the first grade teacher, shared reading lessons involving a
nonfiction text about hawks. The photographs were vibrant and the text provided
diagrams to explain features that were unique to hawks' predatory natures. Mrs.
Eastwood modeled questioning and then involved the whole group in a discussion during
that thirty-minute lesson. A whole group session assures that all students are receiving
the information at least once in this grade level. This came out in conversations with
teachers:

> I was looking through a catalogue and they had big books to go along with science and social studies themes. I thought that this would be wonderful because we could use this for shared reading. You know we would be hitting both reading and content and all the kids would be getting it. Some of the kids get it from guided reading but not all of them. (October 2003)

> Some books focus on phonetics. *Shark in the Park* focuses on the "ar." The kids might not be getting it in their guided reading because either they are beyond that or they're not at that level yet so I try and hit some of those skills in this [shared reading] half hour. (September 2003)

The whole group session also ensures that the teacher knows what the other children are doing while the teacher is engaged in direct instruction. The thought that students were on their own while the teacher worked with a small group was a source of anxiety for some:

> How productive is the rest of the classroom while you're teaching in guided reading? How accountable do you make them while they're at centers? How accountable do you make what they're doing while you're doing this? Should you have them turning in things? Should it be more of a practice time at this or that? Is it OK to do cross-curricular things? (December 2003)

A number of teachers also admitted that they did not use the balanced literacy approach in its entirety during the first year and some of them still do not. "I still teach most of my fiction from this book. I loved the Houghton-Mifflin series and I loved the anthology and I still teach from that" (February 2004). Another teacher stated, "We sometimes will still use the old. We have a couple of excellent stories in the old literature-based books. We will still go back and use them, because they are such high interest to the kids. We're doing all that together" (September 2003). As a researcher, I witnessed a whole group lesson on *The Titanic* using the former series. Hall and Hord (2001) note that the change process is similar to grief. There is a period of letting go

when people must change and have to stop some of the things that they know how to do well and in fact, like doing. This sometimes causes personal conflict or at the very least, sadness.

As spring approached, the school continued to support the teachers in their professional development. Angela Jackson continued the conversation between the school district and herself as she answered questions and reassured teachers about using balanced literacy. Teachers continually wondered if "they were doing it right" (October 2003). Hall and Hord (2001) have found in their research that, "even when training and materials are provided, there is a big leap from preparing to do something and actually doing it" (p. 36).

Teachers at the outlying centers reported being a little unsure about the innovation when comparing themselves to teachers at the Forrest Hills Center. In a quiet voice, Terri conveyed:

> I think that many of the Forrest Hills teachers really have it put together. You know, a lot of teamwork up there and that's another thing, you really don't have anyone to feed off of when you have one grade. I know they do a lot of team planning and just keeping each other on track up there and it's definitely a benefit when you have a double section. We don't have a lot of grade level communication unless you would just do it totally on your own. We had more in the beginning and then some of the assumption is that a lot of this is happening but you know...we need more of that. (December 2003)

In response to these insecurities, the outlying centers participated in a grant that afforded them the opportunity to visit a school with balanced literacy program already in place.

> When we did implement it [balanced literacy], our outlying schools [Emma Rose and Green Waters], sent a group of teachers to Adella. This was a school that whenever we talked about the guided reading part, they were the school that was...you know, "if you could be any school, you'd be Adella." So we took a

trip down there to see. Green Waters had a grant that they wrote to go down -- to pay for the trip and the lodging and whatever. At the time our principal here was also the principal at Green Waters, so she arranged it that even though they wrote the grant we could also go and because of the vehicles, it wouldn't cost anymore if more went down than just the three or four from their school. We got to go see a school that did complete balanced literacy. I mean the whole school shut down from 9:00-11:00 and they did guided reading at that time. This was their entire focus at that time.

It was nice to see some ideas when we went down and talk to the teachers down there. We were probably the only ones that went to see schools after we had decided on the new reading curriculum. We visited so that some of our teachers could see it in action. (December 2003)

These comments support research acknowledging that teachers need to *see* educational possibilities of theory in action. They need to see what the theory looks like in practice (Gerston & Woodard, 1990). Englert and Tarrant (1995) stress the importance of teachers learning in a collaborative community from and with colleagues. Teachers in the Emma Rose School wanted opportunities to see balanced literacy in action since they were not on the original literacy team. They had had little opportunity to develop their mental model.

At this point, differences were emerging in teachers' comfort levels between the two schools. At Emma Rose School, teachers felt isolated. Rosenholtz (1989) found that teachers seldom see, hear, or discuss how others teach, and this isolation often has profound negative implications for professional development as teachers are left with limited resources to help them figure out problems or innovations asking them to change their practices. This isolation seemed to be more prevalent when there was only one teacher for each grade level in the school. Little opportunity to exchange specifics on concerns about skills and strategies at certain grade levels existed. In effect, after the initiation phase, these teachers felt as if they were "on their own." Compounding this

feeling was the fact that Emma Rose School would be led by a new administrator in the fall—one who had not been a part of the innovation process.

Fall semester 2002

The previous year had been spent in an exploratory phase of implementation; "some of us were using bits and pieces our first year to try things out" (August 2003). The fall semester, however, marked a widespread effort to implement balanced literacy across the school district. Each center had a designated book room with materials catalogued and organized by reading levels. The spaces had been refined during the summer so that teachers had a check out system with order and equity across all schools (March 2004). The curriculum focus was to continue on learning about issues related to reading comprehension. Dr. Robert Craig and Dr. Phyllis Olson had conducted a workshop in May beginning with a self-evaluation of teachers' progress in using balanced literacy.

Assessing comprehension and teaching students how to comprehend and develop as strategic readers became the target for fall's instructional focus. Consequently, the first academic task was to benchmark or assess the reading level of each student in the school. Mrs. Franks informed me that this was to enable all classroom teachers to know which levels were the most appropriate instructional targets for their students for guided reading (August 2003). Targeting children's reading levels at their individual instructional level is critical to guided reading. Since it is time consuming, the Title I teachers, who did not have responsibility for any whole classroom, were charged with assessing and benchmarking individual students.

Mrs. Flaten described the process as "a combination of a running record or a miscue analysis. There are questions to read, prediction questions and comprehension questions afterwards, but the real key is the miscue analysis and the running record" (January 2004). Classroom teachers have done this assessment after the initial leveling in the fall so that, "kids are moving from group to group as they developmentally learn to read and are ready to go on" (January 2004). With the implementation of balanced reading, teachers were adjusting groups to meet the varied reading levels of children in their classrooms. Teachers were checking out books from the book room and exchanging them for different levels.

The frequent exchange of leveled books was evidence that the innovation was becoming a part of balanced reading instruction in most classrooms. Historically, use of academic innovations was appraised in terms of whether or not classrooms were equipped with the new materials when classroom inventories were filled out. Storage closets and shelves have housed countless innovations with the implicit assumption that the innovations were being utilized (Hall & Hord, 2001). In the case of Forrest Hills, teachers were using leveled books to teach guided reading, large books to teach shared reading, and activities to teach phonics. Since I supervised student teachers during this time, I observed lessons using balanced reading materials.

It was obvious by the fall of 2002, many of the teachers were making decisions and judgments based on their experience with the innovation. Some teachers were using the materials infrequently, but others were completely engaged in implementing as well

as critiquing the innovation. Adelman and Walking-Eagle (1997) refer to this time as "implementation woes" and report:

> More often than not, the implementation phase of an education reform initiative is an amorphous period of time when a limited number of risk-taking teachers in a school have adopted and practiced an innovation and the time when the reform fizzles and loses steam...If the risk-takers like the results of the strategies, they will continue to employ them. But rarely in the history of education reform have innovations reached a stage that could truthfully be called full implementation or institutionalization (p. 99).

With a couple years of experience with the innovation, some teachers were making adjustments and judgments about the materials. They had tried pieces of the balanced literacy program, but weren't satisfied with all of it.

A veteran third grade teacher reported:

> The test that we now can give, you know those assessments to end say a level 16 or J, or whichever you're going to use. Sometimes they are not the best test. They take a lot of time for a little bit of insight. I can just about already tell what is going to work and not work anyway. I followed the test through the first year, and I don't know any more. I guess I haven't been told I have to always use it, but once in awhile if I have a question that I am not sure of, then I use it. Otherwise I don't. They are very time consuming and they are individual, one child at a time and there is a lot involved in it. I just don't think you will learn much from it.

Other teachers had distinct perspectives when it came to the amount of phonics that was used in the innovation. Teachers who have had experience are going to bring that knowledge to the innovation. Change is an individual process and is influenced by prior experiences and knowledge (Hall & Hord, 1987). Mrs. Lyons, a first grade teacher and recent teacher in the system, pulled in her experience from teaching in a state that had a strong emphasis on systematic phonics instruction. Balance, for her, was to make certain that emphasis was placed on phonics in the first grade room:

When I first started teaching, I was in another state and they were very strong in Open Court. In college I did lots of immersion units and literature books but I had never had the phonetic side. Well, in this first school we had curriculum directors strictly for reading and language arts. We had a lot of training. And through that training I was like, "WOW!" Look at what we can do with just a little bit of phonics and structure to guide them through reading. I moved here and have used what I learned in teaching down south in coordination of what I am doing with guided reading, because I can't see them succeeding with just guided reading. They need to have a phonetic approach too. I tried to get them to look at Open Court but they had already gotten so into it [balanced literacy] that they were like, "we are on a road toward where we think we want to go." We do have sound cards that were adopted with an Orton-Gillingham approach, but the biggest change in my philosophy is that there is not one way to do it. You have to blend to meet the child's needs. (October 2003)

A second grade teacher who had taught using balanced literacy in another state's school district reported:

What I miss from it [Whispering Pines Guided Reading] is the strong phonics instruction, and it is very hard to get in during guided reading. Luckily for me I was hired into a first grade team in my other school and we used Metro-Companion Reading. Even though it's criticized that there's no literature, it is very sequential and it's not just phonetic. It has both a phonetic and sight words base to it. What I miss now [in balanced literacy] is the strong phonics instruction. This is very hard to get in. (January 2004)

On the other hand, one teacher in the lower grades noted that the program Whispering Pines used before "had very little phonics instruction" (August 2003). Consequently, the primary teachers went to workshops on using phonics card packs. In essence, the school added another component that teachers thought would balance their literacy program. One teacher reported, however, "I think when we first started, I saw a lot of, well, too much drill on phonics, but I think it's balancing out. I see people pulling back and seeing that maybe we don't need to emphasize that much on isolated phonics. Let's look at putting it more into context." (August 2003)

<u>Spring semester 2003</u>

With a semester of balanced literacy as the curriculum for most of the teachers,

the overall impressions with the faculty were positive. Tammy Eastwood affirmed, "I

firmly believe in the Rigby Guided Reading because it's leveled to the individual needs."

Another first grade teacher stated:

> I think it's seeing how well the kids like to read. I can recall in the past years
> doing a reading lesson where the struggling kids hated reading. I had a little boy
> one year who cried every time it was reading time. He would have done anything
> to avoid his reading time. And now you see—even my lowest reading groups—
> they can hardly wait to get back to reading. They say, "Is it our turn to go back to
> the table yet?" And you didn't have that in the past. (December 2003)

Good teaching, states Hargreaves (1997), is not "just a matter of being efficient,

developing competent, mastering technique, and possessing the right kind of knowledge.

Good teaching also involves emotional work. It is infused with pleasure, passion,

creativity, challenge, and joy" (p. 12).

A second grade teacher shared, "I love the guided reading. I think it is invaluable

because kids aren't sitting around lost, and you don't have kids that are sitting and bored,

because you can be flexible" (January 2004).

As the semester rolled along and teachers developed confidence in what they were

doing with innovation, the impact of "No Child Left Behind" as a reform of reading

during the first year of its implementation seemed minimal.

However, Yvonne Paulson stated:

> It's going to be there at some point. I'll give you an example. In April we had
> gotten back the ITBS scores. We had also done some other assessments and Beth
> (Mrs. Barth) walks in and suddenly says, "What are we going to do about these
> twelve students?" I said, "Which twelve?" And she said, "This one. This one.
> This one. They all scored below the criteria level...blah, blah, blah...how are we

going to get them up?" I go, "Beth, they were below when they came in here. We are not going to get them up for next year."

Because fourth grade is a reporting year, I said, "They have been labeled a class who needed extra all the way through; from kindergarten on…and what are you doing? Every year you're pulling some support away from them. You gave them all the support in kindergarten and on and now what are you doing? Every year you're pulling some support away from them. (September 2003)

Another teacher reported that she didn't feel the pressure or at least, she didn't let herself feel the pressure since she felt that she and her students were working as hard as they could. (September 2003)

Mrs. Baylor voiced her concerns with this matter as well:

There is no way that every one of these kids, when I look at my Special Education kids, I'll be thrilled if they grow a year, but if they are starting at Kindergarten in the Third Grade and grow a year, that means ending at First Grade. They should be proud of that, but that's not how NCLB works. So, I can't see it working other than it might frustrate a couple of kids into quitting school, when they get to that age. (September 2003)

The pressures to perform were becoming real as NCLB became a household word during the spring of 2003. News media capitalized on the opportunity to report on school performance or the lack of it, and the public started to turn its attention to performance issues. Schools and scores were reported in newspapers.

One teacher shared the story of a young student's anxiety about her own performance:

I have a prime example. There had been some things in the newspaper and some families' talk about the Sunday paper or whatever, and after the ITBS came back and we had shared the results with the individual kids and they took it [scores] home. About a week later, my top student said to me, "May I see you at recess?" I said, "Yes. No problem." At recess she said to me, "Will I be cited in the newspaper?" "What?" I said. "Will my name be in the newspaper?" "What for?" I thought she meant like as a compliment. I said, "What special thing has happened?" She goes, "Not special. I didn't do so well in punctuation." Yeah,

not so well for her meant like a 4.8 in third grade. Since all the rest of hers were higher, she thought that she would be cited for being low. Well, you know her family had been talking about NCLB and how schools get cited and get their name in the paper. Well, I talked to her, and we had a nice visit about that. I mean, she was a nervous wreck.
(September 2003)

As the first full school year of actual implementation of balanced literacy came to a close, some teachers and the administration were contemplating the impact of NCLB. There was talk about purchasing "Test Preps," materials that offer practice on taking standardized tests, for school with the expectation that students learn how to take the standardized tests since balanced literacy didn't really offer any practice in that regard. When asked about the reason for such a purchase, responding without any shame or doubt, the reading specialist said, "The primary purpose is to raise test scores; what else? If that's what everybody is doing and the consensus is that people are saying that their school does, then we have to do it. You are graded against everybody else, so yeah, I think that's coming" (August 2003).

Fall semester 2003

Since the majority of information I acquired as a participant-observer was in the first few months of fall 2003, the interviews often spoke of the teachers' experiences during the prior year. Consequently, a definite chronological time format became more difficult to discern at this point in the investigation due varying individual teacher concerns. Interviews taking place at the Emma Rose School, however, do reflect teacher concerns expressed during the fall semester of 2003.

Hall and Hord's (2001) findings indicate that use of a new program is not automatic. It is not even an issue of whether some persons use it or others not. In any change effort, participants will be operating in different ways. Whispering Pines School District was no exception. Paula Franks reported that some teachers did not really use balanced literacy during the first full year of implementation. "Last year [2002-2003] all of the primary teachers used it, but fourth grade didn't at all, fifth and sixth did some. This year they are using it more" (August 2003).

As I walked into Whispering Pines schools early in the school year with my human subjects review in my hand, I spoke to the first through third grade teachers on a more intimate basis. Although I had been in several of their classrooms when my own students were in their student teaching practica, I was now there on a different mission. I was there as a questioner and observer, a fellow educator working to understand the process of change in this district.

> Use of a new program is not automatic, nor is it a matter of some persons using it and others not. Using new programs or processes is not a simple case of, "Yes, he's using it," or "No, she is not." In any given change effort, implementers will be operating in very different ways with new practices, thus, the real question is, "How is she or he using it?" (Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 80).

As I interviewed teachers, I found that teachers at the Emma Rose School were more cautious and anxious about the innovation than teachers at the Forrest Hills School. One of the teachers admitted that she was really only beginning the innovation this fall. She felt that she needed more direction in terms of being told what to do. Mrs. Knutsen stated, "I think that they [administration] need to get stricter on this. With the way we are set up with the different schools, there are a few isolated teachers still saying, 'I'm not

doing this'" (December 2003). Mrs. Knutsen felt that until people became more

comfortable with the innovation and it became mandated, these few teachers would still

not participate. In essence, she was most comfortable with a "top-down" plan for

curriculum change. She herself admitted that she went back to the safety of her old series

during the prior school year:

> When I lost my husband to death a year ago, I went back to the old. It was for survival. This year I feel like a new teacher. I know that some have dove in head over heels. I feel that the Adamsburg [Forrest Hills] teachers really have it put together. You know, there's a lot of teamwork up there, and that is another factor. We don't really have anyone to feed off of when you have one grade. It seems to me that I just don't think there's enough checking on where everybody is, but our principal is going to be starting a monthly check on, "Where you are at? What are you doing?" I think he is sensing that he needs to be a little bit better on top of things. That is a good thing. That is a professional growth thing for me. He is going to be checking so I need to get this figured out. (December 2004)

The third grade teacher at Emma Rose also acknowledged that her greatest

challenge was keeping the children who were not involved in the small group on-task. "I

give them work to do, but I still see a lot of them looking up here at the group. They pay

attention to what's going on up here instead of doing their work." (February 2004)

Although the teachers in this center varied in their comfort levels with the innovation,

they expressed less comfort with the process than their teaching counterparts at the main

center. The outlying centers, in some ways, felt disconnected from the change process.

Emma Rose School was on its third administrator in three years. The last two

principals had not been a part of the change process when the school adopted the

innovation. Hall and Hord (2001) strongly believe, "that each person's Level of Use and

success with a change is in large measure influenced by the facilitation he or she receives.

If no support and facilitating interventions are offered, many will never fully implement

the innovation, and others will remain nonusers" (p. 92).

Vickie spoke of having a difficult time due to the fact that the school had a

difficult time keeping principals. Her tone was bleak and laced with a sense of

frustration:

> We are constantly getting people out here. It's sad that we know more than they know. Mr. Black, our new one, is wonderful and he would bend over backwards but yet, he's the curriculum director for the district. I know ten times more about guided reading than he does and I don't know a lot. That's what is sad. Our district has invested a lot in balanced literacy and yet there's no one who you can go to ...to really tell them how it is. I mean, as a new teacher coming and need someone to say, "This is the meat of balanced literacy and this is the way you should be doing it." There's nobody who can do that unless there's a teacher in your building who you could go to that could say...and a lot of times teachers don't ...I don't have time to go over to the kindergarten room to make sure she knows what she's doing because I still have first grade and I'm not an expert at balanced literacy in first grade so I'm still working at myself to get better. Again, time is a big thing and the investment in our administration...money again. We don't have the money to keep the good people around. (December 2003)

In contrast, the main education center for Whispering Pines School District has

felt constancy not experienced by the outlying centers. Teachers in this center did not

voice the same mechanical types of concerns with the innovation. Most first through

third grade teachers at Forrest Hills had moved into a routine that established what they

felt worked the best for themselves and their students (Hall & Hord, 2001).

Although there were concerns, the concerns expressed were of a different type

and nature. Apprehension centered more on elements of the program that teachers saw as

weak, rather than their instructional organization. One of these concerns, for example,

had to do with the use of reading materials. Teachers who had taught reading using a

literature-based series were more likely to express disillusionment about the types of materials used for guided reading instruction.

Working from past experiences that utilized quality children's literature as instructional tools, some Forrest Hills' teachers felt that the balanced literacy program was deficient in its use of literature models for children. Mrs. Franks was direct in her analysis of this shortcoming, "I am concerned that all of the guided reading and shared reading books that are being cranked out by textbook publishers will diminish the use of quality literature in the classroom." At each grade level, at least one teacher bemoaned the fact that children were not dialoguing about authors and illustrators. Becky Nim, a teacher who has large bulletin boards dedicated to children's authors and a wealth of personally purchased children's books for her classroom library, feels that guided fiction materials do not represent known authors and illustrators. Finally, a first grade teacher stated that her students seemed to be having a more difficult time with wanting to read fiction rather than nonfiction.

> The nonfiction is harder because of vocabulary, but you know, they really enjoy it better. There is more to talk about and they connect better and have more interest than in the fiction. They can tell me right off in first grade as soon as they open the book and see the table of contents. That's the first thing they learn about the books. This is what are we going to learn about today. If they open it up and it is a fiction book, they say that's not a true book. There are a few good stories, but there are some I just skip over because they are not fun to read. You get done with it and so what? …we are missing the tales and things like that and it's something that kids need to know. We try to get it in free reading, but there's not much time for that. (October 2003)

As I observed in my fieldnotes, most of the children's literature that was displayed in the classroom came from authors who were popular in the late eighties and early nineties. There was no evidence of any new names in the field of children's

literature in the classrooms, and in some classrooms, little evidence existed that literature held a place of honor at the reading table. Instead, phonics charts and skill centers are the focus of instruction. One teacher, in fact, had the opposite concern when it came to balanced literacy:

> I basically like balanced literacy. I like the support and use of small flexible groups and the leveling of books, and I think it is wonderful that we are directly teaching different reading strategies. However, my concern is that balanced literacy not become a reincarnation of "whole language." I firmly believe that direct phonics instruction must be included in superior teaching of reading. (December 2003)

Obviously, change is not going to look the same to everyone. People bring varied experiences and expectations depending upon their personal backgrounds. All of this impacts the change process. In fact, not only does prior knowledge impact change but use of the innovation itself also invites change. As teachers implemented the innovation, they also became more critical of the innovation. Using a critical eye, some teachers were honest about the negatives as well as the positives of balanced reading. Consequently, within this implementation they found that the significant users have to adapt and personalize the innovation in order for the change to become lasting. The change process at Whispering Pines reflected this element.

With all of the education and research on balanced literacy, for example, implementation appeared to be individual at least on some levels and dependent upon experiences and personal philosophies. This was especially evident when it came to teachers' attitudes about the role of children's literature within the curriculum. As I conducted my research, many of the teachers were quick to point out that the new program lacked what they considered to be quality children's literature.

"We're missing some of the things like *Anansi the Spider* (McDermott, 1972) and other tales like that. That's something they need to know about. It's part of our literature," stated a first grade teacher. "I try to make sure I read some of that, but it doesn't always get done" (October 2003).

A second grade teacher reflected:

> I think the part you miss...I mean there's really some good literature other there...like in my old basal. I had Steven Kellogg—a whole theme with Steven Kellogg and Tomi De Paola; you know, I know I shouldn't quit doing the author stuff, but as far as the rich, down to earth, get into the meat of it type literature...I think some of the quality will be lost but yet, reading successes will improve. I don't know. I'm really just trying to get this all figured out, because I know they'd like to just have you leave the other [old basal] alone, but...well, not necessarily because that's where they say bring it back and do it in your shared readings, do your class discussions, talk about your characters in your rich literature as a class. (December 2003)

Another teacher commented:

> Literature-based is a better description of where we were, but now, we have absolutely no well-known authors in our collection except at the upper grades, but in the lower elementary, none. The literature element is definitely gone. That is one of the things I don't like with this new series is the lack of good literature. They have a lot of little books, and a lot of little stories, but we are not emphasizing the literature that we did before. Personally, I like to bring it in, but not every teacher does because some are pretty tied to the program. (August 2003)

A couple teachers also reported that they worried about the fact that children were missing the challenge of bigger books by only using the leveled guided reading books.

Although comments about the lack of literature appeared to illustrate more the "grief" that comes with change, teachers were still incorporating literature through other means than just the reading block. Most teachers, however, found ways to adapt the curriculum in ways that adjusted for the lack of literature. In my field observations, for

example, most classrooms had corners containing colorful plastic baskets overflowing with teachers' personal collections of children's literature with reading levels marked clearly for children's use. If the teachers did not have a personal collection, I noticed the characteristic cardboard boxes that housed the borrowed books from the AEA. Children could choose these books during the guided reading block for their silent reading. The teachers who had taught from the literature-based series also continued to display bulletin boards focusing on authors and their books. Steven Kellogg, Tomi De Paola, Jan Brett, and Cynthia Rylant and their books all held places of esteem on the border-framed walls.

Learning centers, leveled books, phonics charts, group tables, a group gathering area, and a wealth of available reading and writing materials serves as evidence that balanced literacy is an integrated part of the primary education at Whispering Pines. Implementation is taking hold even with the regrets and loss that comes with a change. However, it is important for those monitoring change to recognize individual concerns that come with change. For example, a veteran second grade teacher who had been on the original balanced literacy research team talked about finding "holes" in the program. Research reveals that "implementation woes" are common in school innovation processes (Adelman & Walking-Eagle, 1997) and it is important to address these concerns individually. These "woes" were becoming apparent in this innovation.

> I was on the committee to help choose this book [balanced literacy] and one thing we were looking for was stronger phonics, because we didn't have that. I was telling Beth [the principal] last night, I said, "I was on that committee and I thought…I helped choose this because I felt it had stronger phonics, and now that we are using it; I am going-- it isn't strong at all!" I mean, it will mention long vowels and short vowels or whatever skill but it's about a two sentence mentioning of it. You have to bring in a lot of stuff. If you just use this, it wouldn't be all that much. I've moved to going to do more whole group teaching

of phonics and skills because I lose track of who has had this or that in the small groups. (October 2003)

Overall, however, the teachers remained positive about the impact that balanced reading was having on their students. A second grade teacher who voiced many doubts about her confidence with the innovation admitted,

> Yeah! The kids love it! They are always anxious to see the next book in the baggie. These are 'check out' books. They can't go home so they are always fresh and new and exciting. So it's good to see that enthusiasm and they really don't dwell on the levels—which is nice. We just come to the table at random for guided reading. It's good to see them all reading. You know when you were doing whole group reading from the basal, it was 'sink or swim.' You could tell the ones who hated to read out loud, now we are doing 'whisper read' around the table and there is success for everybody. That's what is exciting. (December 2003)

Summary of Phase II

Administration's Role During the Implementation of the Innovation

As the innovation began to move beyond the initiation phase, Superintendent Garrett became less involved with the innovation. His philosophy was, "If you begin the process, teachers will be hungry for more. Then provide the tools to do what they need to do and let the teachers lead" (March 2004). He expressed confidence with his faculty and believed that the elementary faculty was doing well with the innovation. In fact, he believed that they would lead to the teachers at the high school. Mr. Garrett reported, "The high school teachers are asking questions. You know, questions like how does this work? What are they [elementary] doing? Success follows the leaders in the school. So find the leaders and help change happen." At the implementation phase, Mr. Garrett

moved to the background and rarely came to meetings as he had done during the initiation phase.

The principals at Emma Rose were changing so quickly, that it was difficult for teachers to find guidance if they had questions. During the past three years, three different principals have held this post. Consequently, the administrations' direct involvement with the innovation has been minimal, especially during the last two years. Mrs. Uglum, the principal who helped during the initiation phase, took an active role in trying to assist her faculty in seeing how this changed played out in practice. Even though the school had decided on the innovation, she felt teachers in this center needed to observe a school putting balanced literacy into practice. This helped to answer some questions but teachers are still struggling with elements of the innovation.

At Whispering Pines, Mrs. Barth spoke in detail about the initiation phase, but it was more difficult to discern exactly what teaching and learning supports were being provided during the past year of the innovation. Research groups have disbanded since the balanced literacy decision was made so focused groups on educational research in reading have not met with any regularity, if they have met at all.

One teacher commented on pressures they thought administration was feeling:

> I would say we have a collaborative relationship. When they are able to, because they are overwhelmed too. Somewhere somebody's got to say, "This is it." Instead of dumping in more and more to do and not taking anything away.

Teachers' Reactions to Changes in the Reading Curriculum

On the whole, teachers are positive to the reading innovation, and responded with enthusiasm. A second grade teacher commented:

> But to see that kids have a joy of reading to me is such a purpose of reading, and I don't know that ever before that we have ever been told that that was a part of it, even though I had always believed it. I don't think anyone had ever told me it was OK to have that as a goal. (October 2003)

Written comments (April 2004) stated:

> I love balanced literacy. Having both shared and guided reading meets both criteria doing whole group reading while meeting each student's needs at their reading level.

> I believe in balanced literacy. I like the support and the use of flexible, small groups. I like the leveling system of books and consciously connecting reading and writing.

Although nine out of ten teachers expressed favorable comments for balanced

literacy during interviews and on a questionnaire, concerns still surfaced about the

innovation:

A second grade teacher wrote, "I struggle with the organization of all of the

components involved, and I am frustrated with the lack of continued support of staff

development with all of the components" (April 2004).

Another commented, " I am concerned that as balanced literacy evolves, it will

lose some of its 'balance.' I will be easier for teachers to find their pet part of the balance

and overemphasize that area" (April 2004).

Finally, management issues seemed to be emerging from the comments regarding

time, grouping, and materials.

Administrators' and Teachers' Reactions to No Child Left Behind

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2002,

otherwise known as No Child Left Behind, has impacted public schools throughout the

country with financial rewards and punishments made on the basis of test scores meant to

provide school accountability. Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, comments:

> Although there is a great deal of hand-wringing in certain circles concerning the impact that the law is having, it is undeniable that in the two years since enactment, *NCLB* is having what I consider a transformative impact on our public education system. It is also undeniable that this transformation is taking place in large part due to the determined actions the Department and this administration have taken in implementing the law. For the first time in history, every state has an approved accountability plan to ensure academic proficiency for every child. Achievement gaps are being identified and addressed. The success of schools is now being measured on the academic achievement of all students so that children who need help aren't hidden in averages. (Paige, 2004, p. 1)

Just two years prior to this statement on January 9, 2002, Secretary Paige spoke to

a group at Mount Vernon, "As I said this afternoon, for America's children, the turn of

the century came yesterday. When President Bush signed his *No Child Left Behind* bill

into law, he made the federal government a strong ally of accountability, local

communities and parents" (USDE, 2002b).

While speeches and news media were reporting this legislation almost daily

during the winter of 2002, Whispering Pines simply speculated about what this law

would mean for them. Having just invested thousands of dollars in a reading innovation

and countless hours learning how to implement it, teachers did not feel the impact of this

"landmark legislation" (Bush, 2002). When questioned about feeling any pressures or

influences when this Act became law, Mrs. Baylor replied, "Probably not. I probably

should have felt pressure, but I didn't. I mean I just feel like I am working and they

[students] are working about as hard as they can" (September 2003).

A first grade teacher replied,

I don't feel any more [pressure] than I did twelve years ago. I guess that during certain times of the year I worry that I'm not as far as I was the year before. That would be my only pressure like that, and that's my own pressure. (December 2003)

I questioned two third grade teachers, whose students take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and for whom accountability scores will be taken in fourth grade. One teacher responded, "I haven't. They usually do pretty well." A second third grade teacher said, "It really hasn't come down on us yet...I think the ones who are feeling that right now are the administrators more than the classroom teacher. I don't think they've decided how they're going to bring it down to us" (September 2003).

There seemed to be a consensus when it came to the pressures of NCLB. Teachers really did not feel anxiety about the law, but then, Whispering Pines District had, "No schools in need of improvement" according to the definition of Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). The description of the school district found on the city's website states, "... the Whispering Pines School District, consistently scores well above the state average in statewide testing."

Although the teachers did not report feeling the pressure of NCLB, they were aware of the accountability factor and had opinions on its efficacy.

Mrs. Nim, a veteran second grade teacher, expressed,

Most of our reading comprehension is done orally with discussing the story; I found that the first year too. So most of it is done orally but I have started bringing in other [sheets] to see if they can read on their own and find answers because they have to have that skill. Next year they have Basic Skills and they have to be able to read something on their own and find the answer all the way through. So that I've brought in since it really isn't emphasized. We don't have workbooks to work on that. (October 2001)

Mrs. Nim continued, "As far as pressures, I think the reforms need to be reformed. I just think that you are working against yourself." Without prompting, Mrs. Nim started discussing expectations that she knew of in another state and how school stopped for three weeks while teachers prepared students to take a test.

> We [second graders] don't take them but in third grade they do. They [teachers] were saying the way the questions were presented for this part of the test for a kid who had never experienced it...wasn't working. For example, with Daily Oral Language I put a sentence on the board and leave some thing out. The kids put them back in. For the test they would have the whole thing right except for one thing and you find the one thing that is wrong. It's almost the opposite of what we do. They're looking for lots of things wrong, and there's only one. It completely threw them [third graders]. They didn't know how to handle it. So I can see where if the school is going to be evaluated on test results, you have to teach test-taking skills—which is a waste of content time. Well, just this year now there have been meetings and there is talk about that [test prep materials]. We don't believe in it, but that's where you get your funding...that's where we are evaluated so...it just doesn't make sense. You know, I almost look toward giving up teaching if that's the way it's going to be. It's probably going to be about 5 years and I'll be out and I don't want to get to that point where you're just pushing things in to take a test and then forget about it. It's just sad it's gone to that and...you know people in Congress need to visit a school and see what's going on and see how WE know who can handle curriculum and who can't and who is doing well and who isn't without take a test—especially a test over things they know nothing about. It's really a waste of time. (October 2003)

Mrs. Nim wasn't the only veteran teacher with strong feelings. Mrs. Baylor, a veteran third grade teacher, commented,

> At this point I'm not pressured, but I am sure that there will come a point when we will feel the pressure from it. I guessed I'm not pressured now, because I am irritated by the whole thing, but I bet there will come a point when there will be pressure. [Why?] Well, if they don't change the law, there will be pressure because nobody wants their school cited as a failing school.
>
> One more comment I have would be, if there were anything that could make me retire early, it would be NCLB. [Really?] I mean if it gets to the point where they say to us, "You have to teach to the test, or you have to do this or that." I can't do it. After all these years, I'm not switching colors. (September 2003)

Although no teacher felt that they were specifically being pressured by NCLB to change their teaching, there were subtle influences appearing during the recent school year. One teacher, who requested to be anonymous, shared that all grades were required to examine the third grade ITBS scores from the prior year (2002-2003). The teachers were to see where they had "fallen down" so that they could teach differently or better the next year.

Finally, a "bottom-line" comment came from Superintendent Garrett:

I know we believe this [leaving no children behind], but to what degree, realistically, can we do this? It's just some things are wrong with the logic...If ALL have to reach proficiency, we have some that won't, BUT if all third graders have at least 3rd grade level—it's OK to set the bar high enough. If the bar is set high (expectations), then we'll catch more than when we didn't have a bar set.

It's the publicity surround this [NCLB] that schools fail...we don't get anywhere discrediting anyone. I was on a panel for the State Association of School Boards, and I didn't think it [NCLB] was all that bad to have high expectations and accountability. But the process of the accountability reporting, well, it may be over the hill.

Changing our reading? I can't see change. I hope that we don't see "teaching to the test" like in some states, but I'm afraid that's what will happen, if it keeps us "out of the paper." I don't like it, but...

(March 2004)

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF A READING REFORM CHANGE PROCESS

The results of the data collection and the interpretations of their implications

are presented according to three research questions. First, using the Concerns-Based

Adoption Model (see Figure 1) as a framework for change, an analysis of the

characteristics of individual teacher's feelings and perceptions about change are

described using the Survey of Concerns Questionnaire. Stages of Concern (Hall and

Hord, 2001) are determined for each teacher as the innovation becomes fully integrated

into the reading curriculum. Second, change principles that were in place at each stage of

the innovation are described. In particular, the analysis discusses principles in place for

systemic change at the district level. The final section presents the descriptions and

interpretations of the major issues that impact the longevity of this particular reading

reform.

In order for me to determine real, rather than perceived differences in the schools'

acceptance level of the reform, I decided to assess the concerns about the reading reform

using three information sources:

1. One-legged interview

2. Stages of Concern Questionnaire (see Appendix G)

3. Open-ended questions (see Appendix H)

<u>Concerns</u>

Throughout the course of the one-legged interview and the open-ended concerns,

a source of anxiety arose among all three of the teachers at Emma Rose. Their primary

concern was the organization of guided reading time. They expressed apprehension about a lack of direction during the time that students spent outside of their direct instruction. Vickie, a first grade teacher for twelve years stated:

> I don't want to say control of the kids but figuring out what to do with the other kids while you are back at the other table, that's my biggest challenge. We are told to model your centers, and I model them and model them and model them and the minute I walk away, they are standing next to me at the guided reading table. That's the one thing we've talked about all the time as we've done the balanced literacy and talked to administrators. That's our hardest thing: what to do with the other kids? (December 2003)

By the fall of 2003, the teachers were beginning the fifth year of recognizing a need for change and the third year of actually implementing the balanced literacy innovation. Hall and Loucks (1977) found that most changes in education take three to five years to be implemented at a high level so time is a critical factor. Independent and shared reading had been established, guided reading is becoming more comfortable, and now the final piece to balance the literacy program was to be added: writing.

"Writing is a big push this year. We have had a few in-services on it, and we're looking at the Six Traits of Writing." (October 2003) However, teachers were still expressing some concern with this piece of the balance puzzle:

> I feel that it [curriculum innovation] was done much more in-depth and we had a real feel for the program before it was totally adopted. We are still working, but I'm really concerned in my particular grade level right now about the writing component. It's part of the balance, but it seems to be, when I look at my block of time, the one that doesn't get as much emphasis. By the time you've got at least two guided reading groups that see you for forty minutes and trying to do some self-selected reading and shared reading, writing gets washed out by time. (September 2003)

Balanced reading is an innovation that is complex. It is not a scripted program and relies

on teachers' ability to assess and plan instruction according to children's individual

needs. As Mrs. Barth stated, "It's not the text. It's the teachers that make the

difference." (March 2004) This said, Mrs. Franks, an articulate teacher who engages in

professional reading and conferences, mused:

> I don't think there's one right way to teach reading. It's just, I know, in this
> balance we are going to bring a little phonics in, we're going to bring a
> little literature, we're going to bring a little bit of everything into it. Yeah, that's
> great, but sometimes that is overwhelming. And sometimes I wonder if there are
> so many things that teachers are going to have to worry about, that they are not
> doing any of it well. I just don't know yet. (August 2003)

According to Hall and Hord (2001),

> Many feelings and perceptions are expressed, and many more are only whispered
> or left unspoken. No matter how promising and wonderful the innovation, no
> matter how strong the support, teachers will still have moments of self-doubt
> about whether they can succeed with this new way, and whether they even want
> to (p. 56).

This seemed to be reflected during an interview with a Mrs. Nim:

> As far as the children's end, I think we are closer. I don't know if we are closer in
> the teacher end, like the evaluation end and stuff. I am just not convinced at all
> that that's even in the ballpark. But to see that kids have a joy of reading to me is
> such a purpose of reading, and I don't know that ever before that we have ever
> been told that that was a part of it, even though I had always believed it. I don't
> think anyone had ever told me it was OK to have that as a goal. (October 2003)

My observations of differences in teachers' utilization of the innovation, and

comments during one-legged and full interviews, piqued my curiosity as to where

individual teachers were in relation to the balanced literacy innovation. Consequently, I

sent a Stages of Concern Questionnaire (Hall and Hord, 2001) to the teachers in my study

during the spring 2004 semester. All ten teachers that I interviewed returned the surveys.

I then analyzed and interpreted their stages according to the instrument's guidelines

(Hall, et al., 1979).

Hall and Hord (2001) propose a powerful concept. They state:

> An entire organization does not change until each member has changed. Even
> when the change is introduced to every member of the organization at the same
> time, the rate of making the change and of developing skill and competence in
> using it will vary individually. Some people will grasp the new way immediately,
> while most will need some additional time, and a few will avoid making the
> change for a very long time (p. 7).

This principle has huge implications for the change process and it continues to justify

why change is a process and not a product. It is important for change facilitators to

acknowledge the individuality of change.

Fullan (2001a) states, "Educational change depends on what teachers do and

think—it's as simple and as complex as that" (p. 115). Each Stage of Concern represents

a personal side of an individual's experiences with an innovation and moves in a

developmental pattern as the change process evolves over time (Hall & Hord, 2001).

Knowing individual attitudes toward change is critical to the change process. Even

though an innovation may be introduced to a group of people at the same chronological

time, there is no guarantee that acceptance or rate of change will continue on same

continuum. Individual needs will vary. Figure 3 presents typical expressions of concern

about an innovation (Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 61). Research determined that teachers'

concerns about change can be documented in stages and these stages can help to

determine individuals' feelings about an innovation.

Stages of Concern	Expressions of Concern

IMPACT	6. Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5 Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what my co-workers are doing.
	4 Consequence	How is my use affecting clients?
TASK	3 Management	I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready.
SELF	2 Personal	How will using it affect me?
	1 Informational	I would like to know about it.
	0 Awareness	I am not concerned about it.

Figure 3: Stages of Concern: Typical Expressions of Concern

Teachers' Current Stages of Concern with the Innovation

Since attitude toward change is a critical factor in the change process, I used "The Stages of Concern Questionnaire" to determine teachers' concerns about reading reform. Table 8 presents an overview of teachers' Stages of Concern at the end of the third year of the implementation process for Emma Rose School. Table 9 presents teacher's Stages of Concern at Forrest Hills.

The percentiles for each school reflect the intensity of concerns at the seven Stages of Concern about the Innovation. Higher percentiles reflect the overall intensity

Table 8

Emma Rose School: Stages of Concern in Third Year of Implementation

		Stages of Concern Percentile Scores						
Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rogers	1	60	60	72	90	76	84	65
Knutsen	2	93	88	89	80	66	80	34
Taylor	3	72	40	76	80	30	25	87
Emma Rose Means		75	63	79	83	57	63	62

Table 9

Forrest Hills School: Stages of Concern in Third Year of Implementation

		Stages of Concern Percentile Scores						
Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Eastwood	1	72	72	83	52	19	25	20
Lyons	1	53	16	25	30	19	40	34
Nim	2	81	27	31	69	43	59	47
Flaten	2	60	16	12	34	8	10	22
Paulson	3	46	16	5	30	8	12	14
Baylor	3	29	16	17	60	16	12	6
Franks	1/2	53	19	25	34	38	80	42
Forrest Hills Means		56	26	28	44	22	34	28

of the concern. Interpretations come from determining peaks and valleys within the

Stages of Concern (Hall & Hord, 2001). Figure 4 gives a visual comparison of the two

schools and their corresponding teachers' concerns. Results from these questionnaires

reveal that intensities with stages of concern clearly separate the two schools (see Figure

4). Teachers at the Emma Rose School have a higher overall intensity percentile score

for each of the stages of concern compared to Forrest Hills' teachers. Although Stage 3,

Management, is most intense concern for both centers, teachers at Emma Rose express a

higher level of intensity with this concern reporting a percentile score of 83 compared to

Forrest Hills's 44. High total percentiles suggest definite feelings and involvement with

the innovation, but as a caveat, it is important to note when analyzing concerns; they are

neither good nor bad. They are simply expressions of concern toward an innovation,

which can provide information about where an individual is in relation to the change

process (Hall & Hord, 2001). Also, in this study

Forrest Hills School & Emma Rose School SoCQ Results
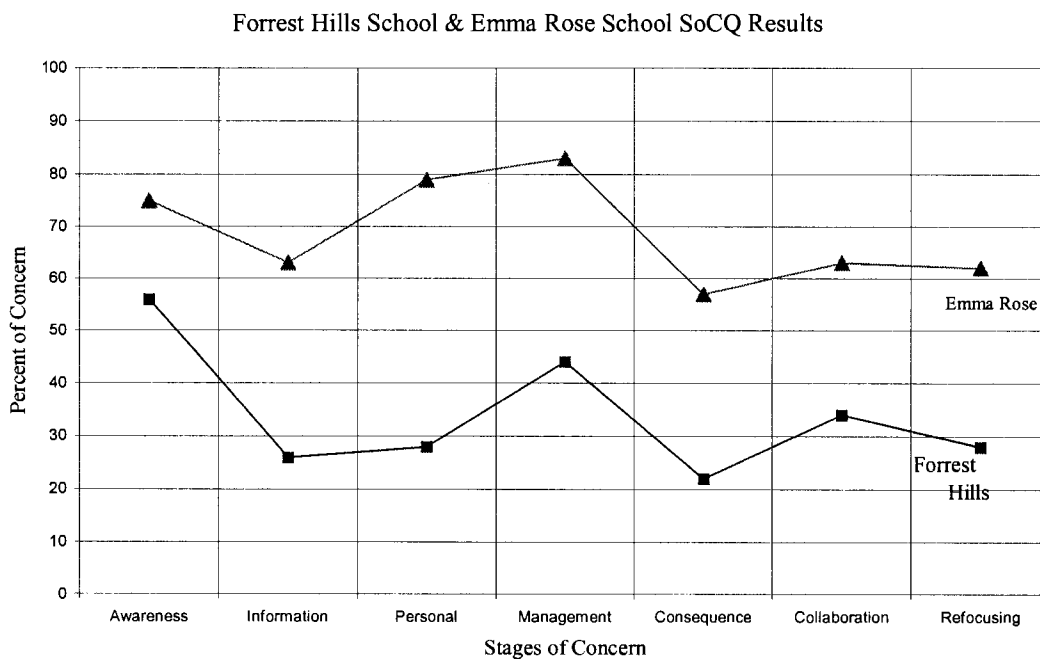
Figure 4: Teachers' Stages of Concern Organized by Schools

the difference in the numbers of teachers in each school reporting their stages of concern have some effect in the scores, however, interview data support that individuals at the Emma Rose School have a high level of concern with this innovation.

Although teachers' composite scores in this school suggest a greater level of intensity toward the innovation, the most useful interpretation of the SoC Questionnaire is at the individual level. Hall and Hord (2001) believe change begins and ends at the individual level. "Even when the change is introduced to every member of the organization at the same time, the rate of making the change and of developing skill and competence in using it will vary individually" (Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 7).

Since change lies within individuals, the following section analyzes each teacher's Stage of Concern about the innovation [balanced literacy].

<u>Individual Teacher's Current Stages of Concern with the Innovation</u>

Many factors influence one's level of concerns. The innovation, for example, may not be a good one; the knowledge and skills requirements may be beyond the person's capabilities; or other demands in a person's life have higher priority. In general, with time, successful experience, and the acquisition of new knowledge and skill, a person's concerns about an innovation develop toward the later stages (Hall et al., 1979).

<div align="center">Emma Rose School</div>

<u>Mrs. Knutsen</u>

During interviews with teachers, several frustrations came out. Some of the most intense remarks came from the second grade teacher:

I don't know if we have enough [information]...I really don't know, but I think we are headed in the right direction. But I think they also have to maybe even get a little bit "stickier" on *every* teacher needs to be working on this. You know, that is where being a district with so many different schools hurts. Different schools are doing different things and some teachers kind of "call the shots." You know, I think it has to be so that you can start having a common language with certain strategies that carry over. I think there are just a few isolated teachers saying, "I'm not doing this" in the district. Within the district, I think that most are open-minded, and I think that many of the Forrest Hills teachers really have it put together. You know, a lot of teamwork up there. Here we do not have anyone to feed off of when you only have one grade. I know they do team planning and just keep track up there. It is definitely a benefit when you have more than one section. We do not have a lot of grade level communication unless you would do it totally on your own. We had more at the beginning and now the assumption is that a lot of this is happening, but you know, we need a lot more of that. (December, 2003)

Paralleling the intensity of her interview, this teacher's overall Stages of Concern were the some of the highest of all of the teachers (see Figure 5). "The higher the score, the more intense the concerns are at this stage. The higher and lower are not absolute, however, but relative to the other stage scores for that individual" (Hall et al., 1979, p. 31). Mrs. Knutsen's concerns registered a 93 at Stage 0, an 88 at Stage 1, and an 89 at Stage 2.

Note: Stage 0 is the only peak stage that that cannot be directly interpreted from the data. Generally other sources of additional information need to be added to the make a judgment as to whether or not a person is using an innovation. In this case, I have observed the subject to be a user of the innovation so the next highest stages reflect a more accurate portrayal about the user's concerns.

In Mrs. Knutsen's analysis the two high scores (discounting Stage 0) are at Stage 1 and Stage 2. Hall et al. (1979) comment that, "Assuming the seemingly developmental

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knutsen	2nd	93	88	89	80	66	80	34
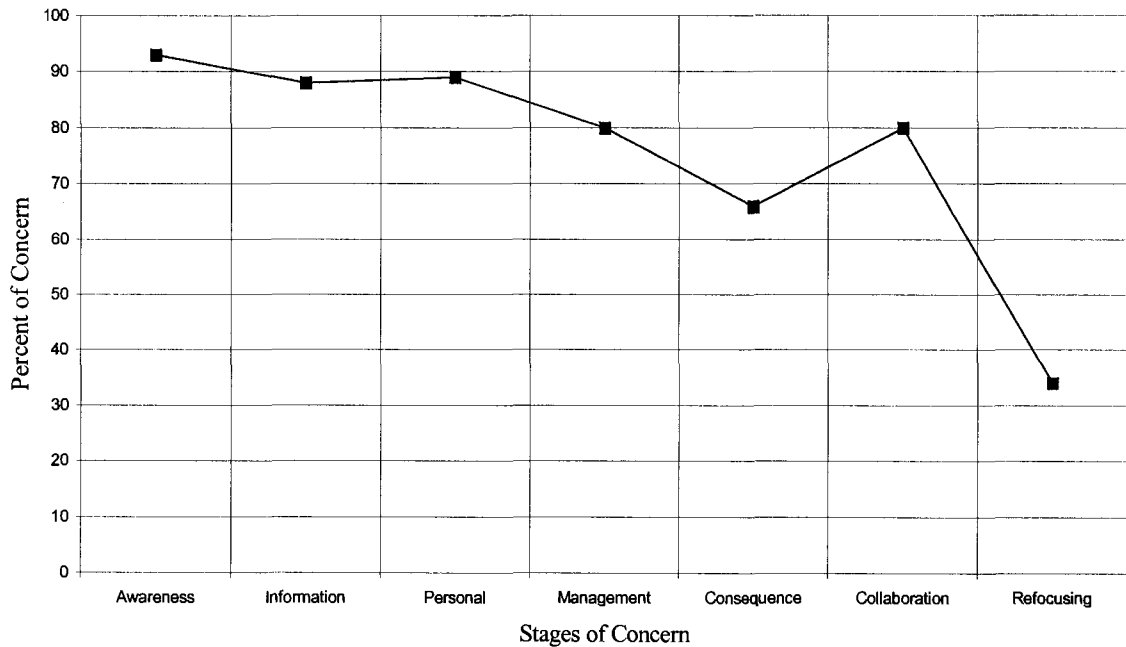
Figure 5. Mrs. Knutsen's SoC Profile

nature of concern, the second highest Stage of Concern will often be adjacent to the

highest Stage of Concern" (p. 31). This is true in Mrs. Knutsen's case.

A peak score at Stage 2 indicates "ego-oriented" questions and uncertainties about

the innovation. Hall and Hord (2001) believe that these intense personal concerns may,

in effect, block out more substantial concerns about the innovation. Users displaying a

high level intensity in the personal category have a difficult time seeing beyond their

concerns. Mrs. Knutsen's comments substantiated her Stage 2 status with comments

such as,

> We used to actually plan our segments of our in-service that were grade level meetings. We would team and talk and talk about what was working and what we have tried. We haven't gotten any of that this year...We seem to be doing a little bit of this and a little of that and a speaker on this...I think that we need to just keep hitting it [balanced reading] until people are more comfortable. Why aren't people doing it? They're not comfortable. I mean it's easy for me to go back some days to just whole class instruction because that's what I know. (December 2003)

Overall, the results of this questionnaire indicated that although Mrs. Knutsen's intensity is quite high overall, she is in the lowest Stages of Concern. Hall and Hord (2001) refer to Stage 2 as having "poisonous mushroom potential" since this is a particularly sensitive stage for an individual. Persons with high Stage 2 (Personal) concerns interpret actions and events, and they can easily interpret actions and events as threatening. Consequently, Stage 2 oncerns can thwart an innovation especially if they have colleagues who are at the same stage. Mrs. Knutsen is using the innovation about three out of five days a week. She is open to learning more but feels she needs more support. Effective intervention is a key to moving this individual to higher stages.

Mrs. Rogers

As a first grade teacher at Emma Rose School for the past eleven years and mother of four little girls, Mrs. Rogers's comments targeted time or rather, the lack of it, as one of the most challenging aspects at this juncture.

> We worked a lot on guided reading. Last year all our in-services were geared around that [guided reading] you know, like we had done with shared reading. Writing was the big push for this year. We have had a few in-services about some of it, but we are also in a computer reporting system to the state. It's where you input all of your standards and benchmarks and objectives and all of the things that you teach. The program will tie all this together so that when you report them to the state everything comes out in a nice little form to see how we cover the school's curriculum standard at first grade. So we are looking at that with in-service. The reports tie things together but the problem is that teachers are the

ones who are supposed to be inputting all of this stuff—but when? We were also supposed to be doing balanced literacy at the same time as this so it was decided that the lower elementary would focus on that first. We agreed with this, but now I'm just stuck here...it's waiting for us like a shark circling the waters...waiting for us to get done with balanced literacy so that we can get to that reporting. (December 2003)

Mrs. Rogers's Stages of Concerns (see Figure 6) reflect a higher level of intensity when compared to her first grade counterparts at the Forrest Hills Center. She also exhibits a multiple-peak profile with a Stage 3 (Management) yielding her highest score followed by a high in the Stage 5 (Collaboration).

The comments made by Mrs. Rogers indicate high concerns about time, logistics, and management problems such as students' abilities to use centers independently. These are typical of a high intensity score in management concerns (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987).

Managing centers is one thing we have talked about all the time as we've done the balanced literacy and talked to administrators. We keep asking that question. What are the other kids supposed to do? One teacher that came in to do the lessons with us taught Title I. Well, she only had three or four kids. I wouldn't have a problem with what the other kids are doing, because there are no other kids. They would all be back at table with me. That's our hardest thing— what to do with the other kids.

We went to Adidas and their answer to this was an associate in the room during guided reading. Well, we can't afford an associate in the room during guided reading. (December, 2003)

A second high intensity percentile in the collaboration stage suggests that Mrs. Rogers is highly concerned about working with others. It appears that engaging in collaborative sharing during the initiating phase was of value to her and that she enjoys learning with other teachers.

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Rogers	1	60	60	72	90	76	84	6
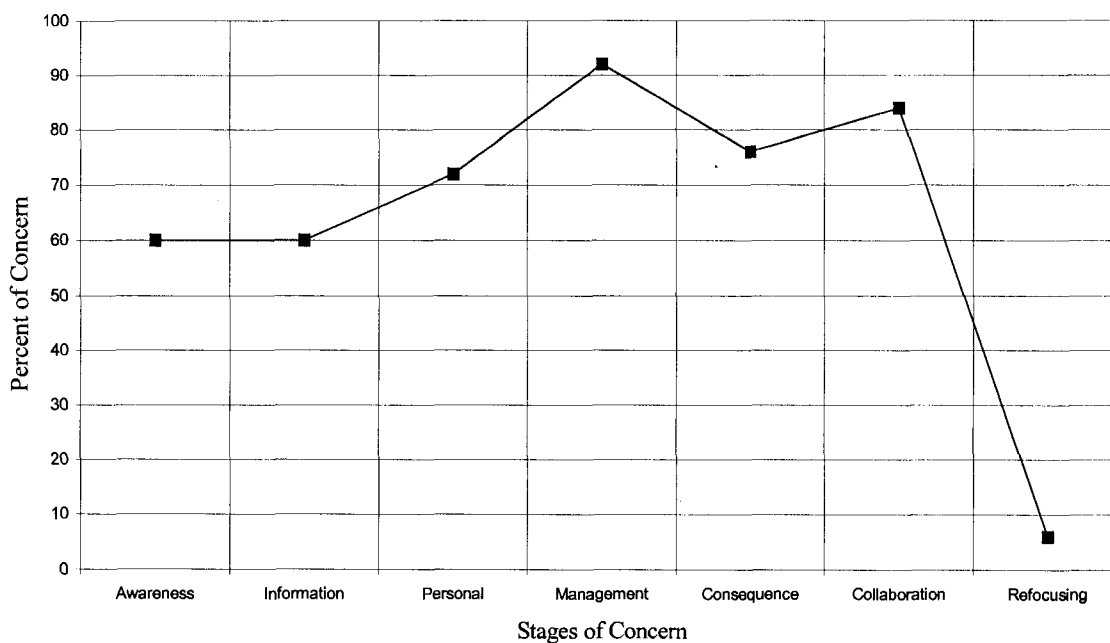
Figure 6. Mrs. Rogers's SoC Profile

There were some masters classes I took on literacy because we were investigating a new literacy program and I thought, "Oh, that might be a good thing to take and see what is really out there." You know, as a classroom teacher you're not always aware of where everything is at, until it gets handed to you. You know, "Here, by the way, this is what we're going to be teaching next fall."

So I took a few of those and having talked to other teachers, they said that there was a really good teacher in another district and she's doing a workshop. So a bunch of us, mostly from Emma Rose School, went there. We are all in our early thirties with small children so we have a lot in common. It was nice to talk and share professionally for a couple of days, but we don't usually have time to do that here.

However, the main obstacle to more collaborative sharing seems to be time.

> There is nobody who can do that (help other teachers with innovation) unless there is a teacher in your building who you could go to and she could tell you. A lot of times teachers do not have the time to go over to the next room and make sure that the new teacher knows what she is doing. I mean, I have a whole class of first graders to watch, and I am still learning.

Mrs. Rogers is using balanced reading in her classroom and is progressing through the stages even though she experiences challenges.

<u>Mrs. Taylor</u>

An experienced teacher of thirty-four years, all of which were in the Whispering Pines School District, Mrs. Taylor had seen innovations come and go as indicated by her response to my question, "Compared to what you have done for reading instruction in the past, do you think this is the answer?"

> I'm sure it will all change. I'm sure this is just a phase and I'm sure we'll change. We always do. I started with groups, then the whole group, and now we're back to groups. I mean, the groups are more fluid now, but it'll change. I didn't think that it would work to have one whole group. That was really hard for me to accept that, you know, teaching one group. But after teaching, I loved the Houghton-Mifflin Reading Series. I love the anthology and I still teach from that. (February 2004)

Mrs. Taylor's Stages of Concerns (see Figure 7) reflect a higher level of intensity when compared to her third grade colleagues at the Forrest Hills Center. She also exhibits a multiple-peak profile with a highest score at a Stage 6 (Refocusing) with a Stage 3 (Management) and Stage 2 (Personal) following close behind. No other teachers surveyed displayed a high percentile score in Stage 6 on the SoC Survey. Hall and Hord (1987) describe this multiple-peak profile as rather straightforward. Generally, this type

of profile signals the need for some type of intervention with this user. The high

Refocusing Concerns (Stage 6) do not necessarily mean that this user has progressed

through the stages. Instead, this person has ideas for improvements on the innovation.

"Most often, what the person thinks would be better is a return to old practices. Unless

something changes, this person will probably abandon the innovation and go back to

more comfortable practices" (p. 40).

The profile reflecting Mrs. Taylor's stages of concern was not surprising. This

interview was the most difficult for me to schedule, we were not able to meet until

February and her survey was the final one to be returned. As our conversation began,

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Taylor	3	72	40	76	80	30	25	87
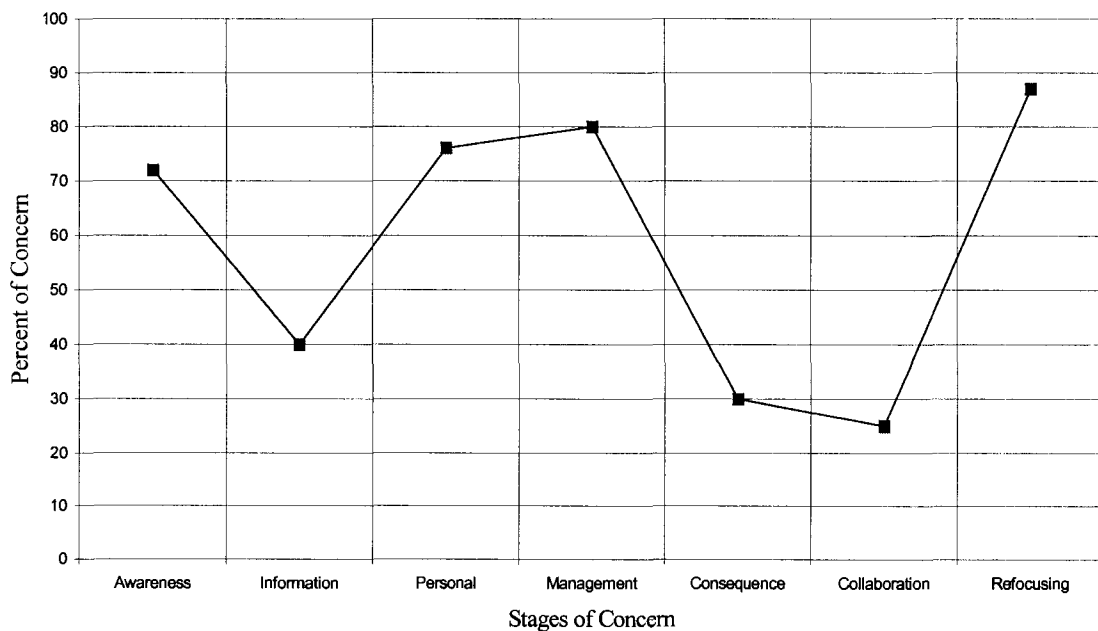
Figure 7. Mrs. Taylor's SoC Profile

the question-answer volleying was quick without much expansion. I tried to draw out

some descriptions from her, without much success, until I asked about student

achievement and accountability:

> I've noticed, for example, that last year I had a student coming here who was
> reading at a first grade level and when he left the room at the end of the year he
> was reading Laura Ingalls Wilder's book, *Little House on the Prairie,* because he
> got into reading with Accelerated Reader. He started with the *Boxcar Children.*
> He started working with the shorter ½ point books, the picture books at the
> beginning of the year. It's fun to watch the students starting with those books at
> the beginning of the year and then at the end of the year be able to read, especially
> a child like him. A lot of them [third graders] get into the Beverly Cleary books
> and are able to read those.

When I inquired as to whether guided reading made a difference, her response was, "No.

Well, maybe in previous grades but not in this room."

Mrs. Taylor also expressed that her biggest challenge was, "Following what kids

are doing when they aren't in a group. I give them work to do, but I still see a lot of them

looking up here where I'm teaching. They pay attention to what's going on up here

instead of their work" (February 2004).

Hall and Hord (1987) advise that a person with these types of concerns receive

intervention or face the possibility of an individual abandoning the innovation. "An

organization does not change until each member has changed" (Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 7).

Mrs. Taylor has not accepted this innovation. However, this will not impact Emma Rose

School since Mrs. Taylor is retiring at the end of this school year and her replacement

may be more open to balanced literacy.

Forrest Hills School

Mrs. Lyons

In her fourth year at Whispering Pines School District, Mrs. Lyons spent two

years at Mallen teaching in a special education classroom before coming to teach first

grade at Forrest Hills. Prior to that, her experience included two years in the large

Midwestern City school district at the first grade level. Using her literature-based

background from college and her Open Court experience from the large city, Mrs. Lyons

seemed satisfied with balanced reading.

> I wasn't here when they did the anthologies, so I don't know the changes here, but
> they [the children] love guided reading. They just enjoy reading. I mean, that is
> the biggest indicator of how something is working, is if they enjoy it.

Mrs. Lyons's overall scores reflect a lower intensity of concerns (see Figure 8).

This is especially evident when comparing her scores to that of her colleagues at Emma

Rose School. From this survey's results, the highest score (disregarding stage 0) is at

Stage 5 (Collaboration), and the second stage high is at Stage 6 (Refocusing). As a high

Stage 5 concerns profile respondent, Mrs. Lyons is heavily concerned about working with

colleagues in coordinating this innovation. With a moderately high Stage 6 score, this

profile indicates that she may have other ideas about the innovation that she would like to

see put into practice or at least tried out.

Interview and fieldwork data validates Mrs. Lyons's profile. As an observer in

the field, I observed the first grade teachers collaborating by sharing centers and materials

across the halls in Forrest Hills School. Mrs. Eastwood mentioned that Mrs. Lyons

ordered materials from the AEA that they shared.

Jen orders a lot from the AEA and we use the materials for shared reading. It is really what we use for our science curriculum. We have a list of themes and topics we are supposed to teach. We have materials, but we share those. All the teachers share them; they are in the closet out there; bundled up. Jen and I have never seen a social studies book, but the outlying teachers swear that there is one somewhere. We just haven't seen it. (October 2003)

The first grade teachers also combined a list of center materials for my pre-service

teachers to construct so that they could all use the centers in their classrooms.

Mrs. Lyons's concern about the amount of phonics in the balanced literacy reflects a

Stage 6 (Refocusing). "High Stage 6 concerns generally indicate that the respondent has

other ideas about the innovation and is concerned about seeing the ideas put into practice,

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lyons	1	53	15	25	30	19	40	34
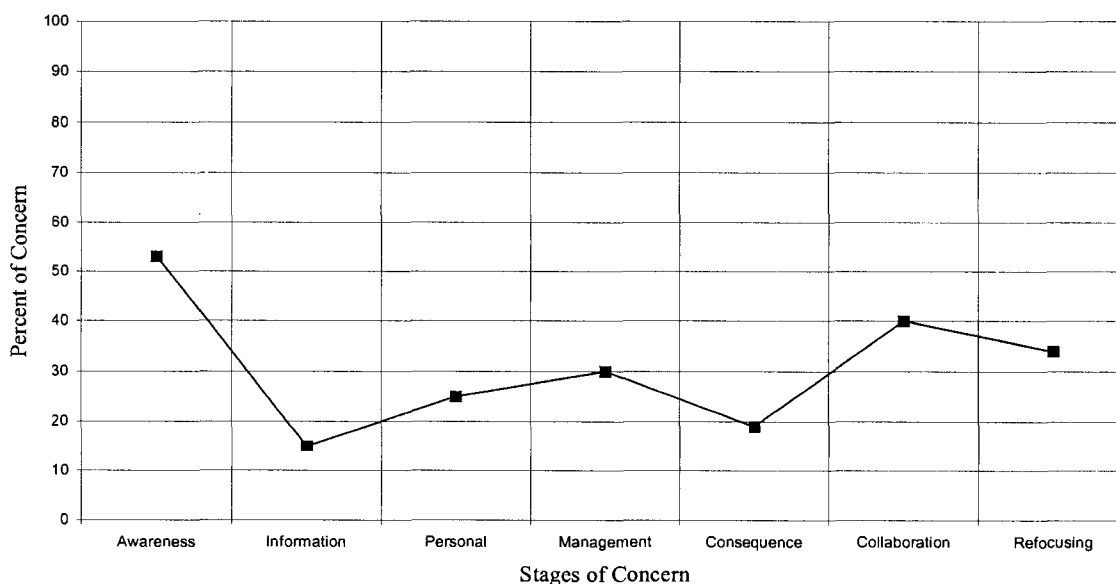
Figure 8. Mrs. Lyons's SoC Profile

or at least tried out" (Hall et al., 1979). Since management is not a major concern for this

teacher, it might be useful to tap her collaboration concerns and to develop time for

collaborating between teachers in an effort to continue to move all teachers on the Stages

of Concern continuum.

<u>Mrs. Eastwood</u>

A teacher with eleven years of teaching experience, six in a local parochial

school, two years in Title Reading, and three in first grade at Whispering Pines, a reading

endorsement and MAE in Elementary Education, Mrs. Eastwood brought a variety of

experiences to this position. She expressed a commitment to balanced reading, especially

guided reading, in her classroom.

> We're doing guided reading and having a balanced literacy program. I
> firmly believe in the guided reading because it is leveled to their [students]
> individual needs. When we first started teaching, everyone sat in a group
> and had the same book. The ones that didn't get it, never did because the
> material kept getting harder and the ones that were beyond it were bored.
> Then you had that chunk, that small chunk, in the middle. It was right on
> for them, but I believe that it needs to be individualized for each student.
> (October 2003):

Mrs Eastwood's profile (see Figure 9) reflects high intensity concerns at the Stage

2 (Personal) level of concern. Generally, this stage reflects a user who is uncertain about

the demands of the innovation, her adequacy to meet those demands, and her role with

the innovation. These concerns reflect an attitude of, "How will it affect me?" (Hall &

Hord, 2001, p. 63).

Mrs. Eastwood expressed frustrations with her literacy block and a shortage of

time:

It was very overwhelming the first year. I just couldn't do everything the first year. You know, you try but you can't, and this year my schedule stinks. I only have one special in the afternoon and the rest of mine are every morning around ten to nine. That's when they all start so it really cuts into my guided reading. The ideal way would be to do shared reading and then right after shared reading, explain centers, and then I would start guided reading until recess and come back and do guided reading until lunch. I would also do shared reading in the afternoon. The majority of my day is filled up so that all I am doing is teaching reading. (October 2003)

These comments are typical of a person at Stage 2 and are often referred to as

"self" concerns. Dissatisfaction with the schedule and questions about how

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores:

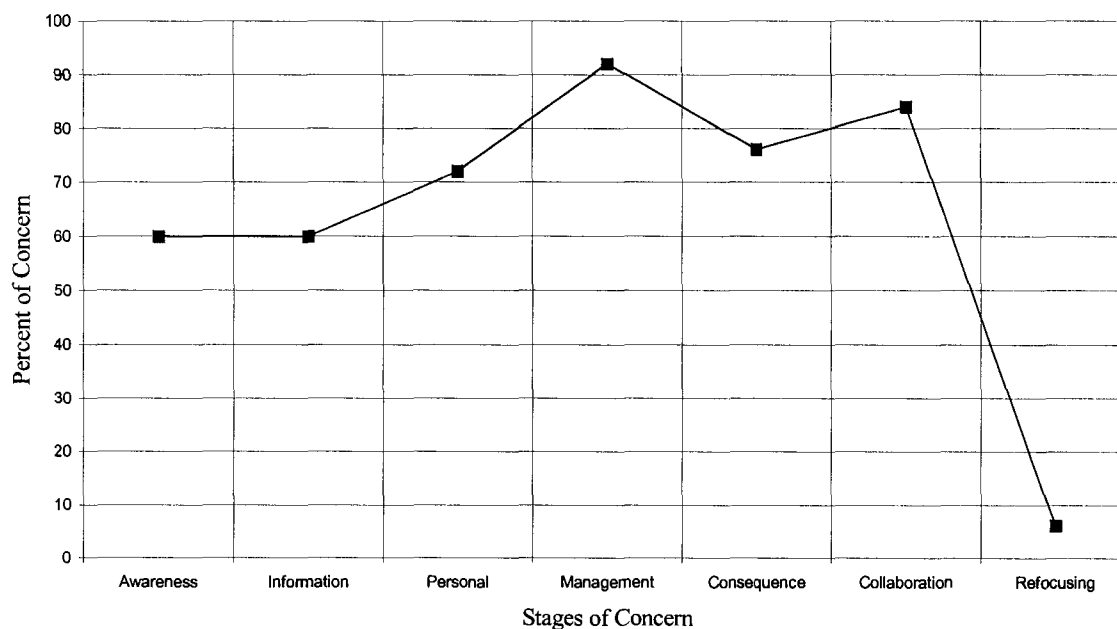| Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Eastwood	1	72	72	83	52	19	25	20

Figure 9. Mrs. Eastwood's SoC Profile

she was going to accomplish everything in the curriculum resonated throughout our conversation:

> It was overwhelming to go from teaching one group to teaching six. I have five now, but I could have six. So I have to, kind of, pull them together. They are really close, but I know that in third grade they'll probably only have three groups. I guess that's where I feel the pressure; trying to get all those groups in. Next year it's going to be worse because we'll have a few more kids in class. So then you're looking at another group and I guess...I love the program, but as a district they need to make sure they're give us time to teach it where we need to teach it. With more kids that would be tough. We have had small classes, only sixteen last year and two were pulled out for LD. This year I have twenty-three and four leave for help, but I need lower class sizes. They [administration] have imbedded the style in our heads and we just kind of take it and run with it. We've been prepared for the ideal situation. (October 2003)

Hall and Hord (1987) recommend that types of concerns such as these require specialized intervention. In this case, the high intensity score for Stage 2 is a signal for needed intervention. "When an individual is primarily concerned about himself or herself, that person does not have much residual energy for concern about the tasks and consequences of innovation use" (Hall & Hord, 1987, p. 72). This is a critical time since this stage seems to be one that should have "moved on" by this point in the innovation; so consequently, intervention is imperative. Hall and Hord (1987) warn, " Many 'good' innovations can be lost due to inadequately addressing or assisting teachers in resolving their personal concerns" (p. 72).

Mrs. Flaten

A relative "newcomer" to the area, Mrs. Flaten is an experienced teacher with sixteen years of teaching experience. Having taken eleven years off to raise her children, Mrs. Flaten kept up her license and went back to teaching. She has been at Forrest Hills

for the past four years. The current school year was her first year in second grade at this school. She taught kindergarten prior to her second-grade assignment.

Mrs. Flaten's profile (see Figure 10) reflects a relatively low intensity concern profile with Stage 3 (Management) concern as the peak score. This score indicates that the user may be struggling with how to organize, manage, and schedule the innovation in her classroom. Level 6 (Refocusing) is the second peak and may indicate definite ideas about alternatives to the innovation. Interview comments verified these concerns:

> What's happening to me in second grade is that I think that you'll find out this if you talk to other people is that there are so many components that we absolutely run out of time. We have guided reading and shared reading. Well, actually guided reading for me is my top priority. That I do not miss. That schedule is sacred. After that I get in shared reading...After that comes writing because of the link between phonetics and reading. I started out at the beginning of the year using the Word Works cards for phonetic instruction, but there's not a lot of time for it. I stopped the cards for a while and went to "Making Words," but that's done in centers. Yeah, really the issue, which is hard for me to say, is TIME. I have to prioritize and guided reading comes first and writing comes second. (January 2004)

Although Mrs. Flaten stated, "I love the guided reading. I think guided reading is invaluable because what you get is the benefit of ability grouping so that you don't have kids that are just sitting lost" (January 2004). However, she did express anxiety about the lack of direct phonetic instruction in balanced literacy.

> When I taught in another state, the first grades across our district used Metro-Companion Reading. What I liked about it was not only phonetic and not only sight words. It had a very orderly and sequentially taught phonetic base. I think that they [first graders] were ready or more ready to go to the literature in the whole language second grades. In the last year I was in the school we moved to balanced literacy and used Metro for shared reading and then did our guided reading. So we did both. What I miss from it [past experience] is the strong phonics instruction. It's very hard to get in. (January 2004)

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Flaten	2	60	16	12	34	8	10	22

Figure 10. Mrs. Flaten's SoC Profile
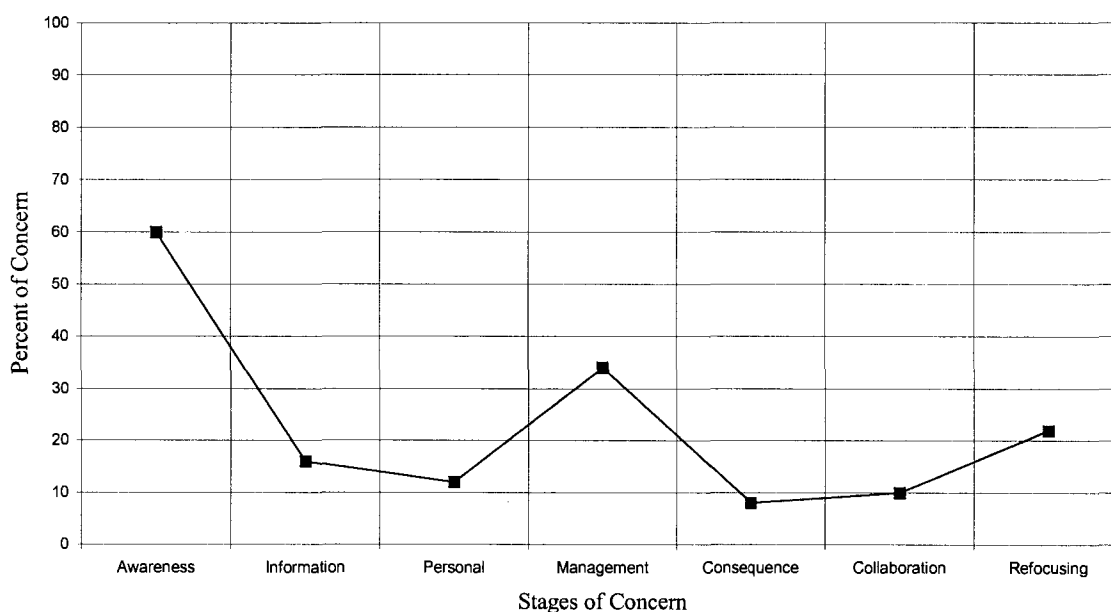
Mrs. Flaten's profile revealed a low intensity probably due, in part, to her having taught using a balanced literacy program prior to coming to Whispering Pines. Her concerns with time certainly fall into the "constantly evolving management concerns" and consulting in-house experts is useful in assisting teachers through Stage 3 and addressing immediate concerns (Hall & Hord, 1987).

<u>Mrs. Nim</u>

With twenty-five years of teaching at Whispering Pines in the lower elementary classrooms, Mrs. Nim's experience with reading programs has varied from small group to large group to small group again. She confesses, however, "...even when we did the whole class, after a couple of years, I found myself still dividing the kids up and kind of giving them extra reading" (October 2003).

The results of Mrs. Nim's SoC Questionnaire (see Figure 11) profile her as a multiple peak user. Her profile reveals high Stage 3 Management concerns and moderately high collaboration concerns. Although Stage 0 is in the 80th percentile, Hall et al. (1979) find that these are individuals are generally confident users of the innovation who shift their concerns to other aspects of their life. If concerns manifest themselves as high in Stages 3-6, these are the scores that are most reflective of the user's level.

Through participant-observations during a guided reading period, my fieldnotes revealed management issues while Mrs. Nim worked with a small group.
Mrs. Nim began her guided reading lesson with three children at the small, kidney-shaped table. She positioned herself so she could monitor fourteen children in the classroom while she worked with three children on a leveled non-fiction book about celebrating Spanish art. Children previewed the photographs and discussed what they thought was going to take place in the story. As they were talking about the book, Mrs. Nim looked up from the table several times to scan the room and check on children working at their desk. She stopped to ask one boy what he was doing and reminded him that the board contained a list of choices that he could work on during this time.

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Nim	2	81	27	31	69	43	59	47
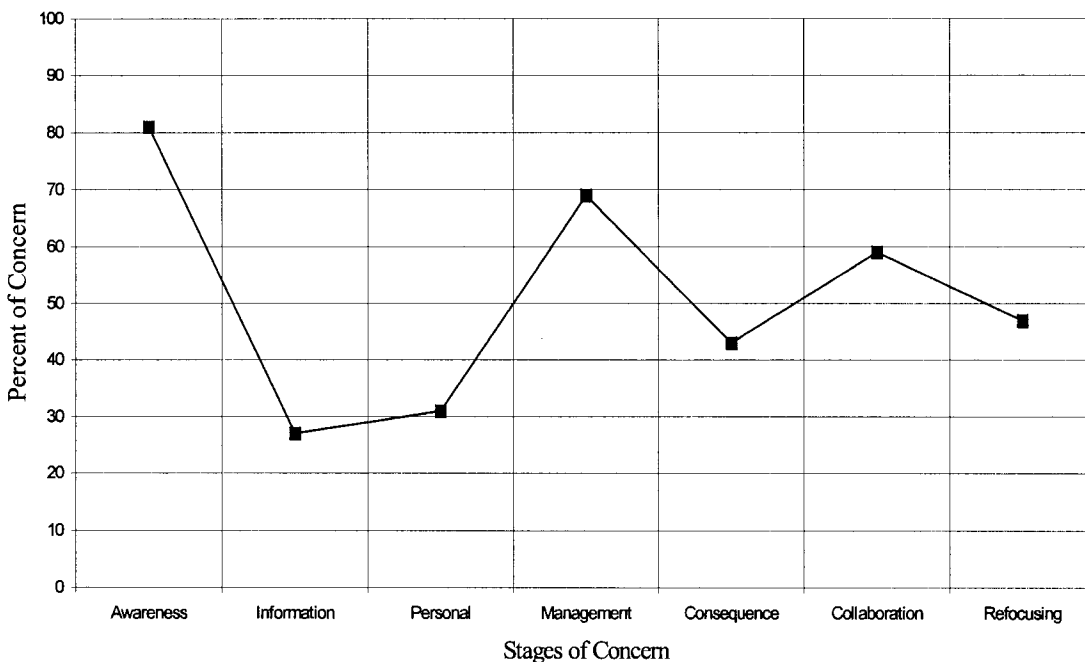
Figure 11. Mrs. Nim's SoC Profile

Mrs. Nim directed her attention back to the group at the table. The children begin to "whisper read" and Mrs. Nim looks up from the table. Jackson [pseudonym], a second grader in her classroom, has been wandering around the classroom and was standing now at the bookshelf dropping books on the floor. Mrs. Nim asked Jackson if he had finished his work. He went back to his desk and Mrs. Nim turned back to her small group. When the group finished during its 15-minute block, one student stayed at the table so that Mrs. Nim could take a one-minute fluency assessment. Looking up, she saw that Jackson was now talking to two other children in the room. She moved Jackson up to sit at the table where she was taking a running record.

When asked about the small group during a one-legged interview, Mrs. Nim

replied, "You always have to be alert and pulling someone back into their work."

During an interview, Mrs. Nim stated:

> My frustration is not the reading curriculum so much as with kids and finding out why they aren't progressing. You get to some that aren't progressing and it's like how can I teach it differently? I do change groups and kids can move from group to group. Although, maybe I'm doing it wrong, I don't find a lot of movement because one group I have someone who is doing better but the next group is at a much higher level. So, you either pull them together or you're ending up with 17 kids in 10 reading groups because you keep splitting them up.

Mrs. Nim's concerns with managing students' independent time and number of groups falls into the management concerns. Consulting an in-house expert would be a useful intervention to assist teachers in moving through Stage 3 concerns. Mrs. Nim's second peak falls in the Collaboration Stage of Concern and this could be useful to note in supporting the innovation since teachers at this stage are willing to work with others and to participate in supporting the innovation (Hall & Hord, 1987).

Finally, my last classroom interviews were with two third grade teachers who were veterans in this school. With a combination of almost sixty years of teaching at the elementary level, reading innovations were not a new phenomenon to these teachers.

Mrs. Baylor

Mrs. Baylor's teaching experience comprises thirty-one years at the kindergarten through fourth grade levels, most of which have been at Whispering Pines. Using her knowledge of children's interests and abilities, Mrs. Baylor remarked:

> A couple of stories from the old [basal] series are excellent stories. We go back and use them because they are such high interest to the kids. Even though we know the groups, we do that all at one time. They just about fall naturally into how we have them grouped, and it's just uncanny. Sometimes it's a better evaluation of what we have…I mean the test that we now give to level the kids are sometimes are not the best test. I can just about already tell what is going to work and not work anyway. They take a lot of time for a little bit of insight. (October 2003)

With management emerging as the most intense concern and the other stages remaining

at a low level, Figure 12 reveals Mrs. Baylor's single-peak profile. This is, according to

Hall and Hord (1987), one of the most commonly observed shapes in SoC profiles.

Management concerns generally focus on the "processes and tasks of using the

innovation and the best use of information and resources" (Hall & Hord, 2001). Though

Mrs. Baylor's interviews did not reveal management concerns with the organizational

tasks of the innovation; she did express concerns about managing assessment data and

materials.

> You know those assessments to end, say a level 16 or J (whichever labeling you
> are going to use); sometimes they are not the best test. [So you have to follow
> through with the test?] We did the first year, and I don't anymore. I guess I
> haven't been told I *have* to, but once in awhile if I have a question that I am not
> sure of, then I use it. Otherwise I don't, because they are very time-consuming,
> and they are individual. One child at a time is involved and I just don't think you
> will learn much from it.

A second voiced concern by Mrs. Baylor was that of organizing materials. A

major management anxiety had to do with keeping track of books that children had read

during the school year.

> There are some little things, like tracking our books, which are a pain-in-the-neck.
> What books have they read from the book room? Well, if they move here or go
> into one of the other schools [in the district], they might not have the same books
> or they maybe only have the one's the child has already read. If that happens,
> then the child will be reading the same books again. I don't know if that would
> happen, but I know the first year in this program, I tracked every child and wrote
> down which books he had read with me. You know, the ones in reading group.
> And if the group changed, that was ok because I was writing it separately for each
> child. That's a lot of paperwork, and then I passed it on to fourth grade, and they
> really didn't need it! I wondered why I did all that work. (October 2003)

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Baylor	3	29	16	17	60	16	12	6
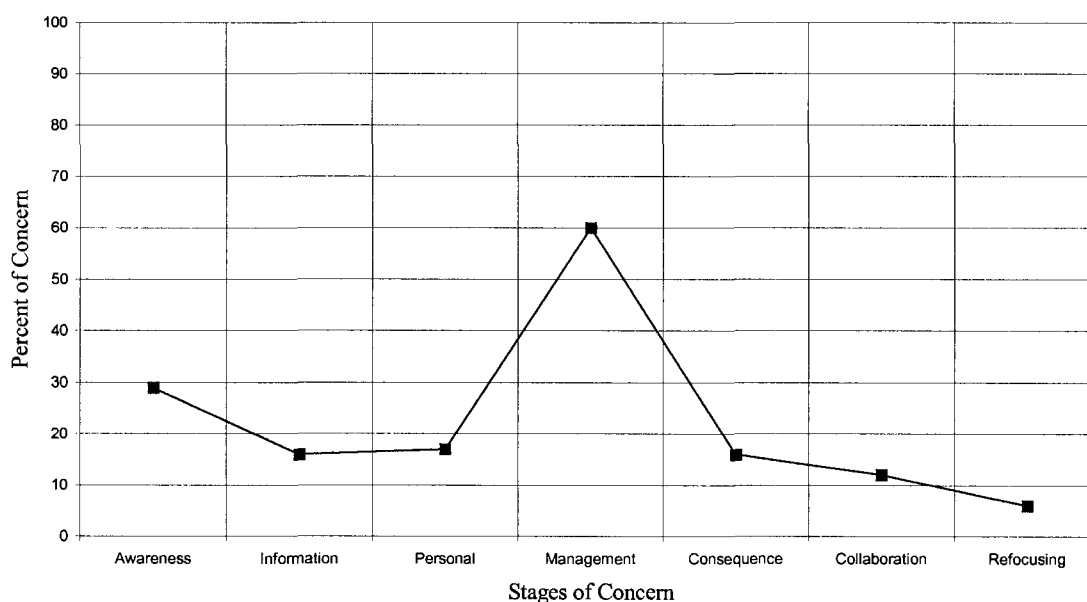
Figure 12. Mrs. Baylor's SoC Profile

Although management appeared as a high level concern, from this profile, Mrs. Baylor

exhibits a low level of concern at all other levels. This low intensity profile indicates that

the respondent feels that she knows all that is necessary about the innovation. There is

little concern at all about obtaining any additional information about the innovation (Hall

& Hord, 2001). From my observations and interviews, I found this to be an accurate

portrayal of Mrs. Baylor's classroom.

In one observation, for example, the class had been engaged in a whole group activity using a story from the old literature-based basal. In a darkened room, the children spread out on the floor with the basal anthologies as Mrs. Baylor read a non-fiction story about the *Titanic,* while the students followed along. As Mrs. Baylor was reading, some children's hands were placed in ice water in order to simulate the freezing waters of the North Atlantic. The lesson continued with a discussion of the facts about the tragedy as well as the feelings that were associated with this tragic voyage.

The lesson, confided Mrs. Baylor, was one that she had done in the past with her class. She valued this topic and exercise and had found a way to work it into her curriculum. Overall, Mrs. Baylor felt confident that she could blend programs and pull in what was needed for her third graders. Based on her prior experiences with reading curriculum, Mrs. Baylor was used to pulling strategies and materials together to make up for what she felt was lacking in the curriculum, and she seemed ready and willing to do this:

> I think that maybe three reading series ago it was certainly based on knowledge at the time, but I think we went too far and were too lax on skills. You don't just learn by hearing correct grammar. It has to be taught. That was tough, but we made it work. We made it work because teachers worked hard to get it to work. At that time I chose, even though it [the manual] didn't tell us we could do that, to use modeling. Then I followed up differently than what they said; otherwise it was a failure for the kids.
>
> I am sure that first time I followed the book, and I learned a lot, but I think over the years some of it has gotten easier. (October 2003)

Mrs. Paulson

Almost paralleling her third grade colleague's pattern of concerns (although at a

lower intensity level), Mrs. Paulson was no stranger to reading curriculum changes.

> I've not necessarily done any specific work in the area of reading, my background
> is in learning disabilities, and I feel that it's one area that I did wonder, "Do I
> know where I'm going with this?" I've felt this especially every time we change
> a curriculum. I've gone all the way from old reading groups where everyone had
> a basal reader to the literature-based where you did whole group and the
> anthology to now our work with guided reading and the things [strategies] that
> way. Each time we change, I'm feeling tentative-like, and yet, I feel that there are
> things from my other background so I try to mesh them together. (September
> 2003)

Mrs. Paulson's thirty-plus years in the classroom provided her with a broad

background of experience to draw from when teaching her students. This seemed to be a

factor in Mrs. Paulson's relatively low intensity levels on her SoC profile (see Figure 13).

The "meshing" of prior experiences was how she was dealing with balanced literacy.

> We basically do literacy for a little over and hour and a half or about an hour and
> forty minutes. That's our literacy block. To do this, I don't meet with all my
> guided reading groups every day, and I limit my number of reading groups to
> three. This is also not in the philosophy of guided reading, but I have fifteen
> students for guided reading and that allows me to have three groups. (September
> 2003)

As indicated by her SoC Questionnaire results, Mrs. Paulson's primary concern

about the innovation was that of management. Her concerns, however, were unlike her

colleagues at the lower elementary level. Instead of expressing concerns about managing

students during guided reading, Mrs. Paulson was more worried about the time it took to

manage this innovation and what it "cost" in relation to other parts of the curriculum.

Her comments revealed this concern:

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Paulson	3	46	16	5	30	8	12	14
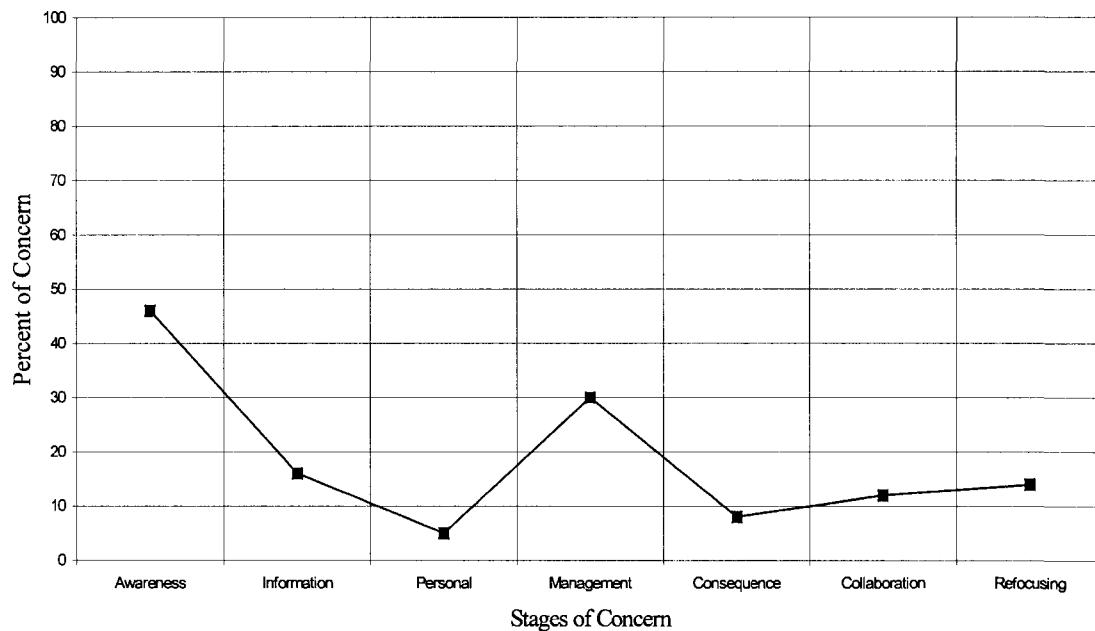
Figure 13. Mrs. Paulson's SoC Profile

It's hard. Kind of...I guess one of the things that brought this to the forefront is the fact that it is...to do it "correctly" every time...takes a lot of time. With the curriculum being such as it is in third grade...that time is shrinking as you get up through fourth, fifth, and sixth. And I don't think feel that all areas are probably getting as much work as, well, they need to...only because of time restrictions. I try to integrate the reading into science, for example. I take a science lesson, for example, out of our science textbook so they can see how reading is used. Really, once you get out of elementary school, your other subjects suddenly have this BIG emphasis. One of the things we've been hearing is that kids can't read from those books [content textbooks]. They don't know how. So we try to start doing that in third grade. (September 2003)

Although Mrs. Paulson indicated that she could make the innovation work for her,

she still worried about the "balance." When asked to reflect on her years of working with

a variety of reading curricula as to whether or not balanced literacy was the "answer" for

reading instruction, Mrs. Paulson paused and laughed:

> I don't know what to say there! I don't think anything is the one true answer. But I think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages in most areas. I am real concerned about the writing component. It's part of the balance, but when I look at my block of time, it's the one that doesn't get as much emphasis. By the time you've got at least two reading groups that you see for forty minutes, and then you're trying to do some self-selected reading, shared reading, writing, and ...everything gets washed out by time. (September 2003)

Mrs. Franks

As a member of the faculty who accepted the invitation to explore a new reading

curriculum, Mrs. Franks was nominated by her colleagues to be a representative for the

balanced literacy selection committee and then selected by her administration.

> The principals took nominations and chose ones who appeared to have a lot of nominations. They also selected us according to grade levels and schools so we'd represent a balance. We went on visitations to school districts using balanced literacy and met with company representatives. We were able to ask questions because we had a pretty good idea of what balanced literacy should look like and what you might look for in a good program. We were able to bring this to the rest of the teachers when we knew what was "out there" for curriculum. (August 2003)

According to Hall and Hord (2001), Mrs. Franks' characterizes, "...the ideal goal

of a concerns-based implementation effort" (p. 71). Her profile reveals low-level

concerns at the first stages of SoC survey but a high-level concern at stage 5 (see Figure

14). Hall and Hord report that, "the essence of good schooling is teachers with high

impact concerns about use of the innovation in their classrooms and about linking with

other teachers using the innovation" (p. 71).

Stages of Concern Percentile Scores

Subject	Grade Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Franks	1-2 specialist	53	19	25	34	38	80	42
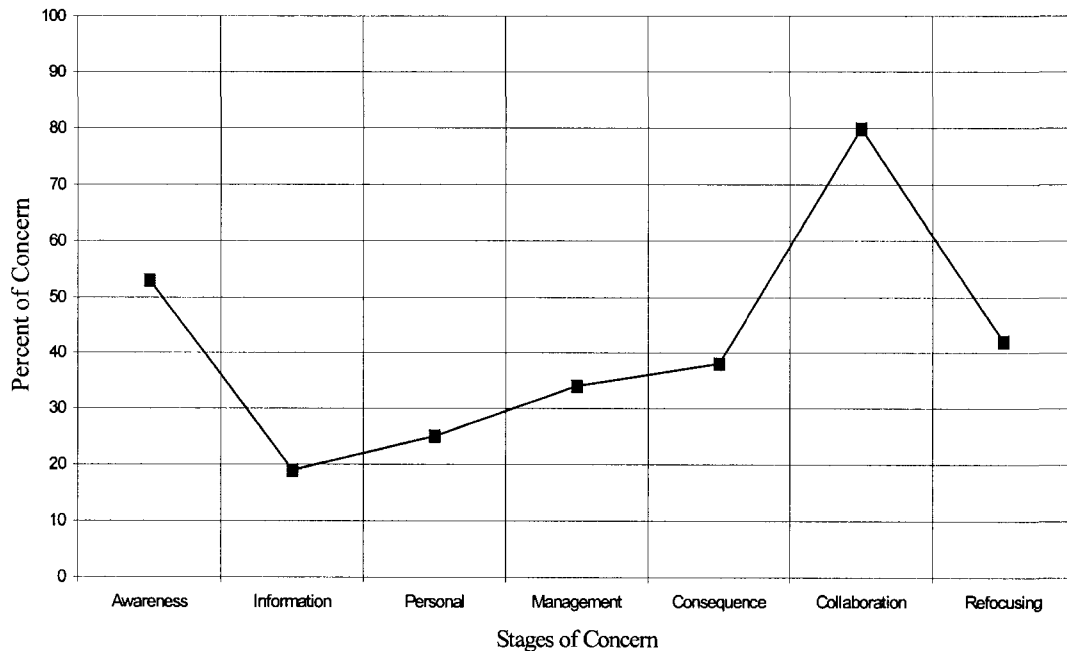
Figure 14. Mrs. Franks's SoC Profile

Mrs. Franks takes an active role in issues concerning curriculum and instruction in her

school and serves as a leader at the elementary level. Her willingness to lead, for

example, was revealed during an interview about assessment and accountability.

> In some ways maybe we have done a little less testing because we are not sure yet
> that we have this all down, and in some ways we are still making sure we are
> accountable. Our new report card will make us a lot more accountable, because
> there is a lot more on it. There is a lot of detail that the teachers need to have to
> know if their students are meeting the grade level expectations. I headed up the
> report card committee with teachers from all the grade levels—again, this was
> from the whole district. (August 2003)

A high Stage 5 Collaboration focuses concerns on "coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation" (Hall & Hord, 2001, p. 63). Interviews with Mrs. Franks revealed that she is concerned about the success of this innovation and its impact on teachers and students. In one conversation, for example, she discussed her concerns about the stress of this innovation on colleagues:

> I don't think there is one right way to teach reading. I just, I know, the balance we are going to bring with a little phonics, we're going to bring in a little literature, we're going to bring a little bit of everything into it. Yeah, that's great, but one of my concerns is that there are so many things teachers are going to have to worry about in this reading, that they are not doing any of it well. I just don't know yet, maybe that will come, but I think we have so many little books in that library that people don't even know where to start sometimes. I know I feel that way sometimes. (August 2003)

In terms of collaboration, I came to talk to Mrs. Franks about learning centers and found her conferencing with a woman. As I waited outside her room door, reading illustrated stories written by her students, I thought it was probably a parent. Consequently, I left so as not to disturb them. When I spoke with her the next day, she said, "Oh, I was just talking to Mrs. Flaten. She was wondering about a couple of students in her class and she wanted to know what I thought." (April 2004)

Hall and Hord (2001) suggest that facilitators of an innovation need to recognize that Mrs. Franks's SoC profile indicates that her most intense concern is about coordination with others in relation to this innovation. For a person in the Collaboration Stage, Mrs. Franks is a teacher who has much to offer this school in terms of her ability to continue the innovation. She has the respect of colleagues and the background experience to move others in her direction.

Summary of Teacher's Individual Stages of Concern

Individuals' levels of concern with an innovation vary in any change process, and the SoC results confirm research observations. Teachers' concerns vary in intensity as well as in stages and realizing this is critical to an innovation's success. In this case, concerns primarily manifest themselves as Stage 3 (Management) concerns. It is important to acknowledge these concerns in the change process. Fullan and Miles (1992) refer to concerns at this point in an innovation process as the "implementation dip" (p. 749), and it is important to not become discouraged at this point. Change is a process that takes time.

Change also needs as much support during the implementation phase as the initiation phase. It is unfair to assume that change will continue at a steady pace just because the initiation phase was begun with a solid framework for change. Intervention has to facilitate teachers along the way to achieve a successful change process. Hall and Hord (2001) recommend the following strategies to facilitate change to meet individual concerns: provide information, resources, and support that are aligned with the person's concerns. Recognizing, acknowledging, and addressing concerns will evolve into a positive culture for change.

Elements of a Leadership Framework

> What matters, we thought, is not mandating a program, practice or policy; rather, it is the professional networks and school-level associations among educators at a school, which we interpreted as a key aspect of the school's context or culture. Absent a context that would support changes aimed at improving student achievement, changes we attempted would fizzle and die (Goldenberg, 2004, p. 47).

Change involves learning to do something new and the quality of working relationships is critical to implementation. Fullan (2001b) states, "Educational change is technically simple and socially complex" (p. 69) and with current policy pressures and tighter budgets, it is not getting any easier. Leadership within the schools is critical for change, especially with reading innovations needing to prove high standards and accountability (Garan, 2004). Fullan (2001a) presents a framework for leading in a culture that is constantly calling for change.

Since Whispering Pines School District will be in its third year of full implementation of the balanced literacy innovation, it is important to assess elements of leadership present in this change process. Leadership is a community challenge. It is not mobilizing others to solve the problems we already know how to solve, but to help them confront problems that have never been successfully addressed (Fullan, 2001a).

Fullan's (2001a) framework for leadership (see Figure 15) is built upon five components of effective leadership: 1) Moral Purpose; 2) Understanding Change; 3) Relationship Building; 4) Knowledge Creation and Sharing; and 5) Coherence Making.

LEADING IN A CULTURE OF CHANGE

Leaders

Enthusiasm

Moral
Purpose

Understanding
Change

Coherence
Making

Relationship
Building

Knowledge
Creation
and Sharing

Energy

Hope

Members

Commitment
(External and Internal)

Results

More good things happen;
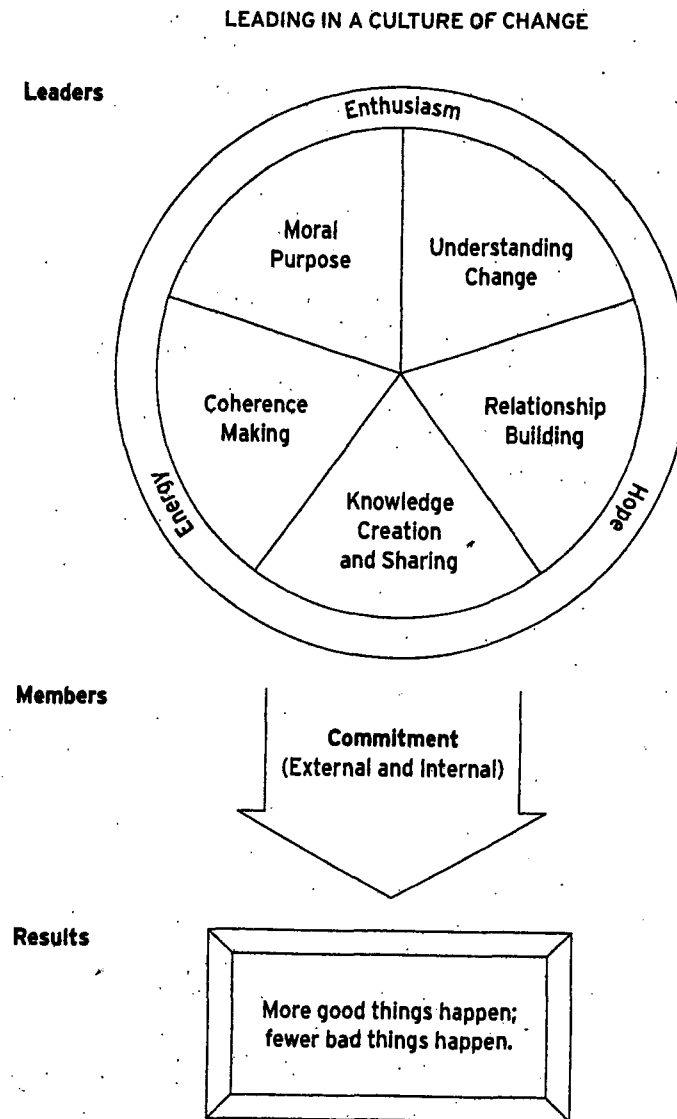fewer bad things happen.

Figure 15. Framework for Leadership (Fullan, 2001a)

The five components represent independent but reinforcing forces for positive change. The encapsulating circle represents the personal characteristics that effective leaders possess (Fullan, 2001a). The following examples illustrate elements of Fullan's leadership framework that presented themselves during this change process.

Moral Purpose

Moral purpose is the intent to act with the intention to make a positive difference. In education this translates into making a difference in the lives of students. Fullan (2001a) stresses, "If you don't treat others well and fairly, you will be a leader without followers" (p.13). School superintendents and principals are natural places to look for leadership. They have the ways and the means to make things happen, but they also need teacher leaders. Childs-Bowen, Moller, and Scrivner (2000) state that principals create the infrastructure to support teacher-leadership roles. They are the ones that create the opportunities for teachers to lead.

Mr. Garrett, the school superintendent, provided the ways and means for Whispering Pines's reading innovation. As he stated,

> If one provides the tools (the money) to do what they (teachers) need to do, then I believe, "let the teachers lead." We (administration) did research and networking so we could get the people to our school to show us how to do balanced literacy. When we had a model, most teachers were so excited about 'her way' of doing things. The others would come around when they wanted to come with us. This program takes kids where they are and moves them forward" (March 2004).

"Moving kids forward" is the moral purpose articulated by others at Whispering Pines as well:

"I believe in this program because we meet individual needs."

"I think this [balanced literacy] gives us the best possible combination and helps ensure the success of our students."

"Now you see even my lowest readers—they can hardly wait to get back reading and ask, 'Is it our turn to go back to the table yet?"

"It's all about the kids."

Moral purpose in the development and implementation of change should be a balanced process. Balance is fair and being fair is a moral purpose. However, as illustrated in Figure 16, a typical change pattern tends to favor those on the development side of an innovation (Hall and Hord, 2001, p. 6). This is the more glamorous end of the scale where those involved tend to be visible and dynamic. Developers typically receive the attention as well as the financial support during the initiating stage. Implementers, however, have to be persistent and patient. They have to continue to carry out the innovation when the developers have moved on to the next initiative.

In the development and implementation of change at Whispering Pines, time, money, and people were dedicated to the development end of the scale. Time was dedicated to learning about the innovation throughout the three-year initiation or development phase, $200,000.00 was dedicated to the reading reform budget, and
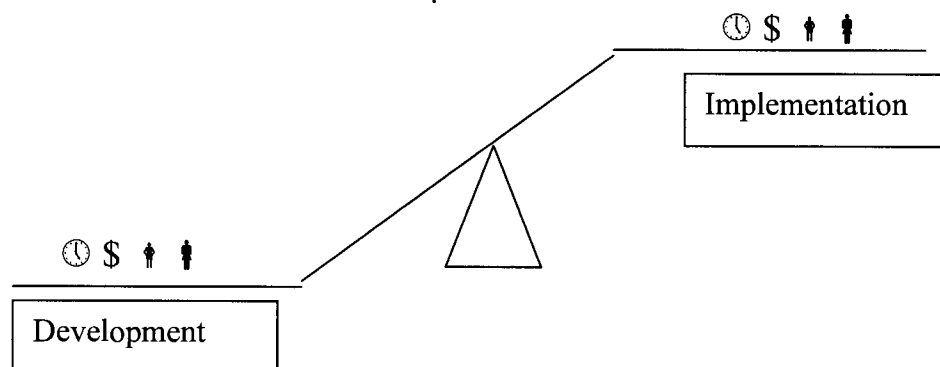
Figure 16. Typical Relationship between Innovation Development & Implementation (Hall and Hord, 2001, p. 6).

human resources were utilized to determine best practice research and then to educate faculty and administration on the innovation (balanced literacy). As the innovation has been in place for its third year, support in the form of research focus groups has moved on and teachers are individually working on implementation of the innovation. Materials are being replaced, but the intensity of time, money, and human resources is not equal during the implementation phase.

Understanding Change

"Change, as a process, *is* rocket science" (Fullan, 2001a, p. 31). It is messy and it is complex. It is a *process* that takes time. At Whispering Pines, it was clear that the reading changes implemented were not going to take place by the adoption of a single textbook series. Mrs. Barth, elementary principal, commented, "We had a meeting on September 1, 1999 and thirty to thirty-five teachers came ready to pick a textbook. They thought they would see a new series coming along" (March 2004). Instead, meetings began to take place every two weeks for an hour after school and teachers were charged with locating information on current best practice in teaching reading. Information had to be collected, sorted, and synthesized, and it was clear that change would not be a one-time announcement. This change was strategic in nature with teachers involved directly in discovering current research in reading and determining best practice (Hall and Hord, 2001).

Mrs. Franks commented, "From our studies the year before (1999-2000) of best practices, the decision was that everything was moving toward a more balanced literacy" (August 2003). In order to articulate a vision for balanced literacy, a Literacy Advisory

Team was chosen to represent teachers from each school and grade level (K-8). The Forrest Hills's principal, Mrs. Barth, and the reading specialist, Mrs. Franks, shared that all faculty nominated someone they felt would be a good member for the team. This committee was going to require monthly meetings, trips to school districts where balanced literacy could be observed in action, and consultation with experts in the field during the 2000-2001 school year. There was no monetary compensation for this extra responsibility, but the superintendent felt that those who were really interested would drive the change forward. *They* would become the leaders.

"One of our most consistent finds and understandings about the change process in education is that *all* successful schools experience implementation dips as they move forward" (Fullan 2001a, p.40; Fullan 2001b). Using the Stages of Concern Questionnaires, Whispering Pines' teachers seem to be at a critical point in the adoption of balanced literacy and on the verge of breaking through to the higher levels of concerns –task concerns (Hall & Hord, 2001). Having a moral purpose embedded within these concerns and improving the impact of the innovation on students, can lead teachers toward purposeful change. Administrative leaders and teacher leaders who have moved into the collaborative stage need to be sensitive and supportive of those who are struggling with the implementation dip. Support will get the innovation going and keep it going.

Relationships, Relationships, Relationships

Attempts at school reform have often focused on effective instruction by a teacher's competence in disciplinary knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Gallego, Hollingsworth, and

Whitenack (2001) saw this as a constricted view toward curriculum and instruction. This view, they believe, was reducing the teacher's role to competence at the expense of the child. In research conducted in urban schools, they found that "relational knowing" (knowledge of curriculum and instruction, knowledge of self and others and relationship, and knowledge of critical action), was critical to success in curriculum reform (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Gallego, et al., 2001). In Goldenberg's (2004) case study of school change, reform only started to happen when teachers began to have "instructional conversations" in workgroups. These workgroups discussed how to help students with reading materials. Teachers were "nearly unanimous" in saying that "workgroups helped create a much more satisfying professional climate at the school" (Goldenberg, 2004, p. 79). In effect, these were the *relationships* that helped to define successful change.

Bryk and Schneider's (2002) longitudinal research on relational trust found that schools characterized by high relational trust were more likely to demonstrate marked gains in student learning as measured by the ITBS. The quality of relationships in and around schools impacts student growth and learning in positive ways.

Opportunities for relationship building occurred at Whispering Pines during the initiation of this innovation. Teachers and principals researched together and discussed best practice. Grade level sharing occurred at faculty meetings and literacy beliefs and stories of successes and failures were exchanged. These are pieces that build relationships and take time.

Interviews reflect that most teachers found this professional sharing as useful. A second grade teacher said:

> We had more grade level communicating in the beginning. Now I guess it's assumed that we're all teaching this, but you know, we really need more of that. We used to actually plan segments of our in-service at grade-level meetings. We would team and talk and talk about what's working and what have you tried...We haven't gotten any of that this year. (December 2003)

Knowledge Building

Fullan (2001a) states, "Schools are in the business of teaching and learning, yet they are terrible at learning from each other" (p. 92). Schools often just go about the business of school within their own district boundaries. Fullan proposes knowledge sharing as a core value that could break down barriers and improve learning for all students.

Whispering Pines capitalized on opportunities to witness balanced literacy in action. Superintendent Garrett made certain that teachers were sent to schools using a balanced literacy curriculum so that they could be provided a model of balanced literacy instruction. In addition, a consultant who was a teacher using the innovation in her own classroom was hired to provide instructional modeling, support, and problem-solving for teachers during this learning process. The faculty valued her knowledge, since she modeled balanced literacy strategies that were used in her own classroom and connected with teachers on a personal level (Savelsbergh & Staebler, 1995). The knowledge building sessions were more than random in-service presenters coming in for a one-day spiel aimed at teachers.

Finally, the faculty themselves engaged in knowledge acquisition on the teaching of reading. They shared professional literature, journal articles, and experiences. Knowledge building was central to this culture of change.

Coherence Making

Change is nonlinear. Diagrams and figures simplify the complex interactions that wind themselves in, between, and among people involved in a change process. Change is not easy.

In today's society, innovations and reforms make their way into schools and classrooms promising results and solutions to every educational challenge that is imaginable. Fullan (2001a) believes that the main problem with school is not the absence of innovations but the presence of too many "disconnected, episodic, piecemeal, superficially adorned projects" (p. 109). Schools are often required to meet criteria from mandates that have short timelines. In an attempt to find a quick fix, education is susceptible to having too many innovations. Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, & Easton, (1998) label these as "Christmas Tree Schools." They have so many innovations that they look shiny from a distance, but they lack depth and coherence upon closer examination.

Whispering Pines had experienced this phenomenon in the past. Mrs.Rogers, first grade teacher at Emma Rose said,

> Writing was the big push this year, but we've only had a few in-services on it. We are also involved in IM reporting [state reporting system] so we have a lot going on. I suppose all districts are like that too, but we are infamous for throwing things in like that, like we're supposed to be teaching sign language. "Ok, let's do that." So we did that for a couple of years and then that's just fall by the wayside. Then we got into balanced literacy, which is great, but again, that's kind of fallen on the wayside. Now we have IM, so let's do some more of that. (December 2003)

In addition to concerns about the expectations for different schools in the district,

Mrs. Rogers also commented that her particular center had suffered from a high rate of

principal turnover and lack of teacher support.

> We go through principals in this building. This is our third year with our third
> principal. In the twelve years I have been here, I think I have had nine principals.
> I do not think that we have had the same principal hardly two years in a row. It is
> not that they are bad; it is that they are also other things besides the principal. Our
> new principal, for example, is also the curriculum director (K-12) so it is an
> enormous job. Like last year, we hired a principal who had no idea that he was
> going to be a curriculum director until he came up for the interview. He wanted
> the job bad enough that he just thought, "Well, I will just stick it out. How bad
> could it possibly be?" Needless to say, he is not here this year. That is where we
> have a hard time, because we are constantly getting new people out here. It is sad
> when we [teachers] know more than they know. Mr. Kearney, our new principal,
> is wonderful and he would bend over backwards, but he is also curriculum
> director for our district. I know ten times more about guided reading than he does
> and I do not know a lot. That is what is sad. Our district has invested a lot in
> balanced literacy and yet, there is not one person who you can go to and learn.
> I mean, as a new teacher coming in and needing someone to say, "This is the meat
> of balanced literacy and this is the way you should be doing it." We wouldn't
> have that. (December 2003)

Fullan's (2001a) five-element framework of change leadership works together to

build commitment between members both inside and outside of school. The result of the

five elements working together is a system where even through the ups and downs,

positive change happens.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

Curriculum change is a daunting experience in many school districts.

Expectations and experiences vary when teachers are examining and deciding new

curriculum. It is not unheard of to have conflicts in ideology and pedagogy when it

comes to deciding curriculum issues, and this is certainly true when it comes to reading

curriculum (Goodman, 1998; Lemann, 1997; Snow, et al., 1998). In many states

curriculum decisions are left up to a state-wide decision making team but other states

allow local faculty and administration to choose curriculum textbooks for their

instructional program (Reutzel & Cooter, 2000).

<u>Summary</u>

In this study, I proposed to examine how the present reading curriculum was

determined for Whispering Pines School District. My first set of questions sought to

answer: (a) how the district determined this particular reading innovation; (b) what role

administration played in determining the innovation; and (c) what role faculty played in

determining the new reading curriculum. I discovered a curriculum change process for

reading that involved teachers as active members of a planning and selection committee.

As teachers and administrators voluntarily invested time and energy into examining

research on "best practice" in the teaching of reading, both groups agreed that a balanced

literacy program would be the course of action to take when selecting curriculum. The

selection committee, whose members were chosen democratically based on peer

recommendations and then narrowed to a core team by administrative selection,

continued to research and to develop a firmer concept of how balanced literacy could work in their district. Both administration and faculty were committed to this initiative and took an active role in this curriculum reform process.

When Whispering Pines moved beyond the initiation stage to implementation, administrators provided the financial support necessary that enabled the balanced literacy team to observe the innovation in action, to learn from outside consultants, and to choose materials that would complement this new curriculum. During this stage, teachers were generally excited about the presenter who was a teacher using balanced literacy in her own classroom. They were able to ask questions and to engage in grade level discussions during this period. Teachers felt unsure about how to balance all parts of this new approach to their reading curriculum, but administration kept the pressure "low key" and proceeded in a cautious manner. They realized that the learning process would take time.

After time and money had been committed to this reading initiative, federal legislation passed the NCLB Act. This law put pressure on school districts across the United States to raise test scores as a measure of school accountability. The mandate has sent many states and districts reeling, as test scores become the yardstick for measuring schools' successes or failures. Attention has been focused on elementary reading scores, in particular, since NCLB declares that ALL children will read at third grade proficiency BY third grade (USDE, 2002a). I expected that this law would put a strain on a newly adopted reading curriculum; however, this did not seem to be the case. Teachers regarded the mandate as an imposed mandate that did not seem to impact their teaching at

the present time. They sensed that the administration felt that they were doing everything possible to help students while they were using the balanced literacy curriculum.

As I spoke to teachers and recreated their journey in this change process, I detected some degree of anxiety, but the uneasiness was not with the legislated mandates. Instead, concerns seemed to be centered on managing the program or whether or not they were doing it [balanced literacy] correctly. Interestingly, concerns did not seem to be the same for each teacher or even the same for each school. This data gave me the impetus to look closely at individual teacher's concerns since, according to research; excellent reading teachers are the key to children's success when learning how to read.

For this information, I employed a survey in an attempt to validate and support my interview data. Hall, et al., (1979) developed an instrument to measure individual levels of change when adopting an innovation. These stages of concern are developmental in nature and useful for determining who is ready to move on with an innovation, who may need support when implementing an innovation, and who may become leaders of an innovation. Leadership is a key component in a change culture (Fullan, 2001a).

The following discussion includes my conclusions on each of these factors as well as recommendations for future reformers who seek to make professional decisions for change in an atmosphere of legislative constraints.

Discussion

Change is neither simplistic nor easy. In the mid-1980s, states disseminated educational directives and regulations in the name of creating change that would lead to "excellence" and target "lazy students and incompetent teachers" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 78). However, these stiffer state standards to create "excellence" generated defensive organizational maneuvers and routine compliance. These top-down mandates did *not* produce the dramatic changes that were being touted.

The curriculum change at Whispering Pines School District, however, took a different approach for creating change. Decisions about this change effort focused on administrative leaders who were ready to learn with their teachers. Since no one was certain of the special curriculum change that was to be introduced at the beginning of this process, researching together was a significant factor in this reform. It equalized faculty and administration as they engaged in discourse on the research and its implications for their own curriculum. The process itself gave credence to professionals engaged in curriculum discussion. They were all learners. This atmosphere of collegiality created a culture of learning and teachers were excited about the prospects for the new reading innovation.

As the research team formed with representatives from each school and varied grade levels, the faculty members were able to ask questions of their colleague "experts." They trusted their teaching peers since they would know what might be challenges to classroom teachers. An aura of professional decision-making had been developed through this process and a solid foundation for implementing the innovation (balanced

literacy) had been formed. In this case, it was critical that teachers were given ownership of the curriculum change process, and Whispering Pines Administration had to trust that teachers could and would make high-quality decisions based on best practice. These reciprocal relationships were a key to the professional atmosphere that had developed at the beginning of the change process.

Not only did teachers have to take an active role in this change but administration was also highly involved and invested. This move toward a democratic initiative required the superintendent and principals to empower and accept ideas and suggestions from faculty. Rather than a top-down approach to curriculum change, decisions were made in a forum that involved invited discussion and opinions from multiple perspectives. It was recognized that the change would take time, and this was critical to the process at Whispering Pines.

At the same time, it is also important to note that not all teachers were at the same place or comfort level in their development of the innovation. Just because all are present at the initiation of an innovation, it does not mean that people will progress at the same growth rates. This was evident in the reading change process throughout the Whispering Pines district and reasons for this varied. New teachers were hired during the curriculum change process, and they had to be informed of the reasons behind the change. Since new faculty did not have the history of the change process, they needed to be given the model of expectations for the innovation. Also, personal lives cannot be controlled or predicted and this can also impact a teacher's readiness and willingness to change. Sometimes life forces one into survival mode and the thought of innovative changes

cannot be addressed. In addition, change can also threaten personal ideologies and teachers resist change when it runs counter to their belief system. Finally, teachers may have participated in so many curriculum changes throughout their tenure that a "new" model does not excite or invite them. They have "been there before."

Given these stances on change expressed at Whispering Pines, it is critical for administrators to consider where teachers are at in their concerns about an innovation. This can serve two purposes: (a) to give a reading on where individual concerns are at so that concerns can be addressed at individual levels; (b) to identify the teacher-leaders in the system. First, identifying individual concerns gives perspective on how the innovation is proceeding. It is dangerous to simply assume that all is going well. Curriculum innovations have a history of being introduced and then moving on with or without the whole faculty. Although change takes time and it may be an impossibility to assume that everyone will embrace the innovation, it is important to acknowledge that there are different levels of comfort and acceptance. Second, the people who emerge as leaders should serve as mentors and supporters for others who are unsure about the innovation. This leadership for change is critical for today's fast-paced world.

Throughout my research it became apparent that stark differences in concerns existed between two of the schools in the district. The teachers that experienced administrative turnover had higher intensity concerns with the innovation than their counterparts who held the same principal for seven years. This suggests that principal turnover during an innovation impacts teachers' progress in a curriculum change. The teachers at the Emma Rose School were in a constant state of change with revolving

principals. They not only had to figure out the new administrative expectations and personalities each year, but they were also supposed to be implementing a reading curriculum without the benefit of administrative leaders who were there at the beginning of the innovation. At the same time, in this small school with only one teacher at each grade level, teachers did not have the peer mentoring at their grade level that might have eased their anxieties. As schools look at changes, it is important for administrators to consider this isolation factor and to continue to work and bring faculty together by grade level throughout the innovation. Teachers need benchmarks too. They need to know if their students are progressing along with their peers, and this is difficult without a same-grade cohort.

Finally, school reform issues impact all schools. As I began my research, I wanted to know whether or not NCLB would have an impact on this particular reading curriculum. I knew that the faculty and administration had made a huge commitment to this process from its beginning, and I wondered whether or not this curriculum process would be eroded by the attempt to meet accountability expectations set by NCLB. Although there has been some attempt to "level" the testing playing field by the recent adoption of practice tests, no other alterations of the curriculum have been made. At least for the present, NCLB has not made a significant change in teachers' practices in relation to balanced literacy. Interview comments from teachers help in backing up this finding.

For example, Mrs. Flaton stated, "This program should help schools meet most of the mandates from the government, and it will survive based on NCLB because the

guided reading component takes every child where they are and it gives them success in reading." (January 2004)

As far as the impact of NCLB for the future, that will depend on the government and reactions of the public to the accountability measurement. However, Mrs. Franks probably put it best with her poignant statement, "Hopefully, the Federal and State government will see the errors of the 'No Child Left Behind' Act, and change it to 'All children moving ahead.'" (April 2004)

Implications for Further Research

One of the findings of this study involved the importance of administrator stability. With frequent turnover of administrators in small rural schools, it is important to establish teacher leaders who may be able to stabilize current curriculum innovations so progress can continue regardless of administrative changes that occur. In this particular district, the current principal at the Emma Rose School will be staying for his second year. The teachers have expressed positive reactions to his leadership style. It would be worthwhile to examine this school's progress in the balanced literacy reform and to continue investigating teachers' Stages of Concern as they work with balanced literacy under a more stable administration. This research might reveal changes in teachers' intensity levels when it comes to the change process and have implications for other schools involved in curriculum reform.

In terms of curriculum change, this district has determined that math will be its next area of consideration for curriculum reform. Since this process of researching best practice before adopting a program has been useful in the area of reading, it would be

worthy to study this process as a model for curriculum change in other areas. Faculty and administration involvement were critical at the beginning of the reading innovation as a sense of professional collaboration was established. Examining this process in math would be worthy in order to determine if similar curriculum investment between faculty and administration would result.

Since one retirement made a number of shifts in personnel throughout this district for the next school year, it would be interesting to study its impacts on the progress of balanced literacy at the Emma Rose School. With the retirement of a teacher who was fairly resistant to balanced literacy, it may be exactly the right time to add the support and information that the other teachers were looking for in this curriculum innovation. Since the "new" teacher transferring to the Emma Rose School is one who has been involved in the balanced reading program since its inception, she may be able to provide the model and leadership that teachers at this school seemed to crave. This, combined with principal stability, could make a big difference in teachers' concerns by the next school year. It might be useful to administer the SoC Questionnaire and examine changes in teachers' intensity levels and stages of concern. This could yield important data for future curriculum development with the realization that change happens at an individual pace and cannot be forced.

Also, it was interesting to note in this research that the consultant played a key role in this change effort. Administration listened to teachers who felt that the local Area Education Agency's consultants were not meeting teachers' need when it came to balanced literacy. They responded by hiring outside consultants to teach them and

mentor them in the new reading curriculum. The main consultant, in this case, was a teacher who was using the same pedagogical framework that she was presenting. Teachers valued her perspective and trusted her advice when she answered their questions. She was from their world.

It would be worthy to continue studies on the role of effective consultants in school curriculum reform. Teachers respected and were enthusiastic about what Mrs. Jackson, in this case, was telling them. Her professional and personal qualities seemed to be the right combination for teacher acceptance. This research might be useful for Area Education Agencies who send their consultants to schools for in-services and faculty workshops in an effort to provide professional development for teachers.

In closing, it seems apparent that educational reformers need to move toward a more democratic system of curriculum reform with faculty and administration taking active roles in the curriculum change process. These seem to be critical factors in the change effort, if real change is to occur. Mandated changes will be difficult if simply demanded and delegated.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW
INFORMED CONSENT

Educational Change Process:
A Case Study of One Rural School District's Reading Reform

UNI Graduate Student: Barbara Bohach
UNI Research Advisor(s): Dr. Rick Traw & Dr. Linda Fitzgerald

Dear Ms. XXXX,

You have been selected to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed consent to participate in this project. Before making your decision, the following information is provided to help you make an informed choice as to whether or not to participate in this research.

The purpose of this proposed study is to gain a more in-depth understanding of master reading teachers' reactions to recently mandated government policies regarding early reading instruction.

As a non-participant observer, data will be collected through interviews, classroom observations, audio-tapes, and documents such as achievement test reports or curriculum plans. These data will be obtained throughout the 2003-2004 school year with interviews and observations occurring not less than three times per semester during a one to three hour block of time. Data will be presented to you for confirmation and further input in order to reflect the most accurate interpretation. The results of this study will be published as a dissertation and may be used for an article in a professional journal or as a conference presentation.

Please be assured that all school districts and personnel involved in this study will remain strictly confidential. Information used in the dissertation, article, and/or presentation will use pseudonyms in order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all, and that by doing so you will not be penalized or lose benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

The investigator(s) will answer any questions that you have about your participation. If you desire information in the future regarding your participation or the study in general, you can contact Barbara Bohach at 563-562-3994 or the investigator's advisor, Linda Fitzgerald, at the Department of Curriculum & Instruction, University of Northern Iowa 319-273- 2214. You can also contact the office of the Human Participants Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-2748, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.

The procedures, purposes, known discomforts and risks, possible benefits to me and to others have been explained to me. I have read this consent form. I am 18 years of age or older.

_____

(Signature of participant)   (Date)

_____

(Printed name of participant)

_____

(Signature of investigator)   (Date)

_____

(Signature of instructor/advisor)   (Date)

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions
Fall 2003

1. Describe your educational background.

2. Describe the evolution of teaching reading during your teaching experience (if you have witnessed any) during the last ____ years.

3. Have you changed your teaching philosophy in any way during your years of experience?

4. What have those changes been and what prompted the changes? Teachers? Administration? Research? Government?

5. Where do you fell you are at "right now" with teaching reading? What, do you believe, is the "answer when it comes to reading pedagogy?

6. Do you foresee anything that is missing in this current approach to teaching reading? How do you see balanced literacy in terms of meeting the needs of children?

7. With current emphasis on reading and attention for accountability from government institutions, what (if any) pressures/changes to address these reform mandates do you see or feel as far as your individual classroom is concerned?

8. Describe how you feel reading instruction is perceived in your school at the present time.

APPENDIX C
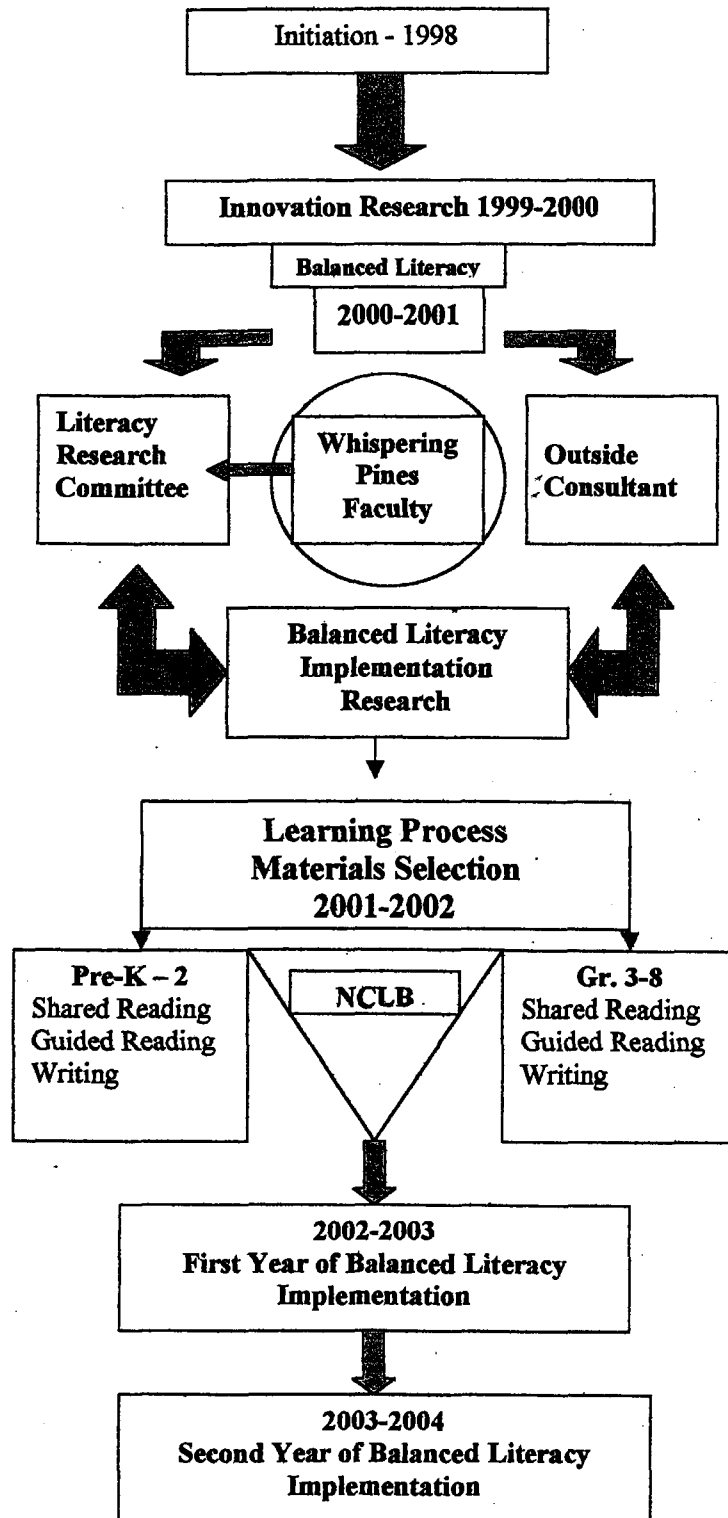
APPENDIX D

Literacy: Belief Statements
October 13, 1999

I believe a reader should be able to know...
1. book handling skills.
2. pictures to text.
3. initial sounds.
4. letter recognition.
5. basic punctuation.
6. retelling a story.
7. rhyming.
8. sequencing.
9. difference between letters/words/sentences.
10. enjoyment
11. ending sounds.
12. context clues.
13. identify sight words.
14. words within a word.
15. comprehending what is read-cause/effect, conclusions.
16. self-attack skills.
17. preview and predict.
18. word attack.
19. use of prior knowledge.
20. fluency and expression.
21. respond to literature.
22. read for information.
23. various genres.
24. use sources of information.
25. follow directions.
26. relate reading to personal experiences.
27. read daily.
28. determine personal reading level (accurately).
29. expand vocabulary.
30. skim and scan for information.
31. summarize.
32. infer from reading.

APPENDIX E

LITERACY QUESTIONS

The following list of questions are ideas! There are categories to think about as you visit schools, the committee thought each category could be addressed in some fashion as you are visiting with teachers, administrators, or support staff.

<u>TRAINING/IMPLEMENT/BUDGET</u>

1. What type of training have you had with your literacy program?

2. How did you get started, how many years till fully implemented?

3. Could a first year, fresh out of college teacher pick it up and run with it easily?

4. Will this program start next year? Will the staff be trained and have the needed materials to start next year? Will there be feedback for the staff so they know if they are doing it correctly at the beginning of the year (support for teachers)?

5. How often are you inserviced on materials, practices, procedures, and assessments used in balanced literacy?

6. During the implementation of your balanced literacy program, how were struggling teachers supported?

7. Does their company provide training?
    How many times do they come and visit?

8. What was the extent of your training before beginning to teach balanced literacy? Was it sufficient?

9. Time line?

10. What type of budgets are provided for consumable items throughout the year and at the beginning of the year?

SUPPORT STAFF

1. Resource and Title Teachers – What do these teachers do? Should they do Guided Reading in the resource room or support the classroom teacher because it is individualized education?

2. How does your library/media specialist fit into your balanced literacy?

3. How do the resource and Title I teachers fit into your balanced literacy?

4. Do you have a reading specialist who provides training opportunities and support? If yes, what type of support?

MATERIALS

1. What series do you use?

2. What don't you have that you need? How complete does it fit standards and benchmarks?

3. What do you use for shared reading?

4. What do kids read for reinforcement practice reading?

5. How was it set up (list of what concepts to cover with which book)? Scope and sequence of series (what to teach – when)?

6. Could a first year, fresh out of college teacher pick it up and run with it easily?

7. Did you buy a series that had phonics skills that go with it, activities to do with each book, etc. or did you have to create your own?

8. Thinking about the current materials you have, what do you like the most and what would you like to have?

9. Did you level books or did you buy materials that were done for you?

LITERACY REVIEW 2000 - 2001

NAME: _____   POSITION: _____

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Rate each criteria using the following scale:

1 = Seldom evident, 2 = Occasionally evident, 3 = Consistantly evident

I. PHILOSOPHY/AUTHORS/ RESEARCH							
A. Philosophy of the series is explained and consistently applied to the texts/materials							
B. Authors and consultants include known "experts" in balanced literacy							
C. Research/philosophy is clear							
II. READING MATERIALS							
A. High quality reading materials for explicit instruction							
B. Complete literacy variety included							
C. Variety of genre (poetry, fiction, non-fiction, fantasy) *see expanded genre list							
D. Topics & information are of student interest and familiarity							
E. Culturally diverse with variety in representation of ethinic groups & ages							

APPENDIX F

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II. READING MATERIALS CONT.							
F. Non-sexist gender portrayal							
G. Quantity of literature allows for a wide range of abilities and interests							
H. Sufficient levels to encourage pacing according to children's needs							
I. Appealing illustrations and format							
J. Component for Title I / Resource Programs							
III. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR CORE BALANCED READING MATERIALS (SHARED READING, GUIDED READING, WORD STUDY, & LANGUAGE ARTS CONNECTIONS)							
A. Shared Reading							
1. Selections referenced in the program meet criteria for quality reading materials in Section II							
2. Selections are repetitive, predictive, varied, and engaging topics							
3. Lesson plans with extensive layers with explicit teaching opportunities							
4. Genre-text							
B. Guided Reading - Leveled Gradient Texts							
1. lessons provide opportunity to problem solve while reading for meaning							
2. lessons provide opportunity to use reading strategies							
3. immediate applications included for use of skills and strategies/integrated							

4. Books written with explicit teaching opportunities							
5. Lesson plans that provide explicit gradiant teaching sequences							
IV. SKILLS INSTRUCTION - BOTH SHARED & GUIDED							
A. Skills & strategies presented match district expectations							
B. Scope & sequence chart available for overview of skills and strategies							
C. Variety of reading strategies taught to promote flexible reading							
D. Lessons are integrated with the content (shared only)							
E. Lessons include provisions for differences in student development							
F. Emphasis on student growth not "coverage" of skills							
G. Word study fosters decoding skills & vocabulary expansion							
H. High-frequency vocabulary words introduced							
I. Comprehension focus explicit teaching							
J. Context clues							
K. Phonics							
L. Structural analysis							
M. Spelling							

V. ASSESSMENTS							
A. Match district expectations							
B. Document individual student growth							
C. Drive instruction							
D. Meaning based							
E. Involve authentic tasks							
F. Utilize running records							
G. Provides benchmark information							
H. Supportive materials available to reteach, reinforce, and extend areas assessed							
I. Manageable to administer and score							
VI. INTEGRATION-LANGUAGE ARTS & OTHER AREAS							
A. Opportunities provided to develop speaking & listening							
B. Frequent writing opportunities applying the writing process							
C. Writing lessons are an extension of reading/integrated							
D. Grammar & Usage lessons in program correlate with skills instruction and reading							
E. Opportunities provided to develop spelling skills							
F. Content includes selections from different subject areas such as science, social studies, etc.							
G. Materials work into current science & social studies curriculum							

VII. Teacher support/management							
A. Teacher's edition easy to follow							
B. Lessons provide opportunities for flexible groupings							
C. Pacing of the program is flexible with options for pupils with varying abilities							
D. Suggestions for quality independent work							
E. Ideas for enrichment activities to extend learning							
F. Software is user friendly for teachers & students							
G. Consistent, comprehensive, easily implemented management system							
H. Efficient record keeping system							
I. Staff development provided - how will series or company support and guide implementation							
VIII. Fiscal Considerations							
A. Books are durable							
B. Reproducible materials are available							
C. Writing lessons are an extension of reading							
IX. Use of series							
A. Field testing has proven success							
B. Listing of users provided by company							

APPENDIX G

Stages of Concern Questionnaire

Name _____

Date Completed _____

It is very important for continuity in processing this data that we have a unique number that you can remember. Please use:

_____   _____   _____   _____

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine what people who are using or thinking about using various programs are concerned about at various times during the innovation adoption process. The items were developed from typical responses of school and college teachers, who ranged from no knowledge at all about various programs to many years of experience in using them. Therefore, *a good part of the items on this questionnaire may appear to be of little relevance or irrelevant to you at this time.* For the completely irrelevant items, please circle "0" on the scale. Other items will represent those concerns you *do* have, in varying degrees of intensity, and should be marked higher on the scale, according to the explanation at the top of each of the following pages.

> For example:
> This statement is very true of me at this time   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
> This statement is somewhat true of me now   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
> This statement is not at all true of me at this time   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
> This statement is irrelevant to me   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please respond to the items in terms of *your present concerns,* or how you feel about your involvement or potential involvement with **balanced literacy**. We do not hold to any one definition of this program, so please think of it in terms of *your own perceptions* of what it involves. Since this questionnaire is used for a variety of innovations, the name **balanced literacy** never appears. However, phrases such as "the innovation," "this approach," and "the new system" all refer to **balanced literacy**. Remember to respond to each item in terms of *your present concerns* about your involvement or potential involvement with **balanced literacy**.

Thank you for taking time to complete this task.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Irrelevant   Not true of me now   Somewhat true of me now   Very true of me now

1. I am concerned about students' attitudes toward this innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. I know of some other approaches that might work better.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I don't even know what the innovation is.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. I am concerned about not having enough time to organize
myself each day.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I would like to help other faculty in their use of the innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. I have a very limited knowledge about the innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I would like to know the effect of this reorganization on my
professional status.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my
responsibilities.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I am concerned about revising my use of the innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. I would like to develop working relationships with both our faculty
and outside faculty using this innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. I am concerned about how the innovation affects students.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I am not concerned about this innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. I would like to know who will make the decisions in the new system.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. I would like to discuss the possibility of using the innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. I would like to know what resources are available if we decide
to adopt this innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. I am concerned about my inability to manage all the innovation
requires.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. I would like to know how my teaching or administration is
supposed to change.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. I would like to familiarize other departments or persons with the
progress of this new approach.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. I would like to revise the innovation's instructional approach.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. I am completely occupied with other things.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. I would like to modify our use of the innovation based on the
experiences of our students.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. Although I don't know about this innovation, I am concerned
about other things in the area.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. I would like to excite my students about their part in this approach.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. I am concerned about my time spent working with nonacademic
problems related to this innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. I would like to know what the use of the innovation will require in
the immediate future.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. I would like to coordinate my efforts with others to maximize the
innovation's effects.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. I would like to have more information on time and energy
commitments required by this innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. I would like to know what other faculty are doing in this area.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. At this time, I am not interested in learning about the innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. I would like to determine how to supplement, enhance, or replace
the innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. I would like to use feedback from students to change the program.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

33. I would like to know how my role will change when I am using
the innovation.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

34. Coordination of tasks and people is taking too much of my time.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

35. I would like to know how this innovation is better than what we
have now.   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX H

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

36. What other concerns, if any, do you have at this time regarding this change and its future? (Please describe them using complete sentences.)

37. How do you feel this program will fare given pressures and mandates from the Federal and State Government?

WILEY
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October 8, 2004

Barbara Bohach
Luther College
University of Northern Iowa
700 College Dr.
Decorah, IA 52101
VIA FACSIMILE: 563-387-1107

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Barbara Bohach
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Spillville, IA 52168

Dear Ms. Bohach:

I am writing to provide you with my permission to include the following in your
dissertation:

- The figure which depicts the key elements of the Concerns Based Adoption
  Model (CBAM) as is presented on page 1 of Hall & Hord (2001).
- The relationship between innovation development and implementation as is
  presented on page 6 of Hall & Hord (2001).
- Stages of Concern: Typical expressions of Concern about the Innovation as
  presented on page 61 of Hall & Hord (2001).

I wish you good success in completing your dissertation study.

Sincerely yours,

Gene E. Hall, Professor