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I, Emily A. Steele,

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This work and its defense approved by:

Chair: Nancy A. Evers, Ph.D.

Mark A. Gooden, Ph.D.

Glenn Markel, Ph.D.

Sara B. Eisenhardt, Ed.D.

A Qualitative Investigation of How Urban Teachers Sustain Change in Turbulent Times

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by

Emily A. Steele

B. A. Wilmington College, 1986
M. A., Northern Kentucky University, 1994

Committee Chair: Nancy A. Evers, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Over the last twenty years there has been increased interest in facilitating and sustaining change in the education. The bulk of past research has focused on systems change with little insight into the role of individual educators as change agents. The purpose of this study was to examine the role individual teachers play in creating and sustaining change in a large Midwestern urban school district. This study focused on how teachers in a system that was made turbulent by both the neighborhood environment it existed in and the ever changing environment of the large urban district it was a part of.

Multiple noteworthy studies have been completed to identify the characteristics and qualities of successful change initiatives. More recently researchers have begun to turn their attention to the human elements of change that occur within systems change. These studies have revealed the importance of collaboration, professional development, available resources, and systems supports to facilitate teachers in change. However, further knowledge is needed to understand how individuals build capacity for change and what the causal factors are that drive teachers to sustain their new practices. In addition, there is a need to discover when it is that teachers begin to plan for sustaining change.

The research sought the answer to one question. How do teachers sustain change in turbulent times? The study design was qualitative and involved the analysis of in-depth interviews conducted during the last year of a three year Reading First change initiative. The study also included archival data and field observations.

It was found that teachers sustain what is within their power to sustain. The larger the support system for sustaining changes the broader teachers plan for sustaining it. In this instance teachers had a very small support system remaining after the withdrawal of grant monies. Their

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vision for sustaining change was limited by the withdrawal of most support structures put in place by the funding provided by Reading First. Their system of support was further narrowed by the termination of key positions (Data Manager, Resource, Coordinator, Literacy Specialist) within the implementation system by the district. Due to the narrowing of the support system teachers began to plan for sustaining by looking to the collaborative network formed through school based professional development as the most viable system of support. They also looked at the success of their new practices and choose from those which they had the power to sustain and which they did not. What they felt was within their power to sustain they created a mindset and collected needed resources to sustain. As one teacher stated, "Well, the program is given to you and you try it. I think like most things, if you try it and you like it, you will continue using it. I think that every reading series that I have ever worked with has given me new understandings. I have pulled certain things from them that I still use today" (Ms. Damas, second grade teacher).

It seems then that when teachers are involved in professional development or involved in an initiative like Reading First they learn and try new things. After trying these things they take with them the learning or strategies that are most beneficial and effective into their future practice. The more internalized the learning and the stronger the support system for new learning the more dynamic sustaining change, or carrying forward new ways of doing, will be.

Acknowledgements

Obtaining a doctoral degree has been a goal of mine for 25 years. I remember the day I stood out in my drive way saying goodbye to my brother, who was moving to Florida. There had been many occurrences in both of our lives that were calling us to make drastic changes. As we walked from my kitchen to his car he asked me, "Emily, what are you going to do? I remember looking at him and saying, "Well, as crazy as it sounds I am going to finish my Bachelor's degree and continue in college until I earn my doctorate and then I am going to start a school for children like us." He laughed, hugged me and said, "That sounds just like you, you always have a plan." Well Danny I made it. All that is left is to create our school.

There are many others in my life who have guided me in my journey, too many to acknowledge here. So I am going to acknowledge a few who have walked with me on my journey with the idea that those who are not mentioned by name know that you have been important to my development and that if you read this acknowledgement you will consider that those I mention are representative of you also. You all are held dear in my heart.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother and father. My father, George Steele, was an illiterate carpenter who one day asked me to teach him to read; it was a request I never fulfilled. Dad, I see you in all of my students. My mother, Dorothy Steele, completed the third grade and beat me at Scrabble every time we played. Mom, you taught me that I have the divine responsibility to pursue my individuality, thank you for teaching me how to HOWL AT THE MOON. I miss you both. I am truly blessed to have had you as inspirational, guiding forces in my life.

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CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RELATED LITERATURE

Statement of the Problem

Dewey (1903) argued a century ago that every teacher should have "some regular and representative way in which he or she can register judgment upon matters of educational importance, with the assurance that this judgment will somehow affect the school system" (p. 199). Dewey's 100 plus year old statement is especially relevant in today's educational world of change. Systemic reforms initiated through No Child Left Behind (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, January 8, 2002) are requiring teachers' practice to undergo deep and meaningful transformation. Crucial to this change is the requirement that instructional programs implemented in schools be researched based.

Historically teacher change efforts have been subsumed in research literature that discusses large scale systemic renewal. Large scale renewal assumes that teachers will implement prescribed change without regard to the investment teachers make in doing so. Therefore when change is discussed, successful or not, the researcher focuses on systems' cause-and-effect. It devalues the efforts of teachers to a level of discussion about paperwork, lack of student input, and other causal variables and overlooks the attention needed to closely evaluate the nature of change teachers experience and growth that springs from the change effort that is either successful or not successful.

Larson (1999) explored how small scale change impacts on larger systems change. In discussing his findings when studying two high schools who undertook small scale curricular changes to meet state requirements, he found that there were many aspects that contribute to the larger picture of change undergone by the two schools. Using the work of Cuban (1990), Weick

(1984), Senge (1990), Fullan (1991), Bromley and Mansfield (1993), Block (1987), Demming (1986), and Peters and Waterman (1982), Larson drew the conclusion that small scale change creates a nucleus for larger scaled reformation. The eighty innovations implemented at the two high schools constituted small-scale planned changes that affected the nature of the curriculum, structure of the school day, student and teacher attitudes, student achievement, and resource allocation (Larson, 1999, p. 70). The inward-out motion of enacted innovations changed the face of education for the two high schools.

Larson's (1999) study of change occurred over the period of five years. In noting the institutionalization of change he recurrently stated that sustainability of change required the realization that change is a process and not an event. Larson noted that institutionalization (conditions of continuation) is the least studied of change phases. He noted that the discontinuation of one course or other innovation was in itself change. "The combination of retained innovations, discontinued innovations, and replacement innovations integrated with human responses created a cycle of change that nurtured institutionalization" (Larson, 1999, pp. 112 – 119). Larson found that for the faculties at two high schools sustaining change and institutionalization involved a reluctance to accept the present as the end rather than a stagnant claiming of success. Change agents (teachers and administrators) never accepted that the current successful practices would always be successful and that unsuccessful practices were failures. Rather, they viewed their teaching practice as a malleable terrain. So, what became an institutionalized factor of the schools was that change was ongoing and based in the needs of the time (Larson, 1999, p. 117).

Datnow (2005) states that, "When one speaks of sustainability of a reform one is typically interested in knowing whether the reform lasts over time and becomes an

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institutionalized feature of the school" (Datnow, 2005, p. 123). Institutionalization involves a multilevel process of embedding an innovation in the structure and norms of the organization. Few studies have actually examined the sustainability of reforms over long periods of time, in part because most reforms do not last (Anderson & Stiegelbauer, 1994; Cuban, 1986, 1992; Kirst & Meister, 1985; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). There is research consensus that a reform is considered institutionalized when it becomes a taken-for-granted feature of life in a school (Datnow, 2005).

Studies of reform institutionalization tend to focus mostly on school-level factors that lead to the reform becoming, or not becoming, part of the fabric of a school. These factors are quite predictable and include such things as genuine interest in change, teacher and administrator support, a critical mass involved in implementation, sustained professional development, and a practical plan for implementation and monitoring of the change effort (Anderson & Stiegelbauer, 1994; Moffet, 2000). "We need to know more about what a supportive reform infrastructure at the district and state level looks like when it comes to externally developed reforms and how in some schools seem to be able to sustain reforms in the absence of supportive external conditions and others do not" (Datnow, 2005).

For nine urban elementary schools, located across the nation, shared leadership was indicated as a factor that both created change and hope for sustainability (Riley, Smith, Ginsberg, and Plisko, 1999). Shared leadership was developed along a continuum moving from top-down management to local, inclusive, and more democratic leadership. In seven of the nine schools the leadership role was shared within the school and expanded to include surrounding community members. However, all nine schools expanded leadership roles within the individual schools. Leadership redefinition efforts took two distinct paths: the use of the principal's role as

a stage for directing leadership dispersal and the role of designated coaches or lead teachers to both lead within the school and coach others in becoming teacher leaders.

Fundamental to developing teacher leaders in each of the nine schools was building capacity in change program implementation and teacher efficacy. Various forms of coaching served to move all stakeholders to capacity and develop collaborative work groups that focused on the desired changes, identifying strengths and weaknesses, how to support what was successful, and meet the challenges to address needs in weak areas of change practices.

> As one school principal explained, "We didn't have a particular model but
> we have pieces of different designs. The key components of this framework
> are: (1) distributed expertise and leadership; (2) curriculum organization,
> alignment, and assessment; (3) collective responsibility for student
> learning; (4) reflective dialogue; and (5) increased teacher efficacy
> (Riley et al., 1999, p. 46).

The five components stated by this principal are expressed in similar words by the remaining eight. In each of the eight schools it was found that no one component was worked on in isolation but rather that all components were intertwined and as success was achieved in one area the associated components grew in capacity. Teacher efficacy and teacher ability to make change and find ways to both sustain and increase expertise grew from the cycle of collaborating on the implementation of the components (Riley et al., 1999).

Datnow's and Larson's studies provide different perspectives. Datnow's qualitative study focused on the impact of district and state factors on large scale comprehensive change sustainability. Larson's study focused on schools that initiated a building-wide comprehensive change that was need-based and began small and spiraled into school-wide comprehensive change. In both studies the researchers found adaptability was key to sustained change. Both researchers stated that sustainability (institutionalization) of an innovation needs further study to discover what "supportive reform structures" and "conditions of continuation" look like

(Datnow, 2005; Larson, 1999). The need to understand how to support and sustain change in high poverty urban settings may best be summed up in these words, "I can see where we are going as a school. Are we there yet? No. Are we moving in the right direction? Yes" (Teacher at Harriet A. Baldwin as quoted in Riley, et al., 1999, p. 39).

In response to the current urgency for further research to understand implementing and sustaining change in urban elementary schools, the purpose of this study is to explore the teacher's role in sustaining change. The study will provide insight into the history of the implementation of a Reading First Program in a large Midwest urban district and then look closely at the transition year from a funded state initiative to a local school district program.

Research Question

The question the researcher is seeking to answer is, "How do urban teachers sustain implementation of the Reading First Initiative?"

Literature Review

Today school systems across the United States are experiencing various forms of change that affect students, teachers, schools, districts, and the larger community. The complexity of change is often viewed as a one-dimensional occurrence that is enacted the same way in diverse school systems. Those seeking to create and sustain change in today's educational environments often fail to be aware of and plan for the difference between their current situation and the educational environment in which the intended change was created.

The following literature review is structured to present insight into the multidimensional nature of how teachers evolve as change agents. The literature review begins with a definition of change as it is presented in current literature and then moves into a discussion of the evolving research on what it means to sustain change. Next the literature review moves into discussion

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about teachers in change; exploring the importance of attitude formation, personal vision, and the significance of providing opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice and the practice of others. The review of literature then continues to explore the complex nature of teachers in change by discussing the role of professional development in building teacher capacity in evoking change and eventually sustaining it. Peer coaching is presented as a model for teacher collaboration to sustain change. In summary collective efficacy is discussed as an outcome of building teacher capacity that will aid in sustaining change. Overall this literature review presents a focused discussion on one facet of change complexity, teachers implementing and sustaining change, which is at the heart of the complex nature of change and is crucial to educators' goal of serving students.

Definition of Change

> We have all become so accustomed to the presence of change that we rarely stop to think what change really means as we are experiencing it at the personal level. More important, we almost never stop to think what it means for others around us who might be in change situations. The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with this reality. We vastly underestimate both what change is and the factors and processes that account for it" (Fullan, 2001, p. 29).

We know much about change. Change happens. It occurs with assistance from those desiring change and without any assistance at all. Change occurs in many areas of our personal and professional lives, usually simultaneously occurring across various levels. Webster lists 31 definitions of change. The one definition that holds the significance for a discussion about current educational reform is number two, "to transform (usually followed by into): *The witch changed the prince into a toad"* (*The New Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language,* 2004). While this example does not present a pretty picture it does exemplify a common misconception about change; that it is quick, always noticeable, and usually unpleasant.

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Understanding that change is a process and not a product is crucial to the success of the implementation of a new program. Change is innovation that is multidimensional.

> The difficulty arising when we explore which aspects of a given change were to be implemented is that educational change is not a single entity. There are at least three components or dimensions at stake in implementing any new program or policy: (1) the possible use of new or revised materials (instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies; (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches; (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g. pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs (Fullan, 2001, p.39).

Fullan states that it is logical to conclude that change has to occur in practice along the three dimensions to affect the outcome. "Along this line of reasoning it would follow that a teacher could use new curriculum materials or technologies without altering the teaching approach. Or a teacher could use the materials and alter some teaching behaviors without coming to grips with the conceptions or beliefs underlying the change" (Fullan, 2001, p.39). Teachers are at different levels of understanding and/or implementation of a desired innovation. Researchers found that teachers ranged in understanding of the implementation process and the underlying principles and rationale of the changes they sought to make. In fact, some teachers' implementation of the new program caused their instructional practices to be less valuable for students than their previous classroom teachings (Simms, 1978; Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel, 1976; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).

Simms (1978) researched the use of an elementary language arts program in one of the provinces in Canada. The three dimensions of change are demonstrated throughout the study as implications of pedagogical beliefs, when teachers are asked to fit teaching to a naturally occurring language situation. The findings recommended teaching methodologies include providing opportunities for active involvement of the child and using a variety of resources and techniques. The curriculum materials and resources required extensive change in both needed

materials and teacher expertise in new technology (i.e. photography). "The difficulties of clarifying and accomplishing changes in practice involving the interrelationship of beliefs, teaching approaches, and resources were clearly viewed as detrimental to the successful change in teacher practice" (Simms, 1978, p.96).

Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976) studied the gap between "surface curriculum and deep structure" in open education. They found that some teachers focused on the surface curriculum, focusing on materials and seeing that students were "busy." They failed to understand the underlying purpose of the curriculum and worked to address open-education goals literally. These teachers asked, "What exactly needed to be covered?" Other teachers were "able to move back and forth between classroom activities and organizing priorities, using a specific encounter to illustrate a broader concern and relating broader priorities back to specific concerns" (Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel, 1976, p. 90-91).

Teachers in the Bussis and associates analysis portrayed teachers who were at varying levels of understanding the change purpose, underlying rationales, and even more importantly the pedagogical underpinnings of the open-education curriculum. Examples that portray the variances abound throughout their study: teachers who saw open education as literally covering subject content but who had no underlying rationale (p. 57); those "who were reasonably articulate in indicating priorities for children [but] were more vague in describing concrete connections between these priorities and classroom activities" (p. 69); still others who may provide the classroom with rich materials on the faith that they will promote certain learning priorities (p. 74) (in Fullan, 2001, p. 42).

The question then becomes, "What is change?" McLaughlin and Mitra (2000) worked to understand what it would take to achieve "deep" reform in their study of three innovations.

The experiences of these three theory-based reforms underscore the point that the relevant "it" that needs to be imbedded in practice is not the particular activity, structures, materials, or routines of a reform but rather the first principles. The problem for implementation then, is not only teachers "learning how to do it," but teachers learning the theoretical project . . . absent knowledge about why they are doing what they're doing; implementation will be superficial only, and teachers will lack the understanding they will need to deepen their practice or to sustain new practices in the face of changing context (p. 10).

Change for McLaughlin and Mitra does not begin until teachers and those leading reform develop an understanding and common language through which to discuss and implement change programs based in the theoretical project. Understanding the theoretical project and how practice reflects theory is critical to change agents developing insightful decision making practices that make sustaining change more likely. Therefore those implementing change act in an informed manner to use new materials and approaches as they create change. The change created looks and sounds different than what they did before. The difference is defined by the new innovation being implemented and the level of understanding and commitment the teacher has.

It is possible to form a definition of educational change from the works cited here. Educational change is multidimensional and involves the possible use of new or revised materials, new teaching approaches, and the alteration of beliefs (Fullan, 2001). In addition educational changes develop at the most profound level of change when change agents learn the theoretical underpinnings of the project in order to build the understandings to develop and deepen new practices (McLaughlin & Mitra, 2000). In fact, McLaughlin & Mitra more than suggest that sustained change cannot occur unless those implementing the desired change have an understanding of the theoretical project.

Sustaining Change

"The innovations that have the best chance of sticking are those that have constituencies that grow around them" and ". . .a reform that reflects some deep social concern for democracy" (Cuban, 2000, p. 7). Some examples of such reforms are special education, Title I, and kindergarten. These reforms have developed large constituencies because they reflect a deep social commitment to equity or for preparing students to lead fulfilling adult lives.

If, as Fullan suggests, change is multileveled then the sustaining of change is a double helix of conceptuality that is multifaceted and ever progressing toward building the capacity of a system to continually renew itself. The major threads that form the first helix are intertwined with the change initiative itself and involve the three dimensions described previously; (1) the possible use of new or revised materials (instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies). (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches. (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g. pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs (Fullan, 2001, p.39). The second helix is formed by the social, professional, systemic, and personal structures in which the intended change occurs. The sustainability of change is ensured by the interconnectedness of the understandings and actions between the two strands of the double helixes as it moves within and around the system in change.

"Sustainability does not simply mean whether something can last. It addresses how particular initiatives can be developed without compromising the development of others in the surrounding environment, now and in the future" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000, p. 32). This implies that sustainable improvement is enduring, not evanescent, develops and draws on resources and supports at a rate that can match the pace of change, and that promoters of sustainability cultivate

and recreate an educational environment or ecosystem that possesses the capacity to stimulate ongoing improvement on a broad front (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 192).

Critical to sustaining educational change is a discussion of what is to be sustained and how educators know when they have attained change that warrants sustaining. "In education, it matters that what is sustained is what, in terms of teaching and learning is itself sustaining. To sustain is to keep alive in every sense of the word" (Hargreaves, 2002, p.192). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) would add that:

> Sound education, good teaching, and learning are inherently sustaining processes. Supporting and maintaining those aspects of teaching and learning that are deep and that endure, that foster sophisticated understanding and lifelong learning for all defines the core of sustainable education. This includes not just knowing what, but knowing why (deep understanding), knowing how (application) and knowing who (building social networks and social capital) (OECD, 2001).

Sustainable education is that which is driven by student need and teacher practice. It is not the design of a prepackaged, research based, and externally developed educational programs. However, these programs can be a vehicle for change if those implementing them have the deep understanding, resources, and know how to implement the program in a way that fosters student, teacher and systemic sophisticated understandings and lifelong learning. Datnow's (2005) sustainability study provides an example of how comprehensive school reform models can foster distinct approaches with that interface Comprehensive School Reform Models and the demands brought on by turbulent district and state contexts: (1) approaching new demands with an efficacious attitude and continuing with reforms; (2) placing reform activities on the "back burner" while incorporating new district and state policies; (3) dropping the reform completely as a result of new contextual constraints; and (4) using turbulent district and state contexts as opportunity to discontinue reforms for which there was waning support or which were not working well (p. 136).

"Three of thirteen schools adopted efficacious attitudes in response to changing district and state demands. "In doing so, they were able to meet new mandates head-on with either symbolic or practical responses and, at the same time, sustain their reforms" (Datnow, p. 136). The teachers and the leadership of the three schools met district urges to adopt programs with a sense of efficacy and self-assurance that guided them to make decisions protecting their successful change implementation from intrusion yet allowing the adoption of district initiatives that supported and integrated their core programs (Datnow, 2005, p. 137).

Intertwined in the telling of the effects of efficacious attitude is the description of teachers and school leadership deeply committed to the implemented change structures to meet the needs of their students. They utilized this knowledge of their school needs and a commitment to develop the model presently in place to meet those needs creating a level of continuity for sustaining change when new initiatives were presented.

> At Forest, we have selected some things that we actually believe in and that's where our attention is focused. … We looked at the needs of our school. We said that we want to do Comer. Our teachers agreed. We wanted a full-service school. We wanted to make it work. Our teachers agreed. We wanted parental involvement. They agreed (Datnow, 2005, p. 136).

Datnow's work crystallizes the images created by McLaughlin and Mitra's presentation of the need to understand the theoretical project in order to create change. When the teachers in Datnow's study declare their beliefs into actions it was based in their understanding of the work they were engaged in and the success of it. One does not have to imply that this work encompasses Fullan's dimensions of change at the classroom level. The teachers in this school state it themselves, ". . . and adopted SRA and are very happy with it" (Datnow, 2005). It appears that what is sustainable is that in which educators become a constituency of believers.

Teachers in Change

In much of today's literature it is recognized that teachers are the primary change agents in educational systems. They are the front line implementers of all instructional changes whether they are teacher generated or comprehensive school reforms. The literature also suggests that there are relative qualities of teachers in change that are important to consider when designing change initiatives. The qualities considered here do not include commonly considered aspects such as knowledge level, experience with prior change efforts, resistance to change, and many other well worn perceptions. Here the qualities that might provide insight into how teachers frame their understandings and shape the nature of their professional lives are discussed. Here we consider how attitude formation, teacher vision, and teacher leadership defines the degree of change and sustainability.

A positive attitude toward change implementation is instrumental in creating a culture for success and sustainability. The pragmatism of most adults makes personal relevance a key ingredient in developing a positive attitude toward change initiatives. Relevance leads to what human beings experience as interest, the emotional nutrient for a positive attitude (Wlodkowski, 2003, p. 43). However, it is important to note that teachers who voice opposition to change do not necessarily equate a negative attitude nor failure to execute change initiatives with a high rate of fidelity (Short, 2004, p. 26).

Carl Hovland and his colleagues at Yale University studied the process of attitude change facilitating change in one's behaviors. In the 1950's they developed the message learning approach to attitude change guided by "working assumptions" that were loosely translated from principles of how people learn verbal and motor skills (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981, p. 59). Hovland and his colleagues determined that when a person is presented with a new attitude and

arguments to support it, and then views this new attitude along with his or her old attitude and beliefs, the individual is swayed to maintain old beliefs or change their attitudes to reflect the new information. However, attitude changes would occur only if the incentive for the new attitudinal position outweighed those associated with the initial attitude. "Thus, attention, comprehension, and retention are necessary but not sufficient preconditions for attitude change" one must also consider the incentives for adopting the new position (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981, p. 60).

Hovland and his colleagues centered their studies of communication and attitude change around the question, "Who says what to whom with what effect?" The question, garnered from the previous work of Smith, Lasswell, & Casey (1946) examined the effects of attitude on the source, message, recipient, channel, and the persistence of the message. According to the message learning approach to attitude change the source could be any number of entities from a person to an institution. The source must be reputable and carry enough prestige to uphold and influence the message being delivered. The communicator delivering the message will need to be a person who is trusted and respected to the community they are communicating with. A clear channel of communication that delivers a consistent, reliable message will work better to create the stage of attitude change and behavioral performance to reflect the change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, p. 62). In many successful change efforts the principal, lead teacher or instructional coach becomes the primary messenger. Research has shown that successful instructional leaders spend a large percentage of their time in classrooms, become teachers of teachers, and know how to disperse leadership to others. "She gets in there with you and shows you. She teaches and shows you to make sure that you understand" (Riley, 1999, p.15).

The importance of attitude formation and its manifestations in the physical world are important to consider when planning, implementing, and sustaining educational change. The workers at the forefront of educational change are the multitude of classroom teachers who directly impact student learning, school culture, and district organization. Often these teachers are mired in ill perceived change attempts and daily routines that sabotage their reform attempts and sap their energy and dedication to students. Fullan (2001, Hovland (1950), and McLaughlin and Mitra's (2000) work imply that teachers must be a valued part of the change process with particular attention paid to the perceptions and assumptions they bring to the process. "The real crunch comes in the relationships between new programs or policies and the thousands of subjective realities embedded in people's individual and organizational contexts and their personal histories. How these subjective realities are addressed or ignored is crucial for whether potential changes become meaningful at the level of individual use and effectiveness" (Fullan, 2001, p. 46).

The role of valuing teacher input is further supported by the work of Karen Hammerness (2001) who conducted a study that investigated the impact of teachers' personal visions on their work and careers. Looking at how a teacher's vision of education drives daily practice, she placed teachers in one of four constellations that ranged from a "Close-Clear" to "Close-Cloudy" to "Distant-Clear" to "Far-Clear". Teachers whose vision was closely aligned to their teaching practice, or who could clearly see connections to practice, made up the "Close-Clear" constellation. These teachers filter decisions and attitudes through their personal vision to create a better alignment of the two. "Close-Cloudy" teachers were not able to describe their vision as clearly as their "Close-Clear" colleagues. For this constellation visions had a fuzzy and narrow focus, were quite close to practice and were in supportive contexts and in these cases, vision

seemed to play a minimum role in teachers' lives. "Distant-Clear" constellation teachers had a clear and narrow focus, were quite distant from practice and were in context that was at best indifferent, or at worst, inimical. Teachers in this cluster felt that the gap between their vision and their practice was overwhelmingly vast. Their distant vision undermined their motivation and depressed and discouraged them. In addition, teachers in this constellation highlighted the unsupportive nature of their contexts reflecting an image of what Rosenholtz (1989) has described as "stuck" schools. The last constellation, "Far-Clear," presented a clear vision and broad focus; here visions were far from practice and were in a supportive context. For all of the teachers from the study whose vision placed in this constellation vision were far from practice yet remained a significant measure and guide (Hammerness, 2001, pp. 147-159).

The vision constellation metaphor gives educational change agents another insight into the complex nature of change. Hammerness' research suggests five possible tenets. (1) Attending to the visions of individual teachers may represent a powerful foundation for improvement efforts. Inviting teachers to make their visions explicit and assisting teachers to examine and challenge those visions may help to surface deeply-held attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning. (2) Uncovering deeply-held beliefs, exploring teachers' visions may help them to face inevitable setbacks and protect them from disillusionment and discouragement. (3) If reformers and teachers work together to identify and clarify the practices that will help advance teachers' visions, they may then be able to develop the appropriate institutional supports that researchers [Fullan, 1999, 2000; Elmore, 1996; and McLaughlin & Mitra, 2003] deem necessary in order to effect change. (4) Exploring teachers' visions may also make it possible to better appreciate whether their opposition to a reform represents resistance to the ideas themselves or something of a learned response after having found that their own vision was not

sustainable. (5) It is most likely that contexts which offer some consistency with teachers' visions will foster teacher growth toward their vision (Hammerness, 2001, pp.158-161).

Teachers who work to affect change (Fullan, 2001; and McLaughlin and Mitra, 2000) approach transformative work through the lens of their past experiences. Their past experiences foreshadow attitudes and understandings of the complex nature of current change efforts. The blend of old and new experiences creates a dissonance between the teacher's visions of what education should look and feel like, causing change to occur. It creates disconnect between the teacher's vision and the change program or supports the teacher's vision and aids in drawing the vision and practice into closer alignment.

Alma Harris (2003) writes, "Change in the classroom involves much more than acquiring new skills or knowledge. It essentially means changing attitudes, beliefs, and personal theories [and vision] in order to reconstruct a personal approach to teaching. This cannot be achieved unless there are opportunities for teachers to reflect upon their practice and the practice of others" (Harris, 2003, p. 378). The study involved three urban schools undergoing change efforts to improve student achievement. Like the schools cited in the research conducted by Datnow (2005), Riley et al. (1999), and Larson (1999), teachers participated in daily challenges that stretched their visions, worried their attitudes, and challenged their knowledge levels. In the total of twelve schools, cited in this combined literature, there is a glaring similarity that cannot be ignored. When change occurs, teachers make decisions about its impact on their perception of what schooling is and what actions they will take. For some teachers this means they will leave the profession, for some it means moving into another school whose "vision" is more closely aligned to their own, and to others it means that they accept the challenge of change and embrace the opportunity to grow.

For the teachers who choose to embark on a change there is a common thread in the

literature which suggests that they must become an integral part of the school change structure

and the school structure must undergo profound change to accommodate that need (Eastwood &

Louis, 1992, p.215). There is prolific evidence in today's change literature that supports a move

away from a top-heavy leadership core to a dispersal of leadership throughout the school. As

shared leadership develops, schools become more like learning communities than traditional

compartmentalized endeavors. School imbedded professional development is essential to the

success of this transformation.

The Role of Professional Development

> One of the National Staff Development Council Learning Standard states,
> It is essential that staff development assist educators in moving beyond
> comprehension of the surface features of a new idea or innovation to a fuller
> and more complete understanding of its purposes, critical attributes, meaning,
> and connection to other approaches. To improve student achievement, adult
> learning under most circumstances must promote deep understanding of a topic
> and provide many opportunities for teachers and administrators to practice new
> skills with feedback on their performance until those skills become automatic
> and habitual. Typically, deeper understanding requires a number of opportunities
> to interact with the idea or procedure through active learning processes that
> promote reflection such as discussion and dialogue, writing, demonstrations,
> practice with feedback, and group problem solving" (retrieved 10/21/05 from
> http://www.nsdc.org/standards/learning.cfm).

The standard emphasizes that consideration of other important aspects of "adult

engagement in change processes." The three aspects considered are the feelings that change

often evokes in individuals which can include anxiety, fear, and anger. Different learning styles

and strengths make it important for educators to have opportunities to learn alone and with others

and, whenever possible, to have choices among learning activities. The life stage of individuals

may affect an individual's availability and interest in additional work responsibilities of his or

her life. Knowledge of the three aspects helps educational leaders to know that professional

development will help educators align their vision of teaching (Hammerness, 2003) with leadership's vision of change and create a more likely arena for success.

Improving the Quality of education For All Project (IQEA) in England, The Manitoba School Improvement Project (MSIP) in Canada, and Success for All in the United States illustrate that highlighting the classroom as the "locus of change" and recognizing that structural changes are required to facilitate pedagogical change creates a need for teacher development and training to become an integral part of the program. They each recognize the importance of building self-sustaining communities of practice where teachers share and learn from each other in order to reach their shared primary aim which is to build capacity and the capability for positive change at the school and classroom level (Harris, 2003, p.372).

> There is evidence from all three projects that providing teachers with the opportunity to work together and to enquire into their pedagogical practice fosters positive relationships. Shared norms, shared values, agreed goals and common aspirations stem from teachers' involvement in exploring pedagogy. In addition, trust and respect among teachers are at the core of all developmental work. This is created through the deliberate effort of staff and students to communicate and to collaborate with each other. A common denominator of all three projects is the way in which teachers are encouraged to learn together (Harris, 2003, p. 378).

The three initiatives (IQEA, MSIP, and SFA) bring into fruition the development of professional communities "where teachers participate in decision making, have a shared sense of purpose, engage in collaborative work and accept joint responsibility for their work" (Harris, p. 380). Learning communities instinctively operate within the intent of the National Staff Development Council's learning standard to build teacher and school capacity. Building teacher capacity is a cornerstone of learning communities.

Teacher capacity-building is the most productive investment for schools and far exceeds the effects of teacher experience or class size (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996 p. 414).

Darling-Hammond and Baker (1999) credit huge gains in reading and mathematics on the U.S. National Assessment of Education Progress in 1992 and 1996 to the development of four-week institutes with follow-up coaching for teachers at all grade levels. Researchers working with the Chicago City schools (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001, p. 297-321, & 2002, p.38-46) found that teachers who were offered high-quality professional development followed through in using teaching methods they were taught leading to higher achievement gains on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in selected schools. In a similar study, a comparative analysis of more highly successful schools with less highly successful schools, lower achieving schools had limited professional development and teacher collaboration (Riley, Smith, Ginsburg, & Plisko, 1999). Mosenthal, Lipson, Mekkelson, Russ, & Sortino (2001) support Riley and colleagues findings in their comparative analysis of highly successful schools and lower achieving schools that the lower achieving schools had limited professional development and lacked common vision.

R. B.Cooter (2003) developed a capacity-building model for teacher development based in Bloom and Vygotsky that is reflective of National Staff Development Council standards as a way in which sustainable learning occurs. "A key feature of this capacity-building model for teacher development is distributed learning over time. It acknowledges that neither cognitive development of new knowledge nor field practice is sufficient in the professional development of teachers. Rather, the combination of both elements – new learning developed over time and practice under the guidance of a more knowledgeable coach – is the most effective practice" (p. 199). The model consists of five stages beginning with a stage of "No Knowledge" and progress to "Expertise and ability to coach others." However, it is important to note that once teachers reach relative mastery they are continually at some stage of learning, residing in Vygotsky's *zone*

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of proximal development. "That is why master teachers everywhere continue to burn the midnight oil pursuing ever more effective ways of helping children learn" (Cooter, 20003, p. 201). Table I demonstrates the model stages, description of each stage, and teacher learning occurring in each stage.

Table I

Capacity Building Model for Teacher Development: Deep Training Plus Coaching

Stage	Description	Teacher Learning
No Knowledge	Teacher is unaware of available knowledge.	None
First Exposure	One– or two-day workshops	Though this is a critical step little more than simple consciousness of a pedagogical construct developed.
Deep learning with Limited capacity	Involves significant study of the new teaching strategy beyond the awareness level and is coupled with classroom applications.	Teachers deepen their knowledge about the topic or strategy, but have only begun experimentation with students thus far.
Participate with Coaching	Essential step to teacher capacity requiring massive classroom practice over time with guidance from an expert coach.	Focus on improving the quality of implementation and solving problems experienced by the teacher in training with aid of a coach.
Refined and Expanded Capacity	Occurs as the teacher understands most elements of new teaching methods and regularly uses them as part of his or her usual protocol of instructions.	Strategies begin to feel natural and automatic, and student performance in reading can improve appreciably on all measures.
Expertise and Ability to Coach Others	Relative mastery of the new teaching methods has been achieved.	Teacher is now able to coach others on the strategy.

Adapted from *Teacher "Capacity Building" Helps Urban Children Succeed in Reading*, Cooter, R. Jr. (2003).

The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative in San Francisco chose to implement literacy coaching as one form of professional development to address literacy reform. The progress of the Bay Area Collaborative project demonstrates the move teachers make as they progress in Cooter's model. After participating in workshops to develop literacy knowledge the

Collaborative chose to invest in literacy coaching to promote literacy reform in three Bay Area districts, kindergarten through high school. Literacy coaches have both content and instructional expertise in literacy. They are released from teaching students to promote and support high-quality literacy instruction through direct, school-based work with other teachers. Literacy coaches model lessons, observe classroom instruction, and coach teachers one-on-one or in grade-level groups. Coaching breaks through the isolation that traditionally characterizes teaching and gives teachers the structured support they need to change their practice (Symonds, 2003, p. 4).

A similar literacy initiative in a large Midwestern urban district found that coaching built program capacity and ensured instructional integrity. The success teachers experienced with program implementation created a cyclical process for building greater instructional fidelity, teacher success with classroom practice, student success in completing classroom assignments, and increased student responses (Short, 2004, pp. 27, 28).

> In schools where teachers work with coaches regularly, teachers, coaches and administrators report a growth of collaborative teacher culture marked by increased teacher willingness and ability to collaborate, peer accountability, individual teacher knowledge about other teachers' classrooms; increased levels and quality of implementation of new instructional strategies, and support for new teachers. Many discussed teachers becoming more receptive to change, with coaches inspiring them to "go outside their comfort zone." Several cited coaches' ability to keep equity goals in the forefront of teachers' conversations and practice and help teachers use differentiated instruction to meet the needs of at-risk students. Coaches also act as advocates between teachers and district leaders and increase school leadership capacity. (Symonds, 2003, p. 5).

In two of the three schools studied in the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, the coaching model moved away from external coaching and towards peer-coaching. The decision to move toward peer coaching was being implemented as teachers reached "relative mastery" (Cooter, 2003). Teachers were modeling, observing, and discussing each others work

implementing literacy strategies supported by the coaches who had been with them but were feeling "it is more important to encourage leadership from within the staff" (Symonds, p. 17).

Linking teachers to peers was beginning to take place to different degrees according to the level of readiness at each of the two schools. The district arranged substitutes for new teachers so they could visit their peers' classrooms. District coaches went with the new teachers and talked them through the visit. There was then a chance to debrief and plan ways to take the strategies back to their own classrooms. Teachers also buddy-taught by combining their classrooms, one teacher modeled instruction while the second teacher observed (Symonds, p.25).

Peer coaching began in the early 1980s as a strategy to improve the degree of implementation of new curriculum and instructional techniques. Showers and Joyce showed that "teachers who had a coaching relationship . . . that is, who shared aspects of teaching, planned together, and pooled their experiences . . . practiced new skills and strategies more frequently and applied them more appropriately than did their counterparts who worked to expand their repertoires (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p. 14). Peer coaching has typically operated as a process of collaborative planning, observation, and feedback, rather than serving as a formal evaluation or review, in order to increase the level of implementation of instructional techniques and curriculum (Ackland, 1991; Odell, 1990; Perkins, 1998; Showers & Joyce, 1996).

"Variations on the term *peer coaching* appear in the literature, such as *technical coaching, team coaching, collegial coaching, cognitive coaching,* and *challenge coaching*" (Wong & Nicotera, 2003, p. 2). Technical coaching and team coaching focus on incorporating new curriculum and instructional techniques into teachers' routines (Ackland, 1991; Becker, 1996; Showers & Joyce, 1996). Collegial coaching and cognitive coaching seek to improve existing teacher practices by refining techniques, developing collegiality, increasing professional

dialogue, and assisting teachers to reflect on their teaching (Ackland, 1991; Becker, 1996;

Showers & Joyce, 1996). Challenge coaching concentrates on identifying and treating a specific

problem and can be used in a larger context than the classroom such as a school or grade level

(Ackland, 1991; Becker, 1996). The peer coaching strategies differ, but all of the strategies use

peers to achieve the goal of improving the teaching and learning process (Wong & Nicotera,

2003, p. 2).

When teachers enter into a peer coaching model that encourages collegiality rather than

supervisory evaluation, teachers act as change agents who understand that change must come

from within the instructor. Observations are essential, because a teacher is likely to be unaware

of many teaching and learning behaviors (Weasmer & Woods, 1999, p. 2). Kurth (1994)

developed a model of peer coaching which establishes that "changing teaching behavior is a

function of social interaction; therefore, teacher change is better facilitated if mutual trust is

established between peer mentors" (p. 39).

> The strength of peer coaching models lies in its functionality across
> educational innovations. Although change in the classroom is rooted in the
> commitment of an individual teacher, peer feedback during change helps
> educators reframe ideas and beliefs. Reframing demonstrates Vygotsky's (1978)
> premise that learning requires decontextualizing experience through social
> interaction. Thus, change is collaborative as well as individual. For example,
> to develop an inclusive classroom a science teacher might invite a special
> education instructor to observe the classroom. The resulting insights then
> determine modifications needed in classroom climate or teaching strategies to
> promote inclusion (Weasmer & Woods, 1999, p. 4).

Peer coaching is an effective professional development structure and a possible vehicle

for sustaining change as a tool for constructing collective efficacy. As defined in social

cognitive theory, all efficacy belief constructs – student, teacher, and collective – are future-

oriented judgments about capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to

produce given attainments in specific situations or contexts (Bandura, 1997, in Goddard, Hoy, &

Hoy, 2004, p. 3). Coaching raises teachers' implemented level of practice through a cycle of observation, goal setting, practice, and reflection. The success teachers experience as they increase their capacity to implement a change initiative raises teacher efficacy to continue improving their instruction and adapting the program to meet the needs of their students (Short, 2004, p. 28). Teachers may experience a more collective sense that their colleagues and school leadership are capable of creating and sustaining change.

Collective Efficacy

The succinct synthesis of existing research by Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2004) provides one with a clear examination of collective efficacy and its social constructs as an added organizational dimension from which to discuss teacher practice and sustaining change. "The connection between collective efficacy beliefs and student outcomes depend in part on the reciprocal relationships among these collective efficacy beliefs, teachers' personal sense of efficacy, teachers' professional practice, and teachers' influence over instructionally relevant school decisions" (Goddard et al, 2004, p. 3).

Studies conducted on the role of efficacy and learning have shown a positive link between teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement (Anderson & Greene, & Lowen, 1988; Armor, Conroy-Oseguera, Cox, King, McDonnell, Pascal, et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross, 1992, 1994). Inquiry into collective efficacy sprung from findings about teachers' sense of efficacy, "recent research has added an organizational dimension to inquiry beliefs about efficacy beliefs in schools" (Goddard et al., 2004). Inquiry of collective efficacy beliefs emphasizes that in addition to teachers having self efficacy beliefs about their abilities they also have "beliefs about the conjoint capability of a school faculty"(p.4).

Such group-referent perceptions reflect an emergent organizational
property known as *perceived collective efficacy* (see e.g., Bandura, 1997;

Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; How, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002).
Within an organization, perceived collective efficacy represents the beliefs
of group members concerning 'the performance of a social system as a whole'
(Bandura, 1997, p. 469). For schools, perceived collective efficacy refers to
the judgment of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organize
nd execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students
Goddard et al., 2004, p. 4).

Collective efficacy beliefs affect instructional practice and student achievement in the

same manner as teacher efficacy. If a school staff has a high sense of collective efficacy school

performance are higher and the more likely the staff will be able to ". . . tenaciously overcome

obstacles and persist in the face of failure. Such resiliency, in turn, tends to foster innovative

teaching and student learning" (Goddard et al., p. 4).

Bandura (1986, 1997) presented four sources of efficacy-shaping: mastery experience,

vicarious experience, social persuasion, and affective states. The mastery experience is one in

which the perception that a performance has been successful tends to raise efficacy beliefs,

contributing to the expectation that performance will be proficient in the vice versa. Mastery

experiences can also act in the reverse, if performances have been unsuccessful then it will be

expected that future performances will be unsuccessful and a low sense of self efficacy will

prevail. Vicarious experiences are those in which the skill in question is modeled by someone

else. Vicarious experiences are gained by observation of successful organizations, especially

those that attain similar goals in the face of familiar opportunities and constraints. If the model

performs well, efficacy beliefs of the observer are most likely enhanced and vice versa. Social

persuasion entails encouragement of specific performance feedback from a supervisor or a

colleague or it may involve discussions in the teacher's lounge, community about the ability of

teachers to influence students and the organization in which they work. Talks, workshops,

professional development opportunities, and feedback about achievement can inspire action.

Affective states are the level of arousal, either of anxiety or excitement and add to individual's perceptions of self-capacity or incompetence. Just as individuals react to stress, so do organizations. "Organizations with strong beliefs can tolerate pressure and crisis and continue to function without debilitating consequences" (Goddard et al., 2004, p. 8).

The four sources of efficacy shaping information have implications for sustaining change. If successful change is to be sustained it is imperative that the change process provides opportunities for those involved to have mastery, vicarious, and social experiences to develop and reflect on practice. These opportunities must also allow time and place for teachers, as change agents, to reflect on the affective states experienced in a socially supportive atmosphere. The created atmosphere of coaching, in its many forms, influences the school or district culture to build a high level of collective efficacy through repetitive practice, observation, planning, and reflection.

This phenomenon is prevalent, though not always identified, in much of research conducted on schools in change. ". . . just by being there and listening, you get to know somebody and know their ideas and how they approach things. So people knew each other better and therefore can be more positive, not putting each other down" (Riley et al, 1999, p. 37). "We are like a good athletic team. When we step out onto the field, we know we are going to win. Whatever challenges come our way, we know we are going to be successful (comment was followed-up with applause and cheering by colleagues)" (p. 37).

Many times the budding of collective efficacy begins with a principal, superintendent, or a coach, who builds a level of trust that calls educators to attention.

> Ms. Warren [principal] and Ms. Payne [mentor, peer coach, and collaborative colleague] set the example for us. Many evenings they are here until ten o'clock and they work long hours on weekends. Although they expect a great deal from us, they go out of their way to support us . . . (Riley et al. p. 48).

At other times collective efficacy is portrayed in the literature as a combination

practices that foster collaboration to learn together.

> In addition to participating in formal training sessions provided through Title I funding, teachers at Burgess learn from each other. Burgess is an environment where staff feel comfortable asking their instructional leaders and each other or help. As Thompkins [Instructional Specialist] said, "They don't have any problem with me coming to work with them." Nor do teachers have difficulty seeking help from each other. Recently, for example, one teacher had visited another classroom to learn how to better teach the mathematical concept of place value. Another teacher reported how Carter encouraged teachers to visit each other's classrooms and share ideas. Teachers enjoyed this sharing and were openly supportive of each other. (p. 68).

These examples demonstrate that, "Perhaps the most compelling reason for the recent

development of interest in perceived collective efficacy is the probable link between collective

efficacy beliefs and group goal attainment" (Goddard et al, 2004, p. 7).

> Bandura demonstrated that the effect of perceived collective efficacy on student achievement was stronger than the direct link between SES and student achievement. Similarly Goddard and his colleagues have shown that, even after controlling for students' prior achievement, race/ethnicity, SES, and gender, collective efficacy beliefs have stronger effects on student achievement than student race or SES. Teachers' beliefs about the collective capability of their faculty can vary greatly among schools and are strongly linked to student achievement (Goddard et al., 2004, p. 7).

Given that the nature of peer coaching lends itself to the investigation of impact of collective

efficacy on student achievement it is important to consider its implications in the study of the

complex nature of school reform and sustainability.

Summary

This review of research literature reflects the complex and intriguing nature of creating

and sustaining change. Implementing change at the classroom level requires teachers to use new

or revised materials, new teaching techniques, and alter beliefs about teaching (Fullan 2001, p.

39). Teachers and school leadership must understand and learn the theoretical project . . .

knowledge about why they are doing what they're doing in order to develop the understanding they will need to deepen their practice or to sustain new practices (McLaughlin & Mitra, 2000, p. 10).

Sustaining new practices requires a deep pedagogical understanding of the necessity to maintain acquired practices while surveying what still needs to be changed. This implies that sustainable improvement is not evanescent, disappearing gradually into nonexistence. Sustainable improvement is enduring and draws on resources and supports at a rate that can match the pace of change, and that promoters of sustainability cultivate and recreate an educational environment or ecosystem that possesses the capacity to stimulate ongoing improvement on a broad front (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 192). As demonstrated by Datnow (2005) the most effective schools approach new demands with an efficacious attitude and continue with reforms (p. 137).

Teachers involved in change programs are faced with a complexity that defines their personal and professional endeavors. Teachers experience direct conflict with belief systems (Harris, 2003), discrepancies between their current attitudes and those presented (Hovland, 1950, Petty & Cacioppo, 1981), disconnect between their vision of practice (Hammerness, 2001), and the challenges of new learning (Fullan, 1999). Teachers' personal and professional constructs, in combination with district and state mandates, create a double helix of change which at times can be overwhelming and discouraging.

To implement effective change, it is important to construct appropriate change structures. One increasingly important change structure is professional development. The National Staff Development Council sets a standard that developing a deeper understanding requires a number of opportunities to interact with the idea or procedure through active learning processes that

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promote reflection such as dialogue, discussion, writing, demonstrations, practice with feedback, and group problem solving. Coaching is one professional development strategy that uses all of the aspects to inform, educate, and nurture teachers to a deep pedagogical shift. More specifically, peer coaching has been found to build teacher capacity through goal setting, practice, observation, and reflection. "These same teachers practiced new skills and strategies more frequently and applied them more appropriately than did their counterparts who worked to expand their repertoires" (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p. 14).

Coaching may lead to higher levels of collective efficacy in a school or district. This is an important consideration as research demonstrates that capacity (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996, p. 414) and collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Goddard et al., 2000; Goddard and Goddard, 2001) show a closer causal affect on student achievement than social economic status or race. The study of teachers' roles implementing and sustaining change may be greatly informed by exploring how teachers' experiences affect collective efficacy and the implications of this affect for sustaining change.

Chapter Two includes a discussion of the research methodology and data analysis procedures this study employed to examine this phenomena. Chapter Three is the presentation and analysis of data. Chapter Four provides a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and research.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the rationale for the research design, participant selection, entry, and role negotiation will be presented. The conceptual framework, data collection, data analysis procedures, and limitations and applications will be discussed.

Rationale for the Design

This was a qualitative study. "Qualitative research, as a set of interpretive practices, privileges no single methodology over any other" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.5). Qualitative researchers search for understanding rather than explanation and for interpretation rather than prediction (Green, 1997). Wilhelm Dilthey (quoted in Stakes, 1994) says, "We understand ourselves only when we transfer our own lived experience into every kind of expression of our own and other people's lives" (p. 36). This research dealt with how the roles of those involved created sustainable change. This was viewed as a qualitative issue that can best be viewed through case study in order to glean understandings that define sustaining change and guide future change initiatives.

Schools are dynamic, complex organizations. To fully understand the ways in which teachers plan for the sustainability of the Reading First Initiative case study was used to capture their individual learning, actions, attitudes, vision, and intent as they were developed in the implementation of the program. In addition program, building, and district leadership were interviewed to ascertain data on sustaining the Reading First initiative. Interviewing across the levels of power in a school system further focused this study into a nested case study. This study involved district leadership as a case, program leadership as a case, building leadership as a case, and teachers as a case each an individual case in this nested case study. The design permitted the

shifting of lenses among the four contexts (district, program, building, and teacher) as ideas about the implementation of Reading First and the planning for future years were considered, discussed, and analyzed. "Months of fieldwork may result in a single case study that describes a village, community, neighborhood, organization, or program. However, that single case study is likely to be made up of many small cases – the stories of specific individuals, families, organizational units, and other groups" (Patton, 2001, p. 297). Qualitative fieldwork can be thought of as "engaging in a series of multilayered and nested case studies, often with intersecting and overlapping units of analysis" (Langer, 1999, p. vi).

The study was designed to gather information from in-depth open ended interviews, direct observations, and written documents. Interviews yielded direct quotations from the participants about their experiences, vision of education, attitudes, insights, knowledge, and projections for sustaining the Reading First Initiative. The observations yielded data about classroom environment, plans for sustaining change, links between plans and occurrences, interactions between participants, and professional development impact. Documents analyzed included program monitoring documents, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, fidelity check documents, ELLCO documents, aggregated reports of student achievement developed by both the state and the local initiative's external evaluator, and professional development frameworks and participant evaluations of professional development. These methods of gathering data are widely accepted qualitative research practices and are globally used as tools for collecting data for case studies.

The research question posed for the study asked that one closely examine the experiences of implementing the Reading First Initiative and how those experiences shaped sustainability. Seeking to understand the relationship between implementation experiences and probable

sustainability placed the study in the theoretical domain of phenomenology. "Phenomenology asks for the very nature of a phenomenon, for that which makes a some- 'thing' what it is – and without which it could not be what it is" (Van Manen, 1990, p.10). Phenomenographic approaches focus on exploring "how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning" (Patton, 2001, p.104). A phenomenologist strives to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for themselves. This can be accomplished by actually living the experience or through in-depth interviews. The goal of the phenomenologist is to describe the phenomenon is such detail that "the description reawakens or shows us the lived quality and significance of the experience in a fuller and deeper manner" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 10). That is "—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others" (Patton, p. 104). The phenomenological approach assumes that "there is an essence or essences to shared experience" (Patton, 2001, p.106). It is the clarity of portraying the shared experiences of the individuals involved in Reading First sustainability that reveals the essence or essences of it.

The nested case study developed through this research is essential to understanding the role of teachers in sustaining change in an urban environment. Urban environments are multi-dimensional sites due to the many forces that both pull them into change and hold them in place. The tension between change and stationary position creates a dynamic condition for the study of sustaining change that is just budding from a funded initiative into a self-sustaining endeavor. Case studies, such as this one on teachers sustaining change in turbulent times, have been described as a way of investigating a phenomenon in a particular context and also as a product that describes and permits analysis of a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998).

Qualitative case study is a research methodology in which collected data are coded and triangulated to create intersects of like occurrences, thinking, and feelings. These points of intersect provide data points from which to draw understandings and conclusions that lead to understanding of oneself in this place at this time. The holistic nature of qualitative methods is both its strength and its weakness. Possible weaknesses could include biased data collection and reporting by the researcher, limited ability to generalize findings, and vulnerability to over analyze or under analyze the data because of researcher's role as a participant in the research. In order to overcome the limitations and possible sources of error, the researcher selected a site that was unique within the district, used multiple methods for collecting data, used the method of data triangulation for the data analysis, and previewed the interview guide with her doctoral committee prior to entering the field, in order to check for response bias in the interview protocol.

Entry and Role Negotiation

The Reading First Initiative in this large Midwest urban district began in the fall of 2003. The researcher applied and was hired for a position as a Lead Data Manager for the initiative prior to the Initiative's implementation. This occurred two weeks after the school year had begun. As a Lead Data Manager for Reading First it was my responsibility to oversee the creation and maintenance of the student assessment data system. The role had several components: hiring and training three other data managers; interfacing between the data system provider, district, and state; developing and delivering professional development for teachers, Reading First leadership, and building principals; coaching new literacy specialists in program focus and teacher development; and conducting program fidelity checks.

The work the researcher did as the Lead Data Manager, prior to the study, gave her entry into the study site. In addition, the researcher conducted a smaller study in the 2003-2004 school year on using Program Fidelity Checks as a coaching tool. Program Fidelity Checks were classroom observations conducted to ensure the Voyager Universal Literacy System was being implemented in the classroom with a high rate of faithfulness to the original program design. The participants in the current study were familiar with the researcher, her style of field work, and trusted her as both a co-worker and a researcher.

While this provided a trusting comfort level for the participants and the researcher, it also posed the need for the researcher to be diligent in recognizing biases that may have arisen because of prior relationships with the participants. As a participatory researcher, the researcher realized that she was both a participant and a researcher conducting interviews, reviewing documents, and triangulating data to construct the truth within the data. As the researcher, I was a participant in the very phenomena that I was studying.

As a participant researcher, I was automatically immersed in the setting enabling me to experience the setting as fully as possible. What was always a consideration in my participation was my responsibility as a researcher to maintain an analytical perspective grounded in the purpose of the fieldwork for the study. I included my own experiences thoughts and feelings in my field notes and report. Practicing reflexivity (MacBeth, 2001, p. 35) I worked to maintain consideration of how my observations may have affected the observed as well as how I might have been affected by what and how I participated and observed. To this end, I have analyzed and reported the origins and implications of my own perspective.

Site Selection

The large Midwest urban school district's Reading First Initiative was being implemented in three elementary schools. The schools had similar demographics of student race, socio-economic status, and student achievement as measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) system and Terra Nova. The number of students at the three schools ranged from350 to 390, and at each school the number of students receiving free and reduced lunches was similar, ranging from 90% to 95%. One school had a teaching staff of six teachers, the second had seven teachers, and the third had nine teachers. All three schools had a Literacy Specialist, part time Resource Coordinator, part time Data Manager, and a full time Principal that serve as the building leadership team (Building Trio).

The three schools involved in the Reading First initiative had all undergone stressful situations during the second year of implementation. At the end of the second year two Reading First schools were combined to create one school with a new name. The new school, Rivermont, houses kindergarten through ninth grade classrooms. Rivermont began the 2005-2006 school year in a cramped, overcrowded school building designed to house one of the two combined schools. In December of the 2005-2006 school year, the students moved again into a new building that would be their permanent home. The shifting of students from one location to another occurred to accommodate the construction of the new building that will eventually be a pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade campus. The teaching staff for kindergarten through third grade was changed very little; in that only one teacher retired during this set of transitions.

Clayton Elementary School was housed on a campus with two buildings. One building housed the kindergarten through third grade classrooms. The other building housed the fourth through eighth grade classrooms. During the summer of 2005, the two buildings were combined

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into a four story turn of the century building that housed 325 students, kindergarten through eighth grade during the 2005-2006 school year. In addition, three of the six primary teachers were new to this building. Primary classrooms had been moved numerous times as the teachers and students settled into one crowded building. Despite interruptions, instruction continued with much planning and replanning to accommodate unscheduled changes.

During the second year of implementation Clearview Elementary experienced the death of its Literacy Specialist. The school spent several months without a Literacy Specialist. In March, of the second year, one of Clearview's first grade teachers was hired as the new Literacy Specialist. At the end of the second year of implementation the school was moved from its location into a new building that caused its students to cross two dangerous intersections and walk, sometimes up to a mile, through neighborhoods with high crime rates. Enrollment at this school had dropped by one-third causing the surplussing of several teachers after the school year began, moving students from one classroom to another, disrupting instruction.

All three sites provided information-rich case study opportunities. Of the three schools the third school was chosen by the researcher to be the study site. The third school was chosen to be the study site because it was assessed to be a case that could make an important point in the grand scheme of the total school district. That is to say, if sustainability for the Reading First initiative could exist at this school it could exist in any school in the district.

The third school was a critical case. While all three schools were operating under stressful situations, the third school had the smallest volunteer base. Volunteers were thought to be critical to the sustainability of the Reading First Initiative because volunteers provided tutoring to many struggling readers. In the other two schools volunteers were present and at times over abundant. The third school was thought to be in such a bad neighborhood that few

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volunteers ventured to its doors. When studying only one site it makes strategic sense to "pick the site that would yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge" (Patton, 2002, p. 236)

Introduction to the District

The large, Midwestern, urban school district this study took place in has been in existence for one hundred and seventy-seven years. In the early eighteen hundreds several public schools operated in the city, making it the first to have a public school system in the new Northwest Territory. Many of the buildings that housed these early public schools still remain to house today's students. The district established its first school board in 1829. In 1850 the first superintendent of the school district was elected by popular vote of the public. The election of superintendents occurred until 1853 when the Board received authority to appoint its superintendent.

Nine years before the Civil War the city's African-American residents successfully moved to create their own, separate public school system. The school was established in 1852 and was supported by proceeds from taxes on property owned by blacks and operated by a board elected by African-Americans. In 1874, after black males were enfranchised by the 15th Amendment, the independent school board was abolished and the system was gradually dismantled with the last school being assimilated into the larger district in 1910. However, in 1914 the school board established an all black school on the West side of the city that remained in operation until 1962.

During the 1960's the district responded to national policies to integrate schools, war against poverty, and build an educational system to meet the new demands of the space age by establishing a system of magnet schools. The magnet schools were established as a way to

integrate student populations and meet the demands to provide highly educated graduates. The district has been involved in this work since that time. Over the years magnet schools have proved to be controversial yet successful. The district has implemented numerous other programs that have either proven successful or not. Successful, sustainable programs have included the creation of Montessori schools, Language schools, Performing Arts schools, and Paideia schools. Programs that have been implemented but have not been sustained include Success For All, Expeditionary Learning, International Baccalaureate Programs, Direct Instruction, CUSI Mathematics and Science a National Science Foundation grant program, Cooperative Learning, Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Open Court Reading Instruction, Standards in Practice, Teaming, and Individually Guided Education.

Today the district serves 35,600 students in its seventy-one schools. At the time of the study the predominant population of students was African American. The demographics were: 71.3 percent African American, 23.2 percent White Americans, 3.5 percent Multiracial Americans, 1 percent Hispanic Americans, less than one percent of students American Indian, and .9 percent of students Asian/Pacific Islanders. The District spread across 90 square miles and had an annual budget in excess of 428.5 million dollars which was overseen by a seven member school board and the district superintendent. The social economic status of the district reflected a population of 64.5 percent economically disadvantaged, and the population of students with disabilities was at 18.5 percent.

The school district operated fifty-five elementary schools, thirteen high schools and six satellite programs. The district's satellite programs focused on serving those students who could not attend in school settings. Satellite programs included a juvenile detention center, area hospitals, a home for mentally ill students, and a work resource center.

Elementary schools had different grade configurations. Fifteen of the elementary schools contained kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. Thirty-nine of the elementary schools contained kindergarten through eighth grade classrooms, and one of the elementary schools contained kindergarten through third grade classrooms. These schools were part of a choice system in which there were neighborhood schools and magnet programs. Neighborhood schools offer strong academic programs based on state academic content standards in a community setting. The district determined the boundaries for each neighborhood school, and neighborhood schools are designated according to the student's street address. Magnet schools attracted students throughout the district who were interested in specific areas such as foreign language, the arts, or a teaching style such as Montessori and Paideia.

The high schools all contained ninth through twelfth grade classrooms but within the high schools there might be three programs operating simultaneously. For example, one high school housed a public service learning program, traditional high school program, and a university program. The district also provided high schools with Montessori curriculums, creative and performing arts curriculums, entrepreneurship, Paideia, information technology programs, and career technical programs. The high schools varied in age levels with most serving high school aged students, while some served students through the age of twenty-two. At the secondary level, there were no school assignments based on address. Instead students would select from a variety of high school programs with special focuses leading students into careers and higher education. To enter some high school programs, students were required to meet standards set out by the individual program.

Clearview Elementary was one of the fifty-five elementary schools in this district. It was a neighborhood school that housed 325 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The students were ninety-nine percent African American and the school had a ninety-seven percent free and reduced lunch rate. Clearview sat in one of the highest crime areas of the city. At the time of this study, there had been seven fatal shootings over a period of two weeks. Other shootings occurred such as an incident involving two of the schools' students being caught in a crossfire shooting at the crosswalk located at the southeast corner of the school. The shooting occurred after school hours and luckily the students were wounded but not fatally shot. During the time of this study, four students were arrested and removed from the school for drug possession. One teacher was escorted out of the building after mishandling middle school students during an altercation. Staff, volunteers, and other visitors are required to park their cars on the school lot in order to provide for the safety of people and property. Clearly this school would be classified as an inner-city school with many of the circumstances that impede or affect instruction.

During the summer of 2005, Clearview was moved from one location to another in order to accommodate the construction of a new building. In 1950 the school being vacated was built on the location of one of the original school sites from the early days of the district. The first school built there was a part of the African-American school system developed in 1852. Clearview operated as a predominantly African-American school until it was moved to its present location. The present location once housed MacMarren Elementary, the building that was vacated when a new school was built to house the students from MacMarren. Now, Clearview students attend school in a borrowed building that was located next to the new

MacMarren Elementary School. Clearview is slated to move back into its home location after the completion of its new building in the 2007-2008 school year.

The move from one location to another presented a new set of issues for Clearview. The parents of its students did not want their children to walk the five city blocks to the new location. Due to gang boundaries and the high crime rate of the neighborhood parents were very concerned about the safety of their children. The district refused to provide transportation for students from the original location to the old MacMarren building. As a result, Clearview lost one-third of its student population to other, surrounding schools. They also lost their volunteer base, as the volunteers had the same concerns as the parents.

Clearview is governed by a Local School Decision Making Committee (LSDMC), Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), and the school principal. The LSDMC is a committee made up of school and community representatives. The members are recruited by the building principal and consist of a teacher representative from each teaching team, two representatives from the civil service staff, two parent representatives, community and business representatives, and a representative from the building's partner in education. The responsibility of the committee is to oversee the implementation of the school's Strategic Improvement Plan (One Plan). In this capacity they oversee the school budget, instructional programs, and staffing. Usually the LSDMC is informed of school needs and achievements by the teacher representatives and the school principal. The agenda for meetings is developed before a meeting by the building principal and the LSDMC chair. The LSDMC is responsible for interviewing principal candidates and making recommendations to district leadership for hiring of the principal. The LSDMC at Clearview has the added responsibility of overseeing the construction of its new school, making decisions about the design of the building's interior and exterior. The

district has created guidelines for the decision making process of the LSDMC and holds it accountable for decisions the committee makes.

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) is made up of representatives from inside the school. The membership consists of team leaders from the regular education, special education, and fine arts teaching teams, and a civil service representative. The agenda for an ILT meeting is constructed prior to the meeting and all within the school may present items to be considered during the meeting. At Clearview the team leaders ensure that teaching team members concerns and ideas are presented to the ILT. This process begins during the team meetings when members bring up possible agenda items and the team decides to carry them forward to the ILT. The team leader then presents the possible agenda item to the principal or ILT chair. The principal and ILT chair make the decision to place the item on the ILT agenda or to take some other appropriate action. As with the LSDMC, there are guidelines to guide the decision making process of the ILT. The ILT is first responsible to the LSDMC and through the LSDMC held responsible for its decisions by the district.

At the end of the 2004-2005 school year, the school was found to be in Academic Emergency as evaluated by the state accountability system. Clearview is in its fourth year of Academic Emergency, this means that the school receives assistance from two coaching teams, an outside coaching team and a district coaching team. The teams are similar in nature as they are made up of one teacher coach and one school leadership coach. The outside team is provided by the state supported education service center. The two teams work together to help Clearview's staff institute changes to raise student achievement on state tests.

In the 2005-2006 school year, the coaching teams were informed by a school audit that occurred during the month of October. The school audit consisted of a team made up of internal

and external coaching team members and other district personnel. The audit lasted one week, during which time teachers, students, parents, and the building Principal were interviewed. The audit also included a building walk through and review of the One Plan. After the audit results were in written format they were presented to the staff at a formal staff meeting. At the same time the Instructional Coaching Teams began planning intervention strategies for the school. The strategies have been implemented over the 2005-2006 school year in the nature of test preparation and leadership guidance and support that addresses areas of concern.

During the 2004-2005 school year 52.8 percent of third grade students at Clearview achieved at or above the proficient level on state reading tests. The state requires that 75 percent of students pass the reading test, and the annual yearly progress goal set by the federal government was 56.3 percent. The percentage of students at and above the proficient level in Mathematics was 25 percent.   The performance level across all grade levels and all tested subjects was: Limited/Below Basic 49.2 percent, Basic 23.2 percent, Proficient 24.1 percent, Accelerated 1.5 per cent, and Advanced 1.2 per cent. The total percent of students at or above the proficient level was 26.8 per cent. The proficient level of students on state testing was instrumental in the designation of Clearview as a school in academic emergency.

To address the academic needs of its students, Clearview implemented six new programs over a three year period (2002-2005). The school district implemented three district wide initiatives to increase student achievement. The three district initiatives were implemented during the current school year, School Building Walk Through, Standards in Practice (SIP), and Standards and Evaluation Aligned Lessons (SEAL). In addition Clearview instituted a Positive Student Behaviors program and a literacy program for the fourth through eighth grade students

during the previous school year. Clearview became involved in the Reading First Initiative in the 2003-2004 school year.

Introduction to the Teachers at the Site

At the time of this study Clearview employed nineteen teachers, creating a student to teacher ratio of one teacher to every nineteen students. Ninety-eight percent of the teachers met the highly qualified teacher requirement in No Child Left Behind. The years of teaching experience ranged from four years to twenty-nine years of time in the classroom. Of the nineteen teachers seventeen had master's degrees and the remaining two were completing their master's degree studies. One master degreed teacher was pursuing a doctorate in curriculum. There was one district credentialed lead teacher and one National Board Certified Teacher. There was also one teacher pursuing National Board Certification. The majority of the teachers at Clearview felt that their students are learners and that they had the potential to achieve state standards or higher in all subject areas.

At the primary level the student to teacher ratio was smaller than the overall ratio at Clearview, meaning that there were twelve to fifteen students in each of the nine primary classrooms. There were two teachers at the kindergarten level, two teachers at the first grade level, three teachers at the second grade level, and two teachers at the third grade level. The level of teaching experience was in line with the larger teacher population, at Clearview, with one teacher having four years of experience and the most experienced teacher having twenty-seven years in the classroom. Eight of the ten teachers at the primary level have Master's Degrees. Among the eight was the school's one National Board Certified Teacher, the Lead Teacher. The Lead Teacher was the school's Literacy Specialist. In addition there were two instructor assistants who worked at the kindergarten and first grade level. There were nine community

volunteers who did reading interventions with students in first through third grade classrooms. This is a reduction from the previous year's twenty-three volunteers who worked at the primary level providing reading interventions.

Reading First Initiative

The Reading First Initiative became a part of the primary teachers' instructional program in 2003 after the Local School Decision Making Committee (LSDMC), Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), and the eighty-five percent of the teaching population voted it into their school. The leadership and staff at Clearview voted in the Reading First Initiative because it presented them with an opportunity to build an instructional program that was explicit, systematic, and would build a common practice for teaching reading in their primary department. They felt the scientifically based program would help them to build students' ability to read and therefore increase student achievement.

The primary purpose of the Reading First Initiative was to improve reading scores in low achieving schools whose population included a high number of children living in poverty. The Reading First model for this large urban district adopted a research-based Three-Tiered Model of instructional support. The model recognized that differing levels of support are needed to meet every child's reading needs. In the model, the Reading First data guide instructional decision-making through a progression of interventions commonly known as a response to intervention model.

The Model implemented layers of instruction that began with classroom implementation of the Voyager Literacy System to meet the needs of 80 percent of the students. The next layer or instruction took the form of small group or individual interventions for struggling readers. The third layer of the Three-Tiered Model involved Problem Based Decision Making through

which a team of concerned individuals analyze the student data and makes recommendations based on the data. The final step of the third layer is referral for assessment for special needs. The model is one of inclusion that plans for instruction of all students in the classroom with interventions taking place alongside other levels of classroom instruction. This creates a seamless instructional model providing all students with instruction that is data driven and uses research based instructional strategies.

In addition to providing a model for instruction and interventions Reading First provides additional personnel, materials, and professional development. The grant funding the Reading First Initiative provided funds for the core instructional program, Voyager, materials and all materials for additional interventions. The grant also purchased professional development materials in the form of professional literature, ELearning Modules, and paid teachers for time spent in professional development. Personnel provided through the grant included a Program Coordinator, a Literacy Specialist at each participating school, a part time Data Manager and Resource Coordinator for each school. In return for the funding the Reading First Initiative agreed to follow state guidelines in areas such as data collection, professional development for the Reading First staff, spending guidelines, and required attendance of teachers, principals, and Reading First personnel at building, district, and state level meetings and professional development.

The core reading program, Voyager, was evaluated using the Consumer's Guide. A team of three reading experts plus the district's Reading Manager took over two weeks to review four reading programs using the Consumer's Guide. The results of the component analysis were graphed by program for each grade and overall. Voyager far surpassed the other programs. It is a comprehensive system, comprising all the critical components necessary to achieve literacy

which include: comprehensive reading curricula addressing each of the five essential components; progress monitoring and evaluation tools; data management and tracking system; built in extended-time interventions, home study curriculum; and explicit instructional materials. During the first year of implementation the focus was to implement the core reading program with a high rate of program fidelity. After the first year of implementation, Reading First leadership, in collaboration with teachers, addressed areas of weakness such as writing and comprehension. The schools involved in Reading First also worked to implement a strong intervention program. During the third year of implementation the targets for strengthening the program included implementing fluency centers in classrooms first through third grade. Another important target during the third year was creating awareness, structures, and the desire to sustain the impact of the Reading First Initiative on classroom instruction.

Professional Development over the three years of the Reading First Initiative concentrated on providing teacher training in the core program, interventions, writing, fluency, comprehension, and state mandated topics. During the first year professional development sessions were directed by the state which used the literacy specialists, in place at each school, to provide like professional development in topics such as the five components of literacy, establishing an environment for literacy development, and national trends in literacy development. The second year of professional development was a combination of state mandated topics and locally based topics. During that year topics addressed interventions, writing, fluency development, and Collaborative Problem Solving at the local level. The third year professional development has focused solely on local professional development needs. Topics were driven by teacher surveys, teacher evaluation of past professional development, and student data. Topics addressed during the third year included writing, intensive comprehension

PD that centered on developing teachers' repertoire of comprehension strategies, and sustaining change.

The state provided a framework for developing professional development. The format included written research to read during the professional development and a strategy that is based in the research. The research is read and discussed by professional development participants and then the strategy was presented, modeled, and practiced at the professional development. Next, the teacher used the strategy in their classroom. During the following professional development session the participants reported and reflected their experience with the strategy.

During the third year of implementation, there were two strategies that were closely linked to sustaining changes brought about by the Reading First Initiative. The two strategies were collaboration and peer coaching. Collaboration was an ongoing part of the Reading First Initiative. Collaboration occurred during professional development sessions, grade level meetings, and at the building trio meetings. The building trio was made up of the Literacy Specialist, Data Manager, and Resource Coordinator. Peer coaching was introduced in December of the third year of implementation when teachers at Clearview, and the Building Trio identified program fidelity as a priority for sustaining the high level of implementation of Voyager as the core reading program.

Reading First in the Classroom

At Clearview literacy instruction at the primary level was restyled to meet the requirements of the Reading First Grant and Voyager Universal Learning. Reading First required that every primary classroom have a ninety minute uninterrupted block of time dedicated to reading. Literacy instruction using the Voyager system required a two-and-a-half

hour block of time dedicated to reading instruction at the kindergarten through second grade level and a two-hour block of time dedicated to reading at the third grade level.

The Grant required that the core reading program be a comprehensive system, comprising all the critical components necessary to achieve literacy: comprehensive reading curricula addressing each of the five essential components; progress monitoring and evaluation tools; data management and tracking system; interventions for students who were not achieving at grade level, have a parent/home connection ; and explicit instructional materials. When the grant writing team reviewed the Voyager program using the Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program for Grades K to 3; A Critical Elements Analysis (Deborah Simmons and Edward Kame'enui, 2003) they found it to be the most comprehensive at meeting the grant requirement. Voyager provides systematic and explicit instruction in the five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Voyager instruction looks similar at the kindergarten through second grade. There is instruction at the large group, small group, and individual level. The day begins with a large group skill introduction and/or practice lesson. At kindergarten the large group is called Treehouse. At first grade it is called All Hands on Deck and at second grade the large group instruction is called Reading Realm.

The teacher and students then move to small group instruction. Small group instruction occurs at three to four Reading Stations. One reading station is the Teaching Station where the teacher differentiates instruction for homogeneous groups of students. The students at the Teaching Station work with the teacher to develop needed reading skills. All of the students work on the same skill as the teacher introduces the skill, and monitors practice of the skill. The students then disperse into heterogeneous groups of students working at independent Reading

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Stations on assignments that support the day's skill or skills learned in the past. After all students have cycled through the Teaching Station and the other Reading Stations they convene in a large group debriefing to reflect on the day's learning and receive a preview of the next day's work.

The third grade day in Voyager looks similar in that it begins with large group instruction and moves into reading stations. However, the third grade curriculum calls for the bulk of instruction to take place during the large group instruction with support work for struggling students only. The day begins with the students and teacher completing Catch of the Day. Catch of the Day includes a Warm-Up. Warm-Ups can be correcting incorrect sentences, listing words with some common spelling or phonetic structure, and other imbedded instruction. The Catch of the Day then moves to skill development for students using a phonetically structured text. The assignments for this part of Catch of the Day focus on: inference, comprehension, retelling, and paraphrasing what was read. There is also a fluency component that occurs once a week.

After the whole group work the class moves to Reading Stations. In third grade the reading stations are constant throughout the year. There is a Teaching Station, Vocabulary Work, and Research. Students who are designated Emerging and on-track by DIBELS work in these two areas of instruction, on altering days. For example, a student could complete Vocabulary Work on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and complete Research on Tuesday and Thursday. While the on-track and emerging students are working on Vocabulary and Research the struggling student are working with the teacher on systematic and explicit instruction in reading to help them become more fluent readers.

The Reading First Initiative at Clearview tweaked the third grade program to place vocabulary instruction in the whole group instruction and developed other reading work to be

completed during Reading Station work that was instructionally aligned with the Voyager curriculum and high stakes state testing. Reading stations at all grade levels were periodically tweaked to better meet the needs of the students in the classroom. This occurred as teacher observation, running records, and DIBELS data indicated the students needed more practice with particular reading skills or strategies. Reading Stations were also altered when Voyager instruction did not cover mandated state standards in language arts. All adjustments to the core reading program were made in collaboration with Clearview's Literacy Specialist and were designed to mirror Voyager content. The only exception to this was when instruction was implemented to address state standards.

DIBELS and the Three Tiered Model of Intervention

To fully understand Reading First applications in the classroom one must understand how data was used to drive instruction. Dynamic Indicators of Basic and Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments were used to assess students' ability in four of the five essential components of learning to read. The five components were identified by the National Reading Panel and published in their landmark report, *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read*. The report was "An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction" (Correro, Ferguson, Kamil, Samuels, Shaywitz, Williams, Yatvin, Ehri, Garza, Marrett, Shanahan, Trabasso, and Willows, 2000).

The five essential components are: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. DIBELS was developed by Roland Good at the University of Oregon. DIBELS was used at the kindergarten and first grade levels to measure Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency, Initial Sound Fluency, and Oral

Reading Fluency. At the second grade and third grade DIBELS was used to measure Oral Reading Fluency.

DIBELS assessments were given to all students in grades kindergarten through third grade at Clearview Elementary. The assessment benchmarks occurred four times a year: September, November, February, and April. Each assessment had cut-off scores that resulted in the students being ranked as On-Track, Emergent, or Struggling readers. The cut-off scores became higher as the year progressed. The assessments used remained constant in level of difficulty. The Oral Reading Fluency assessments had varied reading levels. Passages with the varied reading levels were randomly dispersed across the year. All passages were at the appropriate grade level. First grade passages all had a first grade reading level, the second grade passages had a second grade reading level, and the third grade passages all had a third grade reading level. All assessments, kindergarten through third grade, were timed for one minute.

After a benchmark assessment student data was analyzed and the Building Trio (Literacy Specialist, Resource Coordinator, and Data Manager) and classroom teachers worked collaboratively to group children for appropriate instruction. These homogeneous groups were the groups teacher worked with at the Teaching Station while the other, heterogeneously grouped children, worked at independent Reading Stations. Struggling and some emerging students were also engaged in additional reading interventions. Moving struggling students into groups for additional interventions moved the student into the second tier of the Reading First Three Tiered Model of intervention. The additional interventions were facilitated by the classroom teacher, instructor assistant, or volunteer. The additional interventions were research based interventions. Interventions used at Clearview included *Voyager* interventions, *Passport* interventions, *Letters,*

Sounds, and Stories, and *Peer Assisted Learning Strategies* (PALS).

In addition to benchmark assessments DIBELS progress monitoring assessments were used to monitor student growth between benchmarks. Struggling students were progress monitored weekly, third grade, emergent readers were progress monitored every-other week, and third grade, on-track students were progress monitored monthly. If at any time a student demonstrated a flat lining of DIBELS scores (three data points that were at the same level and below the desired line of growth) the student was brought to the attention of the teacher and the Building Trio. During the discussion of the student's data it was decided if the student should continue with the current intervention, if there were other factors to consider, if the intervention needed to be changed, or if the school psychologist needed to become involved with the student. This step signaled the beginning of Collaborative Problem Solving and moved the student into the top tier of the three tiered Reading First intervention model. From this point, and until the student began to progress, the student was closely monitored by the teacher and the Trio. If the student did not show progress a full Collaborative Problem Solving team was assembled. The team consisted of all concerned adults and could include, the teacher, members of the Building Trio, the principal, the school psychologist, the parents, and others as needed.

Summary of Reading First Data

The structure of Reading First had undergone changes from the first year of implementation to the third year. During the first year there were eleven schools involved in the Initiative. The eleven schools had been reduced to three after the second year of the Initiative because eight of the schools did not meet state requirements in lowering the percentage of students not achieving at or above the national norm, based on cut scores supplied by the test publisher, on theTerra Nova Achievement Test (Form A).

The Terra Nova, a norm referenced test, was given at the end of the first and second year of the Initiative to measure student growth in reading. At the end of the second year the state, at first, required that all schools must reduce the population of students below the national norm by ten percent. Those who did not succeed in doing this were to be cut from the Initiative. After the scores from the Terra Nova were received the state put in place a tiered model in order to retain more schools in the Initiative. The first tier was made up of schools that made the ten percent reduction. The second tier was made up of schools that were within a decided upon point range from the ten percent. Clearview and MacMarren schools were designated tier two schools and remained in the Initiative along with Clayton, a tier one school.

The external evaluator for the Reading First Initiative analyzed the results from the three different instruments administered to students in Reading First during the first two years of implementation. Reading achievement levels were measured by the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic and Early Literacy Skills), the reading section of the Terra Nova Achievement Test (Form A), and the Grade Three State Achievement Test of reading. The 2004-2005 scores were analyzed by the evaluator and compared with results from the previous year in program schools. When possible to do, results for Reading First students were also compared with test results for students in selected sets of district schools not in the Reading First program. Test results were also examined for students continuously enrolled in Reading First schools during the two year period of program implementation.

Student scores on the DIBELS assessments were placed into three different performance categories using cut-off scores prescribed by the test developers with the highest category termed the On Track level. These cut scores become progressively higher with each subsequent test administration. Students at the kindergarten level in 2004-2005 improved their rate of On Track

performance during the year and 62 percent met this level on the fourth and final assessment. Students at grades one through three showed small decreases in this rate during the year and ended the year with On Track rates of 39 percent, 38 percent, and 30 percent respectively. Students at kindergarten and first grade essentially matched the On Track rates from the previous school year while students at grades two and three improved this rate by eleven and nine percentage points respectively.

The Terra Nova Achievement Test was administered in May of 2005 to students at grades one through three, and student scores were categorized as below the national norm or at or above the national norm based on cut scores supplied by the test publisher. An analysis of results for all students completing the test indicated that a majority of students at grade one in Reading First schools had scored at or above the national norm in the Word Analysis and Vocabulary sections of the test. One the Reading Composite score (a combination of three reading subtest scores), 47.2 percent of the grade one students met or exceeded the national norm. At grades two and three, the percentage of students meeting this level of achievement was 43.6 percent and 31.3 percent respectively. These results were lower at grade one (by 1.6 percent) and at grade three (by 2.4 percent) on the Reading Composite score compared to results from the 2003-2004 school year. Students at grade two exceeded the previous year's results by 2.6 percentage points.

The Grade Three State Achievement Test or reading was administered to students in March of 2005. Scores on this test were categorized by the evaluator as being below proficient level or at or above proficient level based on cut scores provided by the State Department of Education. Results for 2005 indicated that 50.6 percent of grade three students in Reading First schools scored at or above the proficient level. This was lower than the rate of 55.4 percent achieved during the 2003-2004 school year in Reading First schools.

Compared with results in a set of four select Comparison schools (from within the district), students in Reading First schools earned a much higher reading score on the Terra Nova Achievement Test. Reading First exceeded the rate of Comparison school students in scoring at or above the national norm on all reading subtests at all three grade levels. Using these same schools for comparison purposes, Reading First students at grade three scored just slightly higher on the Grade Three Achievement Test – 50.6 percent versus 50.0 percent proficient. Using a second set of schools selected by the evaluator for comparison purposes, the evaluator found that grade three students in these Comparison schools scored at the proficient level at a high rate compared to Reading First students – 54.7 percent versus 50.6 percent for Reading First.

Based upon a review of the district's computerized database records, the evaluator determined that 58 percent of the grade one through grade three students enrolled in Reading First schools on May 5, 2005, had been enrolled in Reading First schools since October of 2003. Thus, these students had experienced two academic years of reading instruction under the Reading First program. The evaluator found that this group of students had scored higher on all three reading assessments compared to results for students not continuously enrolled but enrolled in a Reading First school on May 5, 2005.

The continuously enrolled students reached the On Track level on the fourth DIBELS assessment at a rate approximately ten percentage points higher than rates for those students not continuously enrolled. On the Terra Nova achievement test the rate of continuously enrolled students scoring at or above the national norm exceeded the rate of other students by over ten percentage points on most subtest by grade level comparisons. Continuously enrolled students in Reading First schools achieved proficient status or above in reading on the Grade Three State

Achievement Test at a rate that was about twelve percentage points higher than that for other students.

Conceptual framework of the Researcher

As a researcher, my orientation within qualitative research through case study is that of a complexity theorist. The foundational question addressed by complexity theory is: "What is the underlying order, if any, of disorderly phenomena" (Patton, 2001, p. 123)? Examples of disorderly phenomena include the weather, waterfalls, fluids in motion, volcanoes, galaxies and human beings, human groups, programs, and organizations. Complexity theory, the new paradigm of natural science, is used in economics (Romeo, 2001), anthropology (Agar, 1999), organizational development (Eoyang, 2001), and leadership (Wheatley, 1992, 1999). The concepts of system and complexity are often closely related (Patton, 2001, p. 123). Rhee (2000) states, that, "The self-organization of systems, as premised by complexity theory, implies the maintenance of a certain level of organization or the improvement of systems.

Complexity theory offers, perhaps more than anything else, a new set of metaphors for thinking about what we observe, how we observe, and what we know as a result of our observations (Patton, 2001, p. 124). Chaos theory challenges our need for order and prediction, even as it offers new ways to fulfill those needs. Gleick (1987) framed this dilemma well when he wrote, "It's like walking through a maze whose walls rearrange themselves with every step you take" (p. 24). Chaos theory may give us the comfort and courage to describe nonlinear dynamics (chaos) when we find it, without imposing false order to fulfill the presumed traditional purpose of analysis (Patton, p. 124).

In school systems there are many factors that influence the organization of school life.

Complexity theory is a way of thinking that acknowledges this without attempting to pull those factors into an alignment. Complexity theory posits that in school systems there are naturally occurring structures for the alignment of its organization. Complexity theory would also posit that the organisms within that school system (people) affect the alignment according to their perceived needs, resources, and visions. In this way the school system creates its own existence. I view organizations as ever changing and self-renewing systems that are in need of information, clarification, practice, feedback, and reflection to continually recreate or remake itself.

For this study, my position as a complexity theorist is that people within organizations are involved in change, not THE organization. As a complexity theorist it is important to understand that educators, myself included, have lived in the tight confines of bureaucracies, "the most superficial and fatuous of all relationships" (DePree, 1989, p. 136). Complexity theory provides a paradigm for viewing school organizations as places capable of analyzing needs, planning action steps, gathering resources, implementing change, and developing structures for sustaining and nurturing new awakenings. Yet, traditionally the majority of school systems have not placed themselves into a structural framework that would allow for this flow of information. Many school systems remain set in top down managerial styles that block the flow of information gathering and cause information to flow in one direction. This blockage stymies the ability of the school system to do what it desires, evoke change.

In order for change agents to fully understand how deep meaningful change occurs in schools we must look at the pivotal point of change, the teacher. As a complexity theorist, I view the teacher as the nexus of change in a school. When leaders design change initiatives and then approach teachers with the designed change, they must not only create the stage for change but also create the dynamic for teachers to grow the change. Growing into change requires that

the teachers are nurtured through the theoretical underpinnings, understanding the structure of the change, opportunities to practice the change, reflect on the change effects, and the space to adapt the change to fit the current application. Through this process teachers become change agents who then impact the system. The system then becomes a living organism that creates itself in a synergistic exchange of information and mutual growth.

> [It will take us] some time to learn how to live in open, intelligent organizations. This requires an entirely new relationship with information, one in which we embrace its living properties [communication, comprehend, and respond]. Not so that we open ourselves to indiscriminate chaos, but so that we can facilitate effective responses in a world that is constantly surprising us. If we seek *resilient* organizations, a prized property of living systems, information is a key ally (Wheatley, 1999, p. 99).

Data Collection Procedures

In order to build a rich, robust analysis three kinds of data were collected. Archival data were collected in the form of grant proposal, prior meeting agendas and notes (minutes), and other prior artifacts that will be applicable to this research project. Semi-structured interview data were collected and transcribed from audio tapes. The tapes were transcribed by a trained transcriptionist. The third form of collected data was observations of classrooms, professional development sessions, and meetings.

Interviews have been used by phenomenologist as a method to carefully and thoroughly capture and describe how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. In-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest provide the "essence" that is central to the experience (Patton, 2001, p. 104). The interview protocol was reviewed by the researcher's doctoral committee and the protocol was adjusted to control for

reliability (See Appendix A). In addition, the researcher made minor adjustments after the first interview to control for reliability.

The semi-structured interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to one and a half hours. The teacher interviews took place in the teacher's classroom and field notes were taken to note the classroom environment. The Reading First Leadership interviews with the Literacy Specialist, Resource Coordinator, Program Director, and school Principal took place in their respective offices. District leadership interviews also took place in each person's office or other location designated by them. The interviews were guided by the interview protocol but participants were allowed to talk in an open ended way in order to gather their perceptions of the "lived experience". Digressions were allowed if a question was asked that prompted discussion or an explanation about another related topic.

Field observations provided the context for the study, the classroom environment, office environment, and interactions during professional development activities and meetings provided data concerning behavior during planning sessions and learning sessions, with students and with the researcher. The field observations placed the interviewee within the context of the phenomenon of preparing to sustain change as the participants moved from grant support to institutionalization.

The researcher was able to record field notes during classroom observations for program fidelity. The Instructional Fidelity Index observations are an integral part of the Reading First program at Clearview Elementary. The researcher had been an instructional fidelity observer and coach during the previous two years of implementation, and teachers were used to her conducting the observations and follow-up coaching sessions. The field notes became a part of the recording system that the researcher used to provide the classroom teacher with feedback to

enhance program implementation and sustainability. The researcher also made informal

classroom observation notes immediately after she completed data work in the classroom. This

data work involved updating class lists on the data system, monitoring the teachers Palm Pilot

used to conduct assessments, or visiting the classroom to observe particular students or

intervention groups.

Field notes were treated as confidential material and made available to only the teacher

observed and the researcher. The field notes were stored in a locked desk drawer where the

researcher stored all research data.

Document Review proves to be valuable not only because of what can be learned directly

from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct

observation and interviewing (Patton, 2001, p. 294). Patton further stated that "records can

provide a behind the-scenes look at program processes and how they came into being and . . . the

enormous complexity of the logistics of a program" (p. 294). Documents that were collected

included: the original Reading First Grant proposal; innovation configurations; Reading First

Leadership meeting agendas and notes; external evaluator reports; Building Trio meeting

agendas and minutes; professional development planning forms, notes, and teacher evaluations;

program problem solving meeting agenda, notes, and plan; student data from the state

department of education and district data reporting office; tier two plan and follow-up meeting

notes; teacher Instructional Fidelity Index forms; program monitoring binder, and district

strategic plan.

The Reading First Grant proposal, Innovation Configurations, and Program Monitoring

Binder were used to develop a picture of the intent of Reading First and how that intent was

translated into the structures of the initiative. The Reading First Grant proposal was submitted to

the state department of education in the spring of 2003. The proposal, written to state specification, was funded. The district began recruiting schools for the Reading First Initiative during the summer of 2003. By the first day of school nine schools had been recruited from the pool of eligible elementary schools. The grant funded eleven schools and the remaining three schools were recruited during the first two months of the school year. By the end of October, 2003, all eleven schools were in place.

The grant proposal defines the purpose of the grant, structure of the Reading First Initiative, and how the funding could be used to fulfill the purpose through the structure of the Initiative. The Innovation Configuration is a checklist that was completed at the end of each year of implementation. The purpose of the Innovation Configuration was to monitor from inside the Initiative. The Configuration was completed by each Building Trio and used as data to guide planning for the following year. After the Configuration was completed the Trio would note strengths and weaknesses of their school's implementation and plan accordingly. For example, at the end of the first year of implementation Clearview Elementary found that screening assessments were completed for every child in a timely manner. However, it was also discovered that their teachers were not involved in completing these assessments. Involving teachers in completing DIBELS assessments became a target of improvement for the following school year. The Program Monitoring Binder is a portfolio developed at the school level that portrays the implementation of the Reading First Grant at that school level. The Binder is required by the state department of education. It is reviewed by the state liaison three times a year. The Binder is part of the accountability system and its level of completion weighs in the state department of education's decision to continue or discontinue funding.

The Reading First Leadership meeting agendas and notes, building trio meeting agendas and minutes, problem solving meeting agendas notes, and plans, and the Tier Two Plan and follow-up meeting notes were used to discern the implementation of the intent and structures created into the initiative implementation and capacity building endeavors. The Tier Two Plan became an important source of data during the third year of implementation. The Tier Two Plan came about when Clearview was designated as a tier two school by the stated department of education at the end of its second year of implementation. The reason for this designation was explained in the *Summary of Reading First Data* section of this paper. The Tier Two Plan is the plan developed by Clearview's Building Trio, Principal, and the Reading First Program Coordinator. It is a plan to move more of Clearview's second and third grade students into a higher level of achievement in reading and on the Terra Nova.

The professional development planning forms, notes, and teacher evaluations and completed teacher Instructional Fidelity Index forms were used to trace the transfer of knowledge and practice of the new knowledge into classroom practices. Instructional Fidelity Index forms are checklists that are completed during an observation of the Voyager instructional time. The completed checklists are tallied and a score assigned to the observation that rates the level of implementation of the core reading program, Voyager. There is a follow-up debriefing with the teacher. The purpose of the debriefing is to help the teacher identify strengths and weaknesses of their implementation of the program and plan for future instruction.

Student data from the state and local level reports and the external evaluator reports were used to portray the impact of the Reading First Initiative on student achievement. Student data were also used to portray the accuracy of teacher beliefs that students were achieving at higher levels than previously.

In addition to the documents listed above the researcher accessed the school district's website to gather information about the school district as a whole. The same is true of the school that was the site for this study. The information gathered from the site provided information to construct schema for the reader to picture the larger context of this study. This was thought to be essential as teachers do not work apart from the district and school within which they teach. In addition, the district or the school does not function without the teacher in the classroom.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data [by] reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, p. 432). The initial focus is on full understanding of individual cases before those unique cases are combined or aggregated thematically. This helps ensure that emergent categories and discovered patterns are *grounded* in specific cases and their contexts (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The following questions guided the researcher through the analysis of data collected:

- What patterns and themes emerged through the analysis of documents?
- What patterns and themes emerged from responses to interview questions?
- What patterns and themes emerged through the analysis of observations?
- Were there any deviations from these patterns? If yes, were there any findings that would explain these divergent responses?
- What interesting ideas, concepts, understandings emerged from the responses? How can these ideas, concepts, and understandings help to inform the research question?

- Were there intersects between the patterns and themes of the analysis of the documents, interviews, and observations? If not what might have explained these discrepancies? (as in Belenky et al., 1986).

Triangulation of coded data that had been reduced to themes and patterns was completed to produce convergence of data for analysis. Triangulation strengthens a study by combining data. Denzin (1978) states that data triangulation is the use of a variety of data sources to interpret a single problem or program. The point of triangulation is to *test for* consistency of results. Inconsistencies across different kinds of data can be illuminating and offer opportunities for deeper insight into the relationship between inquiry approach and the phenomenon under study (Patton, p. 248).

For this study, the researcher coded data for triangulation in the following manner: 1.) Reading First Grant, Innovation Configuration, and Program Monitoring Binder were coded to locate data on building capacity and sustaining change that actively involved teachers. 2. Reading First Leadership Meeting agendas, notes, and minutes were coded to locate instances of planning and follow-up for involving teachers in the construction and implementation of strategies, structures, and activities that built capacity and moved to sustained change. 3. Professional Development planning forms, notes and teachers' evaluations and Program Fidelity Checks were coded to identify data on how professional development was translated into teacher practice and sustained change. 4. Teacher interviews were coded to locate responses that identified teachers' perceptions of their roles in building capacity and sustained change. The field notes of classroom environment and teacher program fidelity checks were examined alongside the interviews to provide a clearer picture of the experiences of these individuals. Reading First and District leadership interviews were examined in partnership with historical

records of the involvement of these positions in building teacher and/or program capacity that leads to sustainability.

Analysis occurred across interviews first. In this analysis teacher responses were clumped in themes and/or patterns. The second round of analysis occurred across archival data; Program Fidelity Checks, Professional Development planning forms, notes, and teacher evaluations. This process was repeated for Reading First Leadership meeting agendas, notes, and minutes, Building Trio meeting agendas, notes, and minutes, and Tier Two Plan and follow-up meeting notes and then for the remaining group of data sources; Reading First Grant, Innovation Configuration and Progress Monitoring Binders. During this analysis of data themes and patterns were detected and collected in chart form (Miles & Huberman, 1994) for further triangulation. Third, observation data were analyzed to locate themes and patterns. The three sets of data were then triangulated to locate recurring themes. The findings from this triangulation were recorded in chart form as a data display (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Once the data display was created it was used to pinpoint consistencies and inconsistencies for analysis.

Analysis occurs by stepping back from the data and asking what do these data mean in relationship to the research question asked (Miles & Huberman, 1994). At this point of analysis the researcher constantly compared conclusions drawn to data collected and presented through triangulation. In this way the researcher ensured that emerging conclusions were seated in the data. "The meaning, emerging from the data had to be tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their 'confirmability' –that is, their validity" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). For this researcher, this meant would another person looking at these data draw the same conclusions. In order to answer this question the researcher was constantly questioning what

was present in the data and what, if any conclusions, were expanded on, biased by, or configured by the researcher?

As a researcher based in phenomenological theory and chaos or complexity theory my world is full of lights, color, and action. In the analysis of the data I use the vividness of metaphors and analogies to convey the analysis of the conclusions of this study. "Complexity theory and chaos theory offer, perhaps more than anything else, a new set of metaphors for thinking about what we observe, how we observe, and what we know as a result of our observations" (Patton, p. 124). "Metaphors can be powerful and clever ways of communicating findings. A great deal of meaning can be conveyed in a single phrase with a powerful metaphor" (Patton, p.505)

This study was conducted to aid change agents in sustaining change. The use of metaphors provides a bridge for understanding not only the findings of this study but how these findings are relevant to future work. In particular, the use of metaphors allows the reader to become one with the teachers who worked to change their classroom instruction to better serve their students.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to the unitverity's Institutional Revue Board and Midwest School District research policies at all times during this research study. The researcher submitted the appropriate forms and upon the consent of both agencies completed the planned research study. All data collected were stored in a locked cabinet but were considered property of the researcher and the school district. All participants and schools were identified in the writing of this research with pseudonyms. The data collected will be destroyed after a period of three years. See Appendix B for a copy of the Consent Form signed by participants.

This research will be used to fulfill the requirements of dissertation work as directed by the University of Cincinnati's Graduate School. The dissertation resulting from this research was given to a doctoral committee to fulfill university requirements and to the school district's research department to fulfill the commitment agreed to upon consent to complete this research. It is possible that the researcher will submit portions, summaries, or articles springing from the dissertation to pertinent journals.

The school will benefit from participating in this study through the reviewing of its results. As the staff at the study site read the report they will be able to identify their own meaning and use that meaning to guide their efforts to sustain and renew their Reading First Initiative. The results of the study will provide talking points for planning actions, possibly informing teachers of past, present pitfalls in order to avoid future problems. Therefore, the study may act as a catalyst to sustaining change.

Significance and Limitations

Qualitative research, as with all research, has its unique limitations. The primary limitation is that the researcher is the instrument of research. "The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork—as well as things going on in a person's life that might prove a distraction" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Another limitation in this study is the use of critical case sampling. Patton writes that, "Studying one critical case does not permit broad generalizations to all possible cases but rather, allows for logical generalizations that can often be made from the weight of evidence produced in studying a single, critical case" (p. 236, 237).

The inability to generalize across large populations is not only a limitation when using critical case study but is a limitation of qualitative research as a whole. Qualitative research

builds knowledge of a particular phenomenon. Robert Stake stated, "the first priority is to do justice to the specific case, to do a good job of particularization" and that "to generalize is to be an idiot." He later discusses particularization and generalization as compatible terms by stating, "What becomes useful understanding is a full and thorough knowledge of the particular, recognizing it also in new and foreign contexts. That knowledge is a form of generalization" (Stake, 1978). Through repeated experiences of understanding and knowing the particular, one begins to generalize its expected appearance in similar situations. For Stake this is the construction of knowledge, which can only occur in social settings, and one role of the case researcher is to help readers in the construction of knowledge.

The significance of this study lies in the possibility that critical case study aids in the construction of knowledge. At the beginning of this proposal Datnow, 2005; Larson, 1999; and Riley & colleagues (1999) all raised the concern that not enough is known about how deep meaningful change is sustained. The completion of this study and the subsequent writing of results that are then shared with audiences will provide knowledge about the endeavors of this school to develop structures, attitudes, visions, and actions that will sustain the meaningful change in early literacy instruction at their school. The knowledge of the process they go through will provide a valid reference point for others to compare their own experiences. It is possible that this experience will be held in unison with the case studies conducted by Datnow, Larson, Riley et al., and others to form new understandings of the complex nature of sustaining change. In doing so change agents will become more adept at designing, leading, and managing change.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

At the time the data presented in this chapter was accumulated the teachers and other

Reading First personnel had been involved in the implementation of the Reading First Initiative

for about three years. The participants were beginning to project how the changes they had made

in their practice would look in the future. Many formal and informal conversations had occurred

between the Building Trio (literacy specialist, resource coordinator, and data manager) and

teachers during professional development sessions about sustainable instructional, structural, and

support possibilities. In addition, conversations flowed between the Building Trio, the principal,

and the program coordinator about these same topics. In addition, teachers held many informal

conversations between themselves, sharing insights into the possibility of sustaining their work.

The collection of interviews presented in chapter three create individual insights and a

collective insight into where the teachers were in their thinking and planning at the moment in

time when they were to shift from a fully funded initiative to an autonomous entity. Expressed

here are the insights of new, well supported change agents about to become leaders in literacy

education who would be responsible for their new practices and growing their fledging wisdom

into deeper understandings.

Chapter three consists of three sections. First the history and purpose of the Reading

First Grant is presented to provide an understanding of the designed intent of the grant writers.

Second, a description of how the District accommodated change is presented to facilitate an

understanding of the avenue provided teachers at Clearview to become effective leaders in

literacy instruction.   Third, individual interviews of the participants create the story of how

implementation of the three year grant was at first perceived and then developed into current

sustainable practices. Included in the interviews is archival data and data from observations that assists in presenting a multidimensional picture of the individual's implementation of the Reading First Initiative. Fourth, an analysis of interviews is presented. The analysis was constructed from the triangulation and charting of data which were performed using transcribed interviews, archival data and field notes.

History and Purpose

The Reading First Initiative that was implemented in this large, urban, Midwestern, district was sought after by Dr. Edwards, District Curriculum Supervisor, because of three requirements contained in the guidelines (1.) All instruction and other activities were to be based on scientifically based reading research which addressed the need to provide instruction of the five essential components of reading. (2.) The program focused on ensuring that every child could read at grade level or above by the end of third grade. (3.) The classroom provides the most important venue for reaching early readers and the grant promised an opportunity to provide a strong professional development program, resources, and personnel to facilitate the development of teachers as the persons with the greatest impact on the development of early literacy.

> The Reading First program, by design specifically supports States as they work with their districts to ensure that teachers learn about instruction and other activities based on scientifically based reading research, implement programs that are based on this research, and use rigorous assessments with proven validity and reliability that effectively screen, diagnose and monitor the progress of all students.
>
> In addition to the much larger scope and level of ongoing support provided by Reading First, this program focuses directly on ensuring that every child can read at grade level or above by the end of third grade. Reading First will provide support to all K-3 students and their teachers in the schools that are served, and it is the Department's view that the classroom provides the most important teaching venue for reaching these early readers. It is in the classroom where the program will build and support the scientifically based reading foundation. Reading First seeks to embed the essential components

of reading instruction into all elements of the primary, mainstream K-3 teaching structures of each State.

Scientifically based reading research has identified five essential components of reading instruction; phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. This research demonstrates that children need to master skills in these five interrelated areas in order to become proficient, successful readers. Reading First focuses instructional methods and materials, assessments and professional development on these key areas. Programs funded under Reading First will have to demonstrate their ability to address these components in a comprehensive and effective manner (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 2).

Dr. Edwards recruited a team of four individuals to write the grant: Dr. Casey, Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator; Dr. Ovation, State Improvement Grant (SIG) Facilitator; and two district lead teachers, Ms. Betsy and Ms. Miller, who were working with different state funded literacy initiatives as literacy coaches. Dr. Edwards' intention was to use prior literacy development work as a "prototype" for the framework that would build capacity for teachers who would become involved in the Reading First Grant.

The background experience of the grant writing team helped to facilitate the shaping of the grant. The Curriculum Supervisor, Dr. Edwards, began his career in the district as the Language Arts Curriculum Manager and was promoted to Curriculum Supervisor a short time before the grant became available to the district. Dr. Edwards came to the District from California where he had taught at the elementary level, college level, and served as the curriculum supervisor for a small school district outside of Los Angeles. His doctoral thesis was on the impact of using drama instruction on reading development of third graders. His philosophy on the early acquisition of literacy was that literacy development in young children came from a variety of sources with the instructional program initiated by the teacher as a primary factor. He facilitated the language arts program for the District through two paths of acquisition. One path was to find and promote successful programs that met the needs of students. To his way of thinking the programs must provide sound basic instruction while

fostering individual growth that was particular to each student. The second path was to provide extensive professional development that not only helped teachers to understand and implement programs but also developed teachers' knowledge of acquiring literacy at the early stages through high school.

Dr. Edwards had worked with the District as the Language Arts Curriculum Manager for four years before he was promoted to the District Curriculum Supervisor. During his four years as the Language Arts Curriculum Manager he developed insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the District's literacy education curriculum. At the time Reading First had come across his desk, the District had many core reading programs in place in their elementary schools. In addition, professional development was weak in follow-up of initial one-shot professional development sessions. As the Language Arts Curriculum Manager he had facilitated more extensive professional development such as Curriculum of [State] Reading Evaluation (CORE) and the State Improvement Grant to provide willing teachers with extensive, on site professional development. The four years of experience and his background as a literacy educator facilitated his understanding that the State Reading First Grant offered this large Midwestern school district a chance to become involved in a comprehensive initiative that would reach more teachers and provide extensive professional development to grow teachers as literacy educators. "The grant has the potential to fill the large gaps I have witnessed in teachers' understanding of early literacy instruction (Dr. Edwards, Interview, September, 2003).

The Language Arts Manager, who replaced Dr. Edwards, was employed a short time before the grant became available, but had attended the information sessions the State Department of Education had hosted to inform eligible districts of the grant and its requirements. He had never written a grant on such a large scale and his expertise in language arts was at the

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middle school level. The new Language Arts Manager, Dr. Casey, understood that writing the Reading First Grant would be a huge challenge for him, while he knew the terms phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary, and had worked to develop many of them in his students, he knew that there was a great difference between doing this work at the junior high or high school level and teaching students in grades kindergarten through third grade early literacy skills. "I could see the gaps in my students' understanding and knowledge of these critical areas, but, I did not know how to address them at the primary level" (Dr. Casey, Interview, May, 2006). "I remember joking with the other grant writers on the team about this. They were gracious and laughed with me, butI know they had to think I was an idiot. I rolled my sleeves up and jumped into the process as best I could. The other three members were really the primary writers. I became their student, and listened to what they said and hopefully asked intelligent questions to help clarify our intent" (Dr. Casey, Interview, May, 2006).

It was obvious to Dr. Casey that the strength of the Reading First Grant was the extensive professional development. He had observed that while all of the teachers in the District had the opportunity to come to professional development at the District Professional Development Academy only those who were already high performing teachers seemed to attend. Dr. Casey stated, "When I have planned and carried out professional development [through our District Professional Development Academy], I have found that the ones [teachers] who need it the least are there and the ones [teachers] who need it the most are not. I thought the Reading First requirement that all teachers have to attend and participate actively in professional development would work wonders in fostering teachers' understanding of literacy development and how to implement their new understandings in the classroom" (Dr. Casey, Interview, May, 2006).

The SIG Facilitator, Dr. Ovation, was recruited because of her expertise in the Response to Intervention Model promoted through her work at Clayton Elementary School. Dr. Ovation held a Ph. D. with an emphasis in early literacy development. Her small, but mighty, presence and extensive expertise in both the Response to Intervention Model and early literacy development was a catalyst for the shaping of the Reading First Grant. The successful work she had been involved in at Clayton Elementary provided fertile ground for the growing of a larger, more prolific early literacy program. "I was at the time working on the SIG Grant at Clayton, and was just focusing on Clayton. The District Curriculum Supervisor knew of the model we were working from, and the successes that we were having. So, he asked me to help the Language Arts Manager write the grant and incorporate that, and so the SIG Grant became kind of a prototype, almost like a little pilot for the Reading First Grant."

The Reading Fist Grant submitted to the State Department of Education reflected this work in the use of the Three Tiered Model for Response to Intervention as the framework for the purpose of the grant; developing teacher leadership in providing reading instruction for primary students to read well by the end of third grade, ". . . in terms of the tiered model, and using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and all that kind of stuff, and intervention pieces. In the SIG Grant we had a tiered model, but we didn't have the core curriculum piece, because of money. The SIG Grant wasn't nearly as big as Reading First; it was truly funding something that was unusual" (Dr. Ovation, Interview, 2006). In the minds of the grant writers this was an opportunity to create stability of the three tiered model. " . . . because we saw it in Clayton really working nicely, we saw the Reading First Grant as a way to say the model in and of itself helps create sustainability, because it gives people a framework. This framework, this model could exist, if people truly understand it, with [various core reading

programs], without literacy coaches, without anything besides teachers and schools working as teams" (Dr. Ovation, Interview, 2006).

The core reading program was selected through a rigorous product analysis. The selected program, Voyager Universal Literacy, was plugged in as the core reading program that would meet the needs of eighty percent of the students. Level Two interventions were addressed by Voyager interventions and the interventions that had been so successful at Clayton Elementary. These interventions included Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), Paraprofessionals as Reading Tutors (PART), Letter Sounds and Stories (LSS), Teacher Directed Paths to Achieving Literacy Success (PALS), and Collaborative Problem Solving. Level Three addressed the small number of students who needed additional interventions. This was accomplished through the convening of a Collaborative Problem Solving team and could include all of the interventions previously mentioned. Voyager, Clayton Elementary interventions, and Collaborative Problem Solving all had large bodies of research literature to support their effectiveness.

The two Lead Teachers on the grant writing team were both extensively involved in the process of choosing the core literacy program. They along with the Dr. Ovation formed the expert team that reviewed each recommended core programs. After analyzing the programs the expert team sent their recommendation to Dr. Casey and Edwards for review. Ms. Betsy, one of the Lead Teachers was the Building Wide Lead Teacher for Clayton Elementary where her work focused on coaching primary teachers on the implementation of DIBELS assessments and use of the Three Tiered Model for Response to Intervention. "I have always approached coaching as very hands on professional development. At Clayton Dr. Ovation encouraged us to facilitate teacher learning through support and demonstration. She worked very closely with the teachers at Clayton, and myself, to analyze DIBELS data and cultivate an understanding of how to use the

analysis to group children for effective early literacy instruction. It became obvious to me through-out the year that I was replanting her method of coaching into my own practice. This became a valuable tool when we were writing the grant because we kept checking our protocols and proposed practices against our reality of working at Clayton to ensure the growing of Reading First schools would be doable" (Ms Betsy, Interview, 2007).

When it came time to select a core reading program for Reading First, however, we had to lay aside all of our preconceived notions of what made up a solid core program and go by the tool that the state required us to use for evaluation of programs. The expert committee, which consisted of Dr. Ovation, Ms. Silvers (the second Lead Teacher on the grant writing committee), and myself, reviewed different programs using *A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program, Grades K-3; A Critical Elements Analysis* by Simmons and Kame'enui. We spent a week and a half reviewing and rating programs. Prior to evaluating programs we spent several weeks learning the *Consumer's Guide* and how to use it. Dr. Ovation was tantamount in making it clear that our personal, professional opinions had no weight in making this decision. We practiced using the tool and discussed in depth the meaning of each section and questions within the sections. This was a powerful professional development in and of itself because it was like nothing Ms. Silvers or I had ever done. It was clear to both of us that while our expertise as Lead Teachers was very valuable in the shaping of the structure and processes stated in the grant it would not be the primary factor in deciding the core literacy program for Reading First.

We selected the core program using the Consumer's Guide which clearly showed that Voyager significantly outperformed the other programs. The research we read supported this rating as the Illinois Department of Education evaluation also found that Voyager Universal

Literacy System most consistently offered instructional strategies corresponding with the critical elements and characteristics of an effective research-based core reading program (District Reading First Power Point, 2003, slide 12).

Accommodating Change

Accommodations for the proposed changes in instruction for early literacy development called for in the Reading First Grant were extensive and multilayered. As would be expected for a large systemic , all levels of the district would be involved in making accommodations for change. Required accommodations included time commitments for professional development, technical assistance for data management, implementation of a new core early literacy program, and management of personnel. At each level of the district the accommodations displayed a specific nature particular to the level at which the grant was being implemented. For example, at the district level accommodations at the district level might include allowing Reading First needs to supersede district professional development. While at the school level it would look like teachers agreeing to and becoming actively involved in 180 minutes of Reading First professional development.

Prior to the funding of the grant the school District had been engaged in numerous initiatives which supported the implementation of the multi-leveled instructional support model where further assessment data and instructional support are provided based on children's needs. Such initiatives included participation in the State's Intervention Based Assessment Initiative, using DIBELS assessments and the DIBELS pilot project. The DIBELS pilot project trained teachers how to administer the DIBELS measure within a problem-solving model. Teachers participating in this pilot project were also trained and coached on the graphing, analysis, and interpretation of the DIBELS measures to aid in designing and evaluating interventions for

children who were struggling. When the grant was submitted to the State Department of

Education, there were at least three teachers in each potential Reading First school who had

participated in the DIBELS pilot project (Reading First Grant, 2002, p. 10).

In addition, some of the School Psychologists at the District had been receiving training

and coaching in the response to intervention model as it related to making special education

eligibility decisions. The training continued during the first year of Grant implementation. The

training had been received through a collaborative partnership with the District, a local

university, and the local Special Education Resource Center (District Reading First Grant, 2002,

p. 10).

The core reading program, Voyager, fully integrated DIBELS into their program.

Voyager used DIBELS for screening and progress monitoring and an expanded version of

DIBELS for further diagnostic assessment. The assessment process was built into the program

with assessment tools that met all of the requirements for the State's Reading First program.

Voyager called their system Vital Indicators of Progress (VIP). The system provided teachers

with essential information to effectively manage instruction. The VIP system utilizes its own

web-based data management system that provides immediate information on the reading

progress of each student, classroom, and school in tabular and graphic form at the classroom

school, and district levels. The data increased the district's capacity to monitor student progress

and enabled teachers to make informed decisions about instruction based on individual student

needs. VIP measures were equivalent to DIBELS and were both reliable and valid indicators of

early literacy development and predicted reading proficiency (Reading First Grant, 2002, p. 11).

Voyager replaced all core reading programs in Reading First schools. The core

curriculum includes 135 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction for kindergarten through

third grade. Voyager's daily structure integrated the critical skills necessary for children to learn to read into daily lessons. In addition, students identified by Vital Indicators of Progress (VIP) as struggling readers are immediately enrolled in an extended time reading intervention programs for 4.5 hours of targeted reading instruction per week. This is Level Two support on the Three Tiered Model. Students who were still struggling in the spring of any given school year were automatically enrolled in an 80-hour summer reading intervention program.

In Voyager, reading instruction was presented through an "adventure" theme format of interdisciplinary explorations. Rich literature, classroom design, and specially designed activities all enhanced the adventure theme. During the instructional time, the teacher presented systematic instruction lesson and also managed, encouraged and modeled independent activities that reinforce reading skills. Cooperative learning was a critical part of the program as students worked together with each student having an opportunity to be a Team Leader. A "Reading Station" design also enabled the teacher to provide small group reading instruction while other independent groups were actively engaged in activities designed to reinforce reading skills.

The 135 minutes of instruction provided in the Voyager Universal Literacy System incorporated the five essential components of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) as defined in the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Systematic, explicit instruction addresses each of the components, using a carefully constructed sequence of skill development. The Voyager curriculum is built upon a detailed scope and sequence and a skills trace that tracks what skills are to be taught when. Each day's learning would build upon the previous day's learning. Likewise, skills in each grade level would build upon skills and strategies from the previous year.

Voyager instruction was aligned with State Academic Content Standard fulfilling many grade level indicators and benchmark standards, addressing oral language, listening, comprehension, phonological awareness, phoneme segmentation, fluency, and vocabulary building requirements. Many times, especially in the case of phonics and phonemic awareness, Voyager instruction far surpassed the required level of understanding and ability to acquire early literacy skills.

During the formulation of the Reading First Grant the writers acquired commitments from the District School Board and the Local Federation of Teachers (teachers' union). District Reading First Leadership meeting minutes revealed the commitments guaranteed that the District School Board and the Teachers' Union would provide support and assistance needed to accommodate Reading First change in the following ways. The District School Board became the fiscal agent for the District Reading First Initiative. The District assigned the Reading First budget to one fiscal manager, within the accounting office, to oversee fiscal aspects of the Program. In addition the School Board complied with teacher fair bargaining policies allowing recruitment from the district's pool of Lead Teachers to fill Literacy Specialist positions in Reading First. The District's personnel department managed the posting of vacancies and helped new hires to complete required paperwork for all positions, following teacher contract requirements. When Data Managers could not be recruited from District personnel the human resources office placed an ad in the local newspaper to recruit others to fill the vacancies. The Human Resource Office managed this recruitment and hiring.

The district accommodated professional development needs by first agreeing to the requirements set forth in the grant. The professional development requirements were three tiered. First the Reading First Leadership would receive professional development from the

state. Next, the Reading First Leadership would deliver professional development to the school staff. Third, the teachers would use the professional development in their classes. To this end, the District agreed to release Literacy Specialists, Data Managers, Resource Coordinators, and the Program Coordinator to attend state professional development and State meetings for the duration of the grant period. The district also agreed to the district weekly professional development calendar for these same employees. Every Friday the building trio, consisting of the literacy specialist, resource coordinator, and data manager, would be engaged in some form of professional development or professional meeting. This removed the Trio from the school buildings they worked in at least once a week and several times two days a week.

The School Board sanctioned the establishment of 180 minutes of professional development time each month for teachers. The School Board did not set boundaries on the time and place for professional development, leaving the planning of this to personnel in Reading First schools. It was felt that Reading First personnel were best able to plan the time and place to ensure the highest rate of attendance. In fact, every Reading First school had its own unique system for teacher professional development. Some schools completed monthly professional development sessions by splitting the 180 minutes between two after-school sessions. Others used a combination of team meeting time during the school day and after-school time. One school planned three hours of professional development once a month.

The school board also agreed to the state's requirement that professional development content be governed by the state, the Reading First Coordinator, and the individual Reading First schools. This resulted in the three years of professional development that began controlled by state designed professional development and culminated in the majority of professional development being dictated by school need (Literacy Special Professional Development

Planning Meeting minutes, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006). The district, the Reading First personnel, and teachers at Reading First schools all committed to attending three days of Voyager Universal Literacy training and the year long follow-up trainings and coaching sessions.

Another key commitment made by the district was to provide technical assistance in the form of data management. The district designated a contact person within their Research and Testing Department to work with the State to submit required data. There were many forms of data collected from the Reading First program. However, the only form of data that was managed by the district was the reporting of quarterly DIBELS scores. The first year of the grant this was accomplished through a data gathering process that involved teachers, Data Managers, District contact person, and the State. First teachers would administer DIBELS assessments. Data Managers would record and submit each individual students' scores on the Voyager website and on a spreadsheet for the district. Once the scores were submitted to the district, the District contact person would download student demographics and send the data to the State.

The second and third years of Reading First the Palm Pilots, hand held assessment devices, were used to record student scores. Once the scores were in the Palm Pilots the person assessing would hot sync the information into MClass, a data warehousing site. MClass would download to the district contact person, who would clean the data and add student demographics. That person would then submit the cleaned data with added student demographics to the State Department of Education. Cleaning up the data simply means the contact people would either correct errors in the data, or send it to a Data Manager to be corrected. MClass would also forward the data to Voyager Universal Learning.

The district consented to research conducted by the external evaluator of the Reading First Program. External evaluations occurred yearly, with reporting to four different levels: State

Department of Education, The Midwest School District's Superintendent, Reading First Staff, and the individual school buildings. The external evaluator used district student data, teacher and Reading First Staff survey data, Reading First Program Fidelity Classroom Observation data, and comparison school data to compile the annual reports.

At the school level the district supported the need for every Reading First classroom to conduct 135 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction. This became evident during the first year of implementation when several schools were resistant to implementing this schedule change. The District's support also played a large role in moving teachers to plan more interdisciplinary instruction because the time in a school day became crunched when the District held fast to its obligation to the dedication of the allotted time for reading instruction (Reading First District Leadership meeting minutes, February 16, 2003)

The teachers' union, American Federation of Teachers, supported the Reading First Initiative in two ways beyond those stated above. First, the Federation of Teachers accommodated change by working with the Reading First Program Coordinator to move the Program Fidelity Index Observation Form through the process of being approved. The Program Fidelity Index Observation Form was developed by the Reading First Program Coordinator from materials supplied by Voyager. The purpose of the Program Fidelity Index Observation Form was to provide a checklist of observable actions that would indicate at what level of program fidelity a teacher was implementing the Voyager Universal Literacy System. The Three Tiered Model of Intervention, upon which the Initiative was built, required that the core reading program, Voyager, be implemented at a high rate of fidelity. The level of fidelity of implementation had a direct correlation with student outcomes on DIBELS assessments. In order for the students to be accurately assessed for placement in a group for reading intervention

fidelity had to occur at a high rate. If a student failed to make progress from DIBELS benchmark to benchmark the fidelity of implementation of Voyager in the classroom was the first to be examined as a cause for low performance.

The local teachers' union reviewed, offered recommendations, and when the document was approved by the governing body of the teachers' union it was brought before the members for vote. The discussions, edits, and other feedback provided by the governing body of the union was instrumental it the passage of the adopted Program Fidelity Index Observation Form.

The second support from the local American Federation of Teachers union came in March of the second year of implementation. Lead Teachers can be out of the classroom for two years to provide services to the district. Lead Teachers accept such responsibilities as Science Coaches, Math Coaches, Social Studies Coaches, Standards in Practice Coaches, and Literacy Specialists. At the end of the two years they must either go back to the classroom full time or split their work time between out-of-classroom positions and classroom instruction. At the end of the second year four Literacy Specialists were scheduled to go back into the classroom part-time or full-time. They worked with union leadership to prepare a document requesting that their leave from the classroom be extended for the third, and final year of the grant. The membership accepted the proposal and Literacy Specialists were granted out-of-the-classroom work for the duration of the grant (AFT local meeting minutes, May 12, 2005; District Reading First Leadership Meeting minutes, May 22, 2005).

Individual school accommodations for change included implementing all of the grant requirements of 180 minutes of monthly professional development, 135 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction, and implementation of the Voyager Universal Literacy program. The accommodations for change also included using data to form instructional groups, planning and

facilitating interventions using scientifically research reading interventions. Part of the implementation included classroom observation of teachers by the Literacy Specialist, Data Manager, and Resource Coordinator for the purpose of completing Implementation Fidelity Checks and follow-up meetings. The teachers also undertook participating in Early Language Learning Classroom Observations conducted by the Literacy Specialist for coaching purposes in how to create a classroom environment conducive to language learning for primary children.

While the sections on teachers accommodating change are listed in one paragraph it was at the classroom level that the most intensive work occurred. In order for a school to become in the Reading First project the teaching staff of the whole school, not just the primary staff had to vote the program into the school by an 85% acceptance rate. This was accomplished through a structured process in which a presentation of the grant was made to the staff at a regular scheduled staff meeting after the grant had been awarded to the district. A secret ballot vote was taken and if the staff voted at the required percentage then the program was implemented at the school. Clearview Elementary School voted to a Reading First school in May of 2003 (Clearview staff meeting minutes, May 22, 2003).

Professional Development for the Clearview Staff began in July of 2003 when the primary staff attended Voyager professional development to become familiar with the Voyager Universal Literacy System. During this session they began to cultivate an understanding of daily practices, how to administer DIBELS assessments and use DIBELS to form groups, and planning for interventions. They learned what interventions were available through Voyager in July and were given professional development on the SIG grant interventions later in the school year (Data Manager Field Notes, September, November, and December, 2003).

The first year of implementation brought about the implementation of the core reading program, Voyager, with a high level of fidelity. Fidelity Observations Notes reveal that the staff on average held a 96% rate of fidelity for implementation (Short, 2003). ELLCO scores averaged a level 4, with the highest level of rating being a 5, for the first year. Clearview maintained a high fidelity and ELLCO rating throughout the three years of the Grant (Short, Reading First Field Notes, May 8, 2006). A crucial part of the instructional program monitored by Classroom Fidelity Check Observations was the differentiation of classroom instruction and grouping of students for small group instruction, and planning and facilitating interventions for struggling students. This part of the Fidelity Index was labeled the "core" of the reading instructional program.

Throughout the three years of Reading First at Clearview Elementary professional development played a large role in building teacher leadership capacity for implementing changes. The first year professional development was mandated by the State Department of Education, there was little time to use for locally needed professional development. During the first year the five big ideas of early literacy became the core of teacher learning. Understanding the research behind the role of phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, phonics, and comprehension in how young children acquired literacy skills was intensely studied and discussed during the 180 monthly minutes of professional development.

During the second year Clearview's teachers and literacy specialist participated in a combination of state mandated professional development and homegrown sessions. State professional development centered on Universal Learning as a teacher tool. Teachers looked at brain based learning, planning for differentiation of instruction, Data Analysis, and Palm Pilot training. Locally grown education came in the form of Collaborative Problem Solving, Writing

modules designed by Reading First Leadership, Intervention strategies, and teachers sharing success strategies for cooperative learning. Year three of professional development was based on needs of teachers gleaned from an end of the year survey that led Literacy Specialists to work with teachers on comprehension skills. This need was a result of working with the Voyager program for two years and acknowledging its weakness in that area. Some strategies that were studied were Reciprocal (Stauffer, 1969; Raphael, 1993) Teaching, Question Answer Relationship (Pearson and Johnson, 1982; Palinscar, 2000) and K-W-L (Ogle 1986).

Throughout the three years coaching, provided by the Building Trio (Literacy Specialist, Resource Coordinator, and Data Manager) supported teachers as they built their expertise. As previously mentioned coaching occurred through Program Fidelity Check Observations and Conferences and Early Literacy and Learning Observation (ELLCO) and conferences. In addition coaching occurred informally in classrooms, hallways, and at lunch. Another form of coaching occurred during monthly team meetings which were attended by the Building Trio and grade level teaching teams. As the teachers and Building Trio grew through the three years of implementation their new understandings led to system and systemic changes. The changes were organic products of the professional development they attended which was fertilized by student success they witnessed as time passed. "I really feel like I am seeing achievement and I am seeing the children experience achievement. I am very impressed with the reading that's been coming out of this group. I like it [Voyager] better now than I did before because I am more comfortable with it. I think that with any kind of a reading program you have to make it fit your class, and I think you also have to make it fit your style" (Ms Calendar, teacher interview, May, 2006).

Reading First Personnel Interviews

Over a period of four months twelve interviews were completed. Included in the interviews are one member of district leadership: Dr. Casey, Language Arts Program Manager; Dr. Ovation, Reading First Program Coordinator; Mr. Kirk, Literacy Specialist at Clearview Elementary; and Ms. Felix, Resource Coordinator at Clearview Elementary. The Clearview staff interviewed for this study included the principal, Ms.Lyons and seven teachers. The teachers were interviewed at Clearview at various times of the day depending on the teacher's schedule. The teachers interviewed were: Ms. Baachas, kindergarten; Ms. Calendar, first grade; Ms. Moon, first grade; Ms. George, second grade; Ms. Sanders, second grade; Ms. Damas, Second Grade; and Ms. Hawk, third grade.

Interview One: Dr. Casey, District Language Arts Program Manager

Dr. Casey's office is located in a large room that is partitioned into cubicles by portable half-wall sections. His cubicle is joined by the cubicles of all the curriculum managers for the District. The room also includes two cubicles for the secretaries and a small storage area. There is also a walkway through the room that leads to each cubicle and ends at the door to the Center for Teaching Excellence. The Center houses resource materials for educators to preview and use while in the Center.

I first walked into the room and down the walkway to Dr. Casey's "office". The wall entering his work area has a caricature of him that was drawn by a former student. The caricature shows a thin man with a big head that holds a smile broader than his face, sitting on his nose is a pair of wire-rimmed glasses that are medium sized and square. The eyes in the picture look right at you with bright interest and unflinching determination. When you step into his space you are greeted by a picture of his schnauzer Mister. All around the space there are

framed cartoons and mementos of his teaching career. There are books from his classroom, pictures of students, student writings, pictures of classroom events that were sprinkled throughout his tenure as a middle and high school English teacher.

Dr. Casey turned to greet me with that big smile and interested eyes, "Hey you, I'm glad you could make it." He was referring to my previous call that told him I was in a staff meeting and would not be on time for our interview. He had agreed to wait for me until 6:00 pm. unless I called and told him I would not be able to come before then. After greeting me, Dr. Casey invited me to join him in the Excellence in Teaching Center because he felt we would be more comfortable there.

The Center was empty when we entered and it was likely to remain so because the time of our interview was after school and there were no classes scheduled for the evening at the District Professional Develop Academy where the Center was housed. The Center contained comfortable seating areas furnished with fashionable sofas and chairs, an area that housed a large conference table with eight chairs surrounding it, a small area with four comfortable chairs circling a small center table, and shelves along the walls and in the interior of the room holding professional reference books, magazines, and instructional programs. At the main entrance, along the wall was a large counter, desk used by the person overseeing the Center. In addition the Center housed individual work stations and computer stations furnished with lap top computers which where internet accessible.

I had been in the Center numerous times for other meetings and knew it to be welcoming and professionally complimentary to the work of the educators in the district. It was my observation that the crux of the Center was that while it presented materials and resources for the District's educators to use at the Center and to record for future purpose it did not allow them to

check out the resources as needed. So, the district employees did not frequent it except to access email, attend or facilitate meetings, or to wait for professional development sessions to begin.

Dr. Casey and I sat down at the small seating area. I began the interview with background information. Dr. Casey had been with the district for three-and-a-half years. He came from a suburban district where he had taught high school English for seven years. Previously he had taught for two years at another area school for two years and five years at a neighboring school in another school for five years. At both of these schools he taught eighth grade language arts. At the time he came to Midwest District he had just completed the classroom portion of a doctoral program and was a doctoral candidate at a local, large university. The Language Arts Manager position he now held with the district was his first out of the classroom position.

I planned the interview questions for Dr. Casey to focus on the Reading First Initiative so I began to ask him a series of questions to that end. The first question I asked was for him to describe the structure of the Reading First Initiative, the second and third questions were related in that I asked him to state the strengths and weaknesses of Reading First as it existed at that time.

> The Reading First Initiative is an intense implementation of the characteristics of a strong literacy program as defined by the National Reading Panel 2000. It attacks major areas and breaks it down to definable and accessible pieces that can be addressed in order for teachers to become better literacy educators. Most importantly it provides professional development for teachers so teachers can sustain it. I see that Reading First is not program focused, instead it focused on giving teachers the capacity to be strong literacy educators. I think when Reading First ends teachers will walk away much stronger literacy educators. The people involved in Reading First, [teachers, data managers, literacy specialists, resource coordinators, and program coordinators] have fulfilled the role of educating teachers in this.
>
> The original statement of intent in the Reading First Grant, was to bring teachers to capacity as literacy educators to educate children so that they would be reading well by the end of third grade. It is my opinion that Reading First personnel has done this. Reading First has

been successful, not in all schools, not in all classrooms, but I think we
have seen more good than bad. Because of the personnel I have mentioned
before, it is a strong program, it has enriched the lives of the children it
has involved, our assessments show that the majority are making gains
in reading. Teachers are becoming strong in their literacy practice. I
think that the Reading First staff and the professional development that
has been provided has given them that ability. That is what the District
needs in all of the Voyager schools. They need the people to enrich the
children.

Unfortunately there is a need for the District administration to have
a more complete understanding of what Reading First has really done in
order for them to know the value of giving the level of support our original
eleven schools had in implementing Voyager and the other pieces that have
increased reading achievement for the students in Reading First schools.

Dr. Casey continued by stating that he included himself in the above statement. While he

meets with the Reading First District Coordinator he gets updates and assessment results, but

that's almost his full involvement. He felt he was not really involved in the everyday workings

of Reading First. If district leadership was more involved with the meat of Reading First the

program would have been more supported and possibly even more successful. In addition, the

district would be taking the characteristics of Reading First that facilitated the gains in student

achievement and moving them into the schools they were now implementing Voyager in.

Administration would recognize that a program itself was not going to assist the students; it was

the interactions of adults with adults, adults with children, children with adults, and children with

children that made Reading First successful.

Instead we took what I consider a step backwards and got rid of
coaches. I really think the coaching model could have aided all
of our schools to be more successful. I think that the integrity and
implementation would have been stronger in these new schools. We would
have seen some of the same or stronger results. In addition we could have
jumped into some of the professional development from Reading First
which I think would have been majorly valuable. We have no knowledge
of how being involved in Reading First like professional development
would have affected instruction district wide because it was not tapped into.

Researcher question: How might this weakness be addressed?

> To address this issue the Reading First district coordinator and other
> staff would need to meet with the District administrator and share data,
> describe, not only, how the structures of Reading First have been successful,
> but, how they go beyond the product, Voyager. I think we are so product
> based, administration knows the three tiered model, they know Reading First
> structure but it has been my observation and my experience that the
> knowledge of these are only surface knowledge. I don't think administration,
> myself included, know what folks have done to bring Reading First along.

Dr. Casey gave an example of an impact of Reading First that was not implicitly stated as a desired impact of implementing the initiative. Data show that the mobility rate of students and teachers in Reading First schools has dropped. Teacher mobility is almost nil. It has been reported to him by the program coordinator that when a teacher finds they have been surplussed from a Reading First school, due to declining enrollment, one of their first questions has been, "Where are the other Reading First schools?" When they are considering a new school to apply to they are cognizant of the fact that the District has implemented Voyager Universal Literacy Program but they want to go to Reading First schools because of the value they place on the support structures imbedded in these schools. Dr. Casey supported the program coordinators statements to this effect with his own experiences in talking with teachers.

> I believe that what I have heard from teachers is that they have
> been very, very happy with their participation in the grant. This reinforces
> my conviction that the major reason strong teachers are strong teachers is
> because they are comfortable in their profession. There are many factors
> that go into being a strong, capable teacher but one of the main ones is
> being comfortable in your shoes. This is in direct opposition to being
> given a boxed program and being told to open the box and go teach.

At this point I wanted to explore Dr. Casey's perception of how the District understood the Three Tiered Model of Intervention. He had talked extensively about professional development and its impact on the implementation of literacy instruction and this would be the

perfect opportunity to expand our conversation into this overarching structure of the Reading

First Initiative.

> The three tiered model consists of three levels. Tier one is
> the program that is delivered by the teacher to the whole group. It is the
> goal to meet the needs of eighty percent of the children with the core
> reading program. Tier two is where those students who do not make
> progress with the core program get interventions. The interventions are
> small group interventions with some students receiving one-on-one
> instruction. Tier three interventions are more intense interventions for
> individual students who are not making progress with tiers one and two.
> Some students who receive tier three interventions are assessed by the
> school psychologist to identify learning difficulties and often are
> placed on Individual Education Plans (IEP).
>   At tier one the integrity of the implementation of the core program
> is a factor in identifying whether a student moves to tier two. If it is
> found that the teacher is not implementing with eighty-five percent
> or greater integrity then the first thing addressed is instruction at the
> classroom level. Teacher also conduct continuous on going assessments
> of children to see if children are progressing, stagnant, or declining in
> achievement. Students are moved into and out of tiers of intervention
> according to the data presented by this assessment data (DIBELS).

Dr. Casey went on to state that he is not sure that the District's understanding of the three

tiered model goes beyond surface understanding. He was confident that if you asked someone at

the District level, himself included, to define the model they could not define the levels at great

depth. Teachers know that not only does it increase the level of intervention you offer but also

what the intervention looks like. Midwest District administration needs to develop this

understanding so that they know the intricacies involved. Dr. Casey continued to say,

> I think people are afraid of the pyramid. They will say they know
> the pyramid, they say they use the pyramid, but I think they are not really
> familiar with it enough to use it effectively. Change is difficult for people.
> We need to have professional development in place to pull people out of
> comfort zones and create new comfort zones. Instead, we have big
> initiatives that pull people out of their comfort zone but they never become
> comfortable again.

We next moved to discussing sustaining the changes brought about by the Reading First Grant Initiative. I asked two questions of Dr. Casey about sustaining change. "Who is most responsible for sustaining changes brought about by Reading First?" and "What was his role in sustaining these changes?"

> I think teaches are very committed to sustaining what they have learned. They have become so passionate about Reading First that they won't let themselves be pulled back into old habits. They've learned how to be very strong literacy educators and that will drive them further. It is important that the teachers and other Reading First staff inform the District Professional Development Academy about their continuing needs for in-depth literacy professional development. The thirst of these teachers to sustain their learning and classroom instruction will create opportunities with the quality of professional development they received while part of Reading First instead of surface level training.

I asked Dr. Casey what if anything might impede sustaining of the Reading First initiative. He stated two concerns. One was about the continuation of interventions and the other was about the implementation of other District initiatives. The concern about interventions was that with the elimination of coaches would result in there not being a ready.

source of persons to train instructional assistants or volunteers needed to complete interventions. The second concern stated was that the implementation of Standards in Practice (SIP), Standards, Examine Data, Assessments, and Learning (SEAL), and Classroom Walk Through Observations would cause teachers to pull time away from their work in literacy.

> I think with the three district initiatives that are in place now teachers are just trying to stay afloat because they have been given to them so suddenly. If we do not have the manpower and money to sustain interventions and if teacher attention is drawn away I think interventions and program integrity will go by the way.

When speaking about his role for sustaining change, Dr. Casey reported that his role as a District Curriculum Manager was being dissolved by the administration at the end of this year.

Currently his role for the District was to write model lesson plans to help with the implementation of benchmark tests to align instruction with the state high stakes testing.

As a closing remark to our interview Dr. Casey stated, "Reading First teachers will be able to sustain the changes they have created because of the strong professional development they received that helped them develop into strong literacy educators.

Interview Two: Dr. Ovation, Program Director

Dr. Ovation holds a Ph. D. from a large, local research institution. Her area of study was psychology with an emphasis in early literacy. She was asked to lead the writing of the grant because she had done prolific work in the district in the area of using individual assessments to guide literacy development for young children. The assessment used in her work was the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The model the work was structured around was the Three Tiered Model which is a response to intervention model. DIBELS assessments and the Three Tiered Model of Intervention were described in Chapter Two.

Dr. Ovation and I met in a coffee house close to her home. The coffee house served organic products that are purchased under the Fair Trade Cooperative. I arrived at the coffee house first and proceeded to buy a large cup of organic, herbal tea and sat down to wait for her. She entered a short time later and sat down at the table with me. After some initial chit chat to catch-up with each other's lives, a server approached out table and Dr. Hoover ordered a cup of organic coffee, black. As we waited for her coffee to be served we began our interview.

The first set of questions I asked Dr. Ovation focused on her background and how she came to be involved in the Reading First Grant Initiative. Dr. Ovation told me both of her parents are psychologists and that she has always been involved in causes that sought to improve

the lives of others. She attended the School for Creative and Performing Arts in the large urban district she was working in. While at SCPA she studied ballet and drama. She was a support dancer in a local production of *The Nut Cracker* for several years and she had bit parts in several movies that were shot on location in this large Midwestern city.

While these were activities she enjoyed while she was in high school and college her true passion was psychology. She met the leading practitioner, researcher of DIBELS, Dr. Roland Good while completing her master's degree. After meeting Dr. Good and working with the DIBELS assessments and research based interventions during her doctoral internship, Dr. Ovation decided to focus her life's work on early literacy. She came to writing of the Reading First Grant after working with two schools in the district on using the Three Tiered Model of Intervention and DIBELS to drive student instruction in early literacy.

The work with the two schools involved training teachers to administer DIBELS assessments, use the assessment results to form instructional groups, conduct progress monitoring assessments weekly, graph the results and how to share these results with students to foster student growth in reading. Another component of her work with the two schools was to help the teachers develop a collection of research based instruction resources to conduct interventions and classroom instruction with. This work was guided by her awareness of the Response to Intervention Model as spelled out in the Three Tiered Model.

When Dr. Ovation was approached to write the Reading First Grant her first inclination was to sprout the program in her existing work. The use of DIBELS, Three Tiered Model, and scientifically based reading instruction was in line with the requirements of No Child Left Behind, and the successful work in the two schools rooted future work in proven instructional practices. The core reading program "Voyager" was added to the initiative after careful

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consideration of scientifically based reading programs promoted by the Reading First

Requirements. (It is important to not that in this transcribed interview I have allowed her words

to flow freely, springing from the questions I asked her. The intelligence, insight, and passion in

her voice about Reading First radiates the value she placed on the work of those she directed in

their efforts to become better literacy educators.)

 During the first year of implementation of the grant acclimation to the core reading program was placed as first priority. In addition to becoming accustomed to the core program an emphasis was placed on helping teachers and school leaders understand that this is something bigger, and what we're doing is implementing a tiered model, and Voyager [the core reading program] is a key piece within that model, but it's a program, and programs change. I know that for me, and at the beginning it was really important to try to help people understand that this is a model, and what this model means, and getting people to believe in the tenants behind the model. I wanted participants to know we can help our children learn different, but not without the support work needed; we had to look beyond the typical things that we were doing. It is about supporting – creating supportive environments that kids can flourish in, and all of those kinds of things. You know, moving away from categorizing and labeling towards supporting and educating.

 The first year the big thing, in terms of sustainability, was making sure that people understood that we were implementing this model [Three Tiered Model of Intervention]. I think, the first year was much more about making sure that the core Reading First people could not only say what they were doing, but really understood and believed and stood by this model. During the first year there was a lot of work around helping our group [literacy specialists, resource coordinators, and data managers] understand what we're doing, why we're doing it, and why it is important. This work was to build in people a sense of momentum that this is larger than just this three year grant, that this is massive change that we're undertaking. My goal was to be systematic about it despite some roadblocks from the State or difficulties from the District.

 The second year was about now taking this cadre of people who know it [model] and use it [model] and helping teachers know it [model] and be able to implement the model. During the second year we had more leeway with designing our professional development and were able to tailor it to meet our needs. We used this time to educate our teaching staff and school leaders on the design of the Three Tiered Model and why it is important to change how we are meeting students' needs. We put the triangle graphic before the staff as often as possible, even though people were sick of it, and having people explain it even though they felt like they could say it in their sleep. We really were probing more about it, taking it to the problem-solving process at the

Tier III level and seeing that as an opportunity to also reinforce Tiers I and II to make it a complete cycle of implementation.

Dr. Hoover explained that the first year teachers thought they were doing Voyager, but I think the second year, especially in schools that had a really good literacy specialist doing the professional development teachers were getting it. I heard teachers talking about things a little differently. Literacy Specialists and teachers were looking more closely at data and flexible grouping, they began implementing researched reading interventions more systematically. The understanding of the core reading program and how interventions could play a part in increasing students' abilities to read led teachers to be more accepting of the Three Tiered Model of Interventions. "I definitely thought that as the program director the first year I was utilized much more than I was the second year at the school level."

Many times throughout the first year Dr. Ovation stated she was called on to explain and model how to do this or that, or to talk through how to do program fidelity checks and other nuts and bolts kind of stuff. "I saw this as leadership building, you know, the first year was about building the skills of the Reading First cadre of staff, for them to become leaders. The next year was about these new leaders empowering their teachers to become leaders.

Dr. Ovation relayed the concern that one of the unfortunate things about the Reading First Grant was that it was so limited. Her concern springs from her vision of building leadership among the cadre of Reading First personnel and then empowering teachers to become leaders. "It was spreading it that way that was the unfortunate thing about Reading First being so limited. We know from all of the change literature, especially that massive change can't easily be done in two or three years. You really need time because there's a whole new skill set to master and undertake.

During the discussion about grant funding Dr. Ovation's disappointment about several schools that were not funded for the third year because of low test scores was apparent. She told the researcher,

It is disappointing that we were shot down after two years. We know that we saw massive changes in the schools that weren't funded [for the third year]

because of poor scores. We are dealing with very complex and often dysfunctional schools in terms of reading programming assistance. I think that if we would have had ideally, five years, we could have seen this play out much stronger, and we know sometimes with change things get worse and then they get better, and then plateau. These is a flow and an ebb to these types of things so I think that in my mind those first two years we ebbed and flowed and we did see people emerge as leaders.

At one point in time, when the district was considering adopting Voyager as its district wide reading program, there was a group of Reading First teachers who presented to the rest of the schools about Voyager. These teachers were speaking about this model, and using terms they did not know before Reading First, but had learned because of the Grant program. It was not just that they were using the words, but they talked with a believing, and passion that was broader than the model or this program. I mean, they repeatedly said things, like, you have to do this with integrity, you have to look at the data, and you have to address the needs of the children where they are and scaffold and do interventions to help them learn to read. I think that struck me about this presentation was that there was sophistication in understanding assessment, not just assessment in general, but the impact of grouping by assessment results, using targeted interventions, and then assessing again to measure progress and then regroup students as needed. They were saying all of these things that we [Reading First Staff] had been saying forever. It was so great to see first leaders, and then these teacher leaders coming out of that. You know that was pretty powerful.

When Dr. Ovation speaks of Midwest District being shot down after two years she is referring to the decision of the State Department of Education not to fund eight of the district's eleven schools because they did not reduce the not proficient number of students who took the Terra Nova assessment by 10% at the end of the 2004 - 2005 school year. However, all eleven Reading First schools in the District increased the pass rate of students taking the Terra Nova with a mean increase of 11%. No school in the District's decrease in not passing students was less than 6%. In addition to the 6% drop rate for not passing students on the Terra Nova schools in Reading First outperformed comparison schools on the Terra Nova with the mean difference of 11.9 % (External Evaluator Report, September, 2005). In addition 75% of on track readers in Reading First schools passed the State Achievement Test. At Clearview all grade levels made gains on the Terra Nova; first grade, 1%; second grade, 6.5%; third grade, 11%. In addition the

third grade made a nineteen per cent gain on the state achievement test (External Evaluator Report, September 2005). However, Clearview was designated a Tier Two school for Reading First funding in the third year. This meant that they developed an improvement plan that would raise their Terra Nova scores to show a 10% decrease in the number of students below proficiency. Two additional schools were funded for the third year of Reading First; Clayton who had a reduction rate of 11.1% of non proficient students, and Rivermont, which had a reduction rate of 10% in one of the schools, and a reduction rate of -9.3%. The State funded Rivermont because of the reduction rate of the one school, since the state saw the combined school as two separate schools the teachers who had made up the non funded school also drew up an improvement plan while the other teachers were not required to.

I wanted to explore Dr. Ovation's view on how and what evoked change for the Reading First schools so I asked, "What were the explicit things that changed for teachers in buildings where there was a high fidelity of program implementation or where there was an excellent literacy specialist?"

> I think that some of the explicit things were the use of data in a more formative way. So rather than just asking was the student where they need to be right now, teachers were beginning to ask are they beginning to gain skills and understand the process of reading. Are they [the student] getting more refined with that? I think that this was a huge fight for teachers, rather than just doing DIBELS and putting it on a shelf and reading DIBELS once again and sorting the students into groups, teachers were really beginning to use progress monitoring data. I think the overall atmosphere of Reading First really changed that. I saw many instances where good teachers began to feel empowered to working with the students who were very, very low. Where as, before it was like, "Oh no!" Now teachers were seeing things that they could do and they knew how to do those things. So, they were able to scaffold, and do all those things research has proven to be effective in raising students' reading skills.
> The ability to perceive students' needs that were identified through assessments and having tools to address students needs, and the knowledge to use the tools helped the teachers to begin to scaffold instruction. The knowledge and resources created a willingness to scaffold and interventions.

Once they saw success change began to occur because you have to see the payoffs, even if they are incremental payoffs. Then where you have a couple of success stories you can then build on and strengthen your ability by asking yourself, "Oh, what did I do with this kid that really made the difference, and then build on, yea . . ." So, it is kind of making little steps versus being expected to make giant steps.

This was on thing that was so hard about the first year. They expected giant steps in a short amount of time. So, the first half of the year was chaos, not really chaos, but organized chaos. This was especially true for the teachers; the teachers were in tears because it was just, like, so much. It worked out but I think some of that pain could have been avoided if we would have had just a little bit longer. I would have loved to have seen the first year just focusing on the core, not even talking about intervention, or talking about it, but giving it time to get the core down. I would have like to have seen us being able to do the core really well because we know if you do the core really well you are going to get most of your kids, or a good number of them. Then building teacher skills would have been incremental so you are not just throwing a million things at them. I saw the requirements of doing so many things at once as a roadblock placed in our way by the state department of education. We paid the price of spreading ourselves so thinly. This resulted in us still having to deal with implementation issues in our second and third year.

Knowing that Dr. Ovation's leadership style was to foster leadership in those she met I felt that in order to understand her driving ambition to manifest change in early literacy for the students the District served it was important to have an insight in how she thought about herself as a leader. I asked, "How do you think that being the program director over the past two years of the Reading First Grant affected your leadership capacity?" Her following answer reflects her philosophy.

It definitely helped me to become a stronger leader, I don't know if it helped me be a better leader, but a more confident leader. More confident in speaking up and it helped me to understand the importance of assertiveness. I learned that it is important to feel strongly about what you're saying and back it up with action. That is what was so powerful about having a model, and that is why I believe so strongly in this model. I think it gave me a compass to navigate through questions, concerns, requirements, and demands. If somebody came to me and stated, "My kids aren't doing well on a test." I could frame that within this model, and what was important to help the students do better, not only on the test, but in early literacy. The same was true of administrative concerns or mandates that came our way. When I went

to the state department of education meetings and talked with other literacy specialists or program coordinators many of them seemed unfocused. If we had two different bits of information which may or may not have been conflicting, I would be okay with that because the Three Tiered Model provided a framework to organize things. I was able to ask myself if this could be something that we could fit into the model, perhaps as an intervention or a way of doing? The model provided a sort of mission statement that helped me to disregard these bits and pieces of information if it did not make any sense for the work we had set out to accomplish. Because I understood how this model of intervention and support work I could prioritize the work. Often I knew I would do the work assigned from the state department of education but I knew I was not going to like the outcome.   The model gave us the language, guidance, and approach that helped keep us focused and positive, we didn't get into blaming the population that we worked with, or became upset when we got a challenging student because the model along with our materials and know how to implement it provided the pathway to help our students achieve. I learned that the model provided a foundation that helped me become a better leader and helped other people to emerge as leaders.

The model was critical to the ability or inability to shift. Schools began organizing their support systems differently.   If began to change from each teacher gets a half an hour of the Instructional Assistant or the Resource Specialist to what time during the day does it make sense for the students to get support along with other organizational structures. Once the teachers began to see the growth students were making they began asking for the change. Once it was demonstrated that schedules could be more flexible if we worked together and let the model guide our work.

In one school I can think of their special needs students were in an exclusionary special education program. There they were pulled from the classroom for instruction. During the second year the school became inclusionary and teachers were demanding that their special needs students remain in the classroom and that the special education teachers and instructional assistants come into the classroom to work with them. I think that speaks to people beginning to buy into the model, a model that was better for children. Teachers were beginning to become empowered to have valid input in the structure of how low performing children were being served. The teachers saw that they were doing good stuff and that the children who might be pulled out might say something crucial that would aid not only their development but the development of others as readers.

Teachers began to shift from the belief that special education was this magical place where children's needs would be met to having the understanding and materials to serve many of these children's needs in the classroom. They also began to believe that it was better for the children to remain in their classroom and for the support people to come into the classroom to aid the children so that all of the children could benefit.

What do you think classroom teachers would take with them if the core program was nonexistent; if the district withdrew from the Reading First Initiative? Dr Ovation thought for a few seconds and then said,

> I think that the teachers would take the Teaching Station with them. I believe this because the teachers understand how to deliver instruction in the Teaching Station and because they see the power of working with homogeneously group students to promote skill development. I also believe they would use this part of Voyager because it was the part that has been lacking in other programs. I also think they would take the Instructional Models they have learned, like the comprehension models, vocabulary structures, and the models for stretch and sliding words.

Do you think they would take their understanding of the Three Tiered Model with them to apply in a new situation?

> My hope would be that regardless of where they go they understand the model in terms of need. If you use Voyager, or if you use whatever, the need to have a system of structures in place that is not left to chance is crucial to building a successful reading program. No mater what core program you use you are always going to have some kids who need more, and more, and more. You must have a clear way of identifying these kids, matching them to what they need, providing it, and then monitoring your work to make sure the student is progressing.

A natural question to ask at this time was the next question on my interview protocol, "What roadblocks do you foresee for the continuation of the knowledge and skills teachers learned in Reading First?"

> Reading First was more than just a program, it was a system of doing things and a model that was brought to the district through Reading First. It was not in existence before Reading First picked it up. It is now being talked about in other places than just reading. The district is trying to implement it across the board. I think the way our district is throwing it out there, people might not grasp onto it, unless people have been in a Reading First building. Some schools have begun spreading the model throughout their school and into the upper grades. I think this is an example of sustainability; this is an example of all that Reading First money not being wasted.
> One thing that is hard about sustaining the program in this school district is that so many things are mandated and some things are conflicting. I think these mandates could dissipate Reading First practices. One of these

mandates is test preparation initiatives that the district mandates. The focus on bubble kids is a complete contrast to the model. Identifying bubble kids using the results of the state mandated, high stakes tests could change how schools identify anyone who needs help. The teachers might use the knowledge they have gained from reading first to help the bubble kids, but the model would have been compromised because the lower achieving students would not be getting the assistance they needed.

I think another factor that would deplete the sustainability of Reading First would be the fact that this approach creates strong readers but it does not create them overnight. These strong readers would do well on any test, but it takes a consistent and lengthy process. This model, like any good change, takes time. I believe, wholeheartedly, that we saw gradual growth in the adults, changing their behavior, so then kids could experience success. This was more of a long-term payoff. That is we do all this work that we don't see immediate results for. There were some results that were immediate like the growth we saw in our kindergarteners, but we didn't see it in our second and third graders. We saw an improvement, but we didn't see amazing results. I think this approach might go away because of that. People want that immediate result.

After listening to Dr. Ovation's comments on teachers sustaining new learning, and the roadblocks they may face to do so, I wanted to hear her definition of a teacher leader, those whom she spoke so passionately about and worked so hard to bring into being. My last question was, "What is your definition of a teacher leader?"

[A teacher leader is] someone who is, like, daily living and doing what they believe. They are open to people coming in and observing them, and they have a passion for what they do. They would seek opportunities to spread the work and volunteer to do so. Teacher leaders have something that they truly believe, and then not only waiting for others to seek them out but seeking people out and saying, you have to see this. They walk the talk, but then also yell out, "Let me come and tell you about this, show you this, and seeking out opportunities to do that, asserting themselves." Teacher leaders are always asking, "How can I help you do this."

Interview Three: Ms. Lyons, Clearview Principal

I met with Ms. Lyons in her small office at Clearview. While the office was not cluttered it was busy with a stack of papers on the right side of her desk, a box of what looked like treats on a chair by the door. Pictures of students accepting various awards lined one wall. There was

a small rocking chair with a doll in it at the end of her desk, turned at an angle that faced her chair. There were plants on the wide windowsills and a sign behind her desk promoting and team work.

The researcher had worked with Ms. Lyons for the past three years and had never heard her say an unkind word to any student or adult. She would however, let one know when she disapproved of their behavior and would often follow, at the appropriate time, with a compliment about something that had been well done. I asked Ms. Lyons how long she had worked as an educator.

> I have been a teacher for twenty-two years and I have worked for the District for the last twenty. I have taught grade levels from second grade through high school. Over the years, I have been a principal, I have tried to get into a classroom and teach some subject or grade level content to let the students know I'm still a teacher in my heart and not too far removed from he classroom.

As the principal of Clearview Ms. Lyons told me she worked hard to create a warm and caring environment for both the children and the staff. When I asked Ms. Lyons what the strengths of Clearview were shed stated that she observed that the students felt Clearview was a very safe, warm, inviting place to attend school. She felt that students and families knew everyone was there for their needs. As a weakness she stated that finding the right combination of teachers who are able to instruct and help the students emotionally was always a challenge. [Teachers'] content knowledge is sometimes weak. During previous conversations Ms. Lyons had stated the same concerns. I asked Ms. Lyons how she thought these concerns could be addressed. She replied,

> To address this need I work with teachers individually ensuring that they get appropriate professional development. I encourage them to seek out opportunities, and I also provide them with opportunities, to observe other teachers at their grade level and content area so they can learn from observation how to develop their expertise in their content area.

The researcher wanted to know how Ms. Lyons perceived Reading First so I asked her

about her first impressions. "I was very interested because I've always felt that Clearview was

one of the schools that needed the opportunity to get grant money so they could find a solid

foundational reading program that could encompass our kindergarten through third grade."

The researcher then asked Ms. Lyon what Reading First looked like at Clearview.

> We were able to adopt a reading program, Voyager, that has strength in
> phonics, reading fluency and comprehension. It encompasses
> kindergarten through third grade. It is a systematic program that is taught
> daily for ninety minutes that is scripted and allows the opportunity for all
> in all grade levels to receive the same opportunity to understand
> reading.

The researcher asked a follow-up question to explore Ms. Lyons knowledge of the other

components of Reading First, "Are there other components to Reading First?"

> Yes, there is a family involvement piece that helps parents understand how
> They can provide extra help at home and help to provide different learning
> experiences at home. Parents are also brought in so you can explain the
> different parts of the program and how it will enhance their child's literacy.
> There is also a strong tutorial program that brings in the community and
> volunteers that will be able to work one on one or in a small group to
> help students increase their fluency and comprehension. It has many
> strong components. It also has a literacy specialist who enhances the
> teachers through professional development and getting into the classroom
> to help them stay with the program and make sure they are staying true
> to the program (fidelity).

The researcher reflected that Ms. Lyons had previously stated that the strength of the

school was its nurturing, supportive environment and that teacher content knowledge was a weak

area for the school. The researcher then asked, "Do you think there is any way that Reading First

has impacted either?" Ms. Lyons thought a moment then replied.

> I think one way Reading First has supported our efforts at Clearview is
> that it provides the teacher the opportunity to break away from whole group
> instruction into small group instruction or one-on-one instruction. I believe it
> increases a stronger bond between the student and the teacher. Another way is

it also starts at the kindergarten level where it teaches students to participate in stations where they are grouped together and monitor themselves with a team leader. They can learn the correct social skills, they learn to share, learn to lead, learn how to continue an activity without the guidance of a teacher while they are at that station. I feel this is a strong component of our school environment. It also differentiates instruction for these students because whole group instruction is not the way to go. This gives them the opportunities to learn the same thing from each other, with each other, from the teacher, and one-on one.

Ms. Lyons continued on to say that if students have been with the school from kindergarten through second grade they have seen noticeable gain in student achievement in reading. This has been an increase in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and phonemic awareness, across the board in reading. The researcher confirmed Ms. Lyons observation with a quote from the external evaluator's report, "From 2003/2004 school year to the 2004/2005 school year third grade students had increased their achievement by almost 19%." Clearview's DIBELS scores supported Ms. Lyons' comments about students who had attended the school over the last two-and-a-half years.

The external evaluator's report for the duration of Reading First stated that overall students at Reading First schools had a mean growth in performance on DIBELS assessment from the 2003-2004 school year to the 2004-2005 school year of 5%. At the second grade level students' growth rate of on track students was 10% and at the third grade level the growth rate was 9%. Kindergarteners had the highest DIBELS benchmark success with 62% being on track at the end of the school year. His report also demonstrates that continuously enrolled students scored a mean of 10% above not continuously enrolled students. The largest gaps occurred at first and second grades with third running close behind. What was demonstrated on DIBELS benchmark scores translated to a mean of 9% overall gap on the Terra Nova. The four subtest

scores on the Terra Nova: Word Analysis, Reading Vocabulary, Reading, and Reading

Composite show a 9.3%, 14.2%, 8.5%, and 11.7% gap respectively.

After our discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of Clearview and talking about

Reading First's impact the researcher asked Ms. Lyons, "What parts of Reading First do you

think are important to maintain or sustain at Clearview?"

> I think if you have stability in a program and you would want to
> continue it. Our District has adopted across the board, so even if our
> students leave this school and go to another school I think they will have
> consistency in their reading program. I wish they would keep the Literacy
> Specialist and the Data Manager. Since the assessments are done frequently
> to ensure students are increasing in fluency or if they have the intervention
> students require we need those people to maintain it. You can't leave it up
> to the teacher, the teacher has so many other things. It does help to have
> other people that go in and keep that consistency and fidelity level, to help
> teachers keep sight even if they feel overwhelmed because they have to teach
> math and they have to teach everything else. If those core people were gone
> teachers would have to keep up with their own professional development and
> make sure that you are staying true to the program, that you are staying pure.
> I think what happens is that if you don't have someone watching over you
> that knows what you are doing and would be able to tell you if you are straying
> too far from the program to get back on track our students would loose out of the
> Scientifically based instruction we have seen success with.

A follow-up question was asked to help define the role of school leadership in sustaining

Reading First?

> The role of school leadership is to not only support the program but to
> make it clear that you will do the program, you will stay pure with the
> program. I think they have to support all the teachers and be able to understand
> that if a teacher needs more help with the program that they provide the
> opportunity for that person to get the help that they need. If they need
> opportunities to observe other teachers then the leadership needs to provide
> those opportunities. The leader sets the tone, if the leader does not think
> this is an important program they will go back to what they feel is important
> The one good thing about this program is that everyone is doing the same
> thing. If you have kindergarten, first, second and third doing the same
> program. First, you are able to follow your data more clearly because you are
> assessing the children the same way that are getting the same information.
> However, if it is not pure then you are actually comparing apples to oranges.

The researcher clarified these statements by saying if the program is deviated from for one reason or another you don't know what you are assessing because you don't know what kind of instruction the students have had so no matter what the assessment shows you don't know how to go in and provide intervention. However, if the instruction is consistent across the grade levels then you have a road map to plan from. Ms. Lyons agreed with this clarification and added:

> Voyager instruction makes it consistent across the board. Those teachers who may struggle with organization, getting every component of a good reading program in within the allotted time, at least have a guide to help them figure out how to get components in and be organized. A literacy specialist can help that person get everything in because they can see where the teacher expanded on a topic too much, not accentuated something enough, or cut some point out to meet time limits. This is much better than just giving a teacher a book and saying here is the book, make up your own lessons, I believe that teachers would then do something different. Also it equalizes the teaching so if it is a veteran teacher or if it is a new teacher the students still get the same information.

The researcher knew that the District had implemented several new initiatives during the 2005/2006 school year. So in order to gather information about how these initiatives might impact the sustainability of Reading First the following question was asked of Ms. Lyons: "The District has implemented several new initiatives this year, how might these initiatives fit with, or not fit with sustaining Reading First? The two initiatives I am thinking of are Standards in Practice (SIP) and Standards, Examine Data, Assessments, and Learning Experiences (SEAL).

> SEAL is probably aligned right along with Voyager. It says look a your data and from your data you are able to teach your lessons and provide reteaching reteaching opportunities as well as interventions. So I believe they go hand-in-hand with each other. The SEAL lesson plans should be filled in using Voyager data and Voyager lesson plans. The Voyager lesson plan model fit right in with SEAL because you take the data, looks at the data from the data you do skill groups and interventions according to how they sore on DIBELS. Also it lets you know Benchmark assessment what they need to do, what they haven't mastered yet.
> The SIP process is very important because it is always important to look

at student work to make sure it is rigorous and to make sure that what you think you have taught is being assessed. I've always felt that. I think they can go hand-in-hand with each other. What happens is that people don't get the time to do SIP correctly. The District has to commit time to SIP. They cannot leave it up to schools, because schools only have so much time in the day, and with the constraints that schools have because of budgetary issues not all schools have the opportunity to have 90 minutes even once a week for teams to look at student work. So, I believe both the initiatives are important and it is important for the District to commit to them and give the schools the time needed in order to implement them effectively.

To complete our interview I wanted to get Ms. Lyons opinion on who was the most important person to sustainability of Reading First Learning. Ms. Lyons stated that she believes that it would be the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and the leaders within Clearview that will continue the Reading First imitative and all of the components that are associated with it. Of course as the principal who is part of the ILT, "I just feel that if something is working you would continue with that success. Why would you even want to change if something is working."

Interview Four: Mr. Kirk, Literacy Specialist

Clearview has had two literacy specialists over the past three years. The first Literacy Specialist died of a heart attack in November of 2004. The current Literacy Specialist, Mr. Kirk, came from a first grade classroom at Clearview. He was part of the original staff and had undergone all of the professional development on the core reading program and other professional development as mandated by the State. Mr. Kirk had previously served in the district as a reading coach and lead teacher. He had been at Clearview for several years in these capacities. The bulk of his work for the District has been in the classroom, serving in the other roles on a part time basis, from the classroom. At the time of the interview he had been working with the District for 23 years. I have known Mr. Kirk for seven years through our work in the District. Our interview was relaxed and informative.

The interview took place in Mr. Kirk's Reading First office. The office was in a large classroom. There were three desks in the office, a large conference table with several comfortable chairs around it, a bank of two computers at one end, and many shelves of teacher resource books, literature books, Voyager materials, and other supplies necessary for implementing the core reading program and interventions. The windows in this office were made of plexiglass reinforced with chicken wire.

After Mr. Kirk and I had chatted about current Reading First situations and needs at Clearview we began our interview. To begin the interview I asked Mr. Kirk to describe his understanding of Reading First. Mr. Kirk related that his understanding of Reading First was that it was the moneys provided by the federal government to states in order for them to provide for professional development, and an avenue for school districts to bring more rigor, and substance to their reading programs. The moneys could be used to purchase new reading materials, new reading programs and provide continued support and staff development of teachers in using all of the new programs, or whatever the District had decided to do with the ultimate goal of No Child Left Behind to increase student achievement.

> In our District there is a particular framework we use to shape our Reading First Initiative, the Three Tiered Model of intervention. The Model provides all the wonderful things we did, professional development, having supports, interventions, and all the things that should be in place to support student learning in the area of reading. I think school districts were trying to put these things in place but the Reading First Grant provided a lot of support; levels of support to make sure that those things happened throughout at different levels during the initiative.

Mr. Kirk expressed the observation that the professional development had been a very strong component of Reading First in his District. "The professional development brought some cohesion to the staff members that I have worked with here at Clearview. It brought some consistency and cohesion throughout the district as far as what's being done from school to

school. Whereas, before we started with Reading First you could walk into any building on any day, and see a variety of different ways, methods, teaching materials, and strategies going on, not that those were all bad or good, but there was just a lot of inconsistency." Mr. Kirk thought that one of the strengths of this project, of this grant, had been that it brought people together all on the same page as far as how reading should look in primary classrooms. This was especially important because of the mobile student population.

Our interviewed moved to discussing Mr. Kirk's perceived weaknesses of the Initiative. Bureaucracy and paperwork were at the top of his list. He understood the need for accountability and providing data for the research project connected to the initiative at the State level. But, he stated that as both a classroom teacher and literacy specialist, working with Reading First, he thought that there was a lot of paperwork and a lot of other things asked of the staff that didn't quite make sense as far as using valuable time to complete them.

I then asked Mr. Kirk what his first impressions of Reading First were.

> When I first began working with Reading First it was hard because there wasn't a distinction between Reading First, and the adoption of the new reading program. There was a lot of confusion in my mind as to what Reading First was and what the new reading program, Voyager was. During the first year there was a lot of helping people understand that difference. We wanted people to understand that we were a part of the Reading First Initiative and we adopted Voyager as the program to initiate the Reading First Grant. There were some separations there that people didn't quite understand. I thought the communication of that, and getting teachers to understand how that all worked was a little difficult at the start. Still even to this day, there may be people who are a little confused about that.
> Right away our efforts, our time, and our training were geared to that program, Voyager. We wanted to make sure everyone understood it, learned about it, and implemented it. Anytime we had meetings or trainings it all seemed to be about Voyager. Right away Voyager and Reading First became one and the same. Then as time went on, and there were more trainings and more meetings were held covering the other parts of Reading First; more global topics like differentiated instruction and the Three Tiered Model of Intervention it was hard to separate that out from Voyager. If teachers were having difficulty understanding that concept, or implementing that strategy, or

things like that, they were getting frustrated with Voyager as opposed to the Reading First structures. Often teachers failed to see that Reading First was an initiative that had many components of which Voyager is one.

Mr. Kirk stated that in addition to the Three Tiered Model of Intervention there were other important components of the Reading First Initiative.

> The Initiative had all different components to deliver reading instruction and support student achievement. Standards based instruction, the assess-plan-teach model of instruction, a writing program, differentiation of instruction, interventions, and family involvement had come together to create a total package for early literacy development. This total package asked many teachers to change how they did reading instruction. For those teachers not asked to change their total picture of reading instruction it asked them to adjust or add to their current practices.

At Clearview it was evident to Mr. Kirk that there were teachers who have been teaching for a while who had good methodology and strategies that fit well into the structures of Reading First. For them Reading First was a more formal way of bringing it all together. It was also evident at Clearview that some teachers had developed ingrained habits as to how they did things in the classrooms. The whole idea of having support and outside people coming in to provide assistance assessments, analyzing date and helping with interventions made them uncomfortable. In the past they were used to having to deal with things on their own. Being able to work with other adults and figuring out what is best for students was difficult at times.

According to this Literacy Specialist professional development played a key role in aiding teacher growth. He truly felt that participating in the professional development that Reading First provided had really been very meaningful catalyst for change.

> Teachers have taken it and internalized it a lot more because they had the supports and the day-to-day interaction with me as a literacy specialist and the other Reading First personnel. Because the professional development was school based, integrated into the school day, and followed up during observations and team meetings they were able to ask questions and continue with things that were presented at the session.

Coaching at Clearview took several forms. Two observation systems were used to monitor and coach teachers into both instructional fidelity of the core program with its system of interventions and the development of successful environments for fostering early literacy acquisition. The Instructional Fidelity Index which was adapted by the program coordinator, Ms Ovation from Voyager's larger fidelity index guided teachers into achieving a minimum of eighty-five percent fidelity in implementation. The Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation Scoring Form was adapted by the State Department of Education from Coaching for Effective Classroom Instruction: *A Guide to Professional Development* (St. George, 2002).

The Instructional Fidelity Index was made up of five major areas with areas of importance listed under them. For example at the second grade level the five areas were: General Classroom, Reading Realm (whole group), Reading Stations (small group), Spelling Connection, and Home Connection. All headings had five to ten subheadings which were checked during observation if observed and given an X if it was not observed. The subheadings that were not observed were marked N/O. A score was calculated as a percentage of observed out of total possibilities. There were two scores assigned one as an overall rating and a second as a rating for Reading Stations as this area was viewed as a highly critical component of instruction. The Reading Stations contained the teaching station where teachers designed implicit instruction to meet homogeneously grouped students who received interventions or extensions in order from low achieving to high achieving. Once a fidelity observation was completed the observed teacher and the fidelity rater would meet to discuss results and plan for the next observation.

The observation and debriefing were done by the same person who could be any member of the Building Trio or the program coordinator, Dr. Ovation. During the debriefing a teacher

and the observer would plan for the next observation by noting areas of strength to continue in practice and areas of weakness or misunderstandings that needed to be targeted for remediation. Teachers were encouraged to pursue no more than two areas of remediation. Brainstorming occurred to help teachers define how to remediate and materials were supplied by either the teacher or the observer to help carry-out the remediation. At times the observer would model new strategies to guide the teacher in the new practice. An common example of remediation would be behavior of students at reading stations. Strategies employed to address misbehavior included changing work presented at the stations to better meet student abilities and needs, developing a scoring system for student work that would be visited before stations and during circle time at the end of reading instruction.

Teacher fidelity scores for the 2003 – 2004 school year averaged at eighty-one per cent for the overall program and seventy-one percent for the implementation of the Reading Stations. At the time interviews of Clearview staff began the fidelity score averages had raised to ninety-six per cent overall with ninety-five per cent fidelity for the Reading Stations. Much of the increase is directly attributed to the importance the literacy specialist and other building trio members gave to program fidelity. It was observed by the Building Trio that when teachers saw students succeeding at Reading Stations and DIBELS score rising, teachers bought into the need for program fidelity more. This was especially evidenced the second and third year of implementation when Collaborative Problem Solving came into being.

It was Mr. Kirk's observation that student achievement was enhanced because teachers and the Reading First staff saw a lot of students doing things more successfully than before. As a first grade teacher he used the new program and the other components of Reading First and, "it was one of the first times in twenty-something years of teaching first grade that I realized that

these kids were really reading." In the past he stated he was always kind of thinking they were

reading, hoping they were reading, but as a classroom teacher he was always wondering was he

really doing the right thing. All of the Reading First structures really provided a way to see

progress, to help him know he was doing something right.

> We used DIBELS benchmark and progress monitoring data as formative
> assessment to guide instruction and grouping of students. We completed
> DIBELS benchmark assessments four times a year and progress monitored
> struggling students once a week, emerging students every other week and on-
> track students once a month. We then conducted a lot of professional
> development for teachers on grouping students, different interventions and
> when it was appropriate to use interventions with students who were
> struggling. The second year we targeted the Three Tiered Model and
> Collaborative Problem Solving for professional development to aid teachers in
> knowing when to do what interventions and when to identify students who
> needed a multi-factored evaluation for identification of learning disabilities.
> We placed DIBELS assessment as our primary data before results from the
> TERRA NOVA and the State Achievement Test. It was our thought that if
> the students did well on DIBELS and received a high quality of instruction
> they would pass the other two more summative assessments.
> This initiative brought to the forefront this form of data use for the
> teachers to see, and provided them a way of seeing how important that it is.
> Where in the past, I thought, unit testing, informal testing, checklists, and
> teacher observation were the primary forms of summative assessment. I don't
> think they had looked at it seriously. With as much analysis as they do with
> the DIBELS assessments and the data we use now it is taken more seriously
> and used more productively.

Reading First data records for Clearview supported Mr. Kirk's comments the

alignment of a high level of student achievement on DIBELS assessment with a corresponding

level of achievement on the Terra Nova and the state mandated testing. Research conducted by

the support university connected with the state's Reading First program solidified the District's

perception, demonstrating that there was a close alignment of student achievement levels

between the Terra Nova and DIBELS achievement. There was a slightly lower correlation

between DIBELS achievement and the state mandated test at the third grade level (Data Summit

Presentation, March, 2005).

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Interview Five: Ms. Felix, Resource Coordinator

I met with the Resource Coordinator, Ms. Felix, in the storage room of the Reading First office. The cold storage room was a regular, 20' x 20' classroom that had been converted to the storage room by placing large shelving units along three of the walls. The remaining wall contained a bank of large windows that held panes of plexiglass reinforced with chicken wire. This type of window pane is prevalent in the school was intended to keep people from breaking into the school. All of the windows were closed and locked with padlocks added to ensure the windows could not be opened from the inside. This arrangement was used throughout the building.

Ms. Felix entered the room in a relaxed and professional manner. She was wearing a white button down shirt with a dark sweater over it. She wore a pearl necklace and earrings, gray slacks, and had on comfortable looking shoes. She sat in the chair across from me. We were seated at a small table that held my tape recorder and a few items that looked like someone had left from gathering materials. She greeted me with a warm smile and twinkling blue eyes. Ms. Felix was a small, trim woman who exuded a calm sense of purpose.

I learned that Ms. Felix began her career with the District as an instructional aide, working with an autistic child. This child was being introduced to first grade – mainstreamed into a first grade classroom. She was hired because she knew the family and had worked with their son for several years before he entered public school. Later she became a School Community Coordinator at a different school.

Ms. Felix described her role as a resource coordinator as being one that trains volunteers to do interventions, ensure that students receive correct interventions after the data is assessed, creating opportunities for family involvement, and program monitoring. While she spoke

passionately about interventions, data, volunteers and family involvement, she unenthusiastically

described he work in program monitoring, "I guess I was trying to forget that part of it."

> She stated that one thing that the grant required was the development of a
> program monitoring binder that was reviewed four times a year. We had to
> prove, through paperwork, that we are doing what we said we would do in the
> grant. The binder was developed to demonstrate mastery of the indicators the
> state department of education developed that aligned with the Reading First,
> No Child Left Behind requirements. Under each of these indicators I had to
> place evidence that demonstrated we were complying with requirements, this
> is one of the main jobs I have as Resource Coordinator.

Although Ms. Felix was trying to forget about the Program Monitoring Binder at the time

of the interview she had compiled the binder for Clearview twice. The first submission of the

binder rated a score of Adequate Progress in fifteen of the eighteen standards and the second

submission rated Adequate Progress in eighteen of the eighteen standards. The three areas of

Minimal Progress: professional development in reading provides opportunities for developing a

theoretical understanding of reading, learning activities are implemented using Scientifically

Based Reading Research (SBRR) instructional materials and strategies, and the standard for

systematic and explicit instruction were remediated in the Binder by providing more conclusive

artifacts than the ones presented in the first binder. This was possible because the staff at

Clearview were clearly doing work that reflected the three standards at the time of the

submission of the first Program Monitoring Binder. Adequate Progress is the highest rating a

Binder could receive.

When I asked Ms. Felix to describe Reading First she was articulate and presented a

rather thorough description.

> The Reading First Initiative came out of the No Child Left Behind
> legislation, which required that schools make sure that there was equity for all
> children in providing reading instruction. My assumption was that the
> Reading First Initiative began because people began to realize that a lot of
> children were going through school, particularly, in the urban, poverty areas,

and not learning to read. So this was money that was put together by the federal government and applied for by states. When our state received the grant they called for school districts to apply for grant money to institute literacy change programs. Each school district receiving a grant would adopt a reading curriculum, and then over the years of the grant implement the reading program. The district was also responsible to make sure that the reading program did not leave any children behind, as far as reading goes.

   The pieces of Reading First are adopting a reading curriculum that is explicit and systematic. Making sure that interventions are completed with any children who are not -- that have not made grade level. I am not sure if it is all over, but in our grant we have adopted the Three Tiered Model of Intervention. The Three Tiered Model is probably one of the biggest components of our Reading First Grant. This model provides that 80 percent of the kids will learn to read, and be on grade level, when given a good, explicit, systematic reading program. Then the other 20 percent will need some kind of intervention. Some percentage of kids will make it with the intervention and then there are going to be children that will need further, more explicit intervention because they have not made it. They will go on to Tier 3, and have individual plans to try to determine what they'll need to get to grade level.

   The strength of the initiative is that it is one of the first times that a grant, and money have been given where true compliance is required and completed which included the validity of programs. I think that in the past that a lot of grants, and a lot of money went through, and there wasn't very much follow-up to make sure that the parts of the grant were implemented, but I think that this time there is intense scrutiny, and with the program monitoring binder, and with the fact that the first director here in the District personally believes that every child can read, and pass that onto everybody that was part of the initiative.

I thought of the Program Monitoring Binder when Ms. Felix made the above statements about

the strength of the initiative and noted that while she had stated she would like to forget about the

Binder she realized the value of her hard work in putting it together.

   When I asked Ms. Felix if Reading First had a weakness she stated that she felt a weakness

of the Initiative was that the Reading First people at the state level were planning professional

developments in the beginning that personnel were required to attend that might not be pertinent

to them.

   The first year a lot of that professional development came down from the
   State, and had nothing to do with what we are doing in each of our schools,

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the second year we had some leeway, and now the third year they [the State] have allowed schools more opportunity to develop their professional development according to the needs of their teachers. It has become more and more relevant as schools have been allowed to choose the professional development that their schools have used.

Professional development needs were determined through conversations literacy specialists conducted with teachers, analyzing student data, surveys, fidelity checks, program monitoring binder results, coaching observations, reports from the external evaluator and ELLCO observations.

Ms. Felix attested that the most important professional development she took part in was those that immersed her and the teachers in assessing the data and really learning what that means, and how to use it. The example related to this researcher was how the school used a report delivered by the external evaluator at the end of the first year of implementation. His data showed that the struggling students were not moving up, that the emerging and the on-track students seemed to move-up or stay where they were. In fact, many of the on-track students did move on. So the second year there was a huge, huge push to really work with the strugglers, and come up with interventions, and really watch progress monitoring, and watch those kids. If they weren't moving it was our job to come up with another intervention, to constantly work with those strugglers to try to catch this before they lost out all together.

The building leadership and Reading First leadership designed professional developments on using data, interventions, and differentiation of instruction at the teaching station to aid our struggling readers to improve. I think this truly happened because the next external evaluator's data [An Evaluation of Year Two Activities] showed that the strugglers actually did improve dramatically. However, his data also showed that the on-track students lost ground. This year, the third year, we are talking about how to aid struggling readers and maintain and/or progress on-track readers to address the concerns raised by the external evaluator's report.

Intervention records show that Ms. Felix was very active in recruiting volunteers and training them. She also trained Clearview's instructor assistants in conducting interventions. Team meeting minutes reveal that along with the literacy specialist and the data manager Ms

Felix was well versed in both Voyager interventions and other research based interventions used at Clearview such as Letter, Sounds and Stories or Peer Assisted Reading Tutoring (P.A.R.T.). The external evaluator's report states that in the District's Reading First schools 867 students (approximately 51% of all program students) participated in Tier II intervention and that 56 students (3.3%) participated in Tier III intervention. The Tier II interventions students received included in-school interventions such as P.A.R.T. and Voyager interventions; after-school interventions; and both in school and after school interventions. A total of 562 students received in school interventions only. Tier III interventions are those that are specifically designed to meet the needs of individual students and are usually program based and are completed in school.

At Clearview students were receiving interventions at the Tier II level three to five times of week in school. Some of these same Tier II students attended an after school tutoring. In the 2003-2004 school year 76 students were involved in Tier II interventions while 3 students were involved in Tier III in school interventions. In the 2004-2005 school year 63 students were involved in Tier II interventions and 11 students were in Tier III interventions. During the 2005-2006 school year 56 students were involved in Tier II interventions and 9 students were involved in Tier III interventions. Tracking of interventions students who continuously attended Clearview during the three years of Reading First shows that ten of the students who were in interventions in 2003-2004 were moved out of interventions by 2006 (Clearview Data Binder, 2003 through 2006, pp 16 & 17).

The interventions students received were conducted by instructor assistants, volunteer tutors, and classroom teachers. All of the training provided for interventions was conducted by Ms. Felix. Building Trio Team Meeting Minutes Notebook has many references to training dates for tutors, intervention fidelity checks for and training for instructor assistants and teachers

conducted by Ms. Felix. One interesting note is that during the first year of implementation Ms. Felix and the original literacy specialist were responsible for pulling over thirty community volunteers into the school as tutors. Unfortunately, when Clearview moved from its prior location to their current, temporary quarters it lost better than half of the volunteers. At the time of this interview Ms. Felix had recruited several new volunteers to bring the count of volunteers to twenty-two (Intervention Notebook, volunteer tutor count on May 5, 2006). Prior volunteers clearly stated that the reason they were not continuing at Clearview after the move was because the neighborhood was too dangerous (Building Trio minutes, September 22, 2005).

Knowing Ms. Felix's vested interest in the continuation of the skills she had taught others I asked her, "How might the District or individual schools maintain, sustain, the strengths of this grant?"

> I think that the teachers have become very excited about what they got in the last three years through the grant. I truly believe they will continue the parts that they really believe in and I would say that is a lot of it. An example of something teachers have come to value is progress monitoring of struggling students. I think that some teachers have really grabbed onto that, I mean, they are doing it on their own. They can really see the use of it, and they get excited, and they want to do it. I think, the ones that feel that way will continue it, maybe not weekly, but I do truly believe that they will try to maintain that somewhere in their schedule. Then there are teachers who will be glad that we're gone, I think they will probably drop back, and not maintain it as it was meant to be.
>
> Part of my job is just getting them to value interventions. For instance, by doing these interventions and having them [teachers] see that their children are moving, and moving, and moving, through interventions, they will realize the importance and find way to do it or somebody else to do it. That is one thing that I feel is really important, the continuation of the interventions. Hopefully, they will have seen over the last three years that by their children getting interventions that they [teachers] have been able to move children that would have struggled throughout the rest of their lives, instead these children have been able to catch-up and move to the next grade level.
>
> Reading First has many valuable components that the District could help sustain by providing more support for teachers within the schools in the form of having a literacy specialist in every school that would supply school based professional development. If the District could continue that, although there

are some that complain, there are a lot of teachers that really, really like having professional development that they have asked for. That they feel is important as opposed to a lot of the District's initiatives. Another avenue of support for sustainability is to have more qualified instructional assistants that could help assist teachers with intervention. In schools that have very, very qualified instructional assistants it has made a huge, huge difference. In schools where this difference is evident there have been qualified, well trained instructional assistants who conduct interventions consistently and with high fidelity. Our DIBELS data would certainly support that this has been the case. This is also true for teachers who are conducting their own interventions.

Here at this school, I think there are teachers who have internalized and value the Reading First research base, structures, and practices. I would say there are a large percentage of teachers in this school that will definitely sustain the majority of the program. The school will need to navigate district initiatives to sustain their Reading First work. I really think that once we're gone it is going to be the principal that is going to have to step up, and be the leader in making sure that the Voyager Program, which was the curriculum chosen, maintains fidelity

Ms. Felix explained to me that the District has implemented several initiatives that the principal will have to navigate. She thought that if the principal believes in this reading program, and believes in what has gone on over the last three years it would help the school navigate any new initiatives that might come along. Another roadblock to sustainability that Ms. Felix was concerned about was the issue of how teachers are going to be able to support themselves by doing fidelity checks, progress monitoring, and other responsibilities the Building Trio had carried out. She stated,

> Teacher Team Meeting Discussions at this school have included a lot of talk about how the initiative is going to be sustained. The teachers are really worried. They are asking who is going to do this or that next year. Our response has been, you're going to be doing that next year. The teachers do talk about it, some of the things they are happy to lay down and not pursue, fidelity checks being one of those. Overall, when they ask, "How am I going to do this; how am I going to do that?" that was a good thing because they were asking; they want to know how they are going to be able to sustain these things. Teachers are very busy; they are so busy that they're not going to be thinking about how they can do it. They want somebody to tell them how they can do it. That worries me a little because they may not take the time to figure it out for themselves, and that why, I think we as a Reading First group needed to help them answer some of those questions. [Teachers] were going

to have to answer a lot of them themselves, but we needed to help them with strategies because they are usually very, very excited when we come up with ways to be – to have them more easily do some the things.

Interview Six: Ms Baachas, Kindergarten Teacher

Ms. Baachas and I have had many discussions about teaching children to read. We have also discussed classroom management and how to set-up a classroom to create a conducive and child friendly learning environment. The classroom is cluttered with teacher materials. Often the classroom furniture is nestled among these materials with minimal room for movement. The classroom appears cluttered to me and unorganized. There have been many times when I have entered her room and asked for something and thought, "She'll never find it." But she always did, and within a short amount of time. Ms. Baachas' Early Literacy Learning Classroom Observation (ELLCO) observations reflected my concern about classroom clutter rating her learning environment a level two. When the literacy specialist discussed the rating with Ms Baachas she stated, "This is the way my room has always been. I have many teaching materials and like to keep them close at hand in case I need them." Building Trio Meeting Notes reflect a conversation between the literacy specialist, Voyager consultant, and I after the consultant had visited Ms. Baachas' room. The consultant also voiced concern over the clutter. The literacy related the ELLCO story and then went on to say that Ms. Lyons had been after her for years to thin out her room and had hoped when she moved to this building the materials would not move here too. There was a general opinion in the school that this was just the way Ms. Baachas was.

During the three years of the Reading First Grant Ms. Baachas had completed ten Program Fidelity Index observations. Her score on the Fidelity Index began at 84% implementation overall on February 4, 2004 with a score of 72.8% in the core area. By May of the same school year she had undergone three fidelity observations and follow-up debriefings.

Through setting goals and working to achieve them she had raised her implementation fidelity to 100% overall. However, at the time of the interview Ms. Baachas' scores had declined to 86% overall with 83% in the core area. I was curious to find out where Ms. Baachas stood on sustaining Reading First learning and practice.

Some teachers are tall and thin, some teachers are medium height and dumpy, but Ms. Baachas is short and round. Many times you will find her in a long skirt, with a pocketed vest that drapes to her thighs. Often the pockets carry small teaching materials, a marker, a pencil, a sticker, or a letter card. When she smiles her eyes crinkle up and beam at you from a bright and caring face. Her salt and pepper hair frames her face in a soft wave which she often swipes from her face with a capable hand.

Ms. Baachas is a kindergarten teacher that has worked in the district for ten years. She completed her internship at another elementary school in the District. Before that she worked as an instructional assistant for thirteen years. She laughingly told me, one time, that she had done everything there is to do in a school district, mopped floors, washed dishes, and at one time was a cook. "The cook got sick at one of the schools I worked at and the principal knew I cooked, so I ended up cooking lunch for the school. My husband has said that I have done everything but fix the roof."

After Ms. Baachas had moved a couple of stacks of student papers we sat down at a child sized table to complete the interview. At this time we talked of a few other matters concerning Reading First, where to find the next Benchmark Assessments, if she had any new students who needed to be added to our data system or students who had left the school and needed to be deleted from her class list.

We began the interview with Ms. Baachas telling me a little about herself and her experience in the District. We then moved to discussing her first impressions of the Reading First Initiative. She told me she began teaching at Clearview in the third grade where she taught for three years. She then moved to second grade for three or four years and the last group before she moved to kindergarten was a sixth grade classroom. While teaching sixth grade she became aware of the fact that she had many students who could not cut with scissors or know letters. "So I thought I'm going to kindergarten." Here Ms. Baachas found her niche. "You know I see a lot of growth, I love it when my kids don't ask me any more to cut for them or write letters and numbers for them. My husband has said that I have done everything except fix the roof."

We then moved to discussing her first impressions of the Reading First Initiative. She explained that she understood Reading First to be a federal initiative to help kids they feel have fallen through the cracks. It was also designed to establish a better literacy base than students are currently learning.

> My first impression of the initiative, when Dr. Ovation presented it to our school, I thought that I had been doing some of the things suggested already. This was especially true for my own children. They were already reading before they went to school. I knew the importance of print and the quicker they can read the more successful they could be. A few examples of things I did were phonics instruction, labeling everyday objects, and printing words together in sentences and then reading them together. In my home I had sentences posted in the yard, on the refrigerator, and we would be reading signs and advertisements when we rode in the car. My children found words they knew in the paper and would cut those out and take them to their teacher.

Ms. Baachas wasn't really happy with Voyager because she doesn't like reading scripts, but she stated she understood what they are trying to do. She had found that my students get a little bored with it, but felt that if that is what the District wants done, she would do it. Ms. Baachas did feel that Reading First had taught her structures. She liked the stations idea,

although she had observed that the five year olds in her room didn't really do the stations well, but they liked the movement, which is good.

> Part of the reason that students do not do well in the stations is the type of work they are asked to do there. A lot of it requires someone with them – someone assisting them. Some of the students catch on, I have got five or six who can do anything that you show them, but they have had a support base at home. The ones who haven't had that support base they are totally clueless about what to do, they need someone to walk them through everything.
>
> Another issue I have with Voyager is the way it is written. We are talking about different seasons and stuff that don't coincide with our seasons. So I have changed some of that because we were supposed to be talking about summer now, and we haven't even got to spring yet. So I decided I would not teach the book about summer until May. I told the other kindergarten teacher, "You can read it, I am not reading that book until May." I do a poem every season. So we are still doing the winter poem, and then we write it together, and so we will write the spring poem. The daily messages I just change to reflect what we're doing in terms of the season. I found a book that goes along with the season, and then next Monday when spring comes we will be doing some more spring kind of things. Then towards the end of May, the middle of May, we will be doing more with the summer book, discussing and writing about how do you spend your summer vacation, and we will go on from there.

At this point I wanted to clarify with Ms. Baachas about her perception of core reading program, Voyager, and how she was implementing the Initiative in her classroom. It sounded to me as if Ms Baachas was trying to adapt the program to fit her pedagogy of teaching, yet maintain the core instructional program, shifting reading selections to fit her understanding of teaching using relevant materials, yet adhering to the instructional content and processes. Ms. Baachas agreed that this was true because she was trying to adapt the program to fit her situation and the situation of the children. "We need to be doing that because some of the things the program wanted teachers to talk about with the children they not had experiences with. I think that the literature should be connected to some of their experiences, and provide exposure to things that they are really not connected with."

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) scores from the Clearview

Data Notebook indicate that Ms. Baachas' students made gains in three of the four areas

assessed. In Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) the on track students grew from 59% to 89% with

only two students in the struggling category. Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) grew from

53% to 64% with no students remaining in the struggling category. In Nonsense Word Fluency

(NWF) the on track percentage of students grew from 52% to 73% with three students struggling

at the end of the year and three students emerging. However, Initial Sound Fluency (ISF)

dropped drastically from 35% of students being on track at the first benchmark to 14% of

students being on track at the third, and final Benchmark for assessing ISF. It seemed that

although Ms Baachas was discussing many anxieties about the core reading program, Voyager,

her students continued to progress in early literacy skills.

Next we discussed what Ms. Baachas found valuable from her experience in Reading

First and which of those she would sustain. She responded that one of the structures she would

have to keep the core program, Voyager. She then expressed that she would have to keep the

intervention groups. After stating that these were the two components that she would have to

retain she began expressing anxiety about District requirements.

> You know, I understand that we have to take this all on, but in
> kindergarten they have us doing so many assessments, it is hard to keep up
> with the interventions because right now we have got the state diagnostics,
> which takes about 45 minutes per child. We still have to do the other things
> that we have to do. So if someone could come in and show me how to do all
> of that I would be happy to do it. I am doing the best that I can, like, that one
> day you came in and I told you I was fighting a lion with a switch, and making
> bricks without straw, it's unreal. We started off with about 15, 16 kids, which
> is good. Now, I am up to 22 and it is difficult, it really is. I am supposed to
> have an Instructor Assistant all day but I don't. She was supposed to be here
> today but she is sick. So you know, there it is.

When I asked Ms. Baachas what the day might look like if there were no diagnostics and she wasn't being pulled in so many different ways she described the perfect day as follows. She told me they would have fun, fun, fun. They would read books, write about the book, and draw out of the books. She stated that she doesn't get to do as much literature as she did with Four Blocks. For her the fact that Four Blocks had more literature, math, and science. The absence of connections between learning to read and literature, math, and science created a lot of her dissatisfaction with Voyager. She missed the fact that whenever there was an opportunity to read a book they would read a book. She thought students would love being read to more. "I don't get to do all of that, you don't get to do a whole lot of hands-on activities that go along with the literature like I use to do, and when we did that I think that it worked pretty good. The activities were made to go with it [story] and they don't get to do all that with Voyager."

Next, I asked Ms. Baachas what she thought would happen from this point on she explained that she thought they teachers would do Voyager, and hopefully the data that they are trying to get will show that the kids have improved.

> I've got a core group here, who are, you know, have such stresses in their lives they are not able to grasp things that they should because they are dealing with stuff, like, homelessness, and sexual molestation, and a whole lot of stuff, and I have got to get through all of that before I can tell them what an A and a B is. I think that overall we do well. It is just hard, you know, we don't know what they are dealing with.
> If it were up to me I would keep some of the Reading First structures. I love the teaching station, I like that part of it. I would do a little bit more of whole group things, and then send them to proceed to work in small groups from there. I have a problem reading a script like Voyager has. I would not keep the reading stations because too many of the kids do not know how to do them.

After Ms. Baachas' comments it seemed important to find out who she thought would be most valuable to sustain Reading First so I asked her who that might be.

The most valuable people involved in Reading First, that I would retain, would be the literacy specialists. This would be valuable because you would have someone critiquing what you are doing, helping you with improvement, and it is not penal. I like the way the literacy specialist would make suggestions and could help guide improving your instruction. I like the idea of someone saying, okay, you might want to do this; you might want to do this.

Interview Seven: Ms. Calendar, First Grade Teacher

I met with Ms. Calendar in her classroom. The room looked similar to Mr. Kirk's office in that it is a large classroom with big windows. The windows were a combination of glass and plexiglass with chicken wire reinforcement. The comparison of the two rooms stopped there. In the course of my job as the Data Manager for Clearview I have been in Ms. Calendar's room many times. The first thing one is struck by is that the room looks spacious and organized. There are cheerful colors and student sized furniture. The room has spaces for whole group instruction, small group work, and individual learning. Ms. Calendar reflects the room. She approached me with a warm smile and in a gracious manner asked me to sit in the teacher's desk chair which was the only adult sized chair in the room.

Once we had settled into the room we chit chatted about her recently born son, Christopher, and discussed the upcoming DIBELS assessment. She informed me that she felt her students had grown a lot since the last assessment and was looking forward to seeing if the progress she had observed was reflected in their DIBELS scores.

DIBELS data from the Clearview Data Book showed that Ms. Calendar's students had mixed outcomes for the upcoming assessments we discussed prior to her interview. The Reading Connected Text (RCT) scores placed 22% of her students at the on track level, with 50% being emerging in RCT and 28% being at risk. The Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) scores demonstrated a higher level of achievement with 72% of children being on track, 2% emerging,

and no students struggling. The Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) scores placed all students at the on track level. Historically data shows that Ms. Calendar's students have performed in similar or better fashion over the last three years of the Initiative. During the second year 45% of her students were on track for the Reading Connected Text Fluency. During the follow-up, grade level data analysis meeting she expressed disappointment about the outcome of the assessment in Reading Connected Text but pleased with the students' performance in the other two assessments.

I had worked with Ms. Calendar for two and a half years but had never had the opportunity to talk with her about her teaching background. I began by asking her to tell me a little about her professional experience. Ms. Calendar informed me that she had been teaching for fifteen years and that her teaching career had began at the large Midwest district this research was being conducted in. She also informed the researcher that for the most part her experience in teaching had been at the primary level with the exception of two years when she taught first a primary special education unit, and then an intermediate special education unit. These were her first two years of working for the District. Her experience in the Intermediate Special Education Classroom convinced her that her passion was the primary grades and when the opportunity came she moved to a primary, regular classroom position and had remained a first grade teacher since her third year of teaching.

Keeping with the thought that an organization's backbone is its strengths, and that an organization is sustained by its supportive structures I asked Ms. Calendar to describe the strengths of Clearview.

> The strength of this school – I think there are a couple – are the teachers.
> I think we have got some good teachers on staff here. I also think our
> principal is very fair. I have worked with Ms Lyons for a long time,
> I actually have taught with Ms Lyons, so I consider her a strength.

I think havng a literacy specialist is a strength. I definitely think the program, Voyager Universal Literacy, is a strength for this school. Those are a couple of things that I think all work together to provide strength for our school.

The next question asked was to create a balanced picture of how Ms. Calendar viewed the

school as a total entity capable of achieving the goal of teaching all students to read fluently by

the end of third grade. I asked, "what is a weakness of the school?"

As far as just the management, I think if we had children, I hate to say children that behaved better, but if we didn't have so many management problems in the classroom, I think that we would get a lot more accomplished. Piggybacking on that, I also think parent involvement is a weakness just as far as homework, and making sure that they are working with the children really trying to – I hate to say this, because I understand the place many of our parents and children are in, but really trying to raise their children to be respectful, and some of those things, I don't think that we're getting as much backup from home as we could.

Ms. Calendar's observations that the strengths of the school are within the organization of

the Clearview and that the weaknesses of the school laid outside the school in parent support led

into the next question of the interview protocol. I was especially interested in Ms. Calendar's

remarks about Reading First because she had been a constant supporter of the initiative,

receiving consistently high program fidelity and ELLCO scores. I was interested in her

understandings, new knowledge gained, and how she planned to maintain or sustain her

commitment to it. I first asked Ms. Calendar to describe Reading First.

It's terrible that I don't know as much about it as I should. I know it's a grant. I know that it's put in place for schools that have at risk children. That it helps fund the reading program that we have in place, Voyager. I just know how Voyager is structured as far as hitting the skills we cover in first grade, and the structure of the program in doing that. Testing is part of it, the assessment piece, the data, gathering the from that to drive instruction.
There are obviously interventions built into the program through the teacher's station. Reading First basically helps children to achieve by getting the data to group children. It gives us a starting point in knowing what skills they need help with and what to do to help them achieve in

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reading. For interventions I would say that we have this great program that helps us take children's data and group them so they get the maximum support they need to achieve in reading. It also gives us an idea of which children need extra support, through the Voyager program those components are in place to do that. I think in general it hits the areas of instruction that need to be addressed for reading, I am not sure if Reading First is responsible for that or if it is Voyager is responsible for that, having the phonemic awareness, the phonics piece, reading comprehension, and the fluency. You know just having those structures in place helps those strugglers even children that may seemingly be on track. It helps them with their success, it helps us to be constantly aware of their progress in learning to read.

Continuing to seek understanding of Ms. Calendar's implementation of Reading First I

asked her to tell me what her first impressions of Reading First were.

Well, you know, my first experience with it was obviously with Voyager. Actually we got a little taste of it before Voyager actually started when Dr. Ovation introduced us to DIBELS, and we began using it as an assessment piece for reading. So, when we weren't necessarily a Reading First school we still had the DIBELS that we were using to assess the students' learning. With Voyager – when we were introduced to Voyger through Reading First I tried to stay pretty positive. It sounded like some of the things I was already doing in class.

One of the things I had struggled with before Voyager was what to do at the teacher's station. What are the steps, how should I structure that piece, some children needed this, some needed that, how was I to meet all of their needs? I never felt like my teaching station was really as good as it could have been. It was really good to have Voyager come in and say, this is what you're going to do at the teacher's station, these are the skills that you need to cover, this is how you are going to cover it, here are stories that match the skills, and so having that piece was wonderful.

My other impression was that it was pretty much what I was doing in the classroom. I would have reading stations of which one would be the teacher's station. I would be working with students at the teacher's station while children would be doing something else at another station the children would rotate to the different stations just as they do now in Reading First.

When I first heard the presentation on Reading First I liked it, I liked the way it was set-up, I liked the outside support with the data managers, the literacy coach, and some of the other pieces that came into place. I love the way everything was supplied for you, there wasn't any hunting for materials. I just went to the shelf and got what I needed, put it together, and that was my day's work.

My first impressions were really good, I was really positive about it. I am always willing to change; I am always looking for ways to make myself a

better teacher; and I am always looking for ways to help my students; to get them reading because I think reading is a hard skill to learn.

I was interested in exploring Ms. Calendar's willingness to change and its possible connection to our soon to come discussion about sustaining change so I asked her a clarifying question by restating, "I heard you say that you were open to new learning, but you also saw it connected to things that you were already doing, there were some things that were similar or the same, and there were some things that were different and that you were open to them." Ms. Calendar reacted to my restating my understanding with the following, "It really wasn't that far of a stretch. I mean there were some changes that I had to make, but it was things that I was willing – I was very willing to make those changes, and I think with an initiative like this, you have to make those changes."

Ms. Calendar went on to say after working with Reading First for the last two-and-a-half years she still "loves" it. She stated that the components and the pieces are there to help students achieve and she is seeing the children progress in their reading ability.

> I like it better than I did before I am more comfortable with it. I think that any kind of reading program you have to make it fit your class and I think you also have to make it fit your style. For some people this might not be a good fit. They might not be able to manage the groups or the organization of the program. Luckily, I don't have that problem and because I am in my third year of teaching the program I know how to adjust instruction based on my experiences of what went well over the last two years and what did not. I don't need the script as much as I did in the beginning. I always stay true to the teacher's station and to the skill development but I make allowable adjustments to better meet the needs of my students and my instructional day. I am really impressed with the reading that's been coming out of this group.

Listening to Ms. Calendar describe her impressions of Reading First and her current feelings and understandings I perceived that in her words there was couched the idea that Ms. Calendar had internalized the instructional patterns contained within Voyager's daily lesson

plans. To gage my read on what she was saying I replied back to her, "I have the impression that

you feel you have internalized Voyager's curriculum and that you have adjusted and/or expanded

on it to meet your students' needs."

> Yes, absolutely, especially within the teacher's station. I think
> that I have gotten better at supplementing some of the things when I feel
> we really need to work on a skill like fluency. I also modify the Read Aloud
> when I feel time constraints require that we need to put part of it in
> a station instead of doing it in whole group. At times I bring in other things
> to reading stations to facilitate student understanding. In the first grade
> we learn a lot about oceans so I have been bringing in other things
> about oceans from trips I have taken, or information I have gotten from
> other sources. So I put these things in stations as a science piece.

Ms. Calendar's Fidelity Index scores demonstrate that she has indeed internalized and

expanded her understanding of the core instructional program. During the first year of

implementation Ms. Calendar received scores with a mean of 92% overall and 95% in the core

area. Her current Fidelity Index Score was 100%. Likewise her Early Literacy Learning

Classroom Observation (ELLCO) ratings placed the literacy environment she had created in her

classroom at a level 5. As a follow-up question I asked Ms. Calendar to describe student

achievement and any impact Reading First might have had on student achievement in reading.

> Student achievement is often defined by test scores. We give DIBELS
> assessments, the Terra Nova, and state assessments. But I would define student
> achievement as something more because I use those assessments to help me
> group children for instruction and to assess at what level they are reading but
> I also do class observations, how they are working at stations, and how they
> work with me.
> As far as Reading First's impact on student achievement in
> reading I think that the structure has really given them the structure they
> need for succeeding in reading. Reading is such an abstract thing to
> teach and to learn. Sometimes a sound like /a/ and sometimes it sounds
> another way. I think the way Voyager is set-up addresses these
> different ways of pronouncing letters and have addressed those component
> areas that are needed for success.
> I think the kids like it, they enjoy it, they get into it, and I think
> that now they feel like they have ownership in it themselves, and so
> they are trying harder.

Now that our interview had formulated the importance and impact for both Ms. Calendar

and her students I asked Ms. Calendar, "What do you think is the most important to sustain from

Reading First in the future?"

> I think, personally for me, just staying true to the program. Another
> Important piece that I need to sustain would be making sure that I am getting
> those stations in everyday, and making sure that my teacher's station is
> according to the program. I think that we still need to do the testing to help us
> group the children and help us with their skill development. I would love to see
> us keep the literacy coach. I feel like this program is really beginning to click
> for me and we need the professional development the literacy coach provides to
> keep things fresh. I have been in a program that was brought in and put in place
> and then there were people that came back and did checks on it, but nobody really
> did any training after the initial training. I think that having a literacy coach
> would be nice just bcause it would be somebody that would keep things organized
> and keep the program going. I think sometimes people need a little motivation,
> and I think a literacy coach would be a good way to motivate.

To clarify Ms. Calendar's comments I restated my understanding saying, "It was my

understanding that she felt teachers could not keep the program true, organized, or motivated."

I asked her, "What would hinder teachers from doing this for themselves?"

> Well I think sometimes just the routine of it just gets boring, it
> would be the same old stuff everyday. I think that if you have a fresh
> pair of eyes to come in, do stuff and get things going it helps to keep
> busy teachers motivated. It's a long day when you are dealing with
> behaviors and other issues during the day sometimes it is hard to stay
> motivated, to stay on top of your game. It is always good to have somebody
> to come in and just say maybe you can try this, or maybe this could be done
> better this way. It is always good to have somebody to bounce ideas off of.
> Someone who has expertise in the field your are trying to become an expert
> in helps you develop your own expertise. For example, when our literacy
> coach gives me information I feel it is legitimate, he knows what he is talking
> about. I feel like it either helps me become a better teacher or validates what
> I am doing in class. I know that I am doing something right and this is an okay
> decision for me to make. So, I think it is good to have somebody else to push
> it along a bit.

As a follow-up question I asked Ms. Calendar who was the most important person for the

sustaining of Reading First.

As the teacher, you are in charge of the reading program. If you don't do it, students don't learn to read. It is pretty simple, you do what you are to do, students get the information and the skills they need. If you don't do the program then the students don't get it. I think that sustaining Reading First is going to fall back on the teacher; we must continue doing the assessment piece, the intervention piece, and the teaching piece. I think that we are the key to sustaining Reading First.

I feel like, as far as the meat of the program, the teacher's station, I'll do that forever and ever. If this program disappears I am keeping every piece of material that I have and I'll do it anyway. I have seen the student achievement and I believe in this program. I just really feel like this program has everything that these children need, I think the kids like and enjoy it, and I am motivated. I feel like I am in a constant state of change and I think with first graders you need to be that way because they are busy little people. So you need to find new ways to teach and there are different problems, different needs that occur every day that you need to address in this environment you have to roll with the punches with change itself. Reading First has given me a place to stay focused even in the middle of my constantly changing environment.

As a last question I asked Ms. Calendar what supports Clearview Elementary or the

District had in place for the continuation of the Reading First Initiative.

I know that our principal, Ms. Lyons, supports the program. I think would be one to help us get materials or whatever else we needed. I know that we will be doing DIBELS and will still be able to record those scores into the Voyager website to get the data.

We have been talking about peer coaching as a way to help each other sustain our practices we have learned from Reading First. We have begun to do some peer observations and follow-up conversations to see if peer coaching is a practice we can sustain over the next few years.

We never know from year to year how many instructional assistants we will have in our classrooms and this will affect the amount of interventions struggling students will receive. I do interventions at my teacher's station and Voyager has helped me to make those stronger and more effective, but the extra support students get from other interventions provided in our after school intervention program and through instructional assistant support is important too. I don't feel we will be able to sustain that level of intervention without the grant.

I am also concerned that the District has adopted Voyager as the core reading program for all of its primary grades in all of its schools. From what I have heard so far teachers who don't have a literacy specialist in their building are floundering because they don't have the support we have had. They aren't familiar with the program, no one has really been in there to show them how to do it, I don't know if they have had as much training as we have had on it. so the district has got to beef-up or it will be in the hole again, and we will be back to square one, you know, trying to figure out which program that we need to use

for reading.

You know we have seen a lot of programs come and go through this district and I think it is good that there is a district-wide adoption instead of X,Y,Z schools are going to do this, and A,B,C schools are going to do that, and E and F schools will be doing something else. One of the things that we have always complained about is that when we get children in from other schools, they are not privy to all the information, style of teaching, and skills our students have gotten. So I think it is a step in the right direction. I worry that in three or four the teachers are not going to buy into Voyager because they are not getting the support they needed to implement it and see students grow as readers. Then they will just go back to their old ways of teaching because no one is watching me and then it will all fall apart. I am afraid that if things fall apart at the District level it will threaten Clearview's ability to keep going with this program.

Interview Eight: Ms. Moon, First Grade Teacher

Over the past two years of working with Ms. Moon I have been drawn to her room many times. Working as the Data Manager for Clearview, as with most jobs working in schools, there were good days and bad days. When I would feel overwhelmed or ineffective I would spend a few minutes in Ms. Moon's room just watching the children and her interact. Her room was full of rich, bold colors on a background of some calm neutral color. In the first classroom I worked with her the background was a light, pale pink and her current room was soft beige. Both softly painted rooms were somehow infused with warmth that was invigorated by the colorful displays of student materials, curtains, and framed pictures. I would sit in the child sized chairs and immerse myself in the always cheerful voices of the children she taught. Often children would comfort each other in times of disappointment, illness, or sorrow. I never heard Ms. Moon raise her voice or speak gruffly to a child. She always seemed to have a smiling face that welcomed you into any classroom, staff meeting, or hallway she occupied.

Ms. Moon's participation in the Reading First Initiative had always been positive. She was viewed by the Reading First Building Trio to be an excellent teacher not only in Reading but in all content areas. Her Fidelity Index scores was a source of this attitude as from the beginning

of the program she worked to implement the Voyager literacy program with a high rate of fidelity. Her 2003-2004 scores indicate that she consistently performed at or above 90% overall and moved from an 83% in the core area to a 95%. During the current school year her fidelity rating was a constant 100%. ELLCO scores where solidly ranked at a 5 during the years of implementation.

Student DIBELS assessment scores showed yearly improvement in student achievement. In the current school year her students had moved from a 76% on track rating in Nonsense Word Fluency to an 81% on track rate. Gains for on track students in Phoneme Segmentation Fluency were the most impressive for the year showing a gain of 61% of on track students. On track students at the beginning of the year was 29% and increased to 100% by the end of the year. Reading Connected Text showed the least gains with 17% of on track students at the second Benchmark and 19% at the last Benchmark for the year. This was consistent with previous years with the exception that Reading Connected Text had a slightly higher gain for both of the previous years.

Our interview occurred in her classroom, after school. I thanked her for taking the time to talk with me and the Hershey kiss she had placed on the table in front of the chair I was to sit in. We began our interview by my asking her to give me some background on her teaching experience.

> I have been teaching in public schools for twenty-six years. All of my experience is with the District. I began teaching a special education unit at the junior high school level where I taught for two years. Then I took a year off to have a baby. I went back to the same school after my year off and taught for six years. Next I moved to another inner-city school and taught first grade for fourteen years. Last, I came to Clearview and have taught here for three years.

After listening to Ms. Moon's experience base I asked her what she thought a strength of

Clearview was.

> I think our biggest strength is Ms. Lyons. She has helped me to strengthen
> my teaching. I wanted to be a better teacher, and she always made you want to
> be better, and you want to do what she wants you to do, because you see that
> she has the best interest of kids at heart and knows what she is talking about.
> This has been the first time I have felt that any principal ever cared. She gives
> me compliments about my teaching. I think that for me and for the school she
> eally matters, I think she has been really important to our successes here. When
> I first came into this school I could see that she was serious about what went
> on here.

In keeping with wanting to develop a balanced picture of how each interviewed teacher

viewed their school I asked Ms. Moon, "What is a weakness of this school?"

> Teachers, when we were in our other building, before we moved to
> this location because of the building of our new school, I kept to myself
> a lot. I worked in one of the pods and mostly interacted with my team.
> now because we are all in one building I see more. I get concerned when
> teachers don't watch their kids, and a lot of them don't stop discipline
> issues before they start. I like to prevent something from happening by
> knowing what's going on with your kids. I feel like your kids are your
> number one priority when you are at school. Too often I see teachers
> whose priorities are misplaced and their students loose out due to
> lack of control in the classroom or poor instruction. I know Ms Lyons gets
> frustrated that we end up with long   There are some wonderful
> teachers here, but there are too many instances of teachers who not
> have a high teaching ability or a high level of caring. If it was possible
> I would remove those teachers from the building and replace them
> with caring, qualified teachers.

The interview next moved into talking about Reading First and Ms. Moon's first

impressions. It was my intent to move Ms. Moon through the same sequence of questions I had

asked all teachers previously interviewed.

> Good, good, you know, really good. We heard that there might be a
> new reading program. We were all hodgepodging it all the time, aware of the
> skilled reading level, but never knowing what that reading level was for our
> students. Mr. Kirk talked about it and said we might want to try Reading
> First because we weren't doing so good as a school in reading on state tests.
> When Dr. Ovation came and made the presentation about Reading First and

the Voyager Universal Literacy System the staff at Clearview voted to join in as one of the targeted schools.

After we began implementing Voyager I loved it. Our first literacy specialist was one of the people that made me feel that I was doing okay. she would come in and observe then leave me notes telling me what was good and what I might want to change. She always encouraged me to come and talk to her if I had a problem. I felt very, very fortunate. Implementing Voyager changed me as a person. I began to really like what I was doing, I felt confident that this was really where I was supposed to be. I don't think I ever felt that way before. I like the first grade but I would often think I needed to switch to a different school. Voyager has given me something to do that is really good. It gave me a tool that I always wanted. It is very specific but you can add to it, or modify it if you need to. I feel like the program and the support provided by Reading First helps me to know that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing.

I also know that I am doing what I need to be doing because we see growth in the DIBELS scores and the students want to read. The kids like this program, they like to do the station work, they like coming to teacher station and going to intervention groups. They know they are learning and they want to come to school. They are coming and they are wanting.

After listening to Ms. Moon discuss her experiences with Reading First I felt that my next

question had already been answered. I was surprised when her conversation turned to more

technical aspects of the instructional program when I asked her, "What is the impact Reading

First has had on the students in your classroom?"

The greatest impact on them would probably be the logic and order of the skills in Reading First. I never knew how to put them in order, but Voyager does an excellent job at this. I also think that the interventions have helped students be more successful. The decoding skills and testing are exciting to my students. They know they have to read certain amount of words in a minute and they get excited about beating their last score. They go in and get their PALS folders and go to interventions because they know these things will help them to become better readers. They love to show off and assessments are a time when they can show what they have learned. They come Right up, sit down and do their thing and then they go back to their work.
At this point I asked a clarifying question:

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I told Ms. Moon, "What I hear you saying is that the greatest impact of Reading First has been the way the Voyager program is designed to give interventions when needed and that students are learning and they are being confident in the way they are learning, is this correct?"

> Yes, they are reading and they are getting out those books. It is the first year this has happened, that students have been so independent for silent reading time. I have observed that we can read for twenty minutes and they're okay with it. They look through the books, find one to read and when they are done with that book they find another one. They are not bored as quickly with silent reading as other groups have been.
> I define student achievement by assessment scores and seeing where they are supposed to be. I look at classroom behaviors and observe daily achievement. I think achievement is moving to where you are supposed to be by the end of your grade level. Some kids aren't going to get it right the first time, it is going to take them longer. Achievement is growth and moving, moving students. It's also how they feel about themselves. This is not the highest group I have ever taught but these students love reading, so I love reading too.

Ms. Moon had answered my next question with her comments about student achievement. I was curious about Ms. Moon's point of view on what professional development had been offered by Reading First and what meaning the professional development had held for her. She had also stated that the previous professional development offered over the first two years of Reading First had centered on Voyager, the five core ideas of teaching reading, Interventions, and Writing. Ms. Calendar had stated that the first two years had provided the framework for her current practice

> At first it was learning how to do all this different stuff, doing skill groups and learning how to do the different stations from the ideas in the manual. During the first two years it was learning the nuts and bolts of teaching reading and doing interventions. Things like DIBELS, interventions, the core components of teaching reading, and using data to form interventions groups. Last year we worked on developing writing, using Palm Pilots to do DIBELS assessments, and the Three Tiered Model. This year has been wonderful because we have been able to have a voice in what professional development we do. We have worked on writing, comprehension, and have begun to work on developing a peer coaching

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model for our school. I think that getting together and talking about it,
going over the writing. I would like one more year of it because I'm still
not where I want to be with the writing piece. I'm still not getting it in because
we have to do so many other things.

I think getting together, talking about things, and sharing leads
to learning more things. The hand-outs have been useful too because
you can go back and read them on your own. I have difficulty just
reading something and taking it back and doing it in my room. I am a
visual learner and it would be helpful for me to have a video or someone
to model the strategy for me before I try it in my room. If I don't see
something done I have to read the strategy over and over again to be
able to do it. Mr. Kirk has been very supportive in helping me to
implement new ideas in my classroom. This has helped ease me into
trying new things connected to Voyager.

This year we have started to discuss new teaching strategies at
professional development and then trying it in our classrooms and
bringing back student artifacts to discuss in our next professional
development. This has been helpful but we need time to continue to
do professional development this way.

After listening to Ms. Moon discuss professional development her answer to the next

question did not surprise me. I asked her, "What do you think is the most important component

to sustain from Reading First?"

I think there are two parts that are crucial for sustaining Reading
First. The first is professional development and the other is the support
that the Building Trio gives us. I think this because if I don't get something
right away I have to reread it so many times to get it. Mr. Kirk has been
like, everything. It is really nice to know I have him to go to if I get
stuck. He's there if you need more ideas. If you combine his role with
the professional developments it really pulls the program together. I also
think that the roles the data manager and resource coordinator plays in
Reading First makes our work important. Sometimes the importance of
our work is forgotten here because of discipline issues, or other issues.

To extend Ms. Moon's take on sustaining Reading First I asked her what her commitment

was to sustaining Reading First. "We always talk about it. When this grant is gone and if the

District decided to change the core reading program we would doing Voyager without

really doing Voyager. I would do this program to the end. I am taking my stuff with me, and there will be something in that room that works. I have a base now that I have never had in all the years I have taught."

I next asked Ms. Moon what, if any roadblocks might impede the sustainability of Reading First.

> Could they tweak Voyager. I would like to see the writers of the Voyager program and the state get together and create links between social studies and science that meet state standards. I do not want to have to figure that out. I am also concerned that the state will begin to require us to test Social Studies and Science and that would be a problem because reading and math take up so much time to teach. There is not enough time to do it all. This is especially true if you consider the idea that we work in a very needy school community.
>
> I am not a good person to have to figure all of the curriculum connections out. I can't make all the cute stuff. I love teaching with it and I can make learning exciting for children, but I cannot create it. I need other people to do that for me. If you teach Voyager there is a responsibility of the District, or whoever, to create a bridge to span the gap between curriculum areas.
>
> If I am spending my time creating the materials it would distract time from my students. I don't want to do that nor do I want to have to guess that what I am doing is the right thing to do. I want someone to say this is the right thing.
>
> My other fear is that when Mr. Kirk goes back into the classroom and we are without a literacy specialist we will not be able to have quality professional development. The classroom takes a lot of your energy. Mr. Kirk will want to continue but you only have so much energy to do so many things.
>
> My third concern is that we are getting a lot of students who are very needy. When students have a high level of needs it also takes a lot of energy to meet their needs. I am worried about how I am going to teach these kids next year with this high level of needs unless I get help. I am afraid the help will not be there that I will need. I am scared more for next year than now. Right now my students stretch me everyday, they stretch me. I am very concerned about how I will do next year.
>
> You know what will be here to sustain us next year? The teachers will be here. Mr. Kirk, Ms Calendar, Ms George, Ms Sanders, Ms Damas, and Ms Hawk and our principal will be the strength that will help us carry on as long as possible.

Interview Nine: Ms. George, Second Grade Teacher

On one of my first trips to Clearview I entered the building through the front door. Even before the door opened I felt this pulsing, rhythmic beating of a drum that sent its sound waves moving through the walls and along the metal push bar that opened the inner door of the school building. Once I entered the building I heard its low, rumbling, rhythmic beat causing me to shuffle my feet in a different pattern as I moved into the building. Being curious I followed the sound to a room four doors from the office and peaked in to see a small blonde headed woman watching a bearded African American man tap out the drum beat. She was smiling and swaying her body ever so slightly to the rhythm. The class sat mesmerized, shining eyes following the drummers hands as he sent out the sounds that had them tapping their feet and hands. When the drummer stopped everyone broke into applause. As I turned to leave to go to the office the classroom door opened and Ms. George asked me in. I told her who I was and left to go sign in at the office so I could return to watch her class practice drumming with the Drums for Peace volunteer who was working with her second grade class.

In comparison to many of the classrooms at Clearview Ms. George's classroom is practically bare. The work posted in the classroom is student work. Students have arranged their desks in different heterogeneous groupings of four. Ms. George's mode of dress is very basic but stylish. She is slim with medium length, natural blonde hair. She has a soft voice that sometimes one can hear raised when it is appropriate to be heard in that tone of voice. While she is young and pretty, she does not tolerate foolishness that distracts from learning.

Ms. George's Fidelity Index scores have grown enormously over the three years of implementation due to her goal setting and hard work. During the first year of implementation her initial overall score was at 85%, the minimum for implementation fidelity. Her core fidelity

index score was 67%. Throughout the year she worked to bring the fidelity score up and moved it to 88% overall, 73% at the core and at the end of the year her rating was 85% overall and 83% for the core practices. The second year of implementation saw her performing between 90% and 95% overall and 85% to 90% in the core practices.

We held the interview in her classroom before school. We began by talking about a few items that revolved around our daily work and required me to gather some materials to bring to Ms. George later in the day. The official interview began as usual, by my asking her to state her name and tell me about her previous experience as a educator. "This is my fifth year as a teacher. I taught one year at another school and the last four here at Clearview. I have been a second grade teacher for the five years."

I then asked Ms. George to consider the strengths and weaknesses of Clearview and describe those for me.

> I think the reading program is a strength for Clearview. Our kids are making gains in reading. I also feel that we have a good teaching staff. We work well together.
> An area of weakness is consistency in discipline. I feel that with the kids there are double standards, and triple standards, there is just no consistency. If two kids get in trouble for the same thing they will get different punishments even though the same act was made.

To get clarification on the area of weakness I asked Ms. George is the inconsistency of punishments disrupted instruction.

> Yes, all the time. If one of my kids gets up and hits another kid they will be sent out for timeout. I send work with them to be completed. However, I often have kids from other classes in here in timeout, which is fine, but they need work to do. If they don't have work to do they are disrupting my class, or I have to find something for them to do. I'm all about helping the other teachers, but it shouldn't be my job to find them work to do.

I clarified Ms George's comments by saying, an area of weakness is the consistency of discipline, and the effect of the lack of consistency is that repeated people are coming into your

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room for timeout. When they do timeouts in your room they don't always have work to do.

Because they don't have work to do they disrupt your class until you can find something for

them to do, which is a further disruption because you have to stop teaching and get them what

they need.

> Yes, that is correct. I know I should go straight to the principle
> and confront her, but I know she is stressed, she has a lot going on too.
> she has to be aware of this problem and I think she is doing her best. There
> is so much going on right now with the new school, trying to hire people,
> moving staff around and just dealing with the major discipline issues. I
> should tell her but I know she knows and I don't want to kick a dog when
> its down. Its not fully her fault.

This is a difficult problem, would you be able to put work packets together of generic

work to give kids when they come in for a time out, or have a time out sheet they could

complete? Ms. George thought this might be a possibility. But she stated that she would rather

that the kid's teacher put together the work.   She could see though where it might save her sanity

and the sanity of her students if time out students were just handed something to do as soon as

they came in the room. I suggested that we move on with the interview and asked Ms. George

what her first impressions were of Reading First.

> I was excited. I had a mentor my first year at Clearview. She was
> helping me teach reading groups. But I felt there was no structure. I liked
> the Word Study Book and the repetitive reading. These things give structure
> to teaching reading.
> I have been involved with Reading First for two and a half years now
> and I like the fact that we are comfortable with it and know what we can
> tweak, and what works best for the kids. Now that I am more familiar
> with the program I really do like it. I wasn't comfortable teaching reading
> before but now that I am working with Voyager it helps me know how to
> teach reading. I equate Reading First with Voyager and I am not sure
> which this comes from but one of the things I have learned is how to
> create effective reading groups and what materials to use when.

Interviewer Question: What does Reading First look like at Clearview?

> We start our day off with a whole-group activity, usually reading

and either answering questions, or doing some sort of comprehension activity. Then we break into smaller groups. I pull the different ability groups together at the teaching station and spend twenty to twenty-five minutes on skill development with them. While I have the groups at the teaching station the rest of the students are at their seats doing station work. Normally this would be a writing activity or a reading activity based on literacy. Then if they are finished they can go and silent read or play a game based on reading skills. Then we come back together and do spelling and closing circle.

I next told Ms. George that when I hear her talk about her classroom and the work she is doing with Voyager that I had a sense that she believes her students are achieving in reading. I asked her to describe for me how she knows that.

Part of it is how we use words in the classroom. We use vocabulary words fluently that display knowledge of correct meaning. My students demonstrate comprehension in not only reading but in other subject areas. A lot of times they will come back and say, I just read so fluently. And you know, they get so excited when they use the words. We did New Year's Resolutions and a lot of my kids had, "My New Year's Resolution is to comprehend more of what I read." It was so cute. They read great, and I praise them. They are always asking if they can go and read to another teacher, which shows me they are confident readers. If I don't call on them to read they are upset. They want to show what they know. You know if they are not comfortable reading they would not want to read.

I restated my understanding of what Ms. George had told me by saying, "It seems to me that Reading First has provided a place for both you and your students to grow as learners. First, Reding First gave you the pieces you needed to create a successful reading program. Second, when you used the tools and skills you had acquired through the Initiative your students grew as readers because you knew how to lead them there."

Ms. George's DIBELS scores for the current year, by design of the DIBELS assessment system only reflect assessments of Reading Connected Text, what we commonly called Oral Reading Fluency. Over the school year Ms. George's students had achieved at 42% on the first and second Benchmarks, 38% on the third Benchmark, and 40% at the fourth Benchmark. The

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percentage of on track students stayed fairly even throughout the year with a slight dip at the

third Benchmark that somewhat recovered by the fourth. A close look at the data revealed that

there was a lot of mobility in Ms. George's room during the year. Classroom rosters over the

year reveal that three of her higher performing students had withdrawn from Clearview while

four new students had moved in who had no experience with Voyager or DIBELS assessments.

Two students had moved into Clearview from other District schools and were familiar with

Reading First practices.

After talking with Ms. George about student achievement I then asked Ms. George,

"What, if any, professional development opportunities offered by Reading First were meaningful

or helpful to you?"

> I like the professional development on cooperative learning. I am not
> very comfortable teaching writing so I welcome any help I can get with that.
> The professional development on peer coaching was great. . I like the fact that
> I was able to go and observe another teacher. I got to observe Ms Granite.
> I appreciated the way that she has her class. It is different than what I do,
> especially when it comes to discipline, I think I got some good ideas
> from her. She was reteaching a lesson Her students had not understood and
> it was interesting watching how she explained and discussed what went wrong
> and how to correct it. I am looking forward to our follow-up conversation.

I next asked Ms. George what she thought would be the most valuable aspect of Reading

First to sustain given her experiences over the last two-and-a-half years.

> Definitely progress monitoring should be sustained and the results
> should be shared with the kids. They like to see that they are gaining. Also,
> if they don't gain that particular week or month that they know it is okay as
> long as they are try their best, they still feel a sense of accomplishment. I
> think that is very important.
> I have one special education student in here and even though she is
> reading thirteen to fifteen words a minute she feels a sense of pride. I have
> asked her permission to share with the class that you were only reading
> seven words per minute last week now you are at fifteen. She is like, "Oh
> My God!" Her eyes light up and she is so excited. I don't know if she
> really realizes that the other kids are reading 115 to 130 words a minute,
> but she knows she is improving.

No one in the class makes fun of her because we accentuate the
positive and everyone can see she is trying her best. Often when kids
strike-up noticing the difference it is because it has been accentuated. Here
we strive for improvement, not competition. In this classroom if you can
do more, you do more. Everyone can do more, its just that we do more
at different levels. My students always have the option to do more and work
at a higher level.

Having heard Ms. George's explanation of what must be sustained from Reading First I

next asked her what she felt would hinder the sustaining of Reading First learning and current

practices.

If we are going to do progress monitoring easily we would need
to continue with the Mclass system and use Palm Pilots to gather DIBELS
assessment data. We could use pencil and paper assessments but I have
found the other more user friendly and the students enjoy seeing their
results on the Palm Pilot, they get a kick out of seeing their running
man move across the screen, I think it is part of their motivation.
We would also need new textbooks the ones we are using this year
are falling apart. The last and probably one of the most important
is time to do the assessments and interventions correctly.
Another extremely important feature of Reading First to retain
would be the support system of the Building Trio. I enjoy having all
of you here to facilitate. Your positions are important because the Trio
keeps us organized by reminding us of Checkpoints, and quarterly
DIBELS assessments. You come in and observe to help us realize
what we need to change, it might be our reading groups, instructional
pacing, how to get new students into our assessment cycle, and ensure
that we have high fidelity of implementation. So there is a checks and
balances to our program. I would be scared that we might get lazy and
not do what we need to do to continue student success.
Right now we have intervention calendars and pacing guides for
where we are supposed to be, but if I know that I am not going to get to
everything today it would be easy to put reading instruction on
the wayside. If you get off-track and you didn't have someone to come and
help you plan how to do the important parts and catch-up to the pacing
calendar you might never get back on track or you might skip something
important trying to get back on track.

At the close of our interview Ms. George stated that she felt the person who was most

responsible for sustaining changes brought about by Reading First was the principal. She stated

that she felt the principal was the instructional leader of the school and it was her responsibility to make sure teachers stayed on track and completed the program at a high rate of fidelity.

Interview Ten: Ms. Sanders, Second Grade Teacher

Ms. Sanders became a second grade teacher for Clearview at the beginning of this school year. Previously she had taught at the intermediate level, fourth grade science and math. She transferred to second grade after teaching at that level for six years at Clearview.   Our interview took place in Ms. Sanders' room. The room was cluttered and crowded with desks and chairs. Ms. Sanders greeted me at the door with a soft spoken hello. She directed me to a group of desks at the back of the room. We conducted the interview on her planning bell, while her students were at music class.

Ms. Sanders Fidelity Index scores for the year reflect commitment to doing the best she can at all things. At the beginning of the year her overall score was 85% and the Fidelity Index for the core practices was 82%. By the middle of the year her scores had risen to 96% overall and 100% for the core practices. On her last Fidelity Index Observation for the school year her overall score was 100%. Ms Sanders ELLCO scores were in the medium range of 3. Debriefing notes for the ELLCO targeted classroom arrangements for student seating to accommodate group work and student choice of reading station work as goals to work on.

Students DIBELS assessment data indicated that students had made steady gains. On track readers had held steady for the first and second Benchmarks at 23% with 38% of students found to be emerging and 38% to be struggling. At the third Benchmark 38% were found to be struggling, 15% emerging, and 46% on track. However, at the fourth Benchmark 62% were on track, 31% emerging, and 8% struggling. Ms. Sanders could be proud of her efforts to become proficient at teaching the core program and the benefits it had for her students

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I began the interview by asking Ms. Sanders to describe Clearview's strengths and

weaknesses.

> I feel that the staff at Clearview is a definite strength. We work well
> together. We often work long, hard hours together. A weakness of this
> school is that some teachers do not have the classroom discipline needed
> to run an effective classroom. I've been here so long I've learned the ins
> and outs of teaching in an inner city school. I think we need to be more
> consistent and persistent in sticking to the rules. I've had to learn that
> along the way.
> A weakness I see is that when we have new teachers come in the building
> we need to make sure that they are ready, willing, and able to be strict and
> consistent. We need to confident in ourselves to do it. Veteran teachers need to
> support new teachers and help them to know how to be fair, consistent,
> and have high expectations.

I reiterated my understanding for Ms. Sanders to corroborate. I told her that it was my

impression that she felt a strength of Clearview was it teaching staff, but the weakness of the

school was also a staff weakness in that some teachers, especially newer teachers did not have

strong consistency to be effective classroom managers. I also understood that she felt it was

important for new teachers to come with the willingness to learn from older, veteran teachers

how to be better disciplinarians. She affirmed my clarification and then I asked her the next

interview question, "What were your first impressions of Reading First?"

> I felt overwhelmed. I had taught sixth grade science and I had just got
> my Master's in mathematics education. I love to read myself, but my patience
> gets a little short when the little kids can't get it; I'm like, what am I going to do
> to get them to read like I do? I do believe all kids can learn to read, some
> quicker than others but they can all learn to read if they get the help they
> need. I was worried that I would not know what to do.
> When I got into working with the Voyager program I began to feel
> more comfortable teaching reading because it gives you a plan where it tells
> you to do A, B, or C and that makes it much easier. With Voyager and DIBELS
> assessments I can see my students growth and it gives me confidence that
> I am doing what I need to be doing. It gives me data to know where I need to
> help them at. The Voyager program gives my reading instruction structure.
> If we weren't all doing the same thing I could only imagine that we would
> all be at different places at different times. Its good that my reading team
> works together and we know where we are and where we should be. We

also know when we have to make adjustments for state diagnostic tests, or other things that come along.

I asked Ms. Sanders how she knew students were achieving reading skills and what, if any, impact Reading First has had on student achievement.

> I know my students are achieving when I see growth in their DIBELS scores. The DIBELS graphs show growth over time, data doesn't lie. I also measure student achievement by watching for intrinsic indicators such as when a student knows a word he or she did not know an hour ago. You can see it in their eyes, in the smile on their face and their look of pride in knowing how to read something they did not know how to read before.
> The Reading First Initiative has provided a way for us to know where students are achieving in reading so we can help them increase their reading ability through interventions at the teaching station, small group interventions, or after school interventions. I have seen students come up in reading ability because of Voyager and Reading First structures.

We next discussed how professional development provided new learning for Ms. Sanders during this, her first year with Reading First.

> My personal favorite was writing and how it goes hand-in-hand with learning how to read. I wish we had done more with comprehension. I have students who can read 125 words a minute, and that is good, but if they don't understand what they read what good is it?
> We also did work with peer coaching. I was able to observe in Ms George's room. It was interesting seeing her teach the same subject matter I was teaching, but in a different way. It was surprising to me that it looked so different even though we were teaching the exact same thing. Ms Granite observed me and she had some great suggestions. I am always willing to learn and she was able to come up with some things I would never have thought of.

Interviewer question: What is the most valuable thing you have gotten from Reading First?

> First I think the structure of Reading First keeps you on task. It gives you a lot of direction, I need to have a structure that gives me focus. I have not formally taught reading for the last three years. I have worked with students to understand how to read in math and science to get needed information. This was at the intermediate level, fourth grade. Sometimes I found that I had to stop and remind myself that I was teaching second grade now, not fourth. There is a big difference in how you teach at this level,

Voyager gave me structure and the right lessons to use to teach second grade students to read.

At this point it was obvious to me that Ms. Sanders was happy to have a structured program to guide her teaching. It was beginning to sound like she was equally happy to have found a system that also guided her learning of how to teach reading in a systematic and explicit manner. The next question I asked her directed her to talk about sustaining changes she had undergone as a reading teacher. I asked, "What is important to sustain from Reading First?" Ms.Sanders was quiet for a few minutes then responded:

> There are three things I think are the most important to sustain. First is the collection of data using DIBELS. I want to know how my students are progressing. Even if we do not have the grant I still can see myself writing it down and making the graphs, because now I want to be able to use this information to form groups using the data from DIBELS.
> Second, I think some of the of Voyager structures are important to keep. This year has taught me that I really need the structure. I will always use the teaching station, independent work groups, and other daily structures. I think it is important to do interventions, but I am afraid we will not have the instructor assistants or volunteers to be able to do that.
> Third, teacher teaming is important to keep because it helps us to teach the same curriculum and maintain pacing. It is important to be able to work together to sustain each others work. The collaboration helps us to continue working on raising student achievement.
> Another thing that we need to sustain is professional development. I want to know more about using data. I want to know why this student has come up from twenty-seven words a minute to fifty-eight words a minute. Data has shown me that I really need structure. For instance when we were doing four blocks last year in fourth grade I would come in and say oh now we are not going to do making words any more, we are going to do literature circles. How did I know that so and so needs this group or so and so needs that group because I did not write down any data to base my decision about who was in the high, middle, or low group. I would never have thought to do that. My class now is all on basically the same level with the exception of four boys. The help from my fellow teachers on using data helped me to bring my students up to where they are today. If it had not been for using data and the help I received this would not have happened because in the beginning I was clueless. The data sessions during professional development were valuable in giving us time to do that.
> I also want to continue with professional development because I

need to work on comprehension. There are so many ways to foster comprehension. I didn't realize that there were so many ways to help kids with comprehension until Mr. Kirk handed us the list of comprehension strategies. I need to continue to work on this because our core reading program, Voyager, is so weak in that area. If you don't put that comprehension piece in then they don't get it. That's one reason the teaching station is so valuable.

After talking with Ms. Sanders about what she will retain from Reading First I asked her

if there were any roadblocks to sustaining these portions of Voyagers.

> I know for me, personally, I must make sure that I am very, very, very organized and structured. I must work with other teachers, grade level and with vertical teams to know what students should of had in first grade or what they need in third grade. Even though our standards may not be the same we must work together to see how the standards are connected and how we can support each other.

I clarified her answer by saying, "I hear you talking about collaboration, to continue that

process of talking with each other, and working each other to strengthen each others work in

order to help the students achieve. Is that correct?"

> I once worked on a team where we grouped students in grades one through three for reading. That was a real learning experience for me because I had all the third grade students who needed to work on a certain reading skill then I would have those students for teaching them math. The rest of the day I would have a mix of first through third grade students. It was important for the teachers to talk a lot about what we planned to do, what we actually did, what went well, and what we needed to change. We also had to work together on student discipline to make it all work. That experience is why I know it is important for all the primary teachers to talk with each other.
> Sustaining Reading First goes back to how hard the teacher is willing to work. How student achieving is, for me it goes back to how the students are performing and what the data is saying. You have to use the DIBELS data to guide your groupings and then work to give kids what they need.

Ms. Sanders had stated that sustaining Reading First goes back to how hard the teacher is

willing to work which caused me to be curious about what her response to the next question on

my interview protocol would be. I asked, "If there where any District initiatives that might affect

sustaining change?"

> I think that two District initiatives, SIP and SEAL, have added
> to teacher work. I can write a lesson but I cannot seem to get this SEAL thing
> down. I have been trained to do SIP two times. It seems to me with Voyager
> it is hard to write a scoring guide for everything we do. It isn't the right thing
> to do either, because Voyager has so many skills lessons that you cannot do
> SIP with.
> As far as SEAL is concerned I don't think everyone is ready to do
> it. I think it might be harder on kindergarten through second grade because
> we don't have the kind of data they want us to put in our lesson plans. We
> have to create the data to use and it is time consuming. We have to input
> data from many sources and that takes time away from instruction. The data
> produced from DIBELS is more useful than the data we construct from
> different sources. It causes us to spend time duplicating work for the sake
> of fulfilling district requirements. I spent three hours on a Sunday night
> preparing my lesson plans to meet SEAL requirement and I still wasn't
> sure I was doing it right.
> The District has the Classroom Walk Through Initiative, I went to the
> training and it makes sense but, I think is added work that seems to make
> the District look good. It doesn't tell us what the kids need. You have to
> think that before you even start any type of program. Even if you are going
> to teach someone to tie their shoe you need a shoe, you need the shoestrings,
> you need this, you need that. Sometimes I just get overwhelmed, I think it
> puts more stress on teachers that we have all this to do.

Following up on comments of sustaining change takes hard work and that sometimes Ms.

Sanders felt overwhelmed I next asked Ms. Sanders, "What was her impression of how

committed the teachers at Clearview are to sustaining Reading First?"

> The teachers I work directly with are the only teachers I can
> Answer for. I can't speak for the rest of the teachers. They enjoy doing
> Voyager, They tell me, "It's not as bad as it seems, it's not as much
> Work as it seems." No one in the primary team complain about doing
> Voyager, I think the commitment is very high. Our level of collaboration
> is high and I think that keeps us motivated.
> I think coaching by Mr. Kirk is valuable to sustaining our commitment.
> I enjoy all the coaching I receive. Someone should make sure we are
> doing what we need to do. It helps the teacher to know that you are doing
> what you need to be doing and that I am doing it well. You also so need
> to know what you must do better. I also need to know if I am going at
> the right pace or if I need to speed up with instruction, and how to do that.

After listening to Ms. Sanders talk about teachers' commitment and the value of coaching I asked her, "Who was the person who has the most power to sustain Reading First?"

> Ms. Lyons because as the instructional leader she must be able to know if the program is working or not working and if it is working go by that old saying, "Don't fix it if it ain't broke." I also think it would be important to have a literacy specialist and/or a lead teacher to get it going. You have to have someone who is leading to make sure everyone is doing the program. If there were no literacy specialist and if the principal was "iffy" about the program the teachers might not sustain the program because it will depend on the person, if the teacher would do the work.

Interview Eleven: Ms. Damas, Second Grade Teacher

Ms. Damas had taught at Clearview Elementary for six years. All of those years had been as a second grade teacher. Previous to coming to Clearview she had been at several different neighborhood schools. The last school she had taught in before coming to Clearview was also a Reading First school, though she had taught there before the grant had come into effect. She knew the literacy specialist at Clearview as a partner teacher at the other Reading First school; they had come together to Clearview as a team. Ms. Damas was a lean, well dressed, precise teacher. She was always well planned and demanded a high level of expectation for conformity to her discipline plan for all of her students. Her classroom matched her appearance and dedication to order and conformity. It was neat and well organized. Of all the teachers interviewed it was the researcher's observation that Ms. Damas was the teacher who struggled the most to adapt, adopt Reading First practices. This was especially true of the core reading program, but even more apparent when discussing the pyramid of interventions and discipline. This observation was supported by Ms. Damas' first year Program Fidelity Observations and Record Sheet. Her fidelity scores ranged from low seventies to the mid eighties. Over the second year she improved her fidelity rating until by the end of the second

year she received a rating of one-hundred percent. The researcher was the person to conduct fidelity observations and follow-up discussions and coaching. The look on Ms. Damas face was one of disbelief when she received the final rating of the second year of implementation. She laughed and said, "I don't believe it, I don't know of anyone who has ever rated one hundred percent. I feel so, I can't tell you how I feel, there are no words for it, except to say I know you don't usually give teachers one hundred percent" (Research Reading First field notes, May 02, 2005).

Field notes from the beginning of the implementation of the Reading First Initiative reveal that Ms. Damas was very hesitant to implement because she felt that in three years the program would be gone and all of her work would be for nothing because the District would move in another new program and she would have to begin all over again. She had seen this happen many times in the District and was not buying into this new implementation wholeheartedly because of that. This researcher had made a note in her Reading First Log about this statement and her response which was, "We are working very hard to see that that does not occur this time because it is our [Reading First Leadership] belief that the new ways of doing and new teaching strategies learned would be ones that she could apply in any situation. The Voyager literacy system was just a teaching tool to practice these strategies with but, you would be able to do them in any situation." I remember the doubtful look she gave me that was tinged with a small dose of hope.

My first question for Ms. Damas reflected this experience as I believed that the organic matter she may have carried with her from those failed attempts would foreshadow her new experiences with Reading First and I wanted to bring that belief out in the open for both of us to

see. I asked Ms. Damas, "Have you been involved in a lot of change initiatives while working

for the District?"

> Yes, quite a few. When I started to teach we didn't have the standards
> and that sort of thing. With the standards being developed and revised many
> times I've had to change how I teach. I am presently involved in implementing
> Science Kits for science instruction. Those are the things that stick out in my
> mind.

I was amazed at her response. I remembered sitting and talking with her many times in the

beginning of the implementation of Reading First about the issue of grants coming into the

District and leaving the District and how discouraging it was for both of us; her, because she saw

the work to change her instructional practices as futile and me because I wanted to motivate her

and help her understand that change occurs at the individual level and could be transferred.

I wanted to ask her more questions about this topic but decided to move on with the interview

protocol and see if I developed a better understanding of how this trepidation resolved itself for

her. So I asked the next question, "What are the strengths of Clearview?"

> I think we have a fantastic teaching staff. There is a lot of cooperation
> among my colleagues, the second grade team works extremely well together.
> We have the same mission, to help students achieve.

Ms. Damas went on to explain that discipline was a weakness at Clearview. She felt that

the children come to school with a lot on their minds from their home life. A lot of times the

children are already worked up over something that happened at home when they get to school.

We spend a lot of time talking to them, calming them down, and getting them interested in

school. I think this has a lot to do with how they act in the classroom.

I asked Ms. Damas if she thought there was a way the staff at Clearview could help to

make this weakness into strength.

> I don't know. We have full time counselors on our staff and they
> help a lot. We work really hard on making Clearview a safe place but

sometimes I think our students don't feel safe anywhere. There are just
too many days when children come into the classroom unable to work
because there is so much going on at home or in the neighborhood. Did
you know that we had seven shooting deaths in this neighborhood in four
weeks. Two of our students were shot walking in a crosswalk by a drive-by
shooter. It is just hard for our students to focus on school work when so
much is going on.

Ms. Damas was clearly concerned about the need for her students to feel safe in school.

She attributed many of the discipline issues the children experience in the classroom to their

home and neighborhood environment. I wanted to start talking to her about Reading First, I was

curious to find out if during her implementation of the Reading First Initiative she had seen

student growth, what she planned to sustain, and how she planned to do that. I next asked Ms.

Damas about her initial reactions to the Reading First Initiative.

At first, I didn't like the idea it was scripted. But after getting into
it I found that it was not really scripted, I really liked it. I like how it is set
up, the sequencing and structure of it. I like that you have different choices
in ways you present skills, and creating stations. I like the idea of stations
but I find that my children don't handle them well. There is too much
bickering and fighting going on, rather than actually getting the work done.
They don't always get all the work done they need to.

Here Ms. Damas paused and I thought I was going to ask her a more probing question to

make sure this was her full understanding of the program. But, just as I started to ask her a

question she continued with what she was saying.

I have found that all of the support that goes with Reading First has
been invaluable. I mean like the literacy coach, data manager, and resource
coordinator. Having all of you people here to go to if I do have a problem
and get suggestions has really helped me to do this program the best that I
can.
I also think that the three tiered model has been very helpful in
giving our school a focused way to meet all the kids needs. The model
helps me to visualize grouping my children. I have children at various
levels. My top children are able to go through the program the way it
is written. They do well at this but still argue at the independent stations
when they are heterogeneously grouped. My middle group of children
move a little slower through the program but I can do interventions when

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needed at the teaching station. My low group gets interventions at the
teaching station. I use Voyager interventions, and other interventions
we've been given. I also bring in my own lessons when I feel the kids
need a little more practice. I also have two students who have been
in my low group almost all year, and have made very little progress, that
are getting evaluated by the school psychologist to see if they need
more concentrated intervention.

Some of my low children I do one-on-one interventions with
because I tried to teach the same skill to all of the low group but, a lot
of the time not every one would get it even though I am teaching below
second grade level.

I wanted to give Ms. Damas a standing ovation for her answer. She had done an

excellent job in describing the three tiered model and how it is applied in her classroom. I had

caught a glimpse of how she monitors student progress but wanted her to explain this more in

depth so I asked her, "How do you know when your students are succeeding in learning how to

read?"

Well, I do a lot of observation to see what they do everyday in
the classroom along with other testing. I get a lot of information from
weekly progress monitoring. Through my observations, other assessments,
and weekly progress monitoring I have found my students are low in
comprehension. I have brought in a lot of things for them to do to help
them get better at that.

Another thing that helps is that Voyager is set up to repeat skills
over and over again. You can see when students are struggling, when
they begin to get it, and when they become proficient at the skill. The skills
in Voyager are a little more advanced than those taught in other programs.
At first I didn't think they would get it, but I feel today they are better able
to do them. I think that's because many of my current kids have been in
the program for two years. I also think that it is easier to see the struggling
students' achievement because they are doing interventions at their level
with a high rate of frequency [at least three times a week]. The kids in
intervention are able to see their weekly progress through the progress
monitoring scores and I think that helps them feel more confident and
achieve more. That's another thing that let's me know my students
are achieving; that confidence.

Moving the interview along, I next asked Ms. Damas, "What are some professional developments that you have had and what impact have they had on your implementation of the Reading First Initiative?"

> Well, we have our regular team meetings here at school and then we have our monthly meeting with grades kindergarten through third grade all together. We also had intensive training with other teachers from other schools on how to implement Voyager. We have the classroom observations with follow-up discussions that you all do.
>
> Most of it is beneficiary. What I like the most about professional development is when teachers share their ideas. Different teachers have different strengths and weaknesses and if you get together and pull from the other teachers strengths it would help you to see things more clearly and get more ideas. For instance Ms Hawk is a great writing teacher. When she shared her writing ideas with us and then we practiced them in our rooms and if we had questions we went to her room for Ideas or answers. The second grade teachers had all agreed that we needed to work on our writing and Ms Hawk would be a great resource for us. That is a great thing about our staff, we are not shy about sharing.
>
> When we worked on peer coaching it was great to go next door. I enjoyed observing in another room and I think by doing the observation I got more out of it than the person I observed did. I knew what she was teaching and I got to see someone else teach the same thing I have or would be teaching. You get some hints and ideas of the way things can be done it is really interesting to see what works differently in another room and other ways of doing the same thing.

I had heard Ms. Damas' explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of Clearview and her impressions of Reading First, including her description of how the Three Tiered Model played out in her classroom. Her statements about professional development had demonstrated to me that she thought collaboration was a key professional development piece. I next wanted to find out what she thought was most important to sustain from Reading First.

> Well, I would like to continue having whole group and small group and the mixture of different abilities at different stations where the children work together. I even have my children seated in my classroom so that at each of the tables there are two from the high group and one each from the middle and low group of readers. During Math, social studies, and science the children are able to help each other. I do not tell the children that there is a partner with a strength in reading and one with a lot of weaknesses.

To clarify if teaching using stations included having a teaching station where the teacher meet the needs of different levels of learners I asked, "When you say stations are you including a teaching station?"

> Yes, I think that it's real important; for one thing, it has the different level of children working homogeneously at their level. It's a lot easier for them to focus in on what is being taught when you are working with a small homogeneous group for certain skills.

Ms. Damas answered this question in alignment with previous answers about meeting children's needs and the Three Tiered Model. At this point the thought struck me that Ms Damas had lost her trepidation that Reading First was just another grant that would pass by when she began to see her students achieving at learning to read. A new thought formed that Ms. Damas had aligned her learning from Reading First with learning she had experienced in previous classrooms and programs. The connection between the two had created confidence in her ability to sustain her learning. So I asked Ms. Damas, "Who is the most important person in sustaining Reading First?"

> Well, the program is given to you and you try it. I think like most things, if you try it and you like it, you will continue using it. I think that every reading series that I have ever worked with has given me new understandings. I have pulled certain things from them that I still use today.

To clarify Ms. Damas' answer I restated what I thought I heard her say. So, I want to make sure I understand what you are saying. When teachers are involved in professional development or involved in an initiative like Reading First they learn and try new things. After trying these things they take with them the learning or strategies that are most beneficial and effective into their future practice. Ms. Damas smiled at me and simply said, "Right, that's it."

I then asked Ms. Damas who she thought was most responsible for sustaining Reading First.

Well, I believe that the building principal has backed this initiative all the way. In order for the teachers to continue to be effective in sustaining Reading First she would need to continue to back us. I also know that she is working to move DIBELS, progress monitoring, and the Three Tiered Model upward into the fourth through sixth grade. Because of her commitment to the program and willingness to extend some of the features of Reading First to the intermediate level I think we have a better chance of sustaining our program.

The District also has a responsibility to back the principal as our instructional leader in her efforts to sustain and extend our current practices from Reading First. We have other initiatives like SIP and SEAL that the district is forcing us to implement and they take a lot of our time. I don't think our principal can stop the District from requiring us to do these initiatives because she is doing what she is told to do. But if we didn't have the extra paperwork they cause us to do we would not be so pressured and would have more instructional time. I'm not sure SIP and SEAL are doing any good.

At the end of our interview Ms. Damas stated that she doesn't believe that any of the teachers in the primary grades wanted to give up on Reading First but she is concerned that without the support of the Literacy Specialist, Data Manager, and Resource Coordinator [Building Trio] it would be hard to continue with the program as it presently is. She felt that it would be a good strategy for the primary teachers to look at the program together and decide who would be responsible for different roles now fulfilled by the Trio and which roles they would need to drop. She also suggested that the primary teachers continue to collaborate throughout the next year in order to support each other and continue to tweak the program to meet the school's needs.

Interview Twelve: Ms. Hawk, Third Grade Teacher

Ms. Hawk and I met on a Thursday at 3:45 pm just after school was over for the day. We met in her classroom. The room faces the street and has large windows across it. The windows, like others in the building, were glass or fiberglass reinforced with chicken wire. Some of the window panes were clear and others were blue. The metal frames were somewhat rusted and

dirty. The room was painted a neutral beige color with a row of shelving on the wall opposite the windows. In one corner there was a small sink and cabinet. Ms. Hawk's desk was in a corner opposite the entrance to the classroom. The desk was cluttered with randomly placed stacks of papers and books. Tables and chairs were child sized and grouped in fours, some chairs were placed on top of desks to aid the custodian in sweeping the floor, while other chairs were scattered around the room. The room itself was cluttered and had a haphazard feel to it.

When I entered the room Ms. Hawk spotted me immediately and walked toward me with a big smile on her face. Her eyes twinkled as she apologized for the appearance of her classroom stating that it was in such a state of disarray because they had just finished a math game where the kids had to move around the room and do different things. We walked around the room and she showed me the different math stations the students had worked at. One was a multiplication game another a four square addition problem, and several others that dealt with division, geometry, and measurement. She informed me it was an assignment she had developed to help the students prepare for the state achievement test. We talked a few minutes about how the students were doing in math and she stated names of children and their specific strengths and weaknesses.

As we walked back to her desk, she paused and let me walk in front of her toward her desk. Ms.Hawk then stepped around me and headed for the door quietly. When she reached the door she stuck her head through it and saying a child's name told them to come to her immediately. She stepped into the hall and spoke to the child quietly; I could not hear what she was saying. When she came back in the room she was not smiling and seemed to be thinking some deep thought. When she was closer I asked her if everything was alright. She sighed and told me that she had been talking to a former student who was now a seventh grader. Last week

the girl had told Ms. Hawk she thought she was pregnant. Today the girl had confirmed that she

was when Ms. Hawk was talking to her in the hall.

I asked Ms. Hawk how she knew the girl was out there I had not seen her at the door.

She told me that she had seen a shadow pass the door and that often the girl would stop in after

school and talk with her at about this time. Ms. Hawk continued to tell me that when the girl was

her student she would watch the girl and began to notice that there were days when she was not

very awake or would be grumpy. Ms. Hawk started making sure the girl had breakfast and

would give her a snack after school because she found out the family would often not have food

in the house. As time went on she had "adopted" the girl and her younger brother and looked out

for them. Having worked with Ms. Hawk for three years I knew they were not the only students

she looked out for.

After we had finished our conversation about the girl we began our interview. It was odd

to sit Ms. Hawk sitting, she seldom did. Even as she sat she surveyed her room and I knew that

as she answered my questions she was thinking of the work she had yet to do today before she

left school. I asked Ms. Hawk to tell me a little about how long she had been teaching and what

schools she had taught at.

> I have taught for six years. I did one year of student teaching at
> a District Language School and five years at Clearview Elementary. When
> I first came to Clearview I taught fourth grade and then for the last four
> years I taught third grade. I think the students at Clearview are my passion
> many of them are very needy, I have a lot of mothering in me, and I'm not
> afraid to stand up for the kids. But its hard work and I don't know how much
> longer I can teach here. I think about transferring every year, to move to an
> easier school.

I asked Ms. Hawk she thought a strength of Clearview was and she stated what many of

the other teachers had stated, the teaching staff. She felt that the teachers were excellent at

collaboration and supporting each other, especially the primary team. Support occurred in

several ways such as when making decisions, cooperating to get the work done and getting materials together to do the work. Teachers are quick to help each other out without being judgmental.

I then asked Ms. Hawk, "What, if anything, is a weak area of the school?"

> The psychology department is not always timely about assessing students. The Collaborative Problem Solving Process is not fully implemented. I think we have a lot of work to do there. Another weakness, maybe not a weakness but an area where we need to make sure we use it to its fullest potential is our health center. It is not being used as fully as it could be.

Ms. Hawk wasn't sure how to address the school's weak areas but felt they were a job of Clearview's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). She stated that she had been on the ILT at one time but currently refused to be on it because it seemed that if you stated a concern you were the one charged with fixing it. She felt she had been overused by the administration over the past few years and was taking a break to regenerate herself. However, she did state that the school's weaknesses may or may not be addressed by the leadership depending on what their priorities were. Moving on in the interview I asked her what her first impressions were of Reading First.

> I was excited about it. I've always trusted Mr. Kirk. I've known him since I first started working at Clearview and I've always trusted his judgment. Mr. Kirk showed me the Reading First information, he brought it to my classroom and said, "Hey! Look at this." I was working with CORE at the time and I could see the similarities between CORE and Reading First. I felt that Reading First would be a great thing for a school like ours.
>
> Talk about resources, Reading First was loaded with them. Being a new teacher I was looking for something to help me. I didn't feel there was enough out there to help me with what I was dealing with. Constantly seeing students that needed intensive support. Seeing that year after year, the same thing being produced and not seeing improvement in reading skills or literacy, I was ready for Reading First.

I told Ms. Hawk it sounded like she was very excited about Reading First in the beginning and asked her how she felt about it now. Her answer surprised me.

> Tired of it to be honest, I think it's a great thing, but its been a lot of work. There has been a lot of professional development, which I have really enjoyed. The Question Answer Relationship professional development we recently did and the writing support have been really valuable, I really enjoyed them. I really have. Its just that everything else that is happening being on so many committees, Reading First has been going three years, and everything else has been building too. Its been overwhelming to a point. I am sad to see it go because of all the support that was there. I would much rather have it than not have it, but I'm tired, I need to just process all of it.

Hearing Ms. Hawk's response caused me to want to help her process what she had gained from being involved in Reading First. I thought some of the upcoming questions on the interview protocol might help her do this. I also wondered how much the feeling of being so overwhelmed might have to do with the news she had received outside her classroom door before we began our interview. I couched my next interview question in repeating something she had said earlier. I asked her: I heard you say earlier that you felt Reading First could address the needs of your students because Voyager and Reading First structures took a new approach to teaching reading. Did Reading First do that for your students? This was my way of asking her what, if any impact, Reading First had had on her students.

> I will say this, I definitely changed. The first year I noticed a difference in how I taught. I became much more systematic about how I teach. I never had that in my college courses or mentoring. I had never seen a systematic approach to teaching reading. Reading First also changed my math instruction, it changed everything I did because I saw results. That change in results made a big difference. The comprehension piece of it I'm still not sure about where that stands, I don't have any data to show me that. As far as the fluency goes in third grade I saw dramatic changes. The second year when I saw a new group coming in that was so much further along than the year before was when I knew that they had gotten the building blocks, the foundation for reading, that's when I knew what I was doing was very important. There is no doubt that students are reading at a higher level than in years past.

Ms. Hawk became quiet, as if she was thinking about something, and I asked her if anything else had changed. Ms. Hawk told me that her attitude and knowledge level about special education had grown by leaps and bounds. She informed me that she now knows a lot more about who needs intervention – I'm more confident in saying what is going on with a child's attempts at reading and what they need to help them along. I've learned that once you have been identified as an at risk reader you do not always stay an at risk reader. A student's reading needs are not always permanent, and I no longer believe once labeled special education you are always going to be special education. It seemed that the term special education had new meaning for her

> I've seen people who come in that didn't know how to read and after having interventions are reading. They weren't completely caught up but, you could see where their weakness was addressed and once that gap was shortened they just functioned like everyone else and even this was not necessarily a permanent situation.

DIBELS scores for this third grade classroom reflect a jump in growth in Reading Connected Text from 33% of students being on track at the beginning of the current school year and ending with 58% of students being on track at the end of the 2005-2006 school year. By the second Benchmark four students had moved from emerging readers to become on track readers. Their progress was maintained during the school year. In addition to the four that had moved from emerging to on track two students had moved from struggling to emerging and had also maintained their gains. While there was some mobility in Ms. Hawk's class it was minimal with two students withdrawing and two new students enrolling during the school year.

Ms. Hawk and I next discussed professional development and its role in Reading First. She felt that one of the most meaningful professional developments was the Question Answer Relationship (QAR) professional development that had just occurred. Ms. Hawk had always

tried to instill in her students the need to think about what a question is asking and that there are different kinds of questions. It was feeling that if they knew the four types of questions and how to answer them they would be more efficient readers. QAR gave her a formal process to teach students how to make sense of questions they were to answer about their reading. Her goal was to make instruction for comprehension more systematic by using the QAR process more systematically.

Another form of professional development that Ms. Hawk thought was beneficial was coaching. She talked about both the coaching performed by the members of the Building Trio and Peer Coaching.

> I have worked with a literacy coach for the past three years. The first year the literacy coach was very authoritative. Then during the second year we got a new literacy coach, Mr. Kirk. Mr. Kirk works as a facilitator. coaching, in my opinion, should be there to support and collaborate and and give you, make you think about what you are doing. As opposed to nit-picking. I felt in the beginning there was a lot of nit-picking, where now I see it more as a support.
> I also liked the idea of peer coaching. I appreciated feed back from my peers. Their opinion on what I was doing and taking something back from what they were doing was valuable to me. Somehow feedback from my peers seemed more valuable to me because they were in the classroom doing the same thing I was doing and that made it more real to me. I am afraid we won't be able to continue with peer coaching past this year because of scheduling issues.

Over the three years that Ms. Hawk had been involved with the Reading First Initiative she had participated in both Fidelity Index Observations and ELLCO Observations. Her Fidelity scores began in the high seventies overall and in core practices during the first year of implementation. During the second year she moved into receiving 88% overall the first observation and 85% on core practices to receiving 95% overall with 90% in core practices. During the current school year her beginning fidelity scores were 88% overall and 88% for core practices. By the end of the year she received a 100% rating overall.

We next moved to discussing what Ms. Hawk felt was most valuable to sustain about Reading First. In keeping with her earlier comments she stated that she felt the materials were critical to the program success. She also stated that keeping the MClass data system would really help teachers maintain DIBELS benchmark assessments and weekly progress monitoring. She really appreciated the way MClass kept the data organized, timely and accurate. The Palm Pilots maintained a computerized file that could be accessed at any time and didn't take up space on her desk.

Ms. Hawk also felt the continuation of students having consumable anthologies of reading materials was very valuable and should be continued because a consumable anthology allowed the students to write in their books to code main ideas and other important aspects for instructional purposes. Professionally she felt that she would continue using systematic instruction. She stated,

> I see myself using Voyager as well as other strategies we have learned forever. Its best practices to me. I would love to have programs developed for writing and mathematics the same way, especially interventions for the other content areas. That is the strongest part of Voyager, interventions.

It was apparent to me that Ms. Hawk appreciated the structure and sequence of the instruction provided by the Voyager Universal Literacy System, especially the intervention piece which contained not only Voyager interventions but other interventions from Reading First. It appeared that the things Ms. Hawk would sustain would be those that she had already moved into other areas of her instruction. Now, that she had integrated interventions and small group instruction into other areas of instruction she wanted formally developed materials to assist her in her work.

The next question Ms. Hawk responded to had to do with what school supports need to be sustained to support teachers.

> Ideally I think we need to have two full time instructors in the classroom. You almost need on overall facilitator and another doing interventions. I'm talking two highly qualified instructors. I could just image one of the instructors constantly pulling information from data and then forming students into groups for instruction and/or intervention, while the other is managing, maintaining, and implementing higher level thinking activities that are teacher led. I can only imagine the gains in student achievement that would occur.
>
> Manpower is critical. I would love to see that higher level thinking higher level knowledge in all of my students. But I cannot do it at the same time I am doing interventions. They need somebody to lead that. I have tried to have peers lead and it is not successful, it needed to be teacher led.

Ms. Hawk and I discussed that the reason that peer led group instruction might not go well is because students lack the social skills to work in independent work groups. She agreed that social skills was a big part of the break-down but that while they are reading at higher levels their academic ability still hinders them from functioning at a level of independence when it comes to synthesizing and reproducing knowledge in new ways.

My next question for Ms. Hawk was, "Are there other District initiatives occurring along with Reading First? If so do they affect Reading First in any way?"

> Currently I know of the following initiatives that I have been involved in this year: SIP, SEAL, IMS, The EETT Grant, and Riverdeep. They definitely have some affect on Reading First. The main effect is that they detract time from Reading First. For example, SIP if done correctly, would be a phenomenal support for Reading First. It really does make you look at the standards for students. SIP is critically important for expectations to be aligned with what we are trying to teach when we teach it.
>
> However, unless we have the supports in place to conduct SIP as it is intended I don't see how we will be able to do it. Just going to a training on SIP will not make it happen at our school. If you don't have a ninety minute uninterrupted block of time to do SIP it is difficult to do it effectively. Currently we do not have that on our schedule. When we do put it in our schedule it will affect Reading First because it will probably become part of our professional development time.

With SEAL I don't know. In Reading First you are constantly
looking at your data to drive instruction. In SEAL you are doing the
same thing. Its just designing your lessons around that. We already
have a lesson and curriculum design. Its almost as if they want you to move
the data around to fit SEAL as opposed to using the data to change what
you are doing. The way Reading First does it is, ok here's your data now
design how you are going to teach to meet the needs of kids.

Ms. Hawk went on to tell about the issue of teacher collaboration to manage District

initiatives, including Reading First. She stated that she does not believe that the staff works

together to manage these things. It was her observation that the teachers at Clearview who do

what they are supposed to. Not always, 24/7, but for the most part they try hard to do their job.

It's difficult, I mean it's a hard job because there is a lot on your
plate at all times. It seems that there are people in our building that are
being the best educator they can be. Its always the high functioning
teachers that are called upon to do what needs to be done. The teachers
who hang back and just do what they need to do to survive are never
called on the plate and made to pick up the slack, to get with the
program. We as a school never address this issue. It is an ongoing struggle.
The principal has to be overwhelmed. How do you put all this together to
form one program for our school?
I believe the teachers at Clearview are dedicated to sustaining the
gains we have made as teachers and students through Reading First. But
we will only be able to do it if there is high program fidelity and a lot of
collaboration. There is currently some breakdown in program fidelity
now. I fear that unless someone is in these classrooms everyday fidelity
will dissipate over a short period of time.

I next asked Ms. Hawk who she thought was the most valuable to sustaining Reading First.

The most powerful person to sustain Reading First at Clearview is the
principal. The principal is the person who has to hold the group together
in the absence of all the support we have had over the past three years. The
principal needs to say this is what we are going to do, we are still going to
do Reading First and hold people accountable to do it. Moving the concepts
of Reading First up to the intermediate grades is a good move but nothing
will continue without the principal driving it.

Analysis of the Clearview Story

To manifest anything one must have integrity of purpose, words and actions must be true to desired change. The story presented of the District's efforts to create a pathway for change by accommodating the Reading First Grant and the stories of the involvement of personnel, at both the district level and the school level, tell of their efforts to maintain an integrity of purpose for implementing and sustaining changes in their everyday practice of teaching literacy at the primary level. The analysis presented here will further define how these individuals' thoughts and actions moved them into an understanding of what they had manifested, and how they might go about sustaining that manifestation.

A Seed Becomes a Young Tree: Aligning Intents

Several major events occurred almost simultaneously creating the seed for change that became the District's Reading First Initiative. These were; No Child Left Behind, National Reading Panel Report, Dr. Roland Good's work with Dynamic Indicators for Early Literacy Skills, and the creation of Voyager Universal Literacy curriculum. The findings stated in the National Reading Panel Report were incorporated into the No Child Left Behind legislation which became the platform for creating Reading First Grant opportunities. Once the Reading First Grant became available to school districts Midwest School District took up the challenge to fund a large scale change initiative to educate their primary teachers to become master literacy educators.

Thus, the district began to manifest change, clearing a path for the change process by first recruiting knowledgeable staff to write the grant and secondly, by building the infrastructure to facilitate the intent of the grant. This infrastructure included hiring of key personnel, providing places and times for professional development, fulfilling the role of fiscal agent, technical

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assistance with data needs, and providing support in the form of communicating to principals and other leadership personnel the importance for maintaining integrity of the grant.

When the District chose to apply for the Reading First Grant it was because the Curriculum Director for the District, Dr. Edwards, knew that, "At the time Reading First came across my desk the District's third grade reading scores were below fifty percent proficient on the State mandated tests. The District had many core reading programs in place in their elementary schools. In addition professional development was weak in follow through with one-shot professional developments." He also stated that while he had implemented two more extensive professional developments, Core [state] Reading Evaluation (CORE) and the State Improvement Grant for teachers who were willing to participate in school based, extensive professional development in reading, the impact was minimal. He felt that the Reading First Grant offered Midwest School District a chance to become involved in a comprehensive initiative that would reach more teachers and provide extensive professional development to grow teachers as literacy educators. "The grant had the potential to fill the large gaps I had witnessed in teachers' understanding of early literacy instruction" (Dr. Edwards). The intent of the U.S. Department of Education and Midwest School District were aligned in such a way that provided a fertile place for teacher education in early literacy education to begin

Dr. Edwards pulled together a team made up of some of the top literacy educators in the district to write the grant. The Language Arts Program Manager, Dr. Casey, Dr. Ovation, Ms. Betsy, and Ms. Silvers all had a history of working in literacy, Dr. Casey at the middle and high school level, Dr. Ovation, Ms. Betsy, and Ms. Silvers at the elementary level. Naturally, while writing the grant they stayed within the structures laid out by the grant, yet within those structures their expertise helped to carry through the joint intent of the U.S. Department of

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Education and the district by designing an initiative that structured teacher learning in early literacy to ensure that "every child can read at grade level or above by the end of third grade" (U. S. Department of Education, Reading First Information, 2002, p. 2).

Dr. Ovation clearly used the expertise she had gained while working on the State Improvement Grant and her background in early literacy to shape the Reading First Grant. She used the Three Tiered Model of Interventions as a tool to scaffold teacher learning so the process could root and grow into their own individual understandings. In the minds of the grant writers, and particularly Dr. Ovation, this was an opportunity to create stability of the Three Tiered Model, ". . . because we saw it in Clayton really working nicely, we saw the Reading First Grant as a way to say the model in-and-of-itself helps create sustainability, because it gives people a framework. This framework, this model could exist, if people truly understood it, without anything besides teachers and schools working as a team."

The requirements of Reading First and the Three Tiered Model blended well together to fertilize the opportunity for success of the grant. It was a heavily researched model of intervention that was gaining popularity across the state; it too required a researched based core curriculum and assessments. In addition, the Three Tiered Model provided a framework for discussion of ways to meet students' needs who did not have success with the core reading program. Because of its three layers of intervention, the core reading program at level one, level two interventions, and level three Collaborative Problem Solving Process the Three Tiered Model better ensured that teachers would be able to sprout readers at all grade levels to better ensure that all third graders would be able to read at or above grade level.

Another focus for Dr. Ovation was to develop teachers as leaders in literacy education. Those teachers involved in Reading First, in her opinion, had the opportunity to become

immersed in professional development to construct broad, solid, and rich ground to further their understanding of literacy development at the primary level. In addition, these educators would also be able to support other teachers in their development as literacy educators. Dr. Ovation stated, "A [teacher leader] is someone who is daily living and doing what they believe. They are open to people coming in and observing them, and they have a passion for what they do. The seek opportunities to spread the work and they volunteer to do so. Teacher leaders are always asking, 'How can I help you do this?'"

Teacher leadership in literacy education was also a priority of Dr. Casey. "I saw that Reading First is not program focused, instead it focused on giving teachers the capacity to be strong literacy educators." He felt that in the past when he had planned professional development for teachers those who required it the least were the ones who attended, "I thought the Reading First requirement that all teachers had to attend and participate actively in professional development would work wonders in fostering teachers' understanding of literacy development and how to implement their new understandings in the classroom."

Statements from Clearview teachers mirror the need for professional development that was the intent of Reading First and the insight of District leadership and grant writers. When the teachers were asked what were their first impressions of Reading First at the time it was presented to them the majority of teachers stated it fulfilled needs they had been frustrated with for some time. It was as if prior professional development in reading had deposited kernels of knowledge that never where able to connect with the environment that would allow their knowing to develop fully.

The teaching experience of Clearview's primary teachers ranged between six years and twenty-two years. This experienced staff had been involved in other change initiatives over the

years that had given them understandings about learning to read. Their responses explaining

their first impressions reflect the impact of prior change programs on their practice at the time

Reading First was presented to them. Ms. Moon stated, "We were all hodgepodging it at the

time, aware of the skilled reading level, but never knowing what that reading level was for our

students." This observation was reflected in different ways by Ms. Baachaas, and Ms. Calendar

who both stated that the Reading First program sounded like things they were already doing in

their classrooms. Ms. George, the youngest of the teachers stated, "I had a mentor my first year

at Clearview. She was helping me teach reading groups, but I felt there was no structure."

Two of the seven teachers reported that their first impressions were weedy with concerns about

their perception that the core reading program was a scripted program and they did not like

scripted programs. All of the teachers stated the one thing that struck them was that the Reading

First Initiative offered a structure for teaching reading. The structure they referred to was the

structure of the core reading program, Universal Design for Literacy – Voyager.

The one hundred and eighty minutes of monthly professional development was discussed

during the presentation to Clearview about Reading First. No teacher stated anxiety about this

when asked what their first impressions of Reading First were. One of the teachers, Ms. Sanders,

stated that as a teacher moving from sixth grade to second grade in the third year of

implementation of Reading First she felt overwhelmed but the professional development

opportunities and the support of her teaching team had helped her to acclimate herself quickly

and successfully to Voyager and the other components of Reading First.

When the teaching staff voted the Reading First Initiative into existence at Clearview

they completed the furrowing of the Reading First intent from the U. S. Department of Education

to the classroom level, providing a time and place for the cultivation of teacher expertise in early

literacy. The connection was possible because of the infrastructure the District had put into place

which would allow an uninterrupted flow of resources to aid in implementation of the Three

Tiered Model as described in the District Reading First Grant. In addition they provided Dr.

Ovation and her team to become the foresters for the eleven schools implementing Reading First.

A Young Tree Becomes a Forest

In the succession of every mature forest there is a parent tree. The parent tree is the first

tree of a species that survives to maturity and begins to seed other trees. Dr. Ovation became the

parent tree for the forest of teachers that would inhabit Reading First schools.   The small grove

of teachers at Clearview was truly a cluster of protégés of her intent to implement the Three

Tiered Model of Intervention as a framework for successful literacy education. This was

accomplished by making her vision of creating a core of literacy leaders of Building Trios and

sowing them to seed the intent of Reading First in Clearview and her sister schools.

Once the alignment of intent was established with Clearview Elementary the Program

Coordinator and the Building Trio which was made up of the literacy specialist, resource

coordinator, and data manager, began to establish a constancy of purpose. The constancy of

purpose was shaped by professional development and particularly by Dr. Ovation's commitment

to implementing the Three Tiered Model in all Reading First schools.   Professional development

for the Reading First staff and teachers came from many different sources. First, professional

development was designed for Reading First schools at the State Department of Education. State

initiated professional development was designed to inform participants of the conclusions of the

National Reading Panel, guidelines for federal and state Reading First, and use of data to create

change at the district, school, and classroom levels. The state's structure for delivering

professional development was to conduct required trainings in the capital city of the state, which was the location of the State Department of Education.

These trainings were to be attended by program directors, literacy specialists, data managers, resource coordinators, and principals depending on the nature of the professional development. Principals were required to attend data summits conducted twice a year, building walk through training, and two principal meetings were they where given updates about the state of implementation or changes in the requirements of the grant. Data managers and resource coordinators attended four state mandated trainings during the first two years of implementation and two during the third year. Literacy specialists and the program coordinator attended monthly professional developments during the first two years of implementation and bi-monthly sessions during the last year. In addition, during the last year of implementation area consultants would visit individual schools to observe professional development sessions literacy specialists conducted.

Professional development for teachers was conducted by different members of the Building Trio at their school depending on the nature of the professional development. At times the Dr. Ovation would conduct professional development for individual schools if the need presented itself. Often Dr. Ovation would co-present if a literacy specialist did not feel comfortable with the material. Dr. Ovation would also conduct professional development if a staff was particularly confused or reticent to the professional development. When the first literacy specialist at Clearview was unable to facilitate professional development, due to illness, Dr. Ovation stepped in to assist with instruction.

The literacy specialists met with a local university faculty member who acted as the liaison for the State in development and delivery of professional development content to local

literacy specialists. University personnel, Dr. Ovation, and District literacy specialists made up

the team of professional development developers for the District. Clearview's literacy specialist

met with the team of professional development facilitators to collaboratively learn the content,

choose the most relevant research, tweak it to fit school time frames, and discuss previous school

sessions to help shape professional development for all District Reading First schools.

Initially professional development guidelines and requirements set out by the State were

closely followed. During this time the five components of reading as presented by the National

Reading Panel were intensely studied. The five components: phonics, phonemic awareness,

fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension became the focus of all literacy instruction at

Clearview. This was drawn into sharper focus by the design of the core program, Voyager,

which framed all of its instruction on the five components. Previous training of teachers on the

structure of Voyager and DIBELS assessments were pulled into the discussions during these

sessions. Teachers began to see the connections between research, practice, and assessments.

> At first it was learning how to do all this different stuff, doing skill
> groups and learning how to do the different stations from the ideas in the
> manual. During the first two years it was learning the nuts and bolts of
> teaching reading and doing interventions, things like DIBELS,
> interventions, the core components of teaching reading, and using data to
> form interventions groups (Ms. Moon, first grade teacher).

Another teacher, Ms. Calendar, had stated that the professional development offered over

the first two years of Reading First had centered on Voyager, the five core ideas of teaching

reading, interventions, and writing. She stated, "The first two years of professional development

provided the framework for my current practice."

During the first year of implementation acclimation to the core reading program was

placed as first priority. In addition to becoming accustomed to the core reading program an

emphasis was placed on Dr. Ovation's commitment to the Three Tiered Model of Intervention.

". . . helping teachers and school leaders understand that this is something bigger, and what we are doing is implementing a tiered model, Voyager is a key piece within that model, but it's a program and programs change. It was really important to help people understand what the model means and getting people to believe in the tenants behind the model. That we can get our kids who have difficulty to learn, but not without the support needed, but we have got to look beyond the typical things that we are doing. It's about creating supportive environments that kids can flourish in. You know, moving from categorizing and labeling and towards supporting and teaching.

I think the first year was much more about making sure that the core Reading First people could not only say what they were doing, but really understood and believed in this model. During the first year there was a lot of work around helping our group [literacy specialist, resource coordinators, and data managers] understand what we're doing, why we're doing it, and why it's important. This work was to build in people a sense of momentum that this is larger than just this a three year grant that this is massive change that we're undertaking. My goal was to be systematic about it despite some roadblocks from the State Department of Education or difficulties from the Midwest School District.

Simultaneous to the professional development sessions the schools had begun to implement the core reading program and conduct DIBELS assessment. Literacy specialist's coaching at this time centered on the implementation of the core program and fidelity of that implementation. As teachers worked to put in place the structures they encountered difficulties with various portions of it. The observations made by the literacy specialists and conversations with teachers began to bring to light pertinent areas of need for professional development. During the first year these areas were addressed informally or during grade level team meetings at Clearview. As a response to teacher feedback Clearview's literacy specialist, along with the other literacy specialists, brought teacher concerns and needs to weekly District professional development meetings.

In addition to assisting teachers in achieving and maintaining a high rate of fidelity in the implementation of the core reading program and use of data to drive classroom instruction and interventions the Building Trio received training on Collaborative Problem Solving during the

last quarter of the first year. The combination of teacher need and the push to be ready to train

teachers on Collaborative Problem Solving to fully implement the Three Tiered Model resulted

in professional development for the second year to be more aligned with district and school

needs.

> The second year was about taking this cadre of people who know the model
> and use the model, and having them help teachers know and use the model.
> During the second year we had more leeway with designing our professional
> development and were able to tailor it to meet our needs. We used this time to
> educate our teaching staff and school leaders on the design of the Three Tiered
> Model and why it is important to change how we are meeting students' needs.
> We put the triangle graphic before the staff as often as possible, even though
> people were sick of it, and having people explain it even though they felt they
> could say it in their sleep. But we really were probing more about it, taking it to
> the problem-solving process at the Tier III level and seeing it as an opportunity
> to also reinforce Tier I and II to make it a complete cycle (Dr. Ovation).

The professional development schedule for year two of implementation included Data

Analysis (5 hours); Writing (1.5 hours); Writing Assessment, Intervention, and Modification (1.5

hours); Collaborative Problem Solving (7.5 hours); Differentiated Instruction (2 hours); Centers

and Classroom Management (1.5 hours); Universal Design for Learning (1.5 hours); and

Regional Grade Level Meetings. At Clearview teachers experienced the professional

development for the Collaborative Problem Solving Process and the Three Tiered Model

differently than other Reading First schools. In October, their Literacy Specialist became ill and

in November died of a heart attack. Her death caused the staff to experience grieving and

professional development for this critical structure at the same time. In addition, professional

development for the Three Tiered Model and Collaborative Problem Solving was conducted by

several people, Clearview's school psychologist, the data manager, a literacy specialist from

another school, and the program coordinator.

Professional development notes and evaluations from staff reveal that all felt the professional development on Collaborative Problem Solving and the Three Tiered Model were beneficial to instruction and that all teachers understood the process. Feedback from the teachers revealed that they were still concerned with issues of how they would know when a student should be referred for further evaluation. Team meeting and Building Trio notes taken from early November through early March reveal that teachers and the school psychologist were still struggling with how to document interventions and prior efforts to assist children with gaining reading skills before they were referred with testing. This equated to graphing weekly progress monitoring scores for at risk students and deciding if a student was flat lining over three weeks of assessment. If they were then it was time to move the student into more specific one-on-one interventions or refer the student for additional assessment by the school psychologist.

A major issue discussed during team meetings was the need to demonstrate fidelity of the core program through bi-monthly fidelity checks to ensure children were receiving adequate classroom instruction. There was also discussion about whether interventions performed by instructional assistants and volunteers held a high degree of integrity. Data Based Decision Making Worksheet for November 17, 2004 team meeting revealed a need to retrain and monitor two instructor assistants for fidelity of interventions because several of the students they worked with had flat lined with three data points at or below previous data points. In January, the Collaborative Problem Solving Team minutes revealed that two of the students targeted for further assistance/evaluation during the November data meeting were discussed and plans drawn up for them at that meeting. However, Clearview Building Trio March meeting minutes showed that the resource coordinator and the data manager both felt that while teachers understood the

need to use data to group students for instruction and the need to maintain the fidelity of the core

program they were not well versed in the tenets of the Three Tiered Model.

Mr. Kirk, the current literacy specialist, but was a first grade teacher at Clearview during

the 2003 -2004 school year stated,

> When he first began working with Reading First it was hard because there
> wasn't a distinction between Reading First and the adoption of the new
> reading program. There was a lot of confusion in my mind as to what
> Reading First was and what the new reading program, Voyager was. During
> the first year there was a lot of helping people understand that difference. We
> wanted people to understand that we were part of the Reading First Initiative
> and we adopted Voyager as the program to initiate the Reading First Grant.
> There were some separations there that people didn't quite understand. I
> thought the communication of that, and getting teachers to understand how
> that all worked was a little difficult at the start. Still, even to this day, there
> may be people who are a little confused about that.
> Anytime we had meeting or trainings it all seemed to be about Voyager.
> Right away Voyager and Reading First became one and the same. Then as
> time went on, and there were more trainings and more meetings were held
> covering other parts of Reading First, more global topics like differentiated
> instruction and the Three Tiered Model of Intervention it was hard to separate
> that out from Voyager. Often teachers failed to see that Reading First was an
> initiative that had many components of which Voyager was one.

The Three Tiered Model Becomes A Structural Support for Growing Toward the Sun

When foresters plant new trees they often build a barrier of stakes and strong string or rope

to keep animals, people, and debris from destroying or damaging the young sapling. In this way

they are more assured that the tree will grow to its natural height in good health, ready to adapt to

the environment it is in and take from that environment what it needs to continue to grow. In

much the same way the Reading First Program Coordinator and Clearview's Building Trio

educated the teachers in the research base behind the Three Tiered Model and the process needed

to authentically assess student achievement and design instruction based on student and teacher

generated data.

Teacher comments demonstrate that they are well aware of levels I and II of the Three

Tiered Model. During interviews teacher stated that fidelity to the core instructional program is

essential for continuation of Reading First. They also acknowledged that interventions played a

large part in the success of their students. Three of the seven teachers interviewed commented

on the change in attitude they had about struggling students and special education students.

Their comments supply insight into their new learning and understanding of teaching reading in

their classrooms,

> My attitude and knowledge level about special education had grown by
> leaps and bounds. I now know a lot more about who needs intervention – I'm
> more confident in saying what is going on with a child's attempts at reading
> and what they need to help them along. I've learned that once you have been
> identified as an at risk reader you do not always stay an at risk read. A
> student's reading needs are not always permanent, and I no longer believe
> once labeled special education you are always going to be a special education
> students. I've seen people who come in that didn't know how to read and
> after having interventions are reading. They weren't completely caught up
> but, you could see where their weakness was addressed and once that gap was
> shortened they just functioned like everyone else and even this was not
> necessarily a permanent situation (Ms. Hawk, third grade teacher).

All teachers reported that their classroom instruction had changed, often dramatically due to their

participation in Reading First.

> One of the things I had struggled with before Voyager was what to do at
> the teacher's station. What are the steps, how should I structure that piece,
> Some children needed this, some needed that. How was I to meet all of their
> needs? I never felt like my teaching station was really as good as it could
> have been. It was really good to have Voyager come in and say, this is what
> you're going to do at the teacher's station, these are the skills that you need to
> cover, this how you are going to cover it, here are stories that match the skills,
> and so having that piece was wonderful (Ms. Calendar, first grade teacher).

> Ms Moon stated, "The greatest impact Reading First has had on my
> students and myself would probably be the logic and order of the skills. I
> never knew how to put them in order, but Voyager does an excellent job at
> this. I also think the interventions have helped students be more successful.
> The decoding skills and the testing are exciting to my students. They know

they have to read a certain amount of words in a minute and they get excited about beating their last score (Ms. Moon, first grade teacher).

One teacher, Ms. Calendar, seemed confused about whether her new understandings were because of Voyager or Reading First.

> "For interventions I would say that we have this great program that helps us take children's data and group them so they get the maximum support they need to achieve in reading. It also gives us an idea of which children need extra support; through the Voyager program those components are in place to do that. I think in general it hits the areas of instruction that need to be addressed for reading. I am not sure if Reading First is responsible for that or if it is Voyager that is responsible for that, having the phonemic awareness, the phonics piece, reading comprehension, and the fluency. You know just having those structures in place helps those strugglers and even help children that may seemingly be on track. It helps them with their success; it helps us to be constantly aware of their progress in learning to read.

Ms. Calendar's comment does reflect some confusion over what is the source of impact on instruction that she was currently doing it does hint at one of the reasons teachers at Clearview do not describe their instructional program using the Three Tiered Model as their framework of understanding. Teachers are intently focused on what is occurring in their classroom. If you perceive this intent focus in the light of first year professional development as stated by both the Dr. Ovation and Mr. Kirk to be on the core reading program there is a great possibility that even while teachers are gaining new insights on special education as provided by the Three Tiered Model they are also still processing how to implement the core program with a high degree of fidelity and effectiveness.

> I wasn't comfortable teaching reading before but now that I am working with Voyager it helps me know how to teach reading. I equate Reading First with Voyager and I am not sure which this comes from but one of the things I have learned is how to create effective reading groups and what materials to use when.
> We start our day off with a whole-group activity, usually reading and either answering questions, or doing some sort of comprehension activity. Then we break into smaller groups, I pull the different ability groups together

at the teaching station and spend twenty to twenty-five minutes on skill development with them (Ms. George, second grade teachers).

When I got into working with the voyager program I began to feel more comfortable teaching reading because it gives you a plan where it tells you to do A, B, or C. With Voyager and DIBELS assessments I can see my students' growth and it gives me confidence that I am doing what I need to be doing. It gives me data to know where I need to help them at. The Voyager program gives my reading instruction structure. If we weren't all doing the same thing I could only imagine we would all be at different places at different times. It's good that my reading team works together and we know where we are and where we should be. We also know when we have to make adjustments for state diagnostic tests, or other things that come along.
The Reading First Initiative has provided a way for us to know where students are in reading achievement so we can help them increase their reading ability through interventions at the teaching station, small group interventions, or after school interventions. I have seen students come up in reading ability because of Voyager and Reading First structures (Ms Sanders, second grade teacher).

One teacher, Ms. Damas presented a clear picture of how she used the Three Tiered Model for planning for instruction. In her delivery of how use of this model has impacted her Instruction she demonstrates use of data to group students and move them through the model.

I think that the Three Tiered Model has been very helpful in giving our school a focused way to met all the kids needs. The model helps me to visualize grouping my children. I have children a various levels. My children are able to go through the program the way it is written. They do well at this but still argue at the independent stations when they are heterogeneously grouped. My middle group of children moves a little slower through the program but I can do interventions when needed at the teaching station. My low group gets interventions at the teaching station. I use Voyager interventions and other interventions we've been given. I also bring in my own lessons when I feel the kids need a little more practice. I also have two students who have been in my low group almost all year, and have made very little progress, that are getting evaluated by the school psychologist to see if they need more concentrated intervention.
Some of my low children I do one-on-one interventions with because I tried to teach the same skill to all of the low group but, a lot of the time not every one would get it, even though I am teaching below second grade level (Ms. Damas, second grade teacher).

Ms. Damas' description of how she organizes instruction in her classroom mirrors the

Three Tiered Model as described by Clearview's resource coordinator, Ms. Felix.

> The pieces of Reading First are adopting a reading program that is explicit
> and systematic. Making sure that interventions are completed with any
> children that have not made grade level. In our grant we have adopted the
> Three Tiered Model of Intervention. The Three Tiered Model is probably one
> of the biggest components of our Reading First Grant. This model provides
> that at Tier I eighty percent of the kids will learn to read, and be on grade level
> when given a good, explicit, systematic reading program. Then the other
> twenty per cent of the kids will need some kind of intervention. Some
> percentage of kids will make it with the intervention given at the teaching
> station or small group tutoring. These are Tier II kids. Then there are going to
> be children that will need further, more explicit intervention because they
> have not made it. They will go to Tier III, and have individual plans to try to
> determine what they'll need to get to grade level (Ms Felix, resource
> coordinator).

In interviews teachers repeatedly spoke of structure, systematic instruction, having needed

materials, knowing what to do in the teaching station and interventions as key components of

Reading Fist. In all descriptions of Reading First teachers discuss interventions. Teacher

statements indicate that the seven Clearview teachers who were interviewed were at various

stages of understanding the Three Tiered Model and while the majority was focused at the

classroom level they were very aware of the need to be mindful of how to identify students who

needed further assistance in learning to read than the core program. Some teachers were more

sophisticated in their understandings than others, such as Ms. Damas.

The knowledge level of the resource coordinator, Ms. Felix, implies that the line of

communication built by professional development on the Three Tiered Model and Collaborative

Problem Solving filtered down from the program director, to Building Trio members, and then to

teachers was in place. The filtration of the two structures is further supported by Team meeting

and Collaborative Problem Solving Team meeting minutes describing the identification of on

track, emerging, and struggling students and then referring them for further evaluation. At the

time of interviews a systematic structure for moving students in the Three Tiered Model was alive and well. The forest had begun to grow.

Staff Development as Nourishment

During the third year of implementation the professional development team made up of the three remaining schools' litearacy specialists, the program director and the regional university personnel created all professional development for the District's schools. The State Department of Education took the stance that this was the last year of implementation of the grant and the schools would need professional development time to move teachers to independent practice. In addition state required professional development dropped off for Reading First personnel and principals in year three schools. State required professional development took the form of two Data Summits, one at the end of each semester, and a Leadership Summit to Help Sustain Reading First.

In addition to the stance the State Department of Education took on professional development Dr. Ovation left the District's Reading First program. A new program coordinator was hired from the Data Managers who had been surplussed at the end of the 2004-2005 year because of budget cuts. The new program coordinator was hired in mid-November after the school year had begun. During the previous summer Dr. Ovation had worked with the interim program coordinator, Clayton's literacy specialist to facilitate the summer intervention program and the cultivation of professional development to begin the new school year.

The Professional Development Schedule for the District's schools reflected the needs of teachers in the three schools as presented in the following year's end of the year teacher survey and the results of both the Terra Nova and state mandated testing. During the second year of implementation teachers stated concerns that the core reading program was extremely weak in

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building comprehension. In addition, DIBELS assessments did not assess comprehension but the

state mandated testing was replete with comprehension questions. It was also observed by the

teachers that the core program had students discuss some of the more sophisticated strategies for

comprehension but students did very little written responses. A second concern for teachers was

that students were still having difficulty working in cooperative groups at teaching stations.

The Professional Development Schedule reflected these concerns. The schedule was made up of

many comprehension sessions: Question Answer Relationships, CLOSE, Reciprocal Teaching,

Vocabulary Development, Writing, Data Analysis, Cooperative Learning, and Peer Coaching.

Peer coaching was the one professional development that was put in place by the District

professional development team.

The Three Tiered Model of Intervention or Collaborative Problem Solving did not appear

on the Professional Development Schedule for two reasons. First, it was felt by Clearview's

building trio, and the acting program coordinator that these areas had been covered thoroughly

during the previous two years and were moved to be included in grade level team meetings at the

remaining schools. School psychologists were to become leaders in this integration into team

meetings due to the fact that the district had adopted the Three Tiered Model of Intervention as a

structure to base delivery of special education services throughout the district. Dr. Ovation and

two of the remaining three literacy specialists were the team that facilitated professional

development for the district's psychologists which had taken place during the summer.

Teacher comments on professional development reflect that teacher driven professional

development was very meaningful to them.

> This year has been wonderful because we have been able to have a voice in
> what professional development we do. We have worked on writing,
> comprehension, and have begun to work on developing a peer coaching
> model for our school. I think that getting together and talking about it,

going over the writing [has helped me]. I would like one more year of it
because I'm still no where near where I want to be with the writing piece.
I'm still not getting it in because we have to do so many other things.
　　I think getting together, talking about things, and sharing leads
to learning more things. The hand-outs have been useful too because
you can go back and read them on your own. Mr. Kirk has been very
supportive in helping me to implement new ideas in my classroom.
(Ms. Sanders, second grade teacher).

　　This year we have started to discuss new teaching strategies at
professional development and then trying it in our classrooms and
bringing back student artifacts to discuss in our next professional
development. This has been helpful but we need time to continue to
do professional development this way (Ms. Moon, first grade teacher).

Interview responses revealed that when recalling professional development teachers

tended to talk about the professional development that occurred during the current year. Among

the professional development topics they found useful during year three were cooperative

learning, Question Answer Relationship, the relationship between writing and reading, and

comprehension.

Another area of professional development that was implemented during year three was

peer coaching. Reading First discussed using peer coaching as a vehicle for helping teachers

maintain program fidelity. A series of three professional development modules were put

together and implemented over the third and fourth month of the school year. During the third

session teachers partnered up by grade level and set times and observation protocols to be

completed by the next grade level team meeting. Teacher comments on professional

development reveal that teachers felt the process valuable but were concerned about the ability to

sustain it.

　　The professional development on peer coaching was great. .
I like the fact that I was able to go and observe another teacher. I got to
observe Ms Damas. I appreciated the way that she has her class. It is
different than what I do, especially when it comes to discipline, I think I
got some good ideas from her. She was reteaching a lesson Her students

had not understood and it was interesting watching how she explained and
discussed what went wrong and how to correct it. I am looking forward to
our follow-up conversation. (Ms. George, second grade teacher).

Ms George's peer coaching partners agreed with her statements:

When we worked on peer coaching it was great to go next door
I enjoyed observing in another room and I think by doing the observation
I got more out of it than the person I observed did. I knew what she was
teaching and I got to see someone else teach the same thing I have or would
be teaching. You get some hints and ideas of the way things can be done
it is really interesting to see what works differently in another room and other
ways of doing the same thing.(Ms. Damas, second grade teacher).

We also did work with peer coaching. I was able to observe in Ms.
George's room. It was interesting seeing her teach the same subject matter
I was teaching, but in a different way. It was surprising to me that it looked
so different even though we were teaching the exact same thing. Ms Granite
observed me and she had some great suggestions. I am always willing to
learn and she was able to come up with some things I would never have
thought of (Ms. Sanders, second grade teacher).

The response of the three second grade teachers to peer coaching provides an insight into

the value Clearview teachers placed on the collaborative nature of the professional development

implemented during the third year. The value of collaboration is reiterated by Ms. Hawk's

impression of peer coaching:

I also liked the idea of peer coaching. I appreciated feed back
from my peers. Their opinion on what I was doing and taking something
back from what they were doing was valuable to me. Somehow feedback
from my peers seemed more valuable to me because they were in the classroom
doing the same thing I was doing and that made it more real to me. I am
afraid we won't be able to continue with peer coaching past this year
because of scheduling issues (Ms. Hawk, third grade teacher).

Teachers also state in numerous voices that collaboration is a strength of the professional

development they were involved in.

What I like the most about professional development is when teachers
share their ideas. Different teachers have different strengths and weaknesses
and if you get together and pull from the other teachers strengths it would help
you to see things more clearly and get more ideas. For instance Ms. Hawk is a

great writing teacher. When she shared her writing ideas with and then we practiced them in our rooms and if we had questions we went go to her room for Ideas or answers. The second grade teachers had all agreed that we needed o work on our writing and Ms. Hawks has been a great resource for us. That is a great thing about our staff, we are not shy about sharing (Ms. Damas).

Leafing Out - Impact of Professional Development on Instructional Practices and Student

Achievement:

Implementing Voyager changed me as a person. I began to really like what I was doing, I felt confident that this was really where I was supposed to be. I don't think I ever felt that way before. I like the first grade but I would often think I needed to switch to a different school. Voyager gave me something to do that was really good. It gave me a tool I always wanted. It is very specific but you can add to it, or modify it if you need to. I feel like the program and the support provided by Reading First helps me to know that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing (Ms. Moon, first grade teacher).

The educators involved in the Reading First Initiative measured student achievement in different ways depending on the use of the achievement data. For the state student performance on the Terra Nova was a critical measure that demonstrated to the federal government that their statewide Reading First Initiative was having a measurable impact on student growth in reading. The District looked at student achievement as defined by State mandated testing for accountability purposes as indicators that Reading First had a measurable impact. Teachers, literacy specialists, resource coordinators, and data managers used DIBELS assessments to group and regroup students for small group instruction and interventions. DIBELS progress monitoring data for individual students was used as a tool to signal when individual students needed to undergo further evaluation for more intense individual interventions. Often, for teachers, the most valuable assessment of student progress was what they observed students doing in the classroom.

In May of 2006 the State Department of Education decided not to fund eight of the District's eleven schools because they did not reduce the not proficient number of students who took the Terra Nova assessment by 10% at the end of the 2004 - 2005 school year. However, all eleven Reading First schools in the District increased the pass rate of students taking the Terra Nova with a mean increase of 11%. All of the Reading First schools in the district's decreased the rate of not passing students by 6% or better. In addition to the 6% drop rate for not passing students on the Terra Nova, schools in Reading First outperformed comparison schools on the Terra Nova with the mean difference of 11.9 % (External Evaluator Report, September, 2005). In addition 75% of on track readers in Reading First schools passed the State Achievement Test. At Clearview all grade levels made gains on the Terra Nova: first grade, 1%; second grade, 6.5%; third grade, 11%, Clearview ranked third highest of all District Reading First schools. In addition the third grade at Clearview made a nineteen per cent gain on the state achievement test (External Evaluator Report, September 2005). However, Clearview was designated a Tier Two school for Reading First funding in the third year. This meant that they were to develop an improvement plan that would raise their Terra Nova scores to show a 10% decrease in the number of students below proficiency.

The external evaluator's report stated that 867 students (approximately 51% of all program students) participated in Tier II intervention and that 56 students (3.3%) participated in Tier III intervention. The Tier II interventions students received included: in-school interventions such as Peer Assisted Reading Tutoring (P.A.R.T.) and Voyager interventions; after-school interventions; and both in school and after school interventions. A total of 562 students received in school interventions only. Tier III interventions are those that are specifically designed to meet the needs of individual students and are usually program based and

are completed in school. The number of students receiving interventions was a direct result of the student outcomes on the DIBELS Benchmark assessment and progress monitoring of students in interventions.

Tier II students at Clearview received interventions three to five times of week in school; some of these same Tier II students attended an after school tutoring. In the 2003-2004 school year, 76 students were involved in Tier II interventions while 3 students were involved in Tier III in school interventions. In the 2004-2005 school year, 63 students were involved in Tier II interventions and 11 students were in Tier III interventions. During the 2005-2006 school year, 56 students were involved in Tier II interventions and 9 students were involved in Tier III interventions. Tracking of interventions using DIBELS demonstrated that students who continuously attended Clearview during the three years of Reading First showed that ten of the students who were in interventions in 2003-2004 were moved out of interventions by 2006 (Clearview Data Binder, 2003 through 2006, pp 16 & 17).

The interventions which students received were conducted by instructor assistants, volunteer tutors, and classroom teachers. All of the training provided for interventions was conducted by Ms. Felix. Building Trio Team Meeting Minutes Notebook had many references to training dates for tutors, intervention fidelity checks and training for instructor assistants, volunteers, and teachers conducted by Ms. Felix. It was impressive that Ms. Felix and the original literacy specialist were responsible for pulling over thirty community volunteers into the school as tutors. Equally impressive was that after the decline of volunteers to twelve after the move to temporary quarters Ms. Felix increased the twelve to twenty-seven in two months. Ensuring that students received appropriate interventions was a high priority.

An integral part of tutoring and interventions was weekly progress monitoring of students receiving interventions. These one minute weekly tests became the basis for collecting data on students at risk of not achieving literacy skills. The recording of weekly data points on student graphs demonstrated student progress, decline, or flat lining. Depending on the data points recorded, students were moved out of intervention, maintained working on current interventions, changed interventions, or were referred to the Collaborative Problem Solving Team.

Quarterly DIBELS Benchmark Assessments were given to all students at grade level. Teachers used the assessment data to group students, plan for teacher station instruction, and supplement small group, independent teaching stations. Student success on DIBELS assessments gave teachers' their first indication that they were doing something right. In this way student data was used to drive the Reading First Initiative and fostered teacher development as effective literacy educators and leaders.

> I will say this, I definitely changed. The first year I noticed
> a difference in how I taught. I became much more systematic about
> how I teach. I never had that in my college courses or mentoring.
> I had never seen a systematic approach to teaching reading. Reading
> First also changed my math instruction, it changed everything I did
> because I saw results. That change in results made a big difference. The
> comprehension piece of it I'm still not sure about where that stands, I
> don't have any data to show me that. As far as the fluency goes in
> third grade I saw dramatic changes. The second year when I saw a new
> group coming in that was so much further along than the year before was
> when I knew that they had gotten the building blocks, the foundation for
> reading, that's when I knew what I was doing was very important. There
> is no doubt that students are reading at a higher level than in years past (Ms
> Hawk).

Examples of DIBELS assessments documenting student achievement abounded throughout Clearview. DIBELS scores from the Clearview Data Notebook indicate that Ms. Baachas' students made gains in three of the four areas assessed. In Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) the on track students grew from 59% to 89% with only two students in the struggling

category. Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) grew from 53% to 64% with no students remaining in the struggling category. In Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) the on track percentage of students grew from 52% to 73% with three students struggling at the end of the year and three students emerging. However, Initial Sound Fluency (ISF) dropped drastically from 35% of students being on track at the first benchmark to 14% of the students being on track at the third, and final Benchmark for assessing ISF. It seemed that although Ms. Baachas was discussing many anxieties about the core reading program, Voyager, her students continued to progress in early literacy skills.

Students DIBELS assessment data for Ms. Sanders' class were particularly demonstrative of student gains. On track readers had held steady for the first and second Benchmarks at 23% with 38% of students found to be emerging and 38% to be struggling. At the third Benchmark 38% were found to be struggling, 15% emerging, and 46% on track. However, at the fourth Benchmark 62% were on track, 31% emerging, and 8% struggling. Ms. Sanders could be proud of her efforts to become proficient at teaching the core program and the benefits it had for her students

Teachers often expressed eagerness to assess student growth as Ms. Calendar expressed to me at the beginning of our interview. She felt her students had grown a lot since the last assessment and was looking forward to seeing if the progress she had observed was reflected in their DIBELS scores. DIBELS data from the Clearview Data Book showed that Ms. Calendar's students had mixed outcomes for the upcoming assessments we discussed prior to her interview. The Reading Connected Text (RCT) scores placed 22% of her students at the on track level, with 50% being emerging in RCT and 28% being at risk. The Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) scores were better with 72% of children being on track, 2% emerging, and no students struggling. The

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) scores placed all students at the on track level.

Historically, data showed that Ms Calendar's students had performed in a similar, or better

fashion over the last three years of the Initiative. During the second year, 45% of her students

were on track for the Reading Connected Text Fluency. She was disappointed about the

outcome of the assessment in Reading Connected Text but pleased with the students'

performance in the other two assessments.

During interviews when teachers describe how they measure student achievement the

totality of their words present a powerful picture of how the combination of fidelity in the core

program, teachers' professional decision for modifications to fit student needs, DIBELS

assessments, and interventions impact student achievement.

> I also know that I am doing what I need to be doing because we
> see growth in the DIBELS scores and the students want to read. The kids
> like this program, they like to do the station work, they like coming to
> teacher station and going to intervention groups. They know they are
> learning and they want to come to school. They are coming and they are
> wanting.
> I also think that the interventions have helped students be more successful.
> The decoding skills and testing are exciting to my students. They know they
> have to read a certain amount of words in a minute and they get excited about
> beating their last score. They go in and get their PALS folders and go to
> Interventions because they know these things will help them to
> Become better readers. They love to show off and assessments are a time
> when they can show what they have learned. They come right up, sit down
> and do their thing and then they go back to their work (Ms. Moon).

> I have one special education student in here and even though she is
> reading thirteen to fifteen words a minute she feels a sense of pride. I have
> asked her permission to share with the class that you were only reading
> seven words per minute last week now you are at fifteen. She is like, "Oh
> My God!" Her eyes light up and she is so excited. I don't know if she
> really realizes that the other kids are reading 115 to 130 words a minute,
> but she knows she is improving. (Ms. George)

> I know my students are achieving when I see growth in their
> DIBELS scores. The DIBELS graphs show growth over time, data
> doesn't lie. I also measure student achievement by watching for

intrinsic indicators such as when a students know a word he or she did not know an hour ago. You can see it in their eyes, in the smile on their face and their look of pride in knowing how to read something they did not know how to read before.

The Reading First Initiative has provided a way for us to know where students are in reading achievement so we can help them increase their reading ability through interventions at the teaching station, small group interventions, or after school interventions. I have seen students come up in reading ability because of Voyager and Reading First structures. (Ms. Sanders)

Part of it is how we use words in the classroom. We use vocabulary words fluently that display knowledge of correct meaning. My students demonstrate comprehension in not only reading but in other subject areas. A lot of times they will come back and say, I just read so fluently. And you know, they get so excited when they use the words. We did New Year's Resolutions and a lot of my kids had, "My New Year's Resolution is to comprehend more of what I read." It was so cute. They read great, and I praise them. They are confident readers. If I don't call on them to read they are upset. They want to show what they know. You know if they are not comfortable reading they would not want to read.(Ms. George)

Well, I do a lot of observation to see what they do everyday in the classroom along with other testing. I get a lot of information from weekly progress monitoring. Through my observations, other assessments, and weekly progress monitoring I have found my students are low in comprehension. I have brought in a lot of things for them to do to help them get better at that.

Another thing that helps is that Voyager is set up to repeat skills over and over again. You can see when students are struggling, when they begin to get it, and when they become proficient at the skill. The skills in Voyager are a little more advanced than those taught in other programs. At first I didn't think they would get it, but I feel today they are better able to do them. I think that's because many of my current kids have been in the program for two years. I also think that it is easier to see the struggling students' achievement because they are doing interventions at their level with a high rate of frequency [at least three times a week]. The kids in intervention is able to see their weekly progress through the progress monitoring scores and I think that helps them feel more confident and achieve more. That's another thing that let's me know my students are achieving; that confidence. (Ms. Damas)

I've seen people who come in that didn't know how to read and after having interventions are reading. They weren't completely caught up but, you could see where their weakness was addressed and once that gap was

shortened they just functioned like everyone else and even this was not
necessarily a permanent situation (Ms. Hawk)

Teacher comments about student achievement bring assessments into focus for the purpose they are intended, to help students and teachers recognize their weaknesses and turn them into strengths. To stand in the face of weakness and become strong takes courage. At Clearview the primary teaching staff took up the challenge of Reading First and tried new ways of doing in the form of the core reading program, data analysis to shape instruction, and restructuring their classrooms and instruction to fit this new, Three Tiered Model. The light that they saw at the end of the process was the light in their students' eyes when they knew they could read.

Ms. Hawk so revealingly stated in her interview, she was excited about Reading First, hoping it would provide something new that might help her to meet her students' needs because nothing else had yet. All of the materials and supports offered in Reading First were the literacy nutrients she saw coming to her students. All of the teachers spoke of the horrendous life many of their students lived daily, teenage pregnancy, murders on the streets they walked to school, hunger, drugs, and family strife. Yet all of the educators hoped for their students. They were willing to risk their time, efforts, professional reputation for them. For these teachers the risk paid off in stronger reading skills in their students, confidence that they were good readers, excitement about becoming better, and a sense of control over their own learning.

The purposes for assessing student achievement create a dilemma for these teachers and students. On the one hand they see their successes because they live them everyday. Their successes speak to them in a voice that is almost overshadowed by their circumstances. For students the struggle between home life and school demands pulls on them constantly, and it would be easy not to succeed. The fact that many of them are eager to challenge themselves

gives credence to their will to live and thrive in this intense environment. For teachers the place

between seeing student achievement as a personal academic quality in their students and the

requirements of state mandated tests crushes them in a vice of professional ethics. Whose

demands do I meet and why? Dr. Ovation stated it best,

> It is disappointing that we were shot down after two years. We know that we
> saw massive changes in the schools that weren't funded [for the third year]
> because of poor scores. We are dealing with very complex and often
> dysfunctional schools in terms of reading programming assistance. I think
> that if we would have had ideally, five years, we could have seen this play out
> much stronger, and we know sometimes with change things get worse and
> then they get better, and then plateau. These is a flow and an ebb to these
> types of things so I think that in my mind those first two years we ebbed and
> flowed and we did see people emerge as leaders.

> At one point in time, when the district was considering adopting Voyager
> as its district wide reading program, there was a group of Reading First
> teachers who presented to the rest of the schools about Voyager. These
> teachers were speaking about this model, and using terms they did not know
> before Reading First, but had learned because of the Grant program. It was
> not just that they were using the words, but they talked with a believing, and
> passion that was broader than the model or this program. I mean, they
> repeatedly said things, like, you have to do this with integrity, you have to
> look at the data, and you have to address the needs of the children where they
> are and scaffold and do interventions to help them learn to read. I think what
> struck me about this presentation was that there was sophistication in
> understanding assessment, not just assessment in general, but the impact of
> grouping by assessment results, using targeted interventions, and then
> assessing again to measure progress and then regroup students as needed.
> They were saying all of these things that we [Reading First Staff] had been
> saying forever. It was so great to see first leaders, and then these teacher
> leaders coming out of that. You know that was pretty powerful.

The Beauty of Trees: Sustaining What Was Learned

The beauty of plants is that they seek out the environment that will support their need to

grow and produce new plants. Trees are large plants that submerge their roots deep into the

ground and create their own environment for growth. A tree can grow in a field by itself or in a

forest of many different kinds of trees. But ecologists who study trees have found that trees

grow best when they are grouped together as one species. That is why old growth forests are often populated by only one or two species of trees. In succession of forests there is a clear pattern of growth that allows for the dominant trees to grow and flourish while other species die out. At Clearview the succession for sustaining changes brought about by Reading First had clearly begun.

> The ability to perceive students' needs that were identified through assessments and having tools helped the teachers to address students' needs, and the knowledge to use the tools helped the teachers begin to scaffold instruction. The knowledge and resources created a willingness to scaffold and do interventions. Once they saw success change began to occur because you have to see the payoffs, even if they are incremental payoffs. Then when you have a couple of success stories you can build on these and strengthen your ability by asking yourself, "Oh, what did I do with this kid that really made the difference, and then build on . . ." So, it is kind of making little steps versus being expected to make giant steps (Dr. Ovation).

When teachers at Clearview were asked what they would sustain from Reading First learning overwhelmingly the replies reflected structures that would help them to meet students' needs. The statements about what to sustain are a follow through of their original intent when Reading First was approved by this staff. Their prior experience, professional development in reading, and work with DIBELS assessments had given them bits and pieces of a successful early literacy program. What they voted into place was an opportunity to be immersed in a structured program that would help them to solidify their understandings into daily practice.

To that end teachers stated that they would sustain Voyager with special emphasis on sustaining the teaching station, DIBELS assessments, interventions, and heterogeneous or homogeneous grouping as need demanded. From the principal, the Building Trio, and on down to through the teachers these structures where thought to provide solid ground for student achievement. "I think one way Reading First has supported our efforts at Clearview is that it provides the teacher the opportunity to break away from whole group instruction into small

group instruction or one-on-one instruction. I believe it creates a stronger bond between the student and the teacher. Another way is it start at the kindergarten level teaching students to participate in stations with a team leader and learn social skills" (Ms. Lyons, principal).

Ms. Felix had observed that many of the teachers at Clearview had internalized the value of the Reading First research base, structures, and practices. Ms. George supported Ms. Felix's comments about progress monitoring Ms. Felix stated that teachers have come to value progress monitoring of struggling students. Teachers have begun to do this on their own because they can see the use of it, they get excited and what to do it [so that struggling students and the teachers can see the progress students make or that interventions need to change to enhance student achievement]. Ms George supported Ms Felix's comments about progress monitoring by stating,

> Definitely progress monitoring should be sustained and the results should
> be shared with the kids. They like to see that they are gaining. Also, if they
> don't gain that particular week or month that they know it is okay as long as
> they try their best, they still feel a sense of accomplishment.

Ms. George also felt that if progress monitoring was going to be done MClass and palm pilots would be critical to the success because it makes it would be easier for the teacher to gather data. She felt that it was a motivator for students to see the "running man" character that marked their progress to needed Benchmark scores. Ms. Hawk also felt that maintaining MClass and the palm pilots as tools for collecting data was important to sustainability.

Ms. Hawk's intent was to sustain Voyager structures and interventions. She felt she would continue using systematic instruction strategies she had learned forever because it was Best Practices to her. She along with other teachers at Clearview would like to see similar structures for writing and mathematics. This was especially true of interventions because she had found them to be the strongest part of Voyager. Ms. Sanders supported Ms. Hawk's comments by saying that this, her first year at second grade, has taught her that she really needs structure. She

stated that she would always use the teaching station, independent work groups, and other daily structures including interventions.

Ms. Lyons and Mr. Kirk both agree that the Voyager program makes instruction consistent across the board. Mr. Kirk added that the Three Tiered Model of Intervention shapes not only how the core program fits in but the structure the school needs to shape reading instruction. "The Model provides all the wonderful things we did, professional development, having supports, interventions, and the things that should be in place to support student learning in the area of reading" (Kirk, literacy specialist). Ms. Damas also thought that the Three Tiered Model would be helpful to sustain because it gives the school a focused way to meet all the kids' needs.

Ms. Calendar stated that staying true to the program was critical to sustaining Reading First learning. It was important to her to make sure that her teaching station was done according to the program. Ms. Baachas also stated the need to keep the teaching station; she commented that she would do a little more whole group work and then proceed to reading stations after her extensions were completed.

Other areas of sustainability expressed by the staff were professional development and coaching as a support mechanism. The staff at Clearview felt that the literacy specialist was a valuable component of Reading First that would be important to sustain. The reasons for sustaining a literacy specialist ranged from helping teachers maintain a high level of fidelity to the core program to coaching teachers on how to implement new strategies and practices in their classroom. This wish extended from Clearview into district administration with Dr. Casey as a believer that the literacy specialist was critical to helping maintain program pacing and fidelity.

Staff members valued the literacy specialist's coaching them into new understandings about program implementation and other components of literacy.

> I would love to see us keep the literacy coach. I feel like this program is really beginning to click for me and wee need the professional development the literacy coach provides to keep things fresh (Ms. Calendar).

Ms. Moon supported Ms. Calendar's thoughts by saying,

> "I think that one of the things crucial to sustaining Reading First is the support that the Building Trio gives us. I think this because if I don't get something right away I have to reread it so many times to get it. Mr. Kirk has been like, everything. It is really nice to know I have him to go to if I get stuck. He's there if you need more ideas. If you combine his role with the professional development it really pulls the program together. I also think the roles the data manager and resource coordinator plays in Reading First makes our work important.

Ms. Kirk stated that the professional development brought some cohesion to the staff members at Clearview. For Ms. Sanders there was a need to sustain professional development so that she could learn more about using data, "I want to know why this student has come up from twenty-seven words a minute to fifty-eight words a minute." She felt the data sessions during profession development were invaluable in giving the teachers time to collaborate and share strategies, structures, and processes for guiding her to raising all of her students' achievement levels. Ms. George also stated that it would be important to maintain professional development, especially in the areas of writing and comprehension.

Ms. Lyons the Clearview's principal felt that maintaining the Building Trio would be critical to sustaining Reading First due to the fact that teachers are busy people and that the trio would be able to assist with data collection, pacing, fidelity, and professional development.

> I wish they would keep the literacy specialist and the data manager. Since the assessment are done frequently to ensure students are increasing in fluency or if they need intervention. We need those people to maintain it. You can't leave it up to the teacher, the teacher has so many other things. It does help to have other people that go in and keep that consistency and fidelity level, to

help teachers keep sight even if they feel overwhelmed because they have to teach math and they have to teach everything else. If those core people were gone teachers would have to keep up with their own professional development and make sure that you are staying true to the program. I think what happens is that if you don't have someone watching over you that knows what you are doing and would be able to tell you if you are straying too far from the program to get back on track our student would loose out of the scientifically based instruction we have see success with (Ms. Lyons, principal).

Even while the principal and teachers at Clearview were stating their desire to keep the Building Trio in place they knew it was a futile desire. The District had already established that there would not be any content coaches funded for the following school year. If Reading First money disappeared, so did the Building Trio. It was a known fact that the personnel that would be in place to sustain changes brought about by Reading First would be the primary teachers, instructor assistants, and the principal.

Teachers, the principal and members of the Building Trio all stated that they thought there was a large percentage of the primary staff that was dedicated to sustaining all of the Three Tiered Model structures that had been put into place. These structures included the core program, DIBELS assessments – including progress monitoring, and interventions. Since the district had adopted the Three Tiered Model for Intervention as a district wide model for special education there was no doubt that this model would be sustained.

As the teacher, you are in charge of the reading program. If you don't do it students don't learn to read. It is pretty simple, you do what you are to do, students get the information and the skills they need. If you don't do the program then the students don't get it. I think that sustaining Reading First is going to fall back on the teacher; we must continue doing the assessment piece, the intervention piece, and the teaching piece. I think that we are key to sustaining Reading First.

Ms. Moon stated:

I feel like as far as the meat of the program, the teacher's station, I'll do that forever and ever. If this program disappears I am keeping every piece of it. We always talk about it. When this grant is gone, and if the District

decided to change the core reading program, we would do Voyager without really doing Voyager. I would do this program to the end. I am taking my stuff with me and there will be something in that room that works. I have a base now that I have never had in all those years I have taught. You know who will be here to sustain us next year? The teachers will be here.

Teacher commitment to sustain new practices established by Reading First was thought to be high by most teachers interviewed. Ms. Sanders stated the second grade level team was highly committed to sustaining new practices and that she felt the collaboration between her and her team mates would be a positive factor in helping them sustain and continue to grow as literacy educators. "I can't speak for the rest of the teachers, I can only talk about the team I work with and they enjoy doing Voyager. They tell me, 'It's not as bad as it seems, it's not as much work as it seems.' No one on the primary team complains about doing Voyager. I think the commitment is very high. Our level of collaboration is high, and I think that keeps us motivated."

The Building Trio implemented peer coaching at Clearview as a structure that would help teachers manage their absence. Teachers received peer coaching well, and some viewed it as a way to help maintain program fidelity, pacing, and other Reading First structures. Teachers at Clearview expressed that peer observations allowed them to see the same thing taught differently and to gather hints of structures for behavior management they had not previously considered. Peer coaching as a form of collaboration was definitely viewed as a structure that would help to strengthen each other's practice.

Other teachers at Clearview indicated that in absence of the Building Trio the principal, Ms. Lyons would be the person most responsible for sustaining Reading First. In their minds it would be her responsibility, as the instructional leader, to ensure that teachers were maintaining

fidelity to the core program, pacing, Benchmark assessments, progress monitoring and

interventions. She herself supported this idea by saying,

> The role of school leadership is to not only support the program but to
> make it clear that you will do the program; you will stay pure with it. I think
> they have to support all the teachers and be able to understand that if a teacher
> needs help with the program that they provide the opportunity for that person
> to get the help they need. The leader sets the tone, if the leader does not think
> this is an important program they [teachers] will go back to what they feel is
> important.

These beautiful trees will need to root under, over, around and through rocks in the woods

in order to overcome the possibility of stunted growth. These rocks include district initiatives

that would distract from the time needed to do assessments, data analysis, and planning for

interventions, low academic ability or low social skills of students, lack of personnel to complete

student interventions, and nonsupport from the district.

During the third year of implementation the District had initiated additional change

programs in the form of Standards into Practice, (SIP), and Standard/Examine Data/Assessment

/Learning Experiences, Riverdeep (SEAL). The staff at Clearview was working to integrate the

different initiatives or to withdraw from those that they could. The time to work through each

was exhausting and sometimes confusing. In addition the State had begun to switch to more

broad based assessments for kindergarten through second grade. The totality of the expectation

to fulfill each initiative often left teachers drained and stressed.

> The main effect [of these initiatives] is that they detract time from Reading
> First. For example, SIP if done correctly, would be a phenomenal support for
> Reading First. It really does make you look at the standards for students. SIP
> is critically important for expectations to be aligned with what we are trying to
> teach when we teach it. However, unless we have the supports in place to
> conduct SIP as it is intended I don't see how we will be able to do it.
> With SEAL you are looking at you data to drive instruction – this is the
> same in Reading First. SEAL is just designing you lessons around that. We
> already have a lesson and curriculum design. It's almost as if they want you
> to move the data around to fit SEAL as opposed to using the data to change

what you are doing. The way Reading First does it is, ok here's your data now design how you are going to teach to meet the needs of the kids (Ms. Hawk).

Ms. Baachas adds weight to Ms. Hawk's impressions of the impact of other initiatives:

> You know, I understand that we have to take this all on, but in kindergarten they have us doing so many assessments, it is hard to keep up with the interventions because right now we have got the state diagnostics, which takes about 45 minutes per child. We still have to do the other things that we have to do. So if someone could come in and show me how to do all of that I would be happy to do it. I am doing the best that I can, like, that one day you came in and I told you I was fighting a lion with a switch, and making bricks without straw, it's unreal. We started off with about 15, 16 kids, which is good. Now, I am up to 22 and it is difficult, it really is. I am supposed to have an Instructor Assistant all day but I don't. She was supposed to be here today but she is sick. So you know, there it is. (Ms. Baachas)

Dr. Casey stated:

> I think with the three district initiatives that are in place now teachers are just trying to stay afloat because they have been given to them so suddenly. If we do not have the manpower and money to sustain interventions and if teacher attention is drawn away I think interventions and program integrity will go by the way. (Dr. Casey).

A flip side to the District initiatives that may affect Clearview's ability to sustain Reading First learning is that during the second year of implementation the District adopted Voyager Universal Design for Literacy as the district wide core reading program for all primary grades. The concern that the District Language Arts Manager, Dr. Casey, and the teachers at Clearview have is that there have not been the supports for the program that Reading First schools have had.

> You know we have seen a lot of programs come and go through this district. I think it is good that this is a district-wide adoption instead of XYZ school doing this, ABC school doing that, and EFG school doing something else. One of the things we have always complained about is that when we get children in from other schools they have not been privy to all the information, style of teaching, and skills our students have gotten. So, I think this is a step in the right direction. I worry that in three or four years it might be less consistency because teachers will not buy into Voyager because they are not getting the support they needed to implement it and see students grow as

readers. Then they will just go back to their old ways. I am afraid that if things fall apart at the district level it will threaten Clearview's ability to keep going with this program. (Ms. Calendar).

Dr. Casey expressed a similar concern:

> The original statement of intent in the Reading First Grant, was to bring teachers to capacity as literacy educators to educate children so that they would be reading well by the end of third grade. It is my opinion that Reading First personnel has done this. Reading First has been successful, not in all schools, not in all classrooms, but I think we have seen more good than bad. Because of the personnel I have mentioned before, it is a strong program, it has enriched the lives of the children it has involved, our assessments show that the majority are making gains in reading. Teachers are becoming strong in their literacy practice. I think that the Reading First staff and the professional development that has been provided has given them that ability. That is what the District needs in all of the Voyager schools. They need the people to enrich the children.
> Unfortunately there is a need for the District administration to have a more complete understanding of what Reading First has really done in order for them to know the value of giving the level of support our original eleven schools had in implementing Voyager and the other pieces that have increased reading achievement for the students in Reading First schools.

Dr. Casey continued by stating that in addition, the District would be taking the characteristics of Reading First that facilitated the gains in student achievement and moving them into the schools they were now implementing Voyager in. Administration would recognize that a program itself was not going to assist the students; it was the interactions of adults with adults, adults with children, children with adults, and children with children that made Reading First successful.

> Instead we took what I consider a step backwards and got rid of coaches. I really think the coaching model could have aided all of our schools to be more successful. I think that the integrity and implementation would have been stronger in these new schools. We would have seen some of the same or stronger results. In addition we could have jumped into some of the professional development from Reading First which I think would have been of major valuable. We have no knowledge of how being involved in Reading First like professional development would have affected instruction district wide because it was not tapped into.

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Summary

In this chapter the data was presented from five Reading First leadership participants and seven classroom teacher participants. The interviews provided insight into the implementation of the Reading First Initiative and the structures that helped develop teacher capacity. Included in these structures were the Three Tiered Model, scientifically based reading researched core program and supplementary interventions, school specific professional development that was aligned with the intent of the grant and teacher need. Professional development included coaching in classroom instructional practices, use of data to design instruction, and maintaining program fidelity.

Also included in this chapter was the analysis of the Clearview story as gleaned from the triangulation of teacher interviews, archival data, and field notes. Analysis revealed that the teachers at Clearview had a sincere desire to sustain their current level of Reading First practices. In fact, analysis portrayed that teachers were not finished with learning about early literacy and still sought to complete their understandings of topics such as teaching comprehension and writing. It was their desire to continue seeking ways to help their students achieve in reading in order to continue their learning and that of their students.

Chapter four will contain a summary of this study, study findings, conclusions, and implications for practice, research, and theory.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section provides a summary of the study.

The next section will report the findings based on the data analysis. Following that section,

conclusions that could be drawn from the findings will be presented. The last section consists of

implications for practice and research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine how urban teachers sustain change in

turbulent times. Prior studies on change had focused on large scale system change and little

focus on the individual teachers involved in evoking change or how they might sustain change.

Historically teacher change efforts have been subsumed in research literature that discussed large

scale systemic renewal. Large scale renewal assumes that teachers will implement prescribed

change without regard to the investment teachers make in doing so. Therefore when change is

discussed in the literature, successful or not, the researchers focus on systems' cause-and-effect.

Teacher change efforts within large scale change had been devalued to a level of discussion

about paperwork, lack of student input, and other causal variables and overlooked the attention

needed to closely evaluate the nature of change teachers experience.

Larson (1999) explored how small scale change impacts on larger systems change and

found that there were many aspects that contribute to the larger picture of system change.

Basing his work on previous findings of a multitude of researchers (Peters and Waterman, 1982;

Weick, 1984; Demming, 1986; Block, 1987; Cuban, 1990; Senge, 1990; Fullan, 1991; and

Bromley and Mansfield, 1993) Larson drew the conclusion that small scale change creates a

nucleus for larger scaled transformation. In noting the institutionalization of change he

recurrently stated that sustainability of change required the realization that change is a process

and not an event. Larson found that for the two high schools studied sustaining change and

institutionalization involved a reluctance to accept the present as the end rather than a stagnant

claiming of success. Change agents (teachers and administrators) never accepted that the current

successful practices would always be successful and that unsuccessful practices were failures.

Rather they viewed their teaching practice as malleable terrain. So, what became an

institutionalized factor of the schools was that change was ongoing and based in the needs of the

time (Larson, 1999, p. 117).

Riley, Smith, Ginsberg, and Plisko (1999) studied nine urban elementary schools across

the nation and found that shared leadership was indicated as a factor that both created change and

hope for sustainability. Fundamental to developing teacher leaders in each of the nine schools

was building capacity in change program implementation and teacher efficacy. Various forms of

coaching served to move all stakeholders to capacity and develop collaborative work groups that

focused on the desired changes, identifying strengths and weaknesses, how to support what was

successful, and meet the challenges to address needs in weak areas of change practices.

The study revealed five components of design for change were identified by each of the

nine schools and collaboratively imply that the components of a change model are (1) distributed

expertise and leadership; (2) curriculum organization, alignment, and assessment; (3) collective

responsibility for student learning; (4) reflective dialogue; and (5) increased teacher efficacy

(Riley et al., 1999, p. 46). In each of the nine schools it was found that no one component was

worked on in isolation but rather that all components were intertwined and as success was

achieved in one area the associated components grew in capacity. Teacher efficacy, teacher

ability to make change, and teachers finding ways to both sustain and increase expertise grew

from the cycle of collaborating on the implementation of the components (Riley et al., 1999).

Datnow (2005) states that, "When one speaks of sustainability of reform one is typically

interested in knowing whether the reform lasts over time and becomes an institutionalized

feature of the school" (Datnow, p. 123). Studies of reform institutionalization tend to focus

mostly on school-level factors that lead to the reform becoming, or not becoming, part of the

fabric of a school. These factors include such things as genuine interest in change, teacher and

administrator support, a critical mass involved in implementation, sustained professional

development, and a practical plan for implementation and monitoring of the change effort

(Anderson & Steigelbauer, 1994; Moffet 2000). There is a research consensus that a reform is

considered institutionalized when it becomes a taken-for-granted feature of life in a school

(Datnow, 2005). The ideas that change is a fluid process and institutionalization create a

dilemma for determination of what is meant by sustaining change and how does an individual or

an organization know if they are successful at it.

Fullan (2001) suggests that change has to occur along three dimensions of practice in

affect the outcome. The three dimensions are: (1) the possible use of new or revised materials

(instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies; (2) the possible use of new

teaching approaches; (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g. pedagogical assumptions and

theories underlying particular new policies or programs (Fullan, p. 39). Fullen further explains

that change will be superficial if the three do not occur during implementation.

Researchers support Fullan's claim in findings that demonstrate teachers who have

limited understanding of the intended change, curriculum involved in change efforts, and

methodologies needed were less likely to make needed corrections between understandings and

implementation. Teachers with limited understanding tended to focus on surface curriculum and

keeping students busy, while more in tune teachers immersed students in new ways of doing and

achieving (Simms, 1978; and Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel, 1976). McLaughlin and Mitra

(2000) worked to understand "deep" reform in their study of three innovations and found that the

problem for implementation is not only teachers "learning how to do it," but teachers learning

the theoretical project, absent knowledge about why they were doing what they were doing;

implementation would be superficial only (p. 10).

From this body of research it is possible to form a definition of change as

multidimensional; involving the possible use of new or revised materials, new teaching

approaches, and the alterations of beliefs (Fullan, 2001). In addition educational changes

develop at the most profound level of change when change agents learn the theoretical

underpinnings of the project in order to build the new understandings to develop and deepen new

practices (McLaughlin & Mitra, 2000).

Chapter one included the problem statement which made it clear that while change efforts

were prevalent in education researchers were still busy investigating what the true meaning of

change is. Fullan and other researchers had stated that change is a process not an end product.

In addition, research efforts had gathered insights regarding factors that created meaningful

change, one of which was flexibility to discard a change strategy that did not work. Researchers

had added to the known body of understanding of educational change by concluding that

teachers must embrace the research base behind the intended change and must engage with the

research base, curriculum, and practices that were embodied in the change implementation or the

intended change would occur on the surface level at best. The degree of change evoked plays

heavily on whether the change was sustained or dropped by the wayside. These understandings

led the researcher to ask the question, "How do urban teachers sustain change in turbulent times?" The question embraces the findings of previous research as guiding ideas for understanding how teachers embrace change when the structures are there to do so. How do teachers determine what has changed, why that change occurred, and how do they, at the end of a well funded, well staffed change initiative independently take their new learning with them into a different environment?

Chapter two included a discussion of the research methodology and data analysis procedures. This was a qualitative study of how seven teachers perceived their learning during the three year Reading First Initiative and how they planned to sustain themselves as a group of teachers independent of the initiative. The study design included conducting interviews with the seven teachers and five leadership people: the District Language Arts Curriculum Manager, the Program Director, Principal, the Literacy Specialist, and the Resource Coordinator. In addition, background information was gathered from various historical records that included the Reading First Information Booklet, the Reading First Grant, Building Trio Meeting Minutes, Grade Level Team Meeting Minutes, External Evaluator Reports, Data Manager Logs, and other sources as needed. Finally, student achievement data were gathered from state mandated tests, DIBELS assessment notebooks, and Terra Nova tests. Field notes were recorded and included as a data source.

Chapter Three was the presentation of data and analysis of data. The responses to questions from individual interviews, field notes, and data obtained from historical records were presented taking into consideration the purpose and focus of this study. The variables of impact of professional development and student achievement, intent when accepting the grant program into their school, new learning and understandings of what has changed, what will be sustained,

and who is most important to sustaining change were used as the major categories for the data analysis. This chapter will present the findings, conclusions, implications for practice and further research.

Findings

The research question asked was: How do urban teachers sustain change in turbulent times?   The answer is amazingly simple. Given the nature of the turbulent environment within which this group of teachers worked, they will sustain what has become an internalized part of their practice and that which is within their power to sustain. Teachers at Clearview repeatedly stated that there were many parts of the core reading program they would carry forward with them into the future. They also stated that learning from professional development had been important to them; giving them valuable strategies. Collaboration would also be carried forward as a vehicle for supporting each other in their work to maintain fidelity of the core program and interventions. The seeds this group of teachers would spread if they were uplifted from Clearview and blown into a new forest of educators and students would be those they had control over to bring forward with them. They too would use their understanding of the Three Tiered Model of Intervention to hold other literacy environments up to and keep what is important and enhances student achievement.

What is clearly evident in this body of research is that the teachers at Clearview recognized their need to create structure in the efforts to help their students achieve at learning to read. Teachers stated that they were doing bits and pieces of the program already and knew there was no structure to their delivery, "We were all hodgepodging it at the time." They also stated that the structure provided by Reading First was attractive to them. As they began to implement Voyager and the other structures present in Reading First a dissonance began to grow between

their knowledge base and their old ways of doing. When teachers began to see student achievement grow as a response to their new practices they began to buy into the new structures and practices, moving to new attitudes about teaching reading which resulted in further acceptance of knowledge they gained through coaching and other professional development. The cycle of success caused them to switch from their "hodgepodging" ways to the systematic and explicit practices that made up Voyager and the Three Tiered Model. It is possible that all of the teachers at Clearview internalized the knowledge that the more systematic and explicit you are in instruction the more your students will achieve.

An aspect of systematic and explicit instruction is the degree of fidelity to the core program. A second aspect is the use of data to drive instruction. The use of data to drive instruction includes grouping students for instruction, knowing when to involve students in intervention, when to change interventions and when to refer students to the Collaborative Problem Solving Team for more individualized intervention. So by being involved in Reading First Clearview's teachers learned how to deliver daily systematic and explicit instruction through the implementation of the Three Tiered Model of Intervention. "The greatest impact on my students would be the logic and order of the skills in Reading First. I never knew how to put them in order, but Voyager does an excellent job of this; I also think that the interventions have helped students to be more successful" (Ms. Moon, First Grade Teacher).

Another internalized belief that was produced by teachers' participation in Reading First was their appreciation for collaboration. The teachers participated in several forms of collaboration with grade level team meetings being a consistent time of talking with each other at the grade level you taught while the monthly professional development sessions provided specific, focused collaboration on teaching strategies. When teachers spoke of sustaining their

new ways of doing they expressed the knowledge that collaboration would play a big part in keeping them on track with pacing and program fidelity. The Clearview teachers knew that if they were to sustain their current successful practices and continue to grow as literacy educators they must support each other through collaboration. In fact when teachers were asked what the strength of the school was many stated the teaching staff or the principal. Often the declaration of either as a strength was follow-up with comments of how the teachers supported each other, or how the principal supported teachers. "I feel that the staff at Clearview is a definite strength. We work well together. We often work long, hard hours together" (Ms. Sanders, second grade teacher).

It is important to note that collaboration became an integral part of all of the primary teachers' practice when they all had common ground to share. In this case the common ground was formed by the work to implement the Three Tiered Model. Initially common ground was formed as each teacher began to implement Voyager Universal Literacy as the core reading program. The collaboration became more solidified as the teachers began to participate in both whole group and grade level team meetings to analyze data and group students according to data outcomes. Then as students remained at Clearview and moved to higher grades the teachers became resources for each other when discussing individual student needs. Collaboration was cemented by teachers participating in peer coaching. "It's good that my reading team works together and we know where we are and where we should be. We also know when we have to make adjustments for state diagnostic tests, or other things that come along. Teacher teaming is important to keep because it helps us to teach the same curriculum and maintain pacing" (Ms. Sanders).

The second part of the answer to how urban teachers sustain change in turbulent times is that this group of teachers focused on choosing what needed to be sustained from what was within their power to sustain. They knew the environment their school existed in and pragmatically decided I can sustain this, or that, but not this thing over here because I have no control over it. An example of this is when teachers wistfully stated they wanted to sustain the Building Trio as a support system for them, knowing that they had no power to do this. When they were asked who the most important person to sustain change was, all but one teacher stated it was either the teacher or the principal. The principal, Ms. Lyons, herself, supported this idea.

Other factors teachers knew they had the power to sustain were materials and strategies they would use in teaching reading. All teachers and the building principal stated they recognized the importance of having the materials you need close at hand. For some teachers, such as Ms Hawk, it was a deciding factor in adopting the Reading First initiative into Clearview. When teachers discussed what needed to be sustained most stated that acquiring the needed materials, such as student anthologies of literature, interventions materials, and vocabulary books was at the top of the list. "I will keep all of my Voyager materials" (Ms. Moon) Ms. George stated she would keep progress monitoring and use pencil and paper if there was no MClass system to use palm pilots for completing DIBELS Benchmarks and progress monitoring.

For Clearview teachers sustaining change began the instant they saw student achievement. Once it was apparent that what they were doing was working and there was an importance to it, they began to seek opportunities to grow stronger in their new practice. "The first year I noticed a difference in how I taught, I became more systematic. The second year when I saw a new group coming in that was so much further along than the year before, was when I knew that they

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had gotten the building blocks, the foundation for reading; that's when I knew what I was doing was important" (Ms. Hawk, third grade teacher). It was apparent that they would go about their future instructional day with intent to be more organized, systematic, and explicit about literacy instruction. "As far as Reading First's impact on student achievement in reading, I think that the structure has really given them the structure they need for succeeding in reading (Ms. Calendar, First Grade Teacher). It was also evident that in thinking about sustainability for the upcoming years they would seek each other out as collaborative partners in staying true to their new learning and shaping future practice. In addition, they would go about this work in a practical manner focusing on what they could control and deflecting what they could not.

There were other themes and patterns that presented themselves in the data. The recurring themes discussed here are alignment of intent, personnel to conduct interventions, the importance of collaboration and professional development in sustaining change, and defining a learning community.

Alignment of Intent:

Alignment of desired manifestation, intent and action created change and the desire for sustaining it. The data presented demonstrates that there was an alignment of intent from the No Child Left Behind legislation, Reading First goals, State Department of Education goals, Midwest District's goals, and teacher interests. In part this was spelled out as a requirement by Reading First; however, it was Dr. Ovation's understanding of the Three Tiered Model of Interventions, scientifically research based reading instruction, and Collaborative Problem Solving that moved the desired change into the classroom. For the District Reading First schools it was the deliberate funneling and guidance of the core Reading First personnel into understanding the Model and why it was important to develop fidelity of the core program,

interventions, and Collaborative Problem Solving Process that moved all of the personnel

involved with Reading First into a very specifically designed change model. The involvement of

all personnel at Reading First schools created common ground for discussion of literacy

instruction that was imbedded in daily practice. "Here at this school I think there are teachers

who have internalized and value the Reading First research base, structures, an practices" (Ms.

Felix, Resource Coordinator).

What is obvious from the work completed by Clearview is that Dr. Ovation's foresight to

use the Three Tiered Model of Intervention paid off. The students and teachers made

monumental gains.

> What is so powerful about having a model is that it gave me a compass to navigate through questions, concerns, requirements, and demands. If somebody came to me and stated, "My kids aren't doing well on a test." I could frame that within this model, and what was important to help the students do better, not only on the test, but in early literacy. The same was true of administrative concerns or mandates that came our way. When I went to the state department of education meetings and talked with other literacy specialists or program coordinators many of them seemed unfocused. If we had two different bits of information, which may or may not have been conflicting, I would be okay because the Three Tiered Model provided a framework to organize things. I was able to ask myself if this could be something we could fit into the model, perhaps as an intervention or a way of doing? The model provided a sort of mission statement that helped me to disregard those bits and pieces of information if it did not make any sense for the work we had set out to accomplish.

It is possible; however, that while the intent was aligned from the federal government to

the class room there was not a return of alignment of information to the District. This statement

is based on the interview with the Language Arts Program Manager, Dr. Casey. Dr. Casey

stated,

> Unfortunately there is a need for the district administration to have
> A more complete understanding of what Reading First has really done in
> order for them to know the value of giving the level of support our original
> eleven schools had in implementing Voyager and the other pieces that have

increased reading achievement for the students in Reading First schools.

Dr. Casey made this statement with regard to the District's new adoption of the Reading First core program, Voyager, as the district wide literacy primary instructional program. While the district had adopted Voyager they had not set into place the supports Reading First schools had, and he felt it was due to them not understanding the intense nature of why Reading First was showing gains in achievement. He went on to say, "If the district leadership was more involved with the meat of Reading First, the program would have been more supported and possibly more successful. In addition, the District would be taking the characteristics of Reading First that facilitated gains in student achievement and move them into the schools where they are implementing Voyager" (Dr. Casey). These statements would indicate that there was a minimal flow of information back to the District about Reading First. Furthermore, he implies that if the District had been better informed it would have benefited all schools with Voyager and possibly could have aided teachers at Clearview in sustaining their new practices.

This must be taken within the context of the changing nature of the District. At the end of the year the District dissolved Dr. Casey's positions and placed all content coaches back into the classroom. The District then constructed Instructional Leadership Teams that where housed in the District Professional Development Center. The role of these teams was to aid struggling schools in bringing up student achievement as defined by the State Achievement Tests. This redesign shifted the focus of the District away from the classroom and onto the school as a whole.

Need for adequate personnel:

Teachers also stated that manpower to do interventions was an important component to sustaining successful practices they had learned in Reading First. The inclusion of personnel as a

needed commodity was directly related to their knowledge that they never knew how many instructional assistants they would have from year to year, or what the volunteer base would be.

The personnel were needed to do two things, help manage student behavior and conduct interventions. While teachers stated they would continue interventions at the teaching station they knew their students would have greater achievement if they continued to receive daily, in-school interventions that had been conducted by instructor assistants and volunteer tutors. The teachers clearly stated they would maintain the teacher station and any interventions they could implement but would not commit to sustaining interventions supported during the day by instructional assistants or community volunteers. "We never know from year to year how many instructional assistants we will have in our classrooms, and this will affect the amount of interventions struggling students will receive. I do interventions at my teacher's station, and Voyager has helped me to make those stronger and more effective. The extra support students get from other interventions is important, too. I don't feel we will be able to sustain that level of intervention without the manpower provided by the grant" (Ms. Calendar).

Impact of Environment on Teaching and Learning:

Most teachers acknowledged the impact of the surrounding environment on their teaching and student learning. This was noted in many ways when talking about discipline within the school. It was also noted in the classroom as an impact on instruction and student ability to learn. "As far as just the management, if we didn't have so many management problems in the classroom I think that we would get a lot more accomplished" (Ms. Calendar). Ms.Moon supported Ms. Calendar's comment with the following, "Too often I see teachers whose priorities are misplaced and their students loose out due to lack of control in the classroom or

poor instruction. Sometimes the importance of our work here is forgotten because of the discipline issues and other issues."

Teachers also talked about the ineffectiveness of discipline within the school. Ms. Moon, Ms. George, and Ms. Hawk all referred to instances where students were disciplined inconsistently for the same offense, or were given inappropriate discipline, that sometimes interrupted their instruction. Ms. George stated, "If two kids get in trouble for the same thing they get different punishments even thought the same act is committed." She went on to explain that she has students come into her room for timeouts without work to do while there. Her teaching is often interrupted because she has to get them work to do while they are in time out. This is aggravating for her because the teacher who sends the student is responsible to give them work to do. Ms Moon told of a similar experience where she monitored an older student for periods of time. The student is intimidating to her first graders, even though he does nothing to them. He is older and more active than they are. Even with that behavior he is better behaved in her room than in others.

In addition to discipline within the school there are many factors outside of the school that affect instruction and classroom management. As Ms. Baachas stated, "I've got a core group here, who have such stresses in their lives they are not able to grasp things that they should because they are dealing with stuff, like, homelessness, sexual molestation, and a whole lot of stuff. I have got to get through all of that before I can teach them what an A or a B is." Ms. Damas' comments sum up this concern prolifically,

> Some of our children come to school with a lot on their minds from their
> home life. A lot of times the children are already worked up over something
> that happened at home when they get to school. We spend a lot of time
> talking to them, calming them down, and getting them interested in school.
> I think this has a lot to do with how they act in the classroom.

It is interesting to note that while the teachers state that classroom management is an issue that affects instruction they are at the same time working to manage their classrooms better. This is evidenced by the professional development they requested on classroom management and the management of reading stations. They have also begun to place students who need more intense interventions or a behavior plan into the Collaborative Problems Solving process as stated in Grade Level Team Meeting Notes for Data Analysis. A question commonly asked during data meetings was, "Is this occurring because of the students' academic ability or because of their behavior?"

The collaboration of teachers about students had begun to create more inroads to teachers solving their behavior concerns between themselves, using each other as support. That is how the time out in another classroom began. From Ms. George's comments it looked like they had begun the process of helping each other with discipline but still needed to fine tune it to make it fully effective.

Collaboration and Professional Development:

The collaboration over classroom management was indicative of other collaborative efforts within the school. Collaborative school based professional development was a powerful endeavor that helped teachers value each other and use each other as a professional development resource. As the three year implementation progressed teachers became more valuable as a resource for knowing what professional development was needed. They also provided expertise to help each other learn and grow. During the third year they began to fully appreciate the benefits of seeking each other out as informed professional development opportunities. In this way the teachers began to grow their own learning and began moving toward building a powerful learning community. Dr. Ovation's desire that teachers become leaders as literacy

educators was being achieved when the teachers visited each other's classrooms for peer observation to get feedback on writing projects and share in completing data analysis.

Much reliance is placed on teacher collaboration to sustain Reading First practices. Collaboration is hoped to ensure the fidelity of the core program, sustain interventions – including volunteer tutors, and provide a source for professional development. This is quite a daunting task considering the extensive amount of professional development Clearview's staff received. The professional development provided laid down the theoretical foundation for the project the first year by studying the five components of reading; phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. The first year also gave teachers training on the core program, DIBELS assessments and interventions. The second year was replenished with The Three Tiered Model and Collaborative Problem Solving along with a few other professional development components. "The first two years of professional development provided the framework for my current practices" (Ms. Calendar).

Professional development provided the vehicle for new learning and ways of doing for teachers at Clearview. The program coordinator used it to enhance teachers understanding of the Three Tiered Model and Collaborative problem solving. She first educated the Reading First personnel and then helped them to develop professional development modules to deliver to teachers in the schools. In this way the mission of Reading First was made known to all involved. As people accepted the Model as a guiding framework they began to lead the way in changing literacy education for their schools. This was true at Clearview as well. "I wasn't comfortable teaching reading before, but now that I am working with Voyager it helps me know how to teach reading. I equate Reading First with Voyager and I am not sure which this comes

from but one of the things I have learned is how to create effective reading groups and what materials to use when" (Ms George, second grade teacher).

Teachers overwhelmingly desired to sustain professional development that was conducted by the literacy specialist. The professional development that the teachers spoke of included the 180 minutes of structured professional development and both the formal and informal coaching they received. The coaching took the form of maintaining program fidelity, data analysis, modeling, and informal conversations that kept them motivated and informed. Teachers felt that one of the most valuable services the literacy specialist delivered was observing them and giving them feedback. "The most valuable person involved in Reading First that I would retain would be the literacy specialist. This would be valuable because you would have someone critiquing what you are doing, helping you with improvement, and it is not penal" (Ms. Baachas, kindergarten teacher). Ms. Calendar stated, "I feel like the program is really beginning to click for me and we need the professional development the literacy specialist provides to keep things fresh. The literacy specialist would help keep everyone organized and keep the program going." Ms. Calendar went on to explain that the literacy specialist would keep things from getting boring by being a fresh pair of eyes looking at things, helping to maintain program fidelity.

Dr. Casey discussed sustaining Reading First and stated the following:

> I think that teachers are very committed to sustaining what they have learned. They have become so passionate about Reading First that they won't let themselves be pulled back into old habits. They've learned how to be very strong literacy educators and that will drive them further. It is important that the teachers and the other Reading First staff inform the District Professional Development Academy about their continuing needs for in-depth literacy professional development. The thirst of these teachers to sustain their learning and classroom instruction will create opportunities with the quality of professional development they received while part of Reading First instead of surface level training.

Clearview as a Learning Community:

A learning community can be defined as a place where everyone is continually learning and doing. The National Association of School Principals has set forth six standards that characterize instructional leadership in learning communities. Here the six standards will also be used to determine if Clearview has moved toward becoming a learning community. The six standards are especially pertinent to this situation because one of the two intents that Dr. Ovation and Dr. Casey had for Reading First in this large urban district was to create leaders in literacy education.

The first standard states that instructional leaders lead schools in a way that places students and adult learning at the center. During the three years that Clearview was involved in Reading First this was accomplished through intense professional development, coaching, and peer collaboration. For students the immersion in learning came in the form of systematic and explicit instruction as delivered by Voyager and other interventions.

The second standard states that instructional leaders set high expectations and standards for academic and social development of all students and the performances of adults. Clearview met this standard through the use of the Three Tiered Model of Interventions. It was the expectation of Reading First leadership and the teachers at Clearview that all children would learn to read. Every action in literacy instruction was geared to accomplish this feat. In addition, teachers maintained a high level of fidelity to the core program and interventions as evidenced by program fidelity check records.

The third standard states that instructional leaders demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement of agreed-upon academic standards. While students were being tested using DIBELS and the TERRA NOVA it was the state achievement at third grade that was

the target test for teachers and students. The agreed upon standards were the state standards that were met by the core curriculum and the supplements teachers put into place when needed. An example of supplementing would be when teachers attended writing and reading comprehension professional development to provide instruction to fulfill state standards.

The fourth standard states instructional leaders create a culture of continuous learning for adults tied to student learning and other school goals. This was definitely true of Clearview as they moved through the three year cycle of professional development and moved from state mandated professional development to learning sessions that addressed school needs as decided by the teachers.

The fifth standard states that instructional leaders use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement. Using DIBELS assessments to shape instructional groups and reshape them according to new data signifies that this group of teachers became proficient at using data to foster student achievement. This is also true when they read the external evaluators report and used the information to target areas of weakness to make strong. This was evident the second year of implementation when they built up interventions while maintaining on track students successes. The third example of using data as diagnostic tool was the development of school improvement plans based on the TERRA NOVA data for the second year of implementation.

The sixth standard states that instructional leaders actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success. The thirty volunteers that were drawn into the school to do interventions with struggling students was one example of using community resources to foster student achievement. Another example were the literacy fairs

held each year to promote literacy in the home. All who attended went home with books to build a home library and foster reading.

If one would hold the activities of the Clearview staff up to the six standards of leaders of learning communities they would indeed be well on their way to achieving leadership status. By the sound of their voices, they are committed to maintaining the ground they have gained and pushing forward to be stronger in their community of practice and learning. There is one thing for sure; at the time of these interviews, the Clearview staff was poised on the edge of uncertainty. Would they be able to sustain their learning? What will that learning look like in two or three years? Teachers interviewed displayed a commitment to sustaining what they could control and release what they could not. If one holds what teachers are in control of, it is a bountiful handful of internalized learning that they will be able to take forward with them. It will be the courage and the fortitude of these teachers that will see them into sustaining their knowledge and growing it into new seeds of wisdom.

Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study. The conclusions are limited to this study because of the limited size of the population interviewed. As a case study the conclusions drawn were that sustaining change is a process, not an end product, sustaining change is more likely to succeed if those being changed have prior knowledge of the goal of the change and a belief system that is affiliated with the desired goal, teachers choose to sustain what is in their power to sustain, and that professional development, a clear model, and the use of pertinent data is integral to building a platform for sustainability.

Conclusion One:

Sustaining change is a process, not an end product. The first step in sustaining change is to change. Fullan, 2001, stated, "The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with this reality. We vastly underestimate both what change is and the factors and processes that account for it." In his work with change he found that there are at least three components or dimensions that one experiences: (1) the possible use of new or revised materials (instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies); (2) the possible use of new teaching approaches; (3) the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g. pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs) (Fullan, 2001, p. 39). The teachers at Clearview experienced all three levels of change as they lived the Reading First experience. In essence the very nature of how they taught and assessed literacy acquisition changed.

Once the change began to occur they had embarked on sustaining their new learning and ways of doing. The cycle of professional development moved them into a cycle of reflection in which they planned, taught, assessed, and revised their instruction. This was evident when teachers began talking about tweaking the program to meet their students' needs, while maintaining the instructional integrity of the core program. "I think I have gotten better at supplementing some of the things when I feel we really need to work on a skill like fluency. I also modify the Read Aloud when I feel time constraints that we need to put part of it in a station instead of doing it in whole group" (Ms. Calendar).

"Sustainability does not simply mean whether something can last. It addresses how particular initiatives can be developed without compromising the development of others in the surrounding environment, now and in the future" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000, p. 32). This implies that sustainable improvement is enduring, not evanescent, develops and draws on resource and

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supports at a rate that can match the pace of change, and this also implies that promoters of sustainability cultivate and recreate an educational environment or ecosystem that possesses the capacity to stimulate ongoing improvement on a broad front (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 192).

The teachers at Clearview face overwhelming odds. The state will withdraw money that provided support in the form of the Building Trio and on-site, extensive professional development. The District has dissolved the Language Arts Curriculum Manager position, and the principal that was so supportive of them has been moved to another school. Their support system has dwindled to themselves and the professional development that they can muster from the District Professional Development Center. It seems that they will be drawn back into their school based instruction. The one jewel that they have developed is that now they have a reference, a model, to guide their thinking, planning, and actions for literacy instruction. The Reading First initiative has left them with knowledge that will guide them in their future pursuits. As they remain together as a staff they will be able to sustain their new practices and continue to learn more about literacy education. Their strength is in their small but mighty number. As Ms. Moon stated, "You know who will be here, the teachers will be here: Ms. George, Ms. Calendar, Ms. Hawk, Ms. Sanders, Mr. Kirk, and myself, that is who will be here."

Conclusion Two:

Sustaining change is more likely to succeed if those being changed have prior knowledge of the goal of the change and a belief system that is affiliated with the desired goal. "The pragmatism of most adults makes personal relevance a key ingredient in developing a positive attitude toward change initiatives. Relevance leads to what human beings experience as interest, the emotional nutrient for a positive attitude (Wlodkowski, 2003, p. 43).

The importance of attitude formation and its manifestations in the physical world are important to consider when planning, implementing, and sustaining educational change. The workers at the forefront of educational change are the multitude of classroom teachers who directly impact student learning, school culture, and district organization.

When Reading First was presented to the Clearview staff, most teachers recognized it as containing and/or maintaining things they were already doing. What Reading First gave them was a framework to bring all of it together and to deepen their understanding of teaching young children the rudiments of literacy using a systematic and explicit approach. The structure of Voyage and the Three Tiered Model spoke to them, showing them a map of how to put together the pieces to make a meaningful whole. Their commitment to Reading First became more devoted when teachers at Clearview began to shift from hesitancy in implementing the core program to full blown implementation as they began to see student achievement gains on DIBELS assessments.

Then as teachers became more involved in the process of using data to drive instruction and planning meaningful professional development they began to gravitate more into a learning community that guided student achievement and their own learning. The involvement of teachers created an alignment of Reading First leadership vision and teacher vision of effective instructional practices. By listening to teachers leadership fostered the alignment of their individual constellation of vision with the initiative's intent. Hammerness, 2001, placed teachers in one of four constellations that ranged from a "Close-Clear" to "Close-Cloudy" to "Distant-Clear" to "Far Clear". Teachers, whose vision was closely aligned to their teaching practice, or who could clearly see connections to practice, made up the "Close-Clear" constellation. These teachers filtered decisions and attitudes through their personal vision to create a better alignment

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of the two. "Close-Cloudy" teachers were not able to describe their vision as clearly as their "Close-Clear" colleagues. For this constellation visions had a fuzzy and narrow focus, were quite close to practice and were in supportive contexts. In these cases, vision seemed to play a minimum role in teachers' lives. "Distant-Clear" constellation teachers had a clear and narrow focus, were quite distant from practice, and were in context that was at best indifferent, or at worst, inimical. Teachers in this cluster felt that the gap between their vision and their practice was overwhelmingly vast. Their distant vision undermined their motivation and depressed and discouraged them. In addition, teachers in this constellation highlighted the unsupportive nature of their contexts reflecting an image of what Rosenholtz (1989) has described as "stuck" schools. The last constellation, "Far-Clear," presented a clear vision and broad focus; here, visions were far from practice and were in a supportive context. For all of the teachers from the study whose vision placed in this constellation vision were far from practice yet remained a significant measure and guide (Hammerness, 2001, pp. 147-159).

The vision constellation metaphor gives educational change agents another insight into the complex nature of change. Hammerness' research suggests five possible tenets. (1) Attending to the visions of individual teachers may represent a powerful foundation for improvement efforts. Inviting teachers to make their visions explicit and assisting teachers to examine and challenge those visions may help to surface deeply-held attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning. (2) Uncovering deeply-held beliefs, exploring teachers' visions may help them to face inevitable setbacks and protect them from disillusionment and discouragement. (3) If reformers and teachers work together to identify and clarify the practices that will help advance teachers' visions, they may then be able to develop the appropriate institutional supports that researchers [Fullan, 1999, 2000; Elmore, 1996; and McLaughlin & Mitra, 2003] deem

necessary in order to effect change. (4) Exploring teachers' visions may also make it possible to better appreciate whether someone's opposition to a reform represents resistance to the ideas themselves or something of a learned response after having found that their own vision was not sustainable. (5) It is most likely that contexts which offer some consistency with teachers' visions will foster teacher growth toward their vision (Hammerness, 2001, pp.158-161).

Teachers at Clearview were given multiple opportunities to discuss and express their understandings and attitudes toward the Reading First initiative. These conversations and the acceptance of their positions along with a gentle push toward accepting and trying new practices did much to change their practices but gave them time and space to see the rewards of their efforts and desire to sustain their successful practices.

Conclusion Three:

When teachers are in turbulent situations, they choose to sustain what is in their power to sustain. Datnow (2001) studied thirteen schools involved in large scale reforms and found that three of thirteen schools adopted efficacious attitudes in response to changing district and state demands. "In doing so, they were able to meet new mandates head-on with either symbolic or practical responses and, at the same time, sustain their reforms" (Datnow, p. 136). Intertwined in the telling of the effects of efficacious attitude is the description of teachers and school leadership deeply committed to the implemented change structures to meet the needs of their students. They utilized this knowledge of their school needs and a commitment to develop the model presently in place to meet those needs creating a level of continuity for sustaining change when new initiatives were presented.

> At Forest, we have selected some things that we actually believe in and that's where our attention is focused. … We looked at the needs of our school. We said that we want to do Comer. Our teachers agreed. We wanted a full-service school. We wanted to make it work. Our teachers agreed. We wanted parental

involvement. They agreed (Datnow, 2005, p. 136).

Datnow's work crystallizes the images created by McLaughlin and Mitra's presentation of the need to understand the theoretical project in order to create change. When the teachers in Datnow's study declare their beliefs into actions it was based in their understanding of the work they were engaged in and the success of it. One does not have to imply that this work encompasses Fullan's dimensions of change at the classroom level. The teachers in this school state it themselves, ". . . and adopted SRA and are very happy with it" (Datnow, 2005). It appears that what is sustainable is that in which educators become a constituency of believers.

This same efficacious attitude is expressed by Clearview's teachers when they declare that they will use the teaching stations always, they will take their Voyager materials with them and then there will be something in that school that works (Ms. Moon). Ms. Calendar also stated that we will do Voyager without doing Voyager if the District pulls it as our core reading program.

These teachers know that they have no control over the mandates of the district within which they work. They do, however, have control over the instructional practices they use in their classroom. They also know that as long as they are meeting and exceeding state standards the District will leave them alone. Like the teachers in Datnow's study Clearview teachers have a sense of self-efficacy that has been supported and strengthened by the collective efficacy of the primary teaching staff that what they are doing is working and they will not give it up easily.

Conclusion Four:

Professional development is key to creating change and sustaining change. Resplendent throughout the data at Clearview is the importance that professional development played in creating an environment for change. Not only was it the type of professional

development that was delivered it was also the delivery style that made the professional development so profound. The National Professional Development Council states:

> It is essential that staff development assist educators in moving beyond comprehension of the surface features of a new idea or innovation to a fuller and more complete understanding of its purposes, critical attributes, meaning, and connection to other approaches. To improve student achievement, adult learning under most circumstances must promote deep understanding of a topic and provide many opportunities for teachers and administrators to practice new skills with feedback on their performance until those skills become automatic and habitual. Typically, deeper understanding requires a number of opportunities to interact with the idea or procedure through active learning processes that promote reflection such as discussion and dialogue, writing, demonstrations, practice with feedback, and group problem solving" (retrieved 10/21/05 from http://www.nsdc.org/standards/learning.cfm).

The design of professional development for Clearview epitomized the components of effective adult learning. It was the powerhouse combination of mandated professional development, teacher requested professional development, and Reading First personnel observations for professional development that delivered timely information and knowledge to teachers at Clearview. Coupled with the opportunity to practice new learning, reflect on new learning, and tweak new learning in a nonthreatening environment that fostered change in knowledge and practice. Integral to the success of professional development was the "in house" literacy specialist and the other members of the Building Trio, the data manager and the resource coordinator. Having this group of people on-site provided needed support when teachers risked trying something new.

The bonding of colleagues during professional development was the cement that held the staff together in their new adventures in learning and doing. They became loyal and supporting of each other, recognizing areas of weakness but not demeaning those who demonstrated the weakness. It was noted that teachers testified that they sought each other out to get advice on writing, discipline, and ways to reteach what was not learned. These experiences came about

because by the time the teachers got to peer coaching they had as Cooter would state become

master teachers who were ready to become coaches themselves. R. B. Cooter (2003) developed

a capacity-building model for teacher development based in Bloom and Vygotsky that is

reflective of National Staff Development Council standards as a way in which sustainable

learning occurs. "A key feature of this capacity-building model for teacher development is

distributed learning over time. It acknowledges that neither cognitive development of new

knowledge nor field practice is sufficient in the professional development of teachers. Rather,

the combination of both elements – new learning developed over time and practice under the

guidance of a more knowledgeable coach – is the most effective practice" (p. 199). The model

consists of five stages beginning with a stage of "No Knowledge" and progress to "Expertise and

ability to coach others." However, it is important to note that once teachers reach relative

mastery, they are continually at some stage of learning, residing in Vygotsky's *zone of proximal

development.* "That is why master teachers everywhere continue to burn the midnight oil

pursuing ever more effective ways of helping children learn" (Cooter, 20003, p. 201).

Conclusion Five:

The Three Tiered Model provided a common conceptual framework for teachers' work

and development. The Three Tiered Model was brought forward into the designing of the

Reading First Initiative for Midwest School District from Dr. Ovation's previous work at

Clayton Elementary. She had been involved with implementing the Three Tiered Model at

Clayton for several years and the students were experiencing academic gains. The Model is

structured to operate the same way when applied in different context and can be effective for

most aspects in education. For example it can be used to address classroom management or

academic instruction in all content areas.

The Model is designed to be a framework for providing intervention for students at all levels of the Model and provide for flexible grouping where students move up and down levels as academic performance or behavioral performance as it is assessed. I will revisit each level here to give a background for this discussion. Level I is made up of a core program that meets 80% of all the students needs to advance in the subject matter. Level II provides small group or individual students that are struggling, and Level I places very needy students in the Collaborative Problem Solving Process where a team of concerned individuals evaluate past performance and create a plan that is reviewed weekly for progress. The students can flow back and forth between the levels depending on their academic performance.

The Model also provides the framework to hand professional development on. At first professional development is centered on the core program, research base, and essential elements of teaching the subject matter. As time progresses and data is collected on student performance, data analysis professional development occurs to inform teachers of how to analyze data in a way that informs their classroom practice to meet all levels of student need. In addition, resources are gathered to meet the needs of interventions and enrichment for students. So while the middle group of students needs is being met by the core program interventions and enrichment are being provided. At this time the need often arises for professional development on how to manage new instructional practices that move the teacher for teaching to the middle of the class to differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

The above example of how the Three Tiered Model for Intervention can provide a Model to pin use of data, professional development, and teacher reflection together to form a continuous feedback loop of information to drive change is further enhanced when considering the comments of Dr. Ovation when describing how she used the Model to hold state and district

mandates against for making decisions. She described that if they were not relevant to the Model she gave them only required attention, but if it was pertinent to the Model she placed it in a the framework for future use.

Conclusion Six:

Data can be strong catalysts in teacher development. Data sources included DIBELS, State Mandated Tests, TERRA NOVA, Fidelity Observations and Debriefing sessions, ELLCO, informal observations and conversations, Peer Observations, External Evaluator Reports, state required Program Monitoring Binders, and professional development evaluations.

The literacy specialist stated that teachers began to really buy into the Reading First Initiative when they observed the growth their students had made on DIBELS assessments. Grade level team meetings often included discussions that resulted in the grouping of students for interventions, changing interventions, moving students out of interventions, placing them in after school interventions, how to squeeze in interventions for the whole group, how to meet the needs of on track students, and many more concerns based on DIBELS data. These discussions often challenged teachers to think about their classrooms as literacy environments.

In these reflective discussions teachers began to identify what they were doing well and what they needed to change. Teacher reflection was aided by the use of Program Fidelity Observations and Debriefing that helped teachers implement the core reading program at a high rate of integrity of its design. The pursuit of high levels of integrity caused teachers to reflect on the core program and its strengths and weaknesses causing teachers to request additional professional development in writing and comprehension to address gaps in the program. Both gaps were brought to the front at the end of the first year when third grade students did not achieve at a high level of proficiency on the state mandated test.

These examples of data fueling teacher development are representative of how data informed change. In the examples stated here there are two overwhelming factors to consider; how the data was presented and how the data was received. All professional development on data was viewed as formative tools for grouping students for instruction. In addition it was presented as a way to measure if your instruction or the instruction completed by volunteers or instructional assistants during interventions had been effective. If not, then what did you need to do?

The presentation of data from program fidelity observations was also presented as a formative measure of performance during debriefing sessions with teachers. Because it was presented as formative, it was received as formative. Teachers knew they were expected to perform, but they had an informed voice in the performance to be observed. In both instances the teachers were given feedback, materials, and support in making needed changes. Teachers involved in self-identified need for change occurred through the use of live, pertinent, meaningful data. When teachers began to experience that the changes they were making in practice created higher student achievement the cycle of assess, plan, teach, and reflect took on a new and powerful meaning for them.

Conclusion Seven:

Collaboration was the glue that held Clearview teachers focused on striving to increase student achievement. Collaboration was also viewed as strength of the school that would serve the teachers well in their efforts to sustain Reading First practices. When teachers were asked what the strength of Clearview was five of the seven stated the teachers, one stated the principal, and the seventh stated the reading program. The principal also felt that the school was viewed to

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be a safe place by the children because of the caring nature of the teachers. The teachers were viewed as an asset to the school by the principal, the students, and themselves.

When asked who would be the most important person to sustainability of Reading First in the future, answers reflected the feeling that teachers and the principal were strong, positive forces in the school. From the beginning teachers were willing to talk with each other about the surface nature of their instruction. Grade level teams were more open to discussing aspects of their practice than vertical teams. This quality was reflected in Ms Sanders' statements about the commitment level of her team. "Well, I can only speak for my team."

However, the three years this group of teachers spent together working with Reading First helped them to form a strong beginning for deeper, more insightful and productive collaborations around instructional practices. The conversations held about data, instructional practices, implementation of the core program and many other facets of the change initiative helped this group of teachers reflect on their practices and the practices of their colleagues to form new understandings. The conversations created deeper bonds that were based in a common purpose which focused their efforts into helping each other. A prolific example of the power of collaboration occurred during the last year of implementation when the group was studying writing.

> What I like the most about professional development is when teachers share their ideas. Different teachers have different strengths and weaknesses and if you get together and pull from the other teachers' strengths it would help you to see things more clearly and get more ideas. For instance Ms Hawk is a great writing teacher. When she shared her ideas with us and then we practiced them in our rooms and if we had questions we went to her room for Ideas or answers. The second grade teachers had all agreed that we needed to work on our writing and Ms Hawk would be a great resource for us. That is a great thing about our staff, we are not shy about sharing (Ms. Damas, second grade teacher).

Implications

Implications for practice, further research, and theory grow out of this study. All

implications suggest that there may need to be a shift in planning change initiatives. Historically

change has been planned and then sustainability has been considered. This small study suggests

that it is critical to consider sustainability from the very beginning.

Implications for Practice

When planning a change initiative it is important to plan with the end in mind; what is

going to change, how is it going to change, and what are the structures that need to be put in

place to guide change. If indeed teachers do undergo three dimensions of change (Fullan, 2001),

then the three dimensions must be presented to teachers on a framework for change that makes

sense to them. The streamline, compact structure of the Three Tiered Model for Intervention

suggests that a large scale change can be built on a simple framework. The use of the Model in

the Reading First initiative created change in materials teachers used, instructional practices in

the classroom, and caused teachers to undergo pedagogical shifts. This simple framework

housed the multidimensional aspects of change and presented a way of thinking that helped all

involved in Reading First process the many important and unimportant things that came their

way. As Dr. Ovation stated, it became almost a mission statement that guided the change

initiative. This would suggest that large scale change need not be complicated and might in fact

suggest that the simpler the plan the more effective it might be.

Another implication for practice is that what holds the change process together is the

alignment of intent and the constancy of purpose to achieve the intent. All other things are

moved aside to make room for the intended change. If a clear path is created and all efforts are

sighted toward fidelity to that which is intended for manifestation, then the end product will be

easier to sustain. There is a lot of change literature that speaks globally about change. When these global ideas are applied to local situations, there is a filtering process that takes place. Quite simply it might be that which fits is kept and that which does not is let go. That is appears to be what happened at Clearview. As the teachers became more adept at recognizing their needs they released theory and built a practice on application. What that meant was that the teachers understood the theory but were more intrigued by what was working in their classrooms. So change agents might be well advised to design change models that rely heavily on teacher input nestled within the change model.

An example of this is the match teachers made between their need for structure and their awareness that they were already doing many of the things contained in Reading First; it was not the theory that drew them to Reading First it was the structure. It would seem that when other teachers are looking at intended change they will analyze the change to decide if it fulfills their need. Therefore, change agents would might do well to allow discussion among and with teachers about how the change may or may not fulfill a need. In addition, there is a need for teachers to discuss how their belief system fits in with the theory of the intended change. Need and belief have a close kinship that is important to explore when working to cause change with individuals.

The final implication for practice is how success will be measured. As demonstrated by the teachers at Clearview student achievement is not only, or maybe never, measured by large scale tests. It seems that teachers use large scale tests to rank student achievement, group students for instruction, and know what level a student is achieving on in order to prepare for instruction. However, other factors are often equally important to teachers: the look in a student's eye when they know they can read; the use of vocabulary words in a new and informed

way; reading to another student or teacher; and the pride in a student's smile when an increase in scores are shared with the rest of the class. These observed, not testable indicators of student success are sometimes more valuable to teachers than test scores. It is important for teachers to explore how they define success and how they use assessment data. It is crucial that teachers know how assessment data is used in a change initiative and how they can use data as a professional development tool. For this group of teachers there was no separation of which assessment data was better the large scale tests or the observed behaviors of the students. This study suggests that it may be important to honor both.

As important as it is to honor teachers' methods for defining student achievement it is even more crucial to guide teachers in understanding uses of data. In this study multiple forms of data were collected to monitor and adjust implementation of the Reading First initiative. The data collected can be grouped in three closely related sets, student data, teacher data, and program data. Student data included DIBELS assessments – including weekly progress monitoring for struggling students, TERRA NOVA test results, State Diagnostic and Achievement tests, and classroom observations. Teacher data included all student data previously listed, Program Fidelity Observations and Debriefing meeting notes, ELLCO forms, and data from professional development sessions. Program data included external evaluator reports, yearly Innovation Configuration Reflections, Program Monitoring Binders, student data, and teacher data. All data collected was treated as active, meaningful information that was used to monitor and adjust program implementation, professional development, and decisions about student achievement on the school, classroom, and individual levels.

It became evident at Clearview that data were a live entity that fed our change attempts by informing everyone involved in the initiative valuable information to guide our practice and our

learning for how to become more proficient at literacy instruction in the urban environment we taught in. The collaboration around data gathered created a collaborative support system that consisted of the Building Trio, teachers, school leadership, and Reading First leadership. The structure of monthly interactive professional developments provided the place and time for collaboration. Data created the focal point for our discussions. The implication for change agents is that for deep meaningful change to occur there must be a support structure for the people involved in the change initiative that is focused on meaningful information, information that is applicable to the intent of the change, pertinent to those involved in the change effort, and provides insightful guidance to the people involved in implementing the change.

Implications for research

Over the past ten years there has been a multitude of research about change and a growing number of researchers looking at how to sustain change. This study suggests that there is a need to further study how the institutional climate change takes place in affects how change is sustained. This is especially true of large urban districts because of their complex nature and constant upheaval.

There is also a need to study how change initiatives define the end goal of their change efforts. In conjunction with this line of research, it would be important to look at when do teachers begin to sustain change? It seems in order to study this question we must also define more accurately what is meant by sustaining change. Is it sustaining the totality of the change initiative? Is it sustaining parts of the initiative? Is sustaining change creating environment and/or ways of doing that are self perpetuating? These questions are tied to how the change initiative defines the end goal.

In addition there is a need to study individuals in change. If change is a process, then how do we determine when an individual has changed enough to sustain change? If this is true for an individual, it is also true for a school or a school system. It might benefit the educational community if there were a study that would look at the relationship between an individual's position in change in relationship to the intent of the change and how that relationship affects sustainability. This study might look at how individuals maneuver change and when they begin to think about sustaining new knowledge and practice. Another intriguing idea in this line of thinking is the role of collaboration in producing and sustaining change.

Using data to drive instructional change is a common phrase one often hears in change literature. However, what is meant by using data to create change has many definitions. There is a need to further explore how different kinds of data can provide useful information to inform change agents efforts. In addition, it is imperative to understand what kind of data gathering tools are most useful for what kind of situations. What is known is that data gathering must be aligned with the intent of the intended change in order to provide useable feedback. There is a need to understand how to provide relevant feedback that will help those working to implement change guide their efforts successfully.

These are just a few intriguing questions that this study has brought to mind, questions that researchers are only beginning to explore and make sense of to add to the body of knowledge about change and sustainability.

Implications for theory

"Complexity theory tells us that if you increase the amount of purposeful interaction and infuse it with checks and balances of quality knowledge, self organizing patterns (desirable outcomes) will accrue; growing desirable outcomes over time occurs too slowly for a

sustainability-seeking society with a sense of urgency" (Fullan, 2005, p. 19). This realization is in direct opposition to the idea that sustaining change is a process and not an end product. In addition the sense of urgency that is predominant at this time negates the need for individuals involved in change efforts to learn the change broadly and deeply. Without adequate capacity to sustain change, change will not be sustained.

In his book, *Leadership and Sustainability: System Thinkers in Action* (2005) Fullan lists eight elements of sustainability: (1) public service with a moral purpose, (2) commitment to changing context at all levels, (3) lateral capacity building through networks, (4) intelligent accountability and vertical relationships (encompassing both capacity building and accountability), (5) deep learning, (6) dual commitment to short-term and long-term results, (7) cyclical energizing, and (8) the long lever of leadership. I would agree with Fullan that the eight elements are important to sustainability; especially after considering the data presented by the teacher interviews from Clearview. If one looks closely at the analysis of data, findings, and conclusions a little of all eight will be found; holes are created by the inability of the larger organizations to realize that consistency must be present from beginning to end of a change initiative. What is obvious about the Reading First change agenda is that while the federal government, state department of education and the District all were a part of the change agenda, they were not an integral part of the daily workings of the schools implementing Reading First. So when the change initiative went away so did the support structures to sustain change. Complexity theory demands that a constant and vigilant presence of leadership is needed to safeguard the attempts of the individuals who dare to undertake change.

Those individuals are the nuclei of change. Those individuals involved in change are all small nuclei in the workings of a larger organism. The nuclei are the building blocks of change

and complexity theory does little to address the profound impact individuals have on change and sustaining change. It is suggested here that the nuclei of an organization is the only place that change really occurs. It is the nuclei that hold the codes that spell out change and shape it to be what it becomes. Therefore it is this small but mighty epicenter of change that sprouts new knowledge and practice and then grows it to become a tree of knowledge.

Fullan quotes from Gladwell (2000) about context's impact on changing people's behavior. 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). I would suggest that it would also benefit change initiatives to not only seek to change people's behavior but to also acknowledge their level of knowing and honor the value as existing agents of change. Complexity theory cannot afford to assume that old ways of doing and old knowledge does not have value to new knowledge and new ways of doing. If change is indeed a process, then change agents must assume that those they wish to change have been involved in change and use teachers' innate, tacit knowledge to help shape and guide change. Perhaps one of the reasons change is difficult and sustainability eludes us is change agents may ask participants to accept new knowledge as the only knowledge worth acting on.

In today's world of education a discussion about complexity theory implications is not complete unless there is a discussion about data as a source of nutrition for continual cycles of change. Previously it was suggested that there may be a need for researchers to dig deep into our current uses of data to drive change and decipher which data tools are most effective to use in different situations. It also suggested that there may need to be research on what are the most effective ways to communicate the results of data collection to foster change and sustainability.

This study concludes that the use of data to foster teacher learning is the one true and natural outcome of collecting data.

Wheatley (1999) writes, "It is only the meaning of information that makes it potent or not. When information is identified as meaningful, it is a force for change. In a system's network and feedback loops, such information circulates and grows and mutates in the conversations and interactions that may occur. This process seems to be the way nature creates the well-ordered and diverse beauty that delights us. Information is generated freely by the system and fed back on itself so that it continues to grow and change" (Wheatley, 1999, p. 105). The implications of Wheatley's statements for the use of data pertaining to educational change efforts are enormous. Her statements place the use of data to inform district leadership and teachers at the apex of our change efforts. For without meaningful information there is no change.

This study suggests that for the Reading First personnel and teachers involved, data provided insightful questioning to occur about how to meet student needs. DIBELS data informed teachers of student progress toward specific goals. Data sources also guided teachers to reflect on their practice and work to change those practices that caused their implementation of the core program to fall below the 85% acceptable level, the level of implementation that was found to create success for students. This cycle of using pertinent live data created one of many sets of pertinent, live data that fed the teachers' change efforts with meaningful information, guiding them to make informed choices that fostered their success. Their success fostered a desire to sustain and grow effective practices. The avenue for the continuous feedback loop which fed the teachers information was extensive professional development. Wheatley's observations about meaningful information interfaces with the Clearview's experience to suggest

that change efforts may be more effective if live, continuous, meaningful data are used to help those involved in change grow and develop beyond intended manifestations.

Summary

    This chapter consisted of four sections, a summary of the study, the findings based on the data presented and analysis, conclusions that could be drawn from the findings, and implications for practice and research. Making sense of the interviews held with twelve employees of a large Midwestern school district was a task that teased out their voices in a way that would be significant to their change efforts, which spanned three years of intensive professional development, classroom practice, and reflection. As the twelve labored to bring into fruition the intent of the Reading First Grant to create effective literacy instructors and leaders they began to change as educators and as human beings. Their perceptions of how children learn to read and how they learn to teach shaped their new professional images. If you listen closely you will hear their passion for their profession and their caring for their students. But most of all you will hear the pride they developed in finding out that they were effective at teaching children to read.

    Dr. Ovation would be pleased to know that her desire to help teachers reach a state of understanding that the Three Tiered Model as a structure you could take anywhere may have been realized. Even more importantly she would have beamed at the realization that here there be Leaders in Literacy Education.

> My hope would be that regardless of where they go they understand the model
> in terms of need. If you use Voyager, or if you use whatever, the need to have
> a system of structures in place that is not left to chance is crucial to building a
> successful reading program. No mater what core program you use you are
> always going to have some kids who need more, and more, and more. You
> must have a clear way of identifying these kids, matching them to what they
> need, providing it, and then monitoring your work to make sure the student is
> progressing (Dr. Ovation, Program Coordinator).

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Appendices

Appendix A

University of Cincinnati
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services
Urban Educational Leadership
Emily A. Short
937-515-9435
schrote@email.uc.edu

Title of Study: A Qualitative Investigation of How Urban Teachers Sustain Change in Turbulent Times

Introduction: In today's education world many initiatives have been implemented in hopes of raising student achievement in urban schools. While many have evoked changes that have helped to improve the level of student achievement few have sustained change over an extended period of time. In fact, little is known about sustaining change because of the limited sustaining of it. This study focuses on how teachers in an urban school might sustain changes brought about by the participation in a Reading First Initiative.

Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that the following explanation of the proposed procedures be read and understood. This Consent to Participate describes the purposes, risks, and benefits of the study. The Consent also informs you of your right to withdraw from the study at any time. It is important for you to understand that no guarantees or assurances can be made as to the results of this study.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate how urban public elementary school teachers sustain changes made in instructional practices as they move from a three year Reading First Grant Initiative into the first year of district supported reading instruction.

There will be approximately thirty-two participants taking part in this study.

Duration: Your participation in this study will last approximately four months. During those four months I, the principal investigator, will be observing monthly one hundred and eighty minutes of required professional development.

You will also be required to participate in a one hour audio taped interview. The interview will be scheduled at your convenience.

Those participants that are in nonclassroom roles (literacy specialist, resource, coordinator, principal, program coordinator, Instructional Leadership Team members, Local Site Based Decision Making Committee, assistant superintendent, curriculum director, grant writer) will complete a taped one hour interview. These interviews will be scheduled at their convenience.

The school's Instructional Leadership Team and Local School Based Decision Making Committee will participate in one group interview that will last approximately one hour.

The Reading First District Planning Team meetings will be observed once a month for the four months of this study.

Procedures: During the course of this study the following will occur:

- Archival data will be collected in the form of the original grant, literacy specialist professional development planning frameworks and planning notes, Reading First Implementation Check binders will be collected from the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, Reading First District Planning Team agendas and minutes from 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, Building Trio planning meeting minutes and agendas from 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, secondary assessment data published by the school district or state department of education.

  The archival data will be collected over the first two months of the study and be coded to identify data that identifies, or relates to sustaining change.

- Over the four month study period I will attend, participate, and sometimes conduct professional development (PD) sessions during the 180 minutes of required professional development for Reading First staff. When I am not leading PD I will be observing and taking field notes of conversations that occur regarding sustaining the Reading First initiative.

- During the third month you will participate in a one hour, audio taped interview. The interview will be scheduled at your convenience.

- During the third month the Instructional Leadership Team and the Local School Based Decisions Making Committee will participate in a group interview that will be approximately one hour long. These interviews will take place at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting for each group.

- During the second month the literacy specialist, resource coordinator, program director, building principal, and the district curriculum coordinator or the assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum will each participate in a one hour, audio taped interview. These interviews will be scheduled at each person's convenience.

- All interviews will be coded in order to find patterns, themes, and/or categories to make sense of the information by looking across all data and comparing the codes (triangulating data) and matching like information to form a picture of how you prepare to sustain change after the Reading First Grant Initiative is completed.

Exclusion: Teachers who have been reprimanded for professional misconduct will be excluded from this study. All teachers not involved in the Reading First Grant Initiative will be excluded from this study.

Risks/Discomforts: This study carries minimal risk or discomfort. However, the study may involve the following discomforts and/or risks:
- *Discomfort and/or risks* when speaking at professional development sessions.
- *Discomfort and/or risk* during individual or group interviews.

Discomforts and/or risks will be safeguarded during interviews by ensuring privacy during the interview, audio recordings (until they are transcribed, after which they will be erased) and notes will be kept in a locked secure desk drawer, transcribed interviews and interview notes will not be shared with anyone without the consent of the interviewee. Information from transcribed interviews and notes will be identified by pseudonym in writing.

Risks and/or discomforts that may be associated with involvement in professional development will be minimized by all participants and I will continue to go by the protocols established to maintain a professional environment during the sessions. This includes extending PD participants the courtesy of talking openly at the session and not in the "parking lot". I will honor all participants by not discussing my field notes or observations inappropriately.

No information from the interviews or the professional development sessions will be shared with the building principal or the district administration. The only exception would be if the information shared was within the normal role of my position as a data manager for this school (i.e. planning for future professional development).

As with all research studies there may be discomforts and risks that are not yet known but the occurrence of this is thought to be extremely small. Should severe discomfort or unforeseen risks arise you have the right to decide whether to remain in the study. You may also discuss discomfort and perceived risks with the investigator, Emily Short at 937-515-9435, or Dr. Nancy Evers, 513-556-66213.

Benefits: The benefits to you for participating in this study may be that you will gain insight into your current practice and plans for how to carry your current practice into your future work. In addition you might also gain knowledge about the current system structures that are in place at the building and district level and what pitfalls you may experience in sustaining the Reading First Initiative at your school. However, you may receive no benefit at all.

Your participation in this study may help the school district and the larger educational world to understand how urban teachers define sustaining change, how they plan to sustain change, and how they implement their definition and plan in the following years.

Alternatives: As all Reading First teachers are required to complete the 180 minutes of professional development teachers who chose not to participate in the study will have no notes taken of their participation in the professional development. In this way their right not to participate will be protected.

New Findings: You will be told if there is any new information that becomes available during the course of the study that may affect your willingness to continue participation in the study.

Confidentiality: Your research data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's office. Only the investigator will have access to your data. After audiotapes of the interview have been transcribed the audiotapes will be erased. Research data will be stored in a locked desk drawer for three years after the end of this study and then will be destroyed by shredding.

The data from the study may be published; however you will not be identified by name.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or may discontinue participation AT ANY TIME, without penalty or reprisal. I have the right (as the investigator) withdraw you from the study AT ANY TIME. Your withdrawal from the study may be for reasons related solely to you (for example, not following study-related directions, etc.) or because the entire study has been terminated.

Offer to Answer Questions: If you have any questions about this study, you may call Emily Short at 937-515-9435, or Dr. Nancy Evers at 513-556-6623.

Legal Rights: Nothing in this consent form waives any legal right you have nor does it release the investigator, the institution, or its agents from liability or negligence.

I HAVE READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE. I VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM FOR MY INFORMATION.

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____
Signature and Title of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

_____
Identification of Role in the Study

Appendix B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

MARCH 2006

1. Please state your name.

2. How long have you been a teacher, administrator, Reading First Coordinator, Literacy Specialist, or Resource Coordinator (which ever is applicable to interviewee)?

3. Tell me about your involvement with Cincinnati Public Schools.

4. What are the strengths of this school?

5. Is there a weakness of the school or areas of the school that need improvement? What is it?

6. How might the school address areas that need improvement?

7. What is Reading First?

8. What was your first impression of the Reading First Initiative?

9. What does Reading First look like in your school?

10. Describe how you know a students is achieving in reading.

11. Has Reading First affected student achievement at your school? Explain.

12. What parts of Reading First are most important to sustain?

13. Has your school discussed the processes, structures, attitudes, and practices that will be needed to continue Reading First?

14. What is occurring in your school to help sustain these ideas, practices, or structures?

15. How committed are the teachers in your school in continuing Reading First practices?

15. What parts of Reading First will you sustain?

16. Who is the most important person for sustaining Reading First?