AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF LITERACY CURRICULUM RESOURCES IN K-2 CLASSROOMS IN A MIDWEST SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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by
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ABSTRACT

This study explored teacher perceptions through a triangulation of data from surveys, interviews, and document analysis to identify how literacy curriculum implementation is affected in Kindergarten through second grade classrooms. Research was based around three questions: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum? How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum? How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum? The first step in the data collection process involved sending an electronic survey to all Kindergarten, grade one and grade two teachers meeting the criteria for inclusion in the study. Demographic profiles and open-ended questions were used to collect data along with the survey

questions. Six teachers (two Kindergarten, two first grade and two second grade) were interviewed using a semi-structured protocol with each interviewee. Documents were collected and included professional development guides, training schedules, and curriculum resource literature. Results indicated implementation is hindered when professional development is vague and does not provide opportunity for participants to learn, practice, and collaborate together. Implementation in the classroom is enhanced when participants receive feedback and opportunities to observe others, ask questions, and know full implementation takes time. Implementation is enhanced when leadership is supportive and listens to the needs and concerns of the participants. Providing a culture allowing for mistakes and opportunities to improve helps participants feel excited and engaged in the new learning.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies have examined a dissertation titled "An Analysis of Factors Affecting Implementation o Literacy Curriculum Resources in K-2 Classrooms in a Midwest Suburban School District," presented by Karen Elder-Hurst, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GHGR: Good Habits Great Readers

PLC: Professional Learning Community

PTR: Pathways to Reading

PD: Professional Development

GLOSSARY

Balanced literacy is a standards driven approach that combines precise instruction in decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing with applying the learning in daily authentic literacy research-based activities (Tompkins, 2010).

Change Theory is also referred to as change knowledge; a progression of change of behavior through motivation to want to change; to making changes permanent (Fullan, 2006).

Curriculum is all of the experiences that individual learners have in a program of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives, which is planned in terms of a framework of theory and research or past and present professional practice (Hass, 1980).

Effective schools are the means to achieving high and equitable levels of student learning.

Implementation is what a program or innovation consists of when it is delivered in a particular setting (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

Implicit Theory (Fixed and Growth Mind-set) is the assumption an individual holds about the inflexibility or manipulability of personal attributes such as abilities, intelligence, and personality (Dweck, 1986).

Leadership responsibilities are defined as responsible actions led by a person of headship (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Mind-set is the mental attitude that predetermines a person's responses to and interpretations of situations.

Purposeful sampling is when subjects are selected because of some characteristic (Patton, 2003).

Program or innovation is a newly introduced approach (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

Purveyor is an individual representing a program actively working to implement the program with fidelity (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005).

Reform oriented professional development is learning through study groups, mentoring or coaching, and peer action-research (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Teacher Efficacy is a teacher's belief in his or her ability to make a difference in student learning (Collier, 2005; Guskey, 1998; Sparks, 1988).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My experience in administration in curriculum and assessment has opened the door for me to influence the learning of thousands of students by facilitating implementation of an adoption of a new literacy program. Such decisions should not, and cannot, be taken lightly. Even with painstaking efforts to determine the best choice fit for the students and teachers of this district, my previous experience has shown it does not matter if you have the best program available, if complete implementation does not occur. Knowing what influences full implementation and consistent embedded practices among teachers is paramount in leadership.

Schmoker (2011) identified three attributes to the underperformance of any literacy program in a school: not being implemented as a common curriculum, not teaching sound lessons, or using authentic literacy within the instruction. Research has found the actual curriculum used in a classroom differs from teacher to teacher (Berliner, 1984; Marzano, 2003). Reading and writing are essential to learning; however, students rarely engage in authentic reading and writing activities (Marzano). Lessons designed by teachers often leave out many best practices including: modeling, teacher demonstrates the appropriate actions of learning; guiding, teacher supports student learning by monitoring and directing student actions; and releasing responsibility for learning, teacher consistently gives more of the learning process to students (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The absence of these identified best practices for learning are found in many classrooms across the country (Marzano).

The common characteristic affecting modeling, guiding, and releasing is teachers. Schmoker (2011) pointed out teachers are the key aspect affecting student achievement. Teachers are expected to implement the change faithfully and may be the determining factor in the success of such change. The implementation phase of any change is critical. The implementation stage is where proposed changes often wane and the importance of teacher understanding and acceptance of the change are key factors (Heck, Brandon, & Wang, 2001).

Nature of the Problem

Implementation of change in any organization can be difficult. Fullan (1977) acknowledged practice depends upon the daily activities of those within the organization that are in charge of applying or implementing a process or resource. Implementation of an innovation or practice can be different from what was intended. When there is not complete implementation as determined by the originator, the level of results may be distorted (Odom et al., 2010). Such differences are reasons for studying implementation. First, there is little focus on what happens between the decision to adopt an innovation and intended outcomes (Fullan). A second reason, the lack of research, explains why educational changes fail to become established (Fullan). Historically, examining different forms of implementation have been examined by measuring the amount of time an innovation is used within the classroom (Odom et al., 2010). Little research has focused on the thoughts and ideas of those responsible for the implementation in the classroom. Such influence on the implementers necessitates organizational changes causing changes in relationships. Such role relationships are not addressed within an implementation plan (Pence, Justice & Wiggins, 2008). A third reason why it is

important to study implementation is because factors in studies tend to rely on reported use rather than actual use (Odom et al.). Reported uses may be inflated and not be a true picture of how often or in-depth a resource is used. The primary objective of this study was to explore the process of implementing a new literacy curriculum in classrooms.

In Learning to Read: The Great Debate, Jeanne Chall captured the real meaning of the reading wars (1967). The question within the debate is based around how children learn to read the best. Do they read better by beginning with a method that focuses on whole words or with one that focuses on learning phonics and phonemic awareness? Chall found that an early phonics and phonemic awareness instruction produced better outcomes in word recognition in the early grades. Kenneth Goodman (1969) followed in the research by arguing that good readers use context clues and background knowledge to predict and confirm the identification of new words. Goodman's study on oral reading miscues has been noted as research that shaped the whole-language movement.

Research findings from the 1970s to the 1990s led to a synthesis of the processes underlying skillful reading. In Toward a Literacy Society, a 1975 publication sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE), Chall argued that neither phonics nor sight-word approaches were sufficient to help children become skilled readers. What is important is a suitable balance between them. A second NIE publication in 1985, Becoming a Nation of Readers, encouraged researchers to undertake multidisciplinary studies of reading, to examine the efficacy of diverse approaches to instruction, and to extend inquiry beyond decoding and early literacy instruction. By the late 1990s, the National Reading Council (NRC) issued Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, which recognized that children needed to apply letter/sound relationships to

decode new words, to increase fluency through guided oral reading activities, and to use various strategies to improve their reading comprehension (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Such a balanced approach to reading instruction has been identified as an area of concern for the Raymond School District.

This descriptive evaluation study explored how six Kindergarten, first-and second grade teachers describe specific phenomena; the implementation process, professional development, and leadership support of a new literacy curriculum. Included are communication models of a survey, interviews, and document analysis to identify what factors have contributed to and/or inhibited teachers' successful implementation of a new literacy curriculum. An evaluative approach in determining judgments about the merit of the identified factors is an element of this category of study (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

Background

The impetus to improve and reform education is well documented and spurred on by demands from outside the educational arena (Collins, 2001; Fullan, 1998; Fullan, 2000; O'Day, Bitter & Gomez, 2011; Slavin, Daniels & Madden, 2005). In this vein, a Midwestern suburban school district pursued a school improvement initiative to make literacy accessible to all 1,260 K-2 students. The district continued to utilize a balanced literacy philosophy; a standards driven approach that combines precise instruction in decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing with applying the learning in daily authentic literacy research-based activities, which had been in place for eight years; however, materials and professional development were minimal in implementing this philosophy (Tompkins, 2010). The district foundation, a non-profit fundraising committee, supported the philosophy by providing students with leveled readers for each

of the six schools' literacy resource rooms. All teachers were provided Fountas & Pinnell professional teaching resources, with an initial training to review the resources. The district improvement plan goal focused on providing a viable curriculum for all students, with literacy instruction as the highest priority.

The district developed and completed a lengthy Literacy Needs Assessment in October 2010. The needs assessment consisted of four areas of data collection:

- student achievement data;
- observation of classrooms;
- student surveys; and
- teacher surveys.

Results of the needs assessment identified the literacy block of time as sufficient in the school day and that a rudimentary balanced literacy framework was in place within the district. This was supported by the observed literacy structures and an integration of reading and writing components in the classrooms. Student achievement in communication arts was stable and adequate. In order for student achievement to increase, teachers' practices must strengthen. There appeared to be a discrepancy between teachers' instructional practices as observed and their perceived practices. Students indicated a lack of teacher instruction in small groups and conferring. The data showed a variety of instructional resources and assessments being implemented; with minimal common ground among and between schools, sometimes even within grade levels. Educators were asking for a common curriculum to use for instruction. Two new literacy instructional programs were adopted for K-2 grade teachers with implementing scheduled to happen during the 2011-12 school year. The instructional programs were;

Good Habits Great Readers (Frey, 2006) and Pathways to Reading (Pathways to Reading, Inc., 2010). Both programs utilized lessons using authentic literature while incorporating a gradual release model of instruction including teacher modeling and effective feedback.

Beginning in the fall semester of 2011, 61 K-2 teachers began implementing the new materials in their daily literacy instruction. Initial professional development for the new instructional program included five days in the summer of 2011 and three days at the end of the 2010-11 school year. Sixty-one classroom teachers, six reading interventionists, 18 special education teachers, six speech therapists, two English-Language Learner teachers and six teacher associates were trained to use the new materials. Professional development was mandatory and teachers were offered a transfer to an alternative grade level outside of K-2 if they could not complete the professional development. Ongoing professional development has continued with modeling and coaching in fall and winter 2011, and spring 2012.

With district commitment to this change, ensuring teachers implemented the instructional materials completely was critical. Success of the implementation depends on the teachers' complete administration of the materials. Research has noted various explanations of the implementation process based on autonomy of individuals, capacity for change and the will to change (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006); however, measuring the process of implementation is equivalent to measuring a journey. During any change and implementation, there can be a gap between the adoption of new practices and the planned implementation to enhance student outcomes (George et al., 2006). Teachers cannot just leap across the gap, but follow a bridge connecting the adoption of new practices with the implementation of new practices.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher perceptions through surveys, interviews and document analysis to identify how a new literacy curriculum is being implemented in K-2 classrooms. The study is grounded in the pedagogical learning theory of constructivism (Richardson, 2003). Constructivism focuses on the learning process through discovery and connecting previous knowledge with the new learning through active participation (Ausubel, 2000; Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). Factors affecting effective and ineffective implementation emerged from interview discussions. A phenomenological lens was used during the interview process, allowing for a deeper understanding of teachers' direct experiences with the literacy resources. Including teacher perceptions contributed to the missing research on thoughts and ideas of those responsible for the implementation in the classroom (Odom et al., 2008).

Significance of Study

The implementation of a new curriculum requires teachers to leave behind what they have done in the past and use new materials, techniques and procedures they may not have learned and internalized. My previous experience as a school principal placed me in many situations that I found myself as a promoter and cheerleader to teachers when an uncomfortable change was occurring. Learning to use new materials or techniques can cause teachers to become fearful and forget what they cognitively know as good practices. This study provides administrators and teachers with information to support implementation of new initiatives.

This study adds to the literature on the process of implementing a new literacy curriculum in grades K-2 and documents how teachers feel about how this new literacy

curriculum is affecting them, their teaching and student learning during the implementation process. All too often people are trained to do something new and it is assumed they simply go and do exactly what they have been trained to do. This study leads to identification of the problems which occur during the implementation process as teachers begin to internalize the new literacy curriculum until it becomes comfortable and a habit in teaching. Implementation is critical in the change process: however it is rarely investigated in education (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). This study will add to the literature by identifying teacher perceptions of what is negatively or positively affecting implementation in their classroom. The data from the study provide other educators and administrators with help in deciding how to implement a program in their schools. This study also provides insight to leadership characteristics that may enhance practices of new innovations in the classroom.

Research Questions

The overarching research questions posed for this study are as follows:

RQ_1: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_2: How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_3: How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the effect mind-set can have on a teacher's perceptions, especially during a major change in the instructional environment. Dweck's (1986)

Implicit Theory associates people's assumptions that effort may or may not influence outcomes with one's actions. Complexity theory (Fullan, 2003) also supports change by creating an environment that cultivates interactions of a critical mass that is deliberate and purposeful.

Fixed and Growth Mind-Set

Research on mind-set has addressed individual differences between deliberative (also known as fixed) and implemental (also known as growth) mind-sets (Dweck, 2010). Mind-set effects have been found to be reliant on a person's accomplishments (Pucca & Schmalt, 2001), social apprehension (Hiemisch, Ehlers, & Westermann, 2002) and goal commitment (Gagne & Lydon, 2001). Current studies demonstrate that having a growth mind-set is important in teaching and learning (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003).

Dweck defined a fixed mind-set as a belief that intelligence is static; some people are smart and some are not (2010). She explained a growth mind-set as the belief that intelligence can be developed through effort and instruction (Dweck). If a student has a fixed mind-set, achievement can be negatively affected. A teacher with a fixed mind-set may not take steps to help develop the potential of their students.

Implicit theory has been associated with people's assumption of the inflexibility or manipulability of their personal attributes such as abilities, intelligence, and personality (Dweck, 1986). A few years later Dweck and Leggett (1988) concentrated on individual differences in implicit theories. A person may believe a given ability is fixed and another may believe that the same ability is incremental. Current research continues

to support that implicit theory of teachers' perceptions and their personal ability to bring about desired results (Dweck, 2006; Guskey, 1998; Wormeli, 2007).

More research in psychology and neuroscience supports the growth mind-set (Dweck, 2008). The brain has more plasticity over time than imagined (Doidge, 2007); the fundamental aspects of intelligence can be enhanced through learning (Sternberg, 2005); and dedication and persistence are key in outstanding achievement (Ericsson, Charness, Feltovich, & Hoffman in Dweck).

The fixed and growth mind-sets produce diverse psychological worlds. The fixed mind-set individual cares most about how they may be judged. Individuals with this mind-set avoid opportunities to learn if they fear they may make mistakes. The act of hiding mistakes is common so that deficiencies will not be revealed. The fixed mind-set individual believes extending effort should not be needed and ability should bring success. The growth mind-set individual cares about learning. If a mistake is made, it is quickly corrected. Exuding effort is a positive action for them. Failure leads to new learning and enhances their intelligence. The growth mind-set fosters motivation and resilience. Table 1 summarizes fixed mind-set and growth mind-set (Dweck, 2008). People tend to hold mind-set characteristics somewhere along the continuum between the fixed and growth mind-set identifiers (Heslin & Walle, 2008).

Table 1

Summary of Two Types of Mind-set

	Fixed Mind-set	Growth Mind-set
Learning	Rejects opportunities to learn if opportunity of mistakes (Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin, & Wan, 1999; Mueller & Dweck, 1998).	Care about learning. Believe their abilities can be developed through hard work (Nussbaum & Dweck, 2007).
Attitude toward mistakes and deficiencies	Hide rather than correct mistakes (Nussbaum & Dweck, 2007).	Correct mistakes (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Nussbaum & Dweck, 2007).
Attitude toward effort	Afraid of effort. Believe if you have the ability, you shouldn't need effort (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007).	Effort is a positive thing. In the face of failure, efforts are intensified and there is a search for new learning strategies. (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007).
Setbacks	Decrease effort and consider cheating (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007).	Outperform peers with fixed mind-sets when meeting a challenging transition or obstacle (Mueller & Dweck, 1998).

Change Theory

Change theory or change knowledge is powerful in informing education reform strategies. Making the theory actionable and explicit is what makes change sustainable (Fullan, 2006). Fullan describes seven core premises that support the use of change theory:

- Focus on motivation;
- capacity building, with a focus on results;
- learning in context;
- changing context;

- bias for reflective action;
- tri-level engagement; and
- persistence and flexibility in staying the course (p. 8).

Change is focused around motivation. Students and teachers must feel motivated to put in the effort to get results. Motivation is not developed over night, but takes time. Moral purpose, in addition to the direct goal of making a difference in the lives of students, plays a larger role in transforming and sustaining system change. Moral purpose, along with capacity, resources, and leadership support affect change. Capacity building, defined as any strategy that increases the effectiveness of a group, influences outcomes (Fullan, 2005). Many theories regarding change are weak on capacity building and this is an explicit reason they fail.

There must be opportunities for adults to learn in context. Elmore (2004) pinpointed improvement as a function of learning to do the right things (p. 73). As Heifetz and Linsky (2002) said, adaptive work "demands learning," "demands experimentation," and "difficult conversations (p.75)." Theories must have the capacity to change the larger context. Gladwell (2000) identified context as a key Tipping Point: "the power of context says that what really matters is the little things" (p. 150). If you want to change people's behavior "you need to create a community around them, where these new beliefs could be practical, expressed and nurtured" (p. 173). Establishing lateral capacity, learning from those in similar positions, among schools and districts, develops the means of sharing practices with each other. A community of learning provides opportunities to reflect and learn.

Reflective actions support the importance of shared ownership and behavior changes that are derived from the knowledge (Reeves, 2006). This goes back to Dewey, who shared that we do not learn by doing but that we learn by thinking about what we are doing (Dewey, 1916).

Engagement at school/community, districts and state must also align when considering sustainable change. Drawing from the complexity theory, looking at the connectedness of the work, there is a need to increase the amount of purposeful interactions between and among individuals within and across the levels, and indeed within and across systems (Fullan, 2003).

Pursuing strategies that promote mutual interactions influences all levels. With these premises comes the need to persist and not give up over time. Cultivating change takes time and will take resolve during the difficult moments. The use of change knowledge represents a cultural change, which many people resist. The route to achieving change of a critical mass is to not wait for it to happen but to be a promoter (Fullan, 2006).

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher perceptions through surveys, interviews, and document analysis to identify how a new literacy curriculum is being implemented in K-2 classrooms. A qualitative methodology is used to address the research questions posed for the study. This study extends the investigation of the district literacy program begun with the October 2010's Literacy Needs Assessment. This study also examines the implementation of a new literacy curriculum in teachers' classrooms

for what works and is sustainable; to what is not working and may be lost and not continued into the future.

Site Selection

A Midwestern school district was selected for this study. The district is made up of six elementary schools. Each school has a principal with certification in K-8 administration. Sixty-one elementary (grades K-2) teachers in six schools across the district have an average of 9.5 years of experience. Approximately 66% hold master's degrees, 23.5% have a bachelor degree and 10.5% have a specialist degree; an advanced degree beyond a master's. The teachers are Caucasians (99%) and females (100%). The students in grades kindergarten through second (N=1260) attend the six schools involved in the new adoption and implementation of literacy curriculum. Students are Caucasian (87%), African American (9%), Hispanic (2.4%), Asian (1.1%) and less than 1% of the students are Native American. Students (21%) receive free and reduced lunch.

Participants

Participants in the study consisted of kindergarten, first and second grade (K-2) teachers in the Raymond School District in the Midwestern United States (a fictitious name adopted to protect the anonymity of the district). All of the K-2 teachers employed in the district were asked to participate in the study. However, all participating teachers had participated in all district provided professional development and in-service prior to the implementation of the new literacy curriculum. There are 61 teachers currently working in grades K-2 across six elementary schools; 21 kindergarten teachers, 21 first grade teachers, and 19 second grade teachers. All 61 teachers were invited to participate in an on-line open-ended question survey. Twenty teachers responded: three

Kindergarten, 13 first grade, and four second grade. Purposeful sampling determined the teachers interviewed. Sampling was distinguished by ensuring an equal representation from each grade level and including teachers of each grade level with divergent responses to the questions. Six teachers; two kindergarten, two first grade, and two second grade, were selected to participate in a 90 minute semi-structured interview.

Instruments

This study conducted a cross-sectional survey to gather the perceptions of professional development and leadership support of K-2 teachers during implementation of new literacy curriculum. The survey was made up of two open-ended questions addressing professional development and leadership support. A cross-sectional survey was used to identify characteristics of teacher perceptions (Appendix B).

The purpose of the survey was to provide an overall view of teachers' perceptions as well as to guide selection of a purposeful sample of teachers to participate in an interview session to learn more about their perceptions of what worked or did not work during the implementation of new literacy curriculum. Six respondents were identified to participate in a 90 minute interview with the researcher. More in-depth questioning provided detailed information to the study. A semi-structured protocol (Appendix D) guided the discussion and a range of techniques were utilized in the interview. These techniques included, but not limited to, prompts, probes, rephrasing, restating, and repetitions. Documents such as: grade level professional development materials and agendas, school professional development plans, and resource literature were analyzed and determined how curriculum content compared to what was stated as implemented within the interviews.

Limitations, Assumptions and Delimitations

A limitation within the external validity of this research is that only one district in a suburban Midwestern city was studied. Limitation of internal validity may be with self reporting of teacher opinions (Odom et al., 2010). Another limitation within the internal validity may be the feelings of the participants of the criterion sample to participate within the study because the researcher is an employee of the participants' school district. The participants may not be as honest as they may want to be because of the researcher's position in the district and may be a limitation. The use of volunteers within the study may also limit the information collected. This study was also limited by the few grade levels, K-2. This caused the researcher to depend on gathering information from a much smaller group of teachers and classrooms.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter two presents the literature on the factors affecting implementation of new innovations in the classroom. Literature is abundant up to the point of deciding to adopt an innovation; however, studies on what the next steps should be to ensure fidelity of implementation are lacking in the literature. The first section of the literature review explores the significance of implementing literacy programs in the era of high stakes accountability currently evident in schools. The second section examines leadership and the characteristics surrounding organizational change. The review of literature also examines teacher perceptions and beliefs and how their ideas contribute to the fidelity of implementation in education and classrooms. The final section reviews the implementation process and variables identified within previous research that impact program outcomes.

Literacy Instructional Programs in the Realm of High Stakes Testing

"Every child deserves excellent reading teachers because teachers make a difference in children's reading achievement and motivation to read." (National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, 2000) This quote reiterates the importance of the teacher within literacy instruction in public schools. There is not a single superior method or technique of reading instruction. Superiority includes an excellent teacher that has the knowledge of reading research and theory and is within a supportive learning environment.

Historical Review of Literacy

The current reading controversy within United States education is the debate on the best way to learn to read; whole language approach or word decoding approach. Many landmark studies have provided highlights contributing to the debates and discussions over the years. The year of 1967 brought about two landmark documents; First-Grade Studies (Bond & Dykestra, 1967) and then Chall's (1967, 1996) *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. The controversy is based around the question of how do children best learn to read? Is it with a beginning method that stresses comprehension or with one that stresses phonics and phonemic awareness of letters, sounds and words?

In 1967 there were social and racial inequities. The country was struggling politically and economically. Institutions of learning were in turmoil. Southern states were seeing some of the first integrations of African American children into all-white public schools. Church bombings on Sunday mornings and daily protests by minority groups were common. Within all of this rage and unrest, a critical study, First-Grade Studies (Bond & Dykestra, 1967) was published. This study was a federally funded study and designed around three specific questions:

- To what extent are various pupil, teacher, class, school, and community characteristics related to pupil achievement in first-grade reading and spelling?
- Which of the many approaches to initial reading instruction produces superior reading and spelling achievement at the end of first grade?

- Is any program uniquely effective or ineffective for pupils with high or low readiness for reading? (p. 5)

Schools clearly defined as nonwhite or non-English speaking were eliminated from the cross-study analysis in the final report. This caused the resulting data not to be inclusive of all schools studied even though non-English speaking schools were minimal. A lack of attention in this study to race, class, ethnicity, gender, language, and geographical location causes an uncomfortable conclusion and possible misrepresentation of historical reading research (Willis & Harris, 1997). Studies and continued research have catapulted from this original research. It was not until the 1980's researchers began considering race, class, ethnicity, gender, language and geographical location as variables in reading instruction outcomes.

The 1980's acknowledged reading difficulties within children in public schools. A focus on equity, civil rights within public education, and educational quality came to the forefront for researchers. Public education was perceived as dysfunctional and a landmark policy report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education came out in 1983: *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The report set out to document the characteristics and perceived inadequacies of the public educational system in the United States. Public education was accused of failing to meet the needs of too many students and for not producing adequate achievement gains. The report is historically recognized as the turning point when public opinion of education changed from positive to a negative outlook and was found to include faulty data that questioned its validity. Discussions of replacing public education by private, profit-making entities arose from this report.

During the year of 1997 the United States Congress convened a national panel to review research on the effectiveness of various approaches for teaching children to read. A meta-analysis was conducted to evaluate the evidence on alphabetic, comprehension, fluency, teacher education and technology. This was Congress's response to the controversies over reading education. The panel was asked to decide what works in reading education on the basis of reviewing research (Shanahan, 1999).

Integrating reading and meaning connections with systematic phonics instruction significantly exceeded the basal-alone approaches. By the late 1990s, there was a sufficiently large body of basic research findings to form a scientific consensus over the practices underlying skillful reading and the instructional strategies that led to reading competence. In 1998 the National Research Council issued Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, which recognized similar findings from diverse scientific disciplines and provided a foundation on which to base evidence-based reading instruction.

Positive aspects have also resulted from *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983). Educators examine their own practices and policies more frequently. They consider how best to support change and improve while working with more diverse populations. Such response led to another series of important research and policy reports by the National Academy of Education, the National Institute of Education, and the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois. This report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*, was a response to the nation's concern for how to improve reading instruction (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

Becoming a Nation of Readers brought the knowledge and experience of researchers and educators together. The study synthesized research on human cognition, environmental influences and studies of classroom practices. The findings stated it was incorrect to suppose a single step will immediately allow a child to read (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). For large achievement gains, many elements must be in place and implemented. The results of this study provided a glimpse at what research was to come. The studies in the 1990's further investigated the findings of this important report.

Balanced Literacy

During the 1990's a balanced literacy approach was emphasized by three significant writings: *Every Child a Reader,* from California Department of Education in 1995*; Teaching Reading: A Balanced Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Reading in Prekindergarten Through Grade Three,* by California Department of Education in 1996; and *Teaching Our Children to Read: The Role of Skills in a Comprehensive Reading Program,* by Bill Honig in 1996 (Freppon & Dahl, 1998). There was a lot of political proclaiming about balancing literacy instruction. Freppon and Dahl (1998) acknowledged the pressures of media during this era and this influence impacted teachers and educators.

The reports placed blame for California's statewide deficit in children's reading achievement on literature-based instruction instituted into schools in the mid 1980's. The balanced approach would teach skills explicitly and also teach language-rich literature. Kathryn Au, Jacquelyn Carroll and Judith Scheu (1998) followed Honig with a book of their own titled *Balanced Literacy Instruction: A Teacher's Resource Book* and, took the balanced literacy approach while at the same time focusing on minority children, building

home, community and school connections for at-risk students. Social and economic conditions were recognized within this focus of addressing at-risk children.

Gail Tompkins (2010), a California teacher and author of *Literacy for the 21st Century: A Balanced Approach,* expressed concern about literacy as a controversial topic and making researchers, parents and teachers drawn to defend one instructional approach over another.

The findings of the meta-analysis addressed each of the subgroups; alphabetic findings, phonics instruction, comprehension, fluency, guided reading, and independent reading (National Reading Panel, 1997). Alphabetic findings showed teaching children to manipulate phonemes in words was highly effective and significantly improved reading. Systematic phonics instruction enhanced children's success in learning to read. The comprehension subgroup findings identified a combination of reading comprehension techniques was most effective. The fluency subgroup's findings recognized reading practice as an important contributor to fluency. Guided repeated oral reading and independent silent reading were two practices recommended. Teacher education subgroup findings acknowledged in-service professional development produced significantly higher student achievement. The final subgroup of technology found computer technology could be used for reading instruction, especially with the addition of speech to computer-presented text.

The National Reading Panel's report caused a great deal of controversy. Although the NRP claimed its report was completely research-based and scientific, one of its members, the only teacher on the panel, stated the report's creation was considerably less than scientific due to the lack of time, support and political aims (Yatvin, 2002).

Accusations of the administration identified repeated censoring and suppressing reports, piling advisory committees with unqualified political appointees, and refusing to seek any independent scientific expertise (Yatvin, 2002). Another controversy surrounded the topic of sustained silent reading. Research, did not confirm whether independent silent reading with minimal guidance or feedback improves reading achievement and fluency. It also did not prove more silent reading in the classroom cannot work its effectiveness without guidance or feedback. The research suggested there are more beneficial ways to spend reading instructional time than to have students read independently in the classroom without reading instruction. Yet teacher-education and reading-education literature recommends in-class procedures and encouragement for students to read on their own.

The implications of a balanced approach to literacy instruction led Au and Carroll (1997) to uncover that a dual model: one focused on teachers' knowledge and skills and one on empowerment and professional growth, is what will promote the complex teaching needed in balanced instruction. This model provided teachers with the needed developmental programs to learn more about skills instruction and also to develop them as stronger professionals.

The political perspective of widespread public school failure continues to pressure educators to find quick fixes to the problems. Mainstream children not living in poverty tend to do well in U.S. schools. Factors of community, home, and children's personal characteristics were addressed within another report by the United States National Research Council in 1998. The report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, acknowledged that most children learn to read fairly well, but there are large

numbers of children in America whose education is impaired because they do not read well enough to understand or to be competitive in the demanding economy once they set off into the workforce (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The goals of the project were to synthesize rich and diverse research so guidance could be provided to parents, educators and publishers. The information was then conveyed through publications, conferences and other outreach activities.

Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children recommended what is most critical in preventing reading difficulties is to provide excellent reading instruction to all children. Along with this recommendation the committee recognized three stumbling blocks for young readers: difficulty understanding and using the alphabetic principle, failure to transfer the comprehension skills of spoken language to reading, and the absence of initial motivation to read. Throughout the report, superior instruction from pre-school to second grade was emphasized. This report turned the importance from previous research of what should be taught to the focus on excellent instruction. Knowing children needed instruction in basic skills and the instruction of meaning and language, this report discussed the ongoing need of professional development for teachers to become superior literacy instructors.

The year 2000 brought research that focused on improving literacy with high poverty students. Key components to improving literacy instruction for high risk students included:

- good classroom management;
- scaffolded balanced literacy instruction with authentic reading opportunities;
- collaborative learning environment;

- shared responsibility for learning;
- family connection to school and learning; and
- support for teachers and learners (Taylor, Pressley, & Pearson, 2000, p. 7).

In spite of repeated reform efforts and the existence of data to demonstrate overall, public schools are successful, many students, especially minority and poor children, are failing to succeed. The public's attitude is essentially hostile at times toward public education and teachers. Politically, schools and teachers are seen as the problem and not the solution to improved reading achievement for students (NCEE, 1983). Legislatively mandated educational practices are increasing, with the hopes of improving the quality of education through regulation.

In 2001, Missouri passed a bill referred to as Senate Bill 319 (Missouri State Senate, 2001). This bill states no public school student will be promoted to 5th grade if the student's reading ability level is not at or above the 3rd grade level. This bill does not apply to students receiving services within Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, has limited English proficiency, or receiving special education services under and individualized education plan (Missouri State Senate). Additional reading instruction must be offered to all qualifying students. The additional tutoring must be a minimum of 30 hours, before or after school. Though intentions are good, the implementation continues to place a strain on school districts. High quality instruction, staff, and meeting the specific needs of each student are necessary. Consistent student attendance after school hours is also an important element of this Act.

Current Trends and Policies

The concept of being literate is also changing. Traditionally, literacy has been defined as being able to read words. Now, literacy is considered a tool to use within a more technological society (Tompkins, 2010). The NRP's (2002) report, *Practical Advice for Teachers*, narrowed their focus to eight topics to be taught: phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, encouraging children to read, vocabulary, comprehension strategies, professional development, and technology. Panel results specified that simple instruction of one to two phonemic awareness skills at a time at K-1 is most effective. Instructional use of letter sounds and spelling patterns at K-2 is beneficial. Practicing oral reading with materials at the instructional level is beneficial to all grade levels. Reading portions of text aloud repeatedly, with feedback, helps students become better readers. Vocabulary instruction is also important. Teaching students the meaning of words and word parts such as prefixes and suffixes help students comprehend text better. Modeling comprehension strategies help students to learn the strategies for when they read independently. Comprehension instruction needs to happen with narrative and expository texts. Professional development is ongoing and provides practice for teachers to model gradual release of responsibility for learning is effective.

Technology within instruction is part of keeping up with the 21st century skills needed to be literate. Berger, Rush and Eakle (2007) acknowledged the educational community does not have adequate research and theory on the new literacy of reading comprehension on the Internet. This has important consequences for education in the 21st century when learning is increasingly dependent on the ability to read and comprehend

complex information at high levels. In 2005, over one billion people were reading online. The number continues to grow exponentially (Berger et al., 2007).

A new term for the information through technological tools is known as information literacy (Berger et al., 2007). Information literacy involves social and career/work practices. Many businesses and offices utilize technology for their daily avenue of transactions and communication. Information literacy is central to civic, economic, and personal participation in a globalized community (Berger et al.). As a result, they have become important, so we need to provide a more appropriate education for all of our students. Information literacy is also regularly changing as technology changes. Information literacy is not just new today, but will be changing and be newer tomorrow. They are multiple, multimodal, and multifaceted. This increases the complexity and brings multiple points of view to understand them.

Literacy instruction must keep up with this new wave of communication. The future of literacy instruction will need to be ever-changing so public education will be preparing students for the competitive global world.

Teaching and Learning

Three elements can be attributed to a school's underperformance if not implemented. Schmoker (2011) identifies these elements as a common curriculum, sound lessons, and authentic literacy. Simplicity, clarity and priority are key components when designing an instructional system for students. Actual curriculum a child learns can differ from teacher to teacher. Even though we know how important reading and writing is to general learning, students rarely engage in authentic reading and writing activities. Lessons designed by teachers often leave out best practice of modeling, guiding and

slowly releasing responsibility of learning to students. Studies support these conditions exist in the majority of classrooms across the country (Schmoker, 2011).

Ensuring to meet the needs of all students means teachers/schools must also address the diverse residents that are now populating our schools. Recognizing individuals and their cultural strengths is important along with the implementation of strategies to honor the collective group (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008).

To provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum that addresses the needs of each student, powerful and ongoing professional development is necessary. Like students, teachers have different levels of understanding and abilities. Quality embedded professional development must be differentiated and must be authentic. Providing professional development is not enough. Schools must monitor how the curriculum is taught, how the materials are used to support the curriculum, and data should be collected to show students are learning (Mooney & Mausbach, 2008).

High Stakes Testing

There has been a large and growing body of evidence that supports the notion many students enter school significantly behind their more advantaged peers and over the course of elementary school the achievement gap widens (Miller & Foster, 2007). Researchers have documented for years how high school achievement outcomes can be predicted as early as second grade (Center for Public Education, 2011). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCE) (2011) reported high school graduation rate in 2008 was 89.9 percent. This is a slight increase from 2007 with 89.0 percent graduating. Table 2 presents the high school completion rates from 1972 to 2008. No Child Left

Behind has placed all districts in a system of accountability measuring the proficiency level of all students in reading and math by annual benchmarks of growth.

Table 2

Status of High School Completion Rates of 18- Through 24- Year-Olds 1972-2008

Year	Completion Rate (Percent)	Year	Completion Rate (Percent)	Year	Completion Rate (Percent)
1972	82.8	1985	85.4	1998	84.8
1973	83.7	1986	85.5	1999	85.9
1974	83.6	1987	84.7	2000	86.5
1975	83.8	1988	84.5	2001	86.5
1976	83.5	1989	84.7	2002	86.6
1977	83.6	1990	85.6	2003	87.1
1978	83.6	1991	84.9	2004	86.8
1979	83.1	1992	86.4	2005	87.6
1980	83.9	1993	86.2	2006	87.8
1981	83.8	1994	85.8	2007	89.0
1982	83.8	1995	85.3	2008	89.9
1983	83.9	1996	86.2		
1984	84.7	1997	85.9		

In virtually every state Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) results have seen an annual increase in the number of schools failing to meet the benchmark. In several states, the rate schools are failing AYP has doubled and tripled (NEA, 2008). AYP expects all

states, school districts, and schools to reach 100% proficiency in reading and math by 2013-14. Several states conducted projections of AYP results in the year 2013-14 and predict between 75% and 99% of all schools will fail to meet AYP (NEA, 2008). June, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education began granting waivers to the No Child Left Behind Act. Those states receiving waivers will agree to adopt a prescribed set of education reforms, which are currently being defined.

State and federal departments of education have monitored the achievement gap longitudinally. Results of this monitoring have indicated females graduate at a higher rate than males and, white students outperform blacks and Hispanic in reading and math (NCE, 2011). The culture and environment in which children are raised may play a role in the achievement gap. When parents do not see the personal benefits of having exceptional academic skills they do not encourage early education for their own children. As a result of cultural differences, black students tend to begin school with a smaller vocabulary than their white classmates (Diamond & Spillane, n.d.). Poverty also may contribute to a lack of school readiness more than from racial/cultural factors. Poor children regardless of race are from homes lacking satisfactory nutrition and medical care creating a level of anxiety affecting their cognitive, social, and physical development. As a result, children enter school with decreased word knowledge affecting their development of language skills and influencing their experiences with books (Diamond & Spillane, n.d.).

Statistics indicate when students have support from a parent with homework; they do much better in school (NCE, 2011). This is a problem for many minority students because of the large number of single-parent households and the increase in non-English

speaking parents. Students from single-parent homes may find it difficult to find the time to get help from their parent. Similarly, some Hispanic students may have difficulty getting help with their homework because there is not an English speaker at home to offer support. Another possible explanation for racial and ethnic differences in academic performance might be why some minority students stop trying because they do not believe they will ever see the benefits of their hard work. Students may become unmotivated to do well in school because they do not believe it will pay off in the form of a better job or future (Dweck, 2006).

Leadership and Organizational Change

"There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things." (Curious Cat, 2011, para. 1).

Leadership

Leaders have been defined as people doing the right thing while managers are people doing things right (Bennis & Nanus, 1986). Researchers have explored the differences between effective and ineffective schools/districts for years. One variable always emerges as critically important is the instructional leadership. McEwan (1998) outlines seven steps to effective instructional leadership:

- establish clear instruction goals;
- be there for your staff;
- create a culture and climate conducive to learning;
- communicate the vision and mission of your organization;
- set high expectations for your staff;

- develop teacher leaders; and
- maintain positive attitudes toward students, staff, and parents (p. 4).

These steps are not new or innovative, but are present within the research on instructional leadership. Using these as a guide in developing leadership capacity in organization influences instructional practices.

Continued support of the steps needed to be an effective instructional leader has been identified within a more recent study from Vanderbilt. The core components of effective instructional leadership include:

- advocates for students with special needs when making decisions about high standards for student learning;
- plans opportunities for teachers to improve their instruction through professional development;
- plans for a culture of shared responsibility for the social and academic learning of students;
- builds an environment that is safe and orderly for all students; and
- plans for the use of external community resources to promote academic and social learning goals (Polikoff et al., 2009, p. 673).

This type of leadership has been identified within empirical literature as a transformational leader. Such a leader is charismatic, emotional, motivational, trustworthy, confident and motivated intrinsically to do what is right (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Mobilizing and moving followers into action make the difference. Instructional leaders must connect behaviors with the goals of the organization.

Most recently, leaders have begun to respond to accountability measures by using data to guide the practices of teaching and learning (Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, & Thomas, 2006). Data is abundant, but often we do not know what to do with it or how to use it. Research indicates aligning district systems; curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and school improvement will, create a more focused and manageable process for ensuring improvement (Mooney & Mausbauch, 2008). This alignment is then transferred to what is happening in the classroom.

Leaders also must begin the work of developing the instructional staff in the enhancement of pedagogical skills. This process is defined in Marzano and Waters' (2009) book, District Leadership that Works. Five phases are used in developing a system to manage instructional change. The phases are:

- systematically explore and examine instructional strategies;
- designing a model or language of instruction;
- teachers systematically interact about the model or language of instruction;
- teachers observe master teachers (and each other) using the model of instruction; and
- monitor the effectiveness of individual teaching styles (pp. 57-70).

The theoretical literature on leadership and change identifies that not all change is of the same magnitude (Beckard & Pritchard, 1992; Fullan, 1993; Heifetz, 1994). Determining what impact the change will have on various stakeholders should be determined prior to implementation.

Urgency for Improvement

Developing a sense of urgency is also needed to move a group efficiently. Creating a sense of urgency in schools requires developing a clear mandate that cannot be ignored. Operating with this sense of urgency creates a climate where continuous improvement guides all decision making (Mooney & Mausbach, 2008). The need for such change must be communicated and understood by the stakeholders involved. This includes staff, students, parents, community, and district leaders. Each group may have different ways this change will affect them. Explicit communication must address each group's concerns and the message needs to include emphasizing the components of the plan of improvement and how such changes will benefit or enhance their work.

Learning Community

Leadership style encompassing management through a view of a shared responsibility among staff has been studied previously (Lambert et al., 1995). Community leadership attributes promote shared common values and works toward continuous improvement. Assessment is prominent within this model, along with an interactive process so decisions are made through the power of conversation and proof (with data). An example is examining student and building data together and developing goals to address areas to enhance, discontinue, or change. Reviewing data together gives an avenue for conversations. Such conversations provide additional meaning and understanding for everyone. Consistent conversations around school data develop a comfort level allowing for problem solving and looking outside the box when generating ideas. The more exposure and practice of studying data, the more it becomes easier and manageable.

Data and conversation can lead to the development of a mission and vision for the school. This helps to bring a focus to what is most important (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). A vision will address the areas of change needed by identifying and creating the ideal school for the unique population of students. DuFour's et al. Professional Learning Community (PLC) also supports the design of the work around shared leadership. Creating a leadership team to help spread the word, continue conversations, and promote the mission and vision of the school helps to create a commonality among the educational community. These leaders are also known as transitional leaders.

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2005) identified 21 categories of behaviors referred to as responsibilities of a leader. These responsibilities can have a profound effect on achievement of students within their schools. The 21 responsibilities include:

- Affirmation: Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures;
- change Agent: Is willing to challenge and actively challenges the status quo;
- contingent Rewards: Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments;
- communication: Establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students;
- culture: Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation;
- discipline: protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus;
- flexibility: Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and its comfortable with dissent;

- focus: Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention;
- ideals/Beliefs: Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling;
- input: Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies;
- intellectual Stimulation: Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture;
- involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices;
- knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction and assessment practices;
- monitoring/Evaluating: Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning;
- optimizer: Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations;
- order: Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines;
- outreach: Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders;
- relationships: Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff;
- resources: Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs;

- situational Awareness: Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems; and
- visibility: has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students (Marzano et al., 2005, pp. 42-43).

A meta-analysis of the research by Mid-Continent Research for Education (McREL) identified 21 leadership responsibilities that are significantly connected with student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). This work has been transformed into a balanced leadership framework providing details of the knowledge and strategies leaders need to impact the performance of their students (Marzano et al., 2005).

The McREL Balanced Leadership Framework is detailed within the responsibilities to the point of identifying when, how and why the strategies should be implemented for effective leadership. Balanced leadership combines knowledge and skills so the organization of people is supported through a learning environment (Marzano et al., 2005).

Culture

Within the leadership realm is the ability to understand the culture of the school. Evans (1996) pointed out culture really has three layers; artifacts and creations, values, and basic assumptions. Artifacts, creations and values are most commonly referred to as identifiers of a culture. But the basic assumptions are fundamental. This is what guides behavior and shapes the way a group perceives, thinks and feels. Real cultural change is systemic and develops over a substantial period of time. A quick change in culture is

more superficial. Shaping the school's climate and performance can eventually become part of the culture. True change begins with changing the desire of those involved.

Politics also influence the context of change and is determined by the level of trust within a school and its community. Reform is developed around trust and consensus. The leadership team can have a great influence in the development of trust within the community. Opportunities to discuss and problem-solve together builds the relationships needed to begin creating a level of trust. Common communication from teachers, grade levels and principal demonstrates consensus to the community. Consistency of information builds trust and understanding.

Research has also identified a leader described as a servant leader or one, utilizing key characteristics to develop a sense of trust (Greenleaf, 1998). Characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of others and building community. These characteristics support a democratic form of leadership promoting fairness, consistency, organizational and individual growth, and equality within policies and procedures. Each characteristic is defined by Greenleaf (1998) and represents behaviors forming a leader. Listening is the first characteristic. Listening is defined as referring to a deep commitment of listening to others. One must acquire a high level of attentiveness and be dedicated to understanding the communication from others. Empathy, the second characteristic, is described as a leader that attempts to understand others. This understanding should identify with thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others Third characteristic is healing. Healing is explained as the potential to heal one's self or others through words that can raise spirits. The leader can make the organization inviting to the

soul. Awareness, the fourth characteristic, is defined as a general awareness, especially self-awareness. Leaders must be continually open to learning and connecting what is said to what is done. Awareness represents being with-it and knowing what is likely to happen. The fifth characteristic, persuasion, is defined as convincing others, rather than coercing them. A leader is transparent and consistent with actions and communication. Sixth characteristic, conceptualization, is defined as the ability to nurture their own abilities to dream great dreams. Leaders are able to see a vision and be proactive to engage others in the process. Foresight, seventh characteristic, is defined as the ability to foresee or know the likely outcome. A leader is constantly monitoring events and comparing them with past and future actions. Eighth characteristic, stewardship, is the caring for the well being of the institution and serving the needs of those within the institution. Commitment of growth, the ninth characteristic, is defined as a committed effort toward the individual growth of others. Leaders serve as head follower through modeling and helping others. Linda Lambert (1998) recommends the idea of building leadership capacity in faculty and staff so that the building or organization will sustain after the leadership is gone. Michael Fullan's (2005) *Leadership & Sustainability* refers to the same philosophy which he calls lateral capacity building. Sustainability is demonstrated by the number of leaders left behind when a leader leaves and how much farther they can go with what they have learned and have been modeled (Fullan, 2005). Greenleaf's 10th and final characteristic, building community, is defined as seeking to identify some means for building the institution. Leaders give back through service to the community.

Curriculum and Instruction

Retooling curriculum and instruction is part of being a curriculum leader under No Child Left Behind and beyond (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009). Monitoring the implementation of curriculum contributes to improvement. According to the research, there are several reasons for monitoring curriculum:

- efficiency: the district has spent a great deal of time and money on developing the curriculum, and it would be a manifest waste if teachers simply ignored it;
- consistent development: if the district curriculum has been carefully sequenced and articulated, monitoring will help ensure that what students are taught in fourth grade builds on third and leads into fifth;
- teachers stay alert: if they know that their choice of curriculum content is being monitored, they will more likely select appropriate content from the guide; and
- principal's perspective: monitoring is a useful process for helping the principal become more visible and involved with curriculum, one of the central components of school improvement

  (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009, pp. 120-121).

An element of democratic schooling is improving instruction is through the implementation of a program forming a horizontal accountability focused on the collective work of the school (Meier, 1997). This might be an outside group of educators and community members examining student work, school processes, and achievement goals. This provides the community an opportunity to examine what the school is accomplishing, develop a connection, and provide feedback for school staff. Developing

a climate of working together to solve problems and provide continual improvement is valuable. This type of process is developed during the first year, but not implemented until year two.

Two powerful improvements have included the development of a schedule providing grade levels and departments a common time to plan and collaborate during the school day and maximize instructional time by organizing according to learning needs, removing distracters, and minimizing transitional times (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009). Quick fixes can improve morale and create small successes that are immediate. Looking at physical changes within the building, such as coordinating a more efficient dismissal process, is a quick win for all. Efficiency saves time. Instructional time is always a commodity schools are looking for.

Build a Committed Staff

Challenges to the classroom teacher include many variables. Students are coming to school missing background knowledge, living without basic necessities, and distrusting adults. It takes a commitment from staff to believe each child has the capacity to learn. The goal is educating and knowing what we are educating for (Meier, 1995). This takes people who are committed to working to improve and be willing to make changes along the way. Commitment means not giving up or settling for the status quo. Building such a committed staff takes a concerted effort to make sure the right people are in the right positions. Research shows people are affected by change differently. Some look at a situation as a mere adjustment to what they are already doing and valuing, while this same situation could feel like a dramatic break from what they are presently doing (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004).

Organizational Improvement

Organizations get better through an ongoing process of developing a culture of problem solving and reflecting on what is working and what needs improving. This study will analyze what teachers consider as working well and what needs improving within the process of implementing a new literacy curriculum. Organizational change is historically documented and organizations continue to learn from information shared.

Historical View of Organizational Change

Democratic schools have evolved throughout the years from John Dewey's (1916) original work, characterizing democratic schooling as sharing interests, demonstrating freedom in interactions, students participating in learning experiences, and the continual development of social relationships. Dewey described interactions within the learning experiences as habits. These habits become individualized to each person's unique way of addressing the world. Schultz (2001) acknowledged these individual actions are what make up the engine of positive social change within our society. Dewey's ideas were explored through his own Laboratory School. Here he could study and document the interactions within a democratic school setting.

Social activity continued to be studied by many. Mayhew and Edwards (1936) reported that children at the age of four prefer to play alone, and skillful encouragement is needed to incorporate physical activity into group games so that they interact with others. This supported the work Dewey had created within his Laboratory School and ensured cooperative activities among the children.

The cooperative approach was also demonstrated within four schools responding to the educational realities of poverty, injustice and dislocation. Apple and Bean's (1995)

noted democratic schools were committed to building a community within their buildings and around their schools. Democratic school reform included enhancing participation, empowering groups as well as individuals and focusing on coming up with new ways to address present social problems. These schools represented a larger movement developing in the 1990's. This movement was redefining democracy in education by exploring ways to increase participation within the educational environment. This included parents, residents, and students. Defined change included cooperative learning, thematic curriculum, critical thinking, governance, parent involvement and connection to the community.

Greene's (1997) work complimented Dewey's original work by continuing to explore ways of breaking down the societal barriers found between individuals and groups. Her research emphasized dialogue as the component to change the societal divide. A collaborative effort of pursuing projects together and having open conversation within such an activity represented the highest form of community. This work renewed the concept of servant leadership within democratic schools. Greenleaf's (1998) writings identified ten characteristics of a servant leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of others, and building community. This transfer through a theoretical framework of servant-leadership was recognized as a paradigm shift among educational leaders.

Beane and Apple (1999) identified conditions necessary to develop a democratic school. The conditions include the following:

- open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity, that enables people to be as fully informed as possible;
- faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems;
- use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies;
- concern for the welfare of others and the 'the common good;
- concern for the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities;
- understanding that democracy is not so much an 'ideals' to be pursued as an 'idealized' set of values that we must live and that must guide our life as people; and
- organization of social institutions to promote and extend the democratic way of life (p. 7).

During this time of discussing a change within the educational society, DuFour and Eaker (1998) became a driving force in professional learning communities and a collaborative culture. This PLC culture is what has historically been indicated as an important factor in a democratic school. The democratic schooling mantra has been to embrace dialogue and supportive culture while recognizing differences in learning and backgrounds. The professional learning community also focuses on learning by setting responsibilities and accountability for all.

Studies on the responsibilities of the learner have also continued. Schutz (2001) noted within the challenge for all is how to balance providing children with the concrete skills helping them succeed in our society, while developing their knowledge to take

steps to change the options they currently have. Schools have been moving towards this more collegial and service approach within a learning community (Crippen, 2005). The recognition of leadership comes through the competence needed to get a task completed rather than by a person's title or position. Teams are cooperatively achieving more by putting their expertise and energy together to create new learning experiences. The servant-leadership paradigm was defined by Fullan (2003) as the cornerstone of a civil and democratic society where a sense of moral purpose exists.

Kozol (2005) also emphasized the realm of moral purpose within his research. He argued that there is an achievement gap in education among the poor and minority schools do not have the budgets and resources equal to schools in wealthy districts. He continued to point out that the wealthy districts had the highest test scores. This injustice is perpetuated according to Kozol, by politicians pushing test prep materials to low performing schools and not focusing on providing a high-quality learning experience. Thomas Armstrong (2006) supported the same message. He called for human development issues to be integrated into achievement goals. An achievement gap raised the awareness of the inequity within our society of learners. Such gaps have been highlighted within the subgroup results of No Child Left Behind. Year after year, minority groups perform lower in reading and math (National Education Association, 2008).

James Banks (2008) also supported the argument there is inequity within our educational process. He argued education should reflect the home cultures and languages of students from diverse groups, in an integrated method of teaching and learning. He contended group rights could help individuals attain structural equality.

Banks purported the political aspect of citizenship reflected how individuals have rights and privileges, as well as duties. The social aspect of citizenship provides individuals with the health, education and welfare needed to participate fully in their cultural communities. Global immigration and the increasing diversity in our nation has created additional questions about how we can deal effectively with the problem of developing civic communities reflecting the diversity of citizens while sharing common values and goals. Citizenship education should help students to develop a uniqueness and connection to the global community. Citizenship education should also support the development of a human relationship to people around the world. Increasing recognition of diversity and promoting inclusion and civic equality is an area that must be re-examined according to Banks (2008).

The increased recognition of diversity while developing inclusionary measures must occur in the classrooms of today's schools. The research on cooperative learning provides a positive avenue to begin this work. This type of transition is described by Banks (2008) as transformative citizenship: a citizen taking action to actualize values and moral principles. This type of citizenship reflects cultural and global identifications and promotes social justice.

A continuation of this effort of community has been studied by Hugh Price in, *Mobilizing the Community to Help Students Succeed* (Price, 2008). Price supported the research to date. He recommends mobilizing a village of individuals from churches, schools, and volunteer groups. Price focused on relationship building and cultivating a sense of group effort to complete projects. His emphasis is keeping children at the

forefront. This can be accomplished by first focusing on families, which in turn focuses on children.

Historical dilemmas with the launch of Sputnik, Japan as an educational powerhouse, the discussion of *A Nation at Risk*, and privatization and vouchers, have carried the country to the current movement of No Child Left Behind and the development of Common Core State Standards.

Present View of Organizational Change

A well known model offering a framework for transforming a school/district system is the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. This framework provides a solid foundation consisting of a mission, vision, values and goals collaboratively developed, collaborative teams working interdependently to accomplish common goals, and a focus on results dedicated towards continuous improvement (DuFour et al., 2006). The PLC model looks at the learning community as a collaborative unit meeting the needs of each child. Five instructional questions lead this framework:

- What exactly do we expect students to learn?
- How will we know what students are learning?
- How can we assist and support students in their learning?
- Based on a collaborative analysis of the results of our efforts, what can we do to improve student learning; and
- How can we recognize and celebrate improvement in student learning? (Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002, p. 19)

Collaboration is focused around these questions and instructional decisions should always lead back to these five questions. This causes conversations to be focused and with

purpose when considering curriculum and instruction within the school/district. Adults cite talking to others as the most powerful part of professional development/learning (Mooney & Mausbach, 2008).

Systematically teaching an organization about the PLC model and collaboratively addressing each question develops an environment of inquiry and problem solving. The first question is: what exactly do we expect students to learn and addresses the curriculum within the district? Is it aligned with state and future common core standards? Is the curriculum guaranteed and viable? The second question is: how will we know what students are learning and addresses the alignment of formative and summative assessments with the curriculum? Are there collaborative conversations and plans to instructionally address what is best practice? The third question is: how can we assist and support students in their learning and addresses how we will respond instructionally when students need additional help? Do we have interventions in place for those that are struggling? Do we have the time designed within the day to meet the needs of these students? The fourth question is: based on a collaborative analysis of the results of our efforts, what can we do to improve student learning and addresses how we will respond to students that already know the information. Do we have extensions in place for enhancing their learning? Do we have time within the day to encourage extended learning? The fifth question is: how can we recognize and celebrate improvement in student learning and addresses how we celebrate success. Do we know when we have improved? What data do we use to determine improvement (DuFour et al., 2006)?

Continuous collaboration can provide new, meaningful, and relevant learning and develops an environment of trust supporting on-going improvement.

Sustainability

Developing a social environment is a key component in sustainability. Fullan (2010) emphasized the need for resources to close the achievement gap between high and low performers, to develop all schools in the system, and to connect schools to the strength of democracy in society. If leaders do not address the social and moral environment of all schools within a system, then eventually the school system will deteriorate. Monitoring all schools and developing a system of allocating resources to schools demonstrating a need to narrow the achievement gap is a suggested first step. A response to interventions (RtI) framework should be incorporated to address the specific academic or behavioral needs of the students (Allen, 2004).

Sustainability also refers to lasting leadership within an organization. The effectiveness of a district's leadership in creating a culture of sustained change is determined by the leaders left to carry on the mission (Fullan, 2010). Collins (2001) suggested leaders build enduring greatness are not high-profile or flashy performers. Rather, they are individuals blending extreme personal humility with intense professional will (Collins, 2001, p. 21).

Successful leadership calls for an ambitious visionary and requires vigilance and relentless energy. This job cannot be done alone. Mobilizing the right people and collectively using the capacity of others towards a common focus drives systematic change.

Teacher Perceptions and Beliefs

The literature has noted teacher receptivity as a common variable in the fundamental change needed for implementation of a new innovation (Fixsen, Naoom,

Blasé, Friedman & Wallace, 2005; Waugh & Punch, 1987). Teacher's perception of how the change will affect him or her is identified as a measureable factor in the implementation of a new program or innovation. Waugh and Punch recognized five variables affecting teacher receptivity; basic attitude towards education, level of fear and uncertainty associated with the change, practicality of the change while in operation, perceived support and perceived personal cost. Each of these variables influences teacher behaviors and contributes to the level of success of implementing an innovation or change in the classroom.

Teacher Basic Attitude toward Education

The first variable, teacher's basic attitudes about education, can be a hurdle for the implementation of new curriculum practices (Charter & Pellegrin, 1973; Eichholz, 1963; Kazlow, 1977; Nisbet & Collins, 1978; Pellegrin, 1975; Willower, 1963). Researchers examining teacher attitudes about the implementation of new instructional practices have found teachers' self-efficacy to be the most powerful influences on receptivity towards change (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). If at the time of implementation a teacher's attitude is engrained in tradition, it will not be easy to change their educational values. Those with the ability to exhibit new attitudes and behaviors are more likely to be receptive to new thoughts and methods. The strain between a prescribed curriculum and professional principles is a critical issue in education. Attitudes are influenced by emotions and are the products of the way systems of meaning are created and negotiated between people (Fineman, 2000). Attitudes and emotions are developed by reactions to specific learning or problem situations. Decisions are often determined by these beliefs and attitudes. Teachers' reactions are existential, highly personal and often

resistant to persuasion. Such meanings also determine the amount of energy they are willing to invest in their work. Meanings are deeply rooted within one's personal history and part of our identity.

In any learning situation, the knowledge and skills the learners already have should be the starting point for the development of the learning processes to take place. When teachers are learners, their knowledge, beliefs and skills must be taken into account. Otherwise, the innovation will be not be implemented as intended (Cotton, 2006). Fullan (1998) described innovations seen as organizational changes, as first-order change that ignore the crucial role of teachers. The literature recognizes teachers as the real driving force in any education innovation and change agencies should act accordingly. When teachers are not involved, change can be seen as a repair program to eliminate deficits in teacher knowledge and skills (Guskey, 2000).

Mandated programs can lower expectations, reduce professional autonomy and judgment, and limit teachers as expert practitioners (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006). However, when teachers are under-qualified and inexperienced, administrators sometimes decide all teachers must follow a prescribed curriculum. Fidelity, then, establishes an expectation possibly causing dissent in the profession (Achinstien & Ogawa, 2006). Ensuring teachers are a part of the decision-making process in curriculum selection is important. Teachers have been found to be more positive about curriculums giving them autonomy in their choice of teaching strategies. Another component is to make sure the curriculum is implemented with a combination of fidelity and appropriate flexibility. Despite good intentions, teachers are often only partially involved in the

initiation, preparation, design and development of a new innovation (Coenders, Terlouw, & Dijkstra, 2008).

Hargreaves (1994) summarized the deeply emotional attachment teachers have to their work identified in their attitudes and behaviors:

> First, teaching is a job that involves interactions between people and therefore has an inevitably emotional dimension. Second, teachers invest their "selves" in their work, which means that the classroom and/or school become the main sites for the development of self-esteem and self-fulfillment along with a certain degree of vulnerability. Third, teachers have profound feelings about their work because they invest so heavily in it and the values they believe their work represents. A moral perspective on teachers' tasks and therefore their "selves" often lies behind teachers' emotional reactions to apparently trivial incidents. (p. 299)

Level of Fears and Uncertainty Associated with the Change

Fears and uncertainty are often a result of a lack of knowledge. With a lack of Knowledge, there is a belief the development of practical knowledge is acting like a filter through which new knowledge is interpreted and integrated (Van Driel, Bijaard, & Verloop, 2001). The phenomenon of the beliefs teachers hold about what constitutes good student learning and good teaching have been found to strongly influence teacher behaviors (Van Driel et al., 2001). Such beliefs are formed early in one's career and are found to be self-perpetuating sometimes causing resistance to contradictions, reasoning, and experience. Participation is also affected by the personal feelings of uncertainty. Non-attendance at meetings to discuss implementation concerns and the unwillingness to communicate concerns hinders the growth of knowledge needed to alleviate fears.

Barriers attributed to these fears are lack of participation, lack of feedback and lack of conversation.

The knowledge base for teaching has been studied by many researchers over the years (Barnett & Hodson, 2001; Cochran, DeRuiter, & King, 1993; Laplante, 1997; Loughran, Mulhall, & Berry, 2004; Van Driel, Verloop & de Vos, 1998; Veal, 2004; Yarrick, Park, & Nugent, 1997). A teacher's knowledge base is made up of academic knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and experiential knowledge. Academic knowledge is the understanding of the content. Pedagogical content knowledge is the awareness of the teaching within the subject matter. Experiential knowledge is defined as the personal information around teaching and learning. This trio of knowledge is acquired and nourished through practice and study (Barnett & Hodson, 2001). Learning and synthesizing the information is under construction throughout a teacher's career. It is when fears or beliefs get in the way of new knowledge and implementation of innovations and best practices become compromised.

Practicality of the Change

The practicality of the change is also considered as a variable affecting teacher receptivity. Teachers judge practicality by how minimally practical the change is in the classroom and also in terms of their own situation (Doyle & Ponder, 1977, 1978). Does the change fit the way they normally facilitate classroom activities? Is the change compatible with their own preferences of working with students in the classroom? Tobin and McRobbie (1996) identified four cultural myths guiding a teacher's judgment of a change: (a) the transmission mode of teaching currently is more effective than the use of another teaching approach; (b) preparation for the examinations dominates classroom

practices; (c) it must be an efficient use of classroom time; and (d) it must maintain the current level of rigor. When a new program or innovation is a contradiction of a teacher's ideas, implementation is jeopardized. Materials consequently may be used or modified and even discarded if they do not match a teacher's perspective of the value. Brown and McIntrye (1978) found the majority of teachers feel they have the right to make decisions about what they teach in their classroom. A new innovation or program may not align with their preferences, which would affect the level of implementation within their classrooms.

The role of curriculum materials in teacher education is regularly overlooked. Curriculum materials and their use have the potential to shape the pedagogical and the content knowledge of teachers. Davis and Krajcik (2005) recognized that researchers have begun to focus on the teacher component and to explore the role of curriculum materials in teachers' learning. When teachers plan for lessons, they convey the need to know the content of the materials well enough in order to teach. In this way, the curriculum materials stimulate teachers' thinking.

Perceived Support

Research by Stern and Keislar (1977) identifies an accepting environment as the important key in a teacher's perception of the level of support provided for the change. Teachers need to feel free to express their concerns. The active support of principals and teachers increases the success of implementation of an innovation. A number of studies have reported the use of curriculum materials to support teacher learning (Van den Akker, 1988; Coenders et al., 2008). Supportive materials that containing how-to-do advice for teachers, such as lesson preparations, lesson content, and evaluation results in

fewer implementation problems. The level of support may also be within the conditions of the school environment. Smooth implementation may be hampered by a lack of time, large group sizes, inappropriate media and classrooms not conducive to individual or small group work (Verloop & Lowyck, 2003). A school culture considering the impact of a new program allows teachers to express concerns and receive appropriate support throughout the implementation. Communities of collaborative teachers are helpful and supportive when there is a schoolwide change involving teaching and learning. School leadership is a critical factor in facilitating a change within the school. One of the primary roles of school leadership is to support teachers and create a shared vision. The shared vision should place emphasis on student learning. One of the best ways to support teacher change is by providing opportunities for them to observe how the change benefits their students (Ertmer & Ottenbriet-Leftwich, 2010).

Personal Cost

The final variable affecting teacher receptivity is the perception of personal cost. Teachers reference the personal cost by measuring whether the return is greater than the investment in terms of promotions, student response, personal satisfaction, and effect on home life (Stern & Keislar, 1977). Pincus (1974) found classroom teachers often receive little incentive and support to spend time and effort to implement changes. This leads to their perception the personal cost is high.

The motivation to apply the effort and time can be connected to expectancy-value theory. This theory explains how human behavior as a function of two factors: (a) the perceived value of a reward certain behaviors yield and (b) the expectation in the doer a certain behavior will actually yield this reward (Quick, 1988). Expectancy can be related

to the self-efficacy of an individual and value relates to the idea teachers must value a specific method before they will give it their effort and time. Through this determination, the expectancy-value theory is especially relevant to teacher implementation of new innovations. Abrami, Poulsen, and Chambers (2004) utilized the expectancy-value model to explore the correlation between teacher motivation and implementation of cooperative learning strategies. From their results prediction of implementation is defined through the equation: (expectancy) + (value) – (cost) = implementation of an innovation. Expectancy is defined as the level of self-efficacy, value represents the perceived benefits of the innovation to the teacher and cost is defined as the available psychological and physical resources needed.

Despite the efforts, proper implementation of complex changes appears to be quite difficult. Research generally indicates inadequate implementation of innovations (Little, 1996). Expectancy is acknowledged as the strongest predictor of implementation. Problems can stem from the innovation and teachers attempt to analyze and understand these through personal meanings. In situations where people are expected to tackle new problems, use new materials and apply new manners of working, the development of concerns is quite natural (Loucks-Horsley & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Taking teachers' concerns into consideration and giving feedback will provide the support teachers perceive as important.

The implementation of an innovation or new program hinges on the appropriate level of teacher knowledge, willingness to change and professional development. Teacher receptivity influences teacher behaviors. The appropriate teacher behaviors contribute to the level of teacher effectiveness in the classroom.

Teacher Behaviors

Van Eekelen, Vermunt and Boshuizen (2006) have gathered insight about what behaviors are indicative of a willingness to learn. In addition, the research has distinguished a number of different ways the will to learn is manifested within the teaching workplace. Six categories of behaviors characterize teachers' willingness or unwillingness to learn.

The first category acknowledges an alert teacher guiding the learning process within the classroom. Activities identify the teacher as not willing to settle for anything but best practices. Also within this category are teachers behaving in such a way as to maximize predictability within their classrooms. This non-risk-taking behavior is also identified in relation to their level of self-efficacy. The greater the level of self-efficacy, the higher the risk-taking and perseverance a teacher is willing to endure (Van Eeken et al., 2006). Lower levels of self-efficacy cause teachers to develop avoidance patterns reducing fears.

The second category reflects openness to others. Teachers within this behavior category try to connect with others and work to understand. Though they want to connect, they often do not. There is a tendency within this category of behavior to over generalize and not see the cause-and-effect within classroom activities and learning. Teachers within this group will often stick with what they are doing, even with strong disconfirming evidence (Ross & Nisbett, 1991). The behavior of dismissing or ignoring effective practices contributes to varied results of schools and districts.

The third category resembles behaviors where the teacher is more critical of his or her own role or performance within the classroom. Teachers may readily attribute failure

to chance (i.e., external causes) and success to their own ability (i.e., internal causes) or, vice versa. Teachers within this category refer to themselves as the victims of the educational system. As a result, they do not take any action to improve a situation. This pattern of behavior also appears in the Seligman's (1991) study of the phenomenon of learned helplessness as in when people believe there is nothing that they can do to control negative outcomes, they also come to believe they are helpless.

The fourth category of behaviors pertains to the topic of reflection to learn from experience. Teachers in this category reflect before, during, and after a particular experience. Teachers within this category seek feedback through questionnaires or from conferring with students. Behaviors within this group are more open to conversation and analysis of their work. Not all teachers are reflective practitioners and this is an important step in teacher learning. Part of reflection is the demand from time to incorporate this important practice into a teacher's schedule.

The fifth category surrounds the behaviors of those making resolutions and acting on these decisions in a timely manner. Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, addresses the necessary steps for learning from experience and includes setting resolutions and putting them into action. The planning and actual implementation of resolutions depends on the meta-cognitive strategies of a learner. Teachers do not often put their resolutions into action. The study of adults capable of learning new trends in education is increasing (Reisman, 2005). The will to learn meets the ability to learn within this group.

The final category of behaviors demonstrates how teachers can articulate their own learning experiences. The formation of professional knowledge is described as an

interaction between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Within this process are four steps: socialization, internalization, externalization and combination (Van Eekelen et al., 2006). Reflecting on experiences creates dialogue and externalizes learning, expressing tacit knowledge. Teachers within this group are open to innovations and realize they can learn something new to enhance their classroom activities.

In summary, there are six categories are indicative of a teacher's will to learn. A will to learn is different than the ability to learn or the intention to learn. The study of Van Eekelon , Vermunt, & Boshuizen (2006) revealed the need to understand not just whether a teacher has the will to learn, but how he or she actually handles new situations. The personal belief systems of teachers significantly influence the behaviors exhibited in the classroom as well as the instructional choices teachers make. Such personal belief systems are also referred to as efficacy. Teacher efficacy has been identified as conceivably the most central belief system in terms of its effect on the behavior of teachers (Agne, 1992; Collier, 2005; Guskey, 1988; Ross, 1994; Wax & Dutton, 1991).

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy by definition is a teacher's belief in his or her ability to make a difference in student learning (Collier, 2005; Guskey, 1998; Sparks, 1988). This belief has also been identified as one's mind-set (Dweck, 2010). Some individuals have a growth mind-set, where they believe that intelligence can be developed by various means; or they have a fixed mind-set; where they believe intelligence is a static trait: some people are smart and some are not. A growth mind-set correlates with a high level of self-efficacy. Teachers with higher levels of teacher efficacy tend to perform more effectively in the classroom (Sparks, 1988). Such teachers tend to (1) view the role of a

teacher as meaningful and important; (2) set high expectations for themselves and students; (3) take responsibility for students' learning; (4) set goals for themselves; (5) are confident in their abilities to affect student learning; (6) consider themselves partners in learning with their students; and (7) persist longer in assisting students in their learning (Ashton, 1984). Teachers with these beliefs are firm in the belief they can teach all children, including the unmotivated (Guskey, 1988). If high teacher efficacy is the key to facilitating more effective teacher performance, how can teachers be developed and supported in this critical belief system? Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) suggested focusing on a caring environment. A caring environment moves from administration to teacher and teacher to student. A focus on the relationship between teachers and students was important and recognized by students. Noblit, Rogers, and McCadden (1995) asked students to describe a good (caring) teacher. The results revealed supportive teachers respectfully encourage student learning and establish a reciprocal dialogue to provide effective assistance to students. Earlier researchers such as Guskey and Passaro (1994) described teacher efficacy as two dimensional: internal, teachers believed they influence student learning; and external, teachers' perceptions of the influence outside of the classroom beyond their direct control. Since then, teacher efficacy has been correlated to teachers' adoption of instructional, organizational, and accountability innovations (Hoy, 2000).

Ashton (1984) identified eight dimensions of teacher efficacy. Most current research from Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) identified six dimensions correlating with the earlier findings of teacher efficacy: instruction, adapting education to individual students' needs, motivating students, keeping discipline, cooperating with colleagues and

parents, and coping with changes and challenges. Ashton's (1984) eight dimensions of teacher efficacy are:

- a sense of personal accomplishment: the teacher must view differentiating instruction as having an important purpose, a major thrust in ameliorating cognitive diversity;
- positive and realistic expectations for student behavior and achievement: The teacher expects all students to progress toward goals while attending to their zones of proximal development;
- personal responsibility for student learning: Self-reflection and accountability indicates a willingness to critically examine performance;
- strategies for achieving objectives: Planning for learning through a purposeful, challenging activity with goal-setting and identified strategies;
- positive affect: The teacher feels good about teaching as a profession, about self, and about students;
- sense of control: The teacher believes he/she can influence student learning and motivation;
- sense of common teacher-student goals: The teacher develops a joint venture with students to develop and accomplish goals; and
- democratic decision-making: Students are involved in making decisions regarding goals and strategies. (p.28)

According to Hoy (2000), the greater the teacher support the greater the increase in teacher efficacy. A teacher's knowledge of instructional practices, classroom management strategies, and depth of content knowledge contribute to his or her ability to

sustain efficacy. When a new innovation is implemented, variance of teachers' place regarding efficacy must be considered. A one-size-fits-all approach will not support teachers during this time of implementation. A number of researchers have also found an implementation dip in self-efficacy when teachers begin to implement a change initiative (Woolfolk, Hoy, & Burke-Spero, 2005). Self-efficacy tends to rebound for teachers able to successfully implement the change initiative. Teachers tend to overestimate their knowledge and skills and, their self-efficacy beliefs may be based on an overestimation of their skills.

Current research has established teachers' self-efficacy is related to higher levels of student achievement and student motivation, and influences teachers' instructional practices, enthusiasm, commitment, and teaching behaviors (Kalssen et al., 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007). Teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy experience more difficulties with student misbehaviors, are pessimistic about student learning, and experience higher levels of job-related stress. Attitudes are consequently affected in their daily work with children. Such attitudes also affect student performance as well as teacher job performance.

Cantrell and Callaway's (2008) noted high and low implementers supported earlier findings a correlation between teacher self-efficacy and level of implementation. Through a study using a teacher efficacy framework to describe the perceptions of high and low implementers of content literacy instruction, high implementers were characterized by persistence in overcoming barriers associated with the implementation. The high implementers strongly expressed their beliefs about the potential of teachers to meet student needs and to overcome any external influences students may be

experiencing. In contrast, low implementers focused on limitations posed by students' home or family experiences. Low implementers also reflected the perception they have little power to make a real difference in students' learning if parents are not readily involved and supportive. Historically, research has been approached from two different theoretical bases: Rotter's 1966 concept of internal and external control or Bandura's 1997 concept of self-efficacy. The high and low implementers follow Rotter's 1966 belief that self-efficacy increases if teachers believe student achievement can be influenced by education (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). Bandura's 1997 theory stated self-efficacy decreases if teachers believe factors external to teaching are more important to student learning than the influence they may have in the classroom.

Teacher efficacy and literacy teaching research is sparse and received little attention (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2006). The relationship between efficacy and implementation points to the need to consider the issue of efficacy when implementation is expected. A learner must approach and actively deal with an experience in order to learn support constructive perspective on learning.

Kiley (2004) investigated teacher efficacy as a component of reading achievement for students. The factor of efficacy may be present within higher performing schools. Teacher education programs are an important element in ensuring every classroom has a highly qualified teacher of reading. Part of NCLB legislation requires highly qualified teachers; meaning they have been trained and received certification in the area they are teaching (Jehlen & Winans, 2005). It is important for teachers in every content area understanding the instruction of reading. Three teaching strategies identified by Kiley (2004) as powerful in helping all children learn to read included reading to students,

giving students opportunities to read and helping students make connections between what they know and what they learn. Such practices emphasize a literate environment and motivate students to want to read. The culture within the classroom affects students' willingness to take risks and try when maybe they would not have. Although classroom culture is not a specific literacy component, it is an unspoken reference to literacy instruction. The development of the school culture is generated from school leadership.

Implementation

This study focused on analyzing factors influencing the successful implementation of new innovations within the educational setting. Implementation in this study was defined as what a program or innovation consists of when it is delivered in a particular setting (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Durlak and DuPre described the level of delivery as a crucial element affecting program or innovation outcomes. Research has acknowledged there are too few studies contributing to one specific implementation design to follow (Fixsen et al., 2005). What has been identified were effective practices to be followed in implementation to expect positive outcomes (Bernfeld, 2001; Fixsen et al., 2005, Fixsen & Blasé, 1993). Implementation is surrounded by many classroom variables. Classroom dynamics, including teacher individuality (e.g., resistance, multi-levels of professional development, education and preparation); family dynamics (e.g., socioeconomic status, level of education and involvement); children's uniqueness (e.g., special needs, social skills, academic abilities, gender); classroom environment (e.g., social climate, materials, support); and school factors (e.g., peer influence, size of school, grade levels, resources) need to be taken into consideration when examining program implementation (Vartuli & Rohs, 2009).

Implementation is described as a process, not an event. It does not happen all at once or proceed smoothly. In 2001Winter and Szulanski stated “we treat knowledge transfer as a process (not a one-time act) by which a purveyor recreates a complex, causally ambiguous set of routines in new settings and keeps it functioning; the purveyor gradually hones its ability to manage such a process through experience and repetition" (p. 741). This implementation process as described has defined stages. The stages include exploration and adoption, program installation, initial implementation, full operation, innovation, and sustainability (Fixsen et al., 2005).

Exploration and Adoption

The first stage of the implementation process, exploration and adoption, involves gathering information and looking at the options available within an innovation. During this stage, a decision is made about which program or innovation matches the needs of the organization best. Support is gathered during this stage of implementation. When planning for implementation, research has identified key prerequisites that are important to have in place (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Barr, Tubman, Montgomery, & Soza-Vento, 2002; Cooke, 2000; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Kallestad & Olweus, 2003; Ringwalt et al., 2003). The first factor is ensuring a perceived community need for the implementation. When a perceived need is recognized, a belief of desired benefits is also supposed lending to the participant’s self-efficacy and certainty of proficiency. Denton, Vaughn, and Fletcher (2003) recognized when a program was perceived by teachers as practical and beneficial to students a higher quality of implementation was sustained. The literature consistently cites the importance of buy-in throughout all stages of implementation. What the literature did not reference was a specific approach to

achieving this support. Rogers (2003) emphasized the need for clear and specific communication about the theory of the change and identifying individuals able to advocate, persuade, and encourage participants. Early stage preparations described by Adelman and Taylor (2003) included:

- Develop an understanding of the big-picture context; develop an understanding of the current status of efforts; delineate how the innovation can contribute with respect to the larger agenda.
- Mobilize interest and support among key stakeholders; identify champions who are committed to the innovation; implement a marketing strategy to mobilize a critical mass of support; implement strategies to develop support of key policymakers.
- Clarify feasibility; clarify how necessary changes can be accomplished; formulate a long-range strategic plan. (pp. 7-8)

Program Installation

The second stage of the process is program installation (Fixsen et al., 2005). After a decision is made to begin implementing a program, there are tasks to be completed before the teachers and staffs begin to use the resources. Structural supports are put in place for program initiation. These include ensuring the funding is available, reviewing and aligning human resources, and developing policies. Finalizing the outcome expectations and measurement tools to report the results of the program are also part of this stage. Realignment and professional development of current staff are part of the program installation phase (Fixsen et al., 2005). Purchases of supporting resources and

technology are also completed during this stage. Program installation is the preparation phase so that implementation can occur.

Initial Implementation

The third stage, initial implementation, involves changes in the overall practices and environment. Changes in skill levels and organizational culture occur within this phase. There is an awkward stage during this phase because of the compelling forces of fear of change and investment in the status quo combined with the difficult work of implementing something new is prevalent in this stage. This stage requires changes in skill levels, organizational capacity, and organizational culture. Such change demands time and practice. All of this comes during the time a new program is struggling to begin and when confidence in the decision to adopt the program is being questioned. Fixsen et al. (2005) recognized this as the time when attempts to implement new practices may end.

Full Operation

The fourth stage is full operation. At this point, the implemented program becomes fully operational with new learning integrated into practitioner, organizational and community practices, and policies and procedures (Fixsen et al., 2005). Over time, the innovation becomes the accepted practice within the organization. Teachers no longer consider this a new practice, but rather, the way things are done. Their practices are proficient and the community has adapted to the presence of the innovation. Anticipated benefits are also realized during this stage. Once fidelity measures are above criterion levels the majority of the time, beneficial changes can be identified.

Innovation

The fifth stage is innovation. During this stage practices and conditions are used with fidelity and good effect. Opportunities are available to refine and expand the practices, allowing for slight variations and adjustments to meet the needs of the users. Some changes during this phase may not be desirable and are recognized as a threat to the fidelity. This may be due to new personnel coming on board that are learning the techniques and developing an understanding of the innovation. Adjustments within this phase will support the fidelity of implementation through mechanisms used during the early implementation phase. This time allows for enhancement of the program. The innovation phase is where the science of teaching and the art of teaching join together.

Sustainability

The final stage, sustainability, establishes the fully-implemented evidence-based program. This is usually in the second to fourth year period. Previously skilled and trained personnel may leave and need to be replaced. Leaders and funding streams may change. The goal during this stage is the long-term survival and continued effectiveness of the practices. Community planning is important within this phase. Denton et al. (2003) identified the important elements of this stage to help ensure sustainability:

- Teacher's commitment to the program; the presence of strong on-site facilitators to support proficiency in the execution of the program;
- Pronounced buy-in by staff; empowered teachers to take responsibility for the school change; schools follow procedures to ensure high-fidelity implementation and use the collection of data to measure;

- Teachers demonstrate professionalism; teachers are provided with professional development that leads to proficiency;
- Programs are perceived by teachers as practical and beneficial to students; and
- Administrative support and leadership; instructional practice is valued by the school leaders; administration provides long-term support for professional development (pp. 207-08).

Among the stages reviewed, this study will focus on stage three, initial implementation. This stage was selected because the involvement of change with overall practice and environment is a pivotal phase within an organization. If changes in skill levels and organizational culture do not take place, implementation with desired results cannot occur. Recognizing the fear of change and supporting the idea the status quo is no longer accepted can be the tipping point. This stage requires difficult work from all; teachers, purveyors, and administrators. Remembering this is the time that new practices may never get started and where old practices are revived makes this stage crucial in the implementation process (Fixsen et al., 2005).

Successful transference of a new program into a real world setting is within this initial implementation stage. Teachers have a wide range of academic specializations and abilities, take a variety of paths to certification, and bring their own backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences into their classrooms (Richardson, 1996; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). The environment of every classroom also varies with the student population and the conditions of the school. This means providing any curricular program to different teachers across multiple schools will result, to a certain degree, in many different variations in what may have been intended in the development of the program or

innovation. In order to draw valid conclusions relating to the potential of a program to improve students' learning, it is critical to know whether teachers implement the innovation as intended by its designers. Various components have been identified as vital aspects and may cause this stage to take a different direction than intended (Dane & Schneider, 2006). Dane and Schneider identify five aspects:

- Adherence – program components are delivered as prescribed;
- Exposure – amount of program content received by participants;
- Quality of the delivery – theory-based ideal in terms of processes and content;
- Participant responsiveness – engagement of the participants; and
- Program differentiation – unique features of the intervention are distinguishable from other programs (p. 16).

Adherence is also referred to as the integrity or fidelity of whether a program is being delivered as it was designed. This means all core components are delivered to the appropriate population; the staff suitably trained; using the right techniques and materials; and in the contexts prescribed (Mihalic et al., 2002). The literature indicated most teachers do not cover everything in a curriculum, and they are likely to teach less over time. Professional development alone is not sufficient to guarantee fidelity of implementation. Longevity of high fidelity includes strong teacher professional development and complementary program characteristics, teacher characteristics of ownership and pride, and organizational characteristics of a positive and supportive climate. Program characteristics include clarity of goals and specific procedures to put the innovation into place. A clear program structure is necessary, but must also be easy to understand. The program characteristics must also seem relevant and attractive.

Exposure refers to the dosage of sessions implemented, length of each session or the frequency with which the program techniques were implemented (Mihalic et al., 2002). Ensuring implementers understand the core program components and dosage necessary for success is a challenge to program developers. The original efficacy trials of programs are usually under the maximum control of the designer and under optimal conditions with high levels of funding, motivation, and support. The researcher generally exercises extreme care to ensure that the program is thoroughly understood and implemented with a high degree of quality. As programs are established as being effective and disseminated widely, the chances for key program components to be modified and inconsistencies in program delivery become more likely (Dane & Schneider, 2006). Depending upon the type of modifications made, the program may become less effective in ensuring the outcomes sought.

Professional Development

Guskey (1995) acknowledged the significance of professional development efforts designed to facilitate change within successful implementation. Researchers recognize that change occurring in the classroom is contributed to the successful and lasting professional development that is provided (McLaughlin, 1990; Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977; Wise, 1991). Greater success in professional development rests on the capacity to use the knowledge gained from the professional development. McLaughlin (1991) found any improvement effort hinges on the smallest unit of the organization; the classroom. What is most relevant to teachers should be emphasized by focusing on the day-to-day actions within the classroom setting.

Reform oriented professional development tends to be more effective than traditional professional development (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Reform oriented professional development includes such teacher activities as study groups, mentoring or coaching, and peer action-research. Timely and more in-depth engagement than is typically provided in the standard workshop creates interest and collective practice. Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi and Gallagher (2007) found the incorporation of time for teachers to plan for implementation is significant for promoting program implementation. Although a mix of focus on content and strategies is necessary to help support successful implementation, extensive support through discussion and practice helps to eliminate misconceptions. Fishman and Krajcik (2003) found a relationship between professional development activities where teachers engage in inquiry and positive student achievement outcomes. Guskey (2002) refered to this idea of change as "primarily an experientially based learning process for teachers" (p. 34). The need for a change in the professional development delivery is partly due to the fact that most teachers today learned from textbooks and tend to hold conceptions of the discipline inconsistent with an inquiry based approach.

Quality of program delivery is the way teachers deliver a program. A teacher's skill in using the techniques or methods prescribed by the program, attitude and preparedness will all affect the program delivery (Mihalic et al., 2002). Delivery of the program means the content is delivered as specified according to the amount of time spent, to the specific steps followed within the program plan. The quality of delivery depends on the extent a teacher approaches a theoretical ideal of delivering the program content and processes. Such skill development is also tied to the effectiveness of the

professional development provided. Researchers have increasingly focused on what makes professional development effective. Effective professional development leads back to evidence in the classroom. This is particularly important for the teachers of literacy. Effective teaching depends on the instructional decisions teachers make and a teacher's expertise plays a critical part in these decisions. During the instruction of reading, students need models of declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge of strategies (Schraw, 2001). Hartman (2001) found when students become metacognitive with content material academic performance improves. Historically teachers have had difficulty implementing the instruction of reading strategies when they have not been specifically trained in reading instruction (Fisher & Frey, 2005). Effectiveness links together the design of professional development, teachers' learning during professional development activities, and subsequent changes in classroom practice (Borko, 2004).

Other Factors

The level of responsiveness is also related to the level of willingness to learn and adapt to new routines and behaviors. Participant responsiveness is defined as how teachers are engaged and involved in the activities and content of the program (Mihalic et al., 2002). Motivation to become active in the implementation is also related to a teacher's belief of the program's value for students and teachers. There are various ways to promote teachers' active learning. Lack of responsiveness may be related to a lack of understanding of the new materials. The act of planning, enacting, and revising curricular units engages teachers more deeply with their teaching and promotes a better understanding (Spillane, 1999, 2004). Time for instructional planning, discussion, and

consideration of underlying principles of new curriculum may be more effective in supporting implementation of innovations.

How different a new program is can affect a teacher's implementation response. Program differentiation includes the unique features of the different components of the program reliably differentiated from one another (Mihalic et al., 2002). Program differentiation also recognizes distinct differences of critical features distinguishing the program from the previous conditions and whether they are present or absent during implementation. Teachers' interpretations of how well aligned the components are with their own goals for learning can affect the program differentiation. If teachers perceive the program to be aligned with their district goals and with social pressures within the schools, they are more likely to perceive the innovation components as congruent with their own goals and commit to adapting the innovation features into their daily practices (Lumpe, Haney, & Czerniak, 2000).

Historically, studies have found when an innovation fits the needs and mission of the users, it is more likely to have a stronger and lasting implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002; Mihalic et al., 2004; Richard et al., 2004; Riley, Taylor, & Elliott, 2001; Rogers, 2003). Alignment with beliefs and goals of the community helps the innovation seem like it fits and is not just one more new thing to do. The perception of need may also be influenced by the perception of how this may impact such government policies such as No Child Left Behind. Social policy is important for institutionalizing new practices. Another influence in implementation is when there are highly respected individuals in the organization are users or believers in the new innovation. These individuals can promote the program and help coordinate the

innovation through the phases (Rogers, 2003). Rogers identified these individuals as champions within the organization.

Compatibility and adaptability are also key factors of implementation (Mihalic et al., 2004). The ease of the innovation fitting in with the current practices and processes also lends to its success. An organization's culture and collaborative leadership consistently lends to change and implementation. A backer of the innovation will also help to push an implementation through (Rogers, 2003). When these factors described are present, it is much more likely the implementation of the innovation will be successful.

Implementation Conclusions

Research has identified several factors affecting the implementation of a program. A key issue in program fidelity is replication vs. adaptation. Concrete, well-specified programs appear to be more suitable to replication with fidelity, whereas more ambiguous, less clearly defined programs might thrive under conditions of adaptation. Factors included over the years leading to adaptations within the fidelity of programs are funding, work climate, organizational decision-making, leadership, and provider's level of skill proficiency, professional development and technical assistance (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005; Greenhalgh et al., 2005; Van Eekelon et al., 2006).

When evaluating the success of implementing a new innovation, monitoring the levels of implementation is an important influence on the measureable outcomes. Regardless of the process and methods used within the implementation phase, checking throughout the implementation phase helps identify those struggling with executing parts of the new program and will guide the organization in supporting the sustainability and effectiveness of the intended innovation (Fixsen et al., 2005; Greenhalgh et al., 2005).

Summary of Review of Literature

A review of the literature is relevant to this current study because of the various factors: teacher mind-set, leadership characteristics, school environment for change, and the educational influence of high stakes accountability having an effect on implementation of new curriculum. Professional development within a new program offers opportunities for new learning when teachers feel they can learn and become conduits to their classroom of students. Minimizing the factors that negatively affect teacher's perception and maximizing those factors that generate best instruction and learning may influence implementation outcomes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The choice of research method is dependent upon the research questions to be addressed in the study. This descriptive evaluation study explored how primary grade teachers felt about and described the professional development they received in preparation for implementing a new literacy curriculum. The initial selection of a research methodology, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method, requires the proposed research to fit the attributes and features of the method. Other designs were considered for this study. A quantitative methodology would utilize a wide range of numbers and statistics to test research questions and hypotheses to assess some social or learning idea (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). However, quantitative data do not allow the researcher to probe into the beliefs, actions, routines, problematic moments, concerns, personal experiences, and personal meaning in everyday life or interactions between teachers, students and curriculum (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2009). Quantitative research is objective and searches for explanations, while qualitative research attempts to build knowledge about and understand a phenomenon. Quantitative studies focus on numbers and qualitative studies focus on analysis of content collected from words contained in interviews, participant expressions, behaviors, or written evidence. The overarching research questions posed for this study were as follows:

RQ_1: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_2: How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_3: How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

Using qualitative methods provided an opportunity to gather information without pre-specification of variables about teacher perceptions of the new curriculum (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Patton, 2003). Qualitative research seeks to come to a deeper understanding of a topic and asks why and how something happens the way it does. Patton (2003) noted qualitative designs take place in real world settings where the researcher does not manipulate or control the course of action and the study emerges as it proceeds. Qualitative research is not restricted by a plan or design. As the study deepens, new approaches can be tried and additional interests explored (Patton, 2003).

Phenomenological Lens

The design and interpretation of qualitative studies depends upon what lens the researcher chooses to use. The choice of lens through which to view the study colors the analysis and interpretation of the data. Philosophically, this study used a phenomenological lens. Phenomenology asks what the meaning or structure of the experience is for a person or group of people (Fischer & Wertz, 1978; Patton, 2003). While there are various definitions of phenomenology and depending upon who is doing the defining, phenomenology has come to be understood as referring to in-depth interviews of individuals actually living through or with direct experience the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2003). The phenomenon of interest can be an emotion, a relationship, organization, or culture. In this study, the phenomenon of interest is an emotion, organization, culture, and a relationship. The phenomenon of interest is the relationship of teachers to implementing the new curriculum, in the culture of their

organization/school, and how they feel about the new curriculum. Conducting a study with a phenomenological approach involves seeking the essence of the phenomenon of interest. This study concentrated on the descriptions and experiences study participants reported. Participants were encouraged to tell their stories, share their experiences, in their own voices, and these voices and stories were used to understand how a new curriculum is implemented across grades in a school district.

Qualitative research looks for evidence to understand human behavior within its own social setting; known as ethnography. Ethnography of communication model uses anthropological methods to study verbal interactions in its own social setting (Hymes, as cited in Hiemisch, 2002), and tries to understand from as many different viewpoints as possible, the ways people interact with each other, and their environment. The basic unit of analysis in the ethnography of communication model is called the "communicative event," and meanings are conveyed through "speech acts" (Searle, 1969), which can either be defined as a command, a request, or a recommendation. Communication within traditional qualitative methods includes participant observation, interviews, and document analysis as research tools (Saville-Troike, 2003).

This study included communication models of survey, interview, and document analysis. A cross-sectional survey gathered the perceptions of professional development and leadership support of K-2 teachers during implementation of new literacy curriculum. The survey was made up of two open-ended questions addressing professional development and leadership support. The purpose of the survey was to provide an overall view of teachers' perceptions as well as to guide selection of a purposeful sample of teachers to participate in an interview session to learn more about their perceptions of

what worked or did not work during the implementation of new literacy curriculum. A semi-structured interview was utilized to support the interviewer's list of questions and also allow for divergence from the script. The open-ended questions allow room for discussion of possible themes the interviewer wants to talk about, but interviews generally follow the lead of the interviewee (Weiss, 1994). Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) preferred the semi-structured interview format because it allows interviewers to probe, develop, and expand upon particularly interesting responses. Semi-structured interviews need to be organized so the participants feel free to enhance the conversation with what they consider valid while answering specific questions. Additionally, while the semi-structured interviews allow a level of freedom in questions and responses, the structured element provides a means to ensure consistency across interviews (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989).

Documents analyzed in qualitative research include all documents related to the research study. The purpose of document content analysis will be to develop a comparison between the curriculum and implementation. Becker and Lissmann (1973, quoted in Mayring, 2000), have identified two levels of content appropriate for analysis: primary and latent. Primary content includes the themes and main ideas of the text, and latent content includes any contextual information within the text.

Site Selection

One Midwestern school district is making literacy accessible to all students by expanding elementary teachers' knowledge and participation in a balanced literacy instruction. The district maintains and follows a balanced literacy philosophy with explicit professional development to support teacher understanding. The purpose of this

study was to investigate what factors influenced kindergarten, first and second grade (K-2) teachers' implementation of new literacy curriculum.

Sixty-one elementary (grades K-2) teachers in six schools across the district were involved with the new literacy curriculum implementation. Approximately 66% hold master's degrees, 23.5% have a bachelor degree and 10.5% have a specialist degree. The teachers are Caucasians (99%) and females (100%). Twenty of the 61 responded to a survey and six were part of the interview process. The students in grades kindergarten through second (N=1260) attend the six schools involved in the new adoption and implementation of literacy curriculum. Students are Caucasian (87%), African American (9%), Hispanic (2.4%), Asian (1.1%), less than 1% of the students are Native American, and 21% receive free and reduced lunch.

Reading is a focus within the district. Student performance in Communication Arts on the state assessment has been the same over previous testing periods. Growth within cohort groups has been minimal. 2011 reading scores for K-2 are listed in the grade-level chart in Table 3. The numbers of students are predominantly proficient and advanced in Kindergarten, with a consistent increase in basic and below basic in first and second grades.

Table 3

K-2 Reading Levels in 2011

Kindergarten	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
Fountas & Pinnell Level	H and above	B-G	A	Pre-Reading
Total	50	370	22	3
School 1	7	62	9	1
School 2	10	50	1	0
School 3	8	93	5	1
School 4	5	35	4	1
School 5	8	70	2	0
School 6	12	50	1	0
First Grade	**Advanced**	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Below Basic**
Fountas & Pinnell Level	M or above	I-L	D-H	A-C
Total	90	245	51	2
School 1	11	35	8	1
School 2	2	54	9	0
School 3	24	49	15	0
School 4	9	19	4	0
School 5	29	36	10	1
School 6	15	52	5	0
Second Grade	**Advanced**	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Below Basic**
Fountas & Pinnell Level	Q or above	M-P	H-L	G and below
Total	160	216	90	84
School 1	18	28	13	18
School 2	25	32	12	5
School 3	29	39	21	10
School 4	17	24	7	9
School 5	31	33	11	7
School 6	22	32	13	17

Participants and Sampling

Participants

Participants in the study consisted of K-2 teachers in the Raymond School District in the Midwestern United States (a fictitious name was adopted to protect the anonymity of the district and the participants). All of the K-2 teachers employed in the district were asked to participate in the study. However, all participating teachers had participated in all district provided professional development and in-service prior to the implementation of the new literacy curriculum. A criterion sampling consisted of 61 teachers working in grades K-2 across six elementary schools; 21 kindergarten teachers, 21 first grade teachers, and 19 second grade teachers. All 61 teachers were invited to participate in an open-ended question survey. Twenty of the 61 responded to the survey. Six teachers were selected through purposive sampling to participate in a 90 minute semi-structured interview. The sampling represented each grade level; kindergarten, first and second, and each grade level was represented by two teachers with contrary responses in the survey.

Data Collection

Prior to beginning any data collection, permission was obtained from the Raymond School District, the six elementary schools, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Institutional Review Board (IRB). A letter describing the study and requesting teacher participation was sent to each of the K-2 teachers in each of the six elementary schools in the district (Appendix B). The letter explained the purpose and topics to be discussed.

Teacher Survey

Surveys provide researchers the opinions of a large group of people about a particular topic or issue. Information is collected in order to describe some aspects or characteristics of the population. The main form of collecting the information is through asking questions. There are two major types of surveys: cross-sectional and longitudinal (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Cross-sectional surveys collect information from a sample of a predetermined population at one point in time. Longitudinal surveys collect information at different points in time and may collect from samples of a population that may change.

This study conducted a cross-sectional survey to gather the perceptions of professional development and leadership support of K-2 teachers during implementation of new literacy curriculum. The survey was made up of two open-ended questions addressing professional development and leadership support: How has the professional development you have received helped or hindered implementation of the new literacy curriculum programs in your classroom? How has school leadership (i.e., building principal, building leadership team, literacy coaches) helped or hindered your own implementation of the new literacy curriculum programs? A cross-sectional survey was used to identify characteristics of teacher perceptions (Appendix B).

The purpose of the survey was to provide an overall view of teachers' perceptions as well as to guide selection of a purposeful sample of teachers to participate in an interview session to learn more about their perceptions of what worked or did not work during the implementation of new literacy curriculum. A common approach to purposeful sampling is to minimize the variation for interviews. In selecting respondents for individual interviews, researchers might include typical cases, extreme cases or

concentrate on key informants who are particularly rich sources of data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). For this study the researcher identified participants for interviewing by choosing those who characterized influences of implementation due to professional development and leadership. Two representatives of each grade level with contrary responses were asked to participate. Six respondents were identified to participate in a 90 minute interview with the researcher. More in-depth questioning provided detailed information to the study.

Teacher Interviews

Six participants were contacted and asked to volunteer for a 60-90-minute interview with the researcher. Interviewees were given date and time options allowing them to participate as dictated by their schedules. Participants were contacted again the day before the scheduled interview to confirm participation. One and a half hours was allotted for the interview. Prior to the interview session beginning, the room was set up so participant would be able to have a comfortable discussion with the interviewer. The location of the interviews was at a convenient location such as a library or meeting room. Prior to the start of the interview, the researcher gave a brief overview of procedures and informed consent (Appendix A) was explained and signed by the participant.

The researcher is an administrator for the school district and as such may be perceived by the teachers to have some ability hire, fire, or had some control over their professional lives. To allay concerns on the part of teachers, the researcher reminded the participants of the procedures in place to keep the teacher's identification confidential. The researcher has experience facilitating open discussion. The session began with the researcher explaining the study and the informed consent process, and obtaining a

signature. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Note taking was done by the researcher when necessary. The semi-structured protocol (Appendix D) guided the discussion and a range of techniques were utilized in the interview. These techniques included but were not limited to prompts; assisting by suggesting something to be said, probes; question closely, rephrasing; to restate differently , restating; to say again in a new way , and repetitions; making requests. At the conclusion of the interview, the participant was reminded of the confidentiality of the responses and thanked once again for the individual's time and opinions. Interview participants were also reminded at the end of the discussion all comments remain in the room and will not to be shared with other staff members. Data were then transcribed verbatim and prepared for analysis. A professional transcriber was used and participants were provided a number or pseudonym rather than using formal names to ensure confidentiality of the responses. Participants were asked if they wanted to review their transcript to ensure it reflected what they said. Participants were given the opportunity to make any changes to their transcript to better reflect their thoughts and comments.

An interview protocol (Appendix D) guided the discussion within a semi structured interview. Such interviews are flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The overarching questions were: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum? How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum? How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum? The interview was based around teachers' perceptions of the professional development provided for the new literacy

curriculum, the balanced literacy instruction involved in the new adoption, the level of implementation and the feelings of the support by school leadership within the implementation stage. Professional development focus must be on what is happening in the classroom (McLaughlin, 1991). This is where change happens. Questions around the teachers' perceptions of the level of professional development helped the researcher to learn about the success of the professional development provided.

Literacy instruction is complex and difficult to implement if understanding of the components is weak (Fisher & Frey, 2005). Learning about teachers' feelings of understanding of the implementation of a balanced literacy program is important in realizing the capacity of the implementers. Mihalic et al. (2002) referred to the dosage of core components within an implementation process as crucial in ensuring that the implementers have a thorough understanding of the new innovation. Questions around the level of implementation helped to determine the deeper understanding needed for sustainability.

Mooney and Mausbach (2008) identified how the alignment of systems; curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development lead to sustainable improvement. Leadership of this alignment transcends to what is happening in the classroom. Facilitators of change affect the longevity of school improvement (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Learning how teachers feel about the leadership lends to better understanding of the influences, positive or negative, that affect the implementation process.

The semi-structured interview allowed for the interviewer's list of questions to guide the discussion while allowing a certain amount of divergence from the script so the

interviewee could lead the conversation in another direction. The interview schedule of questions provided a means to ensure consistency across interviews.

Literacy Curriculum

The literacy curriculum implemented was determined from the weaknesses identified in the literacy needs assessment that was completed in 2010. Recommendations to the school district suggested a two-year plan. Recommendations included:

- Create an end goal (spring 2013) that will enable all teachers to have a consistent curriculum for literacy.
- Progressive goals should be to determine essential understandings among all teachers. This does not mean that every teacher should be on the same page each day, but sufficient guidelines should promote consistency and coherence.
- Create a way for all schools to work together and for teachers to have a voice. One progressive goal could be to initiate school based groups to work on curricular issues, and then one teacher from each grade level at each school becomes a representative on a literacy curriculum committee.
- Identify key resources being used and create a way to bring together teachers' use of resources for the benefit of all.
- Identify areas for professional development and how to help teachers reach their potential.
- Conclude with an intention to continually work on aligning assessments and instruction (Massengill-Shaw, 2010).

Phonemic awareness and phonics was identified as a weakness in the district (Massengill-Shaw, 2010). Although animated literacy was being used in most K-4 schools, minimal instruction in phonemic awareness (rhyme, blending, segmenting, deleting, substituting) or phonics was observed. Pathways to Reading literacy curriculum/professional development was piloted in one elementary school and was identified within the needs assessment as a very strong alphabetic program. It provided specific phonemic awareness and phonics skills the other resources within the schools did not provide.

A rudimentary balanced literacy framework was in place (Massengill-Shaw, 2010). Teachers were attempting to structure their time accordingly and teach many aspects of literacy. Teachers did not fully understand the framework. Professional development focusing on stages of literacy development and what students need at each stage of development was recommended to help understand the primary focus of balanced literacy instruction and how the balanced literacy structural elements support instruction. The taskforce was charged with finding literacy resources that included instruction within literacy stations, shared reading, modeled and interactive writing (Massengill-Shaw, 2010).

From the needs assessment results, the district literacy task force, made up of teachers and administrators, reviewed materials and resources that would address the recommendations and weaknesses identified from the assessment. Literacy resources were researched and narrowed by the literacy task force. Once narrowed, materials were available for teachers and administrators to review. Teachers were asked to provide reflective feedback to the task force. Reviewing the results of the feedback and evaluating

the components of the needs assessment recommendations, the final recommendation of resources was proposed to the district cabinet of administrators and to the teaching staff. Good Habits Great Readers (GHGR) was chosen to enhance all components of balanced literacy and Pathways to Reading (PTR) was determined as the additional support needed for phonemic awareness and phonics instruction.

PTR is considered as professional development more than as materials. Teachers have received professional development throughout the first year of implementation. The learning was initially five days of training. Throughout the school year, the learning was embedded into their teaching through observations, co-teaching, and coaching. The professional development will continue for an additional year of embedded learning. After the first two years, district trainers will continue the support within a coaching model.

GHGR provided three days of initial training. Professional development has also continued three additional days, with the last two days being embedded in the classroom through modeling and coaching. The second year will include one day embedded professional development.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is the systematic examination of documents in order to identify needs and challenges within the research phenomenon that is being studied. It can help recognize patterns that may be missed. Gaining insight, examining trends, and identifying consistencies in the research lends to reliability and validity of the work. Documents such as: grade level curriculums, professional development materials and agendas, school implementation plans, school leadership plans, etc. were submitted to

document analysis to determine how curriculum content compared to what was expressed as implemented within the interviews with the participating teachers.

Confidentiality

All researchers have an obligation to protect their subjects from harm, deception, preserve confidentiality, and obtain informed consent prior to the beginning of a study. Participants were not be deceived in any way. Informed consent was reviewed with participants prior to the beginning of the interview and participants were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time and request their data not be used. Confidentiality in a qualitative study presents a different set of problems than those found in quantitative research. The researcher/analyst has knowledge of the participant and has the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of this information at all times. Educators may have difficulty trusting the researcher and so every effort was made to gain the participant's trust and cooperation. Signed consent forms were kept separate from the data and in a locked file in a UMKC office. The consent forms (Appendices A-C) will be destroyed six months after the completion of the study. All audio tapes will be destroyed after seven years through magnetizing the tape as well as shredding the tapes at the completion of the study and only pseudonyms will be used on the typed transcripts.

Ethical Assurance

To ensure the study is in compliance with university and SSIRB standards, appropriate measures were put in place. Approval by the SSIRB was achieved prior to collecting any data. The school district provided written consent for the study to be

conducted and insured the researcher has completed any research professional development required by the participating school district.

There was a very minimal risk associated with this study. Participants in the study were volunteers and were free to terminate their involvement at any time without any repercussions. To allow complete anonymity, the study does not reveal anyone's name, name of the school district, or participating schools. The information gathered from the interviews was collected and locked in a file cabinet that is accessible to the researcher only.

All participants in the study were required to sign an informed consent form following university requirements. The consent form included the purpose of the study, minimum requirements for participants, and a confidentiality clause. The participants received a copy for their personal review and record. An additional copy will be retained for the study's record. All consent forms are stored in a separate file in a UMKC office and destroyed within six months of the study ending. The data will be stored electronically for a period of seven years. The information will then be destroyed.

Study Validity and Reliability

Study validity can be external or internal. External validity refers to the generalizabilty of the findings of a study. To what other populations or settings could the findings of the study be generalized? Population external validity addresses identifying other populations to which the findings of a study are generalizable. Population validity also addresses how the subjects were selected for a study (Ary et al., 2009). The study addresses only the teachers in one school district and new literacy curriculum making it generalizing to other teachers in other school districts difficult. There was no threat from

interaction between subjects and treatment; however, using volunteers does present a problem. Volunteers may have special characteristics not typical of the population and no one knows how or why non-volunteers answered the items on the surveys or why they did not volunteer (Ary et al., 2009).

Ecological validity is concerned with the generalizing of the findings to other situations. Before generalizing the findings, it is important to consider the environment in which the research was completed. Threats to ecological validity (pretesting, novelty effect of a new treatment, or attitudes developed over the course of the study) did not present problems in the study. There was no pretesting and the study was of short enough duration to not affect the attitudes and perceptions of the participants. The constructs proposed by the study for investigation are derived from the program the organization has developed.

Campbell and Stanley (1963) distinguished between research designs in terms of internal validity, defining internal validity as the extent to which extraneous variables are controlled by the researcher. Extraneous variables are those variables that may affect the outcomes of a study. The eight factors related to internal validity (history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, differential selection, experimental mortality, and selection maturation interaction) are concerning in the study. History did not present a problem, as there was no occurrence within the organization or in the world at large that affected how study participants behaved in the interviews. The occurrence of outside events (organizational or world) was beyond the control of the researcher; however, no occurrence was noted in the study. Maturation was not be a problem due to the short time line for the study and the participants being adults whose developmental

sequence is not as rapid as in young children. Testing was not a problem as there was no testing involved in this study. Instrumentation was not a problem for the interview protocol was not a test but a guide for discussion. The repeated measures and statistical regression to the mean did not present a problem. Differential selection was not a problem as all members of the population were invited to participate in the study. Selection maturation interaction was not a problem as the study's participants are all adult and not liable to change over the short time period of the study. Experimental mortality or subjects dropping out of a study was not a problem as all teachers were employed on contract with the school district.

Qualitative content analysis validity and reliability depends on the process of the models of communication and category development. The documentary material was analyzed in a consistent manner. The categories of analysis were based on the research questions, and refined by the process of analysis. The validity and reliability of qualitative research depends on specific methods a researcher can perform. Triangulation compares the results from two or more data sources to check for consistency in answers and attitudes. Triangulation is an appropriate method for ensuring comprehensive data collection – getting all sides of "the story," in the answer to a question (Mays & Pope, 2000).

Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994) noted there are no specific rules or conventions for analyzing or interpreting qualitative data. Making sense of piles of data can be challenging but it is possible to make sense out of the data by sorting out the trivial, investigating patterns, identifying what is significant, and communicating the information

in a logical way (Patton, 2003). The researcher needs to work to ensure the data make sense and allow the analysis to emerge from the data. The analyst also needs to monitor biases, perceptions, procedures, and be as honest as possible (Patton, 2003). While there are different ways to conduct a qualitative study, there are also different ways to view the data for analysis and interpretation.

Teacher Survey and Interviews

The responses of teachers to the survey with the open-ended items and the teacher interviews were analyzed using a constant comparison phenomenological lens; a continuous practice of comparing sections within and across categories (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A phenomenological approach to the analysis of the data collected for this study was used to analyze the data. A phenomenological approach or lens to analyze and interpret the data involves being able to view the responses in the group interviews from the individual's point of view. This type of analysis of qualitative data seeks to structure the experiences of people about the phenomena (Patton, 2003).

The analysis for this study involved coding; a numerical representation of categorical data, categorizing; determining qualitative descriptions, and identifying; clustering common identifiers, overall themes present in the data with no preconceived expectations of what might be contained in the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Coded data were organized into categories with irrelevant or repetitive material deleted. The analysis viewed the phenomena of interest through the eyes and thoughts of the study participants. Systematic rigor; reading and re-reading of the data for themes, was used to allow the data to speak (Patton, 2003). One of the first steps in the analysis was to read the transcripts several times prior to any analysis. Reading the transcripts served to

acquaint the researcher with the content of the transcripts and what seemed to emerge from the data. The second step in the analysis was coding the data. Codes are phrases, sentences and even paragraphs and useful, meaningful labels attached to the small units of data. The parameters for definitions developed for the coded pieces of data. A constant comparison method (Patton, 2003) was used and as other pieces of data were coded, they were labeled with an existing code or a new code that developed and was defined. Qualitative analysis is flexible and fluid. During the course of the analysis, the codes may have changed, dropped from the analysis, combined with other codes, and new codes added as the data were analyzed. The process began with unfocused coding; identification of general comparisons, and moved to a descriptive coding with a finite set of patterns or codes developed (Patton, 2003).

When the data analyzed were complete and codes established, an external auditor with experience in qualitative research using the code definitions and parameters, randomly coded selected sections of data as a check on the analyst's coding. The object was to determine the coherence of coding between the auditor and the analyst. Any difference identified between the auditor and the analyst was discussed. The analysis then moved from coding the data to the development of categories and overall themes found in the content of the data. The analysis of qualitative data entails pulling the data apart and then reassembling the data into something that will be meaningful and can be communicated (Patton, 2003). Once the data were coded, the data were studied to determine if the codes came together to make up a larger more encompassing category. Categories represent larger ideas or constructs (Patton). Each category emerging from the data reflects the participant's perceptions and experiences and was defined using constant

comparison and each code placed in the category if the definition was appropriate. These were reflected on and discussed by the auditor and analyst to ensure mutual agreement.

Documents

Documents reveal what people do, or did, and what they value. This type of behavior occurs in a natural setting, so the data have strong validity. Documents exist that are relevant to the research. Not analyzing them would leave a hole or gap in the information. Document analysis of the professional development that has occurred during implementation included reviewing professional development school calendars, topics and agendas of professional development, and professional development information that is produced by the literacy programs. Professional development reflection described participant perceptions and compared relevant documents when analyzing the professional development that had been provided. Materials within the professional development opportunities were analyzed around the research questions of this study.

A review of the program materials of the new adoptions was analyzed. Such documents included recording documents of lessons and informal assessments, and student resources that enhance the curriculum (i.e. leveled readers, lessons aligned with readers, decodable books, and journals). Content analysis was reviewed around the research questions of this study.

Documents exist in organizations such as schools, businesses, nursing homes, courts, and social welfare organizations. Several issues challenge the analysis of documents in any organization. The first of these is obtaining access to the documents, understanding how and why the documents were produced, ascertaining the accuracy of the documents, and linking documents to other sources of data including interview or

observations (Patton, 2003). Berg and Lune (2011) noted unobtrusive data such as documents are not useful for analysis unless the information contained in them can be reduced and made meaningful. Content analysis is a useful qualitative technique to use with documents. Content analysis is defined as systematically and objectively finding ideas in written messages. Criteria was developed and established prior to the data analysis. Criteria for selecting data require a sufficient defining to account for variation in the message. Criteria definitions also need to be adequate enough that another person would understand and code a piece of data the same way. Categories can also be developed from the criteria closely reflect the intent of the study. Inclusion or exclusion of content needs to be consistent.

The content analysis of documents from the literacy program was analyzed for content and comparing curriculum content to implementation content to assess how closely the curriculum was implemented in professional development, classrooms, and schools. Criteria was developed from the curriculum and defined. The defined criteria were then explored in the implementation of professional development in classrooms, schools, and school leadership. Counts were made for each defined criteria in the curriculum and compared to the implementation. This provided the basis for analyzing the documents pertaining to the literacy program in the Raymond School District. Findings from this analysis were used to corroborate or compare to teacher open-ended responses and interviews.

Triangulation Methodology

Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from more than two sources (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Specifically, it

refers to the combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. By combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and empirical materials, researchers can minimize the problems that come from single method, single-observer and single-theory studies.

The purpose of triangulation in qualitative research is to increase the credibility and validity of the results. According to O'Donoghue and Punch (2003), triangulation is a "method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data."

This study used the technique of triangulation to analyze teacher surveys, interviews, and document analysis to develop stronger research results.

Conclusion

The qualitative data collected provided additional understanding of teacher perceptions of implementation, leadership and professional development used to support the influence of instruction and learning in the classroom. Triangulation of the multiple sources of data collection provided a more robust result.

The research described in this study was motivated by an interest in developing a better understanding of how to support the implementation of new initiatives. This study added to the literature on the process of implementing a new literacy curriculum across several schools in a school district. Information was obtained on teacher opinions about how a new literacy curriculum affects them, their teaching and classrooms during the implementation process. The effect leadership has within the implementation process was also gathered. This study identified problems occurring during the implementation process as teachers begin to internalize the new literacy curriculum.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher perceptions of how a new literacy curriculum was being implemented in K-2 classrooms. Chapter four presents the findings of the data collected for the study. Teacher perceptions were explored through surveys, interviews, and document analysis to identify how literacy curriculum resources were being implemented in Kindergarten to 2nd grade classrooms. A brief review of the study is presented, followed by results from the survey conducted with 20 teachers. The findings proceed to describe the six teachers purposively selected to participate in individual interviews followed by document analysis and a summary. The overarching research questions posed for this study were as follows:

RQ_1: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_2: How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_3: How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. The first step in the data collection process involved sending an electronic survey to all Kindergarten, grade one and grade two teachers meeting the criteria of participating in all professional development of the new literacy curriculum, for inclusion in the study. Demographic profiles and open-ended questions were used to collect data along with the survey questions. Also as a part of the survey, respondents were asked if they would be

willing to participate in an interview. Six teachers (two Kindergarten, two first grade and two second grade) participated in an interview. The researcher using the same semi-structured interview protocol with each interviewee and additional questions were used to probe into teacher thinking. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed prior to analysis. Documents were collected from professional development provided to teachers by GHGR and PTR consultants. This included professional development guides, training schedules, and curriculum resource literature. Survey results are presented first followed by the analysis of the interview data and the document analysis data.

Teacher Survey Results

Sixty-one teachers were invited to participate in an open-ended question survey (Appendix B). Of the 61 surveys sent out a total of 20 teachers responded to the survey resulting in a 32.8% response rate. Surveys were sent out in May of 2012 or the end of the first year of implementation. The survey was made up of two open-ended questions addressing professional development and leadership support. Demographic data included: grade taught, years of teaching and completed educational level. The two open-ended questions on the survey were as follows:

1. How has the professional development you have received helped or hindered implementation of the new literacy curriculum programs in your classroom?

2. How has school leadership (i.e. building principal, building leadership team, literacy coaches) helped or hindered your own implementation of the new literacy curriculum programs?

Survey respondents included Kindergarten teachers (n=3, 15%), first grade teachers (n=13, 65%), and second grade teachers (n=4, 20%). All teachers were females

(100%), which are aligned with the K-2 teacher population of the district. Years of experience ranged from 5 to 39 with a mean year of experience of 13.85. Teachers had completed a Bachelor's degree (n=3, 15%), a Master's degree (n=16, 80%), and Education Specialists degree (n=1, 5%).

The first open ended question on the survey asked how teachers perceived their training in how to use the new literacy curriculum in their classrooms and whether or not the training had helped or hindered implementation of the new literacy curriculum. The responses were defined within the realm of the two curriculum resources; PTR and GHGR. Overall (n=18), teachers felt PTR professional development was very helpful. Professional Development was detailed and provided explicit practice. Participant G referenced the thorough, relevant and on-going professional development of PTR as critical in correct implementation. Professional development throughout the year included pre-questionnaires from the consultant. The consultant then designed the future coaching and modeling around the responses of the teachers. Participant O agreed the explicit and timely follow-up was essential. Teachers (n=10) did not feel the same way about GHGR. A portion (n=7) of the teachers did not address GHGR at all within their answer to the question. Participant J stated, "I was extremely disappointed in the professional development for this curriculum." Participant R felt the GHGR professional development stretched out way too long and became boring.

The second question within the survey addressed teachers' perceptions of how school leadership had helped or hindered the implementation of the new literacy curriculum. Nearly half (n=14) of the teachers referenced the literacy coach as a great help and support. One literacy coach supports two schools within the district. The literacy

coaches' responsibilities include classroom support in using the literacy curriculum and utilizing best instructional practices. Additionally, many (n=11) acknowledged the principal as a key factor in supporting them through the implementation. Some (n=5) teachers stated monthly on-going district collaboration helped them to feel comfortable with where they were in the implementation process in their classrooms. A few (n=4) thought there should be additional time to observe teachers who have had experience teaching with the materials. Participant S stated, "Our literacy coach had a handle on the curriculum and was very helpful in implementation." Participant Q also stated, "Our school leadership has helped tremendously with getting answers to questions, setting up observations, and listening to our requests as to what we wanted to see with each program." Participant M thought the grade level meetings were helpful because it allowed teachers time to talk to others from different schools. Grade level collaboration is a monthly event, where teachers voluntarily meet for one hour, to discuss classroom practices with other teachers across the district. While most (n=18) participants felt supported, the references were around PTR. GHGR was not acknowledged in their comments.

The purpose of the survey was to provide an overall view of teachers' perceptions as well as to guide selection of a purposeful sample of teachers to participate in an interview session to learn more about their perceptions of what worked or did not work during the implementation of new literacy curriculum. For this study the researcher identified participants for interviewing by choosing two representatives of each grade level with contradictory responses. Six respondents were identified to participate in a 90 minute interview with the researcher.

Interview Participants and Data Collection Process

Six interviews were conducted late in the spring of 2012 in a comfortable and secure setting where participants would feel free to express their ideas and thoughts. Interviewees included two Kindergarten, two first grade, and two second grade teachers and each interview participant was assigned a pseudonym (i.e. Kim, Kathy, Wanda, Wendy, Teresa, and Tamara) as an identifier to protect the confidentiality of the responses. All of the participants were educators in the district and had completed the professional development of the new literacy materials. Participants were all females and five of the teachers had a Masters degree and one had a Bachelors degree. Educators' teaching experience ranged from 5 to 22 years of experience with a mean of 13.6 years.

Each interview was tape recorded and lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. Verbatim transcripts were typed and used for analysis with all personally identifying information removed. The transcripts captured verbal responses and nonverbal responses were recorded in notes. The transcripts of the discussions were checked individually for accuracy and completeness before interpretation and examination by each participant. A phenomenological lens was used to code and categorize data to present the participant's views and their lived experiences. This approach enabled an accurate capturing of the essence of the participant's views on implementation through questions about professional development, leadership and self reflection within the classroom. The intention was to present the participants' views as objectively as possible and not let personal biases influence the analysis. Every effort was made to be objective and stay true to the opinions and feelings of each participant.

The data from the interviews were analyzed as a set of data. The data were coded after repeated readings of the transcripts and categories developed. The categories centered around the research questions of professional development, leadership, and teacher understanding. During this process, codes were added as necessary, deleted if no longer relevant, combined with other codes, or redefined as necessary to reflect the views of the participants. Personal beliefs about discipline did not bias or influence how the data were collected, analyzed, or interpreted. Every effort was made to present the participants and their ideas by keeping an open mind, allowing the data to speak, and the codes and categories to emerge from the data.

Discussion from Interviews

The research questions posed by the study guided the interview discussions.

RQ1: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ2: How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ3: How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

Additional questions specific to each idea were also included in the interview. Participants were asked common questions, their thoughts and responses allowed for conversational approach adjusted for each individual.

Professional Development with PTR

The first research question posed for this study was as follows:

RQ1: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum?

The educators (n=6, 100%) participating in the interviews thought PTR professional development was important and very effective for teachers. Participant Wendy notes what made it effective was having the author come to the training as she was very knowledgeable about the curriculum since she had developed it. Most participants (n=5, 83%) thought PTR professional development provided them with the skills necessary to be successful when implementing the curriculum. Participant Kathy really felt empowered by the new learning. The initial five day training was somewhat overwhelming but participants understood the need for the in-depth information. The ongoing support of additional embedded professional development, collaboration, and observations of other teachers balanced learning and allowed time to practice the process. Participant Wanda felt the information was not as organized fashion as it needed to be to develop a complete understanding of the program. Participant Kathy stated, "I think I got as much as I could take in."

When considering what else was needed in the professional development (PD), first grade teachers identified two areas of need: a schedule of implementation and prep time upfront to cut and collect all the materials needed for instruction. Participant Wendy stated, "I would say that we were not prepared for the upfront cutting and putting all the materials that you had to do." Most of the teachers (n=4, 67%) felt PTR included all the necessary components in the professional development. Teacher Kathy stated, "Now that I had the PD through Pathways, and the way that they kind of conduct that…it would be awesome if we had that kind of PD for Good Habits or any of the programs that we do."

Changes in professional development (PD) were noted by one participant and included better organization of the documents used during instruction. Both a group manual and a small group manual were used simultaneously during the literacy block of instruction and could be confusing.

All of the teachers (n=6, 100%) felt PTR changed their understanding of literacy instruction. Teachers thought the phonics instruction had been left out in the past and not was taught in teacher preparation for general education pre-service teachers. Participant Wanda stated,

> I remember years ago trying to help children in reading and I did my word analysis and identified they are struggling with vowels. It's the vowels almost every time and I thought if we could just find some way to fix this, you know, they are not going to struggle as much. They are going to make more growth and so it brought that piece to me that organized that; and be able to teach that piece. But then again, it confirmed several things that I knew were always missing in my instruction.

Participant Teresa also stated, "It really helps me understand how to teach literacy better and I have noticed just in the 1 year that I have been teaching it, I noticed a big difference in my students…"

Professional Development with GHGR

Participants (n=5, 83%) were less enthusiastic response about GHGR professional development. Participant Teresa stated, "I think the program kind of lends itself to be more easily implemented because it is more along the lines of what we are used to as far as guided reading." Participant Wendy stated, "Good Habits is more common practices

where good teaching methods are just wrapped into a nice package." Teachers (n=6, 100%) did think GHGR provided consistency and a common language to use across buildings and grade levels. Overall, the information did not appear to be new or innovative to the teachers.

Most of the participants (n=4, 67%) did not have suggestions about additional needs for GHGR professional development. Kindergarten teachers (n=2, 100%) felt the writing component was ignored. Teacher Kathy felt the modeling provided was not based around students, but instead, was demonstrated as an adult lesson.

Possible changes in the professional development suggested by the participants included focusing on grade level examples when modeling; demonstrating more specific instruction on the use of the materials; and modeling the best instructional strategies rather than just giving an overview of the teacher manual. All of the participants (n=6, 100%) felt the GHGR professional development did not change or enhance their understanding of literacy instruction. Participant Kim stated, "I think the philosophy of the way Good Habits Great Readers is supposed to work kind of build on what I already knew but I would love to see that all actually dovetail together like it's supposed to." Teachers did not think you could have the necessary skills without structured professional development. Participant Wanda stated, "Pathways and Good Habits Great Readers would not have looked like what they intended it to look like without it."

Literacy Curriculum within PTR

Teachers (n=6, 100%) liked all of the components within the PTR curriculum. Kindergarten teachers (n=2, 100%) liked the concept of large group instruction and then moving to small groups to practice and differentiating the learning. First grade teachers

(n=2, 100%) liked the systematic process of choosing strategies when decoding words. The 2nd grade teachers (n=2, 100%) liked utilizing segmenting and writing to develop good decoders. Participant Wendy stated, "She (PTR author) does a lot with visualization and first graders close their eyes and use a lot of imagery…that was amazing how much that helped them and it was a good tool that I have used, but it is embedded all the way."

Teachers (n=4, 67%) did have suggestions they thought would enhance the training. Kindergarten participants were concerned managing the classroom of students during small groups. Students in Kindergarten are inexperienced with working independently and small group instruction begins early on in the school year. Another concern for Participant Kim was what to do with the student entering Kindergarten already able to read. First grade participants struggled with the time constraints in a day and getting everything completed. Participant Wendy also noted the fine-print in the manual instructions was easily missed. Two participants suggested changes be made in implementing PTR in future years. Participant Wanda thought additional time was needed to focus on each component of PTR. Participant Kim thought finding independent activities for students during small group time were needed.

Most of the participants (n=4, 67%) thought the curriculum was different from what they have used in the past. The instruction was more specific and focused on phonics and phonemic awareness. Participant Kathy felt some students needed a hook and PTR does not have one like other literacy programs such as Animated Literacy (Stone, 2010). Animated Literacy ties a character and a gesture to letters and sounds. Participant Wanda felt she spent a lot more time on spelling in the past.

Most teachers (n=5, 83%) felt PTR impacted them personally. Participant Kathy stated, "I just think that overall, just me personally getting a better understanding of this…" Participant Tamara stated, "I feel more confident where they are when I send them on." Participant Wanda noted it has been different for her personally, knowing students are not reading books as soon, and she had to have some faith with what she was doing. Most teachers (n=5, 83%) were more confident with PTR curriculum. Participant Wanda stated, "Part of feeling confident is being able to use that program and having something available."

Literacy Curriculum within GHGR

Teachers (n=2, 33%) liked the parts of GHGR curriculum. Participant Wanda liked how the same literature pieces were used in different units and become anchor stories. Participant Wendy thought GHGR was all right there and saved time. Teachers liked non-fiction text guiding the writing, being used in shared reading; and non-fiction text used for the guided reading. Participant Wendy stated, "It's almost utopia." Participant Teresa loved the books being right at her fingertips.

Most teachers (n=5, 83%) thought parts of the GHGR curriculum could be enhanced. Kindergarten and 1st grade participants (n=4) described writing as weak and not addressing all the components of writing. Second grade teachers (n=2, 100%) wanted the comprehension strategies to go deeper. Participant Tamara stated, "I feel like we are a little bit weaker now than we were before."

Most of the teachers (n=5, 83%) wanted changes for next school year in the implementation of the curriculum. All three grade levels (n=3, 100%) thought supplementing the writing instruction would be necessary. Comprehension strategies at

the 2nd grade level also needed supplementing. Half of the teachers (n=3, 50%) recognized one program would not address all their needs. Most of the teachers (n=4, 67%) thought GHGR brought consistency and a common curriculum not available in the past. Participant Teresa stated, "It's nice to know that we're all teaching the same curriculum across the grade levels…" The majority of teachers (n=5, 83%) felt GHGR did not impact them on a personal level. Participant Teresa noted GHGR provided her with confidence in knowing she did not have to scramble for resources. The remaining teachers (n=5, 83%) felt the GHGR professional development did not enhance their confidence.

Implementation of PTR

The second research question posed for this study was as follows: RQ_2: How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum? Teachers (n=6, 100%) noted it was necessary to implement PTR. Participant Kim stated,

> I felt really excited about implementing it because I felt like we were all doing different things and I knew that wasn't the best way to do it. So that was really exciting and I was very glad to have Pathways and I felt I was equipped.

Participant Wanda thought implementation was necessary, but pointed out teachers are in a learning mode and are not always effective yet but students are receiving the best instruction possible at the time. Participant Tamara felt implementing PTR was, "One hundred percent necessary."

Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought some things worked well and some did not work well in the classroom. Kindergarten teachers (n=2, 100%) felt the management of students did not work well during small group time. Vowel town instruction worked well

for half of the teachers (n=3, 50%). Teacher Wendy loved the spelling but realized she was sacrificing some things for others because of the limited time in the day to get everything accomplished.

All participants (n=6, 100%) felt reading instruction changed in their classroom with using PTR. Teacher Tamara stated, "Instruction is much more focused." Teachers (n=6, 100%) also felt PTR has been effective for students. Participant Wanda stated,

> They loved vowel town and the reason I think they did, it made things make sense for them. I mean, those so abstract vowel sounds all of a sudden had a place in their world. They understand the idea of the town and smile hill, the wide open valley matched, yet something to attach it to with their mouth, so that all was very effective and then did it transfer? Yes, it did transfer. I mean, I was amazed that in the first few practices with vowel town they were starting to spot some of those vowels in words. So, to me, for effectiveness, it had all the components. It was easy to teach, it was easy to learn, you know, they could use it, it was reliable and they could transfer.

Most teachers (n=5, 83%) identified a go to person to help or get answers to their questions. The literacy coach was referenced often (n=3, 50%). The PTR author/trainer was identified (n=3, 50%) and other teachers were also identified (n=1, 17%). Teachers (n=6, 100%) felt school leadership helped their implementation in the classroom. One participant felt her implementation was hindered because decodable books were not immediately purchased for use in the classroom. The books were provided later in the year, but caused her implementation to be effected. Participant Wendy stated,

> Oh it has not hindered it in any way. It was clear from the top down exactly what it is going to look like, so I think our expectation before we even came back to school was supported in that and making sure it was happening. Just knowing that we're doing the best that we can and to the letter.

Implementation of GHGR

Teachers (n=5, 83%) felt GHGR was also necessary. Participant Kathy acknowledged a more systematic way of making sure students were getting all of the reading skills was needed. Participant Wanda stated, "I love the resources and I felt like I had everything I needed; I just want to be able to do if for a while and not change again."

Teachers (n=6, 100%) could identify areas not working well in the classroom with GHGR. Participant Teresa felt she knew her students as complete readers the least this year. She stated, "We did not have nearly the same amount of time to have one-on-one conferences with them in reading or writing." Participant Kim identified writing as not working very well. Students were not well enough equipped to write independently. Most participants (n=5, 83%) thought reading instruction changed in their classroom with GHGR. Teacher Kathy felt her classroom looked different but it made sense around what readers and writers do. Teachers (n=6, 100%) felt GHGR did not affect students like PTR.

Leadership of PTR

The third research question posed for this study was as follows: RQ_3: How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum? Teachers (n=6, 100%) felt leadership offered suggestions about the implementation of PTR. The demonstration of implementation came from the PTR

author, PTR teacher trainers, and teachers using the curriculum for more than one year. The literacy coach was recognized twice (n=2, 33%) as the leader providing ideas and suggestions. Participant Tamara stated, "The literacy coach has been very involved with us in implementing the new curriculum."

Parent communication was thought to be a teacher responsibility by all of the participants (n=6, 100%). School leadership did provide support by providing talking points for teachers to use when discussing the curriculum with parents. Teachers (n=6, 100%) did like the culture set for the implementation. Participant Wendy stated,

> We had the training and then the principals knew about it before it was coming; and you have made it very clear that we are all on the same page. That the district took a big investment… and it has just been pretty clear that this is what we are going to do.

Participant Teresa summed it up by stating, "We're really just working smarter not harder…"

Leadership of GHGR

Most teachers (n=5, 83%) identified the principal as the leader offering suggestions for implementation of GHGR. Principals provided problem-solving solutions to scheduling and instructional timeframes. Teacher Kim stated, "Especially with the writing aspect, our principal told us to do what you need to do to have your kids be successful…so when she said that it was really freeing and a great direction to go." Teachers (n=6, 100%) also indicated communication primarily came from school leadership. Leadership did provide guidance in what to say to parents, but teachers felt

like this was their responsibility, since parents wanted to know about their specific child. Teacher Teresa stated,

> I would probably say that most of the communication has been done ourselves, specifically, as classroom teachers with the parents. I know that leadership has helped with kind of the wording and have given us the points to make sure we touch on and the language to use so that we are all consistent with our parents.

Participants (n=6) felt a school culture was set for new literacy curriculum implementation. Participant Wanda stated,

> I think having that consistent strong message, kind of in a serious way, that we're going to take all of this and we are going to put it away. We want to focus on this one thing, not everything. I felt like they were kind of an advocate for us. In a way, it hurt a little bit, to take some of those things away, because that's just what you have already planned and some of that is just taking away some of my convenience, but just presenting that idea that this is just that consistent message and that strong - we're very serious; we're going to do it this way; and then we are going to see; and staying with that and not flip flopping back and forth.

Summary

All educators (n=6, 100%) participating in the interviews agreed on several ideas based on PTR:

- PTR professional development was important and very effective for teachers:
- PTR changed their understanding of literacy instruction because the phonics instruction has been left out in the past and not taught in teacher preparation for general education pre-service teachers;

- teachers liked all of the components in the PTR curriculum;
- it was necessary to implement PTR;
- reading instruction changed in their classroom with using PTR;
- PTR has been effective for students; and
- leadership offered suggestions about the implementation of PTR.

All of the educators (n=6, 100%) participating in the interviews agreed on some ideas based on GHGR:

- GHGR provided consistency and a common language to use across buildings and grade levels;
- GHGR information did not seem new or innovative to the teachers;
- GHGR professional development did not change or enhance their understanding of literacy instruction; and
- writing components (i.e., writing instruction, conferencing, and independent work) did not work well in the classroom with GHGR.

The educators (n=6, 100%) participating in the interviews agreed:

- communication with parents was identified as a teacher responsibility;
- leadership did provide support by providing talking points for teachers to use when discussing the curriculum with parents;
- school leadership helped their implementation in the classroom; and
- the culture was set for the implementation to occur.

Professional Development Content Analysis Results

Analysis of the content of the professional development included documents from professional development schedules, principal professional development guides, and

curriculum resource overview literature. Analysis included a review of word and structure recognition, document categorization and information extraction defined around the study's research questions of professional development, classroom implementation and leadership support. Analysis of word recognition was completed by calculating the number of times specific literacy terms were referenced within the professional development training documents. The words recognized were fluency, reading, comprehension, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and writing. Structure recognition identified and calculated the various ways that information was presented during professional development. Structures included coaching, demonstration, presentation, and distributing written information. Document categorization analyzed the different forms of written information used during professional development. Documents included handouts, PowerPoint note taking, fill-in the blank, and checklists. Information extraction was an analysis of the procedures used within professional development to distribute information. The formats identified and tallied included reference to resources, what to share and how to share, modeling, and assessments. Findings were used to corroborate or compare to teacher open-ended responses and interviews.

Professional Development Schedules

The professional development schedules were reviewed for GHGR and PTR. Initial training of GHGR included three days of professional development. Teachers were divided into groups by grade span. Kindergarten and first grade were together, and second grade teachers were separate. PTR included five days of initial professional development with three additional follow-up days out in each of the six elementary buildings. Teachers were grouped by grade level.

New adoption and implementation of literacy curriculum is a district wide decision for this school district. Professional development is determined and facilitated at the district level with school administration supporting the learning by providing additional reflection and learning throughout the year during building professional development time. Building level professional development is built into the district calendar. The 2011-12 school year offered two built-in days for school level professional development.

GHGR content analysis of word and structure recognition. Word recognition was identified as character/words including the essential literacy components of reading, fluency, comprehension, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary and writing. Frequency of the components was calculated across the professional development days.

Kindergarten and first grade professional development schedules for the first two days included comprehension (37%) and vocabulary (33%). Fluency and phonemic awareness were introduced and discussed at a lower rate (15% each). Phonics was mentioned once and writing was not discussed at all. Second grade professional development schedule was similar. Comprehension was introduced and discussed often (76%) as were vocabulary (16%) and phonics (8%). Phonemic awareness and writing were introduced only once. The third day of professional development utilized the same schedule for Kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers. Comprehension occupied 57% of the time while vocabulary was mentioned twice and writing once. Fluency, reading, phonics, and phonemic awareness were not introduced.

Comparison of professional development schedules and teachers' responses found GHGR did not provide them the skills they needed. Teachers felt GHGR writing

instruction was very weak and did not teach them any new or additional skills. All three grade levels participating in the interviews had to supplement writing instruction.

Structural analysis reviewed how presenters provided the new information: demonstration; presentation; modeling/coaching; or handed out the information with little discussion. GHGR consultants provided the information through presentation 100% of the time. Additional forms including checklists were also provided. Teachers' interviews considered modeling/coaching as the most beneficial. They found GHGR was somewhat boring at times and skimmed the surface on many topics. Participant Kim felt GHGR was so basic it was not beneficial.

GHGR content analysis of document categorization and information extraction. Document categorization reviewed how information was provided in a written format during professional development. Fill-in the blank, rubrics and checklists, or a copy of the presentation slides were included in the GHGR materials. GHGR documents were 70% fill-in the blank. Handouts also included the presentation slides. Participant Tamara acknowledged the more detailed and precise professional development on what would be expected each day was more helpful than an overview.

Information Extraction reviewed the systems used to introduce and train teachers on the new information. This included what information to share, how to share information, resources to find answers, modeling solutions, or documents with the information. GHGR discussed what to share and how to share it 33% of the time; identified resources 23% of the time; provided documents to use to retrieve the information 44% of the time; and modeled the information 0% of the time. Participant

Kathy suggested all professional development be like PTR and include detailed modeling and time to practice.

PTR content analysis of word and structure recognition. Word recognition was identified as character/words including the essential literacy components of reading, fluency, comprehension, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary and writing. Frequency of the components was calculated across the five professional development days. The three follow-up days' schedules were designed around specific building needs of observing, co-teaching, and coaching the teachers through lessons with their students. These days were opportunities for teachers to practice and receive feedback.

Phonemic awareness (33%) and phonics (32%) were covered 65% of the time. Reading was discussed 14% and vocabulary 9%. Fluency and comprehension were introduced and discussed equally at 7%. Writing was presented 5% of the time.

When teachers' interview responses were compared to training, teachers felt PTR professional development was effective and provided them the skills and strategies needed to teach students how to read. Participant Teresa felt PTR provided great training. Participant Wendy thought PTR training was effective because the consultant was very knowledgeable.

Structural analysis of ways the presenter provided the new information: demonstration, presentation, modeling/coaching, or handing out the information with little discussion. The majority of PTR professional development structure was based on modeling/coaching (35%), video demonstrations (13%) and demonstration by consultant (45%). Presentation (4%) and handing out information (3%) was a small part of the schedule. Teacher responses recognized the modeling and demonstration as an important

part of their learning. Participant Kim felt professional development was invaluable because it was different than what they had received before. Participant Kathy felt the PTR professional development was outstanding and so much more helpful than GHGR training. Participant Wanda realized PTR provided her a stronger foundation for the phonics piece and validated things she knew were always missing in her instruction.

PTR content analysis of document categorization and information extraction. Document categorization reviewed how the information was used in a written format during professional development. Choices included fill-in the blank, rubrics, checklists, or a copy of the presentation slides. PTR documents included paper copies of presentation slides (30%), forms for note-taking (30%) and fill-in forms (40%). Participant Kathy felt the training impacted her personally. Participant Teresa definitely felt confident enough to teach PTR after the professional development.

Information Extraction reviewed the systems used to introduce and train teachers on the new information. PTR information included: what to share, how to share the information, resources to find answers, modeling solutions, or providing documents with the information. PTR discussed what (31%) and how (29%) to use the information the majority of time. Reference to resources was utilized 33% of the time. Modeling solutions (6%) and providing documents with information (1%) were also included in PTR professional development. Participant Wanda felt PTR professional development provided her the information and training needed to have the courage to tackle the program. Participant Kathy likes PTR because it is so systematic.

Principal Professional Development Guides

Annually, elementary principals develop plans for the professional development of their teachers and staff. The guides were reviewed for: common references to literacy, GHGR, PTR, curriculum, and instructional implementation. Implementation may also include time for collaboration about the implementation. Teacher participants in this study recognized collaboration as an important piece of the implementation process. Table 4, below, identifies the professional development planned within the six elementary schools.

Table 4

Principal Professional Development Plans

	Number of times topic is referenced in professional development plan for the year					
TOPICS	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6
GHGR	7	10	1	3	7	1
PTR	0	9	10	1	1	2
Collaboration/Implementation	10	10	10	4	10	8
Literacy	2	1	15	2	0	7
Curriculum	3	2	4	1	1	1

Teachers in the study thought time to collaborate was an important factor when implementing a new program. Participant Wanda felt having the opportunity to talk about the program and implementation was helpful. Participant Kathy felt her principal was really good about giving them time to meet vertically and discuss the new programs. Participant Teresa appreciated the time to observe other colleagues in the implementation

of GHGR and PTR. The building professional development plans focused around collaboration in supporting teachers with implementation of the new literacy curriculum materials. All but one school had monthly collaboration around implementation.

Curriculum Materials Review

GHGR provided the schools with an overview of the programs and materials. PTR provided a web site, www.pathwaystoreading.com, to provide an overview of the program. The materials of both programs were reviewed and analyzed. Analysis included a review of word and structure recognition, document categorization and information extraction as defined around the study's research questions of professional development, classroom implementation and leadership support. Findings were used to corroborate or compare to teacher open-ended responses and interviews.

GHGR materials. GHGR program overview included a description and examples of materials teachers would use to teach all the components of literacy instruction; fluency, comprehension, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary and writing. The overview provided lesson examples teachers would actually have within their materials. The structure recognition demonstrated professional development embedded within the daily lessons. Teachers are provided references for research-based best practices. Document categorization included daily lesson plans, database of leveled reading books, embedded professional development, differentiated instructional lessons for students above and below grade level, and assessment guides to determine daily adjustments needed to instruction. The lesson plans were scripted for teachers to follow until they are comfortable leading instruction and delivery of the material. Information extraction is through a classroom set of teacher edition materials, classroom set of leveled

reading materials, vocabulary and writing support was aligned with daily instruction. The overview supports the study participants' comments of having everything they need at their fingertips. Teacher participants liked the consistency of materials for all teachers. Participant Teresa reflected she loved the books from GHGR and it was nice to know everyone was teaching the same curriculum across the grade levels. The overview contrasts with teachers' feelings of the weaknesses within GHGR. Participants felt GHGR was not as effective as PTR. Participant Teresa felt good knowing everyone was using only one source and she liked GHGR because the reading matched the shared reading and writing.

PTR review of overview literature (i.e., www.pathwaystoreading.com). PTR's website www.pathwaystoreading.com provided a research-based description of best practices to use when teaching students how to read. All components: fluency, comprehension, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary and writing are on the website. PTR refers to the program as professional development rather than a literacy program. The site includes replicable materials, videos of each teaching component, training schedules, and research information. Structure recognition was contained in embedded professional development. Document categorization included daily implementation, assessment timelines, instructional guides and specific forms to use to record all data when working with students. Note taking codes were recommended and provided for teachers to incorporate into their daily small group work. A continuum of what should be taught with guides on what to do if students are not learning at the level they should. Information extraction includes videos of every instructional component, guides with lessons and specific scripts, and small group folders to organize learning.

Such detailed information supported the reflection of the participants. Participants liked the specific information and thought it helped with keeping instruction focused. Participant Tamara thought she definitely had ample resources with PTR. Participant Kathy liked all the videos. Participant Wanda really liked the resources and felt like she had everything she needed.

Summary

Content analysis of documents corroborated participant interviews and open-ended questions regarding professional development, implementation, and leadership except in the area of writing with GHGR. Writing was a weakness with teachers, but GHGR materials and resources based on professional development did not reflect such a discrepancy. PTR is a very explicit and systematic program using professional development as the vehicle for learning and implementation. GHGR provides a consistent resource for teachers to use, but provided a basic overview of materials and resources without providing explicit daily instructional understanding. PTR resources are plentiful, but may be difficult to implement without explicit professional development instruction. GHGR seems more teacher friendly, but may not add any new tools to a teacher's tool bag.

Summary of Data Analysis

This study reviewed teacher perceptions of professional development, implementation, and leadership support and compared the results with analysis of training schedules, professional development plans and curriculum literature. The research was guided by the three questions:

RQ_1: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_2: How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_3: How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

An analysis of two separate literacy resources, PTR and GHGR, identified specific differences. Professional development should be specific; explicit to the needs of the learners (focus on motivation); ongoing (stay the course); provide embedded learning that includes practice; and include modeling (capacity building), coaching, and collaborating (reflective action). PTR included these professional development expectations. GHGR did not demonstrate consistency in any of these components. Teacher perceptions should be recognized and validated through feedback from observations of practice (changing context and learning in context); clarified regarding questions and concerns; encouraged to become problem-solvers for answers, and realized this is all part of transition that leads to full implementation. Leadership should be supportive by listening to teacher needs; responding to misunderstandings; addressing instructional time and viability; giving autonomy to teachers to learn and practice; and overtly communicating disequilibrium during implementation (tri-level engagement). To summarize, explicit professional development, addressing teacher perceptions, and cultural development of expectations while allowing grace through leadership contributes to the level of success when implementing new literacy curriculum resources.

Triangulation of the data identified explicit on-going and embedded professional development; with a collaborative culture of continuous discussion, conversation, and coaching; and leadership that is open to giving autonomy to teachers to learn and practice while also problem-solving for answers helps with effective implementation. Such findings will provide additional information to the body of research about factors that influence implementation of new literacy curriculum.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Discussion of Results

Discussion of the results in this research is within this chapter. The chapter includes a summary of the findings around the research questions, implications of the study for classrooms and teachers, and concludes with suggestion directions for future research. The purpose of this study was to explore teacher perceptions of how a new literacy curriculum being implemented in K-2 classrooms. Teacher perceptions were explored through surveys, interviews, and document analysis to identify how literacy curriculum resources were being implemented in Kindergarten to 2nd grade classrooms. An overview of the study is presented with a summary of the teacher survey, teacher interviews, and document analysis. The overarching research questions posed for this study were as follows:

RQ_1: How do K-2 teachers perceive their professional development of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_2: How do K-2 teachers perceive their implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

RQ_3: How do K-2 teachers perceive leadership support for the implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. The data collection process began with a survey sent to a total of 61 teachers of kindergarten, grade one and grade two. Twenty teachers responded to the survey by providing demographic information and answers to open-ended questions about current

implementation of a new literacy curriculum. A purposeful sampling of six teachers (two Kindergarten, two first grade and two second grade) representing opposite responses to the survey questions. The same interview questions were used with the same probes and all interview tapes were transcribed for analysis. Documents were collected from all professional development provided for teachers to implement the new literacy curriculum.

Teacher survey participants included 20 of the Kindergarten-grade two teachers. On average they had 13.85 years of experience and the majority of the respondents to the survey had completed a graduate level degree. Interview participants consisted of two Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers, had on average 13.6 years of experience and five of the six interviewees had completed a graduate degree.

How do K-2 Teachers Perceive their Professional Development of the new Literacy Curriculum?

Teachers (n=5, 83%) thought PTR professional development gave them the confidence and knowledge and impacted them on a personal level. The capacity building of PTR training included explicit learning and practice. The PTR consultant worked closely with teachers throughout the year providing coaching and co-teaching experiences so teachers developed confidence and understanding. PTR provided embedded professional development, modeled instruction and provided monitoring throughout the year with periodic coaching and co-teaching with teachers across the district. Opportunities to explore and reflect on the instructional process were provided three times within the first year of implementation.

Cotton (2006) noted in any learning situation, the knowledge and skills the learners already have should be the starting point for the development of the learning processes to take place. Otherwise, innovation will be not be implemented as intended. Teachers (n=6, 100%) identified GHGR professional development as a broad experience and left them without learning anything knew. The knowledge and skills of the learners was not considered ahead of time

How do K-2 Teachers Perceive their Implementation of the new Literacy Curriculum?

Teachers (n=5, 83%) thought they had the resources needed to support students. Having resources at their fingertips was significant. Both PTR and GHGR resources were sufficient.

Dufour et al. (2006) noted continuous collaboration can provide new, meaningful, and relevant learning and develop an environment of trust supporting on-going improvement. Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought the opportunity to talk with other teachers throughout the year was important in the success of the implementation.

How do K-2 Teachers Perceive Leadership Support for the Implementation of the new Literacy Curriculum?

The teachers (n=6, 100%) thought the leadership developed and maintained a culture of literacy instruction. A strong consistent message with a clear focus supports implementation. The culture and support felt by the teachers (n=6, 100%) enhanced the implementation within the classroom. The community atmosphere of talking with each other throughout the year helped teachers (n=4, 67%) build their confidence. Teachers (n=5, 83%) knowing there was a go-to person was helpful. Quickly getting answers to their questions gave teachers the feeling of support. Reflective action supported the

importance of shared ownership and behavior change was derived from the knowledge (Reeves, 2006).

Greenleaf (1998) identified characteristics and behaviors establishing a leader. Listening is the first characteristic and listening is defined as a deep commitment to listening to others. One must acquire a high level of attentiveness and be dedicated to understanding the communication from others. Teachers (n=6, 100%) recognized leaders as listening to their needs.

Empathy (Greenleaf), the second characteristic, is described as a leader attempting to understand others. This understanding should identify with thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others. Teachers (n=4, 67%) felt leaders understood the implementation year was difficult and would take time.

Third characteristic is healing (Greenleaf). Healing is explained as the potential to heal one's self or others through words raising spirits. The leader can make the organization inviting to the soul. Teachers (n=4, 67%) interviewed as a part of this study, identified specific times when school leadership encouraged them through comments and actions.

The fourth characteristic was awareness (Greenleaf) and was defined as a general awareness, especially self-awareness. Leaders must continually be open to learning and connecting what is said to what is done. Awareness represents being with-it and knowing what is likely to happen (Greenleaf). Teachers (n=3, 50%) appreciated leaders learning along with them.

The fifth characteristic was persuasion (Greenleaf) and was defined as convincing others, rather than coercing them. A leader is transparent and consistent with actions and

communication. Teachers (n=4, 67%) appreciated leaders searching for answers; treating them as professionals by listening to their needs; and taking action.

The sixth characteristic was conceptualization and was defined as the ability to nurture their own abilities to dream great dreams (Greenleaf). Leaders are able to see a vision and be proactive to engage others in the process. Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought the clear vision provided direction through the implementation process.

Foresight, the seventh characteristic was defined as the ability to foresee or know the likely outcome (Greenleaf). A leader is constantly monitoring events and comparing them with past and future actions. Many of the teachers (n=4, 67%) interviewed appreciated leadership's plan for adding supplemental materials to the writing instruction for next year.

Greenleaf's eighth characteristic was stewardship and was defined as caring for the well being of the institution and serving the needs of those within the institution. The teachers (n=6, 100%) recognized literacy coaches, teachers, and building leadership teams visionaries of the implementation.

Commitment to growth was the ninth characteristic and was defined as a committed effort toward the individual growth of others. Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought the change was needed and glad it has happened.

Implications of this Study

Implementation is rarely investigated in education (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). This study added to the literature by identifying teacher perceptions of what is negatively and positively affecting implementation in their classroom. The data from the study provide other educators and administrators recommendations when implementing a new literacy

curriculum in their schools. This study also provides insight on leadership characteristics that enhance the practice of new innovations in the classroom and affect teacher perceptions of the implementation process. Change is focused around motivation and can be accompanied with capacity, resources, and leadership support (Fullan, 2006).

The route to achieving change in a critical mass is not to wait for it to happen but to be a promoter (Fullan, 2006). Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought the message of change was clear and did not change over time. If there was a question, there was a go-to person and opportunities to talk with each other or trainers to get answers. These processes can be put in place when implementing new initiatives.

The National Reading Panel's (2003) report, *Practical Advice for Teachers*, narrowed the literacy focus to eight topics to be taught: phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, encouraging children to read, vocabulary, comprehension strategies, professional development, and technology. Instructional use of letter sounds and spelling patterns at K-2 is beneficial. PTR offered specific instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness. Research supports practicing oral reading with materials at the instructional level as beneficial to all grade levels (Conklin & Wilkins, 2002; NPR, 2002). Reading portions of text aloud repeatedly, with feedback, helps students become better readers (NRP). Vocabulary instruction is also important (NRP). Teaching students the meaning of words and word parts such as prefixes and suffixes help students comprehend text better (NRP). Modeling comprehension strategies help students to learn the strategies for when they read independently (NRP). Comprehension instruction needs to happen with narrative and expository texts (NRP). GHGR encompasses these practices and also provides a gradual release of responsibility to transfer the learning from teacher to

student. Ongoing professional development provides practice for teachers to model gradual release of responsibility and makes learning effective. Both curriculums, PTR and GHGR, are framed around the gradual release model of instruction (NRP).

Three elements can be attributed to a school's underperformance if a program is not implemented appropriately. Schmoker (2011) identified these elements as a common curriculum, sound lessons, and authentic literacy. The data from this study indicated simplicity, clarity and priority are key components when designing an instructional system for students. The actual curriculum a child learns can differ from teacher to teacher however, GHGR provides a common curriculum. Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought GHGR gave consistency to the learning from grade to grade and building to building. PTR also provided a common approach to phonics and phonemic awareness instruction. GHGR provided authentic readers to support the practice of reading and writing confirming prior research on elements of effective literacy as noted above.

To provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum addressing the needs of each student, effective and ongoing professional development is necessary. The teachers are like students, teachers have different levels of understanding and capabilities. Quality embedded professional development needs to be differentiated and authentic. Providing professional development is not enough. Schools need to monitor how the curriculum is taught, how the materials are used to support the curriculum, and data should be collected to demonstrate what students are learning (Mooney & Mausbach, 2008). The changes made by this school district led to a guaranteed and viable curriculum by utilizing a consistent and specific instructional process to teach literacy. Supportive leadership talking with teachers and problem-solving instructional questions was one method used

for monitoring the curriculum as it was being taught. Using agreed-upon materials and removing previous resources also supported consistent instruction.

One variable emerged from the data as critically important and this was instructional leadership. McEwan (1998) outlines seven steps to effective instructional leadership:

- establish clear instruction goals;
- be there for your staff;
- create a culture and climate conducive to learning;
- communicate the vision and mission of your organization;
- set high expectations for your staff;
- develop teacher leaders; and
- maintain positive attitudes toward students, staff, and parents (p. 4).

The Raymond School District established clear goals and supported teachers through its leadership. A culture was developed and recognized to support literacy and a change of curriculum. Talking points were provided to lend a common message to parents and community. Expectations of the use of the new materials were set and clear expectations were communicated to teachers. Teachers became leaders and provided advice and modeling within their classrooms for other teachers. Other teachers had the opportunity to observe and learn best practices. Overall, teachers included in the surveys and interviews the change in literacy programs was needed and the implementation was smooth.

Prior research has indicated aligning district systems; curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and school improvement will, create a more

focused and manageable process for ensuring improvement (Mooney & Mausbauch, 2008). This alignment is then transferred to what is actually happening in the classroom. GHGR and PTR provided consistency of aligned instruction. Classroom practices changed during the first year of implementation for half of the teachers (n=3).

Marzano and Waters (2009) identified five phases used in developing a system to manage instructional change. The phases are as follows:

- systematically explore and examine instructional strategies;
- designing a model or language of instruction;
- teachers systematically interact about the model or language of instruction;
- teachers observe master teachers (and each other) using the model of instruction;
- and monitor the effectiveness of individual teaching styles (pp. 57-70).

Developing a sense of urgency was also needed to move a group efficiently. Creating a sense of urgency in schools requires developing a clear mandate that cannot be ignored by school staff. Operating within this sense of urgency creates a climate where continuous improvement guides all decision making (Mooney & Mausbach, 2008). The Raymond School District provided a sense of urgency by removing all previous instructional materials used to teach literacy so only the PTR and GHGR materials were available and utilized. Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought this message was understood by all staff.

The literature recognizes teachers as the driving force in any educational innovation and change agencies need to act accordingly. When teachers are not involved, change can be seen as a repair program to eliminate deficits in a teacher's

knowledge and skills (Guskey, 2000). Raymond School District recognized the importance of teachers' involvement in the implementation. Both PTR and GHGR were piloted before the adoption was final. Teacher input was used when determining the final implementation plan. Another component was to ensure the curriculum was implemented with a combination of fidelity and appropriate flexibility. Despite good intentions, teachers are often only partially involved in the initiation, preparation, design and development of a new innovation (Coenders et al., 2008). Professional development embedded throughout the year supported the concern for fidelity. Flexibility was pointed out by teachers in the interviews. The district phrase was to embrace disequilibrium during the first year of implementation as an opportunity to learn.

The literature noted learning and synthesizing information was always under construction throughout a teacher's career. When fears or beliefs get in the way of new knowledge implementations, innovations, and best practices are compromised. Teachers (n=4, 67%) thought the leadership supported the need to learn and practice; knowing there would be mistakes.

Davis and Krajcik (2005) recognized that researchers have begun to focus on the teacher component and explore the role of curriculum materials in teachers' learning. When teachers plan for lessons, they need to know the content of the materials well enough to teach them. In this way, the curriculum materials stimulate teachers' thinking. Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought the new literacy curriculum had changed what they did in the classroom.

A number of studies have reported the use of curriculum materials to support teacher learning (Van den Akker, 1988; Coenders et al., 2008). When teachers have

supportive materials with how-to-do advice, such as lesson preparations, lesson content, and evaluation implementations will encounter fewer problems. Review of the materials and the responses of the teachers (n=6, 100%) interviewed identified the explicit instructional materials in the PTR training and curriculum to be outstanding.

Prior research has found some teachers try to connect with others and work to understand. Even if they want to connect, they often do not (Ross & Nisbett, 1991). Teachers have a tendency to over generalize and not see the cause-and-effect within classroom activities and learning. Teachers within this group will often stick with what they are doing, even with strong disconfirming evidence (Ross & Nisbett). Raymond School District removed all previous materials before implementation of the new literacy curriculum began. Some teachers (n=2, 33%) felt anxious about not having the materials they were comfortable using. Other teachers (n=4, 67%) embraced the new materials with little concern about their previous materials.

According to Hoy (2000), the greater the teacher support the greater the increase in teacher efficacy. A teacher's knowledge of instructional practices, classroom management strategies, and depth of content knowledge contribute to his or her ability to sustain efficacy. When a new innovation is implemented, variance of teachers' place regarding efficacy must be considered. A one-size-fits-all approach will not support teachers during implementation. PTR provided specific professional development throughout the year by designing the learning around building needs. Teachers had opportunities to discuss problems through think-tank methods and also observed instruction by the consultant, also the author. GHGR provided specific professional

development within the year designed around building wants and needs. Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought this type of learning was the best experience.

Instructional effectiveness links the design of professional development, teachers' learning during professional development activities, and subsequent changes in classroom practice (Borko, 2004). Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought PTR positively affected students. The same teachers (n=6, 100%) thought GHGR was not as valuable for students. Compatibility and adaptability are also key factors of implementation (Mihalic et al., 2004). The ease of the innovation fitting in with the current practices and processes also led to its success. Teachers (n=6, 100%) thought GHGR was very similar to the balanced literacy approach the district had already been incorporating. This made the transition of GHGR easy and did not seem like something new.

Recommendations

Findings of this study have lead to particular recommendations that the researcher has identified. When budgeting time and money for a new implementation, it is recommended that professional development include before, during and after coaching and modeling; specific planned opportunities for collaborative conversations around the new materials; explicit learning around where teachers are with their understanding; and provide unambiguous materials that support the new learning. Implementation within the classroom leads to recommendations around teacher perceptions; appropriate resources to meet the needs of the students; develop a thorough understanding of the use of materials; and address the mindset of the participants. Recommendations for leadership when implementing new resources include developing a culture that embraces disequilibrium

during implementation; providing a responsive leadership team to address all questions and concerns; and develop a clear message of expectations.

Future Research

Teacher efficacy combined with literacy teaching research is sparse and has received little attention (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2006). The relationship between efficacy and implementation points to the need to consider the issue of efficacy when implementation is expected. This study touched on the readiness of the teachers to make a change, along with the supportive culture to embrace the uncertainties of change. A feeling of importance and amount of influence perceived by teachers contributes to the level of comfort with change and trying new practices. Understanding self-efficacy and its influence on the complex instruction of literacy would contribute to the body of research on implementation of literacy curriculum. Continued research in this area would provide additional information. The final stage of implementation is sustainability (Greenleaf, 1998), and this stage establishes a fully-implemented evidence-based program. This is usually in the second to fourth year period. Previously skilled and trained personnel may leave and need to be replaced. Leaders and funding streams may change. The goal during this stage is the long-term survival and continued effectiveness of the practices. Continuing research on implementation in the Raymond School District would add to the information on sustainability. Research on keeping the momentum and integrity of the programs going is needed within the current research literature. A mixed-method approach to research of literacy curriculum implementation and the influence of student reading levels would be a future continuation of this study.

Reform oriented professional development tends to be more effective than traditional professional development (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Reform oriented professional development includes teacher activities such as study groups, mentoring or coaching, and peer action-research. Timely and more in-depth engagement than is typically provided in the standard workshop creates interest and collective practice. Future research in the sustainability of implementation through a reform oriented PD approach would provide new and additional information to the educational environment. Another topic for future research would be how effective implementation of a new literacy program affects student achievement. While teachers mentioned anecdotal information on change in students, it is important to longitudinally research and measure student outcomes, learning, and achievement.

Summary

The study of adopting and effectively implementing new curriculum and innovations are important in today's public schools with funding low and budgets tightened. Decisions to purchase specific resources backed by extensive professional development take money and time. This study revealed how important the professional development can be in successful implementation that will lead to sustained and enriched learning for students and teachers. Professional development must be explicit and focused on the audience's needs, embedded within the classroom for modeling and practice, and set in a culture of support while holding to high standards of expectations. A clear vision within the leadership of teachers, administrators, and support staff provides the common direction needed to extend teacher knowledge and practices. Aligning district and school leadership with common expectations and sending a clear message that it is acceptable to

make mistakes while learning to implement new curriculum provided teachers with a level of comfort. School leadership must listen and respond to teacher needs while involving them in the development and facilitation of professional development. Providing ongoing classroom support through literacy coaches gives teachers a quick response to unanswered questions and adds sustainability to the professional learning community philosophy. Setting and monitoring clear measurable expectations throughout the implementation leads to longevity and positive change in the classroom.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE LETTER OF REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DISTRICT

May 2012

Asst. Superintendent of Academic Services
Raymond School District (pseudonym)

I am conducting my doctoral dissertation research at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, College of Education. My topic seeks to explore teacher perceptions of the recently implemented K-2 literacy program.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your consent to ask K-2 teachers to answer two questions about the current implementation of Pathways to Reading and Good Habits Great Readers resources. All K-2 classroom teachers are being invited to participate and participation is strictly voluntarily. K-2 teachers are free to choose whether or not to participate and there will be without repercussions to you personally or professionally. To allow complete anonymity, the study will not reveal anyone's name, name of school district, or participating schools. The data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's home office and will not be accessible to anyone other than the researcher. Data will be transcribed and prepared for analysis by using a number or pseudonym rather than using names to ensure confidentiality of the responses. Confidentiality will be maintained, because data will be reported in aggregated format, without names or other personal identifiers.

Based on the responses, the researcher will invite 5-7 teachers to participate in a one-on-one conversation to explore perceptions of professional development opportunities further and perception of leadership support throughout the implementation process. This will also be on a voluntary basis and participants will be free to terminate their involvement at any time without any repercussions.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Deciding not to participate will not result in any penalty. There are no risks in participating in this study. The data will not identify any school nor will the data identify any individual subject by name. By following this procedure, anonymity will be assured.

Sincerely,

Karen Elder-Hurst
Principal Researcher

Researcher has permission to conduct the above described research at Raymond School District.

_____

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY SURVEY

May 2012
To: K-2 Teachers

I am conducting my doctoral dissertation research at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, College of Education. My topic seeks to explore teacher perceptions of the recently implemented K-2 literacy program. I would like to invite you to complete a two-question survey to identify how the new literacy curriculum resources are being implemented in K-2 classrooms. This study will examine the implementation of new literacy curriculum resources in teachers' classrooms for what works and what is not working.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your consent and participation in answering two questions about your current implementation of Pathways to Reading and Good Habits Great Readers resources. All K-2 classroom teachers are being invited to participate and your participation is strictly voluntarily. You are free to choose whether or not to participate and there will be without repercussions to you personally or professionally. To allow complete anonymity, the study will not reveal anyone's name, name of school district, or participating schools. The data will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's home office and will not be accessible to anyone other than the researcher. Data will be transcribed and prepared for analysis by using a number or pseudonym rather than using names to ensure confidentiality of the responses. Confidentiality will be maintained, because data will be reported in aggregated format, without names or other personal identifiers.

Based on the responses, the researcher will invite 6 teachers to participate in a one-on-one conversation to explore perceptions of professional development opportunities further and your perception of leadership support throughout the implementation process. This will also be on a voluntary basis and participants will be free to terminate their involvement at any time without any repercussions.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Deciding not to participate will not result in any penalty. There are no risks in participating in this study. The data will not identify any school nor will the data identify any individual subject by name. By following this procedure, anonymity will be assured.

Your response and return of this two-question survey will constitute consent to participate in this survey/study.

Thank you for your consideration.
Karen Hurst
Please answer the following questions about the new literacy implementation. It is really important to have your honest thoughts and opinions on how well your professional development and school leadership has supported your implementation of the new literacy curriculum resources. Thank you very much for your time and effort. This is greatly appreciated!

Name:

What grade do you teach?

Years of teaching experience:

Degrees held:

1. How has the professional development you have received helped or hindered implementation of the new literacy curriculum programs in your classroom?

2. How has school leadership (i.e. building principal, building leadership team, literacy coaches) helped or hindered your own implementation of the new literacy curriculum programs?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY INTERVIEW

May 2012

Dear K-2 Teacher:

I am conducting my doctoral dissertation research at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, College of Education. My topic seeks to explore teacher perceptions of the recently implemented K-2 literacy program. This study will examine the implementation of new literacy curriculum resources in teachers' classrooms for what works and what is not working.

Based on the responses from the survey, the researcher will invite 6 teachers to participate in a one-on-one conversation to explore perceptions of professional development opportunities further and your perception of leadership support throughout the implementation process.

The interview discussion will include questions about your thoughts of the professional development, curriculum, implementation, and leadership support that have been provided for Pathways to Reading and Good Habits Great Readers. One and a half hours will be allotted for the interview discussion and will be held at a convenient location such as a library or meeting room. The researcher of this study will be conducting the discussions and confidentiality of participant will be ensured.

Teachers invited to participate voluntarily and will be free to terminate their involvement at any time without any repercussions. To allow complete anonymity, the study will not reveal anyone's name, name of school district, or participating schools. The information gathered from the interviews will be collected and locked in a file cabinet that is accessible to the researcher only. Data will be transcribed and prepared for analysis by a professional transcriber and voices will be provided a number or pseudonym rather than using formal names to ensure confidentiality of the responses. Confidentiality will be maintained, because data will be reported in aggregate, without names or other personal identifiers.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Deciding not to participate will not result in any penalty. There are no risks in participating in this study. The data will not identify any school nor will the data identify any individual subject by name. By following this procedure, anonymity will be assured.

Your signature and return of this form will constitute consent to participate in this study.

_____(signature)

_____(printed name)

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The district implemented a new literacy curriculum this year and each of you participated in professional development.

- How effective do you think the professional development was in helping you to implement the new literacy curriculum?
- Did professional development provide you with all of the necessary information and skills to successfully implement this new literacy curriculum?
- What else do you think needed to be included in the professional development?
- How might you change the professional development to be more effective?
- How did new literacy curriculum professional development change your understanding of literacy instruction?

In thinking of the new literacy curriculum:

- What parts of the curriculum do you like?
- What do you not like about the new literacy curriculum?
- What might you like to see changed for next year?
- How is the new literacy curriculum different from what you have used in the past in teaching literacy?
- How has this change in curriculum impacted you on a personal level?
- Describe how the professional development helped you feel confident and knowledgeable about using the new literacy curriculum?
- Did you learn enough in the professional development to feel confident?

How would you describe how you have implemented the new district reading program in your classroom?

- Describe your feelings about implementing the new literacy curriculum. Do you really think it was necessary? Why, why not?
- What do you think has worked well? What do you think has not worked very well?
- How has the reading curriculum changed what you do in the classroom?
- How effective do you think the new reading curriculum is for students?
- In your school, is there a go to person you can ask for help or ask questions?

Describe how your school leadership has helped or hindered your own implementation of the new literacy curriculum?

- What suggestions has school leadership made about how you might implement the new literacy curriculum?
- How has school leadership ‘shown the way’ or demonstrated implementing the new literacy curriculum through instructional leadership?

- How has school leadership facilitated communicating the new literacy curriculum with parents?
- How has school leadership promoted a culture of literacy instruction learning for teachers to understand and implement this new literacy curriculum?

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VITA

Karen Elder-Hurst graduated from Penney High School and attended Northwest Missouri State University and graduated with a degree in Elementary and Secondary Education in the areas of Health and Physical Education in 1978 and began her teaching career in Mid-Buchanan School District, Faucett, MO. In 1989 she received her certification in Secondary Math after completing coursework from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. She worked for Fort Zumwalt School District of O'Fallon, MO as a Secondary Math Teacher. From 1991through 1994 she worked with Fontbonne College of St. Louis, MO as a Representative of the Business degree programs.

Karen completed her Master of Arts in Educational Counseling from University of Missouri-St. Louis in 1995 and worked as an Elementary Counselor at Luff Elementary of the Independence School District, Independence, MO until 1999. In 1999 she continued with Independence School District as an Asst. Principal at Pioneer Ridge Sixth Grade Center. She completed her Educational Specialist in Urban Leadership and Policies from University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2003 and continued as Associate Principal at Pioneer Ridge through 2004.

The fall of 2004 Karen accepted a Principal position at Stonegate Elementary in the Raymore-Peculiar School District, Raymore, MO. She continued this role through 2008. In 2008 she transitioned to Lee's Summit School District, Lee's Summit, MO. There she worked as the Elementary School Improvement Coordinator and collaborated with 18 elementary schools.

In 2009 Karen returned to Raymore-Peculiar School District as Director of Curriculum and Assessment. Karen has remained in that position to date. As Director,

Karen oversees the district Literacy Initiative, development and maintenance of curriculum and assessments for over 300 courses that support nearly 6000 students. She has presented her work with using data to make sound and progressive decisions at state and local venues. Karen began her work on her Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Foundations and Curriculum and Instructional Leadership as co-discipline in the fall of 2009 at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Upon completion of her degree, she plans to pursue research and teaching interests.