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Faith Andrea Morrison  
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Dissertation in Practice

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctorate in Education

**READING REFORM AND THE ROLE OF POLICY, PRACTICE AND  
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON READING ACHIEVEMENT:  
A CASE STUDY OF GRISSOM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

By

Faith Andrea Morrison

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**READING REFORM AND THE ROLE OF POLICY, PRACTICE AND  
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**Faith Andrea Morrison, Ed.D.**

**Lynn University, 2012**

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U.M.I.  
789 Eisenhower Parkway  
Ann Arbor, MI  
48106-1346

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation is the achievement of a personal goal identified over 20 years ago. This journey has been part of my commitment to lifelong learning and the task of completing the Dissertation in Practice coursework and Scholarly Practitioner Presentation as the most challenging I have ever attempted, but the rewards are immeasurable.

I cannot express the sense of love and gratitude I have for my husband Richard, and his commitment and support of my work for the past three years. His dedication to my success meant putting his career on hold for 36 months, taking me to classes, travelling to Indiana and supporting the family, enabling me to concentrate on my studies. His patience, care and concern during the long periods when I was working on the Dissertation in Practice will never be forgotten. When my confidence was down and my spirits were lagging, Richard was there encouraging me to achieve and succeed. I love you!

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This Dissertation in Practice is dedicated to my parents Fay and Vincent (now deceased) who encouraged me to strive to be the best I can be, to have high expectations and to fight hard for what I believe in. They share in my success and I will be forever grateful for their loving support.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore whether William Deming's 8 Step Model would increase reading achievement in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. The study investigated how well the process based plan-do-check-act model when used as a treatment with fidelity, coupled with the principal as instructional leader would result in success in the age of federal accountability.

A qualitative case study methodology was adopted for the study. A school in northwest Indiana was selected and data were collected from interviews, field observations, focus group interviews, a principal questionnaire, and data analysis of student test scores. The focus of the school was quality teaching and learning. A visionary and collaborative leadership style modeled by the principal and leadership team provided the context for teaching and learning programs.

There was strong evidence to support the Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy on which the 8 Step process is based, as well as visionary leadership, customer focus, collaborative decision making and empowerment for stakeholders as characteristics of TQM evident within the school.

As part of the TQM processes, the school district mandated training and development strategies which included individualized professional development plans; school development meetings and days; and the formation of teams to accomplish tasks within the realm of training and development initiatives.

Findings indicated that the process-based model is a fair indicator of increased reading achievement when used with fidelity. The results of this study support the need for continued

research of infusing the 8 Step Process into the curriculum, coupled with a strong instructional leader to ensure adequate reading achievement.

Within the last eleven years, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) has changed public education, altering the practices of schools and districts across the United States. Accountability for student achievement and overall school success has never been greater (Wohlstetter, Datnow, & Park, 2008). Overwhelming accountability pressures from state and federal government mean that educators can no longer choose teaching methods and materials based on personal preferences or ease of implementation (Englert, Fries, Goodwin, Martin-Glenn, & Michael, 2004; Guskey, 2007).

Alignment to state standards and academic rigor dominate decisions made in public school today. Assessments are used throughout the school year to collect data on student achievement and school leaders are responsible, not only for analyzing student data on standardized tests but also for devising a plan to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The No Child Left Behind Act has determined the growth that students must make each year on standardized tests if schools are to approach the lofty goal of 100 % proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2014. The chart below shows the progression of AYP targets that schools are expected to make in districts across the nation.

## AYP TARGETS 2007-2014

**Criterion 1: Participation Rate** (schoolwide, districtwide, and subgroups)

- 95% Participation Rate

**Criterion 2: Percent Proficient - Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)** (schoolwide, districtwide, and subgroups)

- Percent proficient and above per following chart

Level	Percent Proficient Targets															
	2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013		2013-2014	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
Elementary & Middle Schools	24.4	26.5	35.2	37.0	46.0	47.5	56.8	58.0	67.6	68.5	78.4	79.0	89.2	89.5	100	100
High Schools	22.3	20.9	33.4	32.2	44.5	43.5	55.6	54.8	66.7	66.1	77.8	77.4	88.9	88.7	100	100
District	23.0	23.7	34.0	34.6	45.0	45.5	56.0	56.4	67.0	67.3	78.0	78.2	89.0	89.1	100	100

**Criterion 3: Additional Indicator – API** (schoolwide and districtwide)

- Growth in the API of at least one point OR a minimum API per the following chart

Level	Additional Indicator (API)							
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Elementary, Middle, High & District	590	620	650	680	710	740	770	800

**Criterion 4: Graduation Rate** (district and high schools)

- Minimum graduation rate OR fixed growth target OR variable growth target
  - Minimum graduation rate: 90%
  - Fixed Growth Target:  $(2009 \text{ AYP graduation rate} - \text{minimum graduation rate}) / \text{number of years until 2019 AYP}$
  - Variable Growth Target:  $(\text{current AYP graduation rate} - \text{minimum graduation rate}) / \text{number of years until 2019 AYP}$

Assessment Department  
9/2/10

**Figure 1: AYP Chart**

Current trends in education suggest that the intense focus on accountability will likely continue at all levels of the educational system (Wohlstetter, Datnow & Park, 2008). Success at the district and school levels requires effective leadership from principals. NCLB has provided the leverage needed to promote academic improvements at the school level (Wohlstetter, Datnow & Park, 2008). National, state, and local education agencies continue to focus on educational performance and fixate on school and district-level accountability (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

*“There are no ‘leader-proof’ reforms – and no effective reforms without good leadership”.*

The Wallace Foundation 2010

For the past fifty years, the Public Education System in the United States has been criticized consistently for its poor performance of students. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports that 63 percent of fourth graders perform at only basic, or below basic, levels in reading. Sixty-nine percent perform at these levels in mathematics. African-American, Hispanic, and Native American fourth graders perform consistently lower than their white counterparts. Furthermore, schools in the United States fail to teach higher-order skills to about half of the student population. And once again, this “bottom half” comprises primarily the poor and ethnic minorities (National Center for Education Statistics (2011).

It is as a result of this, that educators both locally and federally are now being demanded to do something previous generations of educators were not doing, which is “to engage in systematic, continuous improvement in the quality of the educational experience of students and to subject themselves to the discipline of measuring their success by the metric of students’ academic performance” (Elmore, 2002).

The role of the elementary school principal is both ambiguous and complex (Duke, 1987). “Since the beginnings of the principalship in American education, educators have struggled to define a distinctive role for the position” (Lashway, 2003). This is due to the

multiplicity of demands placed on principals and the fact that principals are expected to accomplish many different things for many different groups (Duke, 1987; Lashway, 2003).

Due to the increased reliance and additional weight being placed on student performance as measured by standardized tests, schools and principals are now being held accountable to state and federal accountability systems (Linn, 2005). These accountability demands require principals to not only manage the daily activities of running a school site but to also function as leaders for student learning and to ensure the academic success of all students in the school (Lashway, 2003).

Many Americans were forced into a state of shock relating to students' poor academic performance in 1983, with the National Commission on Excellence publication of its landmark report, *A Nation at Risk*. The Reagan-Bush selected Commission, was charged with investigating the state of public education in the United States. The resultant report of *A Nation at Risk* painted an extremely gloomy picture of the academic proficiency of American students. The report stated "declines in educational performance are in large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational process itself is often conducted" (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983, p.1).

Reading achievement in the United States has become more important now more than ever, because American students still lag woefully behind students in other nations in this area. On the 2009 PISA, U.S. 15-year-olds' average score in reading literacy was 500, which was not measurably different from the OECD average of 493 (Possible scores on PISA assessments range from 0 to 1,000). The average reading literacy score in the United States was lower than the average score in 6 of the 33 other OECD countries, higher than the average score in 13 of the

other OECD countries, and not measurably different from the average score in 14 of the OECD countries (National Center for Education Statistics, (2011). Critics charge that NCLB has led educators to shift resources away from important but non-tested subjects, such as social studies, art, and music, and to focus instruction within mathematics and reading on the relatively narrow set of topics that are most heavily represented on the high-stakes tests (Rothstein, Jacobsen, and Wilder 2008, Koretz 2008).

A child's ability to read well is the standard by which we measure and judge our schools. Strong readers create successful students. "What was a satisfactory level of literacy in 1950 probably will be marginal by the year 2000" (Anderson, 1985, p. 3) as quoted in *Becoming a Nation of Readers* was prophetic. The demands of the new century for higher levels of literacy as well as different types of literacy are staggering.

Reading achievement is critical at all grade levels in a child's education. It is now more important, as many states within the continental United States are now opting to mandatorily retain 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students who are unable to pass the given state's high stakes tests. According to Munsen (2010), by the end of third grade, children should show evidence of reading comprehension and be able to read unfamiliar words by employing various strategies, such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Early intervention is critical for children who are struggling with reading. There is widespread agreement that early identification and treatment is the most effective course of action for the prevention of learning disabilities (LD) in reading (Bos, Mather, Friedman Narr, & Babur, 1999; Coyne, Kame'enui, & Simmons, 2001). Children who are identified as poor readers in first grade are more than likely to remain poor readers in fourth grade (Juel, 1988). In light of the fact that only 32% of fourth-grade students were considered proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress measures of reading in the year

2003, early and intensive reading instruction must be a priority for schools— particularly for those that serve at-risk populations (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004). Third grade marks the transition from instruction in reading to relying on students' reading skills to teach subject material -- moving from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

Some experts paint a bleak picture of the state of reading achievement in America today (Murphy, 2004).

"The most basic expectation for children attending school is that they will learn to read and write. Sadly, this expectation is not always fulfilled for school children in the United States, far too many of whom fail at the basic school task of literacy acquisition." (p. 40).

"Far too many children have trouble reading and writing. About 20 percent of elementary students nationwide have significant problems learning to read; at least another 20 persons do not read fluently enough to enjoy or engage in independent reading" (p. 40).

"Approximately 25 percent of elementary school students are not adequately learning to read [and] write" (p. 41) .

Attempts to restructure American schools - to initiate and implement school-based collaborative processes as a means of achieving greater instructional effectiveness - have increased greatly in the past several years. Unfortunately, many of these attempts have faltered, in part, because of a lack of research-based knowledge to guide such efforts (Blase, 1998; Malen and Ogawa, 1998; Murphy and Louis, 1994). Therefore, we have focused our work on teachers' perspectives on effective shared-governance principals' leadership (Blase and Blase, 2004) and variations in the development of shared-governance principals in a range of school contexts (Blase et al., 1995)

## ***Research Issues***

### **No Child Left Behind: Accountability**

The passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001 brought accountability for school performance to new levels in the United States. Signed into law in January, 2002 by former President George W. Bush, the law outlined unprecedented challenges for schools "to implement a tightly prescribed accountability model with the goal of all students achieving grade level proficiency in reading or language arts and mathematics within twelve years" (Erpenbach, Foree-Fast and Potts, 2003, p. 1) Because NCLB was introduced simultaneously throughout the United States, many observers have turned to state and national time-series trends in student achievement to assess its impact. Several studies have noted that student achievement, particularly as measured by state assessment systems, appears to have improved both overall and for key subgroups since the implementation of NCLB (Center on Education Policy 2008).

### **Instructional Leadership**

Instructional leadership of the elementary principal has followed a long tradition of multiple and expanding roles. Principals, who were once viewed as social and moral leaders, as well as managers and bureaucrats, are now considered to hold the pivotal role of instructional leader (Beck and Murphy, 2003). Principals are now required to "possess the knowledge, beliefs, and skills that create a common shared vision and motivate others toward it, direct the teaching and learning process, manage the operations of the school, unite the entire learning community, deal with legal and external forces, and have ethics that are beyond approach" (Irvin & White, 2004, p. 21). The emphasis on the principal as instructional leader has been a valuable

first step in increasing student learning. At the heart of school capacity was principal leadership that focused on the development of teachers' (Fullan, 2000).

Characterizing instructional leadership as the principal's central role has been a valuable first step in increasing student learning, but it does not go far enough. Literacy and mathematics improvements are only the beginning. To ensure deeper learning - to encourage problem solving and thinking skills and to develop and nurture highly motivated and engaged learners, for example - requires mobilizing the energy and capacities of teachers. In turn, to mobilize teachers, we must improve teachers' working conditions and morale. Thus, we need leaders who can create a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself. The role of the principal as instructional leader is too narrow a concept to carry the weight of the kinds of reforms that will create the schools that we need for the future. (Fullan, 2000)

### **The Continuous Improvement Model**

Through a review of the research, some common lenses that are being utilized to improve student achievement which result in what principals are doing at their school sites have emerged and will be discussed further in Chapter 2. Those themes include, but are not limited to focusing on instruction, providing a cohesive curriculum, the use of data, establishing measurable goals, effective teamwork, and high quality professional development (Anthes, 2000; Ardivino et al., 2000; Cotton, 2003; Elmore, 2000; Schmoker, 1999; Goldberg & Morrison, 2003; Marzano, 2003).

In the case of Grissom Elementary School which is located in northwest Indiana, the school's principal has focused on Deming's 8 Step Improvement Model which has been formulated for education from the business model of Total Quality Management. The school



board and superintendent must have a clear plan of action to carry out the quality mission. The quality mission must be internalized by all members of the school organization (school board members, administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, community). The transformation is everybody's job (Deming, 1988, pp. 23-24). TQM is a systematic approach to education reform based on the philosophy of Deming (2000).

### ***Research Questions***

To answer the overarching research question: How is this elementary school principal meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?, the following sub-questions were addressed:

- (a) What strategies supported by research did this new instructional leader implement in her efforts at school improvement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?
- (b) What other practical strategies were used by this principal in her efforts at school improvement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?; and
- (c) How did the leadership strategies specifically those associated with the 8 step process supported by research and the practical strategies compare and contrast?

### ***Theoretical Framework***

#### **Conceptual Framework**

Throughout the literature on effective school leadership, many researchers identified principal instructional leadership as a key factor in successful schools (Blasé & Blasé, 1998; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Hallinger & Heck, 1995; Leithwood, Anderson, &

Wahlstrom, 2004). The framework for this study is educational leadership and change theory (TQM) as this study investigates the relationship of perceived principal leadership style and student achievement, particularly as it relates to reading.

The theoretical framework for TQM established by Deming, together with continuous improvement processes outlined by Juran (1989) and Crosby (1980), were being implemented in schools within North America, Great Britain, and Australia in the early 1990's. The transformation that occurred in schools which implemented TQM impacted school administration, curriculum, leadership, and training and development. "Deming's concepts of quality and improvement embody a philosophy of action with implications that challenge current practices in both administration and curriculum in schools" (Holt, 1993, p. 383).

Fullan (2007) believed that "people do not understand the nature or ramifications of most educational changes. They become involved in change voluntarily or involuntarily and in either case experience ambivalence about its meaning, form, or consequences" (p. 29). Contemporary leadership theories such as transformational leadership may contribute to effective school improvement initiatives which support student achievement. This leadership style may also contribute to social change in the school setting, including better collegiality between staff and administration.

## **Total Quality Management**

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a fairly recent school renewal approach that is being implemented by educational leaders in an effort to replicate the positive results seen in business. Seigel (2000) stated that several developments have convinced an increasing number of educators that TQM, specifically the Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance

Excel-Lence, is worth another look. According to William Glasser (1998), “Nothing less [than TQM] will solve the problems of our schools

Total Quality Management or (TQM) is defined by authors as both a management system and a philosophy” (Heiser, 1999 p. 3). TQM had its origins from a theory which was comprised of quality principles, which William Edwards Deming introduced to the Japanese dating back to the early 1950’s. Originally, these quality principles were meant as best practices strategies for corporate entities. In 1949, Deming was charged with visiting Japan by the US State Department to help that government prepare for the 1951 census and to help conduct population statistical studies to remedy the housing shortages (Bonstingl, 1996).

Application of the TQM model to the field of education is much more recent. In education, the model is called the Continuous Improvement Model. Schools have been placed under considerable pressure to make efforts at reform, including pressure from politicians and parents. Because of this, school administrators are searching for answers and ways to undertake successful change. In the last decade, interest in TQM as this answer has gained more momentum among leaders in the educational arena. Although there are 8 steps associated with this improvement process, they are broken down into 4 categories as shown below:

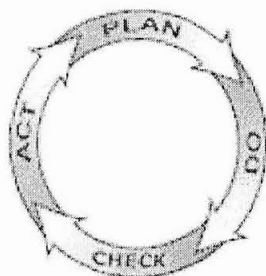


Figure 1: The Continuous Improvement Model- “Plan –Do-Check-Act” model designed to improve student learning

## ***Description of Case Study School***

The research study centers on an elementary school, Grissom Elementary school, which is located in northwest Indiana. Grissom Elementary School is one of 3 elementary schools serving students in the Lake Ridge School Corporation. Students attending Grissom Elementary span grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Grissom Elementary School was selected as the school to be observed for this study, as it is unique. While the school district is diverse, this particular school was placed on Academic Watch- which resulted in the state's Department of Education selecting the site as an Opportunity School. As an Opportunity School Consultant for the state, this school was one of the schools with which I worked. Additionally, the Principal was a first year principal on whom the demands of federal, state and district accountability had been placed. The other reason why this site was chosen, was because I wanted to bring awareness by adding to the body of knowledge in dispelling the belief that only minorities are classified as at-risk students.

## ***Significance of the Study***

Several notable researchers sought to examine the implications of principal leadership(Weber, 1971; Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Andrews and Soder, 1987; Heck et. al, 1990; Heck, 1993; McEwan, 1998; Cotton, 2003; Marzano, 2003; Hallinger, 1996,2003; Leithwood and Mascall, 2008). Powerful and effective instructional leadership is listed as second only to the emphasis placed on classroom instruction effecting student learning (Leithwood, Anderson, & Walstrom,2004).

Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) explained that while principals advance student achievement they work within a framework by "attempting to influence a complex set of

classroom-based and school-wide factors" (p. 334). Blase and Blasé (1994) described behaviors and common traits of effective principals. Providing professional growth activities for all staff members and supervision that highlights collaboration versus control are just two examples that demonstrate the breadth of school-based activities.

Principals' literacy practices have been identified generally, but explicit practices specifically those that have embedded the tenets on Deming's continuous improvement model have not been measured in isolation nor examined in relationship to student achievement in reading.

This study attempted to identify the strength of the relationship between this principal's specific literacy practices associated with reading and student achievement, through the embedding of Deming's TQM strategies. Results will add to the existing body of literature associated with instructional leadership specific to reading.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

1. Data from this study are from teachers Grissom Elementary School in Grade 3 and may not generalize to teachers in other types of institutions (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).
2. Data from this study are from teachers in northwest Indiana, and the results may not generalize to teachers in other states or countries (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).
3. This study took place at one point in time, which may limit the ability to generalize the findings to other time periods (Johnson & Christenson, 2000).

4. The measurements of the directors' leadership styles are the perceptions of their teachers.
5. This study was limited by the reliability and validity of the instruments (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).
6. This study is limited by the accuracy of the participants' responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

### **Delimitations of the Study**

Four delimitations affected the generalizability of the current study.

1. The study was delimited to third-grade students in 1 school in Northwest Indiana, in regular education classrooms.
2. The investigator did not include third-grade students in self-contained special education classes whose Individualized Education Plans (IEP) prescribe the use of state-mandated alternate assessments.
3. Some special education students who received interrelated services were on the third-grade class rosters and their test scores on state criterion-referenced tests (IStep) and norm-referenced tests (NRT) will be included in the class averages.
4. Student performance is restricted to one measure, one grade, and one year of grade 3 reading scores on the Indiana State test IStep.

## Definition of Terms

Definitions of terms and precise use of the terms are key for understanding research.

Key Definitions:

*Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (IStep)* stands for Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus and is an annual testing regimen designed by the Indiana Department of Education to encourage students to master basic language and science skills, particularly reading, writing and mathematics. All students in grades 3 through 8 and high school sophomores take the ISTEP+ each spring, with language and math covered in each test and science covered in grades 5 and 7. (Indiana Department of Education, 2007)

*Self Efficacy*: principals' Self-Efficacy Beliefs are the beliefs in their capability to make a difference in the schools they lead, to effectively manage the challenges they face. The Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale asks principals to assess their capability concerning instructional leadership, management, and moral leadership (Tschannen-Moran, 2002)

*Total Quality Management (TQM)* is an integrative philosophy of management for continuously improving the quality of products and processes. TQM functions on the premise that the quality of products and processes is the responsibility of everyone who is involved with the creation or consumption of the products or services offered by an organization. In other words, TQM capitalizes on the involvement of management, workforce, suppliers, and even customers, in order to meet or exceed customer expectations (Camp, 1989)

*Continuous Improvement Model (CIM)* is a continuous improvement teaching and learning cycle that is comprised of 8 steps. A model introduced by W. Edward Deming for quality control management. This model focuses on long-term success through customer satisfaction and aims at continuous improvement.

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*-component of No Child Left Behind that established the growth those students must make each year on standardized tests if schools are to meet 100% proficiency by 2014. For example, in 2010-2011 AYP benchmarks are 72% in reading and 67% in math. These will increase by 9 and 11 % respectively each year. Schools that continue to meet AYP are those that consistently achieve the increasing benchmarks each year in both math and reading.

*Transformational Leadership*- This style of leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group” (Bass, 1990, p. 21).

## **Assumptions**

This study was built upon the following assumptions:

1. At least 95% of the students who attend Grissom Elementary School have taken the Spring 2011 IStep test.
2. All teachers at Grissom Elementary School have been trained in, and have implemented the Continuous Improvement Model.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

*Each year the child is coming to belong more to the State and less and less to the parent.*

Ellwood Cubberley, 1909

#### ***Introduction***

According to Murphy“(Murphy, 2004b, p.17), Literacy “ indicates a recognition of the complex relationships among reading, writing, ways of talking, ways of learning, and ways of knowing". Literacy, its origins as well as background, coupled with literacy leadership in particular, will form the basis for this literature review. The ever changing role of the elementary principal as an instructional leader from that of a manager and its affect on student achievement will be considered. A dimension of literacy leadership will also be examined in light of characteristics and effective school practice especially as it relates to William Deming’s work.

Over the past century, the general understanding of the word literacy has seen sweeping changes. It has evolved into what it is today. From the turn of the century where one was deemed ‘literate’ if they could mark an X as their signature, to what is now an involved and somewhat insidious and complex marriage between academics, accountability and politics (Morrison, 2011). Today, as we enter the twenty-first century, literacy is considered a birthright, particularly to Americans (Gordon and Gordon, 2003).

Reading instruction in colonial America followed the customs and nuances of the first immigrants to this country, from England. As time progressed, and as the Church of England changed from Catholicism to Protestantism, the control of the schools by the church became essential. Therefore the materials for teaching students included scripture, the Psalter, the Lord's

Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Catechism (Smith, 1965). Students learned letters by memory followed by memorizing syllables. After mastering letters and "the syllabarium" (p. 32) the student would then begin reading the primer, so called because it contained the primary religious instruction for the child.

### ***The History of Reading In America***

Reading research expanded during the rest of the 1920s and 1930s. It was during this period, that the concept of reading readiness was established; (Smith, p.186) and the subsequent diagnosis of reading difficulties was extended. With the advent and evolution of and the country's increasing interest in technology, Reading instruction became further shaped during the early 1950s through to the 1960s. Shannon (1989) called the decade "the re-awakening of the new education in reading instruction in the United States"—a description that would last at least through the 1980s. It could be argued, that during this era, Americans believed themselves to be the leaders in the world, particularly in the areas of science and technology. The realization that this view was certainly not the world's view came in stark realization when the first Russian satellite, Sputnik, was released in 1957 (Smith, 1965, p. 312).

At that time, it was feared that the United States was left behind and would soon fall to Communism. William Carr remarked, "The first Sputnik was followed by a thundering public demand for education" (Smith, 1965, p. 312). This era also sparked heated debates between educators as to why school aged children were unable to read, and read well. It was in 1955, that Rudolph Flesch published *Why Johnny Can't Read* (Flesch, 1955) maintaining students must be taught using the alphabetic principle as opposed to the whole word method, rather than by the pervading principle of 'whole language' instruction.

The U.S. Government's first serious foray in education had the support of President John F Kennedy followed by President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty and joblessness, as well as "civil rights" for all citizens (Smith, 1965, p. 313). Education in general, and by extension reading, was earmarked as the medium for meaningful social change. In 1965, President Johnson proposed an aid-to-education program for the staggering sum of \$1.3 billion to finance the initiatives (Annual Budget Message to the Congress, Fiscal Year 1965).

By 1975 the Committee on Reading was appointed by the Executive Council of the National Academy of Education. The Committee's express task was to study existing scientific knowledge related to reading and to discover what knowledge was still needed to achieve universal literacy. A result of the committee's work was the publication of *Toward a Literate Society* co-edited by John B. Carroll and Jean Chall (Anderson et al., 1985).

In 1981, then Secretary of Education Terrence Bell created the National Commission on Excellence. This Commission sought to examine the quality of education in the United States. Among the charges given to the commission were to: assess the quality of teaching and learning in public and private schools at all levels; compare American schools and colleges with those in other countries; define problems that must be overcome if schools are to become high achieving. The commission was created based on his concern about "the widespread public perception that something is seriously amiss in our education system" (A Nation at Risk, 2).

The report, *A Nation at Risk*, was released on April 26, 1983. It contained a scathing assessment of the state of education in the United States, including strongly worded statements such as, "Our nation is at risk. The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (A

Nation at Risk, 2) The reaction to the findings of this blue ribbon commission's 2 years of work was heightened fear, disbelief and panic (Anderson et. al, 1985, Foreword). The report found low "performance at nearly every level and warned that the education system was "being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity" (A Nation at Risk, 2). Chester Finn, (2002) a senior fellow at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, stated at that time, that the "publication of A Nation at Risk was a major event for the US, but it did more to shock than to correct. He continued, "The report made a lasting contribution by changing national conversations about education" .

The Commission on Reading published a report entitled *Becoming a Nation of Readers* in 1985. This report was sponsored by the National Academy of Education's Commission Education and Public Policy. In this report, various experts eschewed their "interpretations of our current knowledge of reading and the state of the art and practice in teaching reading" (Anderson et. al, 1985, Foreword). The report concluded, "America will become a nation of readers when verified practices of the best teachers in the best schools can be introduced throughout the country" (p. 120).

By 1989, at the behest of the US Congress, fourteen individuals including "leading scientists in reading research, representatives of colleges of education, reading teachers, educational administrators and parents" (Report of the National Reading Panel, p. 1) were commissioned to study and report upon the status of current research-based knowledge and the effectiveness of various instructional strategies and approaches to teaching children to read. Their conclusions were based on findings (on what is now termed the big 5) "from a meta-analysis of experimental studies conducted on five topics: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension" (Braunger, 2006, vi). In its 1999 report to Congress, the Panel's research suggested that teaching children to read is complex and multi-faceted:

learning to read requires a combination of skills including phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension and fluency (Report of the National Reading Panel). Although this came some 20 years later, it underscored Rudolph Flesh's theory about teaching students to read using whole language. While not disputing the findings of the panel, some have been critical of the narrow review of reading described, while omitting important research related to oral language, concepts about print, children's home literacy experiences and text (Coles, 2001; Barone, 2005).

### ***The Standards Based Reform Movement in the United States***

The standards based reform movement in the United States took root in the mid 1990s, when at the National Education Summit, governors of 44 states as well as 60 chief executive officers set priorities that they believed necessary to achieve excellence for students in grades K-12 (Duttweiler, 1998). These priorities included setting and requiring high academic standards for all students, rigorous testing, and the implementation of accountability systems that provided rewards and incentives for all stakeholders who work together to reach the new standards. These rewards are now viewed as punitive (Bierbauer, 1996, p. 1).

"Virginia and other states' governors touted standards as the measure for bringing America's schools back to a competitive level" (Bierbauer, 1996, p.1). At that time only 14 of the 51 states had developed content standards for their students. Within two years "almost every state had implemented, or was in the early stages of implementing academic standards for their students in math and reading" (Duttweiler, 1998, 1). The ongoing debate about standards rages on today. "Despite continuing controversy, state content standards have emerged as the most powerful manifestation of the school reform that began with *A Nation at Risk* more than 20 years ago" (O'Shea, 2005, p. 1).

Due to increased accountability demands such as those placed on schools by NCLB, more and more principals are assuming the role of instructional leader; they are focusing their attention on specific strategies that result in increased student achievement.

### **No Child Left Behind**

The recent accountability movement in education “. . . focuses on defining standards, creating standards-based tests, and promoting policies that impose sanctions for substandard performance and provide monetary rewards for exceeding the standard performance expectations” (Goldberg & Morrison, 63). Although many states have had accountability systems in place for years, in 2001, the federal government mandated legislation entitled No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that required all states to adopt “. . . challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards” (P.L. 107-110, Section 1111 (b)(1)(A) Linn, 2005).

In September 2001, President, George W. Bush, expressed the goal that "no child should be left behind" because he or she cannot read (Sweet, 2004). This rather supercilious goal was an adaptation of the long-time motto of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) that had been directed by M. W. Edelman: "Leave No Child Behind" (Children's Defense Fund, 2006). In 2001, CDF launched a five-year campaign to make children a national priority. The organization had as its nucleus the landmark Act to Leave No Child Behind, which Senator Chris Dodd and Representative George Miller introduced in Congress on the same day. The Act was cosponsored by 95 of their House and Senate colleagues. This Act was likely the antecedent to NCLB.

Public Law 107–110, which was passed in Congress on January 8, 2002 states” An Act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind.” Title One of what has now become known as *The No Child Left Behind Act* further states in Sec. 101., that the act would seek to “Improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged.”

In 1997, Congress charged the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel to assess the status of research-based knowledge (2000). The panel, referred to as the National Reading Panel (NRP) developed guidelines to determine which studies met the scientific standard for evidence of instructional efficacy.

The Congressional charge was never intended to imply that the NRP would endorse, approve, or sanction any particular reading curriculum. As stated by Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers:

The law [NCLB] said nothing about picking specific programs, it just indicated scientifically based programs. But when we looked at the other programs that were being approved, we saw very little evidence that those were more scientific than the ones we were trying to use. (as cited in Manzo, 2007, p. 19) However, the Elementary and Secondary Act, P. L. 89-10, 1965, (ESEA) as amended by NCLB established the RF program to assist state and local agencies in establishing reading programs that were based on scientifically based reading research (SBRR) (Office Of Inspector General 2006).

When NCLB was voted into law, it was overwhelmingly supported by both Democrat and Republican policymakers (Mathews, 2004). One reason for its bipartisan approval may have

been due to the belief that increased accountability is supposed to encourage school improvement and motivate teachers and administrators to meet state standards and improve student achievement (Newmann et al., 1997; O'Day, 2002; Spring, 1994).

NCLB contains four reform principles: (1) stronger accountability for results; (2) increased flexibility and local control; (3) expanded options for parents; and (4) an emphasis on scientifically-based effective teaching methods (California Department of Education, 2004). Not only does NCLB increase accountability, but it also sets up a timeline for stages of accountability implementation in states across the country.

Although NCLB legislation is very specific about some aspects of the policy, states are permitted to either develop or select annual state assessments of their choosing that are in alignment with the state content standards (Ananda, 2003; Bohla et al., Linn, 2005). Indiana's requirements, like most other states include:

- 95% Participation rate of students in annual assessments;
- Minimum percentage of students scoring proficient (Annual Measurable Objectives
- Academic Performance Index (API) as an Additional Indicator; and
- Graduation Rate (Morrison, 2012)

Indiana's AYP bar raises every three years through 2010 and every year after that through 2014 (see chart below). By 2014, the federal law calls for 100 percent of students at every school to pass state tests in both subjects OR significantly reduce the percentage of students not passing these tests by at least 10 percent annually (safe harbor provision).



In an attempt to meet NCLB accountability requirements, principals implement a variety of leadership strategies. In the case of the Lakeridge School District in northwest Indiana, their chosen strategy is the Deming model, otherwise known as the 8 step model for continuous improvement.

## **Total Quality Management**

Total Quality Management or (TQM) is defined by authors as both a management system and a philosophy” (Heiser, 1999 p. 3). TQM had its origins from a theory which was comprised of quality principles, which William Edwards Deming introduced to the Japanese dating back to the early 1950’s. Originally, these quality principles were meant as best practices strategies for corporate entities. In 1949, Deming had been charged with visiting Japan by the US State Department to help that government prepare for the 1951 census and to help conduct population statistical studies to remedy the housing shortages (Bonstingl, 1996). While in Japan, Deming and the other statisticians with whom he worked, presented a series of lectures on statistical process control sponsored by Civil Communications Section (CCS) of the Allied Command (Bonstingl, 1996). These focus of the lectures centered on the importance of preventing and anticipating errors before they occurred, rather than fixing them after the fact. After becoming better known throughout Japan, Deming was invited to give lectures addressing ways that Japanese industry could improve the quality of products and services that they produced. During his tenure in Japan, Deming gained support from Ichiro Ishikawa, president of the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE), an organization that was interested in advancing the cause of quality Japanese manufacturing. The sequence of events that followed are best stated by Bonstingl, 1996):

... with Japan's top industrial leaders, Deming drove home the point that, without the full support of top-level management, the quality revolution Japanese industry so desperately needed would be doomed from the start. It's not enough, Deming warned, to have a cadre of willing workers, all doing their best. The workers' efforts must be guided by the analysis of data and by what Deming would later call a system of profound knowledge, including a deep understanding of human psychology, learning theory, and variation within systems. Deming told the Japanese to view their customers as the last and most important people on their production lines – a new idea for Japanese industrialist. He told that quality is that which satisfies, even delights, the customer, and they must, therefore, go to their customers and ask them what they want. He suggested that they conduct door-to-door surveys and invest company resources in market research (p. 13).

Total Quality Management (TQM) is one significant school renewal approach being implemented by educational leaders in an effort to replicate the positive results seen in business. Seigel (2000) states that several developments in particular have convinced an increasing number of educators that TQM, specifically the Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence, is worth another look. According to William Glasser (1998), "Nothing less [than TQM] will solve the problems of our schools."

Academics such as Deming (2000), Blankstein (1992), Bradley (1989) realized that the paradigm shift that had taken place in industry could work successfully in the education process

This shift they believed, would enable students to participate in a collaborative learning environment where all stakeholders including members of the school community (principal, school leadership team, teaching staff, students and parents) participate in an educational

partnership towards the achievement of the organization's mission. "Education must be redesigned from the ground up, based on theory and profound knowledge" (Deming, 1986, p. 29).

## **Implications for Student Achievement**

Research that highlighted the relationship between leadership and student achievement has viewed the association through various lenses over time. In the 1980s instructional leadership "dominated inquiries ... transformational leadership received attention in the extant literature of 1990s. Today, the research is dominated by inquiries that examine the relationship between vision and school effectiveness" (Knoeppel and Rinehart, 2008, p. 501).

In a study of four principals who led challenging schools, Ylimaki (2007) found that each of the principals improved student achievement in their schools with assorted leadership strengths. Differences included sharing leadership roles, strong pedagogical knowledge, ensuring a safe school, and creating environments for teaching and learning. In a similar study Jacobsen et al. (2007) examined the leadership of three principals in high-poverty elementary schools who improved student achievement following their tenure at the schools. Common practices of the principals included the establishment of a safe learning environment, high expectation and goal setting for students, parents, and teachers, and most importantly, holding everyone accountable for the achievement of their students.

Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) studied the nature and extent of the effect of the principal's leadership on reading achievement. Their results showed no direct effects of the principal's instructional leadership on student achievement. However, the results "supported the belief that a principal can have an indirect effect on school effectiveness through actions that

shape the school's climate" (p. 527). The leadership of the principal is influenced by contextual variables such as gender, social economic status, and parental involvement. Therefore, the principal's role in school effectiveness should be viewed through a contextual lens that "places the principal's leadership behavior in the context of the school organization and its environment" (p. 527). While researchers are unable to definitively measure direct effects of a principal's leadership on test scores, Hallinger suggests that it probably does not matter. The important point he states, is that "both for research and practice, is understanding the ways in which principals shape effective educational programs by working with teachers, staff, parents, and students" (p. 545).

### **The Role of the Instructional Leader**

Instructional leadership of the elementary principal has followed a long tradition of multiple and expanding roles. Principals, who were once viewed as social and moral leaders, as well as managers and bureaucrats, are now considered to hold the pivotal role of instructional leader (Beck and Murphy, 2003). In 1996 the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed standards that describe expectations for principals. In 2008, the standards were revised based on lessons learned from the initial implementation in 1996. The Wallace Foundation supported the development of Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 as part of its long-term commitment to develop and share knowledge, ideas, and insights aimed at increasing understanding of how education leadership can contribute to improved student learning.

The standards require that principals "possess the knowledge, beliefs, and skills that create a common shared vision and motivate others toward it, direct the teaching and learning

process, manage the operations of the school, unite the entire learning community, deal with legal and external forces, and have ethics that are beyond approach" (Irvin & White, 2004, p. 21). Because of the additional federally mandated accountability measures for all students, the principal must make certain that his/her time is spent on building and improving the instructional program within his/her building.

Strong instructional leadership is one of the four factors that make a difference in reading achievement (Weber, 1971). Leadership related to literacy is a direct outgrowth of instructional leadership. Literacy related routines are often at the forefront of the daily practices of principals (Spillane, 2005).

These actions and behaviors, associated with school programs, are called the "hand of leadership" by Sergiovanni (2007, p. 19). Through the hand of leadership the school principal then prioritizes learning as the most significant goal in the school (Dufour, 2003). It stands to reason that literacy leaders make the teaching of reading their number one priority (Hoffinan and Rutherford, 1984; Liekteig, et. al, 1995; Murphy, 2004; Ylimaki and McClain, 2005; and Sherman and Crum, 2007). Literacy leadership as described by Taylor and Gunter (2006) charge principals to create a "fail-safe system of literacy so that all students have access to the standards based curriculum" (p. 2) through actions that encourage students to become active readers. The effective school principal exercises a strong influence on the reading program in his/her school. Reading specialists also serve (as will be evidenced in this study) in a key role in the elementary school. Working alongside the principal and the school's literacy team, the reading specialist fulfills a multitude of roles including: coordinating the school wide literacy plan, recommending and collecting resources, developing and using assessment data to drive instruction, working with classroom teachers to provide professional development for teachers, modeling lessons and

providing intervention services for children. In addition, the reading specialist often serves as a resource for the principal (IRA, 2000; Quatroche and Wepner, 2008) by keeping him/her abreast of the current practices as well as the state of reading instruction and achievement in the school. This type of collaborative community "is characteristic of schools that show positive literacy results for students (Guth and Pettengill, 2005, p. 13).

## **The School Principal**

Ellwood P. Cuberley, the first dean of Stanford University's School of Education asserted, "As is the principal, so is the school" (Gordon, 2003, p. 41). "Leadership could be considered the single most important aspect of effective school reform" (Marzano, 2003, p.172). The leading models in the field of educational leadership, "as measured by the number of empirical studies, are instructional leadership and transformational leadership" (Hallinger, 2003, p. 329). The term *principal* emerged as early as 1841 in the writing of Horace Mann. In the earliest days of 'schooling' in America, principals were seen as teaching members of the school staff. Their role was that of a master educator and instructor. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in addition to being an instructor, the principal's position also included administrative, clerical, and janitorial responsibilities as well as supervision and discipline of students. It was at that time, that the Department of Elementary School Principals was established within the National Education Association and the position of principal was officially recognized (Beck and Murphy, 2003).

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and on into the last, principals were viewed primarily as administrative managers who kept the school running smoothly through the details paid to operational activities. As the federal government became more involved with education in the

1960s and 1970s, the role of the principal began to convert to one in which he/she became responsible for managing programs such as compensatory education, bilingual education, education for the disabled, and other federal entitlements. Policy makers developed many of the innovations associated with federal programs; resulting in the principal becoming the manager of the various program, often more concerned with compliance than program outcomes or results (Hallinger, 1992).

The United States Office of Education in the 1960s, tasked and funded the research of noted educator James Coleman, on presenting a federal paper in which he discussed the effectiveness of the educational system in America. The resultant outcomes concluded that public schools did not make a significant difference for children. He credited the family background of the student as the key indicator for school success. Coleman went on to propose that students who came from poor families and who lacked the proper values to support schooling, could not learn, no matter what the schools did (Coleman et al., 1966).

The results of this research became the foundations of an explanation as to why students' achievements levels were so poor, particularly in urban, high poverty school districts. Many researchers attempted to "replicate or in some cases discredit the findings of the Coleman report" (Hoffman and Rutherford, p. 80, 2004). This sweeping statement drew sharp responses from many persons in academia, among them Ron Edmonds, Director of the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard University. While he agreed that a student's familial background does have an effect on their achievement, he and others embarked on a search for schools where children from low-income families were successful.

In time, Edmonds and others were able to locate many such schools and continue their research. From their studies emerged effective schools research and characteristics or correlates that define a highly successful school. "Edmonds showed that high student achievement correlated very strongly with strong administrative leadership, high expectations for student achievement, an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning, an emphasis on basic skill acquisition, and frequent monitoring of student progress"(Cawelti, 2003, p. 19).

Definitions of leadership have shifted from bossing to managing to leading. Patterson (1998) adds that the concept of "openness" has become an important value in today's workplaces. This includes openness to active participation, diversity, conflict for the purpose of problem solving, reflection and acknowledging mistakes and learning from them.

Dubbed a "watershed conclusion" by Hallinger (1992, p. 2), principals were called on to become instructional leaders within the effective schools framework. Edmonds stated, "We can whenever, and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need in order to do this. Whether we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far" (p. 23, 1979). Thus, the principal's role transitioned from being one of a manager to instructional leader.

Bennis (1990) described the difference between an instructional leader and a manager eloquently: "The manager administers; the leader innovates. The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective. The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why. The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it; the manager does things right, the leader does the right thing" (McEwan, 1998, p. 7). Additionally, the literature about leadership frequently distinguishes between managers and leaders by stating that a



manager does things right and a leader does the right things (Bennis, 1989; Bennis&Nanus, 1985). Bennis (1990) believes that leaders are the ones who "manage the dream" (p. 46).

As noted earlier, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in 1996 developed standards which outlined new roles for principals. The organization stated that principals are required to "possess the knowledge, beliefs, and skills that create a common shared vision and motivate others toward it, direct the teaching and learning process, manage the operations of the school, unite the entire learning community, deal with legal and external forces, and have ethics that are beyond approach" (Irvin & White, 2004, p. 21).

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards have recently been developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA) to help strengthen preparation programs in school leadership (Van Meter & Murphy, 1997).

The Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 organizes the functions that help define strong school leadership under six standards. These standards represent the broad, high-priority themes that education leaders must address in order to promote the success of every student. *These six standards call for:*

1. Setting a widely shared vision for learning;
2. Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
3. Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;

4. Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and
6. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts (Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008).

As time progressed, other organizations such as The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), a national professional organization dedicated to the advocacy and support of elementary and middle schools principals, published *Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do* (2001). The standards include indicators of a quality school as well as six standards that detail what a principal should know and be able to do in order to provide strong instructional leadership. They state as their mandate, six standards that principals should pursue. They are the following:

1. Lead the school in a way that puts students and teaching at the center.
2. Set high expectations for all students and adults.
3. Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed upon academic standards.
4. Create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals.
5. Use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement.

6. Engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

Throughout the course of regular school day principals balance countless numbers of activities which include encounters with students, parents, teachers alike, phone calls, e-mails, school plant emergencies, and the like. Bredeson (2003) explains that highly successful principals have learned what the most important work of the day entails: "... balancing what others expect them to do with their own work priorities and goals as educational leaders" (p. 68). Edgar Schein (1985) pointed out that if one wants to know what a principal values, pay attention to what he does, rather than what he says is important.

Andrews and Soder (1987) studied elementary and secondary schools in Seattle, Washington to examine how the behavior of the principal affected student performance. Their area of focii honed in on students who were deemed to have achieved below expectations. Interactions between teachers and principals in four key areas were studied: the principal as an instruction resource, the principal as a communicator, the principal as a visible presence, and the principal as a resource provider (McEwan, 1998, p. 9). "Their findings showed that, as perceived by the teachers ... the normal equivalent gain scores of students in schools led by strong instructional leaders were significantly greater in both total reading and total mathematics than those students in schools rated as having average or weak leaders"(p. 9).

Since the main strategic goal of schools is teaching and learning, then it would stand to reason that one of the most important roles the principal can play is that of instructional leader (Leithwood and Duke , 1999). In Lyon's (1999) research, "fostering good teaching and learning" was high on the list of those duties considered most important, second only to "providing a safe school environment. "In particular, Silins (1994) found that certain leadership

behaviors - being a visionary, providing individual consideration, engaging in collaborative problem solving, ensuring goal achievement, and establishing school ethos - promoted school improvement.

Studies have also tied principal authenticity with regard to access to information (i.e. enabling teachers by providing them with information relevant to decision making) to teacher empowerment and student achievement (Bredeson, 1989; Heck et al., 1990; Kirby and Colbert, 1992).

### **Instructional Leadership**

NCLB calls for principals to have “the instructional leadership skills to help teachers teach and students learn” (p. 146). Instructional leadership has been a topic of consideration for the last few decades (Blasé & Blasé, 1998; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Hallinger & Heck, 1995; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Since standards and accountability have created demands on education, the principal is expected to lead curricular initiatives that are aligned with state and local standards. According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001):

Elementary and middle school principals are essential to helping students reach standards. The business of schools has changed. Principals can no longer simply be administrators and managers. They must be leaders in improving instructional and student achievement. They must be the force that creates collaboration and cohesion around school learning goals and the commitment to achieve those goals (p. 1).

According to the National Staff Development Council (2002), instructional leadership means sharing responsibility, establishing a culture that supports student achievement, using ongoing information to monitor progress, and holding groups accountable.

The council adds that instructional leaders focus on helping teachers improve classroom instruction. Effective instructional leadership can be accomplished by spending time in classrooms, observing teachers, tracking test scores and focusing teachers on this information, providing staff development, and setting aside time to share ideas, collaborate, and plan curriculum and instruction (NSDC, 2002).

Researchers define instructional leadership as a series of behaviors that successful principals exhibit in their schools. Blase and Blase (2000) examined the characteristics of school principals and their influence on the teachers' classroom instruction through "instructionally oriented interactions" (p. 7). Through these formal and informal conversations a profile of effective principals emerged as those who strive "to participate fully in instructional and school improvement; to develop a collaborative, democratic, trusting community of leader-learners; and to involve all others from the school community in participative, inquiry-oriented constructivist decision making" (p.194). These behaviors, skills, and attitudes exhibited by principals are further described by Blase and Blase as "academic leadership" (p. 194). Cotton (2003) identified twenty five leadership behaviors and traits, which are "positively related to student achievement, attitudes, and social behavior" (p. 67).

Waters and Marzano (2003 p. 156) also indicated that leaders must focus their attention on these practices, but also understand them within the context of change. They argue, "not all change is of the same magnitude" (p.6); there are specific characteristics of "first order" and "second order" change.

Fullan (2002) addressed the central role of the principal as an instructional leader and stated that it "has been a valuable first step in increasing student learning, but it does not go far

enough" (p. 17). Leaders are needed "who can create a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself" (p. 17). A deeper understanding of the school's culture and the role it plays within the framework of student improvement is essential. Furthermore, the leader's influence will have a far reaching and lasting impact on the organization itself if the principal assumes the role of a "Cultural Change Principal", (p. 17) one who can see the big picture and transform the school through the people and teams who work there. Fullan advocates intensive training for principals in the form of "job embedded, organization embedded, and system embedded" (2009, p. 46) leadership development to fully understand instructional leadership.

"Building principals and others serving as reading leaders can have a major impact on student growth in reading and writing. The substance, humanism, and style that leaders bring to daily decision making can mean the difference between productive or mediocre language arts outcomes" (Sanacore, 1994, p. 64).

Murphy (2004) reviewed the "knowledge base of instructional leadership in the area of literacy" (p. 67). Murphy defined the "key leverage points for improvement of literacy programs in the early grades of the elementary school, especially for groups of youngsters who have not fared particularly well in the existing educational system" (p. 92). The connections between school factors and reading achievement were outlined and organized into 10 functions of leadership that impact literacy.

1. Each principal established literacy as a priority by making it clear "that reading is the most important activity undertaken" (p. 75) in classrooms and throughout the

school. Resources are linked to this priority through funding and resources for staff, materials, and professional development.

2. The leader and teachers have "an appropriate platform of beliefs" (p.74), that is, "there is a bedrock belief in the educability of all youngsters in schools that promote mastery of literacy skills" (p.77). All adults in the schoolhouse share responsibility for how students perform.
3. Quality instruction from knowledgeable teachers is key.
4. Principals value instructional time and understand that productive use of and expanded time for literacy instruction is invaluable.
5. Quality programs include: a well-supplied library of multiple levels of texts with varying difficulty and interest; teachers work with students for extended amounts of time in small group learning; a code-emphasis takes center stage for beginning readers.
6. The principal develops and implements systems school wide that include frequent assessments, program monitoring, and early intervention.
7. There is alignment of the reading program from class to class and grade to grade.
8. Principals ensure that appropriate and on-going staff development related to literacy is afforded to all staff members.
9. Parents are involved in their children's literacy development. All members of the school community recognize the importance of parents in helping their children learn to read and make reading improvements.

10. Schools led by effective principals build the capacity by creating a safe, orderly, purposeful, and caring environment.

He concludes that these leverage points "provide the wagon to which leadership must be hitched if it is to serve to strengthen literacy in our elementary schools" (p. 93).

### **A Case for Change - Total Quality Management**

Bradley (1993) states, "There seems to be consensus among the American society that education is in need of new ways of management that focus on quality" (p. 12). After witnessing the improvement of industry in countries such as Japan, and a later emphasis on quality in the United States, there are many who believe that Total Quality Management is the solution to improving the education system.

According to Goodlad, "there is no shortage of good ideas about ways to solve the problems of our schools. Good as they are, however, these ideas have not taken hold and will not take hold, because of the way our schools are managed. Before anything else will work, we need to replace the way we manage now with a new method of management that focuses on quality (as cited by Bradley, 1993, p.12). Currently, there are numerous strategies for restructuring schools, such as site-based management, charter schools, and Deming's total quality management (Holt, 1993).

Total Quality Management, also known as Total Quality Education in education, and Continuous Quality Improvement is a philosophical approach that focuses on school districts as systems and involves a set of principles that promote the ideas of continuous improvement and customer focus (Rhodes, 1992, p. 76). The transformation that occurred in schools which implemented TQM impacted school administration, curriculum, leadership, and training and



development. "Deming's concepts of quality and improvement embody a philosophy of action with implications that challenge current practices in both administration and curriculum in schools" (Holt, 1993, p. 383) Total Quality Management may prove useful for districts in several ways. First, it prevents finger pointing and blame placing on individuals and concentrates instead on implementing change at the systems level. Secondly, TQM focuses on customer satisfaction. TQM also promotes continual improvement by all levels in the system. Fourthly, the process requires management by data, which speaks to federal mandates and finally, it allows for decentralization such as use of decision-making committees and more stakeholder involvement, while supporting the use of long-term strategic planning by all stakeholders.

In schools, just as in businesses, there are managers, employees, and customers who either receive or offer services. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993) state, "Teachers are the suppliers to pupil and parents; secretaries are suppliers of services to teachers; school administrators are suppliers of services to teachers; teachers supply services to each other."

One key component of TQM in education is moving from "boss management" to "lead management." Boss management limits both the quality of the work and the productivity of the worker. Boss management is more concerned with the needs of the boss rather than the workers. More importantly, boss management limits the number of students who do acceptable work to only about 50 percent in the best neighborhoods and 10 percent or less in schools where there is little support for learning (Glasser, 1998). In contrast, lead management involves a manager who spends all his time and energy figuring out how to run the system so that workers will see that it is to their benefit to do quality work (Glasser, 1998).

By attempting specificity in education, Total Quality Management becomes Total Quality Education (TQE)- this is based on the work of Franklin P. Schargel. Schargel (1994, p. 2) defines TQE as a process that involves focusing on: meeting and exceeding customer expectations, continuous improvement, sharing responsibilities with employees, and reducing scrap and rework. Schargel further states that in Deming's model, the paradigm shift is the focus on meeting and exceeding customer expectations. As did the Japanese, this means anticipating the future needs of customers, taking risks, and developing products and services that customers never envisioned they would want or need. In education, some of these customers are employees, students, and parents (Schargel, 1994).

Continuous improvement is a continuous improvement teaching and learning cycle that is comprised of 8 steps. The steps are as follows: disaggregation of test data, development of an instructional timeline, delivery of the instruction, administration of frequent assessments, tutorials, enrichment opportunities for students, maintenance, and ongoing progress monitoring. It is another hallmark ideal of Total Quality Management.

To date, an ever increasing number of schools in Texas and other states are now using the principles of total quality management (Hequet, 1995). Results have revealed that the implementation has empowered teachers and students, has required schools to use hard data, has removed barriers, and requires work in teams. As mentioned earlier, the use of total quality management in schools has just begun to increase in the last decade. Quality Progress magazine stated that in 1995, at least 132 K - 12 U.S. schools were using total quality management (Hequet, 1995). This includes those labeled total quality teaching or total quality education.

As Deming (1986) stated, Total Quality Management is an ongoing process. Continuous improvement makes clear that the work to improve is never done. The process is improved by altering, adding to, subtracting from, and refining (1994). Shared responsibility is yet another aspect of the TQM model. When shared responsibility is increased, it means that the problems are solved by those closest to it. This aspect suggests empowerment, or as Schargel (1994) states, “the sharing of responsibilities, with our employees” (p. 4).

One major component of the TQM or Continuous Improvement Model is data disaggregation. This data driven instruction focuses on individualized student curricula. Districts have traditionally used data for compliance reporting, but in today’s high stakes testing climate, researchers suggest that data can also be used in a proactive manner to improve educational programs, increase student achievement and to enhance accountability at all levels (Heck, 1992; Ardovino et al., 2000). In addition, assessment data provides valuable information that can help educators identify the needs of students along with their progress, guide professional development, plan instructional and curricular interventions, allocate resources and assessing school improvement plans (Ardovino et al., 2000; Goldberg & Morrison, 2003; Lashway, 2002; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

As part of the learning cycle (P-D-C-A), Deming stated that there are four clearly defined stages. They are

1. Planning, including design of processes, selection of measures, and deployment of requirements;
2. Execution of plans;
3. Assessment of progress, taking into account internal and external results; and

4. Revision of plans based upon assessment findings, learning, new inputs, and new requirements.

In using data to inform decision-making, it is important to not only look at standardized assessment data, but to examine multiple measures of student performance as well. Districts must also disaggregate data by breaking students up into subgroups to determine how particular groups of students are performing. According to Ardivino et al. (2000), these may include: (1) Teacher evaluation of student work, including grades running records, checklists, portfolios, etc.; (2) District- developed assessments, writing samples, math assessments, criterion-referenced assessments, assessments linked to instructional materials, etc.; (3) Standardized test, publisher's norm-referenced assessments; and (4) other formal assessments. (California Department of Education, 41).

Schools that have implemented the total quality technique of decision making based on facts and data are observing significant improvements in classroom practice, especially in the area of assessment. Andrade and Ryley (1994) report on an elementary school that has used data gathering to improve its assessment program.

The new assessing and reporting system has operationalized outcomes based education for us at Centennial - We can see results with our students ....it is clear that our data gathering has benefits beyond assessment: empowerment, collaboration, cross-grade planning and teaching, and a renewed energy for teaching and achieving results (Andrade &Ryley, 1992, p. 23).

Not only must principals create an environment that takes assessment data seriously, but they themselves must also be extremely knowledgeable about assessment instruments and

systems (Anthes, 2002). Instructional leaders must provide encouragement and opportunities to examine student work so that progress can be made towards realizing strengths and weaknesses (Schmoker, 1999). Simply having access to data is not enough, principals must create an environment in which assessment data is taken seriously by all members of the school community including teachers and students. This requires a system to be put in place where teachers regularly analyze data and develop strategies for continuous instructional improvement based on assessment data (Goldberg & Morrison, 2003).

Educators at the district level in Indiana, and in this particular school district have decided that as strong believers in Deming's principles, they will be able to can transform the education system and create the change their schools need. These principles include continuous employment involvement and training, customer/stakeholder focus, continuous improvement, the use of hard data for solutions, systems thinking, and teamwork. As Deming stated when he developed his 14 points,(See Appendix B) he felt they were applicable to all organizations, including those which are geared toward educating the country's youth. The principles listed in Appendix B have been extrapolated from his beliefs. Educators are beginning to understand that, "TQM is not about who is at fault. It's not about pointing fingers. It's about how we get better" (Heguet, 1995).According to Florence and Clink, "the total quality approach has changed the whole climate within the school and the emphasis now is on a system approach. The focus is on everyone working together to set standards, continuously improve and measure against those standards (Florence & Clink, 1995, p. 3).

Although the TQM has undoubtedly seen its successes, several educators have embraced the idea favorably, stating that it can be viewed as a radical departure from the current educational paradigm and providing a model for empowerment. However, some critiques have

been offered. Sztjan (1992) provided a strong critique by suggesting that changing the school as factory metaphor to school as an enlightened corporation metaphor (as some TQM advocates have argued) only perpetuates the business/economic mentality. Senge (1990) was critical of TQM because he felt the framework was incomplete. "What's missing is the idea that we must deliver results that are good for society as a whole and contribute to an ideal vision of an exemplary world"(p. 76).

Kohn (1993) was critical of the TQM approach of applying the industrial model to education because he believed it provided a warped view of education based on competition, customer service, and statistics. Kaufman and Hirumi (1992) suggested that schools need to look beyond the vision of satisfied customers to schools that are well served by schools (ethically, socially, and environmentally).

## **Discussion of the Literature**

The work of educational leaders is complex. Three interconnected themes appear to dominate the current educational landscape in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Lugg, et. al, 2002). First, the shift from "muscle-work" to "mind-work" (p. 37) created the demand for a more highly educated work force, therefore creating the sense that the health of the American economy is dependent on the success of the public schools. "Economic concerns will continue to be crucial in shaping public education policies and practices (p. 37)." Second, the economy has given states a much larger role in considering and providing funding for schools. More stringent requirements for teacher licensure, changes in curricula, graduation prerequisites, and professional development are often mandates attached to funding. Third, regulation is accompanied by an increase in required state mandated standards and the accountability for results that follow. Educational

leaders must be aware of how each of these components shape the way schools operate in America today.

When NCLB was voted into law, it was overwhelmingly supported by both Democrat and Republican policymakers (Mathews, 2004). One reason for its bipartisan approval may have been due to the belief that increased accountability is supposed to encourage school improvement and motivate teachers and administrators to meet state standards and improve student achievement (Newmann et al., 1997; O'Day, 2002; Spring, 1994).

Monroe (1997) contended that to maintain a clear administrative perspective for school success, the principal actively engaged in the primary work of the school, educating students. Schools' success rely heavily upon the principal's ability to lead in a manner that resulted in improved teacher morale and student performance (Leithwood et al., 2004). Over the years, researchers found it impossible to improve school performance absent a skilled and knowledgeable leader and noted that the principal played a critical role in a school's success (Gorton et al., 2007; Leithwood, Jantzi, Silins, & Dart, 1992; Thomas, 1997; Wallace Foundation, 2004). In a 2004 report, *Leadership for Learning: Making the Connections Among State, District and School Policies and Practices*, conducted by the Wallace Foundation, researchers reported that among all school-based factors contributing to improved learning, the only thing that outweighed great leadership was great classroom instruction.

For the TQM philosophy to have an impact on schools, a cultural change is necessary and schools need to focus on the management strategies used in the school because there must be a movement from an autocratic model to a more participatory style (Deming, 1986 p. 29). The

quality improvement process provides the vehicle to create the type of cultural change which is necessary for change in education (Bass & Avolio, 1995, p.123)..

This requires a review of the way schools have been managed and movement towards greater involvement by all who are associated with the school. The management function moves from one that was closed, autocratic and hierarchical to one that is open, participatory, enabling and horizontal (Sallas, 1993, p. 37),



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

*"The validity of an experiment is a direct function of the degree to which extraneous variables are controlled." Gay*

#### ***Introduction***

Chapter One of the study focused on the need for more research on the implementation of the Continuous Improvement Model (8 Step Process) at the public school level and the effect TQM may have on district wide improvement. A review of the literature provided background information on TQM and the recent interest in it as a solution for improving today's education system. This chapter will provide the reader with the methodology that was used in conducting and gathering data for TQM implementation, its evaluation, and the perceived effects it has had on one school's operations.

"Principal behaviors and expectations are under extreme scrutiny in light of increased demands for increased levels of student achievement", noted Superintendent of Lakeridge Schools. Reading achievement, in particular, is the measure by which our schools are adjudged along with its principal's leadership. "Significant relationships have been identified between selected school leadership practices and student learning, indicating that evidence existed for certain principal behaviors to produce a direct relationship with student achievement" (Nettles and Harrington, 2007, p. 724). It is this belief that framed the methodology for this study. Leadership related to literacy is a direct outgrowth of instructional leadership. Literacy related routines are often at the forefront of the daily practices of principals (Spillane, 2005).

## ***Purpose of the Study***

This study seeks to enhance the body of knowledge and the relationship between one principal's instructional leadership practices associated with reading amidst increased accountability related to NCLB. The study examined the use of the Continuous Improvement Model which underpinned the principal's literacy practices and its relationship to student achievement, as measured by the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) Reading Test, was examined.

## ***Research Design***

The qualitative design model was selected because of the researcher's belief that the understandings which were developed from the perspectives of the participants being studied will be highly significant in extending the knowledge base about Total Quality Management (TQM) which is known as the 8 Step Process or the Continuous improvement Model in schools. "Qualitative research methods, are appropriate for studying new phenomena." (Borg & Gall, 1989 p. 62). There has been little research on the implementation of TQM in schools, resultant of which the qualitative approach offers promise as an effective method for exploring this new phenomenon, while providing an innovative roadmap for research.

The selection of a qualitative case study design governs the techniques and strategies which were used in data collection and analysis. In attempting to fully grasp the meaning in context which is the basis of qualitative inquiry, the most appropriate method of data collection is to interview people with openness and a sense of exploration. This allows for them to provide meaning to the phenomenon being studied (Campbell and Stanley 1963, p.6) Interviewing was therefore selected as the major strategy for gathering data in this study.

This chapter outlines the procedure for the study using the following broad categories:

- (a) Rationale for a Qualitative Case Study Design;
- (b) Bounding the Data;
- (c) Data Collection, Analysis and Verification;
- (d) Research Timeline;
- (e) Description of the Site;
- (f) Role of the Researcher; and,
- (g) Ethical Considerations.

As the sole researcher, I chose to utilize a qualitative design because by its very nature, qualitative research implies a number of assumptions. In the context of this study, the six assumptions outlined by Merriam (1988) form the basis for the study's research design.

1. It is primarily concerned with process rather than outcomes - how do things happen?
2. The major focus is meaning - how do people make sense of their experience?
3. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection - how is reality constructed?
4. It involves fieldwork, attending the site and observing behavior in its natural setting.
5. Words and pictures are used to convey what the researcher has observed about the phenomenon.

6. It is inductive in nature - it avoids assumptions and allows abstractions, themes, and concepts to evolve during the process.

Other triangulation strategies that were used included observations and document collection, data disaggregation focus group conversations

### ***Case Study***

Stake (1995) points out that case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied. "As a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used" (p. 236). Lincoln and Guba add that "it serves three main purposes: thick description, axiomatic representation and vicarious reader experience" (p. 215). Yin (1994) defines it as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real- life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (as cited by Merriam, 1998). The purpose for using case studies is to establish a framework for discussion and debate (Yin, 1994, p. 2) and to understand processes of events projects, and programs and to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object (Sanders, 1981, p. 44, as cited by Merriam, 1998).

### ***Role of the Researcher***

Qualitative methods involve the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the results of a study (Creswell, 2003). In experimental research, the researcher controls or manipulates the alleged independent variable(s). The experimental researcher controls the selection of participants and divides the selected participants into two or more groups having similar characteristics. The researcher then applied different programs or treatments to the

groups and selects a test or measure to determine the effects of the treatment(s) on the groups (Gay & Airasian, 2000).

Being an active participant in the learning processes of the study involved listening, not as an expert but as a curious student of learning. The research process was based on the tenets of trust, mutual respect, integrity, and partnership in learning. The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection in this study. Consequently, the research design, interview protocols, and data collection tools were progressively adapted and refined.

The overarching question that guided the study was: **How is this elementary school principal meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?** To further develop the response, the following sub-questions were addressed:

- (a) What strategy supported by research is this new instructional leader using in her efforts at school improvement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?
- (b) What other practical strategies is this principal using in her efforts at school improvement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?; and
- (c) How do the leadership strategies specifically those associated with the 8 step process, supported by research and the practical strategies compare and contrast?

The inductive nature of qualitative case study design focuses on processes, understandings, and interpretations. This study was based on these design components. Multiple data collection methods were used to gather data on the processes and understandings which exist in the school and the interpretation and development of themes was the purpose of data

analysis. The very nature of the study also provided greater flexibility as the design of the study gradually emerged during the school visit.

### ***Bounding the Data***

This study is a specific case study of a single geographic setting, an elementary school in northwest Indiana. The site was selected using a purposeful sampling strategy (Patton, 1990), and is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most. The 8 informants in this study were members of the school community and included the principal, members of the school leadership team, staff, students, and a representative group of parents.

### ***Instrumentation and Materials***

#### **Human Instrument -**

The instrument must demonstrate flexibility and adaptability to everyday occurrences and interactions. The human then, serves as the most capable and only instrument able to meet these requirements during the gathering of qualitative data. When using the naturalistic inquiry approach, qualitative methods are considered to be the most accessible. Interactions with the researcher allows first-hand thinking, seeing, and hearing. It is important, therefore, that selected personnel have interactions with the researcher in order for him to gather a true appreciation of how these people perceive the TQM model has impacted the district. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), "One cannot understand human behavior without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings, and actions" (p. 49).

In addition to the researcher being the ‘instrument’, the Tschannen-Moran Principal Sense of Efficacy Questionnaire was used as talking points to guide the discussion with the selected principal. (See Appendix A).

## **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable of increased student achievement on the IStep was obtained by the researcher through databases maintained by Lakeridge Schools in Indiana. The ISTEP+ is a standards-based test that measures how well students are meeting the state's grade-level expectations. The district's educational data warehouse department maintains all student achievement information from Indiana's Standardized Testing and Reporting Programs. In March of 2010 the Indiana General Assembly passed Public Law 109 requiring the evaluation of reading skills for all third grade students. This legislation was developed to ensure students can read at grade level prior to fourth grade. In response to this legislation, all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students have been mandated to take the Indiana Reading Evaluation And Determination (IREAD-3) Assessment, in addition to the IStep.

Based on the Indiana Academic Standards, IREAD-3 specifically tests foundational reading standards through grade three.

The Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (Appendix A) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) was the instrument used to measure principals' sense of efficacy. The PSES is a 24-item measure that assesses principals' self-perceptions of the capability to perform three facets of school leadership (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). The PSES was constructed as an adaptation of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale created by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) which was modeled from Bandura's (2001) teacher-efficacy scale.

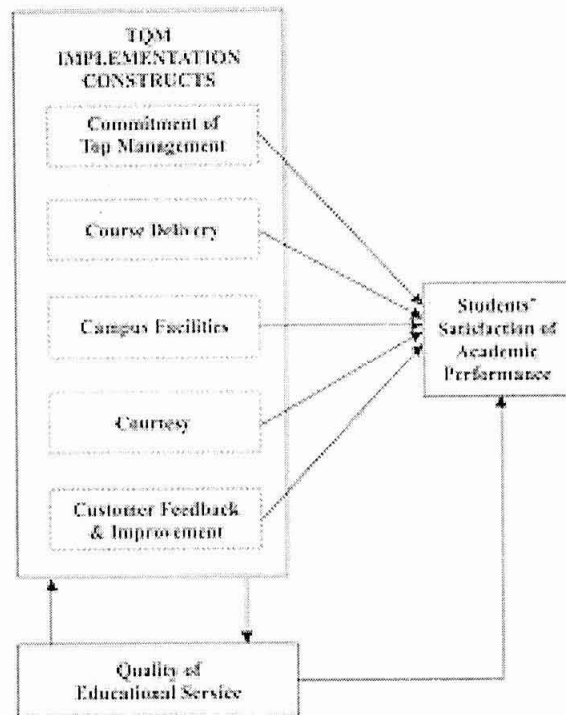
### ***Ethical Considerations***

In compliance with IRB and participating school system guidelines, participants' rights were safeguarded. This researcher submitted a request to the county offices for permission to utilize public data from student tests in this school system. Teachers, students and central office staff were assured of complete confidentiality and that both the names of the school, teachers and participants were not used in any reports or presentations. Raw data will be held in the researcher's home office, in a locked file cabinet, for 5 years. Data will be made available for participants and community partners upon request. A detailed evaluation of data can be found in chapter four.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Creswell (2003) recommends a diagram or figure to illustrate the specific research design to be used as well as indication of how data is contrived. Using a classic notation system, the notations provided by Campbell and Stanley (as cited in Creswell, 2003), are as follows: (X) represents an exposure of a group to an experimental variable or event, the effects of which are to be measured; (0) represents an observation or measurement recorded on an instrument (p. 168).





**Figure 3 : Creswell diagram representing the relationship between student achievement, TQM and principal instructional leadership**

The researcher visited the site for approximately four hours each day over a period of 35 days. The first five days were spent observing the school in operation, gaining awareness of school programs and initiatives, getting to know the staff and their responsibilities, coordinating meeting times, and developing a contextual framework for the data collection. The remaining 27 days were spent observing meetings, professional development sessions, collecting and reviewing school documents and conducting interviews. The three major data gathering techniques used in qualitative case studies - observation interviewing, and document collection and analysis were used extensively in the study.

Field notes were made throughout the multiple data collection phase and became the basis for the development of case records. In addition to field notes made during the various

stages of data collection, typed transcripts were made of the interviews and written summaries made of observations and archival documents.

The following diagram demonstrates the method used to identify and collect data:

Group A X -----0

Group B X-----0

The left-to-right dimension indicates the temporal order of procedures in the experiment. Separation of parallel rows by a dashed line indicates that comparison groups are not equal (or equated) by random assignment (Creswell, 2003).

In this example, Group A is 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students enrolled in the Elementary setting (X) for the 2010-2011 school year. The outcome or dependent variables (0) are IStep scores for the same period- held in March 2011.

The researcher obtained all data for student achievement through Lakeridge School District's Educational Data Warehouse Department. This department maintains all records of student academic performance, discipline, and demographic information including number of students who qualify for free/reduced lunch which indicates the poverty index of its student population. All student data and school site data is maintained through the district's computer databases.

### ***Triangulation***

Three forms of data collection were used in the study (namely, interviews, document analysis, and observation). Following analysis of all the data and the completion of the case record, the researcher verified the accuracy through a comparison of the data collection strategies

as an accurate perception of reality within the context of the unique case. Triangulation of the data was employed to ensure dependability in the research findings. The researcher verified accuracy by a comparison of the data from three sources - namely, interviews, observations and documents. In addition to the comparison of data from all sources, an independent researcher viewed the transcripts and developed an list of concepts which

The researcher was primarily seeking to find similar patterns and themes across all sources. Participant responses from face-to-face interviews were also compared with participant dialogue with the focus group participant responses. Teacher made assessments were also analyzed and compared within the triangulation validation process.

Reliability is a very critical component of any research study. Triangulation, according to Creswell (2003) increases reliability of data collection. This process involves cross checking and corroborating information and conclusions through the use of multiple sources and methods (Creswell, 2003). Patterns in the data that emerged are described in this chapter.

### ***Data Collection Process***

Data collection took place through face-to-face interviews, a focus group, observation of teacher meetings, and an examination of meeting documents and artifacts such as minutes and agenda (Creswell, 2007). Some documents provide valuable information that may not be revealed in interviews and observations. Extensive, multiple sources of information are characteristics of a qualitative case study. The types of data chosen were appropriate to elicit views and perspectives of the participants.

## Data Collection Plan

Data collection took place at the elementary school in this study. Interviews were audio taped to ensure accuracy of participant responses and followed a schedule to ensure interviews from all consenting participants had been completed.

According to Seidman (2006), the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (p. 9). These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2003, p. 188). (See Appendix-A for the interview questions)

The researcher used a digital recorder with a USB port to record interviews. Interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Office 2010 Word. The primary researcher conducted a focus group consisting of four teachers in grade K-2 who were not in the group of teachers who were interviewed for the study. The researcher used a digital recorder with a USB port to record interviews. Interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Office 2010 Word. The primary researcher conducted a focus group consisting of four teachers in grade K-2 who were not in the group of teachers who were interviewed for the study.

Seidman (2006), further states that listening is the most important skill in interviewing and the hardest part is being able to keep quiet and to listen actively (p. 78). The researcher, who has worked with this principal and the other respondents was able to facilitate an atmosphere where trust and candor were evident. This encouraged a conversational atmosphere. Interviewing the other teachers in a focus group added to the study allowing the researcher to ascertain how the K-2 teachers interact together and perceive their roles in the use of data since

they do not use the same type of data sources as intermediate teachers in Grade 3- the tested IStep Grade. Also, this focus group provided more in-depth exploration of individual participant perceptions which enhanced the credibility of findings in this study by providing more perspectives and views (Hatch, 2002).

Observations of three data inquiry meetings were conducted to supplement face-to-face interviews and the focus group. At the end of the school year, the data inquiry meetings were combined due to a tight school schedule. Observations took place in accordance with a meeting schedule implemented by the building administrator. The teachers who participated in the interviews and focus group were the same teachers who were observed in the teacher meetings. Teachers consented to meeting observations since this was a normal routine of charting and transcribing teacher responses.

### ***Permissions***

Permission to conduct the study was requested from and granted by the District Superintendent. Permission was also requested from and granted by the Institutional Review Board at Lynn University. Informed consent forms were obtained from the participating elementary school principal and teachers..

### ***Trustworthiness***

The researcher used Lincoln and Guba's criteria for establishing validity and trustworthiness in the naturalistic paradigm (1985, 1994). These four terms are "credibility," "transferability," "dependability," and "confirmability." Trustworthiness is defined by Lincoln and Guba as credibility or true value, transferability, and consistency (1985). The following definitions are provided:

**credibility** - refers to the question posed and how the results match reality;

**transferability** - addresses the extent to which the findings can be applied to other

**situations; and consistency** - the extent to which the study can be replicated and yield similar results (Merriam, 1988).

### ***Threats to the study's validity***

The aim of the internal validity techniques used in the study was to ensure that the data were accurate matching the reality of the case. The techniques used were triangulation. Three forms of data collection were used in the study (namely, interviews, document analysis, and observation). Following analysis of all the data and the completion of the case record, the researcher verified the accuracy through a comparison of the data collection strategies as an accurate perception of reality within the context of the unique case.

The term "Hawthorne effect" has been made popular by social and behavioral scientists. Awareness of this phenomenon is said to have a positive effect on the subject's performance during the experiment. In the case of this elementary school, as the sole researcher, I witnessed this as it was felt that teachers and administrators alike, felt that my presence warranted an explanation of what they thought I wanted to hear, rather than what could possibly have been their candid conversations.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS/OUTCOMES

*Education is life itself.*

- John Dewey

The purpose of this study was to determine through an analysis of baseline data whether instructional leadership coupled with Deming's Continuous Improvement Model in the Elementary setting would result in: increased literacy achievement as measured by performance on the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (IStep).

In this chapter the results of data analysis, beginning with an introduction of the statistical methods utilized and their reported findings are presented by the sole investigator. Findings from the overarching research question and its sub-questions are discussed with reference to outcome data presented in table format located in the appointed appendices. These include clear categorical findings among the various performance levels of academic achievement for Reading.

#### ***Descriptive Data***

The study took place in a rural school district in Indiana. One elementary school principal participated in the treatment during the study.

#### ***Student Demographics***

Grissom Elementary School is one of 3 elementary schools serving students in the Lake Ridge School Corporation. Students attending Grissom Elementary span grades kindergarten

through fifth grade. Special Education services are provided through Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative (NISEC). Currently NISEC services 39 of their students; 1 student has been identified as OHI, 17 students have been identified as MI, 10 students identified as LD, 1 student identified as autistic, 3 students have been identified as ED, and 6 students receive speech services. Students living in the community with other disabilities are serviced at various locations through NISEC. The 2010 -2011 school year enrollment of Grissom Elementary School was approximately 286 students. Currently, 92% or 264 students are indigent and receiving free or reduced lunch. Grissom Elementary School has experienced a high rate of mobility with approximately 9% or 27 of its students transferring in, and another 16% or 45 students transferring out.

Grissom Elementary School uses the district-adopted curriculum, which is based on the Indiana Academic Standards. Lake Ridge School Corporation has utilized the teaching and administrative staff to develop, review, and adapt a standards' based curriculum and benchmark assessment process.

The school presently holds a School-wide Title I designation. The school receives school-wide technical assistance with Marge Simic. Grissom Elementary also receives assistance from a Safe Haven Grant. The full complement of teaching and paraprofessional staff meets the requirements for highly qualified educators. The Lake Ridge School District provides a Head Start program, where 8/50 or 16% of the students transition to Grissom Elementary School.

Grissom Elementary School is currently recognized as a Choice School under NCLB (No Child Left Behind) guidelines and under the guidelines established under PL 221 Grissom is classified as Academic Watch. The school has up-dated its School Improvement Plan using the



Title I Continuous School Improvement Model that includes an Action Plan and an Implementation Profile. Both documents are included in this plan. This profile contains key instructional strategies, student activities, and interventions. These are based on research data, ISTEP+ needs, school performance data and a comprehensive needs assessment.

### ***Presentation and Analysis of the Data***

As a former school administrator, the researcher understands the feeling one may obtain when asked questions by a person outside the district and one wanting to conduct a study or research. My concern was that the superintendent and assistant superintendent would perceive the study evaluation on how they chose to introduce, implement, and evaluate quality management in their organization. As a result, the discussion began by the researcher stating, “In no way is this an evaluation of what you do in the district. I am interested in hearing your organization’s story on how it uses 8 Step Process as an improvement approach in the organization.”. The two administrators expressed excitement in the proposed study and were very accepting of the idea. Both offered to help in any way possible. The superintendent reaffirmed her interest in the proposed study by stating, “I think this will be a good opportunity for our administrators and teachers to look back and see what we have done with the use of quality in the district over time.”

A principal survey by Tschannen-Moran (See Appendix A) was used to guide the conversation with the Principal to better get a complete picture of some of the issues that created challenges for her in the performance of her duties, particularly as they related to her effectiveness as an instructional leader. Her responses were analyzed to determine the effect of the instructional leadership training and the implementation of the Continuous Improvement

Model. When questioned about the overall mission of the school, the Principal stated “ the overall mission of the school is to get students reading at grade level. Literacy is our primary focus of the school; from there we move into our other content areas of Math and Science, but we believe that we cannot teach a child to do those other things, so our primary focus is to get students reading at grade level.” She further added, “ we want to prepare the children for living in a global society as best we can, and by being literate that gives them a step up.” As outlined by the district, this school embodies the overall vision of creating literate individuals who are able to function in a global society.

The superintendent, with the assistance of one of the assistant superintendent’s brought about the introduction and implementation of TQM in the district. This policy was adopted in 2009. Over the years, the 8 Step process has gained interest among stakeholders and has increased in practice throughout the district.

In discussing the school and the district’s educational philosophies, the Principal noted that her educational philosophy “ is to prepare students to be lifelong learners in an every changing society”. She also stated that she “does not want to spoon feed children and provide too much support for kids and consider that to be successful. So when I look at data and look at where kids are, my philosophy is to look at what they can do independently and to prepare them again to be that lifelong learner.” The data from interviews and school documents provided evidence which documents TQM philosophy as the foundation of the school's administrative and educational programs. The leadership team articulated a clear vision for the school, demonstrated a customer focus and utilized collaborative decision-making and empowerment of stakeholders within school initiatives. There was strong evidence to support the TQM philosophy; visionary

leadership, customer focus, collaborative decision making and empowerment for stakeholders as leadership strategies used to assist in the implementation of the 8 Step Process.

The most recent challenges set forth by the superintendent were presented to all district employees, effective for the 2011-2012 school year. They consisted of the following:

### ***Three District Challenges***

1. Raise the achievement of economically disadvantaged students while sustaining a higher level of achievement for all.
2. Prepare all students to read at or above grade level.
3. Maintain the culture that supports continuous improvement in learning.

Schools are held accountable to meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which requires educators to closely monitor student performance on the high-stakes assessments. NCLB significantly increases the pressure on states, districts, and schools to collect, analyze, and report data.

In speaking of her personal mission and vision and how they impact the culture and flavor of her building, the Principal noted that her personal mission and vision "drive how she interacts with her teachers and the support that she provides for them". She also went on to say, that from there, she provides staff development "where they discuss this so that teachers have a clear understanding of what is going to be observed in the classroom where it all gets tied together by going into the classrooms and making sure that those things are developed and taught. Of course at the high end, that comes from what is expected by the state from the

children so it's the curriculum of what's intended to be taught and what's taught in the classrooms."

Using the Title I Continuous School Improvement Model, the school achievement and improvement plan at Grissom Elementary was updated on a continuous basis using the Title I Continuous School Improvement Model which includes a three-year Implementation Profile for each goal with annual benchmarks. The Continuous Improvement Model also scrutinizes Summative Assessments specifying key instructional and intervention strategies based on research and student needs derived from ISTEP+ and school performance data. The Implementation Profiles show the implementation and outcomes of key instruction/intervention strategies as well as professional development, parent involvement and technology strategies from the current year through 2012-13.

Prior to its official adoption of the 8 step process ,individual schools in the Lakeridge School District had initiated its own instructional efforts, which they thought were best practices strategies geared toward ensuring student success. *These sporadic efforts were unsuccessful,* hence the mandated adoption of this reform strategy. This program provides a comprehensive building-wide approach to increasing academic performance by all students in identified essential content areas. The program focuses on methods, strategies, and techniques to enable a school building's professional staff to raise the achievement of traditionally low performing students to reflect the students' "true" intellectual abilities. The eight steps are:

1. disaggregate student performance data;
2. establish a time line for teaching the identified essential knowledge and skills;

3. develop/identify instructional focus lessons (direct instruction to students) to teach the essential knowledge and skills to all students;
4. assess student progress on the essential knowledge and skills;
5. provide tutorial time to reteach those students who have not yet become proficient;
6. provide enrichment opportunities for students who are proficient;
7. provide on-going maintenance and tutorials to ensure students retain the identified knowledge and skills; and
8. monitor progress and provide professional development so that teachers have the skills to be successful.

### ***Research Question***

The question for the study is: What strategy supported by research is this site administrator in her efforts at school improvement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB? The data gathering process resulted in reoccurring themes emerging. As each question is discussed, it was the researcher's intent to elaborate on what the participants shared during his or her interview and to share what her findings were based on observations conducted November 2011 through March of 2012.

Although this question was asked first, several responses followed the individuals requesting to make it clear that the district did not use the phrase *Total Quality Management*, but rather *Continuous Improvement*. When asked what the reasoning was, the concern was that from its inception, the leadership did not want the approach associated with any of the programs used in other reform movements. When asked a specific question on the definition of quality in the

district, the superintendent responded by saying, “We don’t use the term quality. We use the term *continuous improvement*.” When asked what the primary rationale for implementation was, the following themes occurred at all levels: new direction, student achievement, and complacency and stagnant student and teacher progress.

When analyzing data gathered from the face-to-face interviews, and focus groups, the researcher discovered that several teachers shared common ways for how they use the available data to drive instruction. Themes that emerged from research question 1, were providing feedback to students and parents, planning lessons, re-teaching lessons, posting a data wall, grouping students, creating and analyzing assessments, and using data in various types of teacher meetings. The Deming Model speaks to these themes in the abbreviated Plan-Do-Check-Act wheel.

This analysis further revealed that the majority of the teachers, 6 out of 7, or 86%, shared that they use their data to provide feedback to students, while only 3 out of 7 or 23% use data to provide feedback to parents. Some teachers give assessment results to students to record on their data profile sheet so they could individually track their own performance, as well as write in their agenda books so they were able to share the information with their parents. Others said they provide results to parents in parent conferences. These teachers expressed that using data this way provided an opportunity for students to know how they performed on various assessments, prior to taking the IStep in Spring 2011.

### ***Emerging Themes***

Teacher B said that she, “gives results to students to write in their agenda books and they share data with parents at conferences.” Teacher D stated, “I only share it with parents around

report card time unless they ask.” Additionally, Teacher J said, “They record scores and below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. Don’t use data to communicate with parents, only during beginning of the year I share their portfolio.” Regarding performance, Teacher K noted that “Students check if they are below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced.” Teacher E said, “I also provide feedback to parents to help them know what to work on at home.” Teacher G said, “I give students a chart for indicator tests so they will know where they are. I call parents and let them know where their child is.” Teacher M said, “I share all of my data with the students and their parents.”

Analyzing assessments was mentioned by 4 out of 7 teachers, 57%, which is an activity that teachers perform during one or more of the various teacher meetings mentioned earlier. This may be due to how teachers rated themselves as it related to their knowledge and comfort level with data analysis. Three teachers felt that they are proficient in data analysis, while two considered that they were novices and one an expert. The two teachers who rated themselves as novices expressed candidly that they were unsure of what to do with the data once they have been given the information. Interestingly, some teachers mentioned that they honestly did not know what to do with the data once they identified which students need more intervention. As the teachers were the recipients of numerous workshops on the 8 Step Process, this information was startling. It is important to note however, that these comments were drawn from the K-2 teachers, who did not implement the process in their classrooms with fidelity.

The second major theme that emerged as a reason for the implementation of continuous improvement was that several stakeholders felt student learning and achievement were not at the level of expectations. According to the superintendent, “About half the third graders in the district flunked Reading and Math, and we decided that in conjunction with the board that we

had to take care of that.” As a result, the superintendent, along with the assistant superintendent of instructional services, decided that one way to address the concern was to work with campus principals at attempting a more directed approach.

Although student achievement was a concern, the directive approach allowed for the district leadership to understand that by demanding and placing higher requirements on teachers, they would get exactly what they asked for. Unfortunately, it was at the expense of the students. This approach was not effective and as the assistant superintendent indicated, something had to be done differently. The use of Continuous Improvement has allowed the district to work with employees in a non-threatening manner and has enabled people to notice a different culture.

The third theme that arose as the reason for implementing continuous improvement in the district was the lack of progression. As mentioned in the interviews, students’ achievement levels were not improving to the level expected, and it appeared that the instruction that was taking place in the classroom was status quo, or the same old instruction year after year. Additionally, what the district had discovered, was that there was staff of employees who had become complacent in their teaching practices and the instruction provided, and the organization began to feel as if no change was occurring. The principal described it as, I think we were looking for momentum to help us get over the next hurdle; something to cause us to look back on, what are we doing? Why are we doing it? How do we know that that’s the best practice.”

The use of Total Quality Management, or in this particular district’s case, continuous improvement, the use of its philosophy began as just an idea. Although the district leadership, superintendent, school board, and central office administration, were looking for new and creative ways of moving the district in a new direction, most were looking for an appropriate



path to take. Throughout every interview with administrators and teachers, the common theme that arose on the introduction of continuous improvement was that it was the assistant superintendent of instruction's idea that was implemented, and not that the Department of Education had begun piloting this initiative in this district before implementing it statewide.

The leadership at Grissom Elementary School utilized a variety of strategies and practices to assist the school in achieving its mission of quality teaching and learning outcomes. The principal articulated a clear vision for the school, worked with all the stakeholders to create a common understanding about what the school would be like in the future, and established principles to guide the actions taken at the school in an attempt to achieve the desired future. The leadership provided opportunities for discussion, reading of the literature relevant to the Continuous Improvement Model, attendance at conferences and seminars, and these activities assisted in raising awareness on the part of staff and parents. Over a period of time, these strategies assisted the staff and parents to adopt the philosophy and practice of TQM as the most appropriate framework to enable the school to achieve its goals. The collaborative and democratic leadership style utilized by the principal was important in building the foundation for quality in the school. The collaborative approach to decision making provided opportunities for the staff, parents, and community members to become engaged in a number of activities within the management structure of the school.

The evidence from all data points indicated that the principal at Grissom Elementary School led the effective implementation of the Continuous Improvement Model because of her personal commitment to the strategy's underpinning philosophy and the specific instructional leadership strategies she utilized. School personnel were committed to meeting the needs of their customers (the students) and continually evaluated procedures and processes which ensured

continuous improvement. Comments from study participants demonstrated that collaboration and teamwork characterized problem solving within the school, and stakeholders received training in the use of tools for data collection and analysis. In fact, the principal and her school improvement coach re-purposed a classroom, dubbing it the “war room”, where data meetings were held weekly for the different grade levels.

A principal’s self-efficacy is a judgment of his or her capabilities to structure a particular course of action that will lead towards the attainment of the campus goals (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). The Tschannen-Moran Principal Scale of Efficacy, which is comprised of 24 questions (See Appendix A ) measured the school climate as perceived by the instructional leader. Additionally, questions from Tschannen-Moran’s Principal Trust in Teachers, Students, and Parents survey were also used to further understand the quality of relationships between the Principal and teachers in the school. The reliability for Principal Trust in Teachers was .87 in the norming sample, .87 for Principal Trust in Students, and .86 for Principal Trust in Parents. Factor analytic studies of the Principal Trust Scale support the construct validity of this measure (Gareis, C. R. & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004, April) *Principals’ Sense of Efficacy and Trust*. The Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale has been determined to be a “reasonably valid and reliable measure”(Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, p. 584); however, the instrument is relatively new to the field of research for principal efficacy, therefore additional analysis will need to be conducted.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: the purpose of the study, a summary of the procedures used during the study, a summary of the descriptive data, a summary of the findings, the conclusions, implications and discussions, and recommendations for further research.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

This study seeks to enhance the body of knowledge and the relationship between one principal's practices associated with reading amidst increased accountability related to NCLB. The following research questions guided this study:

How is this elementary school principal meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?

To further develop the response, the following sub-questions were addressed:

- (a) What strategy supported by research did this new instructional leader use in herefforts at school improvement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?
- (b) What other practical strategies did this principal employ in her efforts at schoolimprovement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?; and
- (c) How did the leadership strategies specifically those associated with the 8 stepprocess, supported by research and the practical strategies compared and contrasted?

## ***Summary of the Procedures***

A one-shot case study design was utilized to investigate the relationship between the strength of the relationship between the principal at Grissom Elementary's specific literacy practices associated with reading while examining the effect that the Continuous Improvement Model had on improving reading scores at this particular school. Data was collected primarily from Grissom Elementary school. Interviews were also audio taped to ensure accuracy of participant responses and followed a schedule to ensure interviews from all consenting participants had been completed. For the purpose of this study, the groups measured, were two third classes at Grissom Elementary School, in northwest Indiana. Treatment or independent variables were type of setting (Elementary) and manipulation of the Deming model of Continuous Improvement, or the PDCA (Plan-Do-check-Act) cycle. The outcome or dependent variable is increased achievement on the state test- IStep over time.

I conducted a focus group study that consisted of four teachers in grade K-2 who were not in the group of teachers who were interviewed for the study. According to Seidman (2006), the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (p. 9). These interviews involved unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2003, p. 188). The researcher used a digital recorder with a USB port to record interviews. Interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Office 2010 Word.

## ***Descriptive Data***

The study took place in the Lakeridge Schools System in Gary, Indiana. One elementary school principal participated in the intervention during the study. This study follows the “ Single Case study: model, in which one school was used to receive a treatment (in this case the Continuous Improvement Model) to effect change in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students’ results on the state mandated IStep test.

## ***Summary of Findings***

The analyses of data indicated a significant positive relationship between the Continuous Improvement Model (8 Step Process) and increased gains on the IStep for 3 graders. A significant positive relationship was found between transformational leadership and school climate. This was evidenced by the researcher through classroom observations conversations with teachers and other staff at the school.

## **Research Question 1**

What strategy supported by research is this new instructional leader using in her efforts at school improvement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?

Based on the evidence from all three sources of data it was clear that the faculty and administration of the school had a concern for quality teaching and learning, and student learning outcomes. This concern provided a focus for the school. Interviews and observational evidence demonstrated that teachers, parents and community members at the school had a commitment to the achievement of outstanding educational outcomes for students and all programs and initiatives within the school were designed to achieve that goal. Comments from participants, and

evidence from school documents indicated that a high level of performance from staff and students was expected and achieved. All sources of data confirmed the commitment of staff and community members to the mission of the school and quantifiable results were being achieved through the application of Deming's 8 Step Process in teaching and learning.

## **Research Question 2**

What other practical strategies is this principal using in her efforts at school improvement and meeting the accountability demands of NCLB?

The data from the interviews provided evidence which documents the use of collaborative leadership strategies. In addition, the strategy of establishing teams to complete tasks was often used. Comments indicated these strategies assisted in creating a climate of trust and individuals felt empowered to make decisions and carry out their roles and responsibilities on an independent basis. The strategies used by leaders in the school reflected Deming's interactive areas of profound knowledge and evidence from interviews also demonstrated limited staff awareness of the profound areas of knowledge. The strategy of continuous quality improvement kept the focus on quality and reinforced both the philosophy and practice of the 8 Step Process. Finally, the strategy of establishing training and development focused on quality philosophy and practice provided staff, parents and students with the knowledge and skill to implement the Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle of the Deming Model.

## **Research Question 3**

How do the leadership strategies specifically those associated with the 8 step process, supported by research and the practical strategies compare and contrast?

The data from interviews and school documents provided evidence which documents Deming's 8 Step Process philosophy as the foundation of the school's administrative and educational programs. The leadership team articulated a clear vision for the school, demonstrated a customer focus and utilized collaborative decision-making and empowerment of stakeholders within school initiatives. There was strong evidence to support TQM philosophy; visionary leadership, customer focus, collaborative decision making and empowerment for stakeholders as leadership strategies used to assist in the implementation of the 8 Step Process. However, there was insufficient evidence from the interview responses to support continuous improvement of processes, decisions based on facts and data, and the provision of relevant tools as significant issues within leadership practice. Based on the evidence provided by all sources of data, it was clear that training and development initiatives at Grissom Elementary provided the foundation for the implementation of Deming philosophies and practices. Comments from study participants indicated that negotiated, individualized, professional development plans assisted in the achievement of professional development goals and school development days and meetings complemented these plans. Finally, interview data indicated that the staff acknowledged the support role played by the school leadership team as the school worked toward the implementation of quality philosophy and practice.

### ***Recommendations for Further Research***

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations for further study are presented:

1. Analysis of the data established a significant positive relationship between the implementation of Deming's 8 Step Process on reading achievement. Replication of

this study is recommended in other states and with populations that include teachers from all tiers of K-12 schools..

2. An examination of multiple school districts that have chosen to implement the use of TQM. A comparison on the differences and outcomes of results and subsequent identification of what the major factors were should be used in determining those results. This type of study might provide the processes schools should take for successful implementation to be ineffective..
3. As this initiative is one that is being implemented statewide by the Indiana Department of Education, this could provide an opportunity to track and monitor the development of beliefs and implications of incorporating this strategy in schools within the state.
4. A study of school leaders and leadership styles should also be researched. Leaders with different styles such as authoritarian, participative, transformational, or situational should be considered. Can the TQM model be successful despite the differing leadership styles possessed by superintendents?

### ***Conclusions***

The study's intent was to take an in depth look at what practices one elementary principal implemented throughout the school year to not only increase student achievement, but to continuously meet NCLB accountability requirements as well. The study focused specifically on the school's implementation of the Continuous Improvement Model. From the data collected, it appeared that the leadership role within the school complemented by training and professional development initiatives for staff and parents provided the foundation for the school's focus of



quality teaching and learning. Systematic processes have been implemented within the school to address the expectation of quality teaching and learning outcomes and staff and parents demonstrated an awareness of these processes. The principal, in her role as the newly appointed instructional leader, demonstrated a thorough knowledge of TQM philosophy and practice and was committed to its successful implementation. Her leadership empowered the school community to involve itself into what can only be described as a shared commitment to the achievement of quality teaching and learning. This resulted in a high level of school performance and student achievement.

For principals to effectively support classroom teachers, they must become knowledgeable about what curriculum through differentiation, students should be receiving, as well as being aware and well-informed about effective instructional practices. A principal must be able to observe lessons and student work, and determine if the curriculum being delivered to students is standards based and grade level appropriate. This is key in principals moving from the role of administrators/managers to becoming instructional leaders. Additionally, principals need to be viewed as an educational resource while providing ongoing assistance and guidance to teachers for improving their craft.

Based on findings from the data, the role of leadership at both the district and building levels was significant in the implementation of quality philosophy and practice at Grissom Elementary School. The principal was a methodical and strategic instructional leader who demonstrated a collaborative leadership style, and established a leadership team which facilitated the implementation of TQM through the use of specific leadership strategies. Collaboration, trust, and a team approach to problem solving were encouraged at all levels in the school, and roles and responsibilities were delegated to staff and parents.

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## Appendix A

### Principal Efficacy Survey

#### Principal Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for principals in their school activities.

**Directions:** Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side. The scale of responses ranges from "None at all" (1) to "A Great Deal" (9), with "Some Degree" (5) representing the mid-point between these low and high extremes. You may choose any of the nine possible responses, since each represents a degree on the continuum. Your answers are confidential.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

"In your current role as principal, to what extent can you..."	None at All	Very Little	Some Degree	Quite a Bit	A Great Deal				
1. facilitate student learning in your school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. handle the time demands of the job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. manage change in your school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. create a positive learning environment in your school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. raise student achievement on standardized tests?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8. promote a positive image of your school with the media?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9. motivate teachers?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10. promote the prevailing values of the community in your school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11. maintain control of your own daily schedule?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12. shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13. handle effectively the discipline of students in your school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14. promote acceptable behavior among students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15. handle the paperwork required of the job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
16. promote ethical behavior among school personnel?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
17. cope with the stress of the job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
18. prioritize among competing demands of the job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## Appendix B

### The Deming Paradigm and Conceptual Change:

#### Deming's Fourteen Points:

##### A Theory for Management Transformation

1. Create constancy of purpose toward improvement of product and service, with the aim to become competitive and to stay in business, and to provide jobs.
2. Adopt the new philosophy. We are in a new economic age. Western management must awaken to the challenge, must learn their responsibilities, and take on leadership for change.
3. Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality. Eliminate the need for inspection on an ad-hoc basis by building quality into the product in the first place.
4. End the practice of awarding business on the basis of price tag. Instead, minimize total cost. Move toward a single supplier for any one item, on a long-term relationship of loyalty and trust.
5. Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service, to improve quality and productivity, and thus constantly decrease costs.
6. Institute training on the job.
7. Institute leadership (See point 12). The aim of supervision should be to help people and machines and gadgets to do a better job. Supervision of management is in need of overhaul, as well as supervision of production workers.
8. Drive out fear, so that everyone may work effectively for the company.
9. Break down barriers between departments. People in research, design, sales, and production must work as a team, to foresee problems of production and in use that may be encountered with the product of service.
10. Eliminate slogans, exhortations, and numerical targets for the work force asking for zero defects and new levels of productivity.
- 11 a. Eliminate work standards (quotas) on the factory floor. Substitute leadership.
- b. Eliminate management by objective. Eliminate management by numbers, numerical goals. Substitute leadership.
- 12 a. Remove barriers that rob people in management and in engineering of their right to pride of workmanship. This means, inter alia, abolishment of the annual or merit rating and of management by objective.
13. Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement.
14. Put everyone in the company to work to accomplish the transformation. The transformation is everybody's job.

Source: Deming, W.E. (1986). *Out of the Crisis*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Center for Advanced Engineering Study.

## Appendix C

### Grissom Elementary's Mission Statement

#### Lake Ridge Schools Mission Statement

*Lake Ridge Schools will provide all students opportunities to achieve a quality education in a safe learning environment.*

#### Grissom School Mission Statement

Grissom Astros Reach for the Stars:

- S – Students
- T – Teachers
- A – Achieving
- R – Real
- S – Success

#### Vision Statement

Our vision:

- continuous growth in test scores.
- all students reading on or above grade level.
- strong parental involvement in school activities.
- a safe and orderly environment that is conducive for learning.
- all students engaged in standard based instruction.
- a school culture rich in communication, collaboration, and planning for the improvement of student learning.

#### Core Values

We believe that:

- students are the reason schools exist.
- all students can learn and are capable of fulfilling their unique potential.
- when expectations are high, students will excel.
- students deserve to be in a safe and comfortable environment. Children should feel that the school staff is there for their benefit, assisting in developing their full potential.
- parental involvement is important to students' success and should be encouraged.
- school accountability must be attained by a dedicated school community, which focuses on student learning.
- collaboration, shared decision-making, and teamwork involving all segments of the school community are essential.
- the purpose of the school is to prepare students for their place in an ever-changing society as informed, responsible and cooperative citizens.

## Appendix D

### IStep Results 2008-2010

#### ISTEP+ Performance

(Table shows % passing based on students prepared (enrolled 162 days prior to ISTEP+) at Grissom Elementary in grades 3-6)

	Fall 2008	Spring 2009 (no 6 <sup>th</sup> gr scores)	Spring 2010 (no 6 <sup>th</sup> gr scores)
Overall ELA Scores Grades 3-6	112/189 59%	74/145 51%	84/132 64%
Overall Math Scores Grade 3-6	114/189 60%	66/145 46%	79/132 60%

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students passing ISTEP+ in ELA

Year	Grissom	State Average
2008	30/53 57%	75%
2009	28/51 55%	74%
2010	29/43 67%	not available

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students passing ISTEP+ in Math

Year	Grissom	State Average
2008	26/53 49%	71%
2009	18/51 35%	72%
2010	20/43 47%	not available

#### 4<sup>th</sup> students passing ISTEP+ in ELA

Year	Grissom	State Average
2008	29/47 62%	74%
2009	18/45 40%	73%
2010	24/45 53%	not available

#### 4<sup>th</sup> grade students passing ISTEP+ in Math

Year	Grissom	State Average
2008	29/47 62%	74%
2009	18/45 40%	70%
2010	29/45 64%	not available

#### 5th students passing ISTEP+ in ELA

Year	Grissom	State Average
2008	32/48 67%	75%
2009	28/49 57%	70%
2010	31/44 70%	not available

#### 5th grade students passing ISTEP+ in Math

Year	Grissom	State Average
2008	30/48 63%	78%
2009	30/49 61%	76%
2010	30/44 68%	not available

## Appendix E

### Grissom Elementary's Action Plan and Implementation Profile

#### ***SWP Component #8: Opportunities and Expectations for Teachers to be included in the Decision Making related to the use of Academic Assessment Results leading to Improvement of Student Achievement***

The School-wide plan will be updated annually using the 8-Step Process Model. All teachers will participate in school-wide plan revisions, collaboration and/or inquiry teams that meet in team/grade level and cross grade level committees to determine the use of academic assessments in order to provide information on and to improve the achievement of students as well as the overall instructional program. Teachers identify key error patterns on the assessments to modify instructional strategies.

#### Framework for Monitoring the School Improvement Plan:

Principal will monitor the School Improvement Plan by collecting and analyzing implementation and impact data. The implementation data will focus on collecting data based on the research-based models, strategies and activities described in the Action Plans for reading, writing and math. Impact data will focus on collecting and analyzing the performance of students as a result of implementing the strategies and activities.

#### Impact Data:

#### **Analysis of ISTEP+ Results**

The principal and K-5 teachers will review ISTEP+ results. All classroom teachers, including special resource teachers, will participate in the analysis process of the state's large-scale assessment annually. Staff will review the *Disaggregation Summary Report* for ISTEP+ standards in English/ language arts and mathematics for all grades we prepared. This will include our transition grade in the next grade span, sixth grade. The staff will identify overall performance of students in English/ language arts and mathematics. The staff will identify subgroup performance for NCLB requirements and to meet the cultural competency requirement for PL221. Using the *Disaggregation Summary Report* we will also identify subgroup performance for each academic/ intervention subgroup, where resources have been allocated to provide additional instructional support for students not at proficient levels/ not meeting standards on ISTEP+ and/or benchmarks. These "intervention" subgroups will be analyzed for impact/ outcomes to determine revisions to our interventions.

Staff will review the *Applied Skills Frequency Distribution* ISTEP+ report for each grade level. This report shows how students perform on application tasks and problems, such as the Writing Applications, integrated reading and writing where students must read passages and respond to short answer, extended response items. In math, students must apply their knowledge in solving

complex problems, show and explain their work. Staff will analyze how students perform on performance-based items. We will analyze those items where the lowest percent of students did not meet mastery. An error analysis will be conducted using *Teachers Scoring Guides* (i.e., review prompt, exemplars, rubric) and Error Checklists for reading, writing and math. Teachers will review *Student Test Booklets* and check for errors on those identified items and students level of use of strategies, if applicable. Subgroups will be reviewed and other critical subgroups (i.e., gender) for differences in error patterns. The school will update *Summary Sheet of Key ISTEP+ Data* for English/ language arts and mathematics for needs assessment.

### **Analysis of District Assessments**

Reading: The principal and K-5 teachers will review reading benchmark results each trimester/ or quarter. All classroom teachers, including special resource teachers, participate in the analysis process. Each teacher completes a Class Summary Report, and then grade level teachers complete a Grade Level Summary Report. This Grade Level Summary Report includes key findings from the data related to the particular assessment. Key findings will focus on identifying numbers of students in “risk groups” (i.e., low risk; some risk; high risk) and reviewing specific interventions matched to students.

Writing: The principal and K-5 teachers will review writing benchmark results each trimester. All classroom teachers, including special resource teachers, participate in the analysis process. Error analysis will be conducted for the writing assessment using the Error Pattern Checklist. Each teacher will complete a Class Summary Report, and then grade level teachers will complete a Grade Level Summary Report. This Grade Level Summary Report will include key findings from the data related to the particular assessment. Key findings will focus on identifying numbers of students in “risk groups” (i.e., low risk; some risk; high risk) and reviewing specific interventions matched to those students.

Math: The principal and K-5 teachers will review math benchmark results each trimester. All classroom teachers, including special resource teachers, will participate in the analysis process. Each teacher will complete a Class Summary Report, and then grade level teachers will complete a Grade Level Summary Report. This Grade Level Summary Report includes key findings from the data related to the particular assessment. Key findings will focus on identifying numbers of students in “risk groups” (i.e., low risk; some risk; high risk) and reviewing specific interventions matched to those students.

### **Analysis of Formative Assessments (Student Work Sampling)**

Common, aligned grade level formative assessments will give classroom/ grade level teachers timely data needed to provide students with the “educational booster shots” of differentiated instruction. High- quality grade level data will routinely be available to teachers throughout the trimester. These formative assessments in reading, writing and math will be aligned, conducted and analyzed by grade level teachers in order to determine if students are indeed “hitting the target”---the attainment of critical strategies identified to address errors, the attainment of the different concepts and skills, the attainment of most critical standards.

### **Reading Formative Assessment (Student Work Sampling)**

K-5 teachers will schedule and conduct aligned grade level reading applied skills assessments using integrated reading/ writing extended response assessments to monitor students' comprehension of a topic based on identified error patterns. This monthly formative assessment will monitor students' progress toward the benchmark. Teachers in grades 1-5 will administer a grade level passage and with questions that reflect ISTEP+ -like format with short answer, extended response items (i.e., released ISTEP+ items and Teacher's Scoring Guides w/ exemplars and rubrics; ISTEP+ sample assessments; Curriculum Frameworks; basal series ISTEP+ formative assessments). Kindergarten teachers will use read alouds and a question with picture response with details about the story (end of the year will include picture w/ written response). These formative assessments will reflect tasks students are asked to perform on ISTEP+ Applied Skills items, using integrated reading/ writing performance tasks that will be scored for reading comprehension and using complex questions related to the passage (short answer response; extended response). The reading task and questions will be cold reads for students (no prior practice on these particular passages, however the skills and strategies students would have practiced previously).

The reading formative assessment will be used for analyzing student work samples and students' use of key strategies. Teachers will use aligned grade level assessments (work sample tasks) to monitor and assess the use of strategies to determine if students are making fewer key errors. Strategies will be implemented across a variety of reading genre (fiction/ non-fiction; expository text structures; content areas). Meeting Records, and/or Summary Reports for Key Strategies will be completed during grade level collaboration. Grade level binders will be used to document the student work sampling analysis process.

### **Writing Formative Assessment (Student Work Sampling)**

K-5 teachers will schedule and conduct aligned grade level writing assessments to monitor students' writing applications based on identified error patterns. This monthly formative assessment will monitor students' progress toward the benchmark. Teachers in grades K-5 will administer a grade level prompt (i.e., released ISTEP+ items and Teacher's Scoring Guides w/ exemplars and rubrics; ISTEP+ sample assessments; Curriculum Frameworks; basal series ISTEP+ formative assessments; prompts similar to next prompt). These assessments will reflect tasks students are asked to perform on ISTEP+ Writing Applications or teachers may use an integrated reading/ writing performance task with an extended response that will be scored for writing applications. The writing task for students will be cold (no prior practice on these particular prompts or extended response prompt, however the skills and strategies students would have practiced previously).

The writing formative assessment will be used for analyzing student work samples and students' use of key strategies. Teachers will use aligned grade level assessments (work sample tasks) to monitor and assess the use of strategies to determine if students are making fewer key errors. Meeting Records, and/or Summary Reports for Key Strategies will be completed during grade level collaboration. Grade level binders will be used to document the student work sampling analysis process.



## Math Formative Assessment (Student Work Sampling)

K-5 teachers will schedule and conduct aligned grade level math assessments to monitor students' math application and problem solving skills based on identified error patterns. This monthly formative assessment will monitor students' progress toward the benchmark. Teachers in grades K-5 will administer a grade level problem solving items that will include complex, multi-step problems with ISTEP+-like format and mathematical processes (i.e., released ISTEP+ items and Teacher's Scoring Guides w/ exemplars and rubrics; ISTEP+ sample assessments; Curriculum Frameworks). These assessments will reflect tasks students are asked to perform on ISTEP+ math applied skills. Teachers will use complex problems with multiple steps that require students to "figure out" what kind of answer is needed to make a decision/ find a solution and which math operation(s) is (are) appropriate in doing so. Problems may frequently include more than one math content and/or process standard. These formative assessments will require students to "show their work" and/or "explain their answers". The problems for students will be cold (no prior practice on these particular problems or items, however the skills and strategies students would have practiced previously).

### Implementation Data:

#### **Work Sampling** (monitoring students' use of key strategies)

All grade levels/ teachers will collect and analyze purposeful work samples (the Formative Assessments in reading, writing and math will be used as the work sampling analysis) in order to monitor the extent to which students are using key strategies to address the errors in reading; writing; and math.

Teachers will use the LRSC and Grissom Assessment Calendar to schedule formative assessments that will be used as work sample tasks to monitor the use of strategies to correct the errors in reading, writing and math.

Modeling and use of "gradual release" must reflect what teachers need to "show" students explicitly how to do in order to complete the task accurately (i.e., levels of proficiency and/or at mastery). These strategies will be implemented across reading (fiction/ non-fiction; expository text structures; content areas), writing, and mathematics. Teachers will use the formative assessment to analyze:

1. How many of the students used the strategy and used it accurately?
2. How many of the students used the strategy but did not use it accurately (earned some of the points)?
3. How many of the students did not use the strategies at all?
4. What errors are students making? Are students reducing the errors?

Meeting records will be used to monitor classroom/ teacher implementation of the strategies and then summarized at a grade level. Both levels of monitoring and data from trimester walk-

throughs will identify gaps and help us target where additional support is needed for PD and interventions.

**Walk-throughs** will be conducted to monitor the consistency of the implementation of the key components of the model and key strategies. The purpose of the walk-throughs will be to regularly review the transfer of best-practice to the classroom and the consistency and frequency that the practice and model is being implemented across the grade level and across all grade levels. The walk through will help to identify where teachers and appropriate staff need additional support in implementing the model and/ or specific components or elements of the model; where there are strengths in implementation of the model that can be used for purposes of job embedded professional development (classrooms used for observations and demonstrations). *Protocols* will be used to conduct the walk-throughs. These protocols will focus on key components and elements of the model/ framework and includes the following frameworks/ models and school-wide reform strategies:

## READING

*Balanced Literacy Program*

*90 minutes of reading*

*Word Block (phonemic awareness and phonics)*

*Guided Reading (reading comprehension; vocabulary development)*

*Self-selected (fluency)*

*Modeling of Key Strategies including effective steps for vocabulary instruction*

*Strategies for critical subgroups, in addition to intervention lessons for struggling readers*

## WRITING

*6+1 Traits for Writing Instruction*

*Writing Across the Curriculum*

*Modeling of Key Strategies*

*Strategies for critical subgroups, in addition to intervention lessons for struggling writers*

## MATH

*Balanced Math*

*Problem Solving steps*

*Modeling of Key Strategies*

Strategies for critical subgroups, in addition to activities for enrichment and intervention

### Conducting the Walk-throughs:

The Principal will conduct the walk-throughs for reading, writing and math models, instructional best practice and key strategies. Walk-throughs will be conducted each trimester; however an exact date or time will not be identified during the trimester for the walk-through.