Tracing a Local Innovation Through a Changing Institutional Culture, 1968 -1992

By Patricia Burke

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Introduction

Imagine yourself as a fifth-grade student who has spent your entire school career—kindergarten through fourth grade—in one elementary building. When the 1992 term opens, you will be expected to "blend" in with 800 other fifth and sixth grade students of whom you may know only thirty former fourth grade classmates. What anxieties do you face as the new year approaches? As a ten-year-old, do you worry about how you will make friends or whether or not the work will be too hard? Will the teachers be nice? How are your parents feeling about the change? What anxieties do they hold for you? Is there anyone to help you manage this big transition?

Smooth Move was a program, which I will later describe in detail, designed by a local school counselor in mid-sized Illinois city, to respond to these questions. The names of individuals, schools, and have been changed. She sought to gain the perspective of the fourth-graders soon to be attending Charles Lindbergh school, the building slated in 1992 to house *all* district fifth and sixth graders. Her central aim was to alleviate fear and facilitate their transi

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tion to a much larger school community. For now, I only want to point out that this was a modest and sensible response to a fairly concrete redistricting problem. Yet, to this day, in spite of the single-minded advocacy and hard work of one counselor, several principals, and many teachers, it has failed to achieve stable implementation. In other words, it is not yet fully institutionalized. I wanted to better understand why not. By tracing the fate of one local innovation through its initiation and implementation phases, I hope to illuminate how the surrounding institutional culture and policy structure worked both to frustrate and encourage a grassroots professional innovation in Larchmont.

According to the November, 1992, United Way of Northwest Illinois " Community Needs Assessment Report,"

> (Larchmont) is a community of stability and strength, experiencing recent growth in its retail, industrial, and housing sectors...made up of mostly middle-income families, working mainly in the manufacturing and agricultural areas."

The next highest socioeconomic category is occupied by those employed in the professional and service sectors. Household income has risen locally, according to the 1990 census report, "however, over one-third of the residents are earning less than $20,000 per year."

Larchmont continues to have a stable population of approximately 28,000 people. Its "rural" atmosphere comes from being surrounded by good farm land while "urban" influence stem from its location only thirty miles from the nearby city of Rockford. This urban influence is reflected also by the five Fortune 500 companies which bring both professional and blue collar workers to the community. Over the

Table 1				
% Age of Students by Ethnic Groups in Larchmont				
Ethnic Group	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian American
1989	81.7	16.5	0.2	1.6
1996	77.3	20.2	1.0	1.4

past several years there has been an increase in the number of African American, Asian American and Hispanic residents. This increasing cultural diversity is also reflected in the Larchmont student population. The State of Illinois Public Act 84-126 requires all public school districts to report student performance and background information for each of the schools within the district. Table 1 below indicates the growth of respective groups from 1989 to 1996.

The number of students from families in low socioeconomic circumstances has also risen during the past 11 years, from 23.1% in 1985 to 31.8% in 1996.

Larchmont Redistricting History (1968-1974)

Phase 1: Community Consensus (1968-1975)

Charles Lindbergh Middle School first opened its doors to in the fall of 1968 to sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. Much time and effort had gone into planning for this first middle school in the Larchmont community. A building committee, comprised of administrators and elementary and secondary teachers strove to counter the sentiment that: "First we shape our buildings and thereafter they shape us. We hope that the new middle school will not 'shape us' but will serve education now and in the unforeseen decades" (Larchmont School District, December, 1966). Though the middle school would not entirely shape the educators, many unforeseen events and barriers would prove to have a profound impact on the new middle school staff and students.

While Lindbergh School was to receive sixth, seventh and eighth grade students in 1968, the Larchmont Junior High School would house the rest of the District's seventh and eight graders and all of the ninth graders. This meant that now the District had one middle school and one junior high school—both feeding into the high school. This didn't seem to cause much concern at the time. The first principal of Lindbergh identifies the main reason for building a middle school as "crowded elementary buildings." Originally, only sixth graders from a few designated elementary buildings were supposed to attend the new school, but soon all sixth grade classes were being transported to Lindbergh (personal communication, November 9, 1996). He also notes that the Larchmont School District wanted to ensure an "appropriate" distribution of minority students between Lindbergh and Larchmont Junior High. The principal recalled that at the time, parents were mainly relieved that the over-crowding problem had been solved. It is likely that an important community spokesperson had given the "blessing" to the middle school. He noted that it was a little surprising that there were no noticeable ripples of dissent in the community over the selection of the students to be assigned to each building. When asked who the leading advocates were, he couldn't remember a single individual or group. At any rate, the politically influential were apparently satisfied with the outcome.

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The first attendees of Charles Lindbergh School soon found that they would end up making a minimum of four transitions between buildings during their passage through the Larchmont Public School system. Their path was determined by the differing grade configurations among the eight elementary schools. Some were K-5 buildings, others K-6. All students from K-5 buildings who entered Lindbergh went on to Larchmont Junior High School to complete the ninth grade. From there they moved to Larchmont High School for grades ten, eleven, and twelve. Thus, after leaving Lindbergh, they would spend only one year at Larchmont Junior High before entering the high school. On the other hand, if a student had attended a six-year elementary building, then s/he went

directly to Larchmont Junior High School before entering the high school. Implementing the middle school concept resulted in an odd trade-off. Some students would have several years of busing to various schools before ever reaching the high school.

From a district perspective, this entire transition was accompanied by a large increase in student busing. The elementary buildings were all neighborhood schools. Most students walked to and from school, and some often went home for lunch. Lindbergh was located several miles from their homes. There were no planned activities to prepare for the altered family-school relationship. In today's climate, the need to make preparations would seem imperative. The casual attitude of the time may be explained by:

(1) naivete on the part of parents and educators;

(2) the assumption that students had such a secure and safe community that there would be no student fear of the unknown;

(3) self-esteem worries were less prominent at that time.

During the 1960s and 70s, under the auspices of the Larchmont Board of Education, the "Education Specifications of Middle School West," had been crafted and it became the foundational paper for what was to become Charles Lindbergh School. In this document are listed all the committee members who worked on the development and planning stages. It is strikingly obvious today that all were either teachers or school administrators. No school board members are mentioned, nor were there any parents or students included. Even though the middle school concept was ostensively developed in order to meet the needs and challenges of the adolescent student, it appears that no one thought to consult them. Plans were based solely on the ideas and research of educators. This system of transporting students, fragmented as it may appear to us today, took place without incident or complaint.

During the 1974-75 school year, the district again was faced with school reconfiguration. This time all elementary buildings would house the kindergarten through fifth-grade students. Charles Lindbergh Middle School would take all the sixth and seventh graders, and the Larchmont Junior High School was designated to be the eighth and ninth-grade building. Again, there were no preparations to help students make a transition from one building to the next and no community expressions of concern. School leaders and their community took these pressures in stride and all concurred that the best way to handle them should be left to the wisdom of educational professionals. The hierarchical structure of the school system was embedded in an approving cultural consensus.

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Phase II: The Impact of Declining Enrollment 1982-1991

This consensus persisted until the early 1980s, when student enrollment began to decrease and the District was faced with tighter financial constraints. Another redistricting loomed on the horizon. The idea of sending all fifth-grade students to Lindbergh School suggested itself as an option. The temper of the times and the District's resources had changed since the optimistic 60s and 70s. The population was also becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. This time Larchmont school personnel did hold planning meetings that included parents. Administrators faced the prospect of having to weather the controversial closing of several elementary buildings. They proposed what seemed to be the least disruptive plan. Fifth-grade students would go to Lindbergh, while Larchmont Junior High School would become an even more traditional junior high school taking the seventh and eighth grades, and Larchmont High School would revert to a four-year high school.

Still, parents complained that they did not want to send their ten-year-old children "all the way across town" to a school which held 700 to 800 students! Besides, they objected that Lindbergh was really a middle-school. To them this meant that it was a form of secondary education. No such objections had ever been heard in the previous moves. Some parents became adamant against having their children shuttled from one class to another "all day long." After many meetings, the superintendent, with the support of the Board of Education, finally decided to close three elementary buildings and move all fifth and sixth grade students to Charles Lindbergh School. The first, and still incumbent, principal was to hand over the building keys to another elementary principal who had been in the district for several years.

Major shifts in assignment were also made in the teaching staff. Teachers were told to prioritize their top three assignment preferences for the 1982-1983 school year. This came as a shock to Lindbergh teachers, many of whom had been there since the doors of the building were first opened in 1968. I was one

of those who had joined the staff as a sixth grade teacher in 1973. When the school's grade configuration later changed to make it a sixth- and seventh-grade school, I taught departmentalized social studies and writing to sixth-graders. After serving for several years as Dean of Students, I was assigned in 1982 to a fifth-grade teaching position at Charles Lindbergh—a post that I had not listed on the request form. A colleague of mine, and the counselor who was later to design *Smooth Move*, was unilaterally placed at the High School in spite of her request to remain at Lindbergh. Understandably upset, she conferred with the superintendent to get an explanation. Her outstanding work, he said, had shown that she was "needed" at the high school "to improve the counseling department there" (personal communication, November 4, 1996). There is no doubt, however, that this counselor had been a respected staff leader at Lindbergh.

So in contrast to past changes, parents, teachers, and administrators were embroiled in a turbulent time. Perhaps as a move to stem criticism, it was announced that the school's name would be changed to Charles Lindbergh Upper Elementary School. No one quite knew what an upper elementary school was. But the principal reported that the superintendent hoped to avoid the secondary school image held by so many parents who seemed to fear that their children "would become lost in the big maze" of a quasi-secondary building. He conjectured also, that the change in principal probably was the district's signal that administrators were really serious about making Lindbergh an elementary building. The new Lindbergh principal interpreted the superintendent as believing that maintaining the founding principal of a middle school in place would send the wrong message to parents and staff (personal communication, November 7, 1996). Concerned parents might be more at ease with well-known Larchmont elementary principal at the head of the upper "elementary" Charles Lindbergh School.

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The new principal was certainly correct about the symbolic value of this change in leadership. Yet it had serious morale consequences. Though it might serve to alleviate parental criticism, it could not guarantee an operational transformation from middle school to upper elementary status. For one thing, no one really had any idea what "upper elementary" might mean with respect to concrete facility use, program planning, or hiring policies. Perhaps the upper elementary designation was left purposefully undefined since no written philosophy or curriculum change ever was crafted to operationalize the concept of an "upper elementary" school.

When the superintendent left the following year, the new superintendent failed to take up this question of defining the school. Still faced with dropping enrollments, he simply cut personnel from the upper elementary school. This, of course, only deepened morale problems. Those staff members drawn from the eight elementary buildings had all been trained and were experienced elementary instructors. The remaining original Lindbergh teachers, however, had received their training as middle school/secondary educators. The principal urged them all to learn to work together since they could contribute so many different experiences and skills. He hoped they would flesh out a workable, upper-elementary school concept before they attempted to welcome fifth grade students to the new school environment. What happened instead was that he and his assistant principal devised and relied upon an orientation day for prospective students.

The first student orientation was initiated in spring of 1983 when the fourth grade students from each of the five elementary buildings visited Lindbergh. These orientations were a direct response to parental pressure. The institutional culture was changing, if slowly, from a predominantly educator-centered decision-making organization to one which more quickly accomunodated to parent discontent. To complicate matters for administrators, parents were becoming more vocal at the same time as resources dwindled. Seen as a more or less public relations measure, no one at the time viewed the orientation in curricular or programmatic terms. The teachers took no part in the planning and had only a minimal role in the orientation activities themselves.

First, students listened to a lecture about the school. Then they were divided into three groups respectively led by the principal, assistant principal, and one other staff member. They simply toured the building and walked through some of the classrooms. Not everything went well. The principal was dis-

turbed to see some of the fourth-grade students making hostile signs when they went *into* a classroom. This impression on him would later prove to be a factor in slowing the progress of the expanded *Smooth Move* program. He was also annoyed that, in some instances, he would visit a classroom with his group of children and find neither students nor teachers. He noted further, that their main questions had to do with locker assignments and whether or not they would be required to move from one classroom to another: This latter was no trivial matter. The children were voicing adult suspicions that Lindbergh would be run as a departmentalized school. Obviously, the admittedly undefined, upper- elementary concept had not been communicated to them. That would take more than a name change.

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Since the orientation was mainly a formality, no assessment by parents, teachers, or students was conducted to determine how well it had succeeded in meeting the concerns of the students and/or parent clientele. Nonetheless, it was routinized for the next six years until 1988 when the previously removed counselor was returned to Lindbergh. She returned, determined to use her responsibility for the orientation to foster a broader agenda. Her high school experiences had given her a deeper understanding of why students were so anxious about entering a new school for the first time. The counselor's commitment to a philosophy of student empowerment led her to attempt gradual but strategic changes in the school culture. Many students, she thought, brought natural leadership talents with them to school, but found there little chance to apply them. The counselor could not understand why the talents of teachers and children were so seldom used. Upon her return to Lindbergh, one of her first goals was to create opportunities to cultivate these leadership skills.

At first, the counselor attempted only minor changes in the orientations. She offered the usual lectures and tours. According to her, one hour was far too long for students at this age to sit (personal communications, October 16, 1996). She added a parent orientation soon after the new school year began. Parents' had been phoning to inquire about how best to prepare their children for the move. Since she perceived that staff-generated "change was not valued" (personnel communication, October 16, 1996) , she made orientation improvements in 1990 that to an outside observer would appear to be minor. One that particularly fit her broader philosophy was to enlist a group of students to assist in delivering the lectures. She also gave a pencil to each fourth-grader as a kind of souvenir. The counselor told the children that everybody should keep this pencil and bring it back with him or her to Lindbergh next year because "it would have the correct answers." When a fifth grade teacher noticed on the first day of school that some of her students had brought pencils with them to school, she was surprised to learn that they had received them at orientation the previous spring. Though this teacher appreciated the clever transitional activity, it also indicated to her how limited communication really was among Lindbergh staff members (personal communication, November 4, 1996).

Communication patterns like these are clearly determined by the established organizational structure and culture. Bolman and Deal label the one described here as a "simple" structure (1991, p.85). In these settings, principals are expected to make top-down decisions with little bottom-up input from teachers. Whether intentionally or not, perfectly good ideas from the counselor were often blocked from implementation because of an unquestioned definition of administrative leadership received from the past. Administrative resistance can unwittingly reinforce an unproductive, circumscribed-role bureaucracy where "control is provided mainly by the professional indoctrination of... members" (1991, p.88).

Against administrative and structural resistance, far-reaching changes were initiated during the 1990-91 school year. The counselor began a pilot study in cooperation with Oakland Park Elementary School, whose principal had been a former elementary counselor in the district. *The Ambassadors*, a group of Lindbergh sixth-graders who would go to Oakland Park during the fall term as "testbusters" was formed. Their task was to prepare Oakland Park students for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. *The Ambassadors* would also be right there the following spring at the Lindbergh orientation. Oakland Park fourth-graders were asked to place questions in a shoe box which the *Ambassadors* would read and answer in each of the fourth grade classrooms on a return visit to Oakland Park. The questions illuminated their worries:

- What time does school start and what time does it end?
- What if we are late for school?

- Is Charles Lindbergh much fun?
- Is fifth grade hard?
- Do we have reading?
- What months do we do swimming?
- What if the [swim]suit doesn't fit at Lindbergh or has a hole in it?
- Do you really cut up insects in the science lab?
- What if you forget your locker combination?
- If I wasn't in the same pod or classes with my friends, how could I make new ones?
- Are there drugs at Carl Lindbergh School?
- I'm afraid kids might start fights.
- What if you're scared?
- What is a pink slip?

(written list of questions from fourth grade students, 1990).

From the sample questions, one can see why the counselor sought to institute new activities for the scared, the shy, the wary, and even the excited fourth grade student who would otherwise be left to wait till the end of summer to answer them alone. The next move was to establish a sort of "home base" for them. The idea here was to provide the means for children to get to know at least one Lindbergh teacher or classroom. The building administrator was uncomfortable with these suggestions, preferring not even to discuss them with the rest of the staff. The counselor declined to raise the subject with the other teachers on her own, believing that she should not go forward without the principal's consent.

The fourth grade orientation students were still given pencils to remember their visit. But the counselor's hopes seemed to be stymied. It was at this time in 1991, that all her proposed orientation initiatives received the name, "Smooth Move." In a conversation, the Oakland Park principal mentioned to the counselor that her only aim was to achieve a "smooth move" for her own fourth grade students who would soon be going to Lindbergh School. To make changes in schools, it never hurts to have a bumper sticker name for your initiatives. *Smooth Move* was now printed on all the pencils received by orientation students. Now it had a programmatic identity.

Phase Three: Changes at the Top (1991-1996)

The 1991-1992 school year brought more unanticipated changes to Lindbergh which in turn affected *Smooth Move*. The previous spring, the superintendent had once again replaced the Lindbergh principal. Then the superintendent resigned and was replaced by another who increased the emphasis on parental involvement. Under his leadership, this would become a prominent feature of district strategic planning initiated during the spring of 1992. Thirty-one representatives from local businesses and the community joined forces with a select number of educators to redefine the school district's mission, goals, and objectives. The culture of Lindbergh School was immediately impacted by this change in leadership and by the increasing involvement of parents, students, and other community leaders. This was exemplified by Lindbergh's own strategic planning, problem-based learning methods, and by the development of a school-business partnership. By 1995, equity issues regarding African-American students began to emerge and play an important role in re-thinking curriculum policy and program procedures.

The counselor now had a fresh context from within which to develop *Smooth Move*. She still wanted to have the students stay at school for approximately three hours and fifteen minutes. Activities would include discussion, a tour, and an actual classroom visit. When the new principal agreed to these changes, a committee of three fifth-grade and two sixth-grade teachers, a counselor, the principal, and the assistant principal met to help develop the program. It was offered as a trial run to only one-half of the incoming fourth-grade students. The other half would serve as a control group. Subsequent to the committee's approval, the principal and counselor wrote a joint request to the superintendent asking for an extension of *Smooth Move*. In that request, the main objective was stated as follows: "To help students feel comfortable in their transition from fourth grade to fifth grade located in a new building. Students will experience some organized class time and social time of lunch recess" (written communication, March 20, 1992). The proposal continued:

> The 70 fourth grade students divided into groups of five will join one of the 13 grades' classrooms who have volunteered to participate in the pilot program. The fifth grade students will host the fourth grade students... they will experience lunch, recess and spend about one and one-half hours in the classroom (1992).

Student responses to a questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. They said that the tour had been helpful (Yes-322; No-9) and that they had learned more about Lindbergh from visiting the classroom and being there (Yes-206; No-23). While 21 students said everything was "perfect" or they would change nothing, 14 students wanted to stay all day; 61 students said all fourth grade students should stay.

All seventeen teachers also completed the survey, whether their students were in the experimental or control groups. All said the students were enthusiastic about coming for the tour and they remained enthusiastic about the experience when they returned. There were skeptics. Any field trip after all, is welcomed by most students, just for the novelty and the chance to escape a more routine environment. No evaluation was developed for parents because the counselor feared that the parents of fourth-grade children who did not get to stay in the class and eat lunch at Lindbergh School would feel left out. Some parents grumbled that their children received unfair treatment by being excluded (verbal communication, November 4, 1996).

Parents were provided with the opportunity to attend one of three parent orientation meetings scheduled for the morning, afternoon, or evening for the convenience of working parents. In the letter sent home to the parents of the class of 2000, the principal wrote:

> As you know your child has recently visited Lindbergh School through the 'Smooth Move' program. Hopefully, this provided an opportunity for your child to become acquainted with Lindbergh and maybe lessen some anxieties about leaving his or her home school. ... It is not unusual for the parents to have questions and their own concerns about their child leaving a school which he or she may have attended since kindergarten. To help the parents make a "Smooth Move," Lindbergh staff invites you to attend one of the three "Parents Welcomed at Lindbergh!" meetings (Written parent communication from Patricia J. Burke, Principal, May 5, 1992).

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The Ambassadors went to the evening parents' meeting to provide a student perspective on Charles Lindbergh School. The youngsters answered all the parents' questions and responded to their concerns. The counselor believed that this meeting was so important because parents and students would feel more comfortable as both shared their feelings. She had great confidence in The Ambassadors. Starting back in 1990, she had persisted in her efforts to promote leadership skills in the students through The Ambassadors' program and through the major role they played in *Smooth Move*. They continued to participate in the information section of the orientations and assisted with tours of the building. They also served as follow-up liaisons to the fourth grade classrooms after the actual *Smooth Move* orientation was completed.

The Ambassadors, of course, provided another symbol, as did the *Smooth Move* pencils, for the younger students. In early fall of the school year, wearing bright red "testbuster" tee shirts, they visited the elementary buildings throughout the District performing skits to help prepare students for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. They would return to these schools in the spring for the *Smooth Move* activities. Fourth graders readily identified with the red-shirted Ambassadors from Charles Lindbergh School!

This expansion of *Smooth Move* program activities meant increased work for members of the Lindbergh staff, particularly the counselor. Now she trained hosts and hostesses from the classrooms. The district transportation department became involved because the program involved two different time schedules for each of the buildings to serve both the control and experimental groups. That the counselor was persistent can be seen in her January memo to the superintendent. "Hopefully the extended version of the program may continue next year to include all fourth-grade students by allowing them to stay for the additional time" (written communication to the superintendent, January 16, 1992). And so it did. In the spring of 1993, Smooth Move reached every fourth-grade student in the elementary schools. Finally, it was on its way to becoming institutionalized!

An unexpected policy shift, however, forced a retreat in the plans for *Smooth Move* for the next few years. Lindbergh School was to be returned to its status as a middle school. This was only the half of it: A $3-million reconstruction program would begin in 1993 because the school no longer met the State of Illinois School Code. It had been built in the 1960s as an open building with few walls. Gradually over the years, walls were added to re-establish self-contained rooms. After almost twenty-five years of building within the building, the school was no longer safe—at least as deter-

mined by the State of Illinois School Code. In order to enter over one-half of the classrooms, it had become necessary to walk through another classroom. The State Code for school buildings requires that all classrooms have direct access to a hallway exit. The physical state of the school serves as a wonderful metaphor for the minimal incremental adjustment pattern of decision making that marks the District's history.

Through its decade-long status as an upper elementary school, no well defined philosophy had ever been achieved, or even attempted. Now there was a chance to start again.

When the superintendent of schools approached the principal in 1992 about the feasibility of returning Lindbergh to a middle level building, she immediately agreed. Having trained as an intern teacher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and as a former middle-level teacher who was now the principal of Lindbergh, she saw this as a way to implement some ideas of her own. She immediately engaged staff members in preliminary discussions and planning sessions regarding middle level education. Through its decade-long status as an upper elementary school, no well defined philosophy had ever been achieved, or even attempted. Now there was a chance to start again. The staff accepted the middle school concept without much objection and willingly served on the committees set up to determine the direction of program, teaming, hiring, and facility use. It was at this time that the staff first learned about the major building reconstruction slated to begin in the 1994-95. Reconstruction could facilitate planning a middle level learning environment.

Because there would be larger enrollments, there would be a need for a two-building campus. One-half of the building would be completed during the Summer of 1994. During the school year, one half of the student population would be at Lindbergh School, now nicknamed Lindbergh Central, while the other half would go to a District owned building approximately two miles west of Lindbergh Central, dubbed Lindbergh West.

The *Smooth Move* orientation became more complex as more people confronted transitory conditions. Central office staff and district transportation department had to determine which neighborhood children would go to which Lindbergh school. This task was complicated by the requirement to achieve a balance of students representing the several ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Finally, in May, after four weeks of attempting a solution, the counselor sent a letter to parents and a memo to administrators indicating that Smooth Move-1994 was "not so smooth." An earlier memo had detailed a very complicated schedule of activities. It also included a plea to teachers:

> I need volunteers. Hopefully every teacher will be able to take at least three students. We will be taking present fifth graders who will be going to Lindbergh West to visit. . . (written communication from P... to fifth- and sixth-grade teachers, May 16, 1994).

It was necessary to have enough teacher volunteers agreeing to host fourth-grade students in their classrooms in order to keep the numbers of fourth graders at approximately two to three students per classroom. In spite of the counselor's plea, some sixth-grade teachers refused fourth-grade students because they thought the age and grade differences were too great. Some teachers were more concerned about the current fifth-grade students who would soon be going to sixth-grade at Lindbergh West. Besides, the prospect of having approximately 400 eleven- or twelve-year-olds, at the same adolescent developmental stage, in one building was not a pleasant thought. Ultimately, the decision about how students would be placed was completed through teacher planning committees and teacher-team surveys.

The staff and students at West were supposed to return to Central when reconstruction was completed sometime in 1995. The staff decided they would stay at West for the entire year since it would be less disruptive. So the two-building campus remained intact for the 1994-95 school year which turned out to be a good decision because reconstruction was not completed as scheduled. But this decision meant another tough year for *Smooth Move*. Half of the Lindbergh staff and students were in a building that fourth-grade students would never see! Only half of the Lindbergh Central classrooms were even being used. *Smooth Move* lapsed to its former format of a one and one-half hour tour with a general informational session. The Ambassadors continued to assist in these activities.

Two parent sessions were set for May 23, one at 11:00 a.m. and the other at 7:00 p.m.. Parents would "have the opportunity to see the

newly reconstructed Lindbergh School; . . . the fifth-grade academic program and activities [would] be discussed. Present students of Charles Lindbergh School [would] also be available to answer questions from a child's perspective of the school." Only 50 parents (less than 13% of students in fifth-grade) came to these meetings as shown by the parent registration.

The 1995-96 school year was a more normal year as the entire staff and student body were together under one roof. The middle school initiative was being implemented. The counselor and staff were preparing for *Smooth Move* as it had been initiated two years before. Lindbergh Ambassadors had almost completed their fourth-grade class visits when the last elementary building's fourth-grade teachers decided that they no longer wanted the Ambassadors to come because they were very unhappy with their students' *Smooth Move* experience at Lindbergh. The school's counselor and administrator went immediately to the elementary teachers to hear them out. Only one decision was agreed upon: Fourth-grade students who wanted to talk to the Ambassadors could come and visit during their own lunch and recess time. Unsurprisingly, the principal recalls that fewer than half of the students actually came to ask questions. Fourth-grade teachers did not attend the sessions. It was obvious to the Lindbergh principal and counselor that the Ambassadorial sessions were not being encouraged by fourth-grade teachers. It is interesting to note on this point that a survey developed by the counselor was distributed on May 15, 1996, to the sixteen fourth-grade teachers of the district. Fourteen were returned. The negative responses all came from the teachers who had refused to admit the Ambassadors. One of the teachers wrote, "I don't feel it is valuable for the fourth-graders to be with a different teacher, in a different class, doing different curriculum." Another teacher said that the "tour was helpful but the discussion to orient [students] and answer questions...was distracting and caused a great deal of anxiety due to behavior problems the students observed." The other three fourth-grade teachers agreed that *Smooth Move* should drop the lunch provision.

These responses contrasted with most of the responding teachers who said that their students enjoyed lunchroom and class visits at Lindbergh. Four teachers mentioned that *Smooth Move* helped to relieve the students' stress about going to a new school. One of the most vocal dissenters was a teacher who had taught sixth grade for over ten years at Lindbergh during the years that Smooth Move was being initiated. She worked there under the leadership of the principal who had blocked the expansion of the orientation program beyond the tour and information session. He was her principal at another school in 1995.

Looking back, it seems clear that there was only one constant in all the efforts, and that was the long-term persistence of the counselor.

Conclusion

After all that has been said and done, a *smooth* Smooth Move had been anticipated for the 1995-96 school year: Reconstruction was completed, and the middle school transition was evolving. Why did things go wrong? Simple—one teacher and one principal persisted raising doubts about the program. Was this the only factor which prevented the institutionalizing of *Smooth Move?* Looking back, it seems clear that there was only one constant in all the efforts, and that was the long-term persistence of the counselor. She was often stopped, hindered, and even relocated due to teacher and administrator resistance. Changing stakeholders continued to intervene with their own pet interests. Once pieces were finally implemented, they lost their relevance when a new policy context made it difficult for formerly compatible components to fit. Over the years advocates became tired of the activity and/or found new places for their energies. Thus, the project (over seven years old now) remains unfinished.

Bolman and Deal (1991) define an advocacy as "a loose, flexible self-renewing organic form tied together mostly by lateral coordination....Ad hoc structures are most often found in conditions of turbulence and rapid change" (p. 91). I wanted, and still want, all members on the staff to be shareholders, decision-makers, and initiators in their own classrooms. Teachers must become the leaders—not only in their classrooms but in the building and the district. In 1992, it was I who became the principal of Lindbergh School. Many staff members felt then that I brought turbulence compared to the calmer tenures of the previous principal. I led the staff through a two-year reconstruction. In 1993, an urban education partnership was introduced; and problem-based learning followed the next year. Some teachers readily accepted (although not necessarily welcomed), these changes while others were strongly resistant. This provided the tension laden context in which *Smooth Move* was being developed.

Belasco and Stayer (1993), *in From the Flight of the Buffalo*, compare

leadership skills to two animals. In their , I wanted all the people in my school to be geese, not buffalo, as managers of their own professional growth. As Belasco and Stayer write:

> [B]uffalo are loyal to one leader; they stand around and wait for the leader to show them what to do. When the leader isn't around, they wait for him to show up. People... did only what I told them to do, nothing more, and then they "waited around" for my next set of instructions. ...What I wanted in the organization was a group of responsible, interdependent workers, similar to a flock of geese. ...I could see geese flying in their "V" formation, the leadership changing frequently, with different geese taking lead. ...I could see each goose being a leader (pp. 17-18).

I believe that in the years under consideration in this article, the Lindbergh School culture has changed for the better. Faculty committees work together in curriculum decision making, advise the administration, and develop program (i.e., yearly school theme, curriculum goal setting and assessments, Smooth Move, at-risk student assistance programs). Staff training is provided by the district (and, also, often at the school) to support curriculum and program initiatives. Staff members often take the lead in these development sessions. Problems of competition among teams of teachers for recognition sometimes crop up, but over time there appears to be less of this.

Since Smooth Move requires the cooperation of more staff and students from the five elementary buildings than it does Lindbergh School itself, how extensive its activities will continue depends on many people. Lindbergh school staff will need to involve more people in the preplanning. As Fullan states, "Teachers do receive information literature, and most attend workshops here and there; but they do not have opportunity for continuous personal contact, which would be necessary for becoming aware of and following up on. . . (initiatives)" (p. 53). Since 1992, the Lindbergh staff has been receiving much information about the middle-school student through literature and workshops. The information regarding Smooth Move will be re-emphasized, particularly for the sixth-grade teachers as they seem to be further removed from the fourth-grade students entering the building.

Bolman and Deal (1991) identify what they call the "human resource from (which) adds an additional dimension to the interplay between organizations and people" (p. 120). They agree that organizations exist and are formed to serve human needs. Not only is the consumer an important factor in the organization, the individuals within the organization are people serving their clients. In any organization these servers must be acknowledged since they are instrumental in developing and maintaining a successful organization. In the past, teachers were rewarded for being passive. They were told what they had to accomplish with little input from themselves. The teachers went their own way behind the closed doors of their classrooms. Thus, there have often been concealed conflicts influencing curriculum negotiations and practices. To keep formal or informal small interest groups from appearing, teacher committees can be established to determine policy and procedures.

One obstacle to sharing leadership responsibility is the image of the principal due to the symbolic weight projected onto the role. Perhaps other professionals such as the counselor should set the agenda and facilitate the meetings. The counselor is viewed with respect and, thus, has authority when she makes a statement. The committee should also include some teachers from Lindbergh School who have opposed some aspects of Smooth Move. These teachers deserve to be respected and their views thoughtfully considered as members of the school community.

Probably one reason why there has been a problem, especially with last year's implementation, was that the Central Office had not been contacted or asked to participate in the implementation process. An annual written communication is needed charting the progress of the program. Even more essential will be teacher advocacy within Lindbergh School.

As outlined by Fullan (1991), the other issue which is pertinent to the refinement of Smooth Move involves community pressure and new policy. The community pressure may be applied by the parents of the minority students to decrease the gap of levels of success between Caucasian and African-American students. Parents need to be involved as their children move from one building to another to help the parents themselves feel welcome to discuss concerns with the staff of their children's new building. With reform in the educational air, educators can respond to the real and necessary—but sometimes abstractly articulated—demands of groups calling for equity. Smooth Move is a local and modest response to human needs that turns out to be well suited to advance a broader range of agendas. Such innovations may never be securely institutionalized, but that can also be seen as a strength. As a professional grass roots response to a practical problem, *Smooth Move* may always be subject to the cracks, changes, and

flaws of the institutional structure in which it is embedded.

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How a Textbook Adoption Accelerated a Change in the Teaching Reading

by Stephen J. Wilson

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Introduction

Having been an elementary school principal for the past twelve years, I have had the opportunity to observe a change in how children are taught to read. In the case of West Aurora School District 129, Aurora, Illinois, this change was accelerated by a textbook adoption in the Fall of 1990. The following study covers approximately 12 years, the 1985-86 school year through, and including, the present school year, 1996-97. The first section devotes particular attention to the two-year period (from 1988-90) when the textbook selection process was initiated and a new reading series implemented. In the second section, change process theory will be applied to analyze the events chronicled in the first section.

At its April, 1990, meeting, the Board of Education for West Aurora School District 129 formally adopted a new reading series. This adoption was slated to go into effect during the following 1990-91 school year. It would affect nearly 5,000 students attending in the district's ten elementary schools. Ultimately, what seemed at the time as a simple adoption would also reshape the district's philosophy toward on the teaching of reading.

Section I: Selection and Implementation 1988-1990

The city of Aurora, Illinois, is located approximately 30 miles west of Chicago, one of the westernmost suburban communities. Three public school districts serve the city: Indian Prairie 204, East Aurora 131, and West Aurora 129. This curriculum policy study will investigate events in the West Aurora district. According to the 1996 Illinois School Report Card (Illinois State Board of Education, 1996), West Aurora School District has the following demographics:

Within the district, there are ten elementary schools (grades K-6), two middle schools (grades 7-8), and one large high school with an enrollment of approximately 2,800. The thirteen schools are administered by a central office staff. Mary Ann Gord, the reading coordinator, and Sherry Eagle, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, played key roles in guiding the teaching staff in their selection of a new reading series.

The Adoption

The district's previous reading series by Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich (HBJ), was in place when I began my first principalship at Nicholson School in August,

Total enrollment	8,842 sutdents (K-12)	
Racial/Ethnic breakdown	White	55.5%
	Hispanic	22.5%
	African American	20.0%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	2.0%
Low-income (students receiving free/reduced lunch.		26.6%

1985. Veteran teachers increasingly complained that the series was old and in need of a change. One of their concerns about the HBJ series was its traditional nature which placed a heavy emphasis on skill development, paper and pencil worksheets, phonics, and mostly watered-down story selections. It had been in place since 1978, and a reconsideration of book adoption was overdue.

According to the teachers and administrators interviewed for this study, the timing seemed right for what would ultimately be a successful textbook adoption. The growing research in whole language theory and practice was just becoming available to teachers during the mid to late 1980s. Teachers were acutely interested in new trends in the teaching of reading particularly in whole language philosophy. A concise, working definition of whole language is provided for the purpose of this analysis.

> The whole language philosophy is a belief system about the nature of learning and how it can be fostered in classrooms and schools. It is not an approach, though some kinds of activities can be reasonably characterized as whole language because they are consistent with this philosophy Language is kept whole, not fragmented into "skills;" literacy skills and strategies are developed in the context of whole, authentic literacy events, while reading and writing experiences permeate the whole curriculum; and learning within the classroom is integrated with the whole life of the learner (Weaver, 1990, p.23).

The timing of the textbook adoption was influenced also by the fact that West Aurora was eligible to receive over $500,000 from the Illinois State Board of Education Textbook Loan Fund during 1990, the year of purchase. This encouraged teachers to approach the textbook adoption opportunity with somewhat of a "blank check" mentality. This was a marked divergence from their experience in years past when budgetary restraints not only influenced, but limited and defined their choices. Some of the teachers I interviewed still recall carrying a sense of doubt and apprehension to the selection procedures during the early textbook previews. Teachers at Nicholson School, where I was assigned as principal during the selection phase, frequently asked themselves, "Why are we even looking at all of this material? We'll never be able to afford it!" (personal interview, November 6, 1996). This time we had the available funding to make the choice on professional grounds.

Assistant Superintendent Eagle had empowered the elementary teaching staff to use their best judgment in selecting a new reading series. This would not be a top-down process.

A third factor that made the timing of this adoption auspicious, was the fact that Assistant Superintendent Eagle had empowered the elementary teaching staff to use their best judgment in selecting a new reading series. This would not be a top-down process. Her philosophy was grounded in the premise that if teachers had ownership in the selection process, they would construct values reflective of their fundamental commitments. Eagle herself had a background in reading, having earned her Master's degree in that field; thus, her expertise and leadership were critical factors in the change process.

Eagle delegated the day-to-day coordination of the selection process to Mary Ann Gord who was functioning in the central office role as "program specialist" at the time. Her responsibilities included supervising the District's Title I program, the reading improvement grant, and various curriculum committees. Previous to taking this administrative post, she had built up credibility with her peers as a respected teacher of the primary grades in one of the district's elementary schools. Her recognized effectiveness as a teacher, along with the respect of her colleagues, allowed her to guide the process with poise and confidence.

"Participatory management" and "site-based decision making," two terms frequently used in public school policy discussions during the past ten years, were already place in Aurora by early in the selection process. Each elementary school was to send at least one representative to be a member of the selection committee. Each grade would be represented as well. In a meeting of the committee held August 24, 1989, Assistant Superintendent Eagle reinforced the idea that District 129 is a K-12 unit district. She made a point to encourage the development and articulation of a district-wide reading philosophy which could be employed at all grade levels. From these discussions came the identification of desired learner outcomes in the area of reading. Developing confidence in the

approach presented by Eagle was somewhat of a breakthrough for many teachers in District 129. Her leadership and commitment to a teacher-developed curriculum was rock solid and it became the base which grounded discussions during the entire textbook selection process.

The Board had the final responsibility for approving staff recommendations for a reading series, for defining desired student learner outcomes in the area of reading, and for spending close to one million dollars in new textbooks and materials.

Being something of a self-proclaimed risk taker, Eagle also offered the choice of what has become known as a "dual adoption." This meant that individual schools had the liberty to choose between a basal series, a literary series, or a combination of the two. Making this choice for their respective buildings meant that teachers had increased ownership of the selected curriculum. Of the ten elementary schools, one chose the entire basal series of Houghton-Mifflin, four made a split choice (basal for grades 1 and 2; literary for grades 3, 4, 5, and 6), and five chose a literary series for grades one through six. It should also be noted that basal does not imply "inferior" or "old-fashioned" material in this case. The basal-oriented program included a bit more of an emphasis on isolated skill development, while the literary version used more whole language philosophy and integration of writing with the teaching of reading. Both programs included authentic, quality literature selections.

The Stakeholders

As indicated by the preceding comments, several factors contributed to a successful change process which ultimately affected the teachers' philosophy of teaching reading. Time was devoted to vision building during the 1989-90 school year. Questions posed to teachers included: "What does a good reading program look like? What will meet the needs of our students? and "Which program best fits our reading curriculum?".

These questions were being asked repeatedly by the primary stakeholders, Eagle and Gord. There were, however, many other stakeholders as well. The building principals of the ten elementary schools had a considerable input into the process as well. Their particular responsibility was to facilitate the discussion and selection meetings conducted at their own schools. They held the ultimate responsibility for being accountable to the students and parents of each elementary school. The stakes were even higher than usual for them since schools now had the option of choosing and explaining their choices among three different combinations of the new series. As principal of Nicholson Elementary, I was asked why we chose a basal series for grades one and two but opted for a literary approach for other grades. The primary teachers and I had agreed that the basal offered a better foundation for beginning readers. We made our choice in light of our research, inquiry, and personal preferences. We had to be prepared to justify our conclusions.

The group of stakeholders most directly affected by the new selection consisted of the classroom teachers. They would have to live with their decision for a number of years. Since they were the ones on the "front line" in the delivery process, their role as stakeholders could not be taken lightly. Eagle and Gord accorded them a great deal of professional respect. The children of the elementary schools of course were ultimately the most important "front line" stakeholders. The building representatives on the textbook selection committee also played key stakeholder roles. They were charged with interpreting and fairly representing both their colleagues and their basic philosophy toward teaching reading in each building.

In a more global sense, the seven-members of the School Board were also a stakeholders. The Board had the final responsibility for approving staff recommendations for a reading series, for defining desired student learner outcomes in the area of reading, and for spending close to one million dollars in new textbooks and materials. It soon became clear that this adoption process would be a massive undertaking. The School Board was approached the adoption process with a great deal of confidence because historically, District 129 had built a strong working relationship between its faculty and central office administration.

In close relation to the School Board was the final stakeholder, Gary Jewel, Superintendent of School District 129. His was the responsibility to oversee the entire change process. His confidence in Eagle, Gord, and the teaching staff in the District's ten elementary schools enabled him to be somewhat removed from the day-to-day workings of this transition. According to all parties, there existed a

strong sense of trust and respect toward choosing a reading series that would best meet the needs of the students in District 129.

The Groundwork

Much groundwork was done before this change was implemented. For two years, 1988-1990, individuals and committees spent countless hours meeting, developing ideas, previewing materials, and prioritizing strengths before approving a final recommendation. The need for this groundwork was long overdue. The last time a new reading series was implemented was a decade before, in the Fall of 1978. For a variety of reasons, reviewing materials for a new reading series was put off for several years during the mid-1980s. This groundwork was begun by a reading committee of nearly 45 members in the Fall of 1988. Their primary task was to recommend a new reading series for implementation in the Fall of 1990.

During its first year of existence (the 1988-89 school year), the Committee attended an in-service workshop on current reading practices and theories. Among those emerging were whole language beliefs, whole group instruction, and flexible grouping of students as opposed to ability level teaching. Furthering the need to develop desired student learner outcomes was the existence of the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP) and its accompanying State goals for learning in the area of reading.

The original committee of 45 was split into two subcommittees. One was charged with reviewing published materials and making the recommended selection, and the other was charged with fine tuning desired learner outcomes in reading to insure that they aligned with the State goals for reading. A secondary task of the latter committee was to be mindful of methods and activities for integrating writing and language arts into the reading goals.

Beyond the scope of the Committee's work during this two-year period was a great deal of informal groundwork by the teaching staff in all buildings. Teachers were encouraged to question the current reading series (HBJ) and develop suggestions for the characteristics they would like to see in a new series. Time was allocated at regular faculty meetings for representatives of the Reading Committee to report on progress and provide in-service on new reading research.

During the Fall of 1989 and early in 1990, all teachers (not just committee members) had extensive opportunities to examine textbooks and materials from publishers. The selection process had narrowed the final decision to three potential publishers: Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich; Houghton-Mifflin; and Ginn. All three publishers sent representatives on an on-call basis and supplied the District central office with materials to preview. Teachers were even encouraged to check out texts and try them in their classrooms on a temporary basis. This hands-on approach of experimenting with new materials further enhanced the staff"s ownership in the selection process.

The Implementation

The April, 1990, meeting of the Board of Education for District 129 marked the formal approval of the new reading series from Houghton-Mifflin. By the Fall of 1990, it would be in place in all ten District elementary schools. This new adoption was a impetus for the change in how teachers would teach children to read. Michael Fullan writes that "change is a process, not an event" (Fullan, 1991, p. 49). From my research on this topic, and in conversations with teachers and administrators during my years in the principalship, this quotation has applicability, but with an addendum. The change that occurred in how we teach children to read (process) was prompted by a textbook adoption (event).

To facilitate this change in how reading is taught, there were many in-service opportunities available to certified staff. Ample time was also given to staff to become familiar with the teacher's manuals and texts. The time line on the following page offers an overview of those events and reflects the scheduled plan adhered to by the District faculty.

Additional forms of support were offered to facilitate the transition to a new program and philosophy. The primary form was in the area of funding. There was a creative blending of available monies used to finance the adoption: District dollars from the general education fund, State dollars from the Illinois State Board of Education Textbook Loan Fund, and some monies from a state reading improvement grant. Another form of support was allowed for staff development. This was in the form of release time when teachers could meet with each other and discuss the adjustments to working with the new series. The publisher provided time for its top consultant to be available to the District.

Finally, ongoing in-service training was not limited to just grade-level classroom teachers: Title I, bilingual, and special education teachers also received it. This further supported the notion that the textbook adoption was meant to serve the needs of all learners.

In conclusion, the textbook adoption was the result of a massive undertaking by teachers who were committed to making a well-researched selection that was aligned with desired learner outcomes that they had developed. The process was overseen primarily by Assis-

Date	Activity
March 19, 1990	Houghton-Mifflin recommended as publisher of the new reading series to the School Board.
April 16, 1990	Board approves Houghton-Mifflin
April 17, 1990	Materials ordered, teachers' editions rushed, reading committee members in-serviced on both basal and literary editions
April/May 1990	Building administrators receive in-service training on both editions.
Early May, 1990	Classroom teachers receive manuals and copies of student textbooks, workbooks, response manuals
Late May, 990	In-service training attended by grade levels.
Summer, 1990	Subcommittees meet to: identify activities for gifted/talented and learn how to integrate reading series into other subject areas.
Late August, 1990	New staff receive in-service training. Special education staff receive in-service.
First day of school, 1990	Students begin using materials.
Mid September, 1990	Principals surveyed to determine staff reaction.
Early December, 1990	Meet as grade levels to discuss adjustments to the new series.
Mid February, 1991	Meet again as grade levels, district-wide.
Mid May, 1991	Formal evaluation of new program by staff
Late August, 1991	New staff in-service training.

(Notes from School Board Presentation, March 1990)

tant Superintendent Sherry Eagle and Reading Coordinator Mary Ann Gord. The allocation of money, time, and staff development opportunities led to a successful adoption. The change which occurred in the teachers' philosophy toward teaching children to read will be the basis for the second half of this analysis.

Section II

The second section of this article will deal with a discussion of how the events portrayed in Section I fit into various change process models, primarily those presented by Michael Fullan in *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (1991). Additionally, I will offer my perspective as to how the change in philosophy has been institutionalized. Fullan states that:

> Ideally, the best beginnings combine the 3 Rs of relevance, readiness, and resources. *Relevance* includes the interaction of need, clarity or the innovation, ...and utility, or what it really has to offer teachers and students. ... Readiness involves the school's practical and conceptual capacity to initiate, develop or adopt a given innovation. ...*Resources* concern the accumulation of and provision of support as a part of the change process (1991, pp. 63-64).

In the course of events documented in Section I, the relevance stage was evident due to the fact that it had been ten years since the last series was adopted. In a memorandum, former Assistant Superintendent Don Nylin made note of the fact that "many needed materials will not be available in the near future as the series is a 1978 edition: Obviously this reduces our options to find a new program" (Nylin, memorandum, December 6, 1988). This need for change was a practical one in nature. The former series was too old, and the administrators and staff looked at this as an opportune time to offer something new and exciting to students.

The readiness stage of Fullan's initiation model can be applied as well. The new series addressed a need: It was reasonable, and there were supplies and materials available. Fullan states that these factors need to be evident for a change to be successfully implemented.

While the adoption process, and ultimate decision to approve the new series, fits into Fullan's model, there is still the question of how many teachers were truly ready for this change. The readiness level of several hundred elementary school teachers would be quite varied. What consideration, if any,

would be given to teachers who were reluctant about (or even militant against) not only a change in program, but in philosophy as well? This readiness factor of different individuals would play a key role in the ultimate success or failure of the philosophical change being institutionalized.

What consideration, if any, would be given to teachers who were reluctant about (or even militant against) not only a change in program, but in philosophy as well?

The resource phase refers to the readiness and willingness to support a change over an extended period of time via initiatives like staff development and coordination of ongoing training. "People often underestimate the resources needed to go forward with a change," Fullan writes. "While resources are obviously critical during implementation, it is at the initiation stage that this issue must first be considered and provided for" (Fullan, 1991, p. 64).

Eagle and Gord provided for the support phase of Fullan's model by allocating ongoing training for staff prior to the program's beginning. Teachers were given training by reading "experts," meeting with consultants, and conferring with each other. Also, each elementary school was allocated two thousand dollars for teacher staff development, conference attendance, substitutes for release time, and hiring of consultants. This was done on a building-by-building basis, further enhancing the desire to meet the needs of the learners in a particular school.

The importance of Fullan's notion of underestimating the resources needed is of particular interest. It is unfortunate that these resources for staff development no longer exist as they did during the first year of the adoption. Teachers need to be continually challenged to become acquainted with new ideas, approaches, and methods. This is particularly important in the area of reading. This is not to say that there are no opportunities or resources available to teachers at the present time, just not as many as there were during the 1990-91 school year. For true change to continue and have a positive impact on the teaching of reading, teachers need to become learners. As Roland Barth (1990) states in his book, *Improving Schools From Within*, "When teachers observe, examine, question, and reflect on their ideas and develop new practices that lead toward their ideals, students are alive. When teachers stop growing, so do their students" (p. 50). When a change in reading philosophy becomes institutionalized by the vast majority of teachers in District 129, it will be quite an accomplishment. Many of the teachers I interviewed feel they are already there, but some are not.

One case, in particular, involved a fifteen-year, veteran, first grade teacher. Due to the fact that she was on a maternity leave the year that much of the staff development was available, it took her several years to become totally comfortable with the new series and the whole language emphasis on teaching reading. "When I returned from my leave, it seemed like phonics was now a bad word, and we couldn't even refer to it at all" (Paula Olin, personal interview, November 13, 1996). This is indeed unfortunate since phonics theory does play an important role in teaching and learning to read, particularly at the first grade level.

When a change in reading philosophy becomes institutionalized by the vast majority of teachers in District 129, it will be quite an accomplishment.

> There is a high correlation between phonemic awareness upon entering first grade and poor reading progress by the end of first grade. Researchers have stressed the importance of phonemic awareness training for low-achieving emergent readers, and such training has been found to improve children's reading ability (Allington & Walmsley, 1995, p. 161).

The above excerpt from Allington and Walmsley reinforces the concept that phonics does indeed have a place in reading instruction. The teacher I interviewed has since become more comfortable with her sense of the student's phonemic awareness and the place of phonics in reading instruction. This was done primarily on a trial and error basis and in conversations with colleagues as opposed to a structured in-service opportunity like those

that had been offered during her leave of absence.

The mention of collegiality brings up another channel for change to become implemented and eventually institutionalized. The need for teachers to learn from other teachers is a way for change to continue. Judith Warren Little (1981) offers a good operational definition of collegiality in schools.

> Collegiality is the presence of four specific behaviors as follows: Adults in schools talk about practice. These conversations about teaching and learning are frequent, continuous, concrete, and precise. Adults in schools observe each other engaged in the practice of teaching and administration. These observations become the practice to reflect on and talk about. Adults engage together in work on curriculum by planning, designing, researching, and evaluating curriculum. Finally, adults in schools teach each other what they know about teaching, learning, and leading. Craft knowledge is revealed, articulated, and shared (Barth, 1990, p. 31).

Fullan (1991) also refers to Little's research in discussing the importance of collegiality and its role in the process of initiating lasting educational change.

The role of collegiality was fostered by Eagle and Gord. They developed a plan for each elementary school to have a designated reading resource teacher. This individual was paid a stipend for his or her duties, was provided with extensive training in both the basal and literary editions of the reading series, and was encouraged to attend local and state conferences on reading. This plan was in place for the first two years of the adoption (school years 1990-91 and 1991-92). Unfortunately, upon reflection of practices in the two elementary school in which I have been a principal, this role never seemed to achieve the high expectation levels set by Barth, Little, and Fullan. Teachers in the two schools still seem a bit reluctant to and apprehensive about having a colleague observe them practicing their craft.

As the primary stakeholders, Eagle and Gord also provided ample information and updates to the Board of Education to keep them apprised of the selection process and its implementation. With Eagle's role in particular, the political framework of the district was revealed. Her efforts were perhaps scrutinized a bit more closely since she had only recently been appointed to her position as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. This was viewed by the school board, principals, and teaching staff as her first major curriculum selection decision, and groups were anxiously waiting to formulate opinions of her effectiveness. Deal states that "the political perspective suggests that the goals, structure, and policies of an organization emerge from an ongoing process of bargaining and negotiating among the major interest groups" (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 203).

The major interest groups Eagle had to deal with were classroom teachers, special education and bilingual teachers, principals, her superintendent, school board members, and the taxpayers. She and Gord skillfully mastered the art of negotiating with the Houghton-Mifflin Company directly, garnishing some material discounts and consultant services for the District at a minimal cost.

Eagle and Gord also followed the eight-step model outlined by Fullan which addressed issues of need, practicality, monitoring, communication, feedback, and ongoing support (Fullan, 1991). They also had a realistic time line that allowed for two years of research of materials, development of learner outcomes, and an in-depth staff development plan to familiarize teachers with new practices of teaching reading.

Several activities were needed to implement this new change in the philosophy of teaching reading. On the surface, simply issuing new textbooks and materials wasn't going to have any significant impact on changing attitudes. For a veteran teacher entrenched in mediocrity, it meant merely teaching the same old way with a new book, a practice that would produce little, if any, change of attitude. From a reflective standpoint, the activities to implement a change were present during the first year of the new program via sessions with grade level teachers, meetings with consultants, site visits from the reading specialists, and on-going support from the Houghton-Mifflin Company's consultant.

While these efforts were plentiful during the first year (and into the second) of the textbook adoption, several years after adoption they have not been offered with the same intensity or regularity. This may account for what, I believe, is somewhat of a delay in the philosophical change becoming institutionalized. As a building principal, I now realize it took most teachers two full years to make full use of the new textbooks and materials. During the first year, the teachers were becoming acquainted with the materials. During the second year, teachers made either subtle or significant changes to the curriculum based on trial and error. Entering the third year of the new series, teachers were familiar enough with the new material; however, some had not internalized the new philosophy that accompanied it.

The lack of internalization creates a unique problem for the 1996-97 school year. The District is now in its seventh year of using the Houghton-Mifflin series. While it serves most students quite well, from my observations at two schools, there still seems to be some teachers that continue to have difficulty accepting whole language, flexible grouping, literacy, phonemic awareness and immersion in print for students. This problem is compounded when new teachers enter the school district. Some of them have been prepared at universities that have very progressive ideas regarding the integration of reading and writing. Others were prepared in a conservative, traditional manner.

Another barrier standing in the way of institutionalization of the philosophical change may lie in the District's current practice of site-based management.

Another barrier standing in the way of institutionalization of the philosophical change may lie in the District's current practice of site-based management. For instance, one of the ten elementary schools, Smith School, has spent the past year developing its own reading program. It is much less reliant upon the Houghton-Mifflin series, particularly in the upper grades (4, 5, and 6). It encourages writing and reading in a totally integrated fashion and also depends on studies of novels by the whole class. That particular school has institutionalized its philosophy. However, it can be perceived as being a barrier to a larger, full-scale philosophical change at the district level. Sherry Eagle is now Superintendent Eagle in District 129. She is to be commended for allowing a school to be creative and try what the teachers believe is a better way to teach upper grade level children to read. Fullan (1991) would describe Eagle as a "moving" superintendent as opposed to one who was "stuck." "In moving districts, superintendents require principals and teachers to set learning goals relevant to the students they serve, and monitor and stimulate progress by linking activities and performance data to improvement criteria" (Fullan, 1991, p. 207). The staff of Smith School has presented a well-researched, thorough plan which has been endorsed by the superintendent in the interest of educational change.

As the School District enters the seventh year of the "new series," it may be entering yet another level of need in the change process. In my opinion, we need to offer the potential for our teachers to expand beyond the whole language philosophy of teaching reading to an integrated approach using quality literature. This would require a "starting over" of sorts. It is the never-ending cyclical process described by Fullan:

> If the theory of change emerging at this point leads us to conclude that we needed better implementation plans and planners, we are embarking on the infinite regress that characterizes the pursuit of a theory of "changing." To bring about more effective change, we need to be able to explain not only what causes it but how to influence those causes. To implement programs successfully, we need better implementation plans; to get better implementation plans, we need to know how to change our planning process; to know how to change our planning process, we need to know how to produce better planners and implementers and on and on. Is it any wonder that the planning, doing, and coping with educational change is the 'science of muddling through' (Lindblom, 1959). But it is a science (p. 93).

The next level of expertise for teachers to achieve would be to become familiar with the concept of literacy, which is a bit more complex than reading. Rick Johnson (October, 1995), current District 129 reading specialist, provides a good foundation.

> The essence of literacy involves communication. Reading is an active process in which the reader predicts, samples, and confirms or corrects hypotheses about text in order to construct meaning. Children must read with a purpose, having some notion of why they are reading and what they are reading to find out. Because comprehension is the constant goal of the proficient reader, materials used in the teaching of reading at all stages should have meaning, interest and significance for the reader. The reading program for the early elementary years should be language based, dealing first with clauses and sentences, the basic

> unit of thought, not the word or the individual letter. Words should be introduced in meaningful context, not isolation.

This represents quite a change from my first years as a principal back in 1985. During that time, I observed many teachers relying heavily on mundane paper and pencil tasks and worksheets. The whole language textbook adoption helped some teachers change via new materials, texts, or in-service opportunities. Some teachers have changed gradually, some quickly, others very little. The differences are primarily due to the fact that change is personal, requiring a level of readiness and willingness on the part of the participant.

Johnson (1995) implies, in his thoughts regarding literacy, a need to be able to change continually, particularly as the children we teach change:

> Any community committed to literacy must have a concern for those conditions which impede the progress of instruction. The teacher and the school at large, however, must respond to the circumstances as they exist. Deficiencies in those areas related to school success must be identified and addressed by the school through adjustment in the instructional program.

Johnson also concludes his *System of Beliefs* with a strong statement on continuing educational opportunities for staff to grow. "Finally, a relevant and thorough program of ongoing in-service education for the teaching, support, supervisory, and administrative staffs must be developed and implemented based on this system of beliefs."

Completeness of the change being institutionalized requires that it become part of District 129's culture. I do not believe we are there yet. Deal offers a very practical, common sense definition of culture that was developed by Bowe (1966) as "the way we do things around here" (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 246). When teachers throughout District 129 can convey that they have a full sense of what literacy learning is and how to incorporate it into the teaching they do in their classrooms every day, this change will be institutionalized and become part of the "myths, stories and fairy tales" referred to by Deal and Bolman in discussions on the symbolic frame of an organization (1991). Then it will be part of the culture which continues to be ever changing, much like the children we teach and the adults who teach them.

It seems ironic that District 129 is about to begin the reading textbook review process all over again. Groundwork for the committee structure and formulation will have begun in January, 1997, with a possible adoption targeted for Fall, 1998. This would be an ideal time to implement a new program since the District is shifting to a K-5 elementary school format as opposed to the current K-6 system. Adding to the irony is the role of stakeholder which will be played by Reading Specialist Rick Johnson. He will, in all probability, chair this committee and guide its research, selection, and implementation. With Johnson's high regard for staff development and in-service training, I am sure he will strive for the institutionalization of the new textbook. This is something which I believe the Houghton-Mifflin initiation never quite attained.

Acknowledgments

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Restructuring to Accommodate Diverse Learners: The History of the Restructuring Effort at Main Street Elementary School

by Valerie Breshnahan

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Introduction

I joined the staff of Main Street Elementary School in August of 1991 expecting only to begin my tenure in a role called a 'learning specialist.' The Special Education Department had actually hired me for a standard learning disabilities resource position. But, Ms. Adams, the principal of Main Street School, had other ideas. Not until my second round of interviews in June, 1991, did she first reveal her plan. As we talked, I felt energy and excitement rise up in me like nothing I had experienced in all my twelve years in public schools.

Gradually I saw how I might fit into Adams's vision; yet, I wasn't even remotely prepared for what the next four years would bring: None of the staff were. We knew only that a goal was to integrate special-needs children into the regular classroom. Adams was far more ambitious—a total school restructuring to accommodate the learning needs of an increasingly diverse population. Between 1990 and 1995, the Main Street Elementary School staff found itself—to use the imagery of Wheatley (1991)—in a constant swirl of change with streams of innovation eddying and reverberating off each other.

Even though I joined the restructuring effort 18 months after it had begun, I soon became one of the principal players. As the reform energy played itself out, after 1995, I realized that I lacked a full grasp of what had been achieved. In this historical account, I attempt to trace and understand events in retrospect. Had the advocates of restructuring succeeded or failed? Had genuine inclusion been achieved? In order to compile a full record, I reviewed a variety of information sources including numerous personal interviews, Board of Education notes, the District's personnel directories, and *School Report Card*(s). In the account that follows, the names of the parents, staff members, the school, and the town have all been changed.

The Setting

In 1989, Westville had a population of about 80,000 people. According to the *School Report Card*, the District's 10,977 students were distributed among 13 elementary schools, four middle schools, and two senior high schools. Developers had purchased and partitioned farmland at the far southern edge of town to provide for two huge strip malls. The land remaining was reserved for upscale, high-priced homes. These two land developments symbolize the divergent cultural and economic interests that fueled demands for educational change.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975 formed the legislative structure in 1989 under which the District receives funds and to which it is accountable. Yet, 14 years after its passage, the District was still out of compliance. This explains why Principal Adams received full support of the Superintendent and the Board of Education for her reform agenda. Her restructuring challenge would be met in a 100-year-old, red brick building right in the heart of Westville, the county seat of Collins—a politically Republican and historically Anglo-Saxon town. The school building itself, with its apple trees stenciled on the inside walls and with its 20-foot-high ceilings, spoke of another, simpler era.

Adams was still attending the weekly meetings of the Principals'

Council as the Staff Development Specialist in the Spring of 1989. There she learned from the Director of Special Education that a $25,000 grant would be available to elementary principals willing to begin inclusion efforts in the Fall term. By then, Adams would head Main Street School. (As a new principal, she could do a lot of good with $25,000.) Though she hesitated to attempt big changes as the new, building principal, Adams declared her interest. She requested that the funds be awarded at a later term to allow her time to win staff and community support. Since teachers knew her mainly through her central office work, her first priority would be to establish her administrative credibility at the building level.

Adams came to see that she had underestimated how some children's behavior and particular cognitive defects might impact a regular classroom.

Adams was such a strong advocate of inclusion because she was the mother of a son (Jon) born with spina bifida. Thus, she had a personal stake in the issues. Jon had done well in public schools where he had been included in the regular education program. He never even had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) until he was in high school when it was required for driver's education. Jon's experience had convinced his mother that all students would profit from the same opportunities. Upon reflection, Ms. Adams later admitted that she had held naive hopes in the beginning. Her son had been a regular education student all his life. Adams came to see that she had underestimated how some children's behavior and particular cognitive defects might impact a regular classroom. Her early position was that handicapped students, whatever the handicap, should attend school in the grade they would have been in had they experienced no disabling condition. (Ms. Adams, principal, personal communication, October 9, 1996).

Historical Context

The Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. The Board of Education* in 1954 that it was unlawful under the Fourteenth Amendment to discriminate against any group of people brought profound, unintended consequences. This decision to counter racial discrimination was to "become the cornerstone for ensuring equal rights for students with disabilities" (Friend, 1996, p. 6). Before the Brown decision, curriculum for special-needs students amounted mainly to such non-academic activities as weaving and bead stringing conducted at sites far removed from the regular classroom. But, by the late '50s and early '60s, parents of handicapped students used Civil Rights legislation to claim the educational rights of their children. Also, by the "late 60s, many authorities in the field agreed that segregated special education classes were not the most appropriate education settings for many students with disabilities" (Friend, 1996, p. 7).

Since states were not required to educate children with disabilities before 1975, as many as one million American children were excluded from public education (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], (1992). The 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act, frequently referred to as PL 94-142, set out to change all that. The exact wording in Section 1412 5 (b) reads:

> The State has established procedures to assure that: to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, *or* other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (*Handicapped Students and Special Education*, 1989, p. 264).

In 1985, ten years after the enactment of the law, however, special needs students were still segregated. Madeline Will, then the United States Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, in her famous keynote address to the Wingspread Conference in Racine, Wisconsin, acknowledged the contributions of PL 94-142, but complained that it was flawed. At its heart were presumptions that children with learning problems could not be effectively taught in the regular education environment even given a variety of supports (p. 412).

Her conception of a better system soon became known as the "Regular Education Initiative" (REI). Will had mild to moderately impaired students in mind. Soon, however, parents of more severely

impaired children seized upon her call as the basis for claiming their children's rights. Organizations such as The Association for Severely Handicapped (TASH:) rallied behind a push to have all students (regardless of their handicapping conditions) included in the regular education environment. These events, taken together, put increasing pressure on local districts.

What exactly would inclusion come to mean at Main Street? Who would it help? Back in the Spring of 1990, the Main Street staff understood inclusion to mean "housing a student in the regular classroom."

The Local Impetus

National and state level advocacy for inclusion formed the context for local responses. In the case of Main Street School, one local family had a deeply unhappy seven-year-old who had received education placements since she was three years old. During the 89-90 school year, as her parents listened in anguish, she cried every night for four months. In desperation, Mr. and Mrs. Parker decided to keep her at home and teach her themselves. It was in early 1990 that they learned about the proposed inclusion program in Westville. Along with a few other parents of special-needs students, they attended the discussion at the Westville town library.

Subsequently, when the Parkers approached Main Street School, Ms. Adams immediately consulted the Director of Special Education and the Superintendent. After several on-site visits, workshops, and much research, the administrators agreed to proceed on a trial basis using the six weeks remaining in the school year as a natural trial period. They could then re-group at the close of the term to evaluate.

Mrs. Marsh, a second-grade teacher at Main Street School and the mother of three children with special needs, was surprised when she heard reports of the town library meeting. Her own children were in middle school and high school. To her, all this new talk of inclusion came as an unwelcome shock. As a regular education teacher, Marsh doubted that her own special-needs children could thrive in the regular education environment. When she expressed her concerns to Principal Adams, she was told, "It may be closer than you think" (Mrs. Marsh, personal communication, October, 1996). In fact, Adams hoped that Marsh herself would agree to take special-needs students. So, Adams simply asked Marsh, "Will you be willing to have this child in your classroom?" At first, Marsh agreed. A week later, she was asked to be ready in two weeks. Marsh was comforted only by the prospect of help from a certified teacher's assistant. It turned out that she also was the parent of a child with physical impairments. But the more she thought about it, the more troubled she became. She was not convinced that her own children would have benefitted from regular education placement. Finally, she concluded that she simply could not support this inclusion effort. The educational stakes for this child, and for all the other students in her classroom, overwhelmed her.

Other teachers also voiced this fear of the changed responsibility. As one teacher (also the mother of a child with a disability) put it:

> Sure, I can keep this student in my classroom, but what good is that going to do for the student? What will this student be able to do when he is 18? You can't just drop him in the regular education environment and think that you are educating him! (Fifth grade teacher, personal communication, 1996).

What exactly would inclusion come to mean at Main Street? Who would it help? Back in the Spring of 1990, the Main Street staff understood inclusion to mean "housing a student in the regular classroom." Parents of the first special-needs candidate were mainly interested in social integration. The classroom teacher approached the Parkers at the end of the 6-week trial period to apologize for the lack of academics. The mother responded,

> That's okay. She made great social gains! She did not scream or holler, and she stopped crying the second day of school and never cried again! (Parent, personal communication, October 19, 1996).

For the Parkers, the purposes of inclusion had been met. This was not how the regular education teachers saw things: They were deeply concerned about developing employment skills. Fullan's (1991) point that "in the beginning the meaning of change is rarely shared by all parties" is applicable here (1991).

In early Spring, 1990, Marsh was replaced by another teacher. Ms. Adams encouraged the new teacher and her assistant to describe any successes with the other teachers but to discuss difficulties only with her. This was not an attempt at propaganda. She anticipated inevi-

table but unforeseeable obstacles. She sought to preserve the opportunity to work through potential problems before the staff could form prematurely negative opinions (Special education teacher, personal communication, October 14, 1996). In addition to this careful coaching, Adams' strategy was to play down a seven-year-old child with a disability being placed in her first regular education class. If a child came to school with a broken arm, would she be obliged to inform the whole community? In her weekly newsletter to the parents, therefore, she merely named the new staff member as an addition to the Main Street School team and told her job description (Principal, personal communication, October 9, 1996).

It was soon clear to all that the placement had a dramatic effect on Joan Parker. She was proud to attend school with her big brother, a fourth grader, and her younger sister in first grade. Without direct instruction, Joan quickly modeled the social behavior of the other students. These social gains verified for Ms. Adams that this student could no longer be denied a permanent regular-classroom placement. The Special Education Director moved to expand the scope of the project. They acted partially from altruism and partially in response to administrative and community pressure. Many eyes were on their activities. One parent of a five-year-old boy with autistic-like behavior, for example, was keenly interested in the fate of the Parker placement. Her boy had neither verbal language nor any augmented way to communicate. He was not toilet-trained. His mother happened to be an attorney, well-versed in the inclusion legislation, who wanted her child included in his neighborhood school (Principal, personal communication, October 9, 1996).

Ms. Brown, Director of Special Education, carefully set out to review the students in Main Street attendance area to select five additional students for inclusion. A $5,000 grant was awarded specifically for staff development. At the suggestion of Superintendent Stone, the Board of Education agreed to create and fund a full-time position for the role of inclusion facilitator at Main Street School. The Project Choices grant provided technical assistance (Principal, personal communication, October 4, 1996). This Board and central office support came at a crucial time at Main Street Elementary School.

By the Fall of 1990, the stage seemed to be set for a smooth implementation of inclusion at Main Street Elementary, and indeed for the whole District.

Administrative Support

Superintendent Stone was a key player in promoting inclusion efforts all along. He came to the District in 1987 from Lutheran General Hospital, where he had coordinated medical research and training activities for ten years. A man of integrity and compassion, he was well respected by the staff, community, administrators, the union, and the Board of Education (BOE). Under his leadership, board-level support for special education remained high. Stone trusted the judgement of Adams, and Brown. Together, the three made a powerful team. From its inception, therefore, this inclusion effort, beginning with Main Street, met one critical requirement for implementation success: support from both the central office administrative team and the full Board of Education (Fullan, 1991, p. 74).

By the Fall of 1990, the stage seemed to be set for a smooth implementation of inclusion at Main Street Elementary, and indeed for the whole District. Six students previously in self-contained placements were identified by Brown and returned to their home school at Main Street. The inclusion facilitator position was filled by the former teacher assistant in the Parker placement. Several more teachers volunteered to accept students with disabilities. Three full-time teacher's assistants were hired, and well attended staff development sessions began.

Nonetheless, there was some faculty and parental resistance. Neither the staff as a whole nor the broad community reacted quite as positively as had the Parkers. Some staff members, in fact, still remained in a state of shock! They expressed pity for Mrs. Marsh. They worried about the potential negative impact of inclusion on their own students' learning. Some were heard to complain that there had been no staff development either before or during the six-week trial inclusion period. Little teacher input had been sought before the decision to proceed with inclusion the following year. At least in this past year they could volunteer. Only four teachers of kindergarten, first, third, and fourth grade students volunteered to house special-needs children in their classrooms.

Against this resistance, the $5,000 Project Choices grant money was used to send teachers to three out-of-state locations to learn more about inclusion. Adams visited a district in Toronto where she observed full-scale restructuring of grade levels. Upon her return, she devised opportunities for her teachers to develop a shared language

and feedback systems through weekly team meetings. A rotating substitute covered the teachers' classrooms whenever they met with the inclusion facilitator, speech pathologist, or other support personnel. Participating staff members met with brown bag lunches to "discuss their concerns, celebrate their successes, and share the journey through this change" (Principal, personal communication, October 14, 1996). Allison Ford, the author of what is known as the Syracuse Model, came to give a workshop. Ford also spent a day visiting and observing inclusion classrooms and debriefing teachers. For advocates, these events filled the school with a spirit of adventure, hope, and excitement. Adams understood the need for collaborative time. The success of these lunches and team meetings spurred her on to implement a system of released-time for planning.

Team meetings on school time were already in place when Adams introduced early release for all students. Adams was able to convince Stone that this would be necessary for restructuring reaction to this step at the end of the 1990-91 school year was explosive. The early release of students to provide planning time was vehemently denounced by several parents at an evening meeting held in the school gymnasium. In the public mind, inclusion initiatives and released time were firmly linked, so both innovations were rejected. Early release, however, was never intended to serve only inclusion efforts but to facilitate much more extensive changes. Though it was the need for time by inclusion staff members that gave Adams the idea, she aimed to provide time for innovations the community seemed to support. The reaction was a setback for Adams. The Superintendent consoled,

> Early release is not the issue," he said. "These people are grieving the change in their traditional school. Their reaction to early release is symbolic of the need to resist change (Principal, personal communication, October 4, 1996).

The Shifting Policy Climate

As it so happened, the Fall, 1990, term brought with it an unexpected influx of English as a Second Language (ESL) students. The number of ESL students new to the District and this school, in particular, had been growing for several years. During the 1986-87 school year, there were 29 at Main Street; increasing to 39 in the 1987-88 school year; and to 40 in the 1988-89 school year. By the Fall of the 1990-91 school year, the number had jumped to 60 (28 of whom spoke Spanish). Some of these students had been brought in by World Relief, an organization that sponsors refugee families from around the world. Others came from the low-income housing apartment project at the far north end of the District attendance area. The low income of the residents, combined with the high population density of the apartment complex, qualified it as a ghetto.

Many low-income African-American, Hispanic, East Indian, and single-parent families who had just moved from Maywood, lived in this complex. In order to integrate this population to the several elementary schools, the District has redistributed school attendance many times. In the most recent redistricting, a large number of ESL students, many of whom spoke no English, flooded the classrooms. This had an unexpected, lasting impact on inclusion plans at Main Street.

In November, 1990, and only after numerous pleas from the teachers, an ESL/bilingual teacher's assistant was hired (ESL teacher, personal communications, October 29, 1996). Teachers who had once opposed inclusion now welcomed the teacher's assistant who, in addition to ESL duties, helped with the inclusion students. Additional help also came from the speech therapist. The inclusion facilitator could also be counted on (Special education teacher, A, personal communication, October 14, 1996).

The speech/language therapist, the occupational therapist, and the inclusion facilitator each moved in and out of the general education classrooms at Main Street, assisting those students with disabilities while also providing support for other at-risk learners.

Adams was determined that students should not be removed routinely from general education classrooms to receive assistance because doing so highlights their disabilities, disrupts their education and teaches them to be dependent. Specialized services can be delivered in

general education classrooms" (Friend, 1996, p. 4).

Consequently, the speech/language therapist, the occupational therapist, and the inclusion facilitator each moved in and out of the general education classrooms at Main Street, assisting those students with disabilities while also providing support for other at-risk learners. The ESL teacher, on the other hand, operated strictly on a pull-out schedule in which she took small groups of children to her classroom for daily sessions of 30 minutes. This pattern contradicted the collaborative in-class model being used by the special education support team, and generated many ensuing discussions, negotiations, and expressions of dissension among teachers.

No educational innovation, of course, takes place in a policy vacuum. Inclusion implementation at Main Street was affected not only by the ESL problem and early release opposition, but by many other innovations which included a restructuring of special education service delivery, efforts to expand the bilingual program, and experiments with multi-age classrooms.

During 1991-92, several teachers were taking field-based Master's of Education program at National Lewis University. Their interests provide a good example of how policy initiatives can interact or even neutralize one another. A first-grade teacher, was investigating the effect of multi-year teaching structures on student achievement. She proposed to stay with her students for two years, moving with them from first to second grade. A second-grade teacher who agreed to "switch" places with her so she "loop" to the second grade with her pupils. At first, this arrangement seemed innocuous since it affected only the two teachers and their students. Soon, however, it was to have some far-reaching implications because it laid the groundwork for a multi-age class. When word got out, the community went again into a furor which fed the growing suspicion of moves toward inclusion.

During Adams's visit to Toronto the previous year, she saw how restructuring the service delivery model for special education support services could be done back home. She now had 12 inclusion students and more than 18 resource students. Main Street qualified for two, full-time, special education, support teachers; an inclusion facilitator; a learning disabilities resource teacher; a full-time, Chapter I teacher; and a half-time reading specialist. Since she now had a total of 3.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff positions and five teacher assistants, Adams believed that she was in a position to institute the Toronto model. The big change would be assigning support staff and teacher's assistants by grade level rather than by disability categories as was typically done. Her immediate problem was the stiffening resistance of staff members. The learning disabilities teacher, the Chapter I teacher, and the reading specialist, each of whom had been teaching for over twenty-five years, still favored the traditional pull-out service delivery model. Fortunately for Adams, all three teachers were soon to retire.

Adams replaced the retiring LD resource teacher with one who shared her vision. All students in self-contained placement, who resided in the Main Street school attendance area, were returned to their home school. The student case load was divided only according to grade levels. They each provided assistance to all students within the grade level regardless of disability. To facilitate this shift from category support to grade level support, Ms. Adams simply changed all the position titles! Facilitators, resource teachers, etc., were now to be called learning specialists. The resource teacher became known as the primary learning specialist. She provided support for kindergarten, first, and second-grade teachers. The inclusion facilitator, now renamed the intermediate learning specialist, covered the intermediate grades. This learning specialist system would provide support for all the at-risk students in their assigned grade levels. The whole restructuring of service delivery was designed to liberate the special education staff from the narrow confines of the special education categories in order to address Madeline Will's (1985) challenge made six years earlier. Adams was astute about providing some necessary conditions for educational change. She knew she had to "alter the organizational arrangements and roles of [her] school if educational reform was to take place" (Fullan, 1991, p. 80).

A new bilingual program also was introduced during the 1991-92 school year. Thirty-two students were to be pulled out of their classrooms for 30 minutes a day to receive ESL instruction, *and* for another 90 minutes they were to receive instruction in Spanish (Bilingual teacher, personal communication, October 26, 1996). Teachers were understandably dismayed by being asked to function in the new push-in model of inclusion and a pull-out model of the newly implemented bilingual program at the same time. The schizophrenic nature of service delivery demands had the principal, support staff, and classroom teachers all reeling.

The Policy Impact of Staff Changes

By the beginning of the 1992 school year, the District found itself with a brand new superintendent. He came with a reputation from his former Wisconsin city as a critic of inclusion (Special education teacher A, personal communication, October 14, 1996). Main Street School

hired a new inclusion facilitator. And then, toward the end of that school year, what had started as a modest experiment rocked the Main Street community. The multi-age classroom was presented to the community as a short-term way to manage the large number of students in the second and third grades. Adams and several teachers saw it as an effective way to respond to an increasingly diverse population. They soon learned that the community did not agree. In the Spring of 1993, yet another town meeting to defend Adams and staff proponents of multi-age classrooms was held in a gymnasium full of angry parents.

Staffing problems persisted. Main Street had to introduce a new Chapter I person and yet another new inclusion facilitator.

Over parental objection, one multi-age classroom remained in place for the 1993-94 school year. Staffing problems persisted. Main Street had to introduce a new Chapter I person and yet another new inclusion facilitator. The previous facilitator, after only one year, quit to take a teaching position in a regular education classroom. Upon hiring the new Chapter I staff person, the restructured service delivery model was expanded to include this support member. Adams attempted to bring the ESL teachers on board by constructing an in-class, combined service delivery model. The large numbers of students who spoke a second language meant that Main Street still had 1.5 ESL teachers committed to the old pull-out model.

By the beginning of the 94-95 year, the retirement of the reading specialist offered Adams the opportunity to employ someone more committed to a collaborative service delivery model. The prospective reading teacher spent the summer working with all support personnel to assure the best possible service to at-risk students. One outcome of a growing support staff was the increasing scarcity of office space. Collaborative approaches now became a practical necessity as well as an ideal. Sharing space led teachers into conversations which helped develop a common vocabulary of ideas, strategies, and concerns. "Senders and receivers of information were linked together" (Wheatley 1992, p. 105) in shared office spaces. Thus, an unexpected level of agreement about the craft of teaching was forged in little nooks and crannies throughout Main Street Elementary School.

The opening of the 1994-95 term marked inclusion's fifth year. Early release was by then an established policy. There were two multi-age classes. The bilingual program had been underway for several years. The restructured service delivery model for special education was in its fourth year and had been expanded to include the Chapter I reading specialists, with some limited cooperation with the ESL teacher. The many innovations appeared to be taking root and to be mutually reinforcing. Main Street Elementary School was changing and growing in a state of viable disequilibrium (Wheatley, 1992, p. 78). This was no small achievement for Adams and staff members. Main Street School was visited by teachers and administrators from other districts around the State who came to observe successful inclusion implementation. Staff members from Main Street were invited to give presentations to local, state, and national organizations on how to restructure to accommodate student diversity. Here was an open, dynamic system exchanging energy with its environment.

While the teacher advocates of inclusion and multi-age classrooms were devastated, other staff members greeted Adams's departure with satisfaction.

Yet a slight counter-flap, mild as that of a butterfly's wings, first felt in the Summer of 1992 when Stone resigned, would escalate by 1995 into a tornado. The restructuring efforts at Main Street came face to face with new and "amplifying levels of disturbances" (Wheatley, 1992, p. 88). First, in Spring of 1995, Ms. Brown, the Director of Special Education and a staunch supporter of Adams, announced that she was leaving for a principalship in a neighboring school district. Then, in April, Adams announced that she, too, had accepted a principalship under the superintendency of a colleague and mentor. If that were not enough, the school psychologist—a major supporter of inclusion and restructuring—announced her resignation. Three key supporters of restructuring to achieve inclusion were withdrawing. A key question was whether or not the remaining staff members at Main Street School would possess the "innate properties to reconfigure [themselves] to be able to deal with this new information" (Wheatley, p. 88).

While the teacher advocates of inclusion and multi-age classrooms were devastated, other staff members greeted Adams's departure with satisfaction. It gave them the opportunity to hire a principal who, from their perspective, could bring some needed stability to the school. A backlash by what Robert Hampel from the University of Delaware calls "the cynics" (Miller, 1996, p. 2) now moved to take over the reins of faculty leadership from inclusion advocates. This faction had long been outspoken critics of reform. Now the critics became proactive in an effort to locate a suitable new principal.

A committee of six teachers was formed to poll their colleagues regarding what qualities they sought in a new principal. The majority requested a principal less passionate about change than Adams had been. They were looking instead for someone who would require less out-of-classroom involvement. In other words, they wanted someone who would restore the status quo ante (Main Street staff members, personal communication, May, 1996).

The new principal arrived just one week before the start of school. The special education team faced a new psychologist, the fourth new inclusion facilitator in six years, and now a new principal who supported none of the Adams's initiatives—the restructured service delivery model, inclusion, multi-age classrooms, nor the bilingual program. Staff members who had worked so hard for them felt an acute loss of leadership. Opponents, in contrast, welcomed this former district teacher whose appointment signaled a return to traditional methods of schooling. The 1995-96 year proved to be chaotic.

Staff changes have continued during the current 1996-97 year. At this writing, the Chapter I teacher, the resource teacher, and the bilingual teacher have all gone to other positions in the District. Still another psychologist has been assigned to Main Street School—this one a supporter of inclusion but not of the restructured service delivery model. Inclusion, early release, and the multi-age classrooms are still in place; but the restructured, collaborative service delivery is reverting back to the former pull-out model. The learning specialists' positions have also reverted to their former status: a Chapter I (now referred to as Title I) teacher and two special-education support teachers. The new Title I teacher divides her time between two buildings. She prefers a traditional, non-collaborative, pull-out service delivery model. The learning specialists continue to divide their case load by grade level, but the newly hired special education resource teacher feels more comfortable with a pull-out model. According to staff members who have been at Main Street for several years, the dynamic collaborative environment is diminishing (Speech pathologist, personal communication, November 12, 1996).

Analysis

The strong administrative and board support that made this innovation seem so promising may have been the harbingers of its demise. At the classroom level, neither a felt need nor mission clarity marked teacher's responses during the implementation stage. Administrators were responsible for complying with national and state law, but teachers did not experience an internal need for restructuring. Main Street School had housed self-contained, special education classrooms in the past; and mainstreaming was common. Pull-out services for learning disabilities and self-contained classes for more severely involved students had achieved consensual validity for at least 15 years (since the late 1970s), and they were non-controversial. As far as the regular education staff was concerned, things were working fine.

This lack of staff investment in change prevails when, as Fullan (1991) states, "the majority of teachers were unable to identify the essential features of the innovation..." (p. 70). Most teachers at Main Street believed that "inclusion meant inclusion, meant inclusion, meant inclusion."—which translated, meant only an edict from above, "No pull-out for any reason." For many, this lacked in common sense. And, they had a point. Simply depositing special-needs students in regular education classrooms of 20-30 students, albeit with an individual aide, did not guarantee an appropriate education. This reality was not to be generally admitted by advocates until several years later.

We can see that the implementation process became too complex. Inclusion would turn out to be neither so simple nor so natural as Ms. Adams had originally believed. No one, however, could have predicted the huge effort that could come to be required or the unintended consequences of actions that looked, at the time, like sensible means to an end. As Fullan (1991) states, "These changes required a sophisticated array of activities, structures, diagnoses, teaching strategies, and philosophical understandings" (p. 71). They required also the full commitment of a dedicated staff.

A third major problem of practicality and equality dogged these efforts. Inclusion and the subsequent restructuring efforts may not have passed the "test of practicality ethics" (Fullan, 1991, p. 72). Most teachers had been quite comfortable with the familiar method of service delivery. Though the influx of ESL and Hispanic students did increase their receptivity to the inclusion model with its in-class help, teachers found the entire restructuring effort too unstructured to be practical. Furthermore, the ESL de-

livery model itself reinforced for them older and more familiar methods.

A political analysis also provides some interesting insights. At the very early stages of the innovation, inclusion literally went unnoticed in the community and other schools in the District. Adams certainly preferred that the policy to include special-needs students remain in the "zone of indifference," an activity about which only a few people care deeply. As long as Ms. Adams operated in this area, she didn't trigger political repercussions. Unexpectedly, when she stepped into early release, she found herself in an area heavily constrained by partisan pressures. For the first time, she incurred the wrath of a number of community groups (Bowman, 1991, p. 198). Thus, it was only at the end of the first full year of inclusion, when early release was initiated, that the community became agitated. Under this pressure, the professional differences hardened between teacher advocates of the changes and teacher resisters. The resisting teachers endorsed long accepted, educational routines as necessary and important. Moving students through an established curriculum, assigning paper and pencil worksheet tasks, teaching didactically, and evaluating students through standardized testing literally defined their work. The principal and those teachers who favored student-centered learning believed that the changing population, with its increasingly diverse educational needs, required systematic changes in teaching styles and methods of program delivery. As long as this group had administrative support, they could make progress without their dissenting colleagues. When that support eroded, there were no open collegial lines for communication.

When Ms. Adams began her tenure as principal, her strong connections to the central office and her relationship with the superintendent, Mr. Stone, the Special Education Director, Ms. Hill, provided her freedom of action. Adams to initiate any reform that could be supported by research and which assisted the District with policy compliance. The political climate at the central office began to change, first with Ms. Hill's resignation in 1991. During the 1992-93 school year, with the exception of the assistant superintendent for business and the director of special education, the entire central office staff had changed. At the same time, strong Board supporters were replaced by members who opposed inclusion under the rhetoric of restoring 'rigor' to the curriculum. With the Special Education Director's resignation in 1995, the linchpin of the central office support was gone. Ms. Adams lost the sustaining energy from central office. In the face of so much opposition and so little support, Ms. Adams also left. Her teacher allies at Main Street School felt abandoned. A number of veteran teachers feared a return to the pre-PL94-142 days when students with disabilities were placed in regular education classrooms with no support. Quite possibly, this is the reason they so eagerly sought, and willingly embraced, a replacement who stood for a traditional model of education.

On one level, inclusion may be considered a success at Main Street. If inclusion is defined to mean that students with a wide range of disabilities attend their home school regular education classrooms with same-age classmates, then it may be declared a success. From Main Street's first risk-taking trial in the Spring of 1990, the innovation has grown to encompass every school in the District. Inclusion now exists in 13 elementary schools, four middle schools and two high schools. Six years after the innovation was first introduced, Main Street now has 11 students included in their home school.

While the numbers are encouraging, a deeper question remains unanswered. What does inclusion really mean and to whom does it refer?

If we look past surface indicators, then the outcome is less clear. While the numbers are encouraging, a deeper question remains unanswered. What does inclusion really mean and to whom does it refer? If inclusion simply means maintaining students with disabilities in the regular education environment, then what we have here is a success story. The law , however, mandates that these students are to be educated, not just maintained. To meet this requirement, any honest answer must be more complicated.

Adams's original intention was to expand the definition of inclusion at Main Street. She hoped to use the grant money, not just for students with disabilities, but for all students. Her vision included students with a wide range of abilities, ethnic backgrounds, social economic status, and cultures. Such a vision called for deep structural changes. From this perspective, though true reform was attempted and briefly achieved under Ms. Adams's leadership, it has not taken hold. Perhaps these innovations were too massive and demanded too much effort (Fullan, 1991, p. 71). Adams did attempt, as Fullan suggests, to "break complex change into component parts and implement them in an incremental manner" (p. 72). Waves of other innovations and established policy commitments impeded this process.

It may be that the changes initiated at Main Street will reverberate somewhere else in the District. As we step back further and further in time from these events and see the evolution from a different perspective, we may learn that the disturbance caused by inclusion efforts will feed back on itself and grow exponentially to further effects (Wheatley, 1992, p. 96). If nothing else, innovators like Adams may succeed in redefining inclusion in such a way as to focus attention on a broad range of student diversity. It may be that local attempts like this one—to educate students with disabilities within the regular education environment—will strongly influence the eventual restructuring of American public education.

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From Cooperative Learning to Collaborative Practice in One District

by Susan Thomas

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Introduction

Perhaps change can best be understood through a series of stories – stories that capture the passion of those who are at the heart of an innovation. This article is devoted to a narrative account that traces a second-order change still ongoing in public school Unit District 303, St. Charles, Illinois. It hones in on the concrete experiences of implementers who worked to embed collaborative practice into the heart and soul of the workplace culture. Reading these stories from the differing perspectives of innovators can illuminate both the personal and institutional dimensions of an educational change effort.

Story I: Investing in an Idea

By 1990, cooperative learning had already become well established in St. Charles, both as an instructional strategy and a district-wide policy. Although I was hazily aware of this, it was not until the Summer of 1992 that I received training in this educational approach. Along with over 20 other high school colleagues, I enrolled in a 28-hour in-house workshop called *Cooperative Learning I*. To be quite honest, my key motivation at the time was to add a couple of more hours towards my next step on the salary schedule (a public school teacher's slow, but steady, weapon in the battle against inflation). Besides, I was also intrigued by grapevine rumors that cooperative teaching strategies offered new learning and classroom management techniques. Although I certainly couldn't know it at the time, this workshop experience would mark a turning point in my career. Implementation efforts would change me as I became a teacher: and, as an innovator myself, it would engage me in a new staff-development role. Initially however, the presented material simply supplied my hoped-for remedies or tricks of the trade. More importantly though, it helped me to clarify and reinforce my long-held beliefs about the teacher's role in student learning. I felt freshly invigorated. The instructors impressed me as unfailing models of what they recommended. The time they provided for lesson planning made my transition from workshop participant to classroom practitioner relatively easy. The District provided for follow-up visits by a cooperative learning expert from California, who acted as an outside trainer/consultant. Carole Cooper met with Cooperative Learning I "grads" and, when requested, visited our classrooms to assist with long-term instructional implementation. I was still looking for specific practices, but District administrators had already committed themselves to making cooperative learning a cornerstone of the St. Charles educational philosophy. they hoped to extend this philosophy to all District professional relationships in what they saw as a developing learning community.

By the Spring of 1993, I was wholeheartedly committed to this goal: So, when I was asked to serve as a co-trainer with my colleague Melissa Dockum, a secondary special education teacher, I eagerly accepted. Since that time, we have trained hundreds of colleagues in various aspects of cooperative learning and collaborative practice. Some of these endeavors will be outlined below. Looking back, I realize now that as with all subjects, our first lesson was that the best way to learn something new is to teach it – especially if you are learning a new educational philosophy. What I had naively taken to be a simple collection of strategies for my own improved instruction, was, in fact, a complex and far-reaching philoso-

phy stretching far beyond the classroom itself. As a socially grounded perspective, it threaded into all aspects of school/community life.

Like most educational reform innovations, cooperative learning is comprised of new approaches embodying an old idea. Many of the core beliefs that serve as its philosophical foundation hearken back to the earliest formulations of American educational thought.

From the story as I have told it so far, readers will detect my seduction into a mode of thought and practice. Perhaps because I unconsciously resisted what we used to call bias, my frank advocacy for cooperative learning as a result of my personal experience with it has taken me rather by surprise. As a trainer, I was confronted with many questions that arose from my own experiences with collaborative approaches, and from the colleagues I was supposed to train. I wanted to defend the centrality that the district— and now I—was giving to this approach to learning. I sensed that I needed a story larger than my own personal progress.

Story II: The Historical Journey

As Michael Fullan puts it, "Change is a journey, not a blueprint." To fully read the meaning of a movement, it is important to trace it to its origins. Like most educational reform innovations, cooperative learning is comprised of new approaches embodying an old idea. Many of the core beliefs that serve as its philosophical foundation hearken back to the earliest formulations of American educational thought. In his book, *The American School, 1642-1996*, historian Joel Spring (1996) notes that early American educators held assumptions based on the 17th century European thinkers Locke and Rousseau, who rejected traditional approaches to education. They opposed educational arrangements designed only to develop a citizenry compliant with the state. Education served aristocratic classes as a means to reinforce their interest in maintaining the status quo. Current cooperative learning concepts such as "performance mastery," "self-esteem," and "the child as a blank slate," have their roots in the more democratic educational claims of these philosophers. Charity schools, although different in many regards from today's cooperative learning environments, implemented these ideas and reinforced the importance of social skills. Proponents saw education as a means to guide the learning process. Schools were redefined as providers of tools for children to function productively and therefore independently in society (1996).

In the 19th century, Horace Mann, noting that "knowledge is power," insisted that in a democratic society it was a power that belonged to all. He further cautioned that the American common schools must teach cooperative values as well as knowledge (Cremin, 19964, p. 3). Nineteenth and early

Many families have recently moved to St. Charles specifically because of the District's reputation for excellent academic and extracurricular programs. District administrators and staff are proud of their strong tradition of commitment to school reform. Like most school districts today, they struggle to give shape to the national demand, as expressed in state and national policy positions to prepare students for the 21st century.

20th century pedagogical reformers, such as John Dewey and Frances W. Parker, advanced beliefs about social learning that still form the basis of cooperative learning tenets. In his Cook County Normal School established in 1880, Parker pioneered in practices that we easily recognize today, including whole language approaches, hands-on science methods, the employment of math manipulatives and even constructivist learning models of instruction

with teachers acting as facilitators. In 1902, Dewey's Laboratory School was established specifically to answer such questions as "How can a school become a cooperative community?" and "How can life serve as a ground for curriculum?" (1964, p. 19). For over fifty years, these became the driving questions behind what became known as progressive education.

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So, in 1992, when St. Charles teachers and building administrators asked for support in exploring the implementation of cooperative learning in the classrooms of their schools, they were not traveling uncharted territory. A whole cultural and educational tradition of collaborative learning has long been familiar to the American educational public.

Story III: Two Routes—One Destination

The St. Charles Community Unit School District has seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. The residents are predominantly White, upper middle class and economically, upwardly mobile. Most put a high premium on education. Many families have recently moved to St. Charles specifically because of the District's reputation for excellent academic and extracurricular programs. District administrators and staff are proud of their strong tradition of commitment to school reform. Like most school districts today, they struggle to give shape to the national demand, as expressed in state and national policy positions to prepare students for the 21st century. How then is cooperative education defined in the 1990s?

The problem in St. Charles was how to give concrete shape to a district-wide effort. As Fullan puts it, "Acts of innovation are acts of faith."

A simple definition, it turns out, wouldn't work. Spencer Kagan (1992) in his book *Cooperative Learning*, states:

> *Cooperative learning* refers to a set of instructional strategies which include cooperative student-student interaction over subject matter as an integral part of the learning process. It can be as simple as having students in pairs briefly discussing points of a lecture. Or the cooperative learning can be very complex, including the following: development of student teams, including a variety of team building activities; development of a cooperative class atmosphere, including class building activities; special training in social roles, communication skills, and group skills; assignment of specialized roles for students within teams, specialized tasks for teams; students consulting with students from other teams; complex, multi-objective lesson designs for mastery of curriculum and thinking skills; and special scoring, recognition, and reward systems for individuals, teams and classes (p. 4-I).

This inclusive definition obviously leaves the school with a wide range of foci for implementation. The problem in St. Charles was how to give concrete shape to a district-wide effort. As Fullan puts it, "Acts of innovation are acts of faith." According to his conception of an effective change effort (1991), we were off to a good start because our implementation initiative was called for by St. Charles teachers themselves. And that is the subject of our third story.

When the cooperative learning initiative made its local debut in District 303 a little less than ten years ago, two coincident forces were already in play. In 1988, the new Lincoln Elementary School Principal, Jim Jensen, joined our District from Plano, Illinois, where he had participated in an organization called The Corridor Partnership. This group of educators links nearby public school districts with the Illinois Math and Science Academy in Aurora, Illinois. Its purpose is to serve as a consortium for the promotion of educational innovations. While at Plano, Jensen became interested in the concept of collaborative classroom practice. He received 75 hours of training that focused primarily on math and problem-solving approaches in the fifth and sixth grades.

> The more I read and learned the more excited I became. This was much more, [he] realized, than simply putting students

into groups. Here was an approach that emphasized the important role of teaching social skills and processing with students not only what they learned, but *how* they learned...I came to District 303 in '88 with some training and a great deal of interest in cooperative learning and shared that with my staff. They were excited about the possibilities in their own classrooms and encouraged me to seek training for them (Personal Interview, 1996).

In 1990, Jensen wrote a small staff-development grant proposal seeking resources to support training in cooperative learning. Jensen also shared his enthusiasm with fellow District Principal, Ken Graham. An outcome of their conversation was that Jensen and a small Lincoln Elementary contingent of interested teachers joined forces with Graham and some of his staff from Richmond Elementary School. Altogether, ten participants from these two schools used Association of Supervision & Curriculum Development (ASCD) materials and a teacher/trainer from Jensen's former district to explore ways to incorporate cooperative learning into their classrooms. All these pioneer participants volunteered their own time. These were the first steps on our cooperative-learning, implementation journey.

As the Jensen group took shape, Principal Kurt Anderson and a handful of interested staff members at Thompson Middle School were exploring the arguments for detracking their school. There, students had been tracked into five learning levels: remedial, low-average, average, high average, and academically talented. Their intention was to reduce this tracking system to only two levels. They still sought to maintain the provisions for those students identified as academically talented. But for the rest of the student body, their goal was to effectively eliminate tracking. Extensive research efforts led them again and again to the growing literature on cooperative learning. They were especially drawn to work done on teaching groups of students with differing intelligences and abilities.

As part of their information gathering efforts, the Thompson teachers attended the 1990 Chicago meeting of the National Association of Curriculum Developers. Two internationally prominent presenters, Robert Slavin and Jeannie Oakes, were heavily invested in the cooperative learning movement. Oakes had earned her reputation by developing powerful arguments against tracking in American middle and secondary schools.

> We were ready to embark on a major structural change, detracking, and the messages we heard about collaborative learning communities seemed a perfect match" (Personal interview, Anderson).

This gave the Thompson crew a new sense of direction. One of them, Donna Stockman, a veteran language arts teacher at Thompson, comments. She had volunteered to pilot the detracking program in its infant stages.

> During the first of year of detracking we didn't use much cooperative learning—we were mainly coping with the new system. But, by the second year a large number of the teachers were incorporating more and more of the simple structures and strategies we had heard about or picked up at various workshops in the area. The students who were on the social fringes or from the lower income neighborhoods became incorporated into the culture of the class. The 'us' and 'them' attitude was gone overnight; cliques, as we had known them, were gone (Personal Interview, 1996).

Tthe impetus for a district-wide cooperative learning initiative was coming from two sets of stakeholders with different but related needs—the Lincoln/Richmond cadre of elementary teachers and the Thompson Middle School detracking proponents.

By the end of the 1990 school year then, the impetus for a district-wide cooperative learning initiative was coming from two sets of stakeholders with different but related needs—the Lincoln/Richmond cadre of elementary teachers and the Thompson Middle School detracking proponents. Although each approached from separate locations, their destination was the same: the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. By the following summer, the District's central administration office was offering in-district, cooperative learning training, district wide, with the support of

that support was earned is, of course, a story in itself. It is a story that began long before my own involvement and one that I needed in order to put my own progress in context.

Story IV: Inviting External Stakeholders

Sandy Wright is the St. Charles Public School's Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Supervision. "We want to learn more about this. That's how they approached me." She is referring, of course, to the beaten path of the requests for support from cooperative learning advocates from Lincoln, Richmond, and Thompson Schools. For Wright, this was exactly what she hoped to hear. Wright is a student of educational change and a noted innovator in District 303. From her perspective, an initiative which had teacher support, a strong research base, and demonstrated positive learning outcomes had the potential to integrate the variety of ongoing district initiatives. Among these were a recently implemented K-12 Process Writing program, community-wide involvement in constructing the District Mission Statement and Strategic Plan, elementary pilot programs in Whole Language and Hands-On Science approaches, and a study of a new elementary math program created at the University of Chicago. Detracking was already in place at Thompson Middle School and soon staff members at each of the District's schools would be collaborating on the creation of a Vision for the Year 2000. Wright believed that cooperative learning as an overall philosophy might provide the policy framework to link all these efforts.

Wright's advocacy included sharing faculty interests and needs with colleagues at Arthur Andersen & Company, a large corporation with an international training facility in St. Charles. District 303 had already employed the research and assessment expertise of the Andersen staff to help evaluate the effectiveness of a previously implemented process writing program.

> It became apparent we had a mutual interest: We wanted to investigate training possibilities, and they [Andersen staff] wanted to see how the collaborative principles that are germane to their training philosophy could be applied in the educational setting (Wright Interview, 1996).

Andersen's original goals were "to focus on developing an implementation plan for cooperative learning at Thompson Junior High School and apply the experience gained from Thompson to design a district-wide implementation plan." They agreed to:

- Conduct detailed research on cooperative learning
- Assess current implementation of cooperative learning at Thompson Junior High School
- Interview school principals and other administrators, as appropriate, to determine their plans to implement cooperative learning in their schools.

The cadre of teachers from Lincoln and Richmond Elementary schools who already had been trained in cooperative learning were included in the implementation study "to add depth and richness to the data base." Arthur Andersen staff then assisted the District in planning, designing, and constructing evaluation criteria for a five-day staff development program for 6th to 12th grade teachers. For Thompson Middle School Principal Kurt Anderson, working on this project with Arthur Andersen resource people was a revelation.

> After some preliminary research, we had come up with a list of experts in cooperative learning. Drs. David and Roger Johnson, both professors at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, were frequently mentioned as resources. The Arthur Andersen people not only set up a conference call with the Johnsons, themselves, and us, but also flew a group of us to Minneapolis to meet them firsthand. For me, this was a whole new definition of "networking" (Interview, 1996).

In March, 1991, three district principals, five classroom teachers, and three Arthur Andersen employees comprised the Cooperative Learning Partnership Team to oversee Phase I of the District-wide implementation effort. Their initial research convinced Arthur Andersen that it was worthwhile to pursue this initiative. Collaborative practices seemed a powerful way to follow the District Mission Statement previously crafted by educators, community members, parents, and students.

The mission of the St. Charles School District is to educate students who will:

- Think critically
- Communicate effectively
- Value and demonstrate high ethical conduct
- Possess positive self-esteem
- Contribute to their community
- Excel among people throughout the world

The members of the Cooperative Learning Partnership Team soon realized that the systematic implementation of cooperative learning approaches to pursue this mission would have far reaching implications. In the *Phase I: Cooperative Learning Implementation Study* published in November, 1991, they reported:

> When this initiative began in February, 1991, the focus was on cooperative learning as an *instructional strategy* for making learner-centered education come alive in the classroom. As a result of Phase I, the partnership team learned that cooperative learning is more than an instructional strategy, more than just "another tool in the teacher's bag of tricks." It is a powerful change strategy to build true community and strong relationship *in and out* of the classroom and to help individual students succeed in the following areas: *academic achievement, development of higher-order thinking skills, social skills, management skills, and positive self-esteem.*
>
> The role that cooperative learning can play in restructuring how people relate to another during learning can have a significant positive impact on student outcomes. Therefore, while the immediate objective of the initiative is to introduce cooperative learning as an instructional strategy in the district, the ultimate objective is to have a strategic role in actualizing a more significant goal: *creating collaboration-centered schools that truly reflect what it is to learn in concert with other people* (1991, pp.3-4).

Forty-nine middle and high school teachers were involved in the first in-district cooperative-learning training experience and met for five full days in June at Arthur Andersen's Center for Professional Education. Later that August, 30 of them returned just before the school year began for a two-day follow-up session. The first day of the follow-up training consisted of an Outdoor Adventure Education Program. During the second day, participants met in a classroom for review and extension of ideas/concepts presented at the June session. After canvassing the country for top trainers in cooperative learning methodology and philosophy, three out-of-district instructors were chosen. According to the participants' feedback collected by Arthur Andersen, all three trainers received rave reviews, and the teachers especially appreciated the hands-on practice incorporated into the instruction. The August participants liked the reinforcement of the training they had received in June, the workshop's timeliness, and the opportunity to plan with colleagues.

Both the District and Arthur Andersen were pleased with the results that the research and initial staff development efforts had produced. Three research approaches had been used: a literature review of over 60 publications; interviews with more than 20 experts, including some of the nation's leading educational researchers; and data collection from district teachers, students, parents, and principals. The next step was to recommend an implementation plan, a set of specific actions to ensure the fulfillment of the goals.

Story V: Implementing the Plan

The plan offered by Arthur Andersen was a three-year approach, with emphasis on the activities of the first year, 1991-92. Michael Fullan (1991), among others, suggests that it takes three to five years to internalize the framework of cooperative learning in a school culture and to become highly skilled in its use. Implementation research shows that there are distinct stages of development through which individuals and groups master cooperative learning. Susan Loucks-Horsley, has identified eight stages or levels of use (1991, I-16) which Arthur Andersen modified as the framework for St. Charles' three-year plan.

In general, the identified levels reflect the process of development typical of the first year of use: 1=non-use, 2=orientation, 3=preparation, and 4=mechanical use. The second year brings an advance from a rather prescriptive use of cooperative learning to more sophisticated enactments as a consequence of collaboration with colleagues. From a base of routine use, a successful teacher will go on to refine and integrate structures. In the third year, teachers often achieve the stage of "renewal" (1991, pp. 10-12).

Based on these anticipated levels of use, the implementation team listed expected teacher outcomes for each of the three years. Though many of these focus on classroom learning strategies, many others have to do with the task of embedding collaborative practices in the whole school culture and with engaging all members of the school in personal reflection practices.

Thus, the implementation plan went far beyond classroom practice to connect with the specific curricular initiatives mentioned above. Specific recommendations were

made for elementary teachers, middle school teachers, administrators, and even included a parent communication piece. Each recommendation drove staff development approaches to be offered during the 1991-92 school year.

Cooperative learning provides a framework for these two approaches and will provide specific methods for increasing students' problem-solving and decision-making skills" (1991, p. 20).

To facilitate collegial networking, teachers were enrolled in four or five person teams from each building. Through a combination of after-school, Saturday, and release-time sessions, teachers would receive instruction from a cooperative learning expert, participate in lesson planning development, observe an expert during demonstration lessons, and observe colleagues using cooperative learning. Each participant was also to receive a one-to-one expert coaching session each semester. In-house support groups would be created at Lincoln and Richmond schools, with Arthur Andersen consultants serving in an advisory capacity. A contact person from each building would serve as liaison between the school and the Cooperative Learning Partnership Team.

A separate implementation plan was conceived for the District's two middle schools, Haines and Thompson. Here, the Arthur Andersen Report acknowledged the obvious connection between cooperative learning and the middle schools' efforts in detracking.

> With this change from homogeneous to heterogeneous grouping, teachers will find cooperative learning to be a successful framework for creating collaborative climate and increasing students' interpersonal, problem-solving, and decision-making skills (1991, p. 24).

The teacher development plan was less extensive than its elementary counterpart. Two half-day and one full-day follow-up sessions throughout the school year were to be provided for the 36 teachers who had participated in the training sessions the previous Summer. Emphasis was placed on integrating cooperative learning into subject areas, student assessment, the changing role of the teacher, and constructive controversy and conflict management. Each participant was to receive a one-to-one expert coaching session each semester and, as in the elementary schools, support groups were encouraged. An Arthur Andersen consultant would be available as a resource, with a representative from each building serving as liaison to the Cooperative Learning Partnership Team.

Very brief mention is given to the staff development plan for the high school. Thirteen secondary teachers had participated in the June Summer session, and only eight attended the August follow-up. Under the "Going Forward" subhead of the report, the Committee states:

> Because of the size of the staff and a desire to accomplish a cooperative learning implementation plan in harmony with the high school's mission statement and planned change strategies, the Cooperative Learning Partnership Team will work with the high school independently in 1991-1992 to create a long-term implementation plan" (1991, p. 28).

The "Administrator Development Plan" was directed toward the building administrators of 2 middle schools; 3 elementary schools, and St. Charles High School. The focus for the first year was "to help establish a common cooperative learning definition and vocabulary and the creation of a two-year administrator implementation plan, and in Year 2 they were expected to work on "the creation of collaborative schools" (1991, p. 29). A November workshop was designed to help administrators clarify the definition(s) of and benefits of cooperative learning, assist teachers in role change from "instructors" to "facilitators," and to offer suggestions about how best to use cooperative structures with staff members.

> The use of cooperative practices supports the vision of collaborative practices at the classroom, building, and district levels. The second year of instruction will focus on how the administrator can lead stakeholders in the creation of a collaborative school" (1991, p. 29).

By embedding cooperative learning processes into the elementary curricula and using it as means to further the detracking policy in the middle schools, teacher acceptance was increased.

Although the plan only touches on the role of parents, Cooperative Learning Partnership Team intended to "continue to investigate

effective methods of communicating to parents the purposes and benefits of cooperative learning." During the first year, however, parent communications should be handled on an "as needed/requested basis" (1991, p. 30). The key issue for parents, the committee assumed, would be on assessment rather than on matters of design and initial implementation. A parent education program was suggested for Year 2 that would include recommendations on how cooperative learning practices could be used at home.

This period between 1990 and 1991 was critical for the fate of cooperative learning in District 303. As Fullan (1991) states, "Change is a process, not an event." In *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, he notes that the lines between "initiation," "implementation," "continuation," and "outcome" are hazy. The change process is not linear "because events can feed back to alter decisions in the previous phase" (1991, p. 48). In the St. Charles case, different stakeholders originally acted at different times and places—from the pioneers at Lincoln, Richmond, and Thompson, to the students in the classroom, and to their parents at home. This story illustrates Fullan's insights into how various stakeholders can become enfolded into a district's efforts to incorporate a broad initiative into the school culture. It was during this critical period that almost all the stakeholders identified themselves in such a way as to generate a change process. The district administrators and the Arthur Andersen consultants who believed in cooperative learning as an exciting, viable change agent obviously played a role as key advocates. From their respective positions, they made this innovation credible to board members, building level principals, and classroom teachers. Positive student response to cooperative structures and strategies helped persuade reluctant classroom teachers to at least experiment with cooperative learning. By embedding cooperative learning processes into the elementary curricula and using it as means to further the detracking policy in the middle schools, teacher acceptance was increased. It is apparent, however, that at this stage, little involvement occurred in the high school.

Story VI: Barriers Revealed

As a consequence of the Implementation Plan, teacher training and classroom implementation efforts were begun. We found that, as Fullan observes, "educational change is technically simple and socially complex" (p. 85). Even with all the support from internal and external advocates, planning and coordinating a multi-level social process involving hundreds of people over several years presented huge challenges. Nevertheless, training and support efforts were, for the most part, greeted with enthusiasm. This was particularly true at the elementary and middle school levels. For the next year and a half, two popular trainers, Carole Cooper (now a partner in *Global Learning Communities)* and Neil Davidson (a professor at the University of Maryland and a current junior high math teacher) worked with us. Both had been advocates of cooperative learning for about twenty years, and although each brought a distinctive teaching style, they both related easily to the real-world challenges in the classroom.

In the initial Summer training of 1991, Davidson had worked with the high school participants, Cooper with those from the middle school. Melissa Dockum (my cooperative learning co-trainer in the District) commented on this first group:

> Neil's focus was on classroom structures and strategies whereas Carole emphasized the spiritual side of cooperative learning. At the end of each day we would all get together to debrief. At first my team (the high school people) didn't like the 'touchy-feely' approach Carole used. We felt uncomfortable. This was too much of a mindshift and we weren't ready for the evolution of this initiative that incorporated things like 'social skills' and 'self-worth' and the soft side of education" (1996).

Dockum's recollection amuses me, because she reminds me of how much many of us have changed in our perceived roles as teachers. Those of us who have been practitioners of cooperative learning for several years have come to respect the subjective, collaborative side of its use over the concrete "structures only" approach. But for newcomers, our approach may feel threatening and be perceived as unintellectual or of little substance, a reaction often found at the high school level where subject matter content is often highly valued.

Many "graduates" of the first in-district cooperative learning class formed informal support groups. Trainers, Carole Cooper and Neil Davidson, had heartily encouraged these groups, aware that, without collaborative peer support, the best of intentions can easily be sidetracked, especially concerning second-order changes as complex as cooperative learning. In her book co-authored with Julie Boyd, *Collaborative Approaches to Professional Learning and Refection* (1991), Cooper states,

> In the midst of change, support group members share and generate new ideas, materials and experiences. They engage in problem-solving and re-

confidentiality, sharing of responsibility, and support for each member's growth.

Melissa Dockum and several other high school cooperative learning trainees formed an informal support group during the Fall of 1991, without stipends, released time, or any other form of enhancement.

> We were simply motivated by the needs of the group. The support group became a pivotal point in my development as a user of cooperative learning. I may not have continued its use in the classroom. The implementation of simple structures is only a small part of creating a collaborative classroom. It also requires a complete philosophical shift, especially in regards to the teachers's role. (Interview, 1996)

Study groups evolved from the original support groups. They were the brainchild of the high school's Staff Development Team, a group of 18 classroom teachers led by high school administrator, Maggie Brewner. Participants formed in groups of from three to six members, choosing to study a problem or issue that dovetailed with one or more of the initiatives, endorsed by the District, such as problem-based assessment. A specific number of validated hours had to be recorded, and the group was expected to offer a product or give a presentation in return for a stipend of one hour of professional credit on the salary schedule. Members of the Staff Development Team monitored the process.

The high school home economics instructor, Debbie Scully, elected to join the study group because, she explains,

> I found it was essential for actually planning lessons and incorporating them into the classroom. Time and curriculum are the greatest enemies to implementing cooperative learning. I saw its value and believed in it right away, but it is very difficult to put into practice. (Personal Inteview, 1996)

She credited the study group approach for keeping her from "slipping back into the old ways." Gradually, she says, she saw her role as a teacher begin to change—"it's the whole philosophy: it's a lot harder, for example, to ask the right questions than to tell students what to do" (1996).

It was during this 1991-92 period that Carole Cooper, as mentioned above, was first hired as a consultant to the District. She would come to St. Charles for several weeks at a time to train staff members in Cooperative Learning I, basically the same 30-hour course taught earlier that summer. She and Assistant Superintendent Sandy Wright, worked together on the District's implementation plan. Her expertise in compatible educational initiatives, such as creating collaborative school cultures and addressing assessment issues, was invaluable in helping the District make connections between different components of the restructuring process. Besides district-wide staff development, she worked with building principals and provided post-training support for classroom teachers.

Right on schedule, a group of 48 elementary teachers from buildings throughout the District participated in Cooperative Learning I training. A representative from Arthur Andersen joined Carole as a co-trainer/facilitator. This turned out to be a mistake. Perhaps because the new co-trainer was unfamiliar with elementary school classrooms and cultures. At any rate, the necessary connections to teacher interests could not be made. One fifth-grade teacher pronounced it "horrible." "We were dazed and confused. We had no idea what she was talking about" (1996). After several more frustrating sessions, the plan seemed stalled in its tracks. What, now?

Cooper took over all the training and started anew from square one. After several weeks and 30 contact hours, this second group of elementary practitioners was ready to use cooperative learning in their classrooms. The District provided the support and expert coaching during the school year as prescribed in the implementation plan.

Cooperative learning training hit its stride during the Summer of 1992. Thirty-four elementary teachers representing all seven buildings received instruction. Cooper then worked for the California Department of Education to embed cooperative learning practices and philosophy in the State's education program. As in the previous Summer, she trained a group of 20-plus middle school teachers, and Neil Davidson returned from Maryland as trainer of over 20 high school teachers.

This was the class I joined, and it was at this point that my personal cooperative learning story began and became linked to the advocacy and historical stories. I knew immediately that I could apply the basic structures in my classes—simple strategies such as "numbered heads where students in a group randomly take a number and the teacher calls the number instead of a student's name, not knowing whom she or he has asked to respond. These quick "tricks" to manage group learning were all I saw. Only later would the philosophy behind the initiative—the theories of how students learn and the teacher's role as a facilitator—the

reasoning behind the strategies, become important to me.

How long could the District afford to go on with external consultants and expensive in-service training?

How long could the District afford to go on with external consultants and expensive in-service training? After much discussion and a great deal of anxiety, the Cooperative Learning Partnership Team decided to turn to in-district trainers to continue what the consultants had begun. Cooper sparked the idea—she felt quite confident that there were plenty of teachers with the talent and dedication to carry on the task. Many of the building principals however, were worried that teachers might not accept internal trainers or consultants. Would they really be able to engage the teachers the way Carole and Neil had? (Dockum 1996). Finally, the decision to go ahead was made. Cooper, with Sandy Wright's assistance, invited a core of 11 teachers to serve as the District's first internal, cooperative-learning trainers. Six were chosen from the elementary schools, three from the middle schools, and Melissa Dockum and I were invited from the high school in early Spring of 1993.

This invitation caught me by surprise. Though I had met with Cooper through the year for some expert coaching and a classroom visit, I still considered myself a novice. But, since I liked and greatly respected both women, I thought, "Why not climb on board?" That Spring, the eleven of us were released from classes and given a crash two-and-a-half day training course in teaching Cooperative Learning I. Dockum and I subsequently spent hours constructing a five-day course scheduled for July. The task seemed overwhelming. I feared we were never going to get beyond day one in our planning attempts. But gradually the bits and pieces of information fell into place. We had a game plan.

All three teams taught fellow teachers from their respective levels at the high school campus that July. Cooper, who was nearby conducting an assessment workshop, would stop by periodically. Each team functioned well and needed little assistance. This was an important test! Cooper believed that, as our teacher, this success as trainers was the greatest compliment she could receive. We demonstrated that in-district training could be an effective and economical way to create change within the culture. A month later, Cooper facilitated the first follow-up workshop—a 15-hour course aptly named Cooperative Learning II. Its audience was teachers trained in Cooperative Learning I who had been using basic structures and strategies in the classroom for at least several months. More complicated group learning structures, the connections between cooperative learning and district curriculum and assessment practices, various brain-research theories about how students learn, and some group conflict resolution strategies served as its curriculum base.

Story VII: Unfinished Ending: Staying on Track?

Besides the courses offered through the District's staff development program, other approaches to implementing cooperative learning have been used, some with more success than others. An elaborate Cooperative Learning Site Facilitators concept was created in April, 1993, with all-day training provided by Carole Cooper. The intent was to provide at least one teacher, trained in cooperative learning and the art of facilitation, to each building in the elementary and middle schools and one for each of the nine departments at the high school. The facilitator's role is essentially to offer encouragement, support, and resources to colleagues experimenting with strategies in their classrooms or creating a collaborative culture within the school. After a considerable investment of time and money, this concept has met with modest success. In some of the elementary and middle schools, teacher/facilitators work not only with peers but also with building administrators to plan meetings. At the high school, however, the idea has been abandoned. Lack of a common planning time and teacher reluctance to take on this role with peers, let alone administrators, served as possible barriers. Attendance has been generally good at informal, after-school "cooperative learning refreshers." These provide support and collegiality to teachers trained in cooperative learning.

The Cooperative Learning Evaluation Committee has replaced the Partnership Team. This group was made up mostly of in-district trainers and a few district principals. Created in 1994, this group took on the enormous task of creating and administering a survey of all district teachers of their frequency of use and comfort in using cooperative learning methods. A former Arthur Andersen statistician, now a freelancer, helped the committee with the planning, implementation, and interpretation of the survey. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) served as a framework, and a number of the questions focused on levels of use and the participants' feelings con-

cerning these levels of use in their classrooms. Of concern was not only how broadly, but how deeply, the cooperative learning initiative were being implemented in classrooms. It was administered to all District teachers early in 1995. Generally speaking, the survey results showed that the lower the grade taught, the greater the comfort level and that the use of specific structures and strategies have greater interest to most teachers than the philosophy of collaboration.

Though sometimes all participants travel over new ground in a quest to implement a policy shift, more often than not we must repeatedly revisit familiar places and stopping points on the way. Paradoxically perhaps, both the back and forth movements must go on simultaneously.

Apparently, this change effort journey never really ends. For a district-wide cultural change to retain its direction, others will have to become invested. That is, personal stories of professional aspiration must link up with and become part of the stories of advocates—administrator leadership stories. This will mean that, though sometimes all participants travel over new ground in a quest to implement a policy shift, more often than not we must repeatedly revisit familiar places and stopping points on the way. Paradoxically perhaps, both the back and forth movements must go on simultaneously. What is integrated in one teacher, for example, may be a matter of learning new quick tricks for another. Change is not like boarding a train. Multiple new frontiers make us vital; rest spots and secure comfort zones help us consolidate what has been achieved.

"The future is not some place we are going to but some place we are creating. ...The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination" (John Schaar).

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Changing Technology Policy in a Suburban Chicago School District

by Kirk R. Samples

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Part I

Introduction

"If you build it, they will come."
- from the movie Field of Dreams

These famous words, uttered in a gravelly whisper by the entity speaking from deep within an Iowa corn field to the character played by Kevin Costner, prophesied destiny for the characters in the movie. This same voice could probably have been heard in the late 1980s and early 1990s, if one listened very closely, in the Illinois corn fields of the southwest corner of DuPage County. In a strip of land two to three miles wide and almost 15 miles long, the Chicago suburban city of Naperville shares a border with the city of Aurora, Illinois. A voice, a similar teller of the future, apparently caught the ears of home builders and developers who heeded the advice to build and turned a strip of farmland into a region with the fastest growing school system in the State (Banas, 1994). The district's student population, over 15,000 in 1996, was increasing by more that 1000 students per year, and in 1995 it took in twice as many students as it graduated (Shields, 1995).

"A lot of people want to come here. They bring a lot of kids" (Banas, 1994). This laconic statement by a member of the Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee for the District, acknowledges the basis for the largest successful school referendum in Illinois history. A 97.3 million dollar referendum was passed by the taxpayers of the district in March of 1994, and during the next two years, building began for a new high school and several new elementary schools. The referendum was in response to the exploding school population, projected to hit almost 18,000 by the year 1999 (Banas, 1994).

Not all the money raised by the referendum, however, was slated for new schools. Also included were provisions for a five million dollar technology fund. This was the first known instance of a school district pre-dedicating money from a referendum to a technology budget (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996). Large expenditures were directed to computers, networking, and software packages related to instruction and administration. After school construction, spending for technological advancement comprised the single largest budget item. This development spurred further expectations of change.

There were countless stakeholders in this change of policy direction. (Houston, personal interview, November 22, 1996). The potential impact on interest groups can be evaluated from a number of perspectives. In this study, three stakeholders, drawn from different levels of authority, were interviewed:

(1) Kenneth Kruse, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education acted as a central office advocate initiating the technology movement in the district. From his perspective we can take a look at the chronology of events and the administrative structure and forces which drove the change;

(2) Joan Gantos, Library Media Center (LMC) Director of Hawthorne Elementary School, whose focus shifted from ". . . librarian five years ago to technologist, almost, now" (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996); and

(3) Rick Anderson, fifth grade teacher at Hawthorne School and a 20-year district

veteran. Educational trends and fads come and go, but Rick had embraced the new technology initiative with great enthusiasm. He offers some insight into the "human resource frame" (Bolman & Deal, 1991) in the District.

The need to construct many new schools and hire new teachers created an opportunity to experiment with educational technology advances at the cutting edge rather than being forced to merely adapt to the limits of old buildings.

All three agreed that the overwhelming growth rate, combined with the relative youth of this school district, were related to the impetus for the technological changes. For them, one could not examine one without digging into the other. They also concurred that rapid growth had both positive and harmful effects on the direction of appropriate technology policy.

On the positive side, the need to construct many new schools and hire new teachers created an opportunity to experiment with educational technology advances at the cutting edge rather than being forced to merely adapt to the limits of old buildings. Administrators highlighted this glamorous change to garner additional funding support from the taxpayers. Finally, the growth process exemplified one of Wheatley's organizational *fields* (1994) or frames of mind. Feelings of excitement and hope for the future reverberated throughout the district!

In contrast to these forces, however, there arose many limiting factors equally related to rapid growth. The capacity to outfit such a rapidly expanding system with the necessary hardware and software, and to continually service these resources, seemed at times to be almost unachievable. Another check on the progress of this initiative was the drive toward something called competitive *parity;* or put bluntly, this came down to "We want what they've got." Each group laid claim to this position—administrators, teachers, and parents.

The View from the Top

"In five years, we're going to be so far ahead of the pack. No one will be able to touch us. People will be looking to us for direction in technology planning" (Kenneth Kruse, Institute Day Address. Spring, 1995).

Kenneth Kruse was the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, a position he had occupied for eight years. He had previously held a principalship in one of the District's elementary schools. He came to be a leading advocate for technology in the District because of his experiences as manager of the elementary principals.

Setting the Stage

Though the elementary schools had been purchasing computers in small numbers since before 1991, no coordinated plan had been developed. Costs were cut in constructing new schools by using the same architectural plan. All were provided with computer labs to accommodate anticipated expansion in the use of educational technologies. In the meantime, however, the new computer labs served as office space. During the whole 1991-1992 school year, Kruse and the elementary principals considered budget proposals for computer equipment. As Kruse recalled:

> A major purchase is what we wanted...but we were struggling with why we wanted it. Were we wanting to do it because that just seemed to be the thing to do, or was there some coordinated reason for us all to jump in? (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Finally, they decided in 1992 to purchase major equipment, establish labs, and develop a computer curriculum for elementary students. The focus of this curriculum would be on the writing process and the corresponding keyboarding skills. Now they had a curricular justification for the incurred equipment expenses.

Next, they faced the decision of which platform to select, Apple or personal computer (PC). They knew that teachers held a significant bias toward Apple since they had long been using only Apple products at school. Few owned personal computers at home. Most were a bit intimidated by computer technology and had yet to be convinced that the PC world could satisfy their students' educational needs (Gantos, personal interview, October 15, 1996). In 1991, software was being designed primarily for one platform or the other; and a common assumption then was that Apple was best for schools and that the PC was for business. Though Kruse's personal preference was for PCS, he decided to organize a study rather than make a unilateral decision. Labs were set up in two buildings—one

with Macintosh computers, the other with DOS/IBM. A year-long pilot program was designed to establish whether either platform had significant advantages over the others. The outcome would pave the way for district-wide technology purchases.

The pilot program showed that either platform would satisfy long-term needs for writing and keyboarding (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996). More and more software houses were putting out bilingual products which lessened of teachers' concerns. So, the deciding factor really came down to cost. Which would provide the best package for the best price? It turned out that Apple had a price that IBM couldn't meet. With an imminent referendum effort looming, District administrators chose to go with Macintosh labs and to fund the computers through a time-purchase agreement. In 1993, Apple came to install file servers and to network labs in each building.

How should these judgements be interpreted? Were they motivated by concrete educational aims (to improve writing and word processing e.g.), or were the stated curricular aims used to buttress another agenda? Michael Fullan (1991), in *The New Meaning of Education Change*, states:

> [T]he political and symbolic value of initiation of change for schools is often greater than the educational merit and the time and cost necessary for implementation follow through. Such decisions may be necessary for political survival, may be needed first steps that set the preconditions for real change in practice, or may represent the only change possible in certain situations (p. 61).

When the District adopted a computerized grading and reporting program, Kruse Mae it a requirement that teachers use the program when reporting their grades at the end of the current quarter. Although the program was relatively easy to learn, teachers with little computer experience were overwhelmed to learn it on such a short notice. Kruse defended his edict:

> [Requiring teachers to use a grading program within a quarter]. That was not necessarily the most popular thing we could do, but we felt, I felt, that the urgency in getting people involved with technology was to set the stage for us asking for more money. That's not something that the classroom level teacher understands or saw, but for us, as we approached this [referendum] coming up, we knew that we had to have people involved, there had to be something out there that everybody could point to, teachers and parents, and say, "Look what's going on" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Technology was one of the most talked about topics at this time, so it naturally lent itself as a symbol of educational progress on which he could focus public attention.

By these measures, Kruse had succeeded in getting computers into the classroom and in establishing an administrative use of the software. Kruse used symbols in this strategy to influence a broad community audience. He used available opportunities to make educational technology more visible to the public eye. Technology was one of the most talked about topics at this time, so it naturally lent itself as a symbol of educational progress on which he could focus public attention.

The Big One

When the District proposed the $97.3-million referendum in March of 1994, the new computers were already in place in the elementary schools. Kruse and then Superintendent Tom Scullen had assembled a referendum planning committee of 50-60 people (volunteer parents and taxpayers) who were to determine what should be in the referendum. There was no technology director for the District at the time; and so Kruse, already actively involved with the referendum committee, assumed major responsibility for the District's technology planning. First though, he checked with the Board of Education members to learn if they had objections to the committee requesting a specific dollar amount for technology. The Board members left it to the planning committee. Next, he presented a one-page proposal to committee members. In his words, "The committee bought [my proposal] for $5 million. Their only response was 'Is that enough?'" (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996).

This strategy of mobilizing a citizen task force proved to be effective. The referendum passed by an overwhelming majority. "[The administration] has empowered us as parents to be very active in the education of our children, not only in

classroom activities, but in decision making and the operation of the district," said Julie Larivee, a member of the Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee (Carroll, 1995). Bill Gibson, District 204 Board President commented, "Parents deciding what they wanted for the community, backed by the Board and administration, largely sold the plans." According to S. R. Carroll as quoted in *The Chicago Tribune*, this involvement of stakeholders in what had traditionally been administrative arena was an innovative procedure for school districts, at least in this area. After this published success, the District administrators received requests to work with surrounding districts in their efforts to pass referenda (1995). For the most part, District stakeholders remained very supportive. Kruse recalls:

> We've had no splinter groups, we haven't had the religious right, or the conservative right in here, we haven't had anybody other than the "I want as much for my kid at Georgetown [School] as they have at White Eagle [School]," people. We tried to address that [parity] this summer as well, saying, "Here's what you've got, you might not have as new of machines, but we can give you same capabilities." Parity is such a big issue for our district, that in some ways it eliminates some of the outer fringe groups, because everybody's trying to do so much alike (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

The parity issue created a within-district politics of negotiation that avoided polarization. But if Kruse's assessment of the dynamics is correct, then the parity policy functioned as a buffer zone against ideological interference. Keeping all of the schools at the same place seemed to assure a broad common interest in technological investments.

Kruse moved quickly after the referendum to spend the money. The Referendum Committee's plan had included several priorities. First and foremost was to improve the infrastructure of the District, and second was to put in a wide area network. Ways to assure parity between the existing high school and a new secondary building would also need to be addressed. Fourth, the District faced curriculum issues and staff development needs. Finally, the last priority was to be vigilant in identifying emerging needs. Of the $5-million in hand, Kruse devoted $700,000 to district-wide systems, including the wide area network, electronics, new phone system upgrades, software package purchases such as voice mail and e-mail, and Internet access. With this money, he also hired consultants. He spent about $3-million at the high school. This included $1.4-million in hardware and software purchases; $1.1-million in infrastructure costs, cabling and electronics; $450,000 for a media distribution center; $80,000 to upgrade the distance learning classroom; and $100,000 to put in a television production lab and studio (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996).

At the middle school level, Kruse used several hundred thousand dollars to upgrade labs, add hardware, etc.. Finally he turned to the elementary schools, spending there about $150,000 more in addition to paying off the original Apple loan. By late 1996, only $3500 remained of the $5-million technology budget (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996).

The curriculum/staff development funds went toward paying instructors (mostly teachers) to teach after school, week-end, or summer professional growth courses in technology. Teachers could earn blocks of credit for attending the courses. This credit could be accumulated and traded for credit hours on the salary scale through the District's staff development plan. The rest subsidized a March, 1996, conference called *Plug In To Technology*. Technologically expert staff members were paid to conduct sessions for the rest of the District staff. Presenters were further rewarded by being permitted to use whatever equipment they had ordered for the Conference back in their own schools.

> The March 1 Institute was a little bit of rewarding people who were doing things, but it was even more of opening the door a crack to say, "Look at what some of your colleagues are doing." I felt if I could provide seeds (in the form of money), then water them, hopefully those seeds would continue to grow and the new technology would allow us to do a whole lot. (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996)

The seed money was the initial outlay for the Conference equipment in excess of $1000,000; and the watering afterwards was allowing schools to purchase some of what they had seen at Institute Day. This conference, which was a bold new direction in staff development, sparked teacher interest in the new technology.

Kruse's strategies for implementing technology model Wheatley's (1994) governing principles for effective leadership: "guiding visions, strong values, organizational beliefs... [and the ability]...to communicate them, to keep them ever present and clear, and then allow individuals in the system their random, sometimes chaotic-looking

meanderings" (p. 133). Kruse also exemplified (perhaps unknowingly) to Wheatley's fractal theory of organizations, as was apparent by his seed analogy. His actions demonstrated confidence that an idea, if planted at a micro level,"...can change teaching to reflect what's available and ultimately...increase learning by kids" (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996). He had confidence that if he continued to support it, technological applications would spread. As stated by Wheatley (1994), "These organizations expect to see similar behaviors show up at every level in the organization because those [beliefs] were patterned into the organizing principles at the very start" (p. 132).

Role Redefinition: Librarian or Technologist?

Beyond her duties to maintain a working library for 700 elementary age children at Hawthorne School, Joan Gantos's found her job description expanding between 1992 and 1996 to include the roles of staff developer, systems trouble-shooter, technology advocate, head purchaser of technology, and technology scapegoat and/or mother to teachers when computers froze or printers jammed, etc. In the words of Kenneth Kruse:

> Our Learning Media Center (LMC) jobs are changing dramatically. They've gone from being librarians five years ago to technologists, almost, now. The library function almost takes a back seat to where we start to consider a media person more appropriate for the LMC, with a library technical assistant as an aide, to handle the technical parts of being a librarian (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Gantos accepted the responsibility to help develop entirely new technology curriculum for the elementary school. She and most of her colleagues welcomed these new responsibilities.

> It all makes the job a little more exciting than it was, to be frank. Most of the LMC directors enjoy the new responsibilities and challenges that have come with the new technology (Gantos, personal interview, October 15, 1996).

Computers and networks seemed always to be freezing up, and often long waiting lists confronted those needing help with repairs or other problems.

The LMC directors had been included part of the initial decision as to the merits of Macintosh or IBM computers in the labs, and they had appreciated that opportunity to give input. They had also been charged with establishing a list of standard equipment – that is, of what equipment the schools already had, what was needed to achieve parity, and what equipment the new schools would need when they opened.

Gantos acknowledged, however, that the sudden new responsibilities could also be the source of stress. Computers and networks seemed always to be freezing up, and often long waiting lists confronted those needing help with repairs or other problems. At times, when the entire network in a building froze up, it would take two or three days before the central office could correspond with assistance. Sometimes, Gantos felt blamed by other members of the school staff for problems beyond her control. In spite of a newly formed school technology committee with representatives from each grade level, she continued to carry most of the burden for researching and purchasing new machines and software for the school.

Gantos believed that on the whole, the technology gains made during these years were having a positive effect on teaching. Children in her school were learning keyboarding in fourth grade. They were having successful experiences in publishing by using the word processing programs. Many of the drill and practice type programs clearly improved skills and knowledge mastery in math, science, and geography. "Teachers are starting to learn more and more uses for computers in their curricula and they are teaching the children and each other" (Gantos, personal interview, October 15, 1996). One teacher at Hawthorne School even started an after school technology club where students learned to use a multimedia authoring tool. Other teachers took part in technology conferences and brought back information to share with the staff.

From Gantos's perspective, there was still much more to be done. When she recommended that computer lab time (a scheduled item for each class once a week) be put on a flexible schedule to respond to changing instructional or learning needs, resistance from teachers preserved the rigid scheduling. Teachers complained that they had difficulty fitting a flexible lab time into their already established lesson plans.

In these negotiations, Gantos frequently wished for more central office support. Equipment shortages and weekly technical problems caused her much stress. Finally, she simply insisted that teachers take a more active, professional role in technology development in order to make it more educationally meaningful. "The things we are doing are great, but with what we have in the way of equipment and software, we could be working up to a much higher potential" (Gantos, personal interview, October 15, 1996). It took her a lot of time to learn to use items such as a scanner, for example—a device that takes a photograph or other printed image and digitizes it for use on a computer. To learn to use all of these new tools and software and then attempt to train a staff that had little time to learn was a frustration that Gantos dealt with on a continual basis.

The New Scarcity: Time in the Trenches

"Time is the biggest factor in technology, When do you have time to work on all of this stuff?" (Anderson, personal interview, November 9, 1996). Rick Anderson, a teacher at Hawthorne School, witnessed this technology initiative firsthand. He was an experienced classroom teacher and the parent of two daughters who attended District schools. Anderson had been very interested in educational technology since its emergence at Hawthorne School in the early 1980s. So, he was excited by the District's increased use of it during the early '90s.

Brookdale School, where Anderson taught before Hawthorne School opened in 1992, had a lab of Apple IIs. Before that, there had been no lab at all—just computers in a few scattered classrooms. The students used them mostly for drill and practice, although there was some word processing when a student had a special project. According to Anderson,

> "It was very rare that we ever did anything, maybe once a year, maybe once every two years, that we had staff development in the way of technology" (personal interview, November 9, 1996). A great obstacle to bringing technology to the teachers, Anderson explained, was the fact that there were no labs. There was no way to bring together a group of teachers of any size to teach them. Installing the labs, therefore, was a necessary avenue for staff development.

Thus, when Hawthorne School opened and its new principal recruited him for a fifth- grade position, Anderson was lured by the promise of new attitudes toward technology. At Hawthorne, he began to work with LMC Director Joan Gantos to buy HyperCard, a multimedia authoring program for students. Later he received a grant to buy HyperStudio, a more user-friendly, color version of HyperCard. As one of the coordinators of the technology committee at Hawthorne, he taught numerous staff development courses and became a leader of the teachers working with technology.

Anderson echoes some of Gantos's concerns, particularly the fact that the curriculum guide for technology written at the time of original purchase, is already outdated. Because the computer curriculum was placed under the auspices of the LMCs, direct central office assistance did not reach the individual teachers. If a teacher had a problem with the social studies or language arts curricula, s/he could turn to a curriculum coordinator at the district level: or, in the case of the computer curriculum, "Where do you go for help?" (Anderson, personal interview, November 9, 1996). He doubted that the new District technology director, hired in 1996, could alleviate teachers' feeling stranded with their own struggles. Given the growing number of schools and the constant demand to outfit them with ever improved equipment, Anderson predicted that the new technology director would be too busy even to look at curricula, especially at the elementary level. As for staff development approaches, Anderson thought they too needed to be re-evaluated. "There's just not enough time during a regular school day to learn these things. There's not enough time after school with all of the things that you need to do as a part of running a classroom" (personal interview, November 9, 1996).

Interpretation

"Field creation is not just a task for senior managers. Every employee has energy to contribute; in a field filled space, there are no unimportant players" (Wheatley, 1994, p. 56).

In her application of field theory to organizations, Phyllis Wheatley describes organizational fields as powerful, organizing forces (p. 55). In the case described above, both positive and inhibiting influences, pushed a school organization toward an unclear destination. More than one vision of why and how technology might change learning experiences contributed energy to this field. The three players interviewed offered their personal slants on the events in which they participated. In the following analysis, the Fullan's (1991) model for identifying the necessary conditions for a successful change effort will be used.

Initiation

The primary initiating factor (Fullan, 1991, p. 50) in this case was advocacy from central administra-

tion in the person of Kenneth Kruse. New funding from the referendum was evidence of the community's interest in keeping up with the technology bandwagon.

The follow-up staff development phase proved to be inadequate. Thus, many teachers who found themselves with state-of-the-art equipment had difficulty exploiting its instructional capacities.

According to Fullan's three Rs (relevance, readiness, and resources), the initiation was off to an uncertain beginning. As Kruse describes it, it took elementary principals a year to achieve a clear stance on whether or not to embark on a major technological change. The group had difficulty in forming a rationale. As for readiness Fullan asks, "Do they possess the requisite knowledge and skills? Do they have the time?" (p. 63). If teachers had been asked at the outset, the answer to these questions would have been "No." Fullan asks further, "Is the change compatible with the culture of the school?" (p. 63). The culture of the school and of the whole District certainly played a key role in this initiation process. Kruse knew that in an era of growth, with so many new schools and new hires, the culture was open to suggestions for change. as change had become familiar to this organization. Resources again were available through a bank loan having faith that the funds requested in the upcoming referendum would be approved.

Implementation

The implementation phase can perhaps be best seen through the "lens" of the Learning Media Center director. The perceived need for technological change was not strong among teachers, although the opportunity to explore what was possible (the Plug In To Technology Inservice) did whet appetites. Teachers did seem to recognize that children needed word processing skills to remain current with the computer revolution; but beyond that, drill and practice time was, for them, the only other practical use of computers. Teacher understanding of how they were to teach differently now that they had computer labs, was poor. Developing word processing skills was a clear objective but somehow much more seemed to be expected. On this, there was little guidance here, as Gantos and Anderson both report. Introducing the new technology was expected to usher in vast and complex changes; yet without intensive staff development, teachers had little opportunity to catch the vision or invent ways it might be implemented in their work.

Local factors also had contradictory influences. At the District administrative level, monetary support was very forthcoming at the onset as evidenced by the heavy investments of Kruse and others in securing the financial means for acquisitions. Kruse's vision-building statements at the in-service meetings demonstrated his enthusiasm, but the follow-up staff development phase proved to be inadequate. Thus, many teachers who found themselves with state-of-the-art equipment had difficulty exploiting its instructional capacities.

The high interest surrounding technology had, of course, provided a favorable policy climate for all stakeholders including central administration, school board, community, principals, teachers, and students. Nonetheless, this may have fueled extravagant short-term hopes for wholesale transformation of the learning process.

Board and community support, too, stayed strong throughout the implementation period. The Board gave Kruse full license to request funding (a novel idea at this time). The referendum committee itself responded positively to his request, and the community approved the referendum with a landslide vote (Banas, 1994). School principals also continued to support the change. They participated in Kruse's initial investigation into the outfitting needs of the elementary schools. Most teachers, although timid about the new technology, were even enthusiastic about the possibilities it brought and were ready to accept Kruse's vision of the future (Gantos, personal interview, October 15, 1996). Here again, however, staff development and curriculum guid-

ance could not keep a sufficient pace to bring about the desired outcomes.

External factors played a major role in this environment. Technology was, and still is, an educational bandwagon issue in our society. It was being hyped by the media, pop culture, big business, the President of the United States, as well as educational leaders. The high interest surrounding technology had, of course, provided a favorable policy climate for all stakeholders including central administration, school board, community, principals, teachers, and students. Nonetheless, this may have fueled extravagant short-term hopes for wholesale transformation of the learning process.

Continuation and Outcome

One of the most perplexing problems faced by educators is that technology innovations are advancing at increasing rates with no sign of slowing down in the near future. This presents an interesting paradox for those grappling with educational implications of technological change: rapidly changing *change*. Continuing implementation pressures leave no time for assessment and reflection. Just as plateaus seemed to be reached and the desired outcomes achieved, even recent goals and objectives would become antiquated. For students, the initial objectives were centered around word processing and general computer skills. This level of computer literacy, however, was soon taken for granted. Learning objectives, which could be quickly changed, outran in place policies or procedures which could not be so easily altered. Objectives soon became centered around information gathering, upper level thinking, and problem solving skills. These were qualitatively different from the original goals of initiators.

There is no question that this futile catch-up process would continue and that some would be turned off when the great transformation failed to emerge. Computer literacy had reached the status of an uncriticizable aim with the District and the larger society. Turning back became an impossibility. The pace of teacher implementation and the results in learning outcomes could not be shown to match the level of the dollar investment. Future referenda, however, will likely be devoted to staff development (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Part II

A New Curricular Response

In March of 1997 there is to be a another referendum vote in the District. As the population continues to balloon, the new referendum request, as of November of 1996, reached $110 million. Kenneth Kruse again assembled a Citizen's Facilities Advisory Committee to"write" the referendum, and this time there will be a request for a $10-million technology budget (in a three page handout). The first $2-million is dedicated to completing the local area network infrastructure throughout the District. Voice and video conferencing will be available to all locations, and there will be phones in every elementary classroom. Of the approximately 8 million dollars left, 85 percent will be used to develop curriculum, both hardware and software; about 10 percent will go to fund staff development efforts; and about 5 percent will support new projects, research and development. After presenting his budget, Kruse stated:

> The committee certainly wants to approve it. They want a little more detail, not significantly more detail, though. It's ultimately going to be a question of, "How does it fit into the budget they have in their own minds of where this referendum should go?" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

This time the largest portion of the money, $6.8-million, is earmarked for what Kruse labels "curriculum issues." It reflects the District's focus shifting from technical to curricular problems. Now, the curricular and instructional changes in mind are centered largely around the use of the Internet as an integral tool of the classroom teacher.

In what follows, I describe a plan that will be presented to incorporate the Internet into the elementary curriculum of the district. A new Internet concept will be discussed, called the virtual museum. This is the District's first attempt to bring the Internet into elementary classrooms, but it has not yet been implemented. In addition to drawing on the opinions and insights of the educators presented in Part I, two more voices from those having a direct influence on shaping this initiative will be included. John Houston is the new technology director for the District, hired in July, 1996. Joan Matsie is the staff development coordinator who devised the current program for staff development in the District.

The Virtual Museum Project: One Man's Vision

"The Internet has a lot of advantages and disadvantages, but it is the buzzword, so it is a bandwagon that we hung onto over this last eighteen months, because that's something our parents are hearing so much about. Politically we have needed to make it perhaps a bigger spotlight than we might

have at first." (Kruse, personal interview, November 14, 1996)

By paying teachers to locate quality sources of information on the Internet, then downloading and storing those "sites" on district computers, the dangers of inappropriate materials and wasted student time would be eliminated.

Kruse is referring to the District purchase of their own Internet connection and networking. Work on this technical undertaking was mostly completed by December of 1996, but the curricular aspect is now being addressed by the administration. This continues to raise some very difficult questions. Because the Internet provides an easy publicizing means for millions of businesses, governments, institutions, and individuals, it has become a source of almost infinite access to information. For these very same reasons the Internet"...can be a cyber sewer seething with the most racist, demented, mindlessly violent stuff...[as well as]...the hardest-core downloadable pornography" (Coates, 1995). The sheer quantity and disorganization of materials on the Internet is a problem in itself making valuable information location a cumbersome task. These qualities have made the Internet the subject of much educational controversy which has, in turn, made the administration cautious.

At the conference held in February, 1996, Kruse learned about a new Internet education concept called virtual museums. Many virtual museums were on the Internet already. One can, for example, log onto the computers at the Smithsonian or the Louvre to view photos of exhibits and even take tours. The conference presenter, Jamieson Mckenzie touted a new species of the virtual museum, one run by school districts for use by their own students. By paying teachers to locate quality sources of information on the Internet, then downloading and storing those "sites" on district computers, the dangers of inappropriate materials and wasted student time would be eliminated. Teachers could organize the information and devise projects and lesson plans that would require students to search out and apply the information in projects. The virtual museum would have the same "feel" for the student user as the real Internet but it would shield them from exposure to inappropriate materials.

One of the aspects of Internet (virtual museum) use in the classroom that appealed to Kruse was the amount of video and audio material already available, material that isn't text based, and that which reflects the different modalities of children's learning. "I hate to go back to *Sesame Street*, but our kids are much more in tune with visual learning than we were, and our teaching has to reflect that" (Kruse, personal communication, November 14, 1996). He sees this value-laden issue of getting the Internet in the schools and available to children as high priority, but he still wants clear criteria for assessing the quantity and quality of available material.

Kruse has ambitious goals for the virtual museum. This is reflected in the $6.8-million targeted for curriculum development. He hoped that the virtual museum would ultimately major segments of the curriculum. He states:

> The Internet allows us to break out of a text-based model. I don't think we'll ever buy another social studies textbook at the elementary level. I'm not sure that we'll every buy another science text at the elementary or middle school level. Textbook purchases at the high school level are going to be radically different than what they have been. (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

In the Summer of 1996, Kruse brought Jamieson Mckenzie in from Seattle to serve as consultant for the District virtual museum project pilot study. Applications for the Summer work were distributed to the teaching staff before school let out; and from the pool of interested parties, 40 people were invited to participate in the project. The teachers were divided into teams according to grade level and given the assignment to locate and organize information on the Internet that would serve to supplement the social studies curriculum at their grade level. One of their goals was to change questions teachers typically ask to encourage higher order thinking skills in students. At the end of the Summer the entire group was called back together for a debriefing session. Feelings of both excitement and frustration were shared among administration and staff. According to Kruse:

> One of the things our teachers proved this summer [is that] you have to work real hard to find good stuff. That's an eye opening experience for everybody, that there's a lot of teacher prep time

that's got to go into using the Internet effectively, but when you find what your looking for, the Internet can be an incredible resource (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Technology Director as Dragon Slayer

"Most people say that technology is used to enhance. I don't see that as the goal of technology. If you take a cake metaphor, to me, enhance means the icing. I believe technology is the cake, the substance, the flavor of the cake, not just the icing on the cake" (John Houston, personal interview, November 22, 1996).

Goal number eight on the District's technology goals statement reads "...to increase and integrate the use of instructional technology to enhance existing K-12 curriculum." As can be seen from the quote above, the newly hired (July, 1996) director of technology, John Houston, believes that this statement will soon need revision. Houston opposes the concept that technology is merely an external change will eventually be integrated into the standard curriculum. He thinks that technology is here not only to change curriculum but to replace it. His wide reading of the technology movement literature has convinced him that, regardless of political persuasion, most authors agree that computer technology changes everything. Some argue that we should embrace technology while others warn that we must reject the technology completely because it threatens social and cultural values.

Houston views the Internet as an educational tool for which educators must become responsible. Like a dictionary or encyclopedia, educational professionals must explore and define its place in school. He has taken the helm of the virtual museum project from Kruse and is very excited about is potential uses. In the near future, he expects it to become part of the prescripted curriculum in the same way a textbook or anything else might be adopted by the District. By means of the museum, the problem of inappropriate materials will be solved. He also believes that it will insure that students use the Internet to meet curricular objectives and eliminate "surfing" merely for entertainment.

The virtual museum will develop into a very large inter-district curriculum network. The museum will become an independent curricular form, not just a gateway to the real Internet for inexperienced teachers.

According to Houston, the virtual museum will develop into a very large inter-district curriculum network. The museum will become an independent curricular form, not just a gateway to the real Internet for inexperienced teachers. Houston states, "It feels and smells and tastes just like the real Internet, but it isn't; and certainly this is a way to introduce people to it because we've knocked out the garbage that doesn't work for us" (personal interview, November 22, 1996).

The virtual museum provides a format of control that makes the Internet 'safe' for public school environments.

Despite preliminary success and support from administration, the work on the museum has not progressed very quickly. Since the final meeting of the Summer of 1996, when teachers presented the information sites they had located by means of the guiding research questions they had written, little has been done to turn this work into a usable product. In other words, all of the materials have been gathered, but no assembly has taken place. There is currently no way for what has been done to be tested or assessed by teachers in classrooms. Houston faces the same time scarcity problems that slowed earlier implementation plans:

> Just the sheer magnitude of processing this data into the museum is a great one. During the summertime, when people could give twenty or thirty hours a week to do this, we could make great progress. But during the school year, with all of the other obligations people are under, at most we get one or two hours a week. So things just aren't occurring as fast as one would hope. (personal interview, November 22, 1996)

There is so much going on! When putting more hardware in and more networking,"... things come up that we have to solve, just 'technical dragons,' as I call them, that just jump out in front of us, and we have to slay those dragons before we move on" (Houston, personal interview, November 22, 1996).

Houston is very sensitive to stakeholder's needs in this project. He believes everyone involved is a stakeholder. The teachers want staff

development and technology support. The Board of Education is committed to providing that staff development support. They want to avoid just putting hardware in rooms. Houston hears feedback from parents about their concerns. Some of them are involved with school technology committees, wanting to know how they can assist. "Sometimes their assistance is way ahead of where we are; we're tying our shoelaces and they're ready to run," Houston admits (personal interview, November 22, 1996). The parental opposition that Houston encountered has been from educationally partisan groups who question the constructivist learning theory that forms the basis of the museum project. He assured these parents that the District philosophy did not subscribe to a wholesale constructivist standard.

Houston doesn't believe that the District can have too much staff development. The very limited six hours of required staff development a year is surely not enough to help teachers master the virtual museum, even if he could guarantee that training could be dedicated solely to that goal. Most real training on the virtual museum, he suspects, will increase as teachers model it for other teachers: That is usually when the greatest gains are made.

Self-Made Staff Developer

> "Possibly the greatest impact came from the 'Plug In to Technology' institute we did last March. When our teachers were able to see from their colleagues what could be done, we had a huge surge of interest in technology classes. These classes continue to be filled, and I am confident that the new learning and technology is making its way into the classrooms" (Matsie, e-mail communication, November 21, 1996).

Joan Matsie literally invented the position of staff development coordinator for the District in 1989 as a project for a class she was taking.

Joan Matsie literally invented the position of staff development coordinator for the District in 1989 as a project for a class she was taking. After researching staff development programs throughout the area and conducting a district-wide needs assessment, she developed the current staff development program in the district. As part of the contract, teachers may take "professional growth" classes (taught mostly by other teachers in the District), and earn credit hours on the salary scale, similar to college credit. The instructors are paid with state grant money, and the classes are free to teachers.

Required staff development in the district has been tried in different forms. Several years ago a program was initiated in which the first Friday of every month was an early release day for the students, and the teachers would spend the afternoon in staff development. The last superintendent ended this practice, and

> Unfortunately, right now our Board feels that the kids should be in school as much as we can have them here, and this is heavily oriented toward working parent and child care issues. Even in a case with very predictable scheduling, such as letting out an hour early every Wednesday, we are very concerned about the outcry. So it does force us into a whole different ball game and gives us much less flexibility about how we offer staff development. It's not what we want to do, but I'm not sure how to get around it yet (Matsie, e-mail communication, November 21, 1996).

Support from central administration seemed to be waning since the beginning of the Summer of 1996. Houston and Kruse are confident that administrators are enthusiastic and intend to follow through. As usual, however, they just have so many other issues occupying their attention that the museum has been put on hold. If a new referendum is passed, Kruse intends "... to go nuts next summer. With funds available, [he'd] like to have 100 people working next summer, and that's very likely to happen" (personal interview, November 14, 1996). In order for this initiation to achieve full implementation, however, more attention, guidance, and manpower will need to be applied on a consistent basis. Teachers who were proud of their accomplishments over the Summer have lost some of the momentum and contagious enthusiasm that can affect other staff members. A strong, staff-wide initiation of the museum concept will require broad teacher support.

Community interest in the museum has put pressure on the administration to respond. Kruse has indicated more than once that technology drives are usually successful because they lend themselves to the demand to demonstrate some specific product to the taxpayers. Haw-

thorne School, discussed in the first part of this paper, will hold a fifth-grade "technology night" this year to showcase new uses of technology. New funds provided by the upcoming referendum will be essential for curriculum and then, of course, staff development.

The individual readiness of teachers to support new initiatives varies greatly. While many concur in this educational direction, many still lack the requisite and always changing knowledge and skills; and most can devote only limited time for learning. Perhaps more opportunities, like the Plug In To Technology Conference, will persuade teachers that it is worth their time to learn. Perhaps the handful of teachers using the Internet will serve as catalysts for their colleagues. The administration already pays a stipend to elementary teachers in other areas, so perhaps a technology leader stipend from each school would be effective. Awareness-focused staff development classes will be held on site at different schools to promote interest in the museum. The urgent problem is to broaden the expertise base.

The initiators of virtual museum have more work to do in order to ready the schools. First, the virtual museum must be finished, at least to a point to where teachers can see it. To continue to speak of a nebulous entity without being able to demonstrate anything will engage no teaching. Many teachers become easily frustrated by the technology "dragons" referred to by Houston. The central office staff will need not only to provide more support, but also revise expectations and clarify what roles teachers are expected to play. With most of the hardware resources now in place, there remains the need to build trust in the equipment and those who provide support those services. Equipment (and human) failures which result in spoiled lessons or upset schedules have created a culture of mistrust which needs to be addressed before prescribing a curriculum.

Implementation

Teachers still regard the virtual museum as more of a novelty than a full process of curricular change. Skepticism is common. "It sounds great, but I'll believe it when I see it" is a widespread attitude (Rick Anderson, personal interview, November 9, 1996). The virtual museum can be effectively implemented if this culture of doubt is shifted. At least a prototype of the program for teachers to see and become enthusiastic about will be essential. If teachers once glimpse the improved quality of teaching possible, they will become the prime movers in developing the virtual museum. What has become clear is that the initiative must be designed by teachers for their colleagues. Teachers are best equipped to insure a standard of user-friendliness that will make the program easy to use once it is adopted. Because the program will be implemented incrementally, with one curricular unit being issued to start, quality and practicality surveys should be distributed to teachers, and evaluations can be made after implementation has begun.

"The role of principals" (Fullan, 1991, p. 76) should be to encourage use of the project through staff development time and by fostering a culture of sharing, team meetings, a virtual museum bulletin board, etc. The nomination of a "museum curator" for each school could become a stipend position to assist staff members with training and/or troubleshooting.

This change process will be successfully implemented when students and teachers are using the virtual museum as a resource to do their own problem solving and research in response to constructive inquiry questions. In the last sentence in Fullan's (1991) *The Meaning of Educational Change*, he says:

> Armed with knowledge of the change process and a commitment to action, we should accept nothing less than positive results on a massive scale-at both the individual and organizational levels. (p. 354)

The virtual museum project of the District will require change at this magnitude, and the steps to be taken must be both deliberate and system-wide. It is too early to predict whether it will come to be seen in the future years as a striking success or a misadventure. Either way, much will be learned along the way.

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Building a School Community: The Principal as Change Agent

by Brigid K. Keane

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Introduction

My first two visits to Parker Elementary School (all names of people and places in this article have been changed) were as an interviewee for a primary school position in July of 1995. I still remember how impressed I was with this school. Huge banners, made by students, hung from the walls in the library. In the entrance hall were pictures and news about the school. Just outside the entrance, a large sign posted on the wall of the building announced, "Four more weeks before school starts!" The school office itself had a comfortable rather than an official feel. Prints on these walls featured children. Not least welcoming were the soft, comfortable chairs which invited one to sit and relax.

Margaret Wheatley (1994), the noted author who has explored connections between organizations and science, has described "a field" as that feeling people sense when they enter a new environment: Fields are easy to feel, but not to define. At Parker, it was the field of child friendliness and a pervading sense of community that I sensed. I knew instantly that, for both children and teachers, this was a good place to be. Everyone was welcome here — children, parents, and other visitors.

At Parker, it was the field of child friendliness and a pervading sense of community that I sensed. I knew instantly that, for both children and teachers, this was a good place to be. Everyone was welcome here — children, parents, and other visitors.

As a teacher at Parker, I would soon learn that the field of community did not just happen. It had been created under the leadership of Barbara Kenney, the school principal. Wheatley (1994) suggests that places with positive fields have had "...a manager who, together with employees, took time to fill the...space with clear messages about how [people] would be served" (p. 53). I was to discover, in a very short time, that this was precisely what had happened at Parker.

The educational community at Parker Elementary has been a constant source of amazement and inspiration to me. Educational critics seldom focus on such local successes. Happy stories with happy endings are rare in educational policy literature. I believe, however, that this is an important story to tell. How has such a school community been created? This article is a description of how one brand-new school was intelligently planned for and how it was fashioned into an educational community. Central office administrators, parents, teachers, and principals were interviewed to describe the process from their own perspectives. In large part, it is the story of a principal acting as a change agent and using her ability to articulate and implement a community's aspirations.

Background

The school I have described is located in a unit school district west of Chicago. It includes elementary (kindergarten through fifth grade) schools, middle schools (sixth through eighth grade) and one high school with another currently under construction. In 1990, the district, which spans two counties, faced serious crowding problems as a con-

sequence of ten years of unremitting population growth. Between the years 1985 and 1990, the school enrollment nearly doubled. In those five years, five schools had opened and the high school had doubled its size (Hoefke, January 30, 1991). It was predicted that an annual growth of 750 students per year could be anticipated over the next eight years (Zboril, October 3, 1990).

In 1990, therefore, the school board agreed to form a group of parents and community members to review a 19.2 million dollar referendum proposal to relieve overcrowding. The Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC), a group of 35 residents of the community, recommended that the Board of Education approve a plan for the referendum to support construction of an addition to an existing middle school, a new middle school, and a new elementary school, all of which would be completed by September of 1992. They further recommended that another elementary school be built in time for the beginning of the 1993-1994 school year (Zboril, October 31, 1990).

To provide a transition period, the plan called for temporarily reopening a small, older building as a holding school. Frank Donner, the Elementary Education Director, promised that the opening of this comparatively tiny structure would keep classroom sizes at their current levels. Since the building had long been on lease to the park district and county, it would require no remodeling and very little work (1990). Contingent upon referendum approval by the District's voters, the holding school was scheduled to open for the 1991-92 school year and remain operating until the new elementary building opened in the Fall of 1992. The old building would house kindergarten through fourth-grade students and later, when the entire school faculty, staff, and student body moved to the new school, a fifth grade would be added.

In December of 1990, a former high school physical education teacher, who had also served as an assistant principal at the District's secondary school, was appointed as principal of the holding school. This would be Barbara Kenney's first position as principal. At the high school, Kenney had been in charge of hiring clerical staff, acting as student activity director, organizing student recognition programs, dealing with some student discipline, overseeing the school's graduation, and acting as liaison to the Booster Club (1990). Following her appointment, Kenney responded to an interviewer, "I am looking forward to the opportunity of working with elementary students, parents and staff, creating a really positive environment and setting a positive tone for educating kids" (1990).

In March of 1991, the Board of Education approved the Oakleaf subdivision as the site for the proposed elementary school (Hoefke, March 15, 1991). This decision was disputed by representatives of another area of the community because they also needed the school. Frank Donner defended the Oakleaf site. Donner said,

> Sites are chosen based on where the new school would relieve the most overcrowding, how many students would be served, and where the most children could walk to school. (Hoefke, March 8, 1991)

The Board's decision to use the Oakleaf site was final, but it had not been achieved without disagreement (1991).

Once the site was chosen, the students for the holding school had to be identified. Three key points were agreed upon: (1) The school would serve kindergarten through fourth-grade children who lived in the Oakleaf subdivision. (2) The holding school would open in September of 1991, and every effort would be made to have the new school ready to open in 1992. (3) The entire holding school community would move to the new school and would be joined by children from other nearby subdivisions.

All went as planned. The holding school did open in 1991 with one section of each grade level. There were then approximately 150 students in attendance. The 1992 move to Parker took place on schedule. Parker Elementary School became the tenth K-5 building in the District. There were about 350 students enrolled at Parker during its first year. By the following year, the student population had already grown to approximately 550.

Reconstructing a Community's Self-Image

Barbara Kenney and District administrators shared a clear vision about how the new school should be operated. Their goal had three dimensions:

- The community should have access to the schools;
- A strong sense of unity among the students, parents, and community should be built;
- Student needs would stand at the forefront of decision making processes.

These were not new ideas. Community accessibility had always been a district priority. In a recent interview, Kenney had described how the District's long-term commitment would be extended to the new school.

> I think our school district has a vision overall that the schools should be very accessible and very open. I think that would be the...superintendent's preference. ...I think the vision

was that the school belonged to the community and that has to be the vision when you go back to them for another referendum. ...If you're going to keep asking for money, you'd better show them that these schools belong to them" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Kenney believed one of the strengths that characterized her entire teaching career had been her ability to encourage community involvement. In selecting her, the District was underscoring its commitment to community involvement (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

In the same interview, Kenney indicated that she believed one of the strengths that characterized her entire teaching career had been her ability to encourage community involvement. In selecting her, the District was underscoring its commitment to community involvement (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

This self image as a unified school community had fueled board members' concern over the rapid growth of the District. How could this parental support and involvement be maintained? In a 1990 interview, the Superintendent related how, ever since he took the position in the 1980s, he had striven to create "cohesive schools...developing school identity and pride. ... School enthusiasm was low [when he first was hired]...The District was very transient before and it's still a problem now with families moving in and out" (Zboril, October 31, 1990). A good example of parent involvement, of course, had been the 1990 referendum process. Thirty-five parents and community members held the power to decide whether or not the 1990 school referendum would ever get put on the ballot (Zboril, October 3, 1990).

Kenney thought that this District vision of revitalizing itself as a cohesive school community could best be achieved by focusing on student needs.

> I want kids to be at the forefront of all decision making. . . [and] that students know that the building belongs to them. ...I really made decisions that would have the kids and parents involved as much as I could make them and I [made that clear] from the very beginning" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Kenney further emphasized that she was serious about students being involved in decision-making as well. This philosophy, she still claimed "permeated the District" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Kenney looked forward to the opportunity to form a professional community of teachers who shared her beliefs.

> I was allowed to hire an experienced teacher at every one of the grade levels with the exception of one. ...I knew I could build a team around every [teacher] and my whole goal was to build building leaders in those grade levels before we came [to the new school]. ...I could really count on [the team leaders] to share with the people who were added to the teacher, ...that [I] believe that kids come first" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Kenney was faced with the challenge of building a school community from the ground up. Inherent in this task were strategies to assure all members of the potential community that they were important to the educational process. The first priority was to establish genuine ownership in school itself and in all its endeavors. She already had administrative support. Central office administrators and the Board had confidence in her because of the fine record she had established at the high school. Now she would have to earn the trust of teachers and parents.

Creating Community

Kenney's philosophy regarding parents and teachers is a simple one:

> Without the parents supporting the referendum to build the buildings, there are no teachers. However, without the teachers feeling a sense of belonging in the schools, there is no sense of belonging for the kids" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

Even before determining the site of the new school and long before students began attending, parents were active at the holding school. Communication networks

were quickly established during this transition period. A Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) was formed. The same officers were to serve for a year at the new school. Kenney recalls that the parents heard from her at least biweekly through the newsletters of personal communication. Every time a decision was made or there was an update about the new school, it was communicated to the parents (B. Kenney, personal interview, November 14, 1991).

Kenney was free to select teachers who shared her philosophy. They quickly became involved in laying the groundwork for community. Teachers regularly communicated with parents through newsletters and through many personal communications.

Kenney did not neglect another important constituency in the community.

> The other stakeholder...is the business community. I think that sets a tone for parents, too, to see that we're open to outside community people coming in" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

School-business partnerships were encouraged as three business partnerships have been formed since Parker School opened.

Kenney faced an early and potentially serious problem when some parents objected to using the holding school because it was old and had not been used as a school for many years. It is a testament to Kenney's persuasive powers that she warded off trouble.

> [The holding school] was not looked upon as a favorable place for anybody to go. ...There were a lot of concerns about [the age of the holding school], ...including the drinking water. Those issues were addressed and fears were put aside. [Kenney's] enthusiasm helped to pull [the community] tighter" (K. Johns, personal interview, November 26, 1996).

Accompanied by staff members, Kenney met with parents at the PTA President's house. The parents were able to meet and speak freely with staff members in a comfortable home setting. At one meeting, the librarian asked for parent volunteers to serve in the library. Karen Johns, the PTA president, said that the group "brain-stormed ideas as far as what things we parents can do, [and] how we can get involved" (K. Johns, personal interview, November 26, 1996).

Kenney was proud of the leadership role teachers were displaying at this sensitive time. She knew she had people who could relay her vision.

Kenney was proud of the leadership role teachers were displaying at this sensitive time. She knew she had people who could relay her vision not only to community members, but when the time came, to the other teachers soon to join the staff at Parsons. In Kenney's own words,

> I knew I could build teams around [these teachers] and my whole goal was to build building leaders in all those grade levels before we came [to the new school]" (personal interview, November 14, 1996).

During the Summer, Kenney also held a staff meeting at her own home. "She was very excited about opening a new building. She had lots of ideas of what she could do as a principal" (L. Towns, personal interview, November 22, 1996). She communicated that excitement to her staff.

Establishing Readiness

The success of Kenney's vision of what Parker could become depended on parents, students, and teachers taking ownership in the process. She counted on educators to realize how parent and student involvement in the school served as one important bridge to school success. As one teacher stated,

> I think it's a triangle. You have to have parents, teachers, and kids working together for a child to be the most successful he can be. Once you lose that strand [because of] that kid giving up, or that parent not working with you, ...the child goes one way or the other. They either work with the teacher or the parent. ...The minute I lose that communication with the parent, I feel I can't work with the kid to meet the kid's needs (N. Farmer, personal communication, November 27, 1996).

Another teacher noted that when a child sees his or her parent involved in the school, s/he can be sure that the parent places a high value on the child's education (K. Johns, personal interview, November 26, 1996).

Kenney was perfectly clear that the basis for innovations would be student and parent involvement in decision making. She wanted them

to share ownership with teachers in the responsibility to educate students. If all went well, the extra involvement and shared responsibility in the educational process would give mutual assistance and support to teachers and parents. The students, teachers, parents, and administration would all become partners working together for a common goal. Fullan (1991) describes readiness as a school's practical and conceptual capacity to initiate, develop or adopt a given innovation. Firestone (1989) calls this the "school's capacity to use reform." ...Do stakeholders possess the requisite knowledge and skills? Do they have the time? ...Is the change compatible with the culture of the school? ...Are there other crises or other change efforts in progress? (p. 63-64).

The anticipated opening of a new school represented a major change in the lives of those involved. Stakeholders welcomed the processes of community building. Parents sought information and demonstrated a willingness to be a part of the school.

From the interviews I conducted, it was apparent that Kenney and central office administrators perceived a need that reached far beyond the crowding problem. Would they be able to extend District philosophy to the new school? "The school belong[s] to the community and that has to be the vision when you're going to keep asking them for money" (personal interview, November 14, 1996). Teachers I interviewed all claimed to have supported that philosophy even before they met Kenney. Time and required skills were also developed and made available. During the Spring and Summer of 1991, Kenney met with parents and faculty—before the holding school was even opened—to brainstorm about how parents would best become involved in the transition.

The anticipated opening of a new school represented a major change in the lives of those involved. Stakeholders welcomed the processes of community building. Parents sought information and demonstrated a willingness to be a part of the school. Fullan (1991) comments that "Just because it is a good and pressing idea doesn't mean that the resources are available to carry it out" (p. 64). In this case, however, the resources were educational professionals and members of the community. Both parents and teachers sought contact with one another and with the principal before the school year had even started. Prospective teachers were interviewed and hired according to criteria congruent with Kenney's vision.

Implementation Philosophy

"The simple implementation question is: 'What types of things would have to be changed if an innovation or reform were to become implemented'" (Fullan, 1991, p. 66). First, the conception of educational responsibility would have to change. The teachers in this case acknowledged the educational importance of other members of the community. As one stated, "It's a team. I believe...strongly that it's a team approach, in my teaching [and working with other teachers] and working with kids and parents as well" (S. Saunders, personal interview, November 26, 1996). Parents also noted how valued they felt in the process. "[Kenney] had the vision...[and] had the end result...(in mind), ...but how we were going to get there was up to us" (K. Johns, personal interview, November 26, 1996). Parents assisted in classrooms, attended school functions, and some even participated as members of committees. Johns also explains that parents took ownership in the school community from the beginning. "[Kenney] allowed us to take ownership in our school as such...if you have ownership, then obviously, you're more" (K. Johns, personal interview, November 26, 1996).

Students also were involved right from the beginning and their participation grew with the growth in enrollment. They served on Student Council and recycling teams. They also were involved with the school-business partnerships. At the classroom level, they helped construct classroom rules and responsibilities. In a 1996 survey conducted at Parker Elementary School, sixty percent of the students indicated that they always work toward making their school better, and another thirty percent indicated that they sometimes work toward making their school better. In the same survey, fifty-nine percent said that they felt that they were an important member of the school community always, while thirty-seven percent felt that they were an important member of the community at least some of the time (survey, 1996).

Barbara Kenney's vision of an education community was achieved at Parker. Many factors contributed to its success. Kenney succeeded in educating the community to the

need for shared responsibility. They became convinced that its value and significance were indisputable because it reflected a familiar tradition. Progress was visible from the very beginning. Kenney actively solicited and encouraged parent involvement even before the holding school opened. When hired, new teachers were assured that they would be leaders in creating and implementing goals. Students were involved in creating a name for the new school, choosing a mascot, and participating in the ground-breaking ceremony.

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During the implementation process, the meaning of parent-teacher-student collaboration in constructing a school community became more refined. As Fullan (1991) has pointed out, "People often become clearer about their needs only when they start doing things, that is, during implementation itself" (p. 69). During the transitional year at the holding school, all constituencies were involved in planning for the physical plant of the new school. Parents worked with the principal to furnish and decorate the building entrance (K. Johns, personal interview, November 26, 1996). Students chose to have the school mascot painted on a mural in the gym, and the project was partially financed by the PTA. The librarian selected the materials and groupings she wanted for the library with a minimum of restrictions. Before long, meeting agendas expanded to adapt to the pressures of a growing population. Initially, parent opportunities for involvement were tied to instructional assistance or the decisions from the physical plant. They were not at first involved in curricular matters. Soon, however, Kenney included parents on the committee in charge of addressing the curriculum and school improvement goals.

Opportunities for student involvement also were to expand under the new agreements with business partners. As in other districts across the country, the climate of the past decade has encouraged closer ties between the needs of business and the public schools (Spring, 1997). The District encouraged school administrators to involve community businesses in the educational process and, while at the new school, Kenney solicited three local businesses to act as school partners. When school-business partnerships were added at the new school through parent or administrator contacts, students were involved in decision-making processes. For instance, a partnership with a local bank created the opportunity for a bank in the school. With teachers and parents as facilitators only, the students sat on the Board of Directors of the bank. The Board of Directors hired other students as tellers. The bank was run by students.

Kenney was clear, at the initiation stage and throughout implementation, about what counted as a school community. More importantly, she created ways for others to begin the process in preparing for their year at the holding school. Parents and teachers were invited into decision-making meetings during the Summer before the school opened. At the first full faculty meeting, teachers were alerted that they were expected to encourage parent participation in their rooms. "The doors should always be open," was a phrase Kenney often repeated; and it was soon echoed by the teachers themselves (S. Saunders, personal interview, November 26, 1996). It was later, at Parker, that Kenney herself selected three parents to serve on the committee to evaluate and implement school goals, programs, and curriculum. In addition, parents were asked to participate in the variety of committees resulting from those goals. Such complex changes "...require a sophisticated array of activities, structures, diagnoses, teaching strategies, and philosophical understanding if effective implementation is to be achieved" (p. 71). Fullan compares the successes of complex versus simple change:

> [S]imple changes may be easier to carry out, but they may not make much of a difference. Complex changes promise to accomplish more...but they also demand more effort, and failure takes a great toll. (p. 71-72)

From such a definition it can be seen that the construction of this school community was more complex than it may seem. Teachers and administrators created activities and structures for both groups to be involved in initiation and implementation. There had to be a way to diagnose whether or not the change was being implemented and whether or not students and parents were involved and feeling important in the community. This was accomplished by means of a 1996 survey of students, parents, and teachers. New teaching strategies were

required because teachers found themselves involving parents while still being held ultimately accountable for classroom instruction. It was crucial, therefore, that the teachers agree philosophically, not only with the conception but with the collaborative process of implementation. Kenney faced these requirements during the early stages of implementation at the holding school. The school community brainstormed a variety of ways parents and teachers could cooperate. The philosophy of their work had the agreement of all members of the community.

Why the Implementation Succeeded

"Teachers and others know...not to take change seriously unless central administrators *demonstrate through actions* that they should" (Fullan, 1991, p. 74). As has been shown, the principles of school accessibility and community involvement permeated the entire district (B. Kenney, personal communication, November 14, 1996). Rapid population expansion and the practical need to build schools threatened this consensus. District growth and the projected demand for new schools made it seem essential that the community be closely involved in the decision-making process. Early on, community members understood the stakes and assumed the power to decide in 1990 whether or not to recommend a referendum to the voters in the first place. The growing financial needs of the school district was obvious to all stakeholders. Kenney recognized this political reality and responded to it. As a manager, she met Bolman and Deal's (1991) criteria of effective, organizational leadership: "The politically astute manager needs to develop an agenda, build a base of support for that agenda, and learn how to manage relations with those who might support or resist the agenda" (p. 208). Kenney followed all three of these steps. She was able to develop a clear plan; identify and develop relationships with the people who would support her vision; and finally, create win-win situations for those involved.

By these means, the principal could act as a change agent. "The principal is the person most likely to be in a position to shape the organizational conditions necessary for success" (Fullan, 1991, p. 76). By expecting staff and parents and students to become involved in the decision-making, Kenney was the key to the successful community-building process. As Thomas Shaheen, a former superintendent in Rockford, Illinois, puts it, "When you seek to involve others in decision-making, share with them important responsibilities, not scullery maid duties (T. Shaheen, personal communication, November 16, 1996). Like Shaheen, Kenney involved people in real decision-making opportunities and real ownership of the process. She also played an active role as an eloquent spokesperson for the vision.

The role of the teachers is particularly interesting in this case." The quality of working relationships among teachers is strongly related to implementation" (Fullan, 1991, p. 77). The teachers, especially the twelve at the small holding school, found multiple opportunities for team-building and creating their own rituals—an important facet of professional community (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 262). Sharing daily lunch-time together, participating together in all school activities, and anticipating their future roles as grade level leaders helped them to forge a philosophy congruent with the vision. The principal was certainly given a unique opportunity to hire her own staff. She "inherited" no teachers. Kenney's teachers seemed to acquire an outstanding ability to engage new staff members in their shared vision (personal interview, November 14, 1996). The changes implemented in this case were quickly and fully institutionalized, partly because of this critical mass of wholehearted teacher participation. The vision was built into the structure because the leadership roles of various stakeholders, especially those of the teachers, were made very clear. And these opportunities kept expanding during implementation rather than being diminished. Teachers agreed that it was their responsibility to own and communicate the vision to colleagues.

Personal Observations

This investigation has brought me to some personal conclusions about the success of this model for building a school community:

1. The principal acted successfully as a focus of energy and clarity of purpose.
2. The anticipated move to a new building transformed the context for school/community dialogue.
3. The small size of the holding school allowed teachers to create a shared vocabulary.
4. The move to the new school served as a culmination of a common journey.
5. The vision for change was a reconstruction of long-held values in the community.

Here is a case where a school principal mobilized people to retain ownership in the local school system. Together they all took some risks in advancing this mutual goal. Success was never guaranteed. We must remember that this was an evolving and somewhat fragile process. It required continual refocusing of attention and commitment to keep it strong. The continual addition of new families and new

teachers made sustaining a continuing vision more difficult. New people added energy but also stress to the community, and they have been relatively well ensconced in the school's educational philosophy. As evidenced by a survey of parents, students, and staff during the 1995-96 school year, there is a strong feeling of community ownership and involvement in Parker Elementary (survey, 1996). Despite all the hurdles that arose with the population increase, the survey indicates that Kenney's vision is firmly institutionalized and stands a good chance of sustaining itself well into the future.

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Creating a Cross-Age Tutoring Program: A Curriculum Policy Case Study

by Brigid K. Keane

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Facing Limited Resources

During the 1995-96 school year, it became increasingly evident to the staff at Parker Elementary School (all names of places and people have been changed), that our in-place efforts to provide remediation services were failing. The generally shared dissatisfaction soon became my particular problem. As the administrator/teacher responsible for providing services to students identified as needing extra help, I was expected to find a solution to the scarcity problem. It would not be easy. While my task seemed straightforward enough on the surface, I knew that the large number of students, in whose behalf teachers were seeking help, far outweighed the small number of hours I had to devote to make the appropriate arrangements.

Students were failing to receive the assistance their teachers had requested for them. Teachers were increasingly frustrated in their efforts to respond at the classroom level. For my part, I was feeling overwhelmed (and perhaps somewhat defensive). It was a rapidly worsening situation for everyone!

During the Winter 1996 term, the mood of uncertainty increased when our popular building principal, Barbara Kenney, announced that she had accepted another position. She would be leaving us beginning Fall semester, 1997. By early Spring of 1996, we learned the name of her replacement—Mary Carr, a woman who had been employed in two other schools in the District over the last six years. In fact, she had once worked in the same role I now held, shouldering both administrative and remedial teaching responsibilities. Like me, she had come to understand that the present arrangements were unrealistic. It was simply not possible to meet all the expectations of the teachers and their students. Her response had been to implement a tutoring program which she believed would address the problem.

Cross-Age Tutoring

In the Spring of 1996, before she joined us as principal, Carr invited me to observe the Cross-Age Tutoring Program she had implemented in another school. I watched as students from the fifth grade tutored lower grade students. I observed several matched pairs, heads bent over small portable chalkboards, working together on math problems. Many pairs were using a variety of flashcards for study in reading or math. Some were reading stories. It was clear that the tutors and their 'students' felt productive and successful. It seemed an obvious and refreshingly simple idea.

When Carr asked if I would be willing to implement the Cross-Age Tutoring Program during the 1996-97 school year at Parker Elementary, I jumped at the chance. Visions of all the additional students to be reached danced in my head. Here was the answer to the original problem at Parker. The problem I now had was to come up with a good plan. Hereinafter, I describe that plan for making change in the delivery of remediation services in terms of the three phases of meaningful change as identified by Michael Fullan (1991).

The Plan

Although it was only her first school year as Parker School principal, Carr capably managed a smooth transition. Considerable credit for this should be given to the District in selecting a principal whose leadership vision was so congruent with that of the previous principal. Like Kenney, Carr is committed to fostering community. Both insist on open collaboration among representatives at all stakeholder levels. Carr has continued Kenney's efforts to build teamwork relationships between students, teachers, and parents (Carr, personal interview, December 2, 1996).

It should not be surprising then, that The Cross-Age Tutoring Program had grassroots' origins. Not Carr's original creation, it was an idea she first learned from another teacher and refined to meet her needs. Now I was to be in a position to do the same. As was transmitted to me by Carr, the program called for fifth-grade teachers to recommend those students who qualified as prospective tutors. Permission to participate was to be sought from the parents of these prospective tutors so that they could remain responsible for any material they missed while tutoring out of their own classrooms. Those who were accepted would attend twelve, half-hour training sessions for instruction in teaching skills. Once the training sessions had been completed and the tutors had their assignments, they would be out of the room for two half-hour sessions per week. At Parker, I adopted this part of the plan and conducted the training sessions myself for prospective tutors.

Once the training sessions began, classroom teachers created a list of students they felt could benefit from the tutoring services. Teachers would indicate, in each case, the subject areas and/or skills for which assistance was needed. Teachers were asked to prioritize the urgency of students' needs for the tutoring services. At its inception, tutors and their tutees were assigned two per week, half-hour sessions in the school library. First, the tutors checked in with the classroom teacher regarding the instructional goal for the session. If the classroom teacher had no specific work, the tutor was then permitted to choose an activity. After calling for the tutee and checking with the classroom teacher, both children would go to their work session in the library.

During the sessions in the library, it was my role to supervise the pairs. My specific responsibility was to make sure that the sessions were running smoothly and to help solve any problems that might arise. In addition, I was available to offer assistance in the event that the teacher had not identified a specific subject area in which the pair was to work.

Students acting as tutors teaching younger students would be responsible, first, for learning the content of the training sessions.

Stakeholders

There were many stakeholders to consider in implementing this plan. The Cross-Age Tutoring Program involves students, their teachers, the building administration, and the students' parents. The students were perhaps the most important stakeholders in this program because they would become both the direct suppliers and the recipients of the services. Students acting as tutors teaching younger students would be responsible, first, for learning the content of the training sessions. The selected fifth-grade students needed to be organized and responsible for making up their missed classroom time. Younger students, who would be the chief beneficiaries of the service, must agree to become seriously invested in the program. Like the older students, they too would miss regular classroom time. Clearly, the success of the program depended heavily on students' willingness to make the required efforts.

As stakeholders, classrooms teachers must be prepared to recommend both the tutors and the tutees and to devote extensive follow-up time to make sure the tutor's time was well used. The fifth-grade teachers who recommended tutors realized that their students would be out of the room for the twelve training sessions and a minimum of one hour a week after the sessions began. The first- through fourth-grade teachers would need to be organized to provide clear and appropriate tasks for the pairs to complete.

For Carr, as a new administrator, there are high stakes in the success or failure of this program. She was advising the faculty to attempt this program. As a former facilitator/supervisor, she had witnessed success with the program at other schools and she expected success at Parker. She, in continuing her focus on collaboration, recognized this opportunity as a unique showcase for student-to-student collaboration (M. Carr, personal interview, December 2, 1996). Her reputation as a leader and as one who remains consistent with her own stated philosophy was at stake. Furthermore, she knew that the demand on faculty resources might be a problem. Program failure could revert to the original problem of delivering remediation services with even lower expectations of success.

The parents in the community are, of course, also stakeholders in this process. As in all school programs, they have a tremendous stake in their children's education. As parents of the tutors, they will need to support the teacher's decision in letting their children out of the room and allowing them to demonstrate responsibility for the missed subject matter. As parents of prospective tutees, they must decide whether or not to allow their children to be identified and if it is wise to have them miss classroom time in order to meet with their tutor.

Finally, I am certainly a stakeholder with among the highest stakes riding on this plan for change. I am on record as believing that the supervised tutor-tutee pairs can provide much needed assistance for the teachers and improve the learning of the students.

Assessing Needs

In the Spring of 1996, our former principal, Kenney, appointed a committee to design, distribute, collect, and analyze a survey of parents, staff, and students. While the survey results were overwhelmingly positive, some needs were defined: In "The school would be better if..." section provided to the staff, teachers indicated their need for more remedial assistance to handle the huge number of referrals. There was a strong general sense that this constituency would eagerly support a good faith effort to address this problem.

Student responses to their survey questions were also interesting. While only three percent of the entire student population indicated that they never felt themselves to be an important member of their school community, thirteen percent of the fifth-grade population felt this way. It seemed clear that more opportunities for fifth graders to become involved in the school would be welcomed by students. This fit well with the tutoring program hopes since it would provide fifth graders with a clear and much needed school role to play.

Fullan's warning that it is important for school communities to identify and address constituency needs is borne out by our experience. Carr, previously faced with similar needs, had identified a method to address them. As the manager of the organization of the school, Carr now had the responsibility to arrange building goals which met the needs of the members of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 127). At this point in the process, it appeared that the Cross-Age Tutoring Program would address the expressed needs of the all the educational stakeholders.

Initiation

The resources involved in this change include people and materials. The people are available since I am willing to facilitate this program and we have students and teachers who are willing to participate. A wealth of teaching materials, however, is not available. I have a small budget for the remedial program as a whole, and Carr has given me some of her personal materials. This will be enough to start the program. Unless I can purchase additional prepared materials, however, additional responsibility for planning and materials development will be forced upon the classroom teachers. We will need quantities of manipulatives, flashcards, books, and educational games to offer a variety of activities for the tutor-tutee pairs. I will also apply for a small grant and seek support from our school's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

In summary, there will be a number of steps required during the initiation process. Through faculty meetings and memos, teachers will need to stay informed about the goals of the program as well as their roles in the process. During the first quarter of the school year, teachers will be asked to begin to identify students for the program. Teachers will select the tutors, based on their ability to read, act responsibly, and complete assignments. In grades one through four, teachers will be asked to prioritize students who will benefit from participating as tutees. Before implementing tutoring sessions, the tutors will be trained. A total of six hours of training will be provided across a variety of topics. Specific subject matter strategies will be addressed, as well as tips on managing and organizing the tutoring session.

Implementation Factors

Implementation is the second phase in the change process. This phase involves putting the change in practice (Fullan, 1991, pp. 47-48). If successful, the tutoring program could provide a new opportunity for the fifth-grade students to assume leadership roles in the school. As Wheatley (1994) states, "It would seem that the more participants we engage in this participative universe, the more we can acces its potentials and the wiser we can become" (p. 65).

The Cross Age Tutoring program stands a good chance for success. The instructional and administrative needs for this program are clear. First, there is a need for additional help with remediating students. Due to the time constraints and large numbers of students recommended, it is impossible under the current arrangements to address this need.

As cited by Fullan (1991), "Huberman and Miles (1984) remind us that by the early implementation stage, the people involved must perceive both that the needs being addressed are significant and that they are making at least some progress toward meeting them" (p. 69). One of my roles must be to clarify the three needs for teachers. While some teachers prefer that we expand the current remedial program, that is not an available option at this point. The tutoring program, however, is feasible. Teachers must feel that their concerns for more remedial assistance are valid and that real attempts to address them are being made. Success will depend on teacher confidence and a sense that fifth graders can make use of the opportunity to become more involved in the school community.

Given the fact that there are clear guidelines for implementing the program, the specific arrangements for what needs to be done should be very clear. The steps for implementing the program have been outlined. In addition to the written notes regarding the program arrangement, Carr can be used as a resource. The fact that she ran the program for a number of years makes her an available resource to address questions or problems that might arise.

To clarify the teachers' role in the program, some direction will have to be given about what is expected of them. Teachers will need to have a clear sense of purpose and understand their role in the implementation. They should be given clear guidelines for procedures in recommending students to act as tutors and tutees.

There should also be clarity regarding the standards that tutors must uphold. In clarifying the program for the tutors, they will have the twelve training sessions to assist them with directions and guidelines for the program. The training will involve instruction in doing math, spelling, writing, and reading work. The tutors will also be receiving strategies for teaching skills in these subject areas. In addition, they will role-play through lessons to practice dealing with problems. Furthermore, they will understand that an adult will be supervising the tutors at all times; and, while they should try to deal with any situation that may arise, there will always be an available adult with whom to consult.

Tutors will take the lead in clarifying the program for the tutees. They will explain the rules and procedures of the program. Teachers will be explaining to the tutees, and their parents, the goals and objectives of the program.

The tutors and tutees will be required to make the most changes. They will need to learn new skills related to teaching and facilitating instruction. They will require instruction in teaching strategies as well as in using the available materials. The tutees may also require some changes in beliefs. Some of them may be unaware that a peer can teach them and is worthy of their attention and respect. They will need to understand and support the role of the tutor.

At each quarter, teachers will have a formal opportunity to evaluate the program and describe the specific growth, or lack of growth, that the tutees demonstrate.

My role as facilitator/supervisor means I must cope with much complexity. I will need to communicate the program goals to all of the stakeholders, instruct the tutors, create the schedules, arrange and purchase materials, as well as supervise and facilitate the tutoring sessions. An evaluation process for the program will need to be created.

Regarding materials, some money is available for necessary supplies and a number of manipulatives. Also, there will be time to apply for a mini-grant. If the grant proposal is refused, other funding can be sought from the PTA. The program is scheduled to be running during the middle of the second quarter of this year. Schedules and objectives are clearly defined for each step.

Furthermore, there will need to be communication tools constructed. Each day, tutors will complete a log depicting exactly what was completed during each session. They will also be able to ask questions of the facilitator/supervisor each day. The tutors will describe the weekly progress of their tutee and have a chance to ask for suggestions or assistance.

Tools will also need to be created to evaluate how the needs of the teachers are being met. At each quarter, teachers will have a formal opportunity to evaluate the program and describe the specific growth, or lack of growth, that the tutees demonstrate. Furthermore, they will be able to offer suggestions about improvements of the program.

Tutees will be asked quarterly to assess their progress. Tutees will evaluate their progress in noted subject areas and describe how the program has met their needs. Tutors also will be asked to evaluate their role in the program. They will be asked to describe the benefits of being a tutor, as well as some of the challenges. In addition, they will be asked about their tutee's growth.

Continuation/Institutionalization

Continuation or institutionalization is the third phase of the change process. Fullan (1991) explains that this phase "refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of the system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition" (p. 48). The Cross-Age Tutoring Program will be institutionalized when it has been proven to be worth the time and energy put into it.

One way to identify when this has been achieved will be through demonstrating that the needs described earlier are abeing met. When teachers are able to identify the tutoring program as a valid ad-

ditional resource for them to use with students who are struggling, the program will become institutionalized. They will be able to assess this through quarterly reports. Creating a uniform testing tool which will depict student growth of the tutee regardless of his or her grade level is impossible at this time due to a lack of testing materials and time constraints. Unless this program is working from the teacher's viewpoint, the program will not last. Other avenues for involving fifth graders in the community can be explored and, in fact, are regularly being considered throughout the school culture. However, based on the support for the program from the other schools in which Carr has implemented the program, I am confident that the program will be successful at Parker.

An Update

The Cross-Age Tutoring Program was indeed implemented this year at Parker Elementary. In August, Carr presented the program to the fifth-grade teachers. At that time, she asked the fifth-grade teachers to reserve the last half-hour of each day as a practice or independent work time so that tutors, when out of the room, would not miss instruction. In early September, the other teachers were informed of the plan to start the program at Parker, and Carr described some of the successes she had experienced.

During October, the fifth-grade teachers were asked to recommend five or six students per classroom. Upon compiling the list, there were a total of twenty-five tutors recommended. The response from the parents was positive. A number of the parent permission slips included comments thanking the classroom teachers for giving the opportunity to their children. However, the fifth-grade classroom teachers did express some concerns about the amount of time that the tutors would be out of the classroom for the training sessions. In addressing this, I reminded them that training was necessary for the tutoring sessions to be successful. The teachers accepted this and made the necessary scheduling adjustments during the training sessions.

Also, during the end of October, the first- through fourth-grade teachers were asked to identify students who would benefit from participating in the program. They were also asked to describe skills and subject areas in which the students needed help. Based on these lists, twenty-five first-through fourth-graders were chosen to be tutees.

During the last week of October and through the middle of November, the training sessions were held for the fifth-grade tutors. As facilitator/supervisor, I instructed the tutors on strategies to use during reading, math, and writing. We addressed how to deal with behavior problems and other problematic situations that may arise. In addition, students were given multiple opportunities for role playing and brainstorming. During the training sessions, the tutors collected reference materials to for assistance. Forms for documentation and assessment were explained. These were compiled in a notebook for each pair in the program.

During the last week of November, the tutoring pairs met for the first time. During that time, pairs worked primarily on math, reading, and writing skills. The tutor-tutee teams will continue working together through the remainder of the school year. Both tutors and teachers will be rating the success of the program throughout the year.

Students who come to the attention of the building Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) team, may also be recommended for the program throughout the school year. Any additional tutees added to the program will require that tutors work with two tutees. The fifth-grade teachers will be consulted in the event that this happens, since fifth-graders will require two additional half-hour sessions spent out of the classroom each week.

It has become clear to me that more specific rules and consequences will need to be created for the tutor-tutee pairs. Some problems have arisen from the few of the fifth-graders unable to complete their own required classroom work. Clear guidelines regarding the tutor's academic progress will need to be created.

Despite these initial snags in the program, I can already see some benefits. The fifth- graders enjoy their roles and are demonstrating responsibility. The tutees appear to regard the tutors as esteemed older colleagues and, so far, they are treating them with respect.

I am confident that this program will become institutionalized at Parker Elementary because of the strong sense of community that exists. The opportunity provides for student involvement, as well as academic growth, and is a child-centered program. In keeping with the former principal's vision, and the new principal's vision of collaboration, this program will be a continuing force in the school community.

References

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