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IMPROVING READING INSTRUCTION THROUGH STATE POLICY:
TWO LOCAL STORIES
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IMPROVING READING INSTRUCTION THROUGH STATE POLICY:
TWO LOCAL STORIES

By

Nancy Suzanne Standerford

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

IMPROVING READING INSTRUCTION THROUGH STATE POLICY:

TWO LOCAL STORIES

By

Nancy Suzanne Standerford

This study looked at the ways in which two small school districts in southwestern Michigan responded to a state policy intended to improve reading instruction. The study attempted to understand what those local educators charged with this responsibility knew about the policy, what it meant for reading instruction, and how to facilitate bringing about those changes. The context of the organization and how routines and procedures of the organization affected the work were analyzed. The power structures of the districts and how those affected the work were also examined. The ways in which these three factors, knowledge of the participants, organizational characteristics, and power structures, interacted to shape local efforts were analyzed.

The study found that the local educators had limited knowledge of the ideas underlying the policy and were provided with few opportunities to learn more about those ideas. This occurred because of the push to

fit the implementation efforts into standard operating procedures of the organization. The teachers involved realized that they needed more time to learn before they could do the work effectively; however, the power structures left the decisions in the hands of the administrators who were more focused on meeting district timelines and state mandates than on improving reading instruction in classrooms. This situation limited district efforts to a strategy instruction interpretation of the policy which required that teachers learn some new instructional strategies rather than learning how to fundamentally change their approach to reading instruction.

In both districts, the individual teachers were attempting to sort through the wealth of information coming to them from numerous outside sources and were taking small steps away from traditional ways of teaching reading. Most of these steps consisted of adding the new ideas onto their existing practices. In one district, these steps were supported and encouraged, while in the other district teachers looked for ways to by-pass the district constraints to learn on their own.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work with deep respect and affection to the many teachers and administrators in Rockville and in Fortville who shared their time, their thoughts, and their lives so openly with me.

I also dedicate this work to my husband, Steve, my daughter, Wendy, and my son, Chris, who were always there with encouraging words and support. Without your help I could not have continued.

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Government agencies have a history of attempting to change practices within the nation's schools through policy formulation and implementation (Cuban, 1990; Cohen, 1989-90). However, such efforts have typically been less than successful in bringing about the intended changes in local school districts. What happens to a state policy when it comes to local school districts? Why does local implementation take the course that it does? These are the issues on which this study focused.

In the mid-1980's, Michigan adopted a state reading policy designed to improve reading instruction throughout the state. This study explored what happened in two small school districts in southwestern Michigan as they responded to this state policy. The events were examined from three perspectives. The knowledge of the participants about the policy, the changes it supported, and how those changes might happen was explored. The work was situated within the context of a complex organization; thus, the organizational factors which influenced the work were examined. The efforts to implement the policy were negotiated through the political system of power within the organization, so political agendas and power structures were considered as they affected the efforts. These three

perspectives together offer valuable insights on what happened, why it happened, and how those events affected the districts' plans for improving reading instruction in response to the state policy.

Research Question

The question that framed my study was:

How do (a) the knowledge and beliefs of the principal actors, (b) organizational priorities and routines, and (c) local political agendas interact to shape local school district responses to a state-level reading policy?

This is a question about how local school districts responded to a state reading policy. The study analyzed the thinking and actions of the local educators directly responsible for planning the districts' responses in two small school districts. In each district, a committee of teachers and administrators was formed to revise the district reading curriculum. These committee members, the central office administrators overseeing the work, and the school board members who accept and approve the work, in effect, decide what the policy becomes in each district. The study looked at what these key people knew about the policy, what they thought should be done in response to the policy, what they actually did, and why those actions were taken.

The study focused on district responses at the elementary school level. This focus was chosen for two reasons. First, each district organized the work by separating elementary and secondary efforts. Second, the expertise and interest of the researcher lies at the elementary school level.

Major issues of the study concerned the factors affecting policy implementation, instructional change, and reading instruction. These

major issues were investigated by analyzing how individual knowledge about reading instruction and instructional change, organizational routines, and political agendas interacted to shape implementation of the policy.

Limitations of the Study

My study looked at district-level attempts to implement a state policy designed to change classroom reading instruction. The focus was on what the participants charged with this work thought and did at the district level. I attempted to understand their thinking about the ideas of the policy by observing them in meetings, by interviewing them, and by looking at artifacts and documents.

My study has some limitations. First, I did not focus on the classroom reading instruction of the participants. Although that would be worth doing in another study, it was beyond the realm of this study. Therefore, the information that I have on the teachers' actual teaching is limited. It is well-known that informants may tell a researcher what she wants to hear rather than what they are actually doing. This limitation was addressed by triangulating the information on classroom instruction with observations of the classroom settings and the materials which were being used, with teacher interviews, and with teachers' words and actions at committee meetings. I needed to understand teachers' instruction as it supported their knowledge of the policy and what should happen in the district-level efforts, so this limitation and the approach taken seem credible. However, the participants viewed and described the changes which they were making in their reading instruction through the

lens of traditional reading instruction with which they were more familiar; the reader should bear this in mind.

A second limitation concerns my picture of the first three years of the work in Fortville. I constructed this picture from oral histories of the participants and from documents. I triangulated this data across participants and between what I was told and what I found in district documents such as meeting agendas, rough copies of the proposal, and notices of meetings and of actions taken at meetings. I observed the actual work during the fourth year of the study.

A third limitation concerns my role in Rockville. I was able to be on site for the entire four years because I was working as a reading specialist in the district during that time. This had both advantages and disadvantages. My position allowed me to be on site and to observe the story as it developed more closely. It allowed me to conduct many informal conversations which added to the richness of the data. My role was a disadvantage in that I was closely involved with the participants. This personal involvement was a constant reminder that I had to record events and words exactly as they happened to address personal bias. As with all qualitative research, the researcher's bias is always a concern. Therefore, throughout this report of the study I have used actual quotes from participants and from documents whenever possible. It is hoped that this approach will allow the reader to spot any undue researcher bias in my interpretations of these words.

My study did construct pictures of the work of two small school districts as they responded to a state policy. These pictures offer insights into problems of policy implementation and of influencing

instructional change. These pictures were constructed from participant observations, observations, interviews, informal conversations, documents, and dialogue journals with participants. I believe that the variety of the data and the length of the data collection offered the opportunity to build accurate pictures of this district-level work.

Michigan's Reading Policy Examined

In the early 1980's, a new instructional specialist for reading at the Michigan Department of Education assumed the task of revising the reading objectives for the state as part of the state's five year curriculum revision cycle. She formed a Curriculum Review Committee to do this work. This group consisted of university faculty, public school teachers and reading specialists, representatives from the Michigan Reading Association, representatives from publishers, and state department personnel concerned with reading instruction (e.g., Chapter I monitors). This group of people read the research and attempted to write a reading policy which would improve reading instruction throughout the state. The policy consisted of a redefinition of the process of reading (The New Definition of Reading), a set of goals and objectives (Michigan Essential Objectives for Reading Education), and a new state assessment program (Michigan Educational Assessment Program or MEAP).

What Does the Policy Mean?

In Michigan the generally accepted definition of reading prior to 1980 was that reading consisted of figuring out the words on the page. This "old" definition stated the following.

Reading is the process of transforming the visual representation of language into meaning (Michigan Department of Education and Curriculum Review Committee, 1988, Module #1, p. T6).

This view assumed that if students could figure out the words and knew what the words meant, meaning of the text followed automatically. Thus, instruction focused on word level skills of word recognition and vocabulary development. Instruction in word recognition focused on memorizing sight words, learning rules of phonics, and drilling on structural skills (e.g., affixes and root words). Vocabulary was often taught by having students look up words in the dictionary. Such discrete skills were easily presented, practiced, and tested in classrooms (Pearson, Dole, Duffy, & Roehler, 1991; Durkin, 1978-79).

The New Definition

Michigan's New Definition of Reading attempts to change how teachers think about reading instruction. Reading is now defined as the construction of meaning through an interactive process between the reader's knowledge, the information suggested by the printed text, and the reading situation.

Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the situation (Michigan Department of Education & Curriculum Review Committee, 1988; Michigan Reading Association, 1984).

This view of reading would call for instruction which focused on comprehension of whole pieces of text rather than focusing on figuring out words (Pearson, 1984; Pearson, et al., 1991; Paris & Wixson, 1987). This definition sees the reader as an active participant in the

sense-making. The text merely suggests information which is then mediated or interpreted through what the reader already knows about the topic, the type of text, and the purpose for which the reading is being done. The reader must be knowledgeable about what strategies will enable him/her to construct meaning, when and why to use a specific strategy, and how to use that strategy (Duffy & Roehler, 1989; Paris & Wixson, 1987; Pearson, et al., 1991). This type of knowledge puts the reader in control of the reading process and allows him/her to construct meanings appropriate to the purpose for which he/she is reading (Duffy & Roehler, 1989; Duffy & Roehler, 1989b).

The Essential Objectives

"Michigan Essential Objectives for Reading Education" attempt to translate this definition into student outcomes. These objectives focus on what students need to know to construct meaning from text, what students should know about the process of reading, and what attitudes and perceptions students should have about reading. These objectives are not based on hundreds of discrete skills, as in the past, but make broad statements that apply to readers of all ages and abilities (Pearson, et al., 1989). The objectives, then, are quite similar for grades three, six, and nine (the grade levels addressed by the state). For example, under the heading "Knowledge About Reading," all three grades have the goal of "knowing that reading is communication" and the subgoal of "knowing that what is read was written by someone who was trying to say something." Under the subheading "Strategies," all three grades should "know(ing) about a variety of strategies for identifying words, e.g.,

predictions, context clues, phonics, and structural analysis." With such broad goals, it is left to the teacher to decide what type of instruction or which type of strategy is most appropriate for each situation and for each student.

The Test

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) was also revised to fit with this new view of the reading process and of what students should learn. This revision was done by the MEAP Department of the Department of Education working with the Curriculum Review Committee. The new assessment instrument (which is administered each fall to all fourth, seventh, and tenth graders) measures students' abilities to construct meaning from complete passages of text, both narrative (story) and expository (non-fiction, informational). To pass the test, students must reach a predetermined score on both passages.

This test differs from previous state tests in its approach. First, the passages which students read are complete stories (taken from appropriate grade-level basal books) or sections from content area textbooks. Students no longer read a series of unconnected short paragraphs and answer questions on each. This test asks students to read a longer, connected text and to answer questions about the meaning of the passage. These questions are categorized as "beyond the text," "text," and "intersentence" level questions to assess whether students are able to construct literal meanings from a few sentences, literal and inferential meanings from the entire passage, or inferential meanings going beyond the information suggested by the text. In addition, the

test attempts to assess the students' knowledge about the reading process, or how they would go about constructing meanings, their attitudes and self-perceptions about reading and themselves as readers, and their familiarity with the topic. These additional categories of information are included to help teachers understand why students were or were not able to construct meanings from the text.

The new MEAP is similar to the former test and to other standardized tests in two connected ways. The new MEAP is written in a multiple choice, rather than an open-ended, format. Students must select the one best answer from a choice of four rather than wrestling with the ideas, forming their own conclusions, and expressing these to an audience. This multiple choice format limits student thinking and allows blind guessing at answers. Second, students must all construct the same correct meaning. Students are not expected to use their own knowledge to construct a variety of interpretations, but are expected to come to the same conclusions as the test authors.

Analysis of the Policy: What Implementation Problems Does the Policy Present?

Inherent in Michigan's reading policy are qualities that would be likely to cause problems for local school districts as they respond to it. The policy itself has at least three characteristics which would cause implementation problems. It is open to varied interpretations. The alignment of the test and the definition are questionable. It is a "policy as ideas" (Weiss, 1990) which lacks incentives for implementation.

Varied Interpretations

The first problem inherent in the policy concerns defining what instructional changes it supports. At least two interpretations of the policy are possible.

The Department of Education and the Curriculum Review Committee attempted to spread the word about this new policy across the state. Working with very limited resources, they could provide limited learning opportunities for educators. The Department of Education's instructional specialist presented the information in talks to local organizations across the state. The committee organized state-wide conferences to provide basic awareness information to attending educators. After these initial conferences, the committee provided trainer-of-trainer conferences for those who attended the initial conferences and others who joined them. This series of three conferences provided scripted materials for those attending to become trainers in their local work sites. These new trainers were essentially novices with the policy themselves, some had attended only a portion of the three conferences, but they were expected to work from the scripted materials they received to teach others about this new way of teaching reading.

This approach to dissemination, the lectures, conferences, and materials, provided limited learning opportunities. Information was "given" to those attending through presentations and written materials. Participants did not have opportunities to wrestle with questions of how these ideas would look in practice and to discuss their concerns. They were basically handed "the answer" to impart to others, the typical "pedagogy of policy" (Cohen & Barnes, 1991). Such limited experience

with the new philosophy and ideas and how they would look in practice could lead one to a simplified interpretation of the policy which might be called "strategy instruction." In strategy instruction, the focus is on teaching the students the strategies which they can use to construct the correct meaning, strategies explained in the written materials distributed at the conferences. Strategy instruction carries the danger of teachers learning and then teaching isolated strategies without understanding nor teaching why, when, or where to use those strategies. This scenario bodes the danger of producing instruction which resembles the "old" view of teaching students isolated skills with little attention to how these skills or strategies enable one to control the reading process.

A second interpretation of the policy is also possible, though not as likely given the way it was disseminated. This interpretation sees students using their own knowledge to interact with the information in the text and to construct new ideas from this interaction. In this constructivist view, text could be interpreted in many ways, depending on one's own background knowledge. Students would be constantly clarifying their own interpretations through interaction with others who hold varying interpretations. The teacher would be a facilitator helping students to look within themselves to clarify their thoughts and to communicate their ideas to others, thus helping them refine their ideas through dialogue with others. The focus would be on learning through dialogue and interactions with others and by reflection on one's own thinking. The role of the teacher would be drastically different, not a knowledge dispenser, but a "more knowledgeable other" who helps students

think critically to produce new ideas. The role of the text would be drastically different. Students would be thinking about text, evaluating it, integrating it with their own knowledge, and producing new ideas by combining text ideas and their own ideas. The context of the reading situations would be different. Students would be working toward producing new ideas for their own use, rather than constructing the correct idea to fit the expectations of others. This view of the policy would be more in keeping with the research upon which the policy is based which supported a deeper, more personally relevant approach to making sense of what one reads.

If one assumes the policy supports a constructivist view of learning, a tension appears. A constructivist view assumes that knowledge is constructed as individuals and groups interact based upon the prior experiences of the individuals and the context of the interactions. Thus, subscribing to this view would mean that the implementors would necessarily have varied interpretations of what the policy meant for practice according to their knowledge and the context of their work. If the policy is meant to be interpreted in multiple ways, how would an observer know if the policy were being implemented? If each location interprets the policy and constructs its meaning for themselves, implementation would look different in each site.

In addition, there are different versions of constructivism. Some who call themselves constructivists believe that all humans construct knowledge similarly; thus, teaching strategies to construct knowledge will help learners in their individual constructions. Others who term their views constructivist believe that each person constructs knowledge

in idiosyncratic ways; therefore, teaching everyone to use the same strategies would not be appropriate. However, persons holding each view believe they are interpreting the policy from a constructivist perspective. By definition the policy would have many interpretations, and implementation would look different in each context.

Michigan's New Definition of Reading is open to varied interpretations when one translates it into practice. Does it call for teachers to learn new strategies and then teach these to their students? Does it call for teachers to allow students to wrestle with text and to formulate their own meanings? What does the policy want teachers to do differently? This lack of clarity about what the policy means for practice and the tension between allowing students to construct varied interpretations as opposed to all constructing the same interpretation will likely pose problems for local educators attempting to understand and to respond to this policy. The fact that it can be implemented in varied ways will also make it difficult for observers to know if the policy has been implemented.

Questionable Alignment

Another problem relevant to Michigan's reading policy occurs in its design. This policy follows the "curriculum alignment" (Cohen, 1989-90) family of reforms. This type of reform offers a new curriculum to focus teachers' attention on what needs to change, new texts or materials to tell teachers how to make the changes in practice, and a new test to push them toward the change. Attempting to change instruction in this manner might be possible if the changes were easily understood and easily taught

to teachers and if the philosophical alignment was clear. Attempting to change instruction in this manner when the changes call for deep understanding of the subject and for more teacher decision-making is much more problematic and would be less likely to occur unless teachers had thorough understanding of the new curricula (Ibid.). Thus, the curriculum alignment approach, especially in this instance when teachers had limited opportunities to learn about the expected changes and when the changes themselves are nebulous, presents problems for teachers who do not really understand what changes they are to make in their practice while being "pushed" by a test which is unclear in its philosophy. Aligning the curriculum in this manner pushes the teacher to teach what the test measures, i.e., finding the correct answer, rather than to teach students to construct new ideas from their reading which is implied in the New Definition. It is not clear what instructional changes teachers should make. Thus, each district must interpret the ideas and translate them into operational terms leaving the door open for multiple versions of change to occur. The new MEAP was designed to assess students' abilities to construct meaning; however, the multiple choice format and a predetermined criteria for passing assumes that all students must construct the same meanings to pass the test. This reduction of students' opportunities to construct meanings to choosing the correct answer on a multiple choice test raises questions about the basic philosophy of the state and how it should be interpreted locally. If students will be assessed on how well they can construct the one "correct" meaning of a text, then they are not really expected to be constructing multiple meanings from text. The MEAP, then, pushes

educators toward the strategy instruction interpretation of the policy where students learn new strategies while still striving to identify the correct meaning to pass the test rather than to use their own knowledge to construct new meanings and ideas.

A "Policy as Ideas"

A third implementation problem relevant to this policy is that Michigan's New Definition of Reading is a "policy as ideas" (Weiss , 1990). As such, it attempts to influence the way that people think about reading and about reading instruction. The ideas are the policy instruments; the assumption is that people can be persuaded to change their beliefs and behaviors through new information. However, as discussed earlier, the policy is open to multiple interpretations by those responsible for implementing it. Again, if teachers, those responsible for changing instruction, do not understand the ideas and are not persuaded by the new information, the policy has little chance of improving instruction. Teachers will not be persuaded to make changes which they do not understand, which make little sense to them. Since the policy does not carry incentives for implementation, confused local educators would be likely to ignore it as they dealt with more pressing policies and problems.

Confusion During Implementation

Local educators responding to Michigan's reading policy are likely to experience confusion over what changes must happen in response to the policy. One would expect to find local implementors struggling with

clarification of the intent of the policy and how it would look in practice.

In addition to these problems of clarifying what changes need to happen, attempts to change instruction occur within the context of public institutions. Organizational contexts present their own problems for bringing change. Inherent within organizations are mechanisms which seek to maintain the status quo of the organization for its own preservation. These organizational and bureaucratic mechanisms will present problems for Michigan's policy as it moves into school districts. Political agendas, specifically concerning power to make and act on decisions, also influence the attempts of school districts to implement such a policy.

These factors of clarifying the policy, organizational contexts, and political agendas will all work together to influence what happens in local school districts as they respond to Michigan's reading policy. The policy seeks to have teachers teach reading in ways that will build deep understandings and encourage thinking in students. However, the policy is ambiguous. What does it really mean for practice? That question is open to multiple interpretations as state educators attempt to understand the policy and to translate it into instructional practices. The policy instrument is the ideas on which the policy rests. However, these ideas are not clear and simple to implement. The policy has no real authority to force teachers to change. Will the MEAP provide enough push to encourage teachers to change their instruction? How will they know what to change, who must change, and when this change must occur? Local educators must grapple with these questions as they respond to this state policy. They must decide what the policy means, who it affects,

what must happen in response to it, how that will happen, and within what time frame it will occur. All of this must be decided and implemented within the complex world of an organization, a public bureaucracy, and it must be negotiated through a complex political system.

This exploratory study attempts to understand and explain what happened in two districts over a four year period of time as they responded to this policy at the local level. It also attempts to compare the stories of these two school systems and to draw conclusions that might illuminate this process for others facing similar tasks.

This study was informed by the wealth of information that has been written about attempts to change instruction in our nation's schools. First, I looked at historical attempts to change instruction through governmental policy. Second, I considered the context of instruction, i.e., the school district as an organization, and its influence on attempts to change instruction. Issues of power as they affect attempts to change instruction within hierarchical organizations such as school districts were examined. The nature of teaching as a practice and how it affects change efforts was considered. Last, issues concerning individual teacher characteristics and how those influence change were analyzed. I will address each of these issues as they concern my study.

The Tides of Reform: Context of the Policy

Reform movements in American education rise and ebb much as do the tides of the seas. Reforms of the 1950's hoped to achieve intellectually ambitious instruction. However, this instruction was to be achieved by bypassing the teachers and providing "teacher-proof" curriculum

materials. The 1960's brought political unrest and calls for the schools to address civil rights and equity issues; however, it was unclear what teachers needed to do to address these issues at the classroom level. The late 1970's and early 1980's saw attention focused on "basics." Schools were thought to be lax in their standards, and teachers were maligned for providing instruction that focused on affective areas rather than on academics. The social and political forces called for tougher requirements in basic subjects such as reading and math. These tougher requirements would be measured by improved scores on standardized tests. Although the focus on improved test scores has lasted, the mid to late 1980's have seen another shift in the focus of reforms. Teachers are now expected to provide more thoughtful and intellectually ambitious instruction which will develop students' abilities to define and solve problems and to apply knowledge in a variety of situations. While each of these reforms may have brought minor changes in the schools, few have been able to achieve the desired visions of the reformers (Cohen & Spillane, 1991; Cohen & Barnes, 1991-92).

What can we glean from these earlier movements which might enlighten today's reform efforts to have teachers provide more intellectually ambitious instruction? There are several key issues for policy makers and those who implement policies to consider.

The Role of the Teacher

First, each of these large reform movements have one theme in common; they fail to address what teachers need to learn to do differently to achieve the visions of the policies. In the 1950's,

teachers were expected to allow students to use high quality materials with the expectation that the materials would teach the students. In the 1960's, the teachers were expected to provide more instruction for disadvantaged students, but that instruction most often amounted to more of the same. In the 1970's and early 1980's, teachers were told they must use more structured pedagogical models to improve student test scores. In the late 1980's, teachers were expected to be constantly assessing student needs and to make instantaneous decisions about what those students need to help them construct new ideas from their experiences and dialogues. But, teachers are most often left to their own devices to learn what they need to change and then to figure out what that means for the daily life of their classrooms. This oversight is particularly important in the reforms of today. Most teachers have not experienced intellectually ambitious instruction themselves, nor have they had many opportunities to learn how to provide such instruction for their students (Weiss & Cohen, 1991). Moreover, their own knowledge of the subject matter, especially at the elementary level, has seldom prepared them with the deep understandings of the disciplines necessary to prepare such instruction (McDiarmid, Ball, & Anderson, in press). Reforms calling for teachers to provide intellectually ambitious instruction must address the matter of how teachers will learn to provide such instruction. The typical mode of helping teachers learn about new practices (i.e., deficit model, see Jackson, 1971) has been "didactic and teacher centered" (Cohen & Barnes, 1991). Policy makers typically approach teachers with "THE" answers and proceed to tell them what to do.

This presentation mode reinforces the teacher-centered approach to teaching which today's reforms attempt to change.

Fragmented Governance

Another difficulty which thwarts the success of reform movements is that the system of government in the United States is structured to limit and fragment authority over education. The federal government has historically had a weak influence over education when compared with more centralized educational systems of other countries (Cohen & Spillane, 1991). State governments have the constitutional authority to govern schools; however, they have historically delegated much of this authority to the local level due to a lack of resources to exercise much power (Ibid.). This fragmented system leaves many educational decisions to the local level; thus, there is wide variety in how state policies or national reform movements are interpreted and implemented at the local level (Ibid.). This presents an interesting situation for educational reformers. Cohen and Spillane state the following.

While the design of American government incarnates a deep mistrust of state power, the design of most education policy expressed an abiding hope for the power of government, and a wish to harness it to solving social problems (p. 6).

Americans continue to believe that federal and state educational policies can resolve societal problems by addressing the problem at the school level. However, in reality, the government is designed to limit the power of government agencies and to allow local latitude in implementing such policies. An interesting, often frustrating, paradox for policy makers and policy implementors.

Instructional Guidance

A third problem with efforts to change instruction in classrooms through state policy is that the American system of allowing considerable local latitude in decision-making applies also to the classroom level. Individual teachers find themselves free to choose both the content and the pedagogical approaches they will use in their own classrooms (Cohen & Spillane, 1991). The American system does not provide strong "instructional guidance" to classroom teachers. They are most often left to follow the dictates of textbook publishers in whatever manner they wish. This situation has begun to change as government agencies, local districts, and professional organizations all seek to offer more instructional guidance to teachers. However, these efforts are largely undertaken independent of each other, leaving local educators unsure what to do. Cohen and Spillane sum up the situation.

We live in a blizzard of different, divergent, and often inconsistent efforts to create more consistent guidance. . . . These novel schemes also compete with established ideas and practices, for 'back to basics,' 'effective schools,' and 'direct instruction' all are alive, well, and firmly rooted in school and classroom practice (p. 21).

Not only are the local schools left to choose which schemes to adopt, but there is often disagreement in the basic philosophies and intents of the choices. Lacking adequate understandings of these divergent choices, schools may opt to choose those practices which seem most familiar and which could be implemented with the least expense and resistance. Reforms which aim to change teachers' conceptions of learning in radical ways such as reforms which attempt to have teachers provide

intellectually ambitious instruction would not be cheap and easy to implement.

Societal factors also influence the ways in which local districts will interpret and respond to government policies. Relaxed higher education admission standards and employer disinterest in high school achievement communicate to teachers and students that intellectually demanding instruction is not expected (Cohen & Spillane, 1991; Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, 1985). Thus, incentives to provide such instruction are lacking in our society. In addition, Americans have historically valued experience over formal education and practical content within formal education rather than intellectually challenging content (Cohen & Spillane, 1991; Cohen, 1988-89; Cohen & Barnes, 1991). Teachers who attempt to provide intellectually ambitious instruction will likely meet with both student and parent resistance to such unfamiliar and typically undervalued practices.

These problems all speak to the difficulties a state policy which seeks to make classroom instruction more intellectually demanding will face. Teachers will have difficulty translating such unfamiliar ideas into their own practice. Governance from regulating agencies is likely to be weak and fragmented. Instructional guidance is seldom provided. The larger society will not offer strong support for such changes. These issues will all bear on my stories of two local school districts attempting to respond to a state reading policy which attempts to move reading instruction from a skills-based approach to an approach where students become active participants in the construction of new ideas.

The Michigan reading policy was written in response to broad societal issues and was supported by recent research in the field of reading. Let us now turn to those factors which influenced the formulation of the policy.

Societal Changes

Changes in American society in the 1980's increased political pressures from a variety of groups for educational reform. Business and industry were calling for improved instruction in the schools; instruction which would develop problem-solving skills and the ability to apply what is read. Workplaces were becoming increasingly technological, thus eliminating high paying, low skills jobs. Young adults without the basic skills to learn these new technologies were finding their only employment option to be low paying, service type jobs which relegated them to poverty. The middle class was shrinking while the lower class and the minority populations, whose children typically do poorly in school, were rapidly growing. Discontent with the nation's schools was growing as the schools were once again seen as the vehicle through which society's problems could be addressed (Hodgkinson, 1987; Hodgkinson, 1990).

Renewed Research

Research on learning to read and reading instruction had increased dramatically beginning in the late 1970's (Pearson, 1984; Pearson, et al., 1991; Paris & Wixson, 1987). This research described classroom reading instruction in dismal ways. In most classrooms, reading

instruction was based on a drill and practice view of learning (Pearson, et al., 1991) where students spent most of their reading instruction time independently completing practice sheets of isolated skills. Basal reading programs dictated what and how teachers should teach (Durkin, 1978-79; Duffy, 1982; Pearson, 1984). These programs provided a flood of workbooks, skill sheets, and skills tests, but seldom were these skills applied in the stories students read (Durkin, 1978-79; Pearson, 1984). Standardized tests were written and nationally normed to measure these skills. A vicious circle evolved where teachers taught these skills assuming they were important to reading achievement because they were taught in the basal series and tested on the standardized tests (Valencia & Pearson, 1987). When students did meet with the teacher to read and discuss stories, the focus was often on oral reading and answering literal questions about unimportant details (Pearson, 1984; Paris & Wixson, 1987; Spache & Spache, 1969). From this type of reading instruction, students built inaccurate concepts of what reading is (Duffy & Roehler, 1989). As this reliance on commercial basal series and testing programs grew, teachers relinquished their control of instructional decisions to basal manuals written by "experts" (Barr, 1987; Duffy, 1982; Durkin, 1978-79; Spache & Spache, 1969).

Research described this dismal situation and supported changes in reading instruction. One major shift called for students to learn that the purpose of reading is to construct meanings from text, and that instruction in comprehension strategies will enable them to successfully construct meaning (Duffy, 1982; Pearson, et al., 1991; Paris & Wixson, 1987; Duffy & Roehler, 1989). Another major change was a focus on

enabling students to assume control of their own reading by teaching them what strategies are available to them (declarative knowledge), when and why to use specific strategies (conditional knowledge), and how to use each strategy (procedural knowledge) (Duffy & Roehler, 1989; Paris & Wixson, 1987; Pearson, et al., 1991).

This research called for teachers to assign authentic reading tasks for students rather than worksheets over isolated skills. Authentic tasks are "the ordinary practices of the culture" (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989, p. 34). In the culture of readers, that would mean reading a wide variety of materials for a wide variety of personally meaningful purposes. Teachers would concentrate on developing attitude goals (one reads to get the message of the author and reading is enjoyable and useful), process goals (how the reading system works), and content goals (constructing meaning from the text) (Duffy & Roehler, 1989). Teachers would view all readers as "emerging experts" (Pearson, et al., 1991) who use similar processes to construct meaning from various levels and types of text. Reading would be taught within an integrated language arts curriculum where all language processes (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are used in authentic communication activities. These types of instruction would allow the students to become members of the culture of readers (Brown, et al., 1989; Duffy, 1990).

This research-supported view of reading came to be popularly known as "whole language." Whole language instruction is interpreted in widely varied ways across the nation's schools. Most often it includes viewing students as emerging experts who should begin using reading and writing as communication processes from the beginning. It calls for instruction

on processes (skills and strategies) to be embedded in the context of reading text. For example, letters and sounds are not taught in isolation, but are called to students' attention as they are encountered within text. Drill and practice are replaced by reading and writing tasks.

The whole language movement gained national strength rapidly in the mid-1980's. University classes, professional publications, conferences, workshops, and publishers all began to talk about how teachers could use whole language practices within their classrooms, while seldom defining just what they meant by "whole language" (Bergeron, 1990).

The 1980's were a time of national reform for education and particularly for reading education. It was in the midst of this sea of change that Michigan's reading policy was developed. Cohen (1992) described the situation

. . . the tide of change was rolling in and floating on the surface was the Michigan reading policy, much as one piece of seaweed, floating on the surface of the water, rolls in with the tide (paraphrased).

The Michigan state reading policy was only one source of the pressure for change in reading instruction. Teachers and districts were hearing the call for change from a multitude of sources as part of a larger national movement to improve education by having teachers provide more intellectually challenging instruction.

Inertia: An Organizational Characteristic

An organization runs smoothly because it develops standard operating procedures for conducting daily business. These are necessary routines; however, these standard operating procedures work to limit efforts to

make changes within the organization. Making change within an organization is no simple matter.

Multiple Policies: Multiple Decision Points

Implementation problems are likely to occur because interpreting and translating the policy into practice is done amidst the daily business of running the school district. The government adopts many policies, some conflicting with others, so the local school district must consider many government policies at one time (Allison, 1971; Cohen, 1989-90). Local districts must make sense of what the numerous policies mandate, what types of responses each demands, which constitute immediate problems, and which can be ignored (at least temporarily). In the case of Michigan's reading policy, the fact that the policy instrument is the ideas makes this policy one which would be easier to ignore than one where funding was dependent on implementation of some visible practice. In addition, as the district considers its response to the policy, decisions must be reached by individuals who have different perspectives on what the issues are and what the appropriate responses might be (Allison, 1971). These decisions must then survive a multitude of decision points during the implementation efforts (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973).

Maintenance Versus Development

Organizations can respond to calls for change in ways that assure maintenance or in ways that encourage development of the organization (Berman & McLaughlin, 1979). Maintenance describes the tendency of an organization to maintain status quo in all but minor ways. Development

refers to processes used to make fundamental changes in the way an organization conducts daily operations. School districts are more often prone to use maintenance activities which give the appearance of change where little substantive change has occurred (Ibid.). For example, a school district may revise standardized guidelines such as curriculum documents to give the appearance of change while no real change in instructional behaviors occurs. Subgroups within the district such as curriculum committees may issue reports of progress which may be filled with rhetoric giving the appearance of change while no real instructional change has occurred. Such responses to a policy would give the appearance that implementation has occurred while only minor changes in instruction may have taken place.

Adding on to What Already Exists

Organizations attempt to maintain the status quo to minimize uncertainty (Murphy, 1974). A district may also concentrate on improving existing routines or structures rather than attempting to formulate radically different ones, thus adding on to what exists rather than starting over with new approaches. Such "first order changes" may improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization without upsetting what already exists (Cuban, 1990).

A school district could interpret Michigan's reading policy as calling for new techniques and strategies to add-on to the existing reading instruction, a first order change. This interpretation would be less disrupting for the organization and would solve the short-term problem of appearing to respond to the policy; thus, it would be the path

more likely chosen by school districts. However, such a course of action would leave the long term problems which the policy attempts to address unresolved. The policy intends that all students will become successful readers through instruction which uses what they already know and which allows them to construct new ideas (constructivist interpretation). Adding a few new strategies onto traditional reading instruction (strategy instruction interpretation) will fall short of that intent.

Adding onto existing routines, although a simpler approach for the organization, is not without problems. Teachers may be asked to fit yet another technique into their already full days with nothing removed from the schedule nor any schedule changes which might facilitate success (McLaughlin, 1990). Second, when an innovation is narrowly focused as an add-on, the goal of overall improvement is lost and achievement of the add-on becomes the end (Ibid.). For example, with a strategy instruction interpretation of this policy, teachers might see teaching students the strategies as their goal rather than teaching students to select and use appropriate strategies to make sense of text. This view strongly resembles the "old" way of teaching reading where mastery of a sequence of skills became the goal for students. There is a plethora of possibilities to add-on to existing practice, but a fixed amount of instructional time into which these must fit. Fundamental changes in instruction seldom happen because new techniques are added onto existing practices, but occur as new ideas, beliefs, and practices of practitioners gradually spread throughout the system (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988).

Going Through the Motions

Organizations may also respond to a call for change by concentrating on planning. Plans become "symbols" which give feedback without requiring action, "advertisements" which tell the public that something is happening (Cohen & March, pp. 114-115). The formulation of a plan offers the appearance of action whether any real change is happening or not. Thus, we might expect to find school districts writing plans about how they are going to change without really defining what must be changed. Plans give the appearance that change is occurring whether any change in behavior really occurs or not.

Organizations are intent on minimizing uncertainty. This intent requires that changes remain similar to what already exists while appearing to comply with the policy mandates. Many such changes take on the character of formulating plans to symbolize and advertise change while no action takes place. Other changes become narrowly focused add-ons to existing practices. Neither approach allows much substantive change to occur; thus, maintenance of the status quo occurs.

Looking at policy implementation from the perspective of the organizational context gives one a sense of the myriad problems associated with implementation of a government policy due to the tendency of organizations to reduce uncertainty, maintain the status quo, and add on slight changes which give the appearance of change with the least disruption to business as usual.

Power and Decisions

The power structures within an organization will also affect local efforts to implement a state policy. In this study, teachers were the ones charged with designing district implementation responses. Yet, teachers responsible for policy implementation within a school district may feel they lack real power to make changes (Sarason, 1990; Freedman, Jackson, & Boles, 1983). The bureaucratic structure of school districts often subjects teachers to hierarchical control (control superiors exercise over subordinates) over decisions beyond the classroom, but allows delegated control (control that individuals exercise over their own actions) to a greater extent within the classroom (Elmore, 1983). The hierarchical controls under which teachers must make decisions beyond their classrooms may leave teachers frustrated as they attempt to design district-level implementation plans.

Teachers charged with revising a district curriculum may also feel powerless to set district-level policy due to the conditions under which they must do the work. They are often given little time to learn about the changes, yet they are held responsible if the changes fail to bring the desired results (Sarason, 1990; Czajkowski & Patterson, 1980). The work of planning for change is often done after school, on teachers' own time, suggesting it is not a priority with the district. This feeling that their work is not a priority nor highly valued by the district breeds a sense of powerlessness and a lack of commitment to do the work.

A sense of frustration and powerlessness on the part of the teachers can be exacerbated or ameliorated by the type of leadership offered. People who perceive their behavior is of their own choosing will develop

more commitment and will produce better results in their work (Sergiovanni, 1991). Conversely, people who perceive their behavior as controlled by external forces beyond their control will lack this motivation and commitment to the work. Teachers charged with designing a district response to a state policy would need leadership which empowered them to use their expertise and to gain new expertise in order to develop a commitment to the work.

Thus, in the work of policy implementation, those responsible for the work need to feel they have the power to do the work as they see fit if they are to develop a commitment to the work. This sense of power, or delegated control, can be developed or destroyed by the type of leadership the administrators in the district practice. Administrators who rely heavily on hierarchical control may breed a sense of powerlessness in the teachers, thus, causing a lack of commitment to the work.

Individual Characteristics which Influence Change

When the policy itself is not clear and is open to multiple interpretations, it becomes critical that the individuals charged with implementation have the opportunities to understand and to interpret it together. A policy which calls for changes in teachers' practice must provide opportunities for the teachers to learn about those changes and how they would affect their daily work.

At the most general level, the problem of promoting change in teachers' practice is a problem of promoting learning in adults. Adults seldom learn new skills or attitudes on demand. . . . External demand is largely

ineffective in stimulating adult learning; the motivation to learn new things must come from within (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988, p. 42).

The teachers expected to make the changes must see a need for the changes and must be committed to learning new ideas and ways of behaving. This commitment will be enhanced when teachers see how the change is better for their students, when teachers feel competent and confident in their ability to carry out the change, and when teachers see it as professionally practical in time required and administrative support offered (Ibid.).

Factors which Work Against Individuals Changing Instruction

Even when teachers want to make changes in their instruction, teaching practice has proven difficult to change, in part, because of the structure of the work of teaching. Meeting the needs of a wide variety of abilities, working in a crowded classroom, and having little control over the numbers of students, the materials available, or the organizational practices to assess student learning all influence teachers' abilities to change their practice (Cuban, 1984). Calls for curriculum changes are seldom accompanied by changes in these structural aspects of the work which would make the instructional changes successful (Zumwalt, 1988). For instance, teachers may wish to move to instruction based on children's literature rather than on the basal readers, but have no authority to spend their supply money on multiple copies of literature rather than on basal workbooks. Teachers typically have little voice in many decisions that affect their everyday work (Sarason, 1971), and so they are left to try new instructional ideas while attempting to conform

to mandates from administrators which may conflict with the instructional changes. For example, teachers may attempt to move toward reading instruction which allows students to construct varied interpretations from text. However, they may be required to assess student learning with standardized tests which assume only one correct interpretation of text.

Teachers, driven by a need to maintain the activity flow in a complex classroom, may not see how changes would look or fit with their established routines (Duffy, 1982). This lack of understanding how new ideas would fit with their own teaching situations will work against teachers making changes. Teachers are usually left to their own devices, without support from others, to figure out how such new ideas might fit into their practice (Pearson, 1984; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977), and they are left to implement these new ideas while maintaining order and routine in the complex classroom environment. The separate classrooms and the culture of teaching seldom encourage collaboration (Lortie, 1975) as teachers are bounded by classroom walls (Griffin, 1986). They learn to operate under norms of self-sufficiency, privacy, and non-interference (Van Note-Chism, 1985). Trying new ideas is risky for these isolated teachers as administrators often evaluate them on their ability to keep order (Cusick, 1983), and because teachers bear the brunt of criticism for failed innovations (Czajkowski & Patterson, 1980). Thus, teachers desiring to make instructional changes are faced with their inability to restructure their classroom situations in ways that would make those changes successful; they are left to figure out what changes to make and how to fit those into the already complex world of the classroom without the benefit of collegial sharing and advice; and they are left to make

these changes while maintaining a semblance of order and routine for administrators who evaluate their teaching.

Providing Time for Change

Teachers attempting to change their practice must have the time and energy to devote to learning and developing new practices (Cuban, 1984).

Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) state the following.

If earlier reforms have anything to tell us, it is that time is the essential ingredient in any reform and that the function of time is to provide opportunities to accommodate, adjust, and adapt administration and practice to policy. . . . It means commissioning people who work in real schools to fashion workable solutions to real problems, and allowing those solutions the opportunity to fail and the time to succeed (pp. 60-61).

The teachers must have time to develop the understandings and knowledge needed to adapt the policy to real student needs in real classrooms. They must see the policy as valuable to commit the energy that such adaptation will require of them.

Uncertainties of Teaching Hinder Change

Teaching is full of uncertainties which affect the teacher's ability, desire, and commitment to change practice. Uncertainties include intangible goals, difficulty in assessing one's influence, uncertainty about when to assess student learning, and uncertainty about how their teaching will be judged (Lortie, 1975). The uncertainty of how to judge whether students have really learned what the teacher has taught often leads teachers to simplify knowledge to an easily measurable form rather than to strive for deep conceptual understandings that are difficult to assess (Jackson, 1986). Changes in practice which continue

to allow learning to be simplified and measured may succeed, while changes which increase uncertainty by making learning difficult to assess will be more likely to fail.

One of the interpretations of Michigan's reading policy (discussed earlier) would multiply these uncertainties for teachers and administrators, while the other interpretation would reduce the uncertainties. A constructivist view of reading instruction would increase the uncertainties teachers face. Teachers would be unable to easily assess, measure, and report student learning. Administrators would have difficulty judging teachers' practice by traditional means. The constructivist view of the policy would be uncomfortable for those involved as new ways of evaluating teachers and students were considered. This uncertainty and the need for radical change in evaluation procedures would increase the difficulty of implementing the constructivist interpretation. Instead, strategy instruction might appear the more desirable interpretation. Strategy instruction would be easier to assess, i.e., teachers could measure students' success in following the steps of a specific strategy. Administrators could observe teachers' knowledge of the steps of a strategy. Strategy instruction might bring less fundamental change, but it would reduce the uncertainty for teachers and administrators making it the more desirable choice. Thus, the nature of teaching with its inherent uncertainties would likely lead local implementors to a strategy instruction interpretation of Michigan's reading policy, an interpretation which would be less likely to address the problems the policy was created to address.

Conditions Favoring Changes in Practice

Some factors have been found to facilitate change. Local implementors might be expected to use these conditions to facilitate implementation of a policy designed to change instructional practices. Factors which have been found necessary for lasting change to occur in schools are: "institutional motivation, project implementation strategies, institutional leadership, and certain teacher characteristics" (Marsh & McLaughlin, p. 71).

Institutional Motivation

Institutional motivation encompasses commitment to the change from all segments of the organization, but most importantly the commitment of the teachers. Obtaining teacher commitment requires that administrators actively support the change and communicate to the teachers that they feel it is a worthwhile and important change. Planning for the change must be done collaboratively between teachers and administrators. When one or the other group is absent from the planning for change, the change has little chance for long-term success.

Local implementors must develop commitment to the policy by encouraging collaboration among teachers and administrators about what must change and how that change should happen. If either group feels their ideas are not valued in the collaboration, the chances for success are diminished. The teachers must feel that the policy is better than existing practice and must commit to implementation for this reason rather than because of extrinsic rewards or hierarchical control.

Implementation Strategies

Local districts have considerable latitude in designing their implementation strategies. Two complementary strategies foster lasting change. Staff-training activities often concentrated on giving teachers specific skills and were helpful to transfer knowledge and change behavior in the short run. However, for lasting change to occur, staff-support activities were necessary. Staff-support activities provided opportunities for "mutual adaptation" (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 77) of the change. Mutual adaptation means changing both the innovation and the context in ways that make the change fit the needs of the teacher and the situation.

Local implementors should provide both initial training sessions for teachers to develop a basic awareness of the ideas and support activities throughout the implementation period which help teachers as they try to adapt the innovation to their individual situations. Both types of support are necessary for the changes to occur.

Institutional Leadership

District administrative support for the change gives legitimacy to the efforts. Teachers will usually be unwilling to work hard to make changes that seem unimportant to the administrators. Support is necessary from both the central office and the building administrator, but the building administrator's support seems even more critical to successful implementation.

Local school district administrators would need to become knowledgeable about the policy and about the changes teachers would be

expected to make. If administrators lack an understanding of the policy and make little effort to gain that understanding, teachers would be likely to question the importance of the policy. If the teachers see the policy as unimportant to the district, they would be reluctant to put forth the efforts required to make the changes.

Teachers as Individuals

Characteristics of the individuals can work toward successful implementation of change. Teachers with several years of experience may appear to resist change because of the way it is presented to them. District-wide in-service presentations often leave experienced staff feeling that "there is little challenge left for them and (they) 'turn-off' from teaching" (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 85). Experienced staff can be an asset for change if the planning for change offers them opportunities to draw on their expertise and experience, rather than attempting to tell them new ways to behave.

Teachers, especially veteran teachers, need to see the policy as a chance to use their knowledge and skills to collaboratively improve their practice rather than as an ultimatum to teach in some new prescribed way. Requiring teachers to learn new ways of doing what they are already doing threatens their self-concepts and feelings of accomplishment (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988).

Teacher Efficacy

Teachers must have both the will and the capacity to make instructional changes before such changes will happen (McLaughlin, 1987).

The capacity can be developed as teachers have opportunities to learn new ideas and to practice new approaches. The will to change appears to be related to the classroom autonomy of teachers and to characteristics of the teachers as individuals.

Zumwalt (1988) found that teachers maintained positive attitudes and continued trying to learn and to improve in spite of organizational frustrations because of the autonomy to make professional decisions within their own classrooms. This ability to make professional decisions is the "essence of teaching" (Ibid.). Teachers who have this classroom autonomy can remain positive while those denied this "essence of teaching" will not. Thus, teachers attempting to implement Michigan's reading policy in their own classrooms, where they have the autonomy to make and to act on professional decisions, may remain positive and continue trying new ideas in spite of frustrations beyond the classroom.

Teachers who continue trying to improve their own practice also seem to exhibit feelings of personal self-efficacy (Poole & O'Keafor, 1989; Dembo & Gibson, 1985). This personal self-efficacy means that the teacher believes he/she can influence what happens by his/her actions. Applied to a teacher, this sense of efficacy means the teacher believes that he/she can successfully affect student learning (Dembo & Gibson, 1985; Duffy, 1982). Teachers who believe they, as individuals and as teachers, can develop means by which to further student learning seem to have the will to continue looking for better ways to do so. These teachers are "always actively involved in the process of becoming better teachers" (Wigginton, 1985). This desire to improve, coupled with the self-confidence to experiment with new ways of teaching, enable these

individuals to ask questions, to criticize their own teaching, and to build relationships with other teachers to support them in their efforts (Ibid.). This active problem-solving allows these teachers to use their own skills to adapt both innovations and their situation and to build commitment to new ideas with which they feel successful (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988). Thus, such a teacher comes to see herself/himself as "one who continues learning," not as "one who knows" (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978; Zumwalt, 1988; Harvard Education Letter, 1986). This reconceptualization of the role of teacher supports continually learning new ideas and allows one to try new practices without losing one's confidence, maintaining a sense of self-efficacy.

Teachers trying to understand and implement Michigan's reading policy would be more likely to make changes in their own teaching if they had strong feelings of self-efficacy which would enable them to accept risks and uncertainty as they learned new ways to teach. The ability to make those professional decisions in their own classrooms, the essence of teaching, would likely bolster their feelings of efficacy and sustain their attempts to improve.

Conclusion

This study looked at issues of policy implementation in a specific context and from the viewpoints of teachers and administrators involved in local policy implementation. Answers to the questions posed by this study will illuminate how the thinking and actions of those responsible for interpreting and implementing one complex state policy at the local level affected the work. The study offers a view of how the context of

the local district, as an organization, affects local implementation. It offers insights about how the uses of political power affect policy implementation. The study also offers a perspective on how these three factors work together to shape local efforts to implement a state policy.

This study provides an opportunity to better understand issues relating to policy implementation, improving reading instruction, and teacher change. It offers rich possibilities for learning how the front-line policy makers, or as Lipsky (1980) terms them "street-level bureaucrats," think about state-level policies and their effects on classroom practices. In light of the current trend for government to attempt to tighten controls on the nation's schools through increasing the numbers of educational policies, understanding the thinking of those responsible for implementing one such policy seems a significant contribution.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study explored district-level efforts to implement Michigan's reading policy in two local school districts. The study looked at the work and the thinking of the people charged with planning for district-wide change in response to the policy. In both districts, these people included teachers, principals, central office administrators, and school board members. These key people were chosen because as members of the district committees, they were charged with planning for implementation by revising the district reading curriculum. The study looked at efforts at the elementary school level. Data were collected in Rockville for two school years, with additional supporting data from a pilot study which covered two years prior to this study. Data were collected in Fortville for one year with supporting data from oral histories provided by the participants. These data were triangulated by comparing the information across participants and by searching relevant documents. I used a combination of participant observations of committee and subcommittee meetings, observations of inservice programs, interviews, informal conversations, and documents to analyze both what people thought should happen and what did happen. The theoretical framework provided three perspectives of the data: the knowledge of

individual actors about reading and about facilitating instructional change, the organizational priorities and routines, and the political agendas of the actors. The study was conducted to help understand and explain why local implementation of Michigan's reading policy occurred as it did in two sites.

Research Design

Introduction

The study was proposed because of my previous work at the Michigan Department of Education helping to disseminate the policy and my work in a public school district which was attempting to understand and respond to the policy. I noticed that there seemed a discrepancy between what the Department of Education expected to happen at the local level and what was actually happening in one local setting. This discrepancy captured my interest, and I began to wonder how to better understand what was happening and why the local story took the course that it did.

I first investigated what was happening in one local district through participant observation of the committee's work, through informal conversations with faculty, and through a pilot study of two teacher leaders who were working on the district committee and at the building level to improve the language arts program in the fourth and fifth grades.

During this period of initial study, I began to notice that there were many problems for those trying to implement this policy. First, the policy was not clear on what it intended to happen in classrooms. Those working on implementation had to figure out what the policy meant for

practice in their district. Second, the policy did not carry penalties if implementation did not occur. Therefore, the local implementors had to capture the commitment of those within the district to implement a policy which could also be ignored, at least temporarily. Commitment was not always evident. Third, the local teachers and administrators needed to reach agreement on what should happen, and those decisions needed to survive multiple decision points within the organization. It appeared that neither group was sure what the policy meant, yet each expected the other to know. Decisions were made, but often no follow through occurred. Fourth, the teachers who would ultimately implement the changes had to see the need for the changes, had to learn what those changes meant for their daily work, and had to have time and support to adapt those changes to fit their own situations. Each of these conditions seemed unmet. These issues, which local implementation efforts did not always consider, seemed important to investigate.

Another set of problems that surfaced in my initial study involved the organization as the context of the work. Organizations have features that influence the kinds of changes which happen within them. First, local districts must consider a multitude of policies from the state and local governments. Many of these policies suggest conflicting agendas. The local districts must decide which policies need immediate responses and must act on those while continuing to run business as usual. I noticed in my pilot study that the reading policy did not seem to be a priority for attention in the organization. Organizations attempt to reduce uncertainty by maintaining the status quo in all but minor ways. Thus, local implementors would need to suggest changes which would not

upset routines of the organization. This is often accomplished by focusing on plans which give the appearance of action where no real action exists, by adopting guidelines which standardize practice, but which are largely ignored by practitioners, and by giving progress reports to governing bodies which use the rhetoric of change, but which produce little actual change. Those changes which do occur are most often add-ons to what already exists. My pilot study suggested that the local district was busy writing, adopting, and reporting plans rather than searching for ways to improve instruction. The committee used the plan already in existence and merely added on bits and pieces.

The last area of interest that surfaced during my initial study concerned the local political system. Teachers were asked to revise the curriculum in response to the policy, but those teachers often reported feeling frustrated and powerless to make any real changes. Such feelings of powerlessness and frustration breed apathy and a lack of commitment toward the work. The leadership of the group seemed to have a significant impact on whether teachers felt the work was important and believed their ideas were valued. Thus, the political system of the district appeared to be important in considering what path policy implementation followed.

As I considered what I saw happening, I realized that these issues of individual knowledge, organizational routines, and political systems seemed to be working together in complex ways to influence what happened. I decided to expand my study to investigate these issues. I decided that I would need to better understand what the local educators working on the implementation efforts thought about the policy and the changes that

needed to happen. Second, I decided to compare what they thought to what they actually did. Third, these actions would need to be considered within the context of the organization and the political system. Each of these perspectives would help understand why participants took the actions that they did and why the story unfolded in the way that it did.

One additional change seemed warranted in my study. I decided to collect data in two similar school districts to further understand what I found. I wanted to see if these three issues (individual knowledge, organizational routines, and political systems) would operate similarly or differently in different contexts. I found two districts which presented the opportunity to do such a study. Each district was similar in size and organization, and each responded to the policy by forming a committee to revise the language arts curriculums of the districts. These two districts provided the opportunity to explore the relationships between the knowledge of the participants, the organizational context, and the political systems in the stories of how they went about implementing a state policy at the local level.

Sites

Rockville. The study was conducted in two small school districts in southwest Michigan. The first district was located in a small town, Rockville, located a thirty-five to forty-five minute drive from four metropolitan areas. Rockville has an active downtown business area which offers essential services to area residents. The distance to urban areas demands that residents have access to shopping, repair services, entertainment, and medical care, including a hospital, in town. However,

the relative proximity to larger cities gives residents the choice to go out of town for these services. Rockville is a town which mixes the advantages of small towns such as easy access to services and familiarity with neighbors with the advantages available in nearby cities such as shopping malls, medical specialists, and variety in entertainment choices.

Job opportunities in Rockville are offered by a variety of small industrial plants, offices, stores, restaurants, and the school system. Many of the parents of school district students work in the community because of the range of choices available and the inconvenience of the driving distance to urban areas. The student population comes from upper middle class or professional families, middle class or blue collar families, and lower class or government-assisted families. Racial make-up is almost entirely Caucasian. The few minority children in the schools are Asian children who were adopted by Caucasian families. The four elementary schools each have a mix of socio-economic classes.

The community has a history of failed millage elections. Letters to the editor of the local newspaper often criticize the schools for asking for too much money. Teacher salaries are often mentioned as one cause for the financial problems of the district. Criticism of the schools most often revolves around financial issues; otherwise, support for what the schools are doing seems high.

Fortville. The second district is in Fortville, a small town, located about fifteen miles from a metropolitan area and within forty-five minutes of two other cities. Fortville also has a downtown

business district offering shopping, repair services, a movie theatre, and restaurants. Fortville offers medical care in the form of clinics and a hospital. The short distance to a larger city, however, encourages many residents to do business in that city where more choice is available. In addition, Fortville has little industry, so many parents of the students in the school district work in the nearby city. Considering the proximity of the city and the pull it has on workers and consumers from Fortville, the town has somewhat the feel of a suburb community rather than a self-sustaining small town.

The population in the Fortville school district is similar to that in Rockville with a mix of professional, blue-collar, and government-assisted families. Fortville does have a small population of minority students. The fact that many residents drive to the city to work reduces the small town familiarity with neighbors found in Rockville; however, the ease of traveling to the city for a wider range of choices in employment and services is the trade-off.

Fortville has typically been more willing to support the schools with passed millages than has Rockville, thus, the school district has not had the severe budget problems over the years as those found in Rockville.

Comparing the two districts. The school districts in Rockville and Fortville were selected for this study because of their similarities. Similarities were evident in the community and student population, in the way the district was organized, and in the way the district chose to respond to the policy. The communities and student population offered

many similarities. Both districts were located in small towns, even though the character of the towns was different, and both districts drew students from the surrounding rural areas. A large percentage of students were bused to school, but each district still had neighborhood schools with large populations of walkers. Both locations served large populations of middle class students with smaller populations of upper class and lower class students in each district. Neither district had a substantial number of minority students, nor students who learned English as a second language.

The districts were similar in their size and organization. Both districts were small, between 2,500 and 3,500 students. Each district had a few large elementary schools (400-600 students) in town and a smaller elementary (about 150 students) located about fifteen minutes from town. Each district had one administrator per elementary building, but no assistant principals at the elementary level. Each district had both a superintendent and a director in charge of curriculum matters. There was a large population of veteran teachers, but in the last five years some new teachers had been hired in each district. Both districts had chosen some new teachers with previous experience and advanced degrees and some new teachers just out of college. All district teachers were represented by the Michigan Education Association and local bargaining associations which focused primarily on protecting contractual rights rather than on issues of curriculum and instruction.

The districts were also similar in the way they initially responded to the state policy. Each district responded to the state policy by forming a committee of teachers to revise the reading curriculum. These

committees were formed at roughly the same point in time. Teachers volunteered to serve on the committees. The committees were charged to interpret the policy and what it meant for the district, devise a plan to bring about suggested changes, and submit a revised written curriculum for approval by the Board of Education. The committees were working after school most of the time, and they worked under restricted time schedules. As my study began, each committee had already gone through problems resulting in changes in membership and changes in leadership.

Participants

The participants in each district consisted of the elementary teachers and elementary administrators serving on the district reading curriculum revision committee. In addition, the central office administrators charged with overseeing the work and the school board members responsible for approving the work were included. The subjects were chosen for two reasons. First, they were the people charged with the formal responsibility to plan for district implementation efforts. Their work would decide what shape the district response took. Second, I limited my interviews with teachers to those who had worked on the committee for most of its life to get more accurate data on what was happening and how that fit into the historical context. Changes in committee membership in both districts reduced the number of teacher participants available to five in Rockville and six in Fortville. The teachers in both districts who consistently served on the committee were all veteran teachers. Most of them had taught the same grade level for a number of years and some had never taught another grade. All the

principals, except one, were similar in age and experience. The one exception was roughly the same age as the others, but was a new administrator. Additional subjects included the superintendents, the curriculum directors, and the school board presidents of each district.

Data Collection

Data were collected to analyze and explain three areas that would influence district implementation efforts. First, data were collected which would help to gain an understanding of the knowledge and beliefs of the participants about reading instruction and about facilitating change in the district. Second, data about organizational routines and priorities were collected. Third, data about local political agendas were collected. These areas are explained further below.

Understanding Knowledge and Beliefs of Key Actors

First, it was important to understand what the participants knew and believed about reading, about the intent of the policy, and about how change occurs. The study assumed that what these people knew and believed would influence what they decided should happen. For example, if the committee members believed the policy merely called for new textbooks with manuals for teachers to follow, they might suggest the district only needed to purchase a new basal reading series. If administrators and board members thought the policy called for simple changes, they would be likely to accept, approve, and support such a recommendation. However, if the committee members believed the policy called for large investments in reeducating teachers, they would suggest

focusing on staff development opportunities. If the administrators and board members also believed radical change was needed, they would be more likely to support a focus on educating teachers. A third scenario might find the committee members in disagreement about the meaning of policy or the administrators and board members disagreeing with the committee members. Each example would bring different results in the district's implementation strategies. Therefore, understanding what the participants knew about the issues and what they believed should happen was critical to this study.

Understanding Organizational Routines

Second, it was important to understand what organizational routines and procedures were influencing the districts' responses. It might be that key actors knew what the policy entailed and had sound ideas about how to implement it, but were constrained by organizational routines. For example, the reason that a curriculum revision committee was designated to do this work appeared to be because it was the standard organizational procedure for changing instruction in any subject area. This implied that to improve reading instruction, the reading curriculum must be improved. However, standard routines called for the group to produce a new curriculum guide, a document which is often viewed as useless by teachers. Why was this approach used to respond to the state reading policy? How did the approach shape the implementation process? What other organizational routines were shaping the process and in what ways? Exploring questions such as these was important to the study.

Understanding Local Political Agendas

Third, local political interests and agendas were examined. The principal actors were individuals acting in various roles. Their stakes in the implementation efforts might differ according to individual interests and needs, as well as by role interests and needs. The stand each actor took on issues would ultimately depend on how he/she viewed the effects of decisions and/or actions on his/her stakes and position. Thus, understanding why implementation efforts followed certain paths required understanding what political agendas were at work.

Data Sources

Data were collected in the following ways.

1. Interviews were conducted with the teachers and administrators who were members of the districts' reading curriculum committees. These interviews focused on:
 - a. their knowledge and beliefs about reading, reading instruction, the intent of the policy, and bringing about identified changes;
 - b. their own stakes and agendas in the process such as their motivation, interest, and concerns for self-protection; and
 - c. their reactions to and evaluations of the work of the committee.
2. Interviews were conducted with central office administrators and school board members to:
 - a. understand their knowledge and beliefs about the policy and what it meant for the district,
 - b. identify organizational routines that were guiding the work, and

c. uncover political agendas that might be shaping the district responses (hidden and/or open agendas).

3. Participant-observation was done at district reading curriculum committee meetings, whenever possible. From my pilot study in Rockville, I had field notes and documents covering three meetings the first year, three meetings the second year, and two meetings the third year of the work. I observed meetings occurring during the fall and winter of 1990-91. In Fortville, I needed to rely on participants' accounts of the oral history concerning the work completed before September, 1990. I observed meetings occurring during the fall and winter of 1990-91.

These observations provided evidence of what the committee actually did. The observations allowed the researcher to uncover potential discrepancies that might occur between what the members said and what they did. Observing the meetings also gave the researcher information to probe through interviews with the participants, thus providing a richer picture of what was occurring.

4. District documents such as memos concerning the work, district guidelines, regulations, procedures, and final products of the committee's work were examined. These documents shed light on the organizational routines by showing under what guidelines the participants worked. District documents allowed the researcher to identify actions that deviated from the norm.
5. Dialogue journals with two teachers on the district committee in District One and observations of their building-level planning for reading instruction (data collected as a pilot study) were used. These journals covered the reactions of those two participants throughout the second year of the committee's work. This data source provided information about the knowledge and beliefs of these participants, the organizational routines under which they worked, their perceptions of what the work was "really all about," and their evaluations of the usefulness of their work.

In addition, these journals provided a poignant picture of informal efforts to implement the policy made by the two teachers contrasted with the formal efforts of the committee.

6. Informal conversations with district personnel, including administrators, participating teachers, and other teachers were documented. Informal conversations often provide rich anecdotal information that does not appear in more formal settings.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using the framework cited earlier (i.e., what are the knowledge and beliefs of the participants about what needs to change in reading instruction and how those changes could be facilitated; what organizational routines and procedures influenced the efforts and in what ways; and what political agendas were discernible and how did they influence the work). I took fieldnotes of observations, transcribed notes of interviews, and collected documents. These data were analyzed for themes and issues which appeared to significantly influence what happened in each setting. This analysis was informed by the literature cited in Chapter I.

Time Frame

The data were collected from June, 1990, to June, 1991. In addition, the depth of the data was supplemented with information collected between 1988 and 1990 as part of a pilot study in Rockville.

The analysis and reporting of the data were conducted from June, 1991 to the winter of 1992.

Conclusion

In Chapters III and IV, the stories of the districts are told. These stories are accompanied by my interpretations and by vignettes from

the field. In Chapter V, the findings of the study are summarized. These conclusions attempt to explain the relationship among the knowledge of the participants, the organizational routines, and the political agendas of each district, how each influenced local implementation, and how the stories of the two districts were both similar and different.

CHAPTER III

THE STORIES BEGIN

Introduction

The study began in Rockville in the winter of 1988 as a pilot study I was doing for my graduate studies. I was interested in studying how teachers participated in decisions to change reading instruction in the district and in their own reading programs. Rockville formed a reading curriculum revision committee in January, 1988, so it was a perfect time to begin my pilot study. I attended meetings of the committee and observed building-level team planning between two of the committee members who worked closely together. During this time, I took limited fieldnotes and noted informal conversations.

In the fall of 1989, I decided to expand the pilot study to include interviews and dialogue journals with the same two teachers as they continued working on the committee and working together.

In the summer of 1990, I expanded the study to include other committee members and administrators and to include similar work which was happening in a second district, Fortville. This is the study which I am reporting in this paper.

In both districts, I attempted to understand what the participants knew about the reading policy and what they believed should happen to

implement it in the district. In addition, I watched what the participants and the committee did and considered whether their actions and their beliefs matched. To further consider what I saw happening, I looked at organizational processes and political agendas within each context. The stories of what I saw and heard in each district are told in Chapters III and IV.

How Did the Local Districts First Hear of the Policy?

In both of the districts I studied, initial awareness of the policy was brought by individuals who attended the Michigan Reading Association conference (MRA) or other meetings where the New Definition of Reading was on the agenda. These individuals spread the word informally within the districts. In Rockville two of the district reading specialists attended some of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) conferences. In Fortville, all of the reading specialists attended some of the conferences. A few of the administrators took turns attending parts of one of the conferences. In both districts, the reading specialists and some of the administrators began to meet and to discuss the New Definition of Reading informally trying to figure out what it meant for the district reading programs.

The fact that the local districts became aware of the policy in such an informal way is important. No one in either district could remember any formal notification from the Michigan Department of Education that the districts should be changing reading instruction to fit the new reading policy. There were no regulations to follow, no specific instructions for implementation, and little sense of urgency to act.

Learning about the policy, interpreting it, and implementing it were left to the local districts. Reliance on local districts in this way allows for a variety of implementation stories.

Standard Operating Procedures: Form a
Curriculum Revision Committee

As stated above, in both districts, the reading specialists who had attended MRA and MDE conferences had begun talking informally with the administrators about the information that the MDE was distributing. During the 1987-88 school year, both districts formed Reading Curriculum Committees to revise the district reading curriculum, to bring it in line with the policy. This move was the typical standard operating procedure for changing instruction, change the curriculum.

In Rockville, the routine way to deal with changes in instruction was to have a group of teachers, led by an administrator, rewrite that specific curriculum to include the changes. The comments of Ms. Brown, the principal appointed to chair the committee in Rockville, support this interpretation that it was standard practice to form a curriculum committee to plan for instructional changes.

It (the reading curriculum revision effort) initially took place as part of the five year cycle for curriculum review. It was time to review reading. . . . I had some thoughts about retiring and that was a concern for me, so I talked about it with the superintendent, and he said that he wanted me to get the process through Phase I before I left. Phase I is the background phase where you gather information and develop a philosophy and establish a plan for change in the district.

I felt it was important that if we were going to develop a reading curriculum that it should reflect the current thinking in the field of reading. So part of the job for me was to be up to date in reading. We used the

new philosophy from the department of education as our foundation. Obviously, if you are going to change the curriculum, you want it to be relevant. . . . So, it was started because it was time in the cycle. The key focus was the New Definition of Reading from the Department of Education, and I felt a need to do something different than what we had (Interview, 10/16/90, pp. 1, 2).

This principal stated that the reading curriculum revision began because it was time in the curriculum revision cycle for this to happen. She felt the revision should reflect Michigan's New Definition of Reading and the latest thinking about reading instruction. Ms. Brown felt that she needed to become knowledgeable about the latest research in reading herself. So, the standard operating procedure to deal with instructional change was invoked, formation of a curriculum revision committee. The leader seemed aware that the initial efforts should focus on helping all committee members learn about the current thinking in reading. She stated that Michigan's New Definition of Reading would be the foundation of the new curriculum.

The story was similar in Fortville. People in the district began to hear about new research in reading and the efforts of the MDE and to talk with each other informally. The Director of Curriculum began having informal meetings with the principals and the reading teachers to discuss the district reading programs, as language arts was soon to come up for revision in the district curriculum revision cycle. Mr. Johnson, an elementary principal described the district situation at that time, after word of Michigan's New Definition reached a few people.

There were no plans or actions in our district. We did not set up a systematic way or plan of attacking this. But, that is not really that unusual. We did have a meeting about it, and we called the reading teachers in

and the principals in, but only the elementary principals came. I don't think the secondary people saw this as part of their department. We talked about things that we should be doing along with the Director of Curriculum to embrace this. By then I had read Becoming a Nation of Readers and so I had a little superficial knowledge at least . . . I could see clearly that this is what we ought to do. Not only does research say it, but it made sense. . . . But the elementary principals were in agreement that this had to happen, and the Director of Curriculum was in agreement. . . . So we went right to the staff and started talking about what was going on and what was out there, and we started sending the reading teachers to meetings

. . . . We started to do things that we could do without an overall plan like introduce novels and trade books and talk to teachers about what works and what doesn't. . . . So teachers are well aware that it is change or die time, but as far as having a nice tight plan that we pursued with systematic vigor, no way! (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 9,10).

From these informal meetings, the Director of Curriculum decided to form a committee to revise the district reading curriculum. The high school reading teacher, who had attended the MDE conferences, was asked to chair this committee. However, she was unable to accept due to personal commitments, and so a high school English teacher and an elementary teacher, neither of whom had attended the MDE conferences, were asked to cochair the committee (Interview, 1/06/91, p. 1).

The administrators and faculty in Fortville spent some time individually reading, talking with each other, and providing opportunities for the reading teachers to go to conferences before a formal plan evolved. When the Director of Curriculum decided to begin some formal action, he activated the standard operating procedure of forming a committee of teachers to revise the district curriculum.

A similarity between the districts at this point was that administrators in both districts realized that only a few people in the district had knowledge of the New Definition of Reading. Ms. Brown, the

original chair of the committee in Rockville, stated that she saw the initial work being to familiarize the committee members with the latest ideas in reading so that they could develop a philosophical base to guide their efforts.

Basically, I felt that (completing the first phase of the plan) meant to develop a broad philosophical base from which the rest of the work would grow, to familiarize the rest of the committee with all of the latest that was being written about reading by experts in the field. You can't have a philosophy without acquainting the people involved with information of all types. We read everything that we could get our hands on. I don't mean curriculum guides, but articles about reading, the thoughts of experts. Then we tried to relate those to our own situation (Interview, 10/16/90, p. 2).

Ms. Brown realized that teachers were not all familiar with the policy and the ideas on which it was based. She saw a need to begin by educating the committee members with the latest research on reading instruction.

In Fortville Mr. Johnson, an elementary principal who was later appointed to lead the work, expressed similar views. Speaking of the situation two years later, he felt that still only a few of the teachers were familiar with the New Definition and what it meant for reading instruction. He addressed this problem by relying on the knowledge of the cochairs of the subcommittees.

I think a reading teacher or two got wind of it (the New Definition of Reading) at MRA (Michigan Reading Association conference) or some meeting . . . I'd say a third of the people were quite conversant in the New Definition and the other two thirds weren't, but they had to be brought up to speed as fast as we could. . . . So I think we depended a lot on what the chairmen already knew about research and we depended on the state (Interview, 6/13/90, pp. 3, 9, 14).

Mr. Johnson realized that the majority of his group had little understanding of the New Definition of Reading, but because he felt the need to work within a set timeframe, he relied on the knowledge of the subcommittee chairs to lead the group in the right direction.

Ms. Jones, an elementary principal who later became a cochair of the Elementary Reading Subcommittee in Fortville also recognized that the district's teachers were limited in their understanding of the policy in those beginning years.

Those reading teachers began to do some initial training with staff at staff meetings about awareness of the New Definition of Reading and the strategies. Giving them some beginning stuff to work with (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 5).

Ms. Jones stated that teachers needed some "initial training" and "awareness of the New Definition." She felt that the reading teachers could give the staff some "beginning stuff." Her remarks indicate that she felt the staff was weak in their knowledge of the New Definition of Reading.

This lack of knowledge about what needed to change made learning about current research in reading and the New Definition of Reading a goal for both committees. A major difference between the committees of Rockville and Fortville in the beginning was in the type of leadership selected and the action plan developed. Initially, Fortville selected two teachers to lead the group while Rockville appointed an administrator to lead. The administrator in Rockville had a timeline for the group to learn about the policy and the research, to develop the philosophy, and to conduct investigations. Fortville's leaders did not have such a tight

timeline nor a well-developed plan to follow during those beginning efforts.

Preparing the Committee Members for Their Work

Both districts now had the procedure in motion to revise the reading curriculums of the districts. In both districts, the majority of the teachers serving on the committees had minimal exposure to Michigan's New Definition prior to their work on the committees.

The opportunities that followed for committee members to learn about the policy and what it might look like in practice were minimal in each district. Committee members in both districts were given journal articles to read, and meetings were held monthly to discuss those articles. Those members who had attended the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) conferences, the reading teachers, appeared to be considered the experts in both districts. This was evidenced in the way that both districts asked the reading teachers to present inservice sessions to other staff members about the New Definition of Reading on the basis of what they had learned at these conferences. In Rockville the reading teachers presented a three hour inservice for all elementary staff. In Fortville the reading teachers presented short sessions at staff meetings to familiarize teachers with the policy. Committee members who had not attended the MDE conferences were expected to develop an understanding of the policy through the sessions provided by the reading teachers and the reading of journal articles, followed by discussions at committee meetings.

Again, the policy instrument was the ideas upon which the policy rested. Each district had only a few people who had background with these new ideas. Basically, it was up to the districts to make their teachers and administrators aware of the policy and what it would mean for the district. In my two districts, those with the most knowledge of the policy were the reading specialists. The specialists were to educate others about these ideas, and thus, to influence implementation efforts. However, these specialists were basically novices with the policy, and most of them were interpreting the policy as "strategy instruction." This interpretation of the policy is evidenced in the learning opportunities provided for the classroom teachers by the reading specialists. In Rockville the initial inservice was done by the reading specialists and consisted of an overview of the New Definition and three sessions on strategies from the MDE Modules for Professional Development. One session covered "Probable Passages," a technique to activate prior knowledge before reading. A second session concentrated on the importance of activating prior knowledge and other techniques to do so. The third session covered strategies for teaching expository text including "K-W-L" (Ogle, 1986) and semantic mapping. (These techniques were contained in The State of Reading: Professional Development Leadership Series, which all those attending the conferences received.)

In Fortville, the reading specialists also did inservice sessions for the classroom teachers. These sessions were done at staff meetings and after school. As in Rockville, the sessions covered the MDE strategies such as story mapping, "K-W-L," and semantic mapping.

The fact that those most familiar with the policy saw it from a strategy instruction view was important for the efforts to bring change in the district. Change efforts focused on showing teachers how to teach the strategies. The constructivist view of the policy had little chance to take hold because few people in the districts had experience with that view, and the materials received from the MDE conferences provided scripts to simplify training teachers in the strategies. Strategy instruction was the interpretation of the policy prevalent in both districts.

The classroom teachers had little background with the policy other than what had been provided by the reading specialists. Research has shown that classroom teachers have most often relied on basal textbooks as their reading program; basal textbook manuals provided lesson plans which teachers followed (Durkin, 1978-79; Duffy, 1982; Pearson, 1984). The New Definition of Reading calls for teachers to become more active in the decisions about their reading instruction. The New Definition of Reading describes reading as a "dynamic" process, ever-changing. This idea of reading as a dynamic process calls for teachers to be able to assess the reading situation and to make decisions about what type of instruction would be most appropriate for each situation.

Moving from a teacher who follows the lessons prescribed in a teacher's manual to a teacher who can make on-the-spot decisions and adjustments during instruction is no small task. Reading and discussing journal articles at monthly after-school meetings over a period of a few months would be a small step toward putting teachers in a position to take control of their reading programs rather than relying on the basal

manuals. Nor would such limited learning opportunities be likely to make significant changes in teachers' fundamental beliefs about reading instruction. Instead, inservice sessions showing teachers new strategies to teach would likely become "add-on" pieces of their reading programs, not fundamental shifts or changes in the way they viewed reading instruction. Thus, it would seem that the initial learning opportunities the teachers on the committees had, reading and discussing articles and learning new strategies to teach, would have had limited impact in putting teachers in a position to make substantive changes in their own, or in district, reading programs. Yet, after these limited opportunities to learn about the policy and what it meant for practice, these teachers were expected to revise the district reading curriculum in ways that would fit the policy.

How Were the Teachers Teaching?

Most of the teacher participants in Rockville and in Fortville described their reading programs as quite traditional before the committee formed. Included in their definitions of traditional were things like allowing the basal program to control what was taught, using ability groups for instruction, and focusing on independent skills practice and answering of questions. Don, a fourth grade teacher in Fortville, described his program at that time.

I taught fourth grade and basically I used the reading books from the basal series and had the groups and such. I used the manual to tell me what to teach, how, and when, pretty much. . . . We had four rooms of fourth graders and I taught reading to the second highest group. So I taught (the basal) right from the book, plus I did a lot of read alouds. I read aloud to my homeroom and to my reading class (Interview, 10/17/90, p. 1,2).

Don relied on the basal manual as the authority in his program. He allowed it to tell him what to teach and when to teach it. The students were ability tracked. He taught "right from the book" and added some read alouds. Don's program in those early days was quite traditional.

Ann, a first grade teacher in Rockville, also described a very traditional approach to reading instruction.

Well, I had your basic reading groups, by ability, and each group would come back to the table, and we would read a story together or do some workbook pages. The other kids would do independent work at their seats. I had five groups and my aide would take the top two groups out of the room and work with them while I worked with the bottom three groups in the room. The top groups went right into Bears, the first pre-primer, and the bottom groups did Ready to Read and other readiness things. The top groups moved a lot faster through the materials than the bottom groups did. Basically, it was a lot of workbooks and worksheets, mostly paper and pencil things (Interview, 10/12/90, p. 1).

Ann relied on the basal manual, workbooks, and independent seatwork.

Farah had worked as a substitute teacher in Rockville for about six years before she was hired permanently. She was able to reflect on reading instruction across the entire district during that time.

From what I remember about eight to fourteen years ago when I subbed a lot is that units were all taught separately. One unit didn't flow into another one. We taught from the basal and the basal was not heavy into the introduction. There was not the focus on leading up to the reading. Now there is a focus on that. It wasn't there eight to ten years ago. . . . Also, writing was not part of reading then. We taught the skills through the workbooks. It was not writing a complete sentence. The emphasis was on if they knew the answer, not if they knew it and could communicate it to you well (Interview, 10/23/90, p. 6).

Farah remembered that teachers taught from the basal manuals, did not connect units to each other, did not introduce stories before reading, and taught skills through workbooks, not as part of writing and

communicating. Her memories are of traditional reading instruction throughout the district.

Other teachers supported that they had once used mostly traditional reading instruction. Kaitlin, a fourth grade teacher in Rockville, stated, "In the beginning, I was traditional with the basal and the groups" (Interview, 10/10/90, p. 2). Frances, a fifth grade teacher in Rockville, stated, "In the old way, we just had kids read and answer questions and read some more and answer some more questions" (Interview, 1/16/91, p. 5).

Mary, a first grade teacher in Fortville, had different memories. Mary felt that she had always tried to engage students in constructing meanings and relating the text to their own lives.

It (the New Definition) means creating a reading situation where kids bring their own information to the text, and they interact with it. They are fully involved with the story. They learn to analyze and extend it on their own. They begin to think about what they read in relation to their own lives. At first grade extending it might mean drawing a character or a patterned rewriting. Mainly, it means relating what they read to their own lives. . . . Yes (I agree). I always have taught that way. It used to be the alternative approach, and now I am the mainstream approach. It legitimized what I have always done (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 4).

Mary felt she had been outside the mainstream in those early days, but with the New Definition of Reading, her approach was legitimized. She continued by saying

It enables us to get away from prescription learning and to get away from isolated skills that are not used or related (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 4).

The fact that she used "us" and "we," including herself, in these latter remarks casts doubt on her earlier statements that "she had always taught in this way." Either way though, she acknowledges that many teachers

were teaching in a more traditional way before the New Definition of Reading.

The teachers in my study remembered teaching reading in traditional ways (i.e., relying on the basal program to define their program, emphasizing independent practice on unrelated skills, and ability grouping children for all reading instruction) in the early days before the committee's work.

The Committees Begin: September 1987 - JUNE 1988

Rockville

The work began in Rockville by inviting the entire district administrative team to a preliminary presentation of an overview of Michigan's New Definition of Reading. This presentation was done by a committee member who was a Chapter I reading specialist, using the module provided by the Michigan Department of Education's Curriculum Review Committee. The administrator in charge, Ms. Brown, characterized this as "building a power base" of support for the new ideas about reading and the expertise of the committee members (Interview, 10/16/90, p. 3). Ms. Brown understood that if the curriculum was to contain any major changes, the administrative council would need to understand those changes enough to lend support. She felt that having a committee member present the information would build credibility for the expertise of the committee members.

On January 26, 1988, the committee met for the first time to begin its work. The initial memo to members stated the following.

The purpose of the meeting will be to review the charge to our committee, discuss a plan of action, and to distribute a few current materials that will provide us with a common framework (Memo, 1/15/88).

The same overview of Michigan's New Definition of Reading was presented to the entire committee as had been presented to the administrators to help the committee begin considering the New Definition of Reading and what it meant for the district. In addition, materials for individuals to read such as Statewide Plan for Reading, March, 1987, and Michigan Essential Goals and Objectives for Reading Education (both from the Michigan Department of Education) were distributed.

The committee met monthly from January, 1988, to June, 1988 to read and discuss journal articles and materials from the MDE and the district. The goal was to help all members develop an understanding and a commitment to the new ideas about reading instruction. Some committee members voiced the concern that new ideas come to education all of the time but seldom last; these members were hesitant to accept the research findings as a basis for changing practice. Ms. Brown, the chair, stated that the committee's charge was to "enhance our program, not change everything" (Agenda Fieldnotes, 2/23/88). The intent of Ms. Brown's statement seemed to be to help teachers accept some change without feeling that everything they had been doing was now considered wrong.

Topics discussed during that spring included: where are the decoding skills; how to relate reading to content area skills; how to influence students' confidence as readers; using trade books in addition to a basal; budget constraints on the work; and three phases of reading instruction, developmental (learning to read), functional (reading to learn), and recreational (loving to read) (Fieldnotes and Memos, 2/23/88,

3/22/88, 4/12/88). Teachers were considering the policy and trying to understand how it fit with their own beliefs. No decisions were reached on any of the topics, but many topics for further consideration had surfaced.

In March, 1988, members volunteered to serve on various subgroups to write a philosophy to guide future work and to investigate what other districts were doing, what new materials were available, and what district teachers thought about the then current program. The school year ended with a rough copy of the philosophy written. The philosophy statement attempted to incorporate the new ideas from the readings and the discussions (See appendix for a copy). In addition, subgroups were formed and prepared to continue their investigations in the fall.

As the year ended, the teachers in Rockville had only limited opportunities to learn about the new ideas in reading. Betty, a first grade teacher with about thirteen years teaching experience, remembered her learning opportunities after joining the committee.

Well, we got articles handed out to us, and we could read them. No (we weren't encouraged to go to workshops) (Interview, 2/4/91, p. 6).

Kaitlin, a fourth grade teacher with about sixteen years teaching experience, remembered similar experiences.

Yes, (I had learning opportunities) but by my own initiative. When opportunities came up that I was interested in, I submitted a request to go and used this committee as the reason that I should get to go. I used it, I guess. But, I felt it was important to go to sessions for my own awareness. I was never directed by the chairman to go to anything (Interview, 10/19/90, p. 5).

Even though learning opportunities had been minimal during the first six month, teachers remembered the readings and discussions as valuable and rewarding. Kaitlin describes those first meetings.

We divided into subgroups and were given tasks. We researched other districts and we wrote the philosophy. Then we met and reported on what the subgroups did. There was also time for bringing in ideas and sharing. The administrator would bring in articles for us to discuss on reading. We also discussed things we saw in the buildings that we wanted to share. We thought about the direction we should go and we wrote the philosophy. Then we looked to see what's out there to meet the philosophy (Interview, 10/10/90, p. 7).

Betty also found those initial meetings rewarding.

In the beginning, when Ms. Brown was in charge, it was (professionally productive). She ran it very professionally. We were given journal articles to read and we discussed them at our meetings. We were treated as professionals. We didn't make much headway, but I always left feeling like 'I am a teacher and I have just been talking with other teachers about my profession.' It really felt good. They were long meetings, but I always left feeling so good (Interview, 2/4/91, p. 9).

Frances, the senior member of the committee with about twenty-five years teaching experience, stated that she learned from the initial discussions with other teachers.

Yes, new things have come up in the discussions. Just listening to the discussions, I learn. I don't always agree, but if I hadn't been there I wouldn't have heard them (Interview, 1/16/91, p. 9).

As the initial year ended in Rockville, the Reading Curriculum Revision Committee had been formed, teachers had read and discussed research articles, and subgroups were formed to continue the study and investigations the following year. Teachers seemed to feel they were learning as they worked.

Fortville

The committee in Fortville, chaired by two teachers, was also meeting during the spring of 1988. This group also read journal articles and discussed ideas about reading instruction. However, attendance at the meetings was poor and commitment to the work seemed lacking by both teacher and administrator members. Participants stated that attendance and commitment were lacking for a variety of reasons. The leaders were not administrators and did not have the clout to require members to do anything. The task was so large and undefined that the group was unable to get a handle on what they were to do. There was no time provided for teachers to complete the work (Interviews, 6/13/90, 11/13/90, 3/19/91). This lack of commitment suggests that the district had not really embraced the idea that a change was needed. The work may have been started for the appearance of compliance, rather than for the development of a plan for change. There was no push from the MDE to make changes.

Comparing the Districts' Approaches to Teacher Learning

The approach of the two districts to teacher learning in the initial year of the work, which was basically self-education, is more evidence that this is a policy which uses ideas as the policy instrument. The state did not tell districts what they needed to do. The ideas of the policy were expected to convince local educators that they needed to learn more about reading instruction. It was expected that they would then use what they learned to improve reading instruction in their districts. However, in reality these districts saw no need for intensive, systematic learning opportunities for the teachers who were to

implement the policy. There were no incentives attached to the policy, so half-hearted responses could be expected.

This limited opportunity to learn about and to develop understandings of the policy could have different meanings. First, it might suggest that the districts did not see the policy as very different from what teachers were already doing. If the changes needed were minor, teachers would need little help in understanding or making those changes. This belief that the teachers already knew what they needed to know or that they could easily learn it by reading and discussing articles or learning new strategies to teach was evident in the comments of the top administrators in Rockville. The Director of Educational Services stated that he did not really understand the policy, but counted on the expert reading specialists and classroom teachers because they knew about it.

I'm not an expert in reading, though, so I can't really critique it (Michigan's New Definition of Reading). I rely on my staff in matters of curriculum policy and implementation. . . . The Chapter I staff are considered our experts in reading because of the requirements of the job, the masters in reading. They also stay up to date in the field, so they are the nucleus that I rely on. And then, of course, the classroom teachers are represented, too. They are the ones who teach reading, so I rely on what they think. Some of them have masters in reading, also. I look to staff who are involved in professional organizations, so that they stay current, those with advanced study. We must stay current in the New Definition and in how to apply it (Interview, 2/5/91, p. 1).

The superintendent Rockville also spoke of the teachers as experts in reading instruction.

We were right there when it started (the New Definition of Reading). I felt good that we were right with it. We didn't have teachers asking later 'What is it?' Our teachers are well informed about it. . . . The real experts are the reading teachers, though (Interview, 3/27/91, p. 1).

Both of these administrators equate the qualifications of the reading teachers, a masters in reading, with being experts in reading. However, the reading specialists in this district each completed their masters degrees before 1980, before the research on which Michigan's New Definition of Reading was based had been conducted. Even though staying current and well-informed was mentioned by each of these administrators, their comments imply that becoming experts about this new philosophy of reading instruction and how to implement it would be a fairly simple task, accomplished through membership in professional organizations and some advanced study. There seemed no recognition that this new philosophy would require a change in the fundamental beliefs about learning to read that these teachers had learned throughout their careers, a change from diagnosing and remediating isolated skills to a focus on using one's own knowledge about the topic and about reading to construct meaning from text.

The lack of opportunity to learn about the policy could also mean that the policy was not seen as a serious call for change. The state had not provided incentives to change, nor regulations to follow. There was talk that a new state assessment (MEAP) was coming, but in that early period of the work there was so little information about the new test that these two districts were not thinking seriously about it yet. In my interviews of the teachers on the committees, none of the teachers, except the fourth grade teachers, saw the MEAP as important to their classroom programs. The administrators that I interviewed were confused because the former MEAP measured isolated skills and objectives, which did not fit with the philosophy behind the New Definition of Reading.

Even though a new test was coming and would be a concern later, no one seemed to see it as an incentive to change in the spring of 1988. The districts may have interpreted this lack of direction or incentives from the state as meaning that they did not have to take the policy very seriously or to give it much priority.

The lack of clarity about what changes were expected from the state and the lack of urgency to make changes may have worked together to minimize efforts to make significant changes. Murphy (1974) found that organizations typically work to minimize uncertainty by concentrating on solving short-term problems which are relatively well-defined rather than developing long term strategies (p. 15). Murphy's point illustrates that the district may not have made implementation of the New Definition of Reading a priority because to do so would increase, rather than decrease, uncertainty for the organization. As stated earlier, the policy was open to multiple interpretations. Attempting to interpret it and then to plan changes on that interpretation would not have been a clearly defined task. Murphy also stated that organizations do not typically search for the best ways of doing their jobs, preferring to continue procedures that have been acceptable until shown that these procedures are no longer satisfactory (p. 119). This point is pertinent to the situation because the state had not provided strong incentives to embrace the policy locally. The school organizations would have needed some clear evidence that their reading instructional programs were unsatisfactory, a belief that change was needed, to take the call for change seriously.

In either case, the teachers were considered experts about the New Definition of Reading or the districts saw little incentive to make changes, the fact is that those expected to revise the reading curriculum had few opportunities to learn about the policy or the instructional changes needed. This is significant. Basically, in both districts, committee members were asked to write a new curriculum based on ideas with which they had little experience. This was a tough assignment.

The Second Year: June 1988 - June 1989

Rockville

In the summer of 1988, Ms. Brown, the principal chairing Rockville's committee, retired. The district was also experiencing a fiscal crisis, and three attempts to pass a new millage failed. This caused the lay-off of numerous teachers and the transfer to new positions of many others. Thus, when September came, the committee was under new leadership and had lost some members and added others. The superintendent appointed two cochairs who were elementary principals; the male, Mr. Curt, had been an administrator in the district for over twenty years and the female, Ms. Smith, was a new administrator and new to the district.

The group did not meet again until January of 1989. The cochairs seemed unsure what had been done or what the next steps might be. Mr. Curt stated that they had been trying to "sort out what had been done" (Fieldnotes, 1/12/89). The pattern of conversation at this meeting was question-asking by Mr. Curt followed by short answers by a teacher. The group did not engage in any discussion, and Ms. Smith observed quietly. The tone of this meeting was quite different from earlier meetings.

Under the previous leadership, teachers had engaged in discussions about reading research and what they envisioned as important for the district reading curriculum. Beginning with this meeting, members seemed unsure what to say or do and discussion was nonexistent. Mr. Curt controlled the meeting by asking questions and responding to those who answered without encouraging discourse among the teachers. The following vignette was typical of the discourse at the meeting.

Mr. Curt: Was there any document summarizing the work done (by the Survey of Research Subgroup)?

Farah: No, we hoped to visit other schools and get documents.

Mr. Curt: Do we have curriculum guides?

Farah: Yes, (I found one that) was good. It integrated all of the language arts.

Don: I can get (another). They're about the same size district.

Mr. Curt: How useful will this year's SAT's be? All we have is percentages of questions right? Can we even use that?

MM: I think it shows trends, but we don't know how to interpret it yet.

Mr. Curt: Exactly, what does the raw score mean?

MM: We've got the MEAP's.

Mr. Curt: They're not as complete.

MM: They show trends . . .

Mr. Curt: Each school is meeting about their building results. They can look for trends in their meetings (Fieldnotes, 1/12/89, p. B,C).

This example from Rockville's meeting illustrates that there was no real discussion among the teachers. Mr. Curt was trying to ascertain what had been accomplished to date. However, his manner of question-

asking and responding to the answers given tended to thwart discussion. Members were talking only to him and only in reply to his questions.

The philosophy was read silently by members, and discussion was called for by Mr. Curt. No one responded. He then commented on the parts of the statement that he liked; still no one commented. He then asked that everyone read it over and be prepared to talk about it at the next meeting (Fieldnotes, 1/12/89). The group seemed unsure what they were being asked to do. The philosophy had been developed the previous spring from the discussions and readings. Now they were being asked to discuss it again, but they seemed unsure what they should discuss.

Subcommittee reports were solicited, but nothing was reported because the subcommittees had not been working. At that point, Mr. Curt suggested that the committee "move on to Phase II, Development . . . I know we have to go back to Phase I, but I see Phase II as the next step" (Fieldnotes, 1/12/89, p. C). Subgroups were put on hold until the new leaders had time to sort through things. Mr. Curt and Ms. Smith were to contact the individual subgroups before they resumed working. However, the subgroups were never contacted and never resumed their investigations; they disintegrated after this meeting. In light of the fact that none of the investigations or background work had been done, it was a strange move to skip those investigations and move right into development of the new curriculum. This move provides more evidence that the teachers were being asked to write the new curriculum with a very limited knowledge base about the policy or changes that would need to be made. In addition, it is evidence that the standard operating procedures and timelines were dictating what should happen.

In an interview the next day, one committee member reacted to the meeting.

It was interesting. It was different from last year. Last year we did a lot of sharing of information and articles. Maybe we will do that in the future. Maybe he just needed to get a feel for where we are, but I missed that sharing. The people did not seem as comfortable. I didn't see any enthusiasm about reading like it was last year (Interview, 1/13/89, p. E).

When the committee next met on February 16, 1989, the agenda had been prepared beforehand by Mr. Curt. The first item was to discuss the philosophy statement. He asked for comments. However, the pattern of conversation from the January meeting continued; Mr. Curt responded to each comment by a teacher. There was no discussion among teachers. The following vignette is from that meeting.

Farah: Could the people that wrote the philosophy go over the main points and explain it further?

Mr. Curt: What do you want them to do? I don't understand what you're asking.

Kaitlin: Could they paraphrase it?

Farah: Am I just wasting time? Does everyone else understand it thoroughly?

At this point, no one else spoke up, but Mr. Curt quickly added, "Well, let's look at it together."

Farah: Well, it seems to me that the philosophy is taking us in a different direction than before.

Mr. Curt: In a different direction? How?

Farah: Well, there is more emphasis on using literature and other materials than a basal.

Mr. Curt: The state wants us to move in that direction, but that doesn't preclude teaching skills, too. Literature is more emphasized, though.

Farah: Maybe this isn't important to do . . .
(Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. B).

With this statement, the "discussion" of the philosophy closed, and it became the official philosophy for the district.

This vignette illustrates three important points. First, even though the philosophy was adopted officially, there appears to have been confusion about what it really meant. Farah was asking for clarification of it. Mr. Curt did not seem to understand that it was going in a new direction. No one else contributed to the conversation. The philosophy was adopted, but it was not clear to everyone what it meant. Thus, a philosophy was adopted to guide the work of revising the curriculum, but that philosophy was not clear to all of the people who would do the revising. This lack of clarity about a vision which the committee was trying to work toward would make the work nearly impossible. This confusion became more important later that spring as the new philosophy was attached to a document which outlined teaching in the old, skills-based approach.

Second, the vignette further illustrates that Mr. Curt's leadership style thwarted discussion among the teachers. When teachers surfaced questions, he responded in ways that silenced those teachers and appeared to make other teachers remain silent as well.

Third, this conversation illustrates that Mr. Curt's understanding of the new philosophy and the policy were weak. Mr. Curt questioned Farah's remark that the philosophy was "taking us in a different direction." He did not see that it was a different direction, a departure from current practice. He also seemed to minimize the changes in the philosophy when he stated that "that doesn't preclude teaching

skills, too." His statement is true, skills are still a piece of teaching reading (Duffy & Roehler, 1989). However, the context in which this statement was made tended to devalue the policy's ideas and to place greater emphasis on skills instruction.

As the meeting progressed, Mr. Curt stated that he was having a hard time pulling it all together. Farah and Kaitlin stated that the previous year there had been more discussion and sharing of articles and that "you were able to get a feel for where people were coming from" (Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. C). Mr. Curt replied that the first year of the work allowed for that, but that now it was time to move on to Phase II. He told the group that they must prepare a curriculum document for the Board (Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. C). Mr. Curt was saying quite clearly that the goal of the group was to produce a document for the Board, the standard operating procedure for revising curriculum. He made it clear that teachers would no longer have time to discuss and learn together, but that they must write the document from their knowledge at that time. This document would delineate the then current reading program because there was no document for reading curriculum at that time. This focus on preparing a document fits Berman and McLaughlin's (1979) description of ways that organizations maintain the status quo by producing standardized guidelines at the symbolic level (delivery uniformity) and focusing on bureaucratic goals which sometimes constrain the actions (p. 27-28). The group was now focused on producing a document which would give the appearance of action rather than on planning what needed to change and how that could happen.

There was much confusion at this time about the lack of secondary representation needed to write a K-12 reading curriculum. There was only one middle school reading specialist on the committee to represent both the middle school and the high school. Mr. Curt replied that "we will be more specific at the K-5 level, but we will write a general one for the secondary program" (Fieldnotes, 1/16/89, p. C). Again, Mr. Curt was emphasizing the production of a document for the Board even though there were not enough qualified members to write the secondary curriculum. The focus was on getting a document done, not on learning about reading and making appropriate changes.

The committee members did not appear enthused about the idea of preparing a document at that time. One member questioned Mr. Curt about this task. She felt that the committee's work was to rewrite the reading curriculum, not write down the old curriculum. Mr. Curt stated that this document was only a beginning point, but when questioned further, he seemed to indicate that there was not much that could be done because of limited resources. This conversation follows.

Mr. Curt: Now the second part of the process is to document the current program. So I have had the skills from the Houghton-Mifflin copied for you to see. We need to go by grade level and see which we are doing and then add the skills that we are doing in addition to these.

Pauline: As a committee, is our job to talk about what we are doing now, or what direction we want to go? Should we concentrate on what we are doing or on what we want to do?

Mr. Curt: We need to document what we are doing so we can see it all by grade level. Each grade level can then put in their thoughts on literature-based things or novels, stating why they use them and what they do with them. I see us getting bogged down with trying to come up with an imaginary reading program. We can't decide where to go until we know where we are.

Pauline: I agree we need to document where we are, but are we going to go on from there?

Mr. Curt: Well, I talked with the superintendent about this. It is a big concern to me. How much can we really project when we have no money to make any changes? (Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. D,E).

Mr. Curt was in effect telling the group that they would be writing down the current program for the Board, but that he saw it somewhat futile to try and create changes, "an imaginary reading program," and that there were no resources to make changes anyway.

These comments were important to understanding the story of the work in Rockville. First, Mr. Curt again showed his lack of understanding of the policy and the changes required. He stated that he saw the group "getting bogged down trying to create an imaginary reading program." He clearly had no vision for what the new program would look like or how to get it developed. In the face of his uncertainty, he directed the committee to write down the known, disregarding that the known did not fit with the philosophy which he was to incorporate into the district's reading program. Second, he seemed to believe that without resources to make change, nothing could be changed anyway. This belief was communicated to the group, again directing them to focus on the status quo, not on making change. The district was operating under austerity conditions. Three millages had failed; the school day was shortened and all special subjects (i.e., physical education and music) were eliminated; no money was available for new textbooks; and no money was provided for conference attendance by teachers. Conditions were not ideal for making large-scale changes. However, Mr. Curt did not discuss with the group what changes could be made with little funding. Instead,

he chose to tell them that change was next to impossible, and so their focus would be on documenting the current program to satisfy the Board with a document. Changing reading instruction was no longer their focus.

This meeting seemed a turning point in the work. It seemed to indicate that the goal of the committee had switched from learning about the policy and revising the reading curriculum, to writing down what people were doing to produce a document for the Board.

Teachers did not give up their original goal so easily. They attempted to convince Mr. Curt that funding could be found in creative ways. Farah and Kaitlin mentioned that the basal reading books were not too bad, but that the workbooks did not coordinate with them well. They suggested that teachers could discontinue the workbooks and use the money for other materials. Mr. Curt replied that "It all depends on where you are in your teaching experience. You are all experienced people, but a new teacher would rely on workbooks more" (Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. G). Mr. Curt did not address the issue of the relevancy of what the workbook covered. After the meeting, a few teachers approached him again about not ordering workbooks and using the money differently, but Mr. Curt replied that "I think first grade should (use them) though" (Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. I).

Four teachers continued to tell him of their own successes in moving away from the workbooks and that the current workbook was poorly done. As they talked, he interjected "We need to get our goals down. There is pressure from the Board to get some documentation" (Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. J). Then as the teachers continued to talk, he stood up and walked out of the room.

Mr. Curt's response to the ideas and optimism of these teachers again illustrates his lack of commitment to the charge of changing the district's reading instruction. He did not acknowledge that their ideas had value and should be considered further. He responded with statements suggesting that their ideas were not feasible. For example, "I think first grade should (use workbooks) though" and his final comment "We need to get our goals down. There is pressure from the Board." At this point, Mr. Curt was not leading the committee in defining and planning for change; he was discouraging the members from thinking and offering innovative ideas. The leadership of the committee was definitely not facilitating the work of bringing about change in the reading programs of the district.

After the meeting, I asked Farah and Kaitlin, who were the most vocal members of the group, their reactions to the meeting. They both mentioned concern with the lack of comments from many members, but that they felt teachers were more interested in finishing and leaving on time and that the leadership style discouraged discussion (Dialogue journals, 2/89). Farah and Kaitlin both recognized that the style of leadership which Mr. Curt was using was hindering the progress of the committee by discouraging discussion.

Rockville's February meeting illustrates some important issues that had a significant impact on the work of the committee. First, Mr. Curt was controlling the committee's work rather than letting all members have a voice in the work. He set the agendas, controlled the discourse, and gave the orders for what had to be done. Second, Mr. Curt was focused on getting a document for the Board. He did not listen to the teachers'

objections and concerns about the then current program, which he was requiring them to use as the basis for the document. As teachers suggested that the workbooks were not beneficial to students, Mr. Curt replied that he felt some teachers needed to use them, especially first grade teachers. As teachers objected to writing a document containing the current program, he stated that it was a place to begin and would accomplish the goal of getting documentation to the Board. Mr. Curt seemed to be at odds with the members in his views of what needed to happen and about the current program. Mr. Curt voiced his doubt that the committee could make many changes because of limited resources. Mr. Curt's statements and actions indicate that he had little commitment to making changes in the reading instruction, but that he was following standard operating procedures (producing a document), and that he was content with maintaining the status quo in reading (allowing the then current instruction to become the official reading program).

In addition, Mr. Curt displayed a lack of understanding about the philosophy and a lack of commitment to the policy in general. In response to a member's comment that the new philosophy emphasized using literature, he stated the following.

The state wants us to move in that direction, but that doesn't preclude teaching skills, too. Literature is more emphasized, though (Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. B).

At another time during the meeting a member mentioned that the New Definition of Reading was calling for all teachers to become teachers of reading. Mr. Curt replied, "Yeah, but we wanted that twenty-six years ago" (Fieldnotes, 2/16/89, p. D). Mr. Curt's remarks during this meeting indicate that he had minimal understanding of the policy and little

commitment to implementing it in the district. He was focused on producing a document of the current program to satisfy the Board.

Within the following month, the Rockville committee members met with their respective grade levels and asked if the skills listed on the Scope and Sequence were currently being taught. A few grade levels added lists of trade books they were using in addition to the basal. Members brought these pieces back to the cochairs. The group met again in April to discuss the new document. The conversation focused on issues of grammar and flow, not on substantive issues about the content of the document. The cochairs said they would finish it up and present it to the Board. The final document was typed in several different types indicating that the pieces were probably submitted with no revisions. The final document contained the new philosophy, which was to guide the revision work, the goals from the MDE, and the objectives from the scope and sequence chart of the basal. There was no concern that the sections did not match in approach; the philosophy and goals supported the policy and the objectives supported a skills-based program. The document was accepted after the cursory examination by the committee and was presented to the Board as "The Current Reading Curriculum" in May, 1989.

This mismatch among the parts of the document suggests at least two conclusions. First, it could mean that the members of the committee were not well-versed enough in the policy's ideas to recognize that it was calling for a change in instruction. Members were willing to accept that they could achieve the new philosophy and goals using the old objectives and methods. Second, it could mean that the intent was to supply a document for the public record, not to change reading instruction. The

Board would be unlikely to notice the discrepancies, but would trust the judgment of the educators on the committee.

My observations of these meetings suggest that both conclusions are partly true. The teachers were not happy with the document and recognized that it did not outline changes in reading instruction. However, they were still unsure what the document should contain, and they were not given the chance to learn more at that time. Consequently, they accepted the document by their silence. The administrator leading the group stated flatly that he was under pressure to produce a document for the Board. When teachers questioned him about this task, he stayed firm that they must complete a document quickly. It appears that a combination of a lack of knowledge about the policy and a need to complete a public document quickly accounts for the discrepancies found in this document.

Training the Staff

Mr. Curt and Ms. Smith did seem interested in presenting the New Definition of Reading to the entire elementary staff. In February, 1989, these cochairs organized a half-day inservice on the New Definition of Reading for the entire elementary staff. The goal was to give the staff an awareness of what this definition meant and to provide some strategies for staff to apply in their classrooms. The morning was divided into three 45 minute strategy sessions which presented strategies from the Michigan Department of Education Modules for Professional Development and one 20 minute overview of the New Definition. These modules, mentioned in an earlier section, were scripts that the Department of Education had

given to those attending its conferences. These scripts provided the information and presentation format for the readers to conduct training sessions in their own work sites. The presenters for Rockville's inservice could simply read the scripts and show the accompanying overhead transparencies to the audience. The presenters could thus conduct inservice sessions with a minimum of personal understanding. The presenters were district reading specialists who based their presentations on the modules from the MDE. The twenty minute session provided an overview of the New Definition of Reading. The three 45 minute sessions walked teachers through teaching strategies such as "Probable Passages" (Wood, 1984) and K-W-L (Ogle, 1986).

Summary of Rockville's Progress in Year Two

The school year ended with little accomplished in the way of changing or revising the curriculum. The committee members were frustrated. They expressed concern that in the first year they had felt they were learning new ideas, but in the second year they felt they had done nothing worthwhile. Kaitlin's comments about the year's work summarize what she felt they had done and why.

The Board wanted a piece of paper to show we have a reading curriculum or were creating one. We worked under a real time scrunch to give a paper to the Board. We turned in what we are doing, but the committee agreed that it was not what we wanted to be doing and it needed work. We hadn't determined yet where to go. The push for a paper was to satisfy the superintendent and the Board. The principal kept saying 'I have got to get something down on paper for the Board.' He said that over and over. The superintendent was on his case (Interview, 10/10/90, p. 6).

Frances responded to my question about what the committee had done by expressing the frustration of the work.

You mean besides making everybody on it frustrated?
(laughs) I think it has made everybody aware that we have changes which need to be made in reading. We have done a lot of background work even though those of us on it from the beginning feel we have been spinning our wheels
(Interview, 1/16/91, p. 8).

Betty remembered the work during this time similarly.

I just felt we had to get something done for the Board. We just copied what we had in the past. There were no changes made in what we are doing now. It was just hurry up and get it done. I don't know why there was such a push to get something done for the Board. But there was no opportunity for new thinking (Interview, 2/4/91, p. 9).

As the second year of the work ended, the teachers were feeling that they had done little worthwhile work toward revising the reading curriculum. They recognized the emphasis on producing a document quickly and acknowledged that this action was not likely to make changes in the district reading program. In addition, the new leadership had changed the thrust of the work from learning about reading instruction and what should be changed, to producing a document for the public record. This shift in what the group was expected to do caused a rift between the leadership and the members. Members were unhappy that they could no longer focus on learning about reading instruction, and they began to express their frustration and negative feelings about the leadership of the group. The group had no common vision, and no longer was an attempt being made to build one.

Other Influences on Rockville's Teachers' Learning

Even though the Rockville teachers were quite frustrated with their work on the committee, they all remembered hearing about the New Definition of Reading and learning more about what it meant for reading instruction from multiple sources. Ann and Betty spoke of district inservice sessions in Rockville familiarizing them with the New Definition and what it meant. In addition, they talked about teachers sharing ideas and "everyone" talking about whole language. Frances heard the MDE instructional specialist speak at a conference. Farah and Kaitlin mentioned the building reading specialist as the source of their knowledge about the New Definition of Reading. So, even though the teachers were not provided with extensive learning opportunities through district channels, they were learning about the policy from a variety of sources inside and outside the districts.

Additional Teacher Training in Rockville

During the summer of 1989, the cochairs sponsored a voluntary inservice day for elementary teachers. This session was to prepare teachers to use the "Discovering Intensive Phonics" (DIP) program. DIP is a highly structured phonics approach which does not fit well with the New Definition of Reading philosophy for two reasons. First, it focuses on word level skills of decoding with little attention to constructing meaning. Second, it supports the role of the teacher as a technician who follows a prescriptive manual, rather than as an instructional decision-maker. The program teaches students to say the sounds of consonants and short vowels in isolation. Then, students are taught to

blend the sounds of a consonant and a short vowel together. Next, students are taught to blend a consonant, short vowel, and another consonant together into short words and nonsense words. The emphasis is always on sounding out combinations of letters, not on making sense of what is read. Students use sounding out words as their primary word attack skill. Guessing of words that might make sense using the context is not allowed in this program. In fact, when used in kindergarten and first grade, teachers were instructed not to give students books until they had mastered all of the letters and could blend sounds easily to prevent them from guessing at words. Sounding out words is the goal of DIP with little attention to reading and constructing meaning, the goals of the policy.

Teachers were encouraged, but not mandated, to use this program. Those teachers who were willing to try the program were provided with the manual, a scripted book that tells the teachers exactly what to say and when to say it. Following a script during reading instruction is also not in agreement with the intent of the New Definition of Reading. This policy supports teachers as decision-makers who consistently adapt their instruction to meet the needs of students in varied reading situations. DIP does not fit that view of the role of the teacher.

The district's focus on the DIP program causes one to question both the participants' understanding of the policy and their beliefs in or commitment to the ideas behind it. Providing training and encouragement for a program that does not fit with the intent of the policy suggests that the district did not support the policy and did not support changes that are in line with it. It could be evidence that the local educators

in this district had little understanding of the policy, its meaning, and its intent. It appears to have most likely been a combination of the two; the district was not supporting change, and the staff had minimal understanding of the policy.

Changes Teachers Were Making
in Their Own Instruction

The teachers in Rockville were experimenting in their own classrooms with ways to apply what they were learning about these new ways to teach reading. Farah discussed the changes she was making in grouping students.

This is the third group I have tried it with. I started the last nine weeks of a school year. I had ability groups for reading and non-ability groups for English. I switched them. I decided to try it for a short time, so if I wasn't pleased, I wouldn't have to switch around in the middle of the year. I told the students everyone had done so well all year in reading that we would not have reading groups anymore. We would all do reading together; no more grouping. Then the sparrows came alive. They seemed more attentive. They had their hands up more and participated more than they had all year. There were a few top students who felt they were above working with the others. I detected an arrogant attitude. After all, these kids had been grouped all through school, and they didn't feel they should have to be in the same group with the low kids. Just a few seemed to feel that way. But I was pleased how well it all blended in. I didn't use cooperative groups that year, mainly because I didn't know how. But it was such a rewarding and exciting nine weeks. The kids were sitting tall. I have continued ever since. We have noticed that we have fewer discipline problems now that we don't group by ability (Interview, 10/23/90, p. 3).

Farah was enthused with the changes she had witnessed in her students from a nine week experiment with whole group instruction, so she continued the practice. She spoke of not knowing how to use cooperative groups at that time (something she learned about later and then

incorporated into her program). Farah was continuing to learn on her own and to try new ideas in her own room.

Frances was also changing her instruction. Frances spoke of trying to use cooperative grouping with little success. She also remembered moving from a skill-oriented program to a stronger focus on comprehension.

A few years ago I tried mixing high and low kids, and it wasn't successful. . . . The top kids wanted to help too much, and the low kids were willing to just sit and let the top do it for them. I would tell them that everyone had to take a turn, but it didn't work. I just didn't feel it was successful. Cooperative groups do work well for discussion, though. . . . I just don't teach the same way every year. I do things differently because the kids are different each year. I have gone from a terrifically skill-oriented approach. We used to do a lot more phonics with the lower students in the past. . . . Now we do more comprehension things. I used to do specific units in comprehension like a unit on main idea which developed into outlining. I didn't do it last year. . . . I don't know about this year. I will have to check with the other teachers. In the past, I did more specific skills (Interview, 1/16/91, p. 4).

Frances was beginning to try new approaches to grouping, which she did not find successful. She was also letting go of her emphasis on decoding and working toward a focus on comprehension. However, it sounded as though she still used a didactic approach where comprehension skills were taught apart from real reading tasks. She was taking small steps toward new ways of teaching reading.

Kaitlin was also experimenting with different ways to teach reading in her classroom.

Then I began to experiment and taught thematic units to different reading groups. Then I ventured into literature with the reading groups. Then I tried whole group instruction. I began to hate the groups and wondered why all kids couldn't try the books. Then more recently I went to non-ability grouping totally and try to

use cooperative groups more . . . I look at the skills a reader needs to have; how reading fits into their lives; what a reader needs to get from the material. Then I base my lessons on developing comprehension of the material and relating it to their own lives and needs. I do not teach phonics like when two vowels are together what the first one says. Oh, I might do a little with phonics to point out how to figure out a particular word, but ninety-nine percent of what I do is to develop understanding of what one reads. And, I also do a lot with writing. But, I don't have anything that I base my decisions on really. I worry that I may be totally off base, but I don't think so (Interview, 10/10/90, p. 2,3).

Kaitlin was trying to move from the traditional teaching of the past to a more student-oriented approach. She attempted to assess what students needed and then to provide that while keeping them focused on developing understanding of what one reads. Kaitlin was experimenting with new ways to teach reading, but she was unsure that she was doing the right things.

Rockville's district response appeared stalled in Year Two of the work, but individual teachers were trying new ideas which they heard from a variety of sources. The comments of the teachers suggest that they were taking tentative steps in new directions and thinking about how those changes were affecting their students. As Schiffer (1979) suggested, teachers must see value in a change. The teachers in Rockville were trying some new ideas and evaluating the worth of those ideas from their observations of their students. Change was happening within the district in individual classrooms.

Fortville

Fortville's committee continued to meet, but continued to have difficulty gaining the commitment of anyone. The group was unable to get a focus and a plan. In the spring of 1989, the two teacher cochairs

resigned as leaders of the group. One of these cochairs listed her reasons for resigning and for not continuing on the committee when it reformed later.

I told the Curriculum Director that I felt there were too many problems with the way it was organized. First, there were administrators on the committee, but none were chairs. I felt there should have been an administrator as co-chair to give more weight to the position. And there was not enough time allotted to do the job. We needed more released time to do the task, not just an hour after school. I felt it was too big a job for the time allowed . . . I had given it two years already and I did not feel I wanted to take anymore time at that time with it. It just wasn't progressing (Interview, 3/19/91).

Even though the committee was not making progress, there was concern that the general staff become familiar with the New Definition of Reading. In February, 1989, the district provided one day of inservice for all teachers on Michigan's New Definition of Reading. Ms. Jones, an elementary principal, stated that this awareness day was a turning point in the district.

I feel that the February, 1989, inservice that we were able to do in our district, a district inservice where we brought speakers in and we did mini-sessions at the elementary level, was probably a break through for many teachers, as well as administrators. It truly was the first exposure for many people to the New Definition and what it was all about. I really believe that those awareness sessions for people are important if we expect anyone to begin to think about the need for change (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 2).

Ms. Jones felt that the district's administrators and teachers began to think about the New Definition of Reading and what changes it involved as a result of the first district inservice which provided awareness of the policy. However, inservice of this type typically brings little real change as it offers teachers "add-on" type ideas, not fundamental shifts in thinking (Jackson, 1971).

The Curriculum Director appointed an elementary principal, Mr. Johnson, to assume responsibility for revising the language arts curriculum. This appointment could indicate that he recognized that the teacher leaders did not have the political power to get the job done. The fact that a new committee was ordered could be an example of the standard operating procedure because it was time in the curriculum cycle to revise the reading curriculum and the first committee had not been able to do that. Or, it could be a sign that this Curriculum Director recognized the need for changes in reading instruction.

My data suggests that it was a combination of these two reasons. The superintendent and the President of the Board stated that the curriculum revision cycle was important to follow because it allowed the district to give attention to all areas of the curriculum, and it allowed for funding of each area in turn. My interview with the superintendent uncovered the importance of the cycle.

The cycle is set up so that various components of the development and review process are kept in mind. By short cutting, it might miss important components. We need to be thorough. The cycle also gives each subject area time for funding and assures that some will not be just set aside (Interview, 3/1/91, p. 2).

The President of the School Board supported this view.

From the standpoint of money, it (the revision cycle) is very important. . . . Everyone knows that there is a time set aside for each area to make changes and receive the money they need to do so. . . . This is their turn to do so and other areas can't intrude on their turn. Before we had this cycle, everyone had to compete for the money all the time. Now everyone has a turn to get funding. If the committee had worked a year longer, they would have lost their turn for money (Interview, 5/6/91, p. 4,5).

However, following the curriculum revision cycle was not the only motive for the reformation of the committee in Fortville. Mr. Johnson, the principal in charge of the committee, saw this as an opportunity to make real changes in the district's reading program. He spent the summer talking with people from other districts and with the other two elementary principals in his district about his charge. He developed a plan of action for the fall. The appointment of the new leader and his legwork in preparing to take charge suggest an interest and a commitment to making changes. His attempts to learn about the policy and to develop a workable plan of action suggest a serious attitude about his charge. He appeared to accept that change was needed and made some efforts to understand what those changes might look like and how to achieve them. His actions did not suggest that he was intent on maintaining the status quo in the district.

Ms. Jones remembered these summer discussions as the time when the mission became clear.

. . . and that was when it began to jell for us as a group what we needed to do, and Mr. Johnson came up with the structure and the plan out of that (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 2).

Changes in personnel plagued Fortville also. The Curriculum Director, who had a background in elementary education, resigned during the summer, and a new person with a background in secondary education took the position.

What Were the Fortville Teachers Learning?

The teachers in Fortville were also learning about the new ideas in reading instruction from a variety of sources. Don remembered that

Fortville provided "some spotty training," but that "we (teachers) picked up most of it on our own by going to workshops and sharing with each other" (Interview, 10/17/90, p. 2). Cory, a reading specialist in Fortville, mentioned reading journals and going to local reading council meetings as ways she learned more about the New Definition of Reading. Jan, a reading specialist, heard the MDE instructional specialist speak at a conference. Mary, a first grade teacher, heard about the New Definition at the Michigan Reading Association annual conference. Sue, the third reading specialist, had heard about the new ideas in reading from her university graduate classes in reading. Each of these teachers felt they learned these ideas on their own initiative. They were learning about the changes from a variety of sources, most of which were outside of the district.

Changes Fortville's Teachers Were Making in Their Classrooms

The teachers in Fortville were also experimenting in their own classrooms with the new ideas they were hearing. Don remembered the situation and how his own instruction was changing.

Some teachers began to teach novels and that idea filtered down from one teacher to another. Then last year we bought sets of novels for the first time. The first time I tried to teach novels I had ten copies of each and divided the group into three groups, each reading a different novel. It was a disaster! I couldn't keep up with everything for each group. Then the next year I bought three sets of thirty books each and some instructional stuff to go with it. One was Caddie Woodlawn and the blackline masters to go with it (Interview, 10/17/90, p. 2).

Don was changing his practice in two ways. He was moving to using children's literature rather than the basal on which he had previously

relied. He then realized that trying to teach three different novels in one class period was not working, so he went to having the whole class reading one novel. One important piece of his instruction was not changing, though. Don was still relying on commercial materials to define what students should learn and do. He was buying blackline masters for students to complete worksheets about the books they read.

Cory felt that she had always taught in these "new" ways. She responded to my question about changes in her reading program by talking about how the policy had made her ideas legitimate.

It is what I have always believed about reading. In my classrooms, I always taught this way. I never felt that having kids read something and answer questions about it was teaching reading. To teach reading, you must teach the kids how to think and arrive at the answers. They need to know how to understand both what is in the book and what is in their heads and how the two work together. I did these things "under the table," but it was not sanctioned to teach in this way. It just made more sense to me. Then "Hallelujah!" This came out, and I could openly teach that way. My teaching changed because now I had the research to support my views and back it up. I had specific strategies with names to use. It is all so well organized and so much is done for me. It is easier now. I can spend more time on comprehension and on teaching the process of integrating these factors. So what changed is probably the way I use my time and the organization, not my beliefs or philosophy (Interview, 12/6/90, p. 6).

Cory felt she had changed in only minor ways because now her own beliefs were supported by the research and the policy. It was unclear exactly what she meant about "so much is done for me" and the "strategies with names to use." I interpreted this to mean that she could now teach these strategies to students and assume they were comprehending the text rather than struggling by herself about how to teach comprehension. If my interpretation is correct, it may mean that Cory was moving in the

opposite direction from the intent of the research. She may have formerly been teaching in ways that allowed each student to construct meaning individually, but was now moving toward a strategy instruction approach. In either case, she was learning the new ideas and using them in her classroom.

Jan, another reading specialist in Fortville, also talked about changes she was trying to make.

I was so frustrated at that time. I was on the reading committee, and the teachers were using the "Barbe Checklist" to test kids on lots of little skills. I knew the teachers didn't need to do that, but I was fighting a war. I had been very shy until then, but I began to get quite loud. I just knew it was wrong to continue all those little skill tests. I came back and told the assistant superintendent that right away. I had always believed it was wrong, but the conference solidified my views. I just didn't believe the tests were valid. All we were doing was teaching and testing separate skills. I do think skills are important and I teach skills. For example I think a lot of problems in reading are because of the vowel sounds. I teach those. But I tell the kids they don't need to know all of them. We try at least to get the short vowels and hope it might help (Interview, 12/5/90, p. 4,5).

Jan felt she had always believed in the ideas supported by the New Definition of Reading. She was trying to change district policy which focused on teaching and testing isolated skills. However, in all of my conversations with her, she spoke of the importance of phonics for decoding and the value of her remedial program which focused heavily on phonics skills. Jan was working for change, but I was unclear how big the change looked to her.

Year Two ended in Fortville with little progress toward a district response, similar to what had happened in Rockville. However, also like in Rockville, individual teachers were hearing about new ways to teach

reading from a variety of sources and were trying to make changes in their own classrooms. So, even though district-level responses were stalled, changes in instruction were occurring.

Year Three: August 1989 - June 1990

Rockville

In the summer of 1989, Rockville was finally able to pass a millage and staff were called back from lay-off, causing the transfer of many teachers back to original positions. The teachers' contract had not been settled, so teachers were beginning the year with no contract. The teachers' organization asked teachers to refuse to work on voluntary committees. The Reading Curriculum Committee called a meeting in November, 1989. Only three teachers attended, and the group decided that they should suspend work until the contract was settled. The contract was settled in June, 1990, and so no work was done on the reading curriculum during the 1989-90 school year.

Individual teachers continued to try new ideas and to attend workshops and conferences. There was no district pressure or support for changing the reading program, though. Commitment to the changes from all district personnel and district and administrative support for the changes are necessary for sustained change in instruction to occur (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978). The fact that the teachers' association and the administration were not openly supporting instructional changes suggest that individual teachers would find it difficult to make lasting changes in their instruction. In addition, these teachers were still trying to understand and make sense of what needed to change on their own without

support or collaboration from colleagues or administrators. This situation does not enhance the chances for individual teachers being able to make fundamental and lasting changes in their reading instruction (Duffy, 1982; Pearson, 1984; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).

Changes Teachers Were Continuing to Make

The teachers in Rockville continued to experiment with new ways of teaching reading in Year Three. Ann, a first grade teacher, spoke of the changes she was making and why she made those changes.

You know, when I took Math Their Way, it made such sense to me. It was like it was what I had always wanted, and it had always been there, but I didn't know about it. I finally found it. It was like that in reading when I read Transitions (by Routman). It just made sense; it was a better way. Now I use lots of big books, and the kids love them. They beg "read it again, read it again." It is just so big, and they read along with me. They've memorized them, I know, but I think that is okay. They are more excited, but the key is probably that I am more excited. It is more fun to teach this way. I have not used the ditto machine all year, not one ditto. I have a brand new set of phonics workbooks on the shelf that I haven't touched. I don't do the "DIP" program, I haven't even unwrapped the manual. We are writing in journals everyday. Some kids draw a picture, and I write it down. Some kids draw, and then they say "Tell me how to write this down." And some kids are writing sentences themselves and even making up basic short stories about their pictures. Those are the top kids, but you know, they aren't sitting down while they do it. Everybody is moving around and copying things that they want to write. I have labels and words all around the room on everything, and they use them. They are copying, but at least they are writing. I still use the Bears workbook, because Ms. Smith told me I had to, but not every page (Interview, 10/12/90, p. 1,2).

Ann described the changes she was making from the traditional program she described for Year One. She had moved away from reliance on the basal. She was using lots of writing and lots of shared reading with big books.

She was now enjoying teaching reading and saw her students enjoying reading more, too. She combined these changes with the basal program and workbooks skills because her principal insisted she continue to use the basal. Ann was taking steps to change her own program, while still meeting the requirements of the district.

Betty, another first grade teacher in Rockville, also spoke of making changes in her program. Unlike Ann, who felt she changed because of her experience with Math Their Way and the book Transitions, Betty felt she was changing because of the general buzz she was hearing about whole language instruction. She described how her program was evolving.

This year everyone is talking about whole language and big books. They are really big this year. I am doing more with them this year, the big books and the Sunshine Books. I only have one copy of the Sunshine Books, so I use the opaque projector to enlarge it for the whole class to see. We discuss the title, the pictures; we predict, we discuss the picture and say "What do you think the words might say?" Then as we read them, I have someone point to the words. We do the story as a group and that has been successful. I do it in place of big books because I don't have big books. After that the kids are confident picking up the book and trying to read it. Even if they don't know all of the words, they understand the meaning and they feel they are reading and they feel good about it. They also write their own stories. . . . They also write in their daily journals . . . I give daily homework. Two times a week it is reading or writing "DIP" words from the phonics program and two time it is reading phrases from their basal . . . I have given out old basals that I had to each child. They get the one that is comparable to where they are in the series. They can read it independently. I made Valentine bookmarks for them to mark their places. These use words that they have had and they can use the pictures and their knowledge of "DIP" and be successful. This year I am telling them something different when they get stuck on a word. I tell them to look at the picture and the first letter and see if they can guess a word to go there. Then if that doesn't work, I tell them to try to sound it out second. I also use the skill charts that come with the basal to teach the skills that they (the basal) think should be taught.

(While the kids meet with me, the others) work on seatwork. They do math papers, workbook pages from their basal, they do phonics sheets like coloring the vowels red and the consonants yellow. They put numbers in order. I don't use as many dittos now as I used to, but I use some. I give them work over the skills I have already taught so that they do not need help. They practice what they know (Interview, 2/4/91, p. 2).

Betty was clearly making some changes in her program. She was using big books with the whole group and was teaching students to use picture clues to predict what the story might be about. She was encouraging them to use pictures and context to figure out new words. She was asking them to write stories and thoughts of their own. However, Betty was still holding onto many traditional practices as well. She was using the basal program, the "DIP" phonics program, and an old basal series. She had students grouped by ability and met with each group while others completed practice sheets on things they "already know." Betty was experimenting with new ideas, but she was not yet ready to let go of the old, more comfortable way. Consequently, the changes Betty made in her classroom were added onto her existing program rather than used in place of former practices.

Farah discussed the continuing evolution of her program. She was making changes each year. By this third year, Farah felt happy with her newer program.

This is my sixth year. The first year I taught about twenty-five percent of the time from the basal and seventy-five percent from novels. From there on the basal took on less and less time. Last year we opened the basal two times. That was on two days I had to be gone, and I wanted two simple lessons for a sub to do. It's easier to use the basal. I can see why teachers don't want to give them up. They do the planning, provide the materials, and they are in short lessons. It's all there for you. I know when I do a long six week unit, I get so I can't wait to be done. The kids feel it, too . . . (I enjoy it) when

they get excited about a project and take it beyond the expected. For example, when they do the interview of a veteran. Their families get involved, and I know they have gained new ideas from their family. Also, when that "not so comfortable reader" checks out books all the time. Or a parent says "Billy read last evening and didn't watch TV at all." I also like the flexibility of what I am doing. Say versus teaching math or science. I can incorporate lots of things like integrated projects into reading. Like teaching about worms or history during reading. In How to Eat Fried Worms, we talk a lot about peer pressure and making wise choices, life skills . . . I am excited by the enthusiasm that I see for silent reading this year. It has not always been there in other years (Interview, 10/23/90, pp. 2-5).

Farah was pleased with the changes she observed in her students' enthusiasm for reading. She liked being able to use literature as a springboard for other activities which integrated subjects. She felt good about the changes she was making in her program.

Kaitlin expressed her opinions on the scope of change happening in the district. I asked her if she felt more teachers were teaching in these new ways. She replied

Probably not. Although, through inservice and their own readings, they are broadening their methods. Most are willing to try it. Most are trying it, but not to a full extent--to some extent. I think they have learned about it through seminars, not on the New Definition, but on thematic units and literature-based approaches and reading across the curriculum (Interview, 10/10/90, p. 3,4).

Kaitlin felt that most teachers were trying to apply new ideas they learned about thematic units and literature-based approaches, but that they were still retaining their old methods as well. This is what one might expect. Teachers must continue to teach while learning about new methods and approaches. It would be impossible for them to toss out all that they were comfortable doing at once. They would likely try new ideas in small steps, experimenting and observing the effects on their

students. The teachers in Rockville were doing just that as they were learning new ideas about reading instruction from multiple sources.

Fortville

The committee in Fortville began working full force in September, 1989, to revise the K-12 Language Arts Curriculum. Mr. Johnson formed an Executive Committee which consisted of the two cochairs for each of four subcommittees covering all the language arts, K-12. I studied the Elementary Reading Subcommittee which was led by an elementary principal and a reading specialist. The cochairs chose the teacher members for their subcommittees.

The Executive Committee began their task in the early fall of 1989 by writing a mission statement to guide their work. One member remembered that Mr. Johnson placed great importance on identifying their mission at the initial meeting.

Mr. Johnson would not let us leave until we wrote our mission statement. So we posed questions to each other about what our expectations were for the students in the district. We started that way. I don't think anyone relied on anything from the previous committee (Interview 1/6/91).

Mr. Johnson also mentioned the mission statement that the group developed at their first meeting.

We had our own mission statement. It was that we were going to restructure the curriculum with the goal of making students more literate. That was our statement. And our final mission statement is very simple. It says that our goal is to make students literate in school and prepare them to be literate in everyday life outside of school (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 2).

Mr. Johnson, the chair of the project, stated that he relied heavily on the knowledge of the leaders to do the work, and that they tried to

choose knowledgeable members because there was no time to educate people. The district expected the revised curriculum to be ready for the Board in the spring.

We basically picked people who were pretty knowledgeable about reading. I mean, we didn't have time to educate people, so we had to pick people who knew what was going on. We had a fair number of people, I'd say a third of the people were quite conversant in the New Definition and the other two thirds weren't, but they had to be brought up to speed as fast as we could (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 3).

The fact that the district placed more value on adhering to a fixed time schedule than on educating the people charged to do the work suggests that the district focus was on standard operating procedures and the appearance of compliance.

However, Mr. Johnson, the principal chairing the committee, recognized that changes were needed. He relied on the subcommittee cochairs to be knowledgeable enough to shape the curriculum in a way that would reflect needed changes. This acceptance that the cochairs were already knowledgeable about the policy could indicate that the changes envisioned by the leader were not radically different than what was already happening in reading at that time. This view could have been somewhat warranted because district teachers had been learning and experimenting in their own reading programs for a few years by this time, even though no formal district changes had occurred. Thus, the actual reading instruction in some classrooms in the district may have been different than the officially sanctioned instruction. In addition, the policy had been interpreted and presented to teachers as "strategy instruction." The sessions which had been provided for teachers at staff meetings and inservice days focused on new strategies to use in their

classrooms. Teaching new strategies in place of the skills formerly taught from basal manual lessons would be a less dramatic change than if the policy were being interpreted from the constructivist perspective. The constructivist perspective would have required the district to examine their beliefs about how one learns to read and about what the real goals of reading instruction are. The strategy instruction interpretation would be more concrete and more like the status quo, more able to be added onto existing practices. Strategy instruction could simply change what the teacher presents to the students without questioning the presentation mode of teaching nor the overall goal of the presentation (i.e., to construct the correct meanings from text to satisfy the teacher's expectations).

To realize his plan, while staying within district timelines, Mr. Johnson selected an elementary principal with a masters degree in reading, Ms. Jones, as the K-5 Reading Subcommittee cochair. Ms. Jones then selected a reading specialist with a recent masters in reading, Sue, for her cochair. These two cochairs selected their committee members. Sue stated that "We recruited teachers. . . . We took any warm body" (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 6). This comment would indicate that even though the cochairs may have been knowledgeable about the policy, the teachers serving on the subcommittee may not have been.

This new group did not have the same members as the original committee and so the group again spent limited time reading journal articles and visiting other districts. However, these learning opportunities were minimal because the timeline for the work required

that they jump right into writing the proposal by December. Mr. Johnson characterized the situation.

That was certainly something we discussed in the Executive Committee as to what we were going to do about research and background. But you've got to understand that I asked for a preliminary report to be done in three months, so they didn't have a lot of time to do anything. And, of course, typical of everything we do in education, this was all done in our spare time. Each committee had one day that they could hire subs for, or two half days, however they wanted to do it. So they could have a little time at least so that they could be thoughtful about it. . . . In many cases, they met every week in addition to their regular duties. So I think we depended a lot on what the chairmen already knew about research, and we depended on the state. We said that this is one case where the state knows what it's doing, and we don't need to re-invent the wheel (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 13,14).

Again, the evidence indicates that the standard operating procedures and timelines were taking precedence over providing the committee members opportunities to develop deep understandings of the policy. It was assumed that the chairs knew enough about the policy to shape the results and that the materials from the MDE would help.

The policy as ideas allows the districts to interpret and implement it in varied ways. This could be an advantage because mutual adaptation of the policy and the site has been found to be a key in successful implementation efforts (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978). However, providing minimal opportunities for teachers to develop an understanding of the ideas and how they might look in practice bodes the danger of an interpretation which looks very much like the status quo rather than of mutual adaptation. It would be difficult for teachers to revise the reading curriculum in ways which they did not understand and, possibly, in which they did not believe.

The Elementary Reading Subcommittee met on October 3, 1989, for the first time. The agenda for this meeting included

1. description of organizational plan
2. brainstorm a goal statement
3. task assignments (state objectives and research)
(Agenda, 10/3/89).

Ms. Jones, the administrative cochair, stated that at the initial meeting some members were still asking if the district was going to go along with the state's New Definition of Reading. Ms. Jones replied that it was not a question, that the district would follow the state's direction (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 9). Ms. Jones' reply illustrates the importance of the cochairs' knowledge and also their power. She basically ordered the group to go with the policy when doubts were expressed.

The group did a conceptual map to identify important pieces that should be included. The goal developed from the mapping exercise was:

Our goal is to develop a plan for K-5 reading that is unified and sequential. The purpose of the plan will be to produce motivated, literate, thinking readers with respect for the idea that reading is best taught in conjunction with writing, speaking, and listening. It will contain a core program which integrates comprehension, decoding, and teaching strategies within a context of variety and enrichment. Included in the plan will be implementation, inservice, and evaluation components.

The development of the plan will be based on the following:

- research
- past experiences
- teacher input/surveys
- Michigan Reading Definition/Essential Goals/Objectives
- visitations to other programs/school districts
- grade level objectives (Document, Goal Statement, 10/3/89).

We will have each person on the committee communicate with their staff at their respective buildings regularly. We will meet on Tuesdays two to four times each month based on need. Regular reports will be generated and given at an executive committee meeting.

Tasks underway:

1. research collection
2. trade books listed by building/grade level/how used
3. core structure for written plan to be adapted after State of Michigan outline
4. arrangements for visitations to other districts (Document, 10/3/89).

A timeline was developed for the work

October 17--refine map; approve timeline
 October 24--share with Executive Group (map & format)
 November 14--share research findings in small group
 December 12--prepare list of teaching strategies to correlate with grade level objectives
 January 16--put objectives and methods together (Document, 10/3/89).

After this first meeting of the subcommittee, the group had written its goal, how to approach it, its management plan, tasks underway, and a timeline to guide the work. The timeline illustrates the limited time allowed for learning opportunities. Basically, between October 3rd, and December 12th, learning and investigation were to be concluded, and writing was to begin. This learning and investigation would be done mostly after school. After this meeting, the group had a plan of action and appeared ready to move.

The Executive Committee in Fortville was convened in October to share ideas from the individual subcommittees. Mr. Johnson felt a meeting of the Executive Committee so soon would help the groups get started and would allow groups to share ideas that could be helpful to each other. There was still no set approach to follow. Each

subcommittee was to develop its own approach to reach the vision contained in their mission statement.

We met in September, and they were to come back in October and lay out for the whole committee what their subcommittee's game plan was going to be, how they were going to reach their goal. The reason we did that was twofold. One, to make sure they got started because if they had to give a report, they would have to do something in that month. Two, to share the different methods that people had brainstormed to attack this problem. What came out of that October meeting is that everybody learned a little from everybody else about how they were going to attack it.

We did not set aside a way to do it because I don't know that the same method would work for a K-5 Reading Committee as would work for a 7-12 Language Arts Committee. They saw their tasks as different. But we did the same basic things because we were all following the same basic game plan and the same basic timelines and the same basic job description. But, we were unafraid to adjust what we were doing as we went along because nobody had ever done this before, and we felt that we could invent it ourselves as we went along, and that's what we did (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 14).

Mr. Johnson's comments illustrate the illusive quality of implementing this policy. There were no clear guidelines to follow, so the committees invented their own ways. However, remembering that earlier Mr. Johnson stated about two-thirds of the committee members were weak in their understanding of the policy when they began, and that there was little time for them to learn more, inventing a way to implement the policy as they went would be tricky.

Fortville was making other changes while the committee began its work. The roles of the reading specialists were being redefined as they began to present information about the New Definition of Reading to their staffs and as they modified their remedial programs. They were considered the experts in the policy, and they were to help other teachers learn about it. Ms. Jones described these changes.

Individually each building has done their own thing. For example, when we hired the new reading teachers at two elementaries . . . we already had in mind that we wanted those people to play a greater role in teacher training and serve as consultants. . . . So at those two elementaries, those reading teachers began to do some initial training with staff at staff meetings about awareness of the New Definition of Reading and the new strategies. And also, changing our approach to remediation with kids. Instead of adopting kids for the whole nine months, serve a child for only that specific need and then take on another group of children. So we were beginning to change the role of reading teacher to the reading consultant, staff developer, teacher leader . . .

I think we are breaking down the myth in our district now that you can't be an expert in your own arena because we've had lead teachers do ITIP training sessions in the district and now we have had reading teachers doing some instruction as well as other teachers on staff doing some of those mini-sessions at inservice. So the next step as I see it is doing more of that (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 6).

Ms. Jones' comments indicate that the reading teachers were expected to play a big role in teaching other teachers about the policy; they were to become reading consultants for their buildings. These reading teachers had been to the MDE conferences and to Michigan Reading Association (MRA) conferences. They knew the new strategies to teach, but one might question whether they had enough experience and time with the New Definition of Reading to look beyond the new strategies. These questions become more important in light of the comments that each of the reading teachers made in my interviews.

Sue was one of the new reading teachers hired specifically to play the role of consultant. She was also the cochair for the Elementary Reading Subcommittee. Sue told me that she was a political science major in college and that after many years she decided to get a masters in reading. She said that she had never taught reading in the classroom, and she seemed less than confident in her own knowledge about teaching

reading. "I don't have much classroom experience. I have no idea why I was chosen as the cochair of the committee" (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 2). Sue's comments did not suggest a thorough understanding of the policy, nor that she had had a lot of learning opportunities to strengthen her understanding.

(I heard about the New Definition) about four years ago. I heard about it at the WMU (Western Michigan University) Reading Center through a professor. He was working on those modules from the Department of Education. . . . (It means) reading for comprehension . . . I like it because it is simple and to the point. I think it is clear. . . . The freedom to pursue all kinds of instruction (is new) . . . I think it is open-ended. It is clear . . . I think it is (clear) to all who have read it. If people have gone to the inservice and have gone open-minded, it's clear to them (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 4).

Sue's next comments about the MEAP are especially interesting. She indicated that she had "minimal" knowledge of the new MEAP and that the "stuff at the state conferences" didn't really answer her questions.

Sue's comments indicate that she felt the New Definition of Reading was quite simple and clear and would be easy to understand. This definitely suggests that she was using a strategy instruction interpretation at best. It also indicates that she did not see the policy as calling for fundamental changes in reading instruction. Fundamental changes would not be simple and clear to everyone who had heard them with an open mind.

In addition to Sue's simplistic interpretation of the policy, her role as a consultant was hampered because she was working only half time, and she was learning to be a Reading Recovery teacher the other half of her time.

The other reading consultants were more able to restate the definition terminology, but each of them was conducting a pull-out remedial program which focused strongly on phonics skills while including some of the strategies from the MDE modules. This suggests that they had not made a shift in their beliefs about reading instruction, but had grafted the new ideas, the strategy instruction, onto their existing views. Neither of these reading specialists strongly supported this role change. Cory had mixed feelings about the change.

I have mixed feelings about it (the role change). I am supposed to think so (that it is a good move). For the time being, yes, it probably is good. Teachers do need help to get thoroughly comfortable with the New Definition. . . . It was an administrative decision to make the change. When I interviewed for the position, I was told outright that they were hiring someone who would make change happen in the building . . . I did not feel comfortable just coming in and completely changing what the former teacher's role had been. I did not feel I would be accepted then. It has to be a gradual change, but it has been more gradual than we expected (Interview, 12/6/90, p. 4).

Cory's comments indicate that this role change was an administrative idea and that she was hired with the change in mind. She also indicates that she is not completely sold on the value of it.

Jan, the third reading specialist, expressed similar concerns. She felt she was being ordered to make this role change, and that the teachers in her building did not want the change. She did not feel it was a good move for the district.

Nobody has officially done that (redefined the role). I remember the first time Mr. Johnson brought it up. He wanted me to drop all of my remedial work and become a roving teacher who would go from room to room and teach the teachers how to teach. I just flat said, "NO!" I had several reasons for saying no. First, I'm shy in demonstrating in front of others; it's just not comfortable for me. I believe in what I do and I am

secure in myself, and I do my best with kids . . . I had problems with giving up what I do and Mr. Johnson and I had problems over it . . . I was sent to another district to see this approach. . . . In that district, I found that I was right. They had tried that approach and found it didn't work and had backed off of it. They found a few teachers invited them in, but others didn't . . . I really believe in what I do with the students, and the teachers want that help with the remedial program (Interview, 12/5/90, p. 2,3, 12/11/90, p. 13).

The remarks of each of Fortville's reading specialists suggest that changing their roles to consultants would be difficult. First, they did not seem to fully understand the policy, nor to be practicing it daily in their own situations. Second, two of these teachers were working only half-time and had limited time to do consulting. Third, at least two of the three specialists questioned the value of the change and felt it was wanted by the administrators more than by the teachers. This is a critical point in that the reading specialists would be expected to play key roles in educating the classroom teachers in the district. Providing on-site, daily support for teachers in interpreting the policy and translating it into practice is a laudable goal, and one necessary to make lasting change (Duffy, 1982; Pearson, 1984; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). However, any change that does not win the commitment of the teachers is not likely to be successful (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978). This role change in Fortville appears to have been a top-down decision from the administrators rather than an idea developed collaboratively by teachers and administrators. Such top-down ideas often bring resistance from the teachers (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978).

The elementary subcommittee continued to meet at least once per month through January, 1990. Between meetings the members were expected to continue reading research on their own. A few visitations were made

to see programs in other districts. However, it was generally agreed that only a few visitations were actually made, and the visits basically focused on how the reading programs were set up and what materials were being used elsewhere. The issues they were observing appear to be more management related than related to how one best learns to read.

Mary, a first grade member of the group, remembered those visits in our interview.

Not a lot (were made). I went to one district to visit. We had a questionnaire that we used to look around. We looked at how they ran their reading program, if they used a basal or trade books, if they used whole group or ability group instruction, how writing was used. The questionnaire dealt with all the language arts (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 6).

Jan also remembered visiting other schools.

In the beginning, we visited other schools right away to see what they were doing and what materials they were using (Interview, 12/5/90, p. 8).

Both Mary's and Jan's statements support the view that the few visits made focused on what materials other districts were using and what types of grouping others were doing, management related issues rather than philosophical differences.

By December, 1990, the group divided the task of writing the document among the members. Ms. Jones, the cochair, stated that "We divided the tasks according to our interests and expertise." Each member worked with a partner to write one piece of the document. Then Ms. Jones said "these pieces were given to the three reading teachers who put the whole package together." She further stated that the document went through "several revisions and the committee took part in that" (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 8).

The committee members did not remember this process as being so neat and efficient, however. Cory, one of the reading specialists who Ms. Jones said compiled the document, felt that the document was written mostly by the cochairs and that everyone else basically rubber-stamped it. She blamed this on the lack of time that the committee had to complete the work. They were being held to a strict time schedule by the central office, and the order was to have a document for the Board by spring. Cory describes her perceptions of the writing of the document.

They (the cochairs) wrote many things and then they would just pass them by us. We would say, "It sounds good." Then it would just become part of the proposal. We didn't spend lots of time discussing any pieces. I agreed with what was written, but I felt that I lacked ownership because I didn't have much input to it. It was just too rushed to do any other way. Ms. Jones and Sue could get together and work on it during school and they just had to write a lot of it because there was no time (Interview, 12/6/90, p. 10).

Mary, another committee member, saw the process similarly. She was disappointed that the time crunch prevented members from really learning about the policy.

(I expected) to explore new ideas in reading. I didn't feel there was any time to explore, though. There was lots thrown at us, but we were told to put it together and write the proposal without adequate time to take in things ourselves. Basically, large parts of it were just written by Ms. Jones and Sue. . . . (The committee approved it) in a general way. We read it in thirty seconds or less. Not a thorough reading or discussions of it (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 10).

This fragmented approach could have had serious consequences. First, the members were at different levels in their understanding of the policy. The written pieces would likely reflect this. Second, the fact that members did not really question the pieces that others wrote could allow parts that were not in tune with the policy to be included. These

problems were probably minimized, though, because the cochairs did much of the final writing. Third, the teachers themselves spoke of feeling a lack of ownership in the document because of the fragmented writing. Last, this approach suggests that the members were focused on getting the document done on schedule more than on producing a plan for change.

Each person that I spoke to stated that working on this committee had been frustrating for them personally. The biggest frustration cited was the lack of time to think about what they were doing and to do it well. As stated earlier, the superintendent and the President of the Board saw it as imperative that the work be completed within the standard cycle schedule because of funding policies. The Curriculum Director substantiated that reason for the time crunch.

We have a five year cycle here for curriculum studies. Because the first committee had worked two years, this group was in essence in the year for a proposal when they started. We had to go quickly in order to keep the cycle in place. Also, it was time for a change to happen, and we didn't want to put it off. The curriculum council expected a proposal. Sometimes we do our best work when we are under a crunch. I think that happened here. They rose to the occasion.

We had the impetus to get the proposal to the Board by May. They require two readings before they approve something like this. They needed to have May and June for those, so they could approve it in July. We had to get it approved by then in order to order materials for the fall and to plan inservice opportunities. To really make a difference in instruction, it had to be done (Interview, 2/19/90, p. 4,5).

Fortville's standard operating procedures for revising curriculum, for Board approval, and for ordering materials took precedence over allowing committee members to learn and reflect as the revised the curriculum. The Curriculum Director believed that the group rose to the occasion because of the pressure. He may have been somewhat correct in

that every person I spoke with was pleased with the final document that was sent to the Board. However, there are two points to consider here. First, the cochairers were doing most of the writing, using chunks of information provided by various committee members. As stated earlier, Mr. Johnson knew from the beginning that he would need to rely on the knowledge of the cochairers. He specifically picked people that he felt had a better grasp than most of what the policy meant. The proposal is more a reflection of what the leaders thought than what the teachers had learned. Second, the final document used the goals and objectives from the MDE as the foundation of the proposal. These goals and objectives are somewhat nebulous; exactly what needs to happen in instruction is left to individual interpretation. The pieces of the proposal that the committee actually wrote dealt more with an implementation plan covering staff development, materials to be used, and some general guides to instruction. The final proposal did not outline what teachers needed to do in their classrooms. So, even though the group worked hard to meet the deadlines, they did not define what changes in instruction were expected. Teachers were still left somewhat in the dark as to how they should change their practice.

The Proposal: Content and Problems

In addition to containing the goals and objectives from the MDE, the proposal addressed staff development, materials, and instruction. First, staff development was envisioned in a different way.

(Staff development) must shift from scattered presentations on what's faddish for this year to systematic on-going training where participants have the

time and assistance to master new skills. Our goal is to increase knowledge retention and on-the-job use of skills learned in training (Language Arts Proposal, p. 21).

Part of this change encompassed changing the roles of the building reading specialists from remedial teachers to staff consultants and hiring a coordinator to oversee the efforts. As stated earlier, the idea of the role change for reading specialists appears to have come from the administrators, not the teachers, and it was not widely supported.

Second, the proposal recommended the purchase of a new literature-based basal series that appeared to correlate with the New Definition. This was to be one piece of the reading program. In addition, each teacher was given two hundred fifty dollars to purchase materials to supplement the basal series.

The purchase of a new basal series was not unanimously supported by the committee members. Cory, a reading specialist, responded to my question about how the decision to purchase a basal happened by expressing surprise that the group went that direction.

I wish I knew! We seemed to talk about two different approaches: the basal and trade books. All year I would have sworn that we would go with trade books as the most of the program. . . . Then one day we just started asking textbook reps to send us samples and we looked them over and we picked one. I asked myself afterwards, "How did that happen?" (Interview, 12/6/90, p. 7,8).

Mary, a first grade teacher had similar thoughts.

I don't see choosing a new basal as an accomplishment, though. I didn't realize when I joined the committee that we'd push for a new basal. (I think we did) because most people are comfortable with it. The basal lays it all out for you . . . I feel people's minds were set from the beginning on buying a new basal. People looked for a basal and the main goal seemed to be finding a new one (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 8).

Don, a fourth grade teacher, felt choosing a new book helped to make the task manageable for the group. Don had a more traditional view in that he felt the basal would tell teachers what to do anyway, so writing a new curriculum was not important. He described how the basal was selected and pointed out that because the task was overwhelming, it was done more by hearsay than investigation.

It was frustrating. Nobody was trained in the New Definition, but our assignment was to come up with a new program. No one knew what the new program should look like, so people were saying "Let's get a new book" with no criteria for what they wanted. . . . I know you should write the curriculum before you look for a book, but you have limited time and you will usually copy something from a book rather than re-invent the wheel. People are afraid to say "Let's just buy a new book," but we create a lot of work and it will be in the book anyway in the Scope and Sequence. . . . Then Ms. Jones ordered lots of reading series for us to look at. The library was full of them. Then we thought "What next? Are we really going to go through all of these with these questions?" No, it was too much, so we began to say "Well, I heard someone say they really liked this one or this one's not good." . . . It was not a super scientific process (Interview, 10/17/90, p. 6).

Don saw the best goal for the committee to be choosing a new basal, as Mary suspected when she stated that some members just wanted to purchase a new basal from the beginning. He realized that the choice was not done with much information or investigation.

Lucy, a second grade teacher, had a similar perception of the goal and how it was carried out. Lucy joined the committee to have the opportunity to see the new materials available for reading, "It was one way to see the new materials that are available." She also confirmed Don's story of how the choice was made on hearsay.

I had a girlfriend who hated her new book, and I was instrumental in making sure we didn't get that book. There were three choices, and one of them was that one. I made sure we didn't choose it (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 2).

The other item in the proposal concerning materials provided each teacher with two hundred fifty dollars to purchase materials which would personalize his/her program. This purchase had to be approved by the administrators, however, so that reading programs could be personalized within limits. The administrators were strong in their support of moving away from a skills-based, workbook-oriented approach. Teachers who wanted to continue this type of program were not comfortable ordering worksheets and workbooks. The invisible, but real, strings on this money caused much grumbling among teachers, and put reading teachers in the uncomfortable position of acting as liaison between disgruntled teachers and administrators (Fieldnotes, Reading Teacher Meeting, 11/13/90). Lucy, who strongly believed in the skills-based approach, went so far as to ask a teacher in another building to copy workbook pages for her hoping to hide her usage of workbook sheets from her principal.

Jan, a reading specialist, felt that teachers were caught in a bind, being asked to change their teaching with little help and having difficulty getting the materials they needed.

The committee decided that the teachers could order workbooks if they wanted to. There has been a big uproar about that issue . . . I get two different stories from the teachers and the administrators. The administrators don't want workbooks. They can't contain their beliefs in that. So the teachers get the word. . . . They were allowed to order them finally, but the first semester is almost over. They were told in the beginning that they could not order them, then it was changed and they could order them (Interview, 12/5/90, p. 5).

This disagreement over the use of a skills-based, workbook-oriented approach illustrates once again that the knowledge, and possibly the beliefs, of some of the teachers was weak in what the policy intended them to do. They did not question the discrepancy between such an approach and the intent of the New Definition of Reading nor the wisdom of using such an approach. This disagreement also illustrates how important the knowledge of the administrators was to this district's plan. The administrators apparently understood the discrepancy between the skills-based approach and the policy, and they acted to force teachers away from the skills-based approach. The problem occurred because the teachers did not share this knowledge and belief in the policy and were not sure how to make appropriate changes, nor if they believed changes were necessary.

The third thrust of Fortville's proposal was instructional techniques. It supported providing direct instruction in what strategies to use, when to use them, and why to use them. There was also direction given to provide instruction before, during, and after each reading experience. This section of the document also outlined the responsibility for reading instruction of various roles such as classroom teacher, principal, media specialist. Responsibilities were listed for each role.

The Proposal Analyzed

This proposal with its broad approach to change appeared to be moving past the standard operating procedure of producing a document for the public record. The proposal used the goals from the MDE. Those

goals contained a vision for what successful readers can do; however, no practical guidelines on how to help students achieve that success were included. The proposal then outlined a plan for changes in staff development, materials, staff roles, and instruction. Thus, the proposal contained an action plan, but the plan still left the ideas about what the policy meant for the classroom teacher undefined. The attention to staff development held the promise that this definition was still to come.

The Proposal: Funding

Basically, the proposal requested the money to make organizational changes which would produce some undefined instructional changes in the future. The budget to implement this proposal requested three times the normal amount given to curriculum innovation. The proposal was presented to the Board in June, 1990. It was accepted and the resources were provided for implementation. The Curriculum Director saw his position as crucial in preparing the Board to provide such a large amount of money for implementation.

(My role was) one of facilitator, cheerleader, encourager, liaison to prepare the Board and the superintendent for what would be coming. A challenger to the committee to be sure that the proposal and the financial commitments it would bring would fit in with what the Board would be able to adopt . . . I had to prepare the Board to think about a bigger budget than they had allowed in the past . . . I had to help the Board see the massive changes that were needed and why, because society has changed, the world is different, and kids' needs have changed. . . . My job is to help them prepare something that will be accepted by the Board and to help the Board see the need for it (Interview, 2/19/91, p. 5).

The request and approval for a large amount of money implied that the district was serious about making changes. Providing resources to make changes is a key to successful implementation, a key that District Two understood and upon which they acted.

Staff Development

The district in Fortville continued to provide district wide inservice programs. In February, 1990, the district held a half-day inservice for all district teachers. This day consisted of a motivational speaker for the entire staff and two choices from a variety of fifty minute sessions. The mini-sessions provided ideas for classroom use. This inservice is evidence of the deficit model of teacher learning (Jackson, 1971) and seems at odds with the direction for staff development identified in the proposal. The deficit view of teacher learning is based on the idea that teachers are deficient in some area, and they need to be told new ways to act. It suggests that teachers will perform better if they learn tricks for the classroom, and that they learn these best by listening to outside "experts" tell them how to do new techniques. In addition, celebrity experts can entertain and motivate the teachers to try these new activities. There was little opportunity for teachers to voice their confusions or concerns with the policy and/or the proposal, nor to share their enthusiasm and successes. Teachers were told new ways to act and were to go and act in those new ways on their own. Also, this approach to teacher learning provides more evidence of the policy instrument as ideas, and as such there was no real monitoring that the approaches for teacher learning or the ideas

suggested conformed to the intent of the policy. Each local district was responsible to interpret and implement the policy as they saw fit.

Summary of the Third Year in Fortville

As the 1989-90 school year ended, Fortville had a plan for implementing the goals and objectives outlined by the MDE. This plan covered staff development, materials, and some general guidelines for instruction. Money was provided to implement this proposal. Two issues appeared, though, which could have negative effects on implementation efforts. First, teachers and administrators did not agree on what needed to happen. A key piece of the proposal was to provide on-site, on-going staff development to help teachers change instructional practices. The reading consultants were to provide a large portion of this support. As shown earlier, the reading specialists had not accepted this role change and classroom teachers were still asking for them to provide remedial services instead. Second, administrators appeared to have grasped a different view of reading which would not rely on basal manuals and was not a skills-based approach. However, the teachers were not sure how this would look in their classrooms and were not sure students would learn without the attention to practice sheets with which they were familiar. Reading specialists were concentrating on strategy instruction. Basal reading manuals were still providing step-by-step plans. Teachers were left to sort through it all and to provide some elusive type of instruction about which they knew little. In essence, teachers had not had time to learn about and to develop a clear

definition of what the policy meant for instruction as they entered the implementation year.

Changes That Individual Teachers
Were Making in Fortville

The proposal in Fortville was not clear about what teachers should change in their reading instruction. The teachers had not felt that writing the proposal provided them with the learning opportunities which they needed. Yet, the individual teachers continued to learn new ideas from each other and from sources outside the district and to experiment in their own classrooms. Don talked about the evolution which was continuing in his classroom.

Then last year I learned more and I got away from the blackline masters. I did more writing and thinking. The year before I had tried to separate writing and reading. When I began in fourth grade, about three years ago, I was told that I should teach reading in reading class and writing in language arts in my homeroom with spelling and English. They were not integrated. I don't know exactly why it was structured that way, but that is what I was told when I began. I think Mr. Johnson had something to do with the structure because it happened when he was the principal . . . I think it was good for me to use the manual at first because I had limited knowledge. Then I grew into using the novels. Last year we bought three novels for instruction and then others they could read on their own. My kids read about eight or nine on their own (Interview, 10/17/90, p. 2).

Don talked about turning loose of the blackline masters somewhat and doing more "writing and thinking." He was beginning to integrate reading and writing even though he had been told not to do so. He recognized that the basal manual had been an appropriate crutch for him in the beginning, but that once his knowledge increased, he could put it aside.

He was pleased to see his students reading numerous books on their own. Don felt he had made big changes in his program.

Jan, a Fortville reading specialist, spoke of making changes in her instruction also. Jan stated that in the past she had worked "mainly on decoding." She stated that it was "a little boring," and that she did "lots of repetition on decoding types of work." However, she felt she was adding new dimensions to her program now.

This year it is a little different. In the fifth grade, where they regroup for reading, I take my show on the road. I go into those rooms. It is a crazy schedule. I go to one room on Monday and Tuesdays and to another room on Wednesday and Thursdays. And on Fridays I do Junior Great Books with the fourth graders. I meet with the teachers, and we conference and decide what I'll teach. Then I also have an extra group from fifth grade of decoders. After Christmas I hope to add a group to work on comprehension . . . I have expertise in the New Definition of Reading, so I do lessons that will also help the teachers. Right now I am doing "Recipes for Remembering," and they will have to write theirs. I have shown them "K-W-L" and "DRTA" and mapping and trigger notes. I told them I want them to make a book for me showing me their recipe for remembering. I try to show them how to use these techniques for studying. Then after I do the lesson, the classroom teacher can take it further (Interview, 12/5/90, p. 2).

Jan felt she was changing her program to help both students and teachers. She was moving into her new role of consultant in small ways. She was using a program often reserved for the top students, Junior Great Books, with all of the fourth graders. She was teaching the MDE strategies for comprehension. She was moving past a total focus on decoding, although, she continued to have groups which focused on decoding skills.

The teachers in Fortville continued to interpret the information they were receiving from multiple sources and to apply it as they saw fit

in their own classrooms. They were taking steps to implement these new ideas somewhat independent of district efforts to make change.

Summary and Comparison of the
First Three Years in Both Districts

The implementation work in both districts had been fraught with difficulties during the first three years. Changes in leadership, changes in committee membership, contractual issues, financial problems, and time constraints had all influenced the work. Both districts had spent the first two years muddling through, trying to get a workable plan and a group to do the work. Progress had been slow.

Major differences appeared between the two districts by the third year of the work, though. Rockville had begun with a focus on teacher learning and on making changes in reading instruction. A change in leadership the second year changed the committee in two important ways. First, the focus was changed to the appearance of compliance with the policy. A new document was produced. However, the document contained a philosophy which was in line with the policy, but the instructional objectives were from the old skills-based basal program. Second, the leader of the committee assumed control of the group's direction, and his leadership style thwarted efforts of the group to retain their original focus, that of learning and of change. The group no longer spent time investigating and learning together. Investigative subgroups were disbanded. Discussions were not allowed because time was to be spent producing a document.

The committee in Rockville did not define where they were going before they began writing the document. Teachers were confused and

frustrated. The leaders were skeptical about the possibilities. Everyone seemed unsure just what the policy meant for the district's reading program.

The first three years had brought little progress for Rockville's committee. Knowledge of the policy was still minimal; both the leaders and the teachers were unsure what needed to happen. Teachers were calling for change; however, the leader seemed to lack a commitment to change and appeared unwilling to act on the teachers' suggestions. Rockville was still in a state of confusion at the end of three years.

Fortville appeared to have accomplished more than Rockville after three years of work. Fortville had begun the work with a committee led by teachers. However, after two years, this committee disintegrated, and an administrator was appointed to begin again. This leader had a sense of where he wanted to go, and he developed a framework to organize the efforts. Subgroups were formed, a proposal was written and approved, and funding was secured within the third year.

Some concerns are warranted at this point, however. First, the work had been conducted under severe time limitations. The time constraints did not allow much time to educate the committee members about the policy. Thus, the knowledge of the leaders was used to write the proposal, leaving some teachers feeling a lack of understanding and ownership in the ideas.

Second, the administrators were retaining control of the efforts. For example, the administrator cochair was one of the two main authors of the proposal, not the teachers. The administrators would have to approve purchases made by teachers. This administrative control could have both

negative and positive effects. On the positive side, the administrators felt they were more knowledgeable than most of the teachers. If this were true, they would have been in a better position to write the proposal. On the negative side, the teachers were being forced to make changes which they did not fully understand nor support. This could cause problems as the implementation of the proposal began.

Third, the proposal did not make clear what teachers were to change in their daily practice. The goals included in the proposal were copied from the Michigan Essential Goals and Objectives for Reading. These goals are broad, offering a vision or outcome for students, but leaving achievement of that goal to the teacher. As stated throughout this chapter, the teachers in Fortville had limited opportunities to learn about the policy and what it meant for instruction in the first three years of this work. These same teachers would now have to translate those broad goals and the changes inherent in them into practice.

In both districts, the teachers on the committees were learning about the new ideas for reading instruction from a variety of sources. They were trying to adapt these ideas to their own classrooms and were observing their students to decide what worked and what did not. They were making changes, some bigger than others, but each was trying to make sense of what was happening in the area of reading instruction and how it affected them and their students.

In Chapter Four, I will continue the stories of both districts. Rockville continued its committee work, trying to find a focus and develop a plan. Fortville moved into implementation of its proposal. All

of the teachers continued to teach their students, making changes which they felt were worthwhile and which appeared to work in their classrooms with their students.

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CHAPTER IV

THE WORK CONTINUES

Introduction

In the summer of 1990, both districts began the fourth year of their efforts to implement Michigan's New Definition of Reading. Rockville had made little progress due to changes in membership, changes in leadership, and fiscal problems. They had produced a document which outlined skills taught in the old basal reading series, but they were basically starting from scratch as to what changes needed to happen and how that might occur. A philosophy had been hastily written and attached to the skills-oriented document. Members were frustrated with the work, and disagreement was apparent between the interests of the teachers and the mandates of the leaders.

Fortville had made more progress in their efforts to implement the policy. The committee in Fortville had produced a proposal which contained a plan for change, but which left instructional changes undefined. This committee had secured funding for their plan, and a new basal series was ordered for teachers. The efforts in Fortville appeared top-down, with administrators in control of material purchases and administrators mandating role changes which were not widely supported by

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In both districts, individual teachers continued making changes in their own classrooms. These teachers were talking with each other informally, attending local reading council meetings and workshops when possible, reading journals, and experimenting with the new ideas in their own classrooms. These new ideas were both added onto their existing practices and replacing some former practices. There was variety in how far the teachers had moved toward the New Definition of Reading; yet, almost all were moving to some extent. These classroom changes seemed only marginally affected by the district level efforts; they seemed instead to be a function of the capacity and will of the individual teachers (McLaughlin, 1987). The teachers had the "will" to change their instruction. They wanted to find out more about the new ideas for teaching reading, and they wanted to try new ideas that would make their teaching both more effective and more fun. They were trying to build the "capacity" to make these changes by talking and sharing ideas, by reading articles, and by attending whatever types of learning opportunities they could manage. They were trying to learn how to put these new ideas into practice in their own situations quite apart from the work they were doing at the district level.

During the fourth year of the work, the district-level efforts of the two districts were at different points. Rockville was still trying to set a direction and to identify what needed to change and how to make that happen. Fortville was focused on implementing the proposal and on training the teaching staff in how to do that. In Fortville it was

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In this chapter, I will discuss the work that occurred during Year Four in both districts. The major themes of this year's work are discussed under headings that seem to characterize what I saw happening.

We Need to Learn More about These New Ideas

Even though both districts had been working on implementing this policy for three years by the 1990-91 school year, both Rockville and Fortville realized that district teachers did not fully understand how to put the policy into practice. Both districts provided inservice opportunities for their teachers; however, these opportunities were the standard "bring the teachers in and tell them" sessions. In addition, these inservice sessions dealt primarily with either how to use new basal materials or how to teach the strategies from the Michigan Department of Education modules.

Rockville

In August, 1990, before the school year began, Rockville again provided a voluntary inservice on the Discovering Intensive Phonics (DIP) program. The program was not mandated for use in classrooms; teachers could use it or not as they chose. However, providing the inservice a second time suggests that the district was encouraging and supporting use of this phonics program. As stated earlier, this program teaches letters and sounds in isolation, supports teaching students to use "sounding out

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words" as their primary word attack method, and provides scripts for the teacher for each lesson. This focus is not in line with the New Definition of Reading which suggests the teacher must make instructional decisions because reading is an interactive process of constructing meaning using what the student knows, what the text suggests, and the context of the reading situation. Providing this inservice also suggests that at the beginning of Year Four of Rockville's implementation efforts, the district still had not defined where they were going or what needed to happen. What did the policy mean for this district? Encouraging teachers to use the DIP program suggests that the district efforts were not yet focused on the policy and what it means for instruction.

On October 15, 1990, Rockville held their annual inservice day. All elementary teachers were required to attend three one-hour sessions in the morning. One of these sessions was focused on reading and was done by the consultant from the publisher of the basal series currently in use in the district. This consultant briefly reviewed the meaning of Michigan's New Definition of Reading and listed some things that are different about this view of reading:

It is integrated, literature-driven, student-centered, and includes a more flexible classroom. There is more informal assessment. Enrichment is integral, and cooperative learning is used (Handout and Fieldnotes, 10/15/90).

She then read several children's books aloud and gave specific ideas that teachers could use in their classrooms with each book, new "tricks" (Jackson, 1971). In the middle of it all, she made a short sales pitch for her company's new materials. The teachers politely listened. Few took notes or attempted to ask questions. There was no enthusiasm or

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involvement, but the comments afterwards were that it was "a good session and helpful" (Fieldnotes, 10/15/90).

This inservice day was operating on the defect model of teacher learning (Jackson, 1971). It assumed that the teachers were deficient in some knowledge or skill and that they would learn this knowledge or skill by listening to an expert tell them about it and show them what they should do in their classrooms. The teachers did not participate in the session, other than by listening. However, many teachers seemed to feel it was helpful. It may have seemed helpful to them because it showed them a glimpse of how reading instruction that fits with the New Definition of Reading would look. This defect model of teacher learning has not been shown to be successful in helping teachers make fundamental changes in their teaching, though (Jackson, 1971; Little, 1982; Zumwalt, 1988). The teachers may try the activity that they were shown, but they seldom move past that activity into new ways of teaching. Such training experiences do not foster reflection about one's practice, but encourage doing the same old thing in slightly modified ways. Thus, few teachers could be expected to make substantial change in their reading instruction as a result of this inservice session.

In addition, Marsh and McLaughlin (1978) suggest that initial staff training experiences are not enough to make sustained changes. Staff support activities must follow. Teachers may learn new ideas or tricks during inservice sessions, but on-going opportunities to interact with others about the changes as they try them out and adapt them within their own classrooms are essential to making lasting change. Rockville did not

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provide staff support activities following this inservice; therefore, it is doubtful that significant, lasting change would occur.

The other learning opportunities afforded to the teachers in Rockville during Year Four of the work consisted of presentations by textbook consultants about their new basal programs. On March 26, 1991, Houghton-Mifflin brought their new basal materials to the district for a one hour presentation. About twenty-five teachers attended, but only about half of the Reading Committee was there. The presentation talked only about the books and their strengths. Teachers were able to look at the materials for each grade level and to ask questions about the program. There was no general discussion, but teachers congregated by grade level to peruse the materials available.

Before the year ended, there were two more meetings with book company representatives.

The Heath basal series was presented at a meeting on May 22, 1991. About twenty-five teachers attended; about half of the reading committee came. Teachers listened to the consultant speak. After the meeting, they had the opportunity to look at materials for individual grade levels and to ask questions. The committee did not discuss any of the materials or the presentation.

On May 28, 1991, Modern Curriculum Press came to talk about their supplemental materials. However, this meeting was announced over the loud speaker in each building only ten minutes before it was to begin. As far as I know, very few people attended. Other companies who published supplemental materials and who were to be invited did not present their materials before the end of the year.

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Rockville's Committee Members Are
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The Rockville committee met on January 10, 1991, for its second meeting of the year. At this meeting, it was clear that both Mr. Curt, the leader, and many of the teachers felt they needed more opportunities to learn about the new ideas in reading. Mr. Curt made comments that indicate he was still unclear about what the committee should do. He seemed to feel that the group was talking about whole language, but he did not understand what that would mean for instruction.

So is whole language what we're talking about? Do we have enough information about it? How to do it? Even after reading this article, which is good, I keep wondering, 'But how would you do this?' Do you feel that way? Do you need more opportunities to learn how to do it? (Fieldnotes, 1/10/91).

Mr. Curt seemed to recognize that he did not understand what whole language really is, and he wondered if teachers understood it. He did ask if teachers needed more opportunities to learn about it. This would indicate that he realized teacher learning might need to be a focus of the group. However, his later actions seem to belie this view.

At this point, it seemed the committee began using the term "whole language" to describe what they thought they should be doing. They moved from focusing on the New Definition of Reading and what it meant for reading instruction to focusing on whole language as the way to go.

Following Mr. Curt's remarks, two teachers remarked that they did feel it was such a big change that they needed more time to learn and that they were not sure that they agreed with a total change. Other teachers called for the committee to define what each grade level would teach before considering materials and to decide if they would go with a

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developmentally-appropriate curriculum first (Fieldnotes, 1/10/91). The group agreed that they would like to have a workshop on whole language set up for all district teachers. Mr. Curt said that he would arrange it; however, this workshop never happened. When the committee members asked about it again in March, Ms. Smith, the leader of that meeting, stated that she knew nothing about it and dropped the matter. The workshop did not occur.

One teacher asked that the group define whole language as she was not sure what the term really meant. Questions were also asked about the "Discovering Intensive Phonics" (DIP) program and who was using it. Basically, information about what was being done district-wide seemed sparse.

This meeting illustrates that Rockville's committee had never done the initial investigations planned back in the spring of 1988. It was unclear what was being taught currently, and members were confused about what changes should happen in reading instruction. Teachers were using jargon such as whole language and developmentally-appropriate curriculum, but there was confusion as to what these terms meant. Teachers were asking for time to learn about these ideas and to define grade level goals as well as to investigate what district teachers were currently doing in reading instruction. These tasks had been planned for the second year of the work, but were never done.

The opportunities to learn about the new ideas in reading were quite limited during Year Four of the work in Rockville. All district teachers had the opportunity to learn about the "DIP" program before the year began; all district teachers had the opportunity to hear from several

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textbook consultants about their new materials. However, the committee strongly suggested that they needed to learn more about whole language, and they needed more time to talk with each other by grade level to decide what they needed to do. These opportunities were not provided. The learning opportunities provided in Rockville were not likely to help district teachers understand the policy and make fundamental changes in their reading instruction.

Fortville

The story was slightly different during 1990-91 in Fortville. This district had approved and budgeted a plan for staff development in the district. This plan had two major pieces in it. First, a one-half time Language Arts Coordinator was hired to provide on-going inservice sessions for the district. Second, the reading teachers in each elementary building were expected to change their roles to ones of consultants, providing on-site modeling and advice as teachers tried to make instructional changes. Both pieces of the plan sounded right on target to provide staff training and staff support (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978). However, in reality, it worked quite differently than on paper.

The Language Arts Coordinator

In the summer of 1990, a one-half time "Language Arts Coordinator" was hired. Mike was a middle school classroom teacher for ten years before he was selected for this position. He did not serve on the committee which wrote the proposal. He had experience doing inservice

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sessions with teachers in the district on ITIP (Instructional Theory Into Practice). He characterized his new position for me.

It was really a way to get a coordinator without spending anymore money. The middle school reading teacher retired, so they just rewrote the job description and made it half time reading consultant and half time language arts coordinator . . . two half time jobs which are both full time (Interview, 10/03/90).

Mike would work with all district teachers. One major role was to provide awareness sessions and demonstration lessons to teachers. The building reading consultants were to work closely with Mike to support teachers in their daily efforts to change reading instruction. It was hoped that together these roles would provide on-going staff development for teachers in the district and would bring about sustained changes in instruction. This plan meets the criteria that both staff training and on-going staff support are needed to bring about real changes in practice (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978).

Mr. Johnson, the chairperson of the Language Arts Committee, stated that hiring the Language Arts Coordinator was essential to the success of the proposal. He stated that he would not be able to oversee the implementation efforts because of his other duties and that if no one were overseeing the project, nothing would happen (Interview, 6/13/90). Again, the district plan has met a criteria needed for successfully bringing about sustained change, institutional motivation (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978). The district recognized that commitment to the proposal required having someone in charge of the efforts with time to devote to the project. Fortville then created and filled that position. One shadow on this motivation is the fact that the position was created as a half-time position by cutting another reading teacher position to

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Another shadow is found in the comments of the Director of Curriculum. He noted that the position was created for only two years due to financial constraints. The district perceived a need for a similar position in math in two years, so the reading position would be eliminated at that time to fund the math position. The hope was that at the end of two years, the building reading consultants could successfully sustain the movement (Interview, 2/18/91).

Taken together, these comments indicate that the job was seen as critical for the short term, but not critical enough to provide additional money. The position was funded through cutting a reading consultant's position in half. This approach of designating only half-time for both the coordinator's position and the middle school reading consultant's position caused difficulty as the year progressed. Mike found that he did not have enough hours in the day to oversee implementation in the entire district, provide on-going staff development, and serve as the middle school consultant. In addition, at the high school level, the reading teacher was given no time released from students to work with teachers on implementing the proposal (Fieldnotes, 1/17/91, pp. 3-6). These decisions bring doubts about the strength of the district's commitment to implementation of the proposal. In theory they appeared to understand what needed to happen, but in reality, financial constraints often took precedence, and compromises which weakened the plan were made.

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If the building reading consultants were going to be key to Mike's plan, he would need to work closely with them to get a feel for building needs and to enable them to act as back-up trainers to carry on what he could only begin in each building. To help the three reading consultants to meet this role, they decided to meet with Mike for one afternoon each week.

The reading teachers in Fortville were not clear on what their new roles as consultants would entail. They interpreted their role as liaisons between principals and teachers rather than as decision-makers. The principals were seen as the decision-makers; the consultants would then communicate these decisions to the teachers. The following vignette from one of their meetings makes their confusion painfully clear.

Sue: We have issues come up in the reading teacher meetings, do we make recommendations to the Reading Committee? . . . I would like the Reading Committee to send recommendations to us and we discuss them and then send them to the principals.

Mike: That would be efficient. A chain of command. The administrators want control over a decision, but they want the involvement of the reading teachers. But, we are unsure of the flow of communication. For example, if teachers want workbooks, they tell Jan. But who does she talk to? Who takes it back to report to the teachers? We don't want only one person doing that.

Sue: No, but not another committee. That would break anyone! We have plenty of committees.

Mike: I agree. We don't want to ask the committee to come together to discuss every glitch.

Sue: I want some efficiency.

Jan: I don't want to usurp the principal's authority.

Mike: They do have the final say, but the reading teachers should give input.

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Sue: I think Mike should take this problem of the flow of communication to the principals, not to the Reading Committee.

Jan: Decision-making and the flow of information. Ultimately, decisions come from the principals. There are budgets to consider. Why should the committee spend its time on decisions when the final decision is the principal's anyway? Let's ask the principals first.

Sue: I think the Reading Committee is done. Ms. Jones disagrees. I am tired of it.

Jan: YES!

Sue: How can we do record keeping and assessment with so few people? We could do it better as the reading teachers. We should ask the principals how to provide a united front and best serve them.

Mike: Then on these three issues, workbooks, spelling, tests, I go to the principals with the concerns. We, the reading teachers, make recommendations, and I take it to the principals. I get a decision, and the reading teachers go back to the teachers (Fieldnotes, 11/13/90).

This exchange shows that the reading teachers were interpreting their roles to be liaisons between principals and teachers. Their conversation did not support a view of the reading teachers as the experts providing staff development to guide the change efforts. Instead, they seemed to perceive the principals as making all decisions, even though the reading teachers might make suggestions, and the reading teachers would become messengers to the teachers to communicate the principals' decisions.

This is an interesting paradox. In the proposal, the reading consultants were to provide on-site help for teachers to make changes in their reading instruction. However, in reality, the reading consultants were not going to make critical decisions, but were going to communicate to the teachers the decisions made by the principals. Thus, control of

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This meeting also made clear that the role change from reading teacher to reading consultant was unclear to those teachers. They did not seem to grasp just what they were supposed to do. At this point in the year, mid-November, the reading consultants were spending little time helping teachers change their practice. None of the reading teachers had moved very far in this direction. Sue was spending half of her day out of her building as she learned to teach an early intervention program called "Reading Recovery" through a nearby university. In the other half day, Sue was trying to provide remedial services and to meet with the reading consultants weekly (Interview, 11/13/90). Cory was working only half time and was spending much of her time providing remedial services to students, as well as the weekly meetings with the consultants (Interview, 12/6/90). Jan did not believe in the role change. She felt that her role as remedial reading teacher was valuable and needed by teachers. She was resisting making the change (Interview, 12/5/90). Thus, with a third of the year gone, the role change had not become a reality. The discussion at this meeting suggests that when these teachers did act as consultants, it was more focused on checking up on material orders for teachers, not on helping teachers understand the New Definition of Reading and how to change their practice accordingly.

The pressure was great on the Language Arts Coordinator and the reading consultants. They were expected to teach the teachers new ways to teach, to convince them of the value of these new ways, and to act as liaison with the principals when the teachers were unhappy. Considering

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the limited experience each of these people had with the policy and the ideas behind it, this was an uncomfortable position for them. They were being asked to give up their accustomed ways of working, with pull-out groups of remedial students, and to become teachers of teachers. As cited earlier in Chapter Three, these reading consultants were not totally in favor of making this role change.

Thus, the situation in Fortville was frustrating for all. Administrators were meeting with resistance to the ideas in which they believed. The Language Arts Coordinator and the reading consultants were caught in the middle between resisting teachers and strong-willed administrators. The reading consultants were being asked to make changes for which they were minimally prepared and in which they did not fully believe. All of this frustration can be partly attributed to the use of hierarchical power (Sergiovanni, 1991; Elmore, 1983). The administrators were attempting to force a top-down model of implementation without allowing delegated power, or power to use what one knows, to the teachers. Such top-down or forced change is seldom successful.

Inservice Sessions for Teachers in Fortville

Mike, the Language Arts Coordinator in Fortville, organized inservice sessions for all elementary teachers early in the fall of 1990. The first sessions were divided by building. Mike went to staff meetings in each building and showed a set of videos provided by the basal company. These videos covered topics such as "Teaching the Reading Lesson" which explained the pieces contained in each manual lesson and

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"Teaching Reading Strategies" which illustrated how to use strategies such as "K-W-L" in one's classroom. Sessions were also held for each grade level to meet with the basal company consultant for directions on how to best use the program. These learning opportunities all dealt specifically with making the best use of the new basal program. Each of them involved teachers listening to someone tell them how "to do" reading instruction by using the new materials.

As soon as copies of the proposal were printed, Mike went to each elementary school to explain and to present the buildings with copies of the proposal and to give the teachers copies of the Scope and Sequence document. I attended one of these meetings on November 13, 1990. The teachers gathered for forty-five minutes before school began. The meeting began ten minutes late because not everyone had arrived, so the meeting was limited to thirty-five minutes. In all, thirty-seven staff members attended, the entire staff and the superintendent. By the time other business was finished, Mike had about twenty minutes to speak. He began by pointing out that the proposal was based on the latest research and that the teacher is the key to students' reading success by the decisions he/she makes. He mentioned that the New Definition of Reading "empowers" teachers by "letting" them make instructional decisions instead of "having them (decisions) made for them" (Fieldnotes, 11/13/90, p. 1). He explained that the Goals and Objectives would be used in a different way.

You can't just look at them and say 'I'll teach this one on Monday and this one on Tuesday.' You need to read them over several times and keep reading them throughout the year. You must become familiar with them and then

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keep them in mind as you teach and when you plan all lessons. They will help you choose your stories and know what to emphasize with each one (Fieldnotes, 11/13/90, p. 1).

Mike seemed to be emphasizing a different view of reading, not just teaching a few new strategies. Mike seemed to have grasped a deeper meaning of the New Definition of Reading than just strategy instruction. In talking with Mike, he stressed that the new basal series was chosen because of its congruence with the New Definition and that he was trying to help teachers see what parts were "philosophically important to the New Definition of Reading" (Interview, 10/3/90, p. 2). Mike did seem to have a vision of how the policy should look in practice as he began his position of Language Arts Coordinator.

At this point in his presentation, Mike realized the shortness of his time and began to rush. Instead of explaining how this proposal might look in practice, he offered to come to grade level meetings to explain it more thoroughly. He left it up to each grade level to invite him to do so. Then he proceeded to mention specific page numbers and what could be found on each, basically giving just an awareness of what parts the document contained.

Mike ended the meeting with a pep talk for the teachers.

The dynamics of this year are that it is a year of change. That can be uncomfortable; it puts the burden on the teachers. It also puts us in charge. A big part of that is deciding how to take so much new information and narrow it down to what you can do on Thursday.

The document has a message. Researchers are learning how people read and write. We must learn from the research and use it in our decisions.

There is no hidden agenda as some people have asked. The teachers must make the decisions. Our goal is to gain the knowledge to make those decisions well (Fieldnotes, 11/13/90, p. 3).

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Mike emphasized three key points in this talk. First, teachers need to become decision-makers in their reading instruction. Second, the teachers would be learning throughout the year to be able to make wise decisions. Third, change is uncomfortable. He seemed to have an understanding of what should happen and how it might affect teachers.

As the teachers left the meeting, they were asked to turn in the copies of the proposal. Each building would get between three and five copies for its professional library, but teachers would not have a copy in their rooms. The copies of the Scope and Sequence were kept by the teachers. Not furnishing the teachers with copies of the proposal was a financial decision meant to save money. However, it is interesting that Mike had just told them to read over the objectives (contained in the proposal) frequently and to keep them in mind as they planned throughout the year. Now they were told that they would not have a personal copy of the proposal, but would share a few copies in each building. This turn of events gives a mixed message. The proposal was important enough for teachers to read it often and to let it guide their decisions, but it was not important enough to give each teacher a copy so that he/she could read it frequently.

Ms. Jones, cochair of the Elementary Reading Subcommittee, did not see the proposal as something for teachers to follow. She thought the Scope and Sequence document would be more helpful for the teachers in changing their practice. The Scope and Sequence listed procedures, attitudes, and strategies or skills more concretely. For example, the Kindergarten Scope and Sequence contained the following pieces:

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Procedures:

read aloud
big books
choral reading
cloze
dramatization, etc.

Attitudes and Self-perceptions:

develop a positive attitude about reading
choose to read a variety of age appropriate materials
for a variety of purposes
perceive self as reader, etc.

Knowledge of reading/constructing meaning:

pictorial context clues
concepts of print
retelling a story in sequence
prediction
identifying characters and setting, etc. (Document,
6/13/90).

Ms. Jones stated that the proposal was written for the Board, but the Scope and Sequence was to guide teachers.

The document, the bound document, was purely written for the Board. I don't see teachers picking that up and using it. Other than it does identify what the main components of a language arts curriculum should be.

We argued if it was even possible to put together one document that would accomplish it all because teachers don't want to look at budget sheets, they don't need that information. That doesn't help teachers teach better, but the Board needs that. . . . Teachers need this stuff (indicating the Scope and Sequence document). . . . They may refer to it once in a while, but basically once they know what the routine is and they have established that, they aren't going to need this (the proposal) (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 11).

Ms. Jones did not see the proposal as being helpful to the teachers.

Yet, the overall goals which Mike referred to as guiding the teachers' decisions were unavailable except in the proposal.

This situation brings into question whether the teachers were expected to understand the philosophy and make decisions about their own instruction, or whether they were to follow a more rigid plan such as the

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Scope and Sequence appeared to be. When the fact that administrators controlled the purchase of materials and the fact that teachers had limited learning opportunities are also considered, the story seems to say that the teachers were not really expected to make consequential decisions about their instruction. Teachers were allowed to purchase materials that administrators believed to be consonant with the New Definition; principals had the final decision about supplemental materials to be purchased. Mike's inservices turned out to focus mostly on strategies to teach students. Even though Mike, Ms. Jones, and Mr. Johnson all seemed to have a grasp of the philosophy behind the policy, the way teachers were treated during the implementation stage led to a more narrow, strategy instruction approach with less emphasis on teacher decision-making for most of the teachers.

Fortville's Inservice Day

An all day in-service for the entire district was held on November 21, 1990. The whole day focused on reading. Mike planned the day using suggestions from the district teachers on topics. It began with a motivational speech titled "There's a Dead Buffalo in the Middle of the Road" (Inservice Program, 11/21/90). This speech attempted to let teachers know that the "old" view of reading was still laying in the "road" and teachers would need to go around or over it to get on with the New Definition of Reading. The rest of the morning was mini-sessions, each one hour in length. Teachers were to attend three sessions, with a choice among three for each hour. The topics covered writing, thematic units focused on thinking skills and using literature, portfolio

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assessment ideas, and techniques for whole-class teaching. Lunch was provided. The afternoon was a whole group session by Dr. Elaine Weber, Michigan Department of Education Instructional Specialist for Reading, on preparing for a literate future (Program, 11/21/90).

Mike felt that the motivational speaker and Dr. Weber communicated "the sense of urgency needed to push forward our new curriculum." Mike felt that most people left the program "inspired to try the many techniques and strategies they learned during the sessions" (Private correspondence, 11/28/90). His views were confirmed in the evaluations of the day which were done by those attending. Ninety-five percent of the teachers responding indicated that the motivational speaker was excellent or good. Ninety-six percent of the respondents felt that he inspired them to try new ideas or confirmed something they were already doing. Eighty-one percent of the teachers responding felt that Dr. Weber's speech was excellent or good. Eighty-seven percent felt that it encouraged them to try new ideas or confirmed some they were already doing (Evaluation of K-12 In-service, 11/21/90).

Mike collected the evaluations of the day and tabulated the elementary teachers' responses in two groups: K-2 and 3-5. Fifty percent of the K-2 and eighty percent of the 3-5 teachers rated the day as "Excellent." Thirty-eight percent of the K-2 and twenty percent of the 3-5 teachers rated the day as "Good." Twelve percent of the K-2 teachers rated the day as "Fair." The total number of elementary teachers responding was fifty-six. Each session was also rated individually, and comments were collected. Only one session was rated

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"fair" or "poor" by a significant number (eighty-six percent) of people (Evaluation of K-12 In-service, 11/21/90).

The Inservice Evaluations suggest that the teachers felt it was a good day. They consistently rated the speakers both high in quality and in inspiring them personally to try new ideas. Other items that were mentioned a significant number of times included that the teachers expected to feel physically comfortable and not to feel rushed, and they wanted to have ideas or "tricks" to do the next day.

This inservice day was again operating from the "defect model" (Jackson, 1971) of teacher learning. Teachers listen to ideas, in which they are deficient, presented by "experts." The positive evaluations by most teachers indicate that the teachers saw no problem with this model of learning. However, research has shown that such learning opportunities seldom bring fundamental changes in teachers' practice (Jackson, 1971; Little, 1982; Zumwalt, 1988).

By mid-year Mike had been working diligently to carry out his plan for implementing the district's proposal. He had spoken in each building, organized inservice sessions by grade level with the textbook consultant, organized a district-wide inservice day, and met weekly with the reading consultants to discuss their concerns. At an Executive Committee meeting in January, Mike reported on his progress and his plan for future inservice sessions. He commented that he thought the in-service efforts at the beginning of the year had helped the elementary schools get off to a good start. His plan for continuing to offer learning opportunities at the elementary level was to hold one meeting per month in each building. At these meetings, he would teach a strategy

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for use in the classrooms such as "K-W-L" (Ogle, 1986) or "Anticipation-Reaction Guides" (Handout, 1/24/91). Each building consultant would then actively solicit invitations to do follow-up lessons in classrooms and to work with individual teachers to help them use these strategies in their own lessons.

This plan shows again how critical the reading consultants were to Mike's plan. He had very limited time. The plan was for him to give the overview and initial foundation of knowledge about the strategies in short sessions in each building. Then, it would be up to each building's consultant to help teachers transfer that knowledge into their own practice. The major work would be done by the consultants. However, as shown earlier, the consultants did not all support nor feel comfortable with this role change, and they were also quite limited in time. So, even though the plan was well-thought out and appeared on paper to be providing a lot of help to teachers, in reality, Mike's awareness sessions provided the majority of the learning opportunities that teachers had.

One issue of concern at this meeting of the Executive Committee was the lack of time for helping change occur at the high school. Mike, who was considered half time as Language Arts Coordinator, was focusing on the elementary buildings and the middle school in addition to his liaison and administrative duties. He had very little time left for working in the high school. The high school reading consultant was not given the time to consult, but was scheduled with a full load of classes. Mike expressed his view that the problems at the high school were exacerbated by the way the high school was organized. The schedule did not allow

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time for the reading consultant to meet with him or the other consultants. He realized the difficulties in the high school and so chose to put his energy into the elementaries and the middle school.

You've hit the problem on the head. We have a reading consultant in each elementary building and at the middle school we have a consultant and a department head. But at the high school, we have no one who is free to do that job. I feel remiss in not getting there more, but I have been trying to put my energy where it will help the most. The way the high school is organized, even if I go over to talk to the reading teachers or another teacher, they have classes or it is their planning time. The way it is organized doesn't help. I get together with the elementary consultants each week, but the high school teacher can't even meet with us (Fieldnotes, 1/17/91, p. 4).

Mike's remarks again raise the question of Fortville's commitment to the change efforts. Even though the implementation of the proposal clearly depended on the changing of the reading teacher to a reading consultant, the high school reading teacher was not allowed any time to perform these new duties. She continued to teach remedial reading classes every hour except her planning hour. This concerned the Executive Committee. The Curriculum Director suggested that the problem was tied to money. The following vignette shows that money to replace the remedial reading teacher at the high school was at least part of the reason that she was not changing her role to one of consultant.

Curriculum Director: The easiest solution would be for me to tell the high school administrator that he has to free her (the reading teacher) up to be the consultant. But that is not quite so simple. Who will teach those kids? That means we must hire new personnel . . . I need help in finding out the best way to do this. If hiring another one-half time person is the answer, then I need to know where in the priority bank that fits. I think we need to look for options. I can put it in the bank, but how fast do we want it to happen? We may need a more creative solution.

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Mike: I am biased, but I think that secondary reading and writing is at the top of the priority list. Everything you read today mentions it. I think when the teachers understand it, they will embrace it. They think now it means cutting time off their subjects to teach reading. It doesn't. It is a way to help their students learn the subjects better through reading and writing strategies. They need to see how to integrate it.

Curriculum Director: If we don't take the initiative now, I predict it will change, but not till the content area assessments that we keep hearing about come out. . . Do we want to wait?

Ms. Jones: As a writer of the proposal, I think we felt that one thing had to be different to make this happen and that was the role of the consultant. It comes down to a matter of respect for the proposal. I am also worried. When you have something new, there is a certain amount of fire at the beginning and excitement. It grows if it is nurtured. But soon it diminishes and the fire goes out. I think that will happen at the high school if we don't do something now. It will be hard to rekindle it in the fall.

Cindy (the high school reading teacher): I have the same concerns. . . . Last year we worked hard on it, and we were all excited. We were united behind the need for continuity K-12. Only to find out this year that high school has not been included.

Mr. Kent (an elementary principal): Maybe we can accomplish both tasks by changing that scenario. It will be frightening to the teachers, but we can say to them 'Here's the skill to teach to help the kids comprehend the material.' I think the kids would rather not see remedial reading on their credentials. What about dropping remedial reading in the high school?

Curriculum Director: Who will meet those kids needs?

Mr. Kent: We will create that person. The kids will be in the regular rooms and the reading consultant will help the teachers improve their teaching.

Curriculum Director: This is still an issue. If we take those kids out and put them in other rooms, we then have classes of thirty-five. . . . Maybe we could use the elementary consultants more in the elementary schools and use the district consultant more in the high school. . . . We needed you (Mike) at the elementary level this fall.

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We needed you to get the program off the ground there. Maybe now, though, in midstream, it is time to change course and to pick up efforts at the high school (Fieldnotes, 1/17/91, pp. 4-8).

This vignette shows that the change in role for the reading teachers outlined in the proposal was not happening at the high school. It also shows that the problem seems to have been one of money and a structure that did not allow for this change. The Executive Committee was not able to decide what to do during this meeting.

The vignette again shows the importance of this role change at the elementary levels. Ms. Jones stated that it was a key idea in the proposal. The Curriculum Director suggests putting more responsibility for consulting on the elementary consultants to free up the Language Arts Coordinator for work in the high school. There seems no question that this role change was a key to the district's implementation plan.

As the group considered the role of the high school consultant, the discussion evolved to the problems in all of the schools with changing the role of the reading teachers to one of reading consultants. Mr. Johnson raised the question of how much time the elementary consultants were using to perform that role. The discussion pointed out that the role change was not happening as quickly as had been hoped.

Mr. Johnson: We said in the proposal that we were heading toward a fifty percent time for consulting for these people. Is it?

Mike: No, the high school schedule doesn't allow it. Sue is busy with Reading Recovery. Some of our people are only one-half time. Jan is in that huge building. Teachers are asking them to service remedial students. They say 'If you really want to help me, take these three students and help them learn to read.' We are teachers, too, and we can't force the change.

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It needs to come from the administrators. They need to say 'This is what the job is now.' People still want that remedial help. It is hard for teachers to say to other teachers 'This will improve your teaching.'

Group Member: But it happened in the middle school.

Mike: That was because the administrator gave them no choice. Next year the administrators need to say 'We have only this much time for remedial services, so choose who goes carefully.'

Curriculum Director: What if I sent an edict from the central office that remedial teachers would reduce their caseloads to fifty percent by January 21st?

Mr. Johnson: It would be better done at the building levels.

Ms. Smith: There is some history here that might help. When Sue and Cory were hired, they were interviewed with the new role in mind. That made the change happen faster at some buildings. It doesn't happen overnight. You need support from the building principal. . . . But I don't think the idea of edicts about percents will work. The principals need to tell the teachers that the consultant will come to work with you. Our problem is that she is one-half time, so on the days she is there, it is good. But on the other days, nothing is happening (Fieldnotes, 1/17/91 pp. 9-11).

This discussion again shows the importance placed on the role change of the consultants. It also points out that the Executive Committee was aware that the change was not happening quickly, nor uniformly.

It was interesting that the administrators discussing this change did not question the reading teachers' commitment to the change. It was assumed that the problems were time and requests for remedial services from classroom teachers. However, my data pointed out that the reading teachers were not fully convinced that this change was a positive one. This is another example of the knowledge and beliefs of the administrators controlling and pushing the change efforts. The teachers were not committed to the change, but the administrators were pushing it

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It was also interesting that Mike was calling for the administrators to force this change. Considering the comments of the reading teachers about the principals making decisions and Mike's remarks in this meeting, it appears that it was accepted that administrators should make decisions and force teachers to comply. This attitude is troublesome when one considers that the policy supported teachers becoming more active instructional decision-makers. How would teachers know what decisions they could make? This question was at the root of the discussion from the reading teachers' meeting concerning materials (cited earlier in this chapter).

Cindy, the high school reading teacher, pointed out that one problem with the implementation efforts appeared to be that the committee had not asked for enough money to fully implement the proposal.

I think when we were working on the proposal, we went beyond the money budgeted in what we called for. We went to the Board and they asked if what we wanted was enough to do the job. Now this year we are trying to scrimp again. We are not trying for it all (Fieldnotes, 1/17/91, p. 11).

Cindy seemed to hit the problem squarely on the head. The Board approved a budget for implementation, but the costs for full implementation were beyond the approved amount. Thus, the group was left to figure out ways to cut corners in their daily efforts. Some members called for the group to go back to the Board and ask for more money. However, Mr. Johnson stated that they should first work with the central office and see what creative solutions they could devise. Mr. Johnson

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mentioned that "our credibility with the Board is at stake" (Fieldnotes, 1/17/91, p. 12). At this point, the matter of the change in the reading teachers' roles was tabled with no real solution.

An Example of Mike's
Inservice Sessions: "K-W-L"

One building inservice session was held on January 24, 1991. I arrived ten minutes early, and Mike had the room set up and was ready to go. The principal, Ms. Jones, was unable to be there. Ten minutes after he was to begin, only six teachers were present. Mike decided to begin anyway. Teachers continued to arrive throughout the lesson; eventually there were twelve attending out of the fifteen on the staff. Mike later commented that he felt the fact that the principal did not attend made a difference in the attendance and the enthusiasm of the teachers (Informal conversation, 1/24/91).

As Mike began, he announced that due to the late start he would try to be done in about ten minutes. Mike had given each teacher a folder with a "notes organizer" in it. This form followed his overheads and his presentation and made note-taking quite simple. He stressed that they must be cautious and not confuse the strategy with the principle behind it. He seemed to be saying that teachers must keep in mind what they are trying to accomplish with students and use strategies to do that, rather than to make the strategies the end in themselves (Fieldnotes, 1/24/91, p. 2).

Mike seemed to have a vision for reading instruction that went beyond strategy instruction. However, the focus of his presentation was on how to do the strategy. This focus may have been due to the short

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time available to him, but the teachers were likely to come away from the presentation thinking that using this new strategy was the only instructional change expected of them.

As Mike moved through his presentation, he often had points that he asked teachers to record on their notes organizer. Teachers recorded when told to do so and listened politely. The only question asked was "Is this something to use with our new textbook?" Mike replied

Yes. You can do it on a piece that they will read and that you think you can get some discussion about. Do not do it on something that they don't know anything about. They must have some prior knowledge. It is really powerful with the science and social studies texts (Fieldnotes, 1/24/91, p. 3).

Some of the teachers kept their coats on during the lesson, and seemed eager to leave. Mike seemed to sense that enthusiasm was lacking. He showed a humorous overhead after his presentation.

Chinese proverb:

Tell me, I forget.

Show me, I remember.

Involve me, I understand.

American proverb:

Ask me to do something at a staff meeting and things could get ugly.

As everyone laughed, Mike asked if they would like to do the activity he had planned for them. He mentioned that another building had really enjoyed it. The reply was "You should have videotaped it for us" followed by laughter from the group (Fieldnotes, 1/24/91, p. 3).

With that comment, Mike suggested that the teachers invite Cory, the building reading consultant, into their rooms to demonstrate this strategy for them. He also offered Cory's time as a substitute teacher if anyone wanted released time to observe another classroom. He

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volunteered to come to grades four and five himself. Mike ended the session by pointing out the folders he had prepared for each teacher which contained information about the strategy for later use. Teachers left quickly.

Mike conducted four of these sessions in each elementary. The sessions ran from January through April and were done before or after school. Each session was approximately one-half hour in length and addressed a different strategy. If a session did not begin on time, the time for Mike's presentation had to be shortened. This left little actual time for instruction about the strategy.

Mike was definitely well-prepared and was an entertaining, easy to listen to speaker. However, the teachers attending this session did not show much enthusiasm. They listened, but did not participate nor ask many questions. The one question, "Is this something to use with material in our textbooks?" indicates that teachers were lacking in conditional knowledge. Conditional knowledge refers to understanding when and why to use a particular strategy. Conditional knowledge is critical for teachers to be decision-makers about their own instruction. Just knowing how to do a strategy is not enough. They must know why to use it and when it is appropriate.

Mike's ten minute session was barely able to cover what the strategy was and how to do it. He was not able to help teachers understand why they might use it and when it would be most helpful to the students.

This lack of understanding when and why to use the strategies is a key problem with the strategy instruction interpretation of the policy. If teachers learn how to do new strategies, and then use these strategies

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without thought for why they are appropriate or for when to use them, the teachers are still in the role of technicians, following a prescribed way to teach that someone else devised for them to use. The New Definition of Reading calls for teachers to make decisions about their own instruction to help students construct meaning from the text. Teachers must have a thorough understanding of the reading process and how to help students learn to control that process to make these decisions. Although teaching strategies is a piece of that, teachers must have conditional knowledge of those strategies to make appropriate decisions.

Mike's plan addressed this concern by providing follow-up help from the reading consultants, but, as stated earlier, little help was actually being given. Thus, these short overview sessions on specific strategies were the bulk of the learning opportunities that teachers were given.

In May of the school year, Mike distributed a survey to teachers to evaluate the success of his inservice work throughout the year. Mike's performance throughout the year was rated Excellent or Good by one hundred percent of the teachers. Most of the inservice opportunities were rated highly by more than seventy percent of the teachers. However, when asked if they were teaching expository text, the focus of five out of six of Mike's sessions (Document, 12/11/90), only seventy percent of the teachers indicated that they were. In addition, only thirty-four percent of the teachers indicated that they were using the building reading consultants (Survey, 5/91). That would lead one to believe that thirty percent of the teachers were not using the strategies in which Mike had been providing training. It seems that having thirty percent, almost a third, of the teachers reply they were not using the information

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Mike had provided would be a cause for concern. In addition, because the data was self-reported, there may have been many more teachers who were not teaching expository text, but who knew they should report that they were.

Another concern was that only thirty-four percent of the teachers reported using the consultants. This is further evidence that the role change for reading teachers had not occurred as suggested in the proposal. The classroom teachers were not using these consultants as resource people to change their reading instruction. This data would also be a cause for concern. The district plan for changing reading instruction relied heavily on having building reading consultants to provide daily, on-site help to teachers. Yet, two-thirds of the teachers were not using this help. Thus, either many teachers were not learning about and implementing the New Definition of Reading, or the teachers had learned about it in some other way. Even the teachers on the committee had few learning opportunities, so it is doubtful that most of the district's teachers had numerous other learning opportunities. It is more likely that these teachers had little knowledge of the New Definition of Reading. The district recognized this lack of knowledge and planned for it with the role change of the reading teachers. Since only a small number of teachers were actually using these building consultants, one must question their abilities to successfully make instructional changes in line with the proposal.

These two areas, teaching expository text and using the building consultants, cause one to question the first section of responses on this survey. Under "Implementation of Goals" the survey asked teachers

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questions about providing daily time for reading independently, reading aloud to students daily, using materials other than just the basal, having students use the writing process in language arts and content areas, and teaching and expecting students to use the reading strategies for constructing meaning. More than seventy-five percent of the teachers replied that they were doing all of these things. More than eighty percent replied that their students were reading and writing more and better. These figures suggest that a majority of the teachers were feeling positive about their reading programs at the end of the year. However, the survey questions focused mostly on processes and materials. Whether or not teachers had internalized a view of reading instruction built around helping students construct meanings from text is unclear from this survey. Teachers did feel that their students were reading and writing "better." However, what they defined as better is not clear either. Possibly the teachers felt good about their reading instruction because they were doing what they had always done. Possibly they felt good about their reading instruction because they had new materials to use. Whatever the reason, their responses on these two areas do not indicate that they were using the resource people provided by the proposal nor the strategies for expository text on which Mike had focused, the two learning opportunities available to them.

The inservice opportunities were rated highly by over seventy percent of the teachers. Seventy percent had also reported they were teaching expository text on the first section of the survey. Thus, seventy percent of the teachers may have transferred the knowledge presented by Mike into their instructional approaches. Two points must

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be mentioned, though. First, those responses were self-reported and, as such, must be read with caution. Teachers may have been replying in ways they knew were "correct." The district would expect them to be doing these things. Second, Mike's presentations were all directed toward strategies. Teachers were shown some specific new strategies to use in their lessons. Teachers may have felt these were good presentations, easy to understand, and easy to use. They may have added these new strategies onto their existing ways of teaching reading. In addition, as mentioned earlier, Mike was an excellent, well-prepared speaker, and the teachers may have been rating these opportunities highly on that basis without making the instructional changes suggested by the presentations.

A large percentage (thirty percent) of the teachers reported that they were not teaching expository text, which Mike had focused on in most of his presentations. This thirty percent may have been the same thirty percent who rated the inservice opportunities lower. They may have been teachers who lacked conditional knowledge and were unable to fit these expository text strategies into their instructional programs. They may have been teachers who did not understand and/or believe in the New Definition of Reading. Whatever caused their replies, the survey does show that a substantial percentage of the district's teachers did not feel they had made the changes that Mike had been trying to support.

The third section of the survey concerned teachers' needs for next year. Eighty-six percent of the teachers responded that they wanted continued inservice on reading strategies. The fact that this large majority of the teachers wanted more opportunities to learn suggests two conclusions. First, it suggests a willingness to continue learning.

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These teachers evidently wanted to know more about how to improve their reading instruction. This will or motivation to learn is an important factor in making change (McLaughlin, 1987). Second, the fact that so many teachers wanted more learning opportunities could suggest that they did not yet feel comfortable with the changes they were making and felt they needed more help in making them. A few mentioned they would like opportunities to go to workshops or conferences away from the district. A few mentioned liking the availability of help on-site.

General comments from the teachers covered a range of topics. A few are cited below:

I have been very pleased with the new series and the freedom we have to supplement with literature.

I think this is a terrific approach. I haven't been this enthused about teaching reading in a long time. I feel the children, especially the low readers, are doing better and the challenge to top kids are good, workable ideas.

We are on the right track. It's just that it takes time and support to make good changes.

The adoption of a basal series for the district has been one of the most appropriate moves towards continuity in instruction for all students. We should continue to monitor our progress.

I loved teaching reading this year! What exciting materials and approaches to work with. Thank you!

The best parts about the Language Arts Program are: (1) the proposal, including objectives, etc. - I use them regularly. (2) money for trade books, etc. - that help us do more - we added many big books, too. (3) Mike - in-services, professionalism, attitude, enthusiasm, support (where we usually feel that there is none) to help if a question/problem arises. Please do not cut Mike's position ever - we need a language arts coordinator in this district. (Actually we need a curriculum coordinator in general, too.)

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Superb series, excellent literature - the Heath activity suggestions are creative and offer a wide variety of supportive activities! Mike's continued teacher support and ideas have enhanced the success of this series!

This has been a "process learning" experience. It seems we continue to learn as we teach. I am especially grateful for Mike's expertise and the opportunity to learn about strategies without leaving my classroom for a day to go to a conference. I wish we had "master teachers" with time to teach us or remind us of these strategies in all curricular areas. It is becoming overwhelming for the typical elementary teacher with the many subjects we teach to be nurturers of children and masters of control at the same time (Evaluation, 5/91).

The majority of the teachers' comments and responses indicate that they felt they had made changes in their classrooms which reflected the thrust of the district's proposal which was based on the New Definition of Reading. They seemed to attribute their progress to the new series, the money to buy additional materials, and the role of Mike, the Language Arts Coordinator.

One comment again brought up the question of the role change for the reading teachers.

We continue to have children that need "extra" reading help, i.e. remedial phonics, language expression, identifying words. I am concerned that with the emphasis on whole-class and the classroom teacher, we are losing the services of a reading specialist. We can identify problems, but need tutorial assistance in attacking the problems (Evaluation, 5/91).

This comment indicates that the removal of remedial services to provide consulting services was still not accepted by everyone. The survey replies, indicating that few people were taking advantage of the consultants, also supports this conclusion that the role change was not yet completely accepted. This role change was a key piece of the proposal and would need to be addressed at some point. At the end of the

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1990-91 school year, it appeared that the reasons for resistance to this change had not yet been confronted.

In the fall of 1991, I spoke with both Mr. Johnson and Cindy, the high school consultant, about this role change in the new school year. Mr. Johnson stated that his building's reading consultant did not seem able to make this change and that he was considering placing her in a classroom at the end of the year (Informal Conversation, 9/27/91). His comments suggest that for at least one building there would continue to be little consulting for the second year of implementation. My conversation with Cindy was similar. She had not been provided with any released time to consult with teachers. She continued to serve as a remedial reading teacher (Informal Conversation, 9/25/91). These conversations indicate that the district continued to lack a commitment to providing the high school with consulting services on-site, and that the elementary consultants were not all making the role change during the second year of implementation of the proposal.

The survey evaluation of the teachers' perceptions of first year efforts to implement the proposal suggest that teachers were feeling positive about their reading instruction and that they wanted to continue learning. However, many teachers had not implemented many of the ideas presented to them, specifically teaching students to read expository text. Most teachers were not making use of the building reading consultants, and some felt this role change hindered them by removing tutorial assistance. The survey supported the new basal and the work of the Language Arts Coordinator.

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Summary of Learning Opportunities
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Both Rockville and Fortville provided limited opportunities for their teachers to learn about the new ideas in reading instruction. These opportunities consisted of learning how to use new strategies and new materials in both districts. Rockville seemed to have no real plan for their inservice sessions and vacillated between attention to a structured phonics program and investigation of new basal materials. The expectation in Rockville appears to have been that teachers needed prescriptive programs and materials to help make these changes rather than opportunities to learn more about reading instruction to inform teacher decisions. Fortville had a more organized plan for teacher learning with the Language Arts Coordinator and the building reading consultants. However, in reality, this plan was not working out so smoothly. The Language Arts Coordinator was severely limited in his time; thus, he focused on short awareness sessions on strategies and materials. The consultants were to follow-up with more support for staff, but they were confused about this role and did not fully support the change. The teacher survey also indicates that a minority of teachers were using the help of the consultants by the end of the year.

In both Rockville and in Fortville, opportunities for the teachers to learn together and to develop a thorough understanding of the constructivist view of learning to read were limited. Teachers were called together for short sessions where they were told about new strategies and new materials, but they were mostly on their own to figure out what these ideas meant for their own instructional practice.

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Who's Running the Show?

In both districts, the work to revise the reading curriculum at the district level was tightly controlled by the administrators chairing the committees. The teachers in both districts seemed to accept that the administrators would make the decisions, and few attempts to take that power for themselves were evident. The administrators were "running the show."

Rockville

Pressures on administrators changed the committee makeup. In Rockville, as in districts all across the state, the administrators were attempting to respond to other state policies at the same time, policies which carried incentives. For instance, the state of Michigan had enacted "Public Act 25" (Michigan's Bill for Quality Schools) and the "Core Curriculum." Each of these policies required the school districts to prepare written documents and public reports by specific deadlines to retain their full level of funding. The pressures to respond to these policies were much greater than were the pressures to respond to the reading policy. This outside pressure caused the administrators in Rockville to give more weight to the work of developing responses to the other policies.

So when the 1990-91 school year began, Rockville reorganized the Reading Curriculum Committee for the third time. This move was made in response to new state policies for quality education in Michigan (Public Act 25 and Core Curriculum). The district decided to reactivate all curriculum committees and to form a Curriculum Coordinating Council to

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coordinate the work of these committees as part of their plan to meet the requirements of these new state policies. Having so many committees meeting at the same time meant that membership on the committees would have to be monitored in some way. The fear was that the same few teachers would be serving on all committees and would become overburdened (Interview, 10/11/90, p. 1). Consequently, the district issued a questionnaire on which teachers were to sign up for their first, second, and third choice of a committee on which they would volunteer to work. The administrators then used this list to assign teachers to committees. Mr. Curt requested that the reading committee and the Language Arts Committee combine at this time, and it became an elementary committee (Interview, 10/11/90, p. 2).

Some teachers who wanted to work on the Language Arts Committee were not selected because of the large number of teachers who chose it as their first choice. Mr. Curt explained that this committee was historically prestigious and meaningful.

The reading committee has always been the most prestigious committee. It was a more meaningful group historically. It was meaningful, and people wanted to serve on it (Interview, 10/11/90, p. 1).

A few teachers listed the Language Arts Committee as their only choice to be sure they were assigned to it; in essence, if they were not chosen, they were refusing to work on any committee. This tactic appeared to work as these teachers were assigned to the committee, while some others who gave three choices were assigned to their second or third choice. A first grade teacher who wanted to work on the committee, but was not selected, was told by Ms. Smith, the cochair, that she was still welcome to come to the meetings, but she could not vote on decisions (Informal

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Conversation, 11/16/90). Thus, as the committee was reformed, administrators assumed control of membership; it was no longer a strictly voluntary group, but one with limited, controlled membership.

Mr. Curt also stated this view concerning who could have a voice in decisions about reading. He justified this by stating that they had selected knowledgeable, respected members from each grade level and each building.

Yes, (the committee is being reformed), but we will still use some of the key people. We will try to balance it from buildings and grade levels. Everybody will be welcome to come to the meetings and to speak up, but the committee will make the final decisions. For example, if we want to institute thematic instruction, the committee will have to make that decision
(Interview, 10/11/90, p. 2).

The new committee contained only five members from the former reading committee. Some members considered getting off the committee at this point because of the frustrations they were feeling. Farah summed up her feelings.

I don't really want it (the committee) to start. I am fed up with that committee. It is wasting our time. I don't even want to be on it again. If all we are going to do is write something, like what we did two years ago, and say that is our reading program, why waste our time? That was so useless. I don't want to work on it anymore
(Informal Conversation, 9/19/90).

The new committee members were selected to balance representation by grade level and by building. Having only five of the former members suggests little thought was given that those having already served might possibly be more familiar with the reading policy than other teachers in the district.

The concern with meeting the state's requirements for Public Act 25 and the Core Curriculum suggests that other state reforms were seen as

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more immediate than the reading policy. Each of these newer policies requires the local districts to produce some document for the public record. A policy which requires some visible action may seem more important to local districts than a policy which uses ideas as the policy instrument; it becomes a short-term problem (produce a public document) rather than calling for a long-range plan for changing beliefs and behaviors (Murphy, 1974).

Reforming the Reading Committee could imply that the district viewed the on-going work of the committee as unimportant; it could easily be disbanded and could start over. It could also be a recognition that the committee had made little progress and little effort had been made to educate the members, so having new members begin again would cause few problems. In either case, the way in which the committee was disbanded and reformed is more evidence that the administration did not seem to recognize that teachers needed to know or to learn new ideas before they could understand and implement the reading policy. However, even though district efforts were progressing at a snail's pace, individual teachers continued to seek new ways to teach reading, new ways that were not totally supported by either Ms. Smith or Mr. Curt, the leaders of the district efforts.

Teachers were trying new things in their classrooms without waiting on the committee's decisions. One member, who taught in Ms. Smith's, building tried to change to a whole language type approach, eliminating the basal as the mainstay of her curriculum and using trade books as springboards for reading and writing activities. However, Ms. Smith told

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her that the old, skills-based basal materials would still have to be used in her program.

I still have to use the workbooks and the level tests for the basals. . . . When I talked to Ms. Smith she said I had to use them--not every page--but all the tests and to use the workbooks, too. She said it was the curriculum, and I was responsible to use it (Informal Conversation, 10/7/90).

Mr. Curt also continued to support requiring teachers to use the old basal as the foundation of their reading program.

Well, there is no policy really. I guess it is expected procedure that people will use the Houghton-Mifflin materials. I know that is playing with words, but it has never been a formal policy exactly. When the adoption was made several years ago, and we decided to go with Houghton-Mifflin, we expected that people would use those things. If we are going to adopt the series, it means we teach them then. The reading curriculum has pretty much just been the basal. So, it's not exactly a policy, but it is the expected procedure. Of course, people can use other things, too. Well, we know workbooks are on the way out, but that is one way to be sure you teach the skills (Informal Conversation, 11/16/90).

The continued expectation that teachers should use the skills-oriented basal materials, especially the workbooks and the level tests, indicate that neither Ms. Smith nor Mr. Curt had embraced the ideas on which the New Definition of Reading was based. They were telling teachers that they must teach in ways that did not fit with the intent of the policy; the administrators were trying to retain control of the reading curriculum. This lack of understanding of the policy that the leaders showed was especially important because the committee had just been reformed and only a few original members, who had done some reading and discussing of the New Definition, would continue to serve. The committee now had fewer members having experience with the policy,

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which suggests the group had even less understanding of the policy than before, yet they were expected to revise the district reading curriculum. In addition, the previous work of the group illustrates that even if there continued to be members who were knowledgeable, the power structure thwarted their being able to use that knowledge. The administrators retained control of the group's work.

When the second district, Fortville, had confronted a similar situation, committee members lacking in knowledge about the policy, the administrators relied on their own understanding to create a proposal. However, in Rockville neither Ms. Smith nor Mr. Curt had a strong understanding of the policy nor a vision of what changes it would require (as evidenced in their words and actions previously cited). Thus, the committee in Rockville was handicapped by a general lack of knowledge about the policy and a power structure which left control in the hands of administrators who had very limited knowledge.

Administrators Controlled the Meetings

The leaders in Rockville continued to tightly control the committee meetings through their leadership styles, their prepared agendas, and their lack of action on committee decisions. The reformed committee met for the first time December 4, 1990. The meeting room was changed at the last minute, but no notice was posted. I waited for ten minutes in the stated room, then went looking for the group. I found them and was told that the location was changed to provide desks which were more adult-size. Mr. Curt did not seem to see this move as an issue of importance. However, upon arriving almost every member commented that

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they could not find the meeting place (Fieldnotes, 12/04/90, p. 1). Out of the fifteen members selected for the committee, only seven attended the meeting. Mr. Curt remarked "There was a lot of interest in serving on this committee, but you couldn't tell that with the small turnout tonight" (Fieldnotes, 12/04/90, p. 2).

Members were asked to pick up a stack of materials to read. These included:

1. the curriculum development plan of the district
2. the document prepared in 1989
3. Michigan's K-12 Program Standards of Quality
4. Michigan's Essential Objectives for Reading
5. Speaking and Listening Goals & Objectives for Grades 7-12 (even though this group was only considering the elementary curriculum)
6. Michigan's Essential Goals and Objectives for Writing
7. Position Statement on Core Curriculum from the Michigan Department of Education
8. Broad Student Outcomes from the Michigan Department of Education.

The stack of materials given to each attending member was several inches thick, somewhat prohibitive at first glance. . .

Mr. Curt and Ms. Smith began the meeting by explaining the charge.

Mr. Curt: This is the Language Arts Committee now. It will look at reading, writing, spelling, English. We will look at them all this year to try to tie everything into a whole package. Then we can accomplish what we really want to in all areas. We will need to decide how to organize this study as we go.

As you know, last year we didn't really do much with the committee. The year before we did get a kind of general guide done. That may give us a format to use or to begin with this time. But there have been many changes since we did that. The MEAP has changed; the Michigan

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Accreditation requirements are here now; Public Act 25 is here. There is a lot happening and we need to consider the whole picture.

Ms. Smith: We wanted to give you a lot of information to get your hands on right away. The Standards of Quality should be what you read first. . . I know you will need time to wade through all of this. It is a lot to read. But it will give you a feel for where we are headed and the changes that we will need to make. It will let you know the objectives that will be required in each building by the Core Curriculum.

You also have the "Curriculum-Student Services Review and Development Plan" for this school system. This plan has five phases: Assessment, Development, Implement and Monitor, Refinement, and Review. I know we have a curriculum that we hastily put together in 1989, but I think we are really at the beginning stages now. We need to review where we are first. Then we can start planning the curriculum (Fieldnotes, 12/04/90, pp. 2-3).

The cochairs did most of the talking and stressed the need for members to read the materials and to think about what the state wanted us to do. The MEAP scores were mentioned as having gone down, especially on reading for information. Mr. Curt stated

I read the passage from the MEAP for seventh grade and I can see why they did poorly. We may decide that it's not all stuff that we want to work on, but we need to make that decision from knowledge, not just neglect (Fieldnotes, 12/04/90, p. 4).

The meeting lasted only twenty minutes. Teachers left with the instructions to read the stack of materials, solicit grade level concerns, and think about how they would like to organize and begin the new curriculum. Given that this was a new committee, such broad, non-specific directions may have left members wondering just what they should do before the next meeting.

This meeting fell short of reorganizing the group and setting a direction for the work. Less than half of the group attended. There was no effort to build rapport among group members, and no opportunity to

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hear member's views, concerns, visions, or reasons for serving on the committee. The pattern of communication was that the leaders decided what should be addressed, and they addressed it, as in previous meetings. Members mostly listened. Members were told to read over hundreds of pages in materials with little direction about what they should be considering as they read. Evidently this individual reading of state documents was to educate the teachers about the direction in which the state wanted the district to move. There was no other mention of opportunities for the members to learn about the policy. Mr. Curt's statement that the group might decide that the results from the MEAP might not all be "stuff that we want to work on" suggests that he still had little commitment to the policy's ideas. The group was dismissed with a lot of materials to read, but not much direction about where the committee was heading or what they would be doing. Views of the members were devalued and silenced by the leadership style, and no effort to meld the group into a working team was made. This meeting suggested that the work would continue in the same vein as had occurred in previous years.

The next meeting of the committee proved this prediction accurate. The next meeting of the committee was on January 10, 1991. After the poor attendance at the first meeting, the memo announcing this meeting stated that "if you will not be able to participate on this committee, please let us know so replacements to represent the grade level can be found" (Memo, 12/05/90). This memo, sent on December 5, 1990, was the only reminder for teachers, even though several weeks and Christmas vacation occurred between the memo's arrival and the meeting time. Attendance was good, though, with fourteen of the fifteen official

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members attending. Some teachers heard that materials were passed out at the first meeting and called one of the leaders before this meeting to ask for the handouts. Those teachers received them; those who did not hear and/or call never got the handouts. As with the first meeting, the location of the meeting was moved with no notice, so teachers had to search the building for the meeting.

Ms. Smith was coming late, so Mr. Curt started without her. He handed out prepared agendas and an article on "Easing into Whole Language" that he recommended everyone read. He also asked if anyone was interested in going to an all day workshop offered by Houghton-Mifflin that "looks good and it's free" (Fieldnotes, 1/4/91, p. 1) He said he had reserved five spots for our committee. There were no volunteers.

Mr. Curt did not mention the reading assignment from the first meeting. If members had read the stack of materials, they were given no opportunity to discuss them or to ask questions. Neither did Mr. Curt take time to bring the group together by allowing time for members to speak to each other. He began the meeting with his agenda and proceeded to follow it throughout the meeting.

As 4:00 approached, teachers started to leave, so Mr. Curt recapped the day's topics and what needed to be done for the next meeting.

Could we recap today now? Someone brought up that we need to define whole language. Ms. Smith and I will work on that and talk to teachers in the buildings and then we'll look at it at the next meeting. I'll work on the whole language workshop. We'll talk about the reading curriculum and our needs at the next grade level meetings. I got a bunch of materials from McGraw-Hill, and I will make a display and let you know when you can come see it. I will set up a 5/6th grade meeting and a K/1st grade meeting. On January 15th Houghton-Mifflin has its

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meeting. Who would like to go? (No one volunteered and so people who were not there were "volunteered") (Fieldnotes, 1/10/91, p. 10).

The only assignment for the members was to talk about reading at their next grade level meetings. Mr. Curt stated that he and Ms. Smith would talk to teachers in the buildings and define whole language for the next meeting. In addition, he took responsibility for setting up a workshop on whole language, for setting up a display of materials, and for setting up some cross-grade level meetings. The only one of these that he completed was a meeting for fifth and sixth grade teachers. Mr. Curt did not follow through on the decisions that the committee reached during this meeting which required follow up and for which he took responsibility. This began a pattern of behavior which continued throughout the year and which had disturbing results. Mr. Curt and Ms. Smith continued to state that they would take responsibility for specific tasks, but did not fulfill those responsibilities. In effect, decisions never made it through the multiple decision points of the organization (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). This lack of follow through on decisions left teachers feeling powerless and frustrated. This eroded their commitment to the work as the year progressed.

When the meeting adjourned at 4:15, no decisions had been reached except that teachers wanted more opportunities to learn about whole language. The members left with no real assignments for the next meeting. The materials from the first meeting which were to be read and discussed at this meeting were never mentioned.

Rockville's next meeting of the committee was even more administrator controlled, but the leadership had inexplicably changed.

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The committee met again on February 7, 1991. All but one member attended. Again, as in December and January, the meeting room was changed and teachers had to search the building for the meeting. Teachers sat in pupil chairs with desks attached. Discussion was difficult because members could not see each other. There was much commotion in the hallway during the meeting as other staff and students were preparing for a school-wide festival the following day. The memo sent to teachers after the January meeting stated that whole language would be defined and Mr. Curt would check on bringing whole language workshops to the district (Memo, 1/15/91). However, the agenda for this meeting contained three items:

Review Current Program (philosophy, document)

Brainstorming/Expectations

Organizations (Agenda, 2/07/91).

Neither the whole language definition nor the workshop were included on the agenda. The members were not aware that the philosophy and document (from 1988 and 1989) would be reviewed and had not brought copies of them.

For the first time in the history of the committee, Ms. Smith was in charge of the meeting. There was no explanation for the change in leadership. Ms. Smith called the meeting to order at exactly 3:15 by calling everyone's attention to Agenda Item One. There was no greeting or welcome and no attempt to hear from members nor to build a team feeling. Ms. Smith stated that she wanted to begin by going over the philosophy. However, only two people had a copy of it with them. No one had been notified that they should bring the philosophy, and Ms. Smith

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had not made copies. So, she read the entire statement (two and one half pages) straight through once. This took about ten minutes. When she finished, she said, "We need to look at that philosophy and decide if it's what we want. Now, let's brainstorm. We need a recorder" (Fieldnotes, 2/07/91, p. 2). Teachers remained largely silent. The fact that they did not have written copies of the document to look at and that they had not been notified to think about it ahead of time may have contributed to the silence. Finally, teachers began to make short statements such as the following.

The writing connection, we need more of that or we need it written in a different way. . . . We should have quiet times everyday for all kids. . . . We need more about emergent literacy in the philosophy (Fieldnotes, 2/07/91, p. 2).

Ms. Smith then ended the discussion with "So are we saying that there are a few things to add or change in the philosophy as it is written?"

A teacher replied, "I think it's all there already."

Then Ms. Smith said, "Let's talk about the document. Are we satisfied with it?" Discussion about the philosophy, such as it was, was ended with no real decision made. It was unclear if the philosophy had been accepted as written or if additions were needed. Ms. Smith appeared unaware that teachers were having difficulty critiquing the philosophy without having a copy to peruse.

The teachers did not have the document with them either, so they were being asked to critique it from memory also. A few people stated that it was not a satisfactory document. The following vignette illustrates how the meeting progressed.

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Farah: We are preparing a document? Is that down the road?

Ms. Smith: Yes, but people are not satisfied with what we have now so we need to decide how to change it. We also need to look at the standards that the state expects for quality education in Michigan. We should look at the guidelines for reading and communications. Our curriculum should also reflect the recent literature and research. We want to visit other schools and take a look at what they are doing. There are people in the district who are trying new things. We should talk to them. We should learn from what has been tried already. We need to look at materials. Do we want a document that spells out specific skills for each grade level? Do we want a new basal?

Farah: We want to form committees then to look at these things?

Ms. Smith: That's what I want to find out. At the last few meetings I have heard people say that we need to do visits and we need to look at basals. What is it that we want our kids to know? Then how will they get there?

We have had lots of discussions at our meetings, but when we leave the meeting we don't have anything to do and we don't seem to know how to get started. Where are we going in reading? How do we see it when we're done? . . .

I feel that our charge is overwhelming. It is a real challenge. We need to decide how to get started. One way of getting there is to have committees look at specific things and to find something workable for us (Fieldnotes, 2/07/91).

Ms. Smith was suggesting that the group should form subcommittees to become experts on specific topics so that they could lead the committee in regard to those topics. This sounded much like the original committee's subgroups which had disbanded in 1989 before doing their investigations. This was not the approach that the teachers had suggested repeatedly. The teachers preferred to work by grade levels and to learn about all issues having to do with their grade levels. This was a point of disagreement between Ms. Smith and the teacher members. It is more evidence that even though Ms. Smith stated that she wanted the

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teachers to take charge, she was unwilling to relinquish control of the group. An impasse resulted. Teachers were unwilling to volunteer to work on Ms. Smith's expert groups, and Ms. Smith appeared unwilling to allow teachers to work in grade level groups. Consequently, no groups were working on anything, bringing more frustration to all concerned.

The discussion turned to the new basal series and the fact that the publishers had already done a lot of the work in improving reading instruction. Discussion also occurred about what a developmentally-appropriate curriculum might be. Then Ms. Smith appointed two teachers to become "experts" about developmentally-appropriate curriculum and asked who would contact basal companies to learn more about available materials. No one volunteered. She then asked for volunteers to look at test scores.

Farah: What are our options?

Ms. Smith: I'm not bossing anyone around. What are they? We are looking for people on other programs, reading journals and guidelines, tests, and basals. Is this the way you want to work? Or do you like the way the meetings have been going?

Farah: I think we need committees if we are going to get anything done . . .

Ms. Smith: So we need one on testing, materials, staff development, to contact people to talk about things like Reading Recovery.

Who would be interested in testing? (Fieldnotes, 2/07/91, p. 8).

Two teachers volunteered to look at test scores for the district, and two teachers agreed to investigate the meaning of developmentally-appropriate curriculum.

The discussion then turned to the value of the standardized testing program in the district. The teachers were unanimously against

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continuing the testing of every child every year. Ms. Smith replied, "But we need a way to gauge our kids against the nation." Ms. Smith's remark ended the discussion. Again, power and voice were denied the teachers by the leadership. Ms. Smith did not ask why teachers unanimously wanted to change the current testing, nor did she allow discussion among the teachers. She stated that testing would continue and considered the matter closed.

Teachers were beginning to leave one-by-one as it was nearing four o'clock. Ms. Smith attempted once more to get volunteers to look into staff development, but the teachers felt the administrators should do that because they received more information on opportunities. As the meeting drew to a close, two people had agreed to be "experts" on developmentally-appropriate curriculum, and two had agreed to look at test scores before the next meeting. In addition, teachers were to ask questions about reading at grade level meetings and to bring the answers to the next meeting. However, there was no real direction as to what the questions should address.

Meeting three ended much the same as other meetings had ended. No one seemed clear on what would happen between meetings. No decisions had been made about the direction the group would go. Issues carried over from the previous meeting were not addressed. Teachers' voices had not been heard.

Rockville had two more meetings of the committee before the year ended. These meetings followed much the same patterns as the earlier meetings just described. Meeting times and places were changed with little or no notice; the administrator tightly controlled the agenda and

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the discourse; and the teachers were unsure what they were expected to do. It had probably become clear to the committee members by this point in the story that they were not going to have the opportunities to learn more about the new ideas in reading as a result of committee membership, nor were they going to be afforded much voice in district decisions. The administrators in Rockville were definitely "running the show."

Fortville

The district work in Fortville was also tightly controlled by the administrators. This control appeared first as I discussed the new materials which had been ordered with the teachers. The new basal materials were ordered and arrived in the fall of 1990. To save money and to satisfy individual teachers who did not want a basal, the district did not provide enough books for all children. Teachers would need to share materials.

There appeared to be some confusion and disagreement over the ordering of the new materials. The elementary principals did not support ordering workbooks. Lucy, a veteran second grade teacher, was upset and felt that the students would not learn as well with no workbooks for reinforcement. This caused much distress for her.

Well, it's not going too well so far. First of all, we have been trying to work without workbooks. Also, the manual talks about the charts, but we don't have them. The manual also talks about phonics and lots of skills, but we don't have the materials to teach those things. There is a lot of confusion on what we are supposed to use and do. The policy is unclear (Interview, 11/13/90).

Lucy was a traditional teacher who felt she was being asked to forsake what she believed to be important in reading instruction. She was

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spending much time making up her own skill drill sheets to take the place of workbooks. Marsh and McLaughlin (1978) point out that veteran teachers often resist making changes because of the way the changes are presented to them. Veteran teachers need to feel a part of the decision-making; they need to feel their voice was heard in making the final decision. Lucy evidently felt that she had not been heard when decisions were made about which materials teachers could purchase. This lack of voice would bring the resistance which Lucy displayed by running off her own materials for skills practice, sometimes subversively. Her resistance probably also indicated a lack of understanding of the new ideas

However, Mary, a first grade teacher, viewed the situation differently. Mary did not want to spend her money on a basal. She felt that she would rather spend the money on supplemental materials and had been successful in doing this in her building.

I voted against buying a basal. I did not feel we needed one in first grade. But the committee felt there needed to be continuity at all schools, so they went with a basal to get that . . . I got our building's order cut in half so we could order more trade books with the rest of the money (Interview, 11/13/90).

Mary was a less traditional teacher who wanted to break away from reliance on a basal program. She was able to use her money differently, to purchase non-basal materials for her program.

Mary's ability to control her own resources while Lucy was unable to have the same power speaks to the fact that the administrators, who were in final control of the resources, allowed a different level of power to teachers. Those who requested materials which fit the vision for instruction that the administrators held and wanted implemented could use

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the resources as they wanted. Those who held a different view of reading instruction were not allowed this freedom. Controlling the resources was a powerful way for administrators to retain control of the change efforts.

The reading consultants discussed this issue of who controlled the resources and what materials were acceptable in a meeting with Mike, the Language Arts Coordinator.

Jan: The biggest question I have is who sets the policy? Other things teachers have mentioned is can they order workbooks?

Sue: My kindergarten teacher feels she needs more of the materials to go with the program to teach it effectively.

Jan: I talked with grade five, three, and two and they all wondered about getting all of the materials to go with the program.

Our fourth grade teacher is trying to teach to heterogeneous groups and to use whole language. But she wants the workbook and she is afraid to ask for it. The fifth grade teachers want the skill pads and the third and second do, too. Specifically, they want one copy to use to make copies of the pages they want to use. They feel that they cannot do the full lesson without these things. They need the workbook for practice of parts of the lesson.

Sue: We are not saying that workbooks are inherently bad, but that people should not use them indiscriminately. That they should choose only what they really need to use.

Jan: I don't think anyone here would use every page. What I'm saying is that what we say doesn't matter. The classroom teachers don't care what the reading teachers say. They do what their principals say. They are adult human beings who are running scared. They send me notes because I am a better listener. Mr. Johnson tries to be accommodating, but they don't trust him. In the past, he has been very down on workbooks. He said he would not restrict buying workbooks this year, but they don't believe him.

Sue: I think it's a sign of paranoia.

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Jan: Teachers want to have a choice of what they use. . . . The teachers take their jobs very seriously. They have had almost no training to make these changes. They want the materials that will help them make the changes.

Mike: People are putting motives into actions that aren't really there, I think.

Jan: What about testing? Can they order tests?

Sue: I thought they were originally included in the price. I don't know why they weren't ordered.

Mike: So a decision was made not to go with the testing component?

Sue: I don't know where that decision was made. It was not made by the committee. When I saw the order form, and went over it with Ms. Jones, tests were on it. I don't know what happened.

Mike: Not having workbooks and tests is one way to shake things up.

Jan: I didn't want the workbooks either, but the teachers seem to need them.

Mike: I think that when we meet with the K-5 Reading Committee, we must be honest with the administrators.

Jan: People are afraid to say much.

Sue: I don't think we know what the administrators want in any unified way.

Jan: I only talk to Mr. Johnson once a month and that's not enough.

Sue: We are confused about the flow of information and the decision-making (Observation, 11/13/90).

It became clear from this meeting that more teachers than just Lucy felt they were unable to order the materials that they wanted to go with the new basal. The teachers seemed to feel that it was due to the principals' dislike of workbooks. The reading teachers appeared caught in the middle. The discussion illustrates the top-down feeling of the

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implementation efforts in Fortville. The administrators were using their authority of position, hierarchical control (Elmore, 1983), to provide only the materials they felt were appropriate for teachers to use. However, having this decision forced on them from above in the hierarchy brought resistance from teachers. Remembering also that the proposal did not make clear what instructional changes were expected of teachers, these teachers were caught in a Catch-22. They were unclear about what they were expected to change and how to make those changes, but they were not provided with materials to teach in a way that felt comfortable to them.

An interesting incident occurred which supported this view. Lucy decided that she needed workbooks to teach her students. She got one copy of the workbook and asked a teacher in Ms. Jones' building to make twenty-five copies of every page for her because she did not want Mr. Johnson to know that she was using the workbook pages. Ms. Jones, who got wind of this, sent the pages to Mr. Johnson for him to deal with the situation. Mr. Johnson allowed the copies to be made, but made Lucy aware that he knew what she was doing (Informal conversation, 11/15/90). The principals were sending the message that they did not support workbook usage, but the extent of this ban was not clear to the teachers. This lack of clarity on what the policy was and who made the decisions about ordering materials caused distress for some teachers. It is evidence that teachers perceived the administrators to be in control of many decisions about their classroom reading programs. This feeling that the administrators were controlling the teachers' decisions about reading instruction would be in conflict with the idea (from the policy) that

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teachers should make decisions about their reading instruction. However, the fact that the teachers were asking for workbook and skillpad materials suggests that the teachers were lacking in either knowledge or commitment to the ideas contained in the policy. Thus, it appears that the administrators were trying to use their power to force changes in line with the policy which teachers were resisting.

It appeared that teachers were given some control over their resources, though. Each teacher was given two hundred and fifty dollars to "personalize" his/her reading program. This money could be spent by the teacher, but only with principal's approval. Mr. Johnson commented "The building principal will want to have a say in how that is used. We must have a game plan and not just spend willy-nilly" (Fieldnotes, 9/06/90, p. 8). This led to the murky issue of whether the money could be used for purchasing workbooks. Both Ms. Jones and Mr. Johnson agreed that teachers would be allowed to order workbooks, but they were not making that statement public. Mr. Johnson remained concerned that money was not unlimited and if teachers chose to spend their money on workbooks, the money would be gone and supplemental books could not be purchased (Fieldnotes, 9/6/90, p. 8).

So when it came to the second thrust of Fortville's proposal, materials, administrators were in control of what the teachers could order, and they attempted to use their hierarchical power to force teachers to use only materials that fit with the philosophy they held about reading instruction. This left some teachers angry and frustrated as they were asked to teach in some as yet undefined way without materials which they considered crucial to students' success.

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Mike, the Language Arts Coordinator, also displayed confusion about who was in charge of what. Mike broached this subject at a meeting of the Executive Committee. Mike asked the Executive Committee several questions during this meeting. First, he needed clarification on the budget; how was in-service money to be used? Second, he wanted input on in-service planning; what type, what times, consistency of the reading consultant's role? Third, he asked for volunteers to help with the writing assessment. Fourth, he wanted clarification on the role of the reading consultants. Fifth, he wanted to know how much consistency was expected in classroom reading programs across the district. Last, he wondered if the Scope and Sequence document prepared by the Reading Subcommittee should be typed and distributed to staff (Fieldnotes, 9/06/90, p. 2).

Mike's list of questions indicated that the proposal had left many issues unclear, including what power his position afforded. Mike needed to understand how policy would be set and how much power he had to make decisions. Mr. Johnson stated that rather than having the Executive Committee try to answer all of Mike's questions, they should move to agenda item number four and decide what the role of the Executive Committee would be for the year (Fieldnotes, 9/6/90, p. 3).

The Executive Committee decided that Mike should use that group as a sounding board for ideas and suggestions. However, he would report directly to the Director of Curriculum and to the principals. The Executive Committee would meet as needed, not regularly. It was hoped that this structure would alleviate lost time waiting for group meetings and would simplify Mike's job (Fieldnotes, 9/06/90, p. 4). Mike's list

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of questions were left unanswered, but it was decided that he would consult with the appropriate person or group to get answers. For example, to find out about the budget, he would speak with the central office. However, some of his questions had no easy answer. The role of reading consultants was outlined in the proposal, but it was unclear who had the power to enforce that role change.

Mr. Johnson did not appear to be retaining tight control of this meeting of the Executive Committee. Throughout this meeting, Mr. Johnson acted as a facilitator. He organized the meeting to fit the needs of the group, even though it meant deviating from the written agenda. After Mike listed his questions, Mr. Johnson interpreted Mike's real need to be understanding the role of the Executive Committee, so he stated "Rather than trying to answer all of these questions, let's jump to number four on the agenda" (Future direction of the committee. . . . What will be our role?) He solicited ideas from members "Other ideas? What do you think, Mike?" He pulled the ideas together in summaries "We need to bring closure to this part of the meeting. Let me sum up what we've said. . . . Is that good enough?" (Fieldnotes, 9/06/90). Even though he provided strong leadership, he did not appear to squelch opportunities for members to give opinions or ideas. This is in contrast to his top-down approach with his teachers. This could be explained because the Executive Committee consisted mostly of other administrators and department chairs rather than classroom teachers.

The meeting adjourned with most of Mike's questions unanswered, but with directions for him to see the appropriate administrators for the answers. The administrators present reminded the group to give Mike

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whatever help he needed and assured him that he could turn to the group when he felt he needed help.

In Fortville everyone seemed to accept that the administrators controlled the power, yet many were confused as to what issues would be tightly controlled and which would not. In a meeting between Mike and the reading teachers, it was clear that they were also confused about who held the power to do what. They asked Mike to clarify issues such as who could order workbooks and where were the skill charts and extra books that should have been ordered in September. Mike said he realized there were concerns so his first agenda item was to address their concerns (Fieldnotes, 11/13/90, p. 1); however, he did not have an answer for their question about materials. He was not clear about who decided what materials could be ordered.

Three issues of concern were discussed during this meeting of Mike and the reading teachers. First, they discussed questions teachers had about using workbooks. Some teachers still wanted to use workbooks, but were afraid that the principals would not allow it. The second concern was the role of basal test materials and whether they had been ordered. Sue, the Reading Subcommittee cochair, stated that the committee had decided to order the testing component of the basal program, and it had been included on the original order. However, these tests had not been ordered and no one present seemed to know why. Some teachers had expressed concern to Jan that they had always used the tests to figure report card grades. Now they felt they had no concrete data to use in supporting grades. Sue agreed that it would be hard to know how twenty-five students were doing with no tests. The third concern was

that they tried to figure out how the chain of command should look. The question seemed to revolve around who had the power and how the consultants would fit into the picture. Both consultants present agreed that they should be liaisons between the Reading Subcommittee and the principals. The subcommittee could make recommendations to the consultants, who would communicate them to the principals. The principals would make the decisions and communicate them back to the reading consultants. They would then tell the teachers what the decisions were. It was clear that the principals were seen as the ones making the decisions (Fieldnotes, 11/13/90, pp. 5, 6).

The reading consultants appeared to feel caught in the middle between teachers and principals with little understanding of what their decision-making powers and roles were. They seemed to feel that the principals were going to make the final decisions, and so it would help them to know what those decisions were first, before they had to act.

The story in Fortville indicates that the administrators were definitely "running the show" as the district tried to implement its proposal.

Summary of "Who's Running the Show?" in Both Districts

In both Rockville and Fortville, the data suggests that the administrators were retaining control of the efforts to revise the district reading programs. In Rockville this control was exhibited strongly in the manner in which the principals chaired the meetings. These leaders prepared the agendas, controlled the discourse, and silenced teacher discussion on issues which would not be changed. They

also required that teachers continue to teach the old basal series using the workbooks and the tests provided, limiting instructional changes to add-ons. In Fortville the administrators controlled the resources to implement the proposal. They simply did not order materials which did not support their view of reading instruction. Even though this could be interpreted as supporting the ideas in the policy, it left many traditional teachers who did not understand these new ideas well enough to put them into practice quite frustrated. So in both districts, the administrators controlled what could occur as part of the district response.

Considering this in light of the pressures which the administrators were facing to produce reports and plans for Public Act 25 and Core Curriculum, suggests that administrators may have needed to focus on plans and reports more than on instructional change. Had the teachers, who are more closely focused on instruction, been allowed the power to shape the districts' responses would the story have been different? One cannot say for sure, but the fact that these teachers were making changes in their own instruction in spite of these frustrations suggests that possibility. However, organizational tendencies for inertia and political battles for resources would have likely limited the district efforts in similar ways.

What Were Teachers Doing in Their Classrooms?

In both Rockville and Fortville, teachers were making changes in their own classrooms. Considering the limitations of the learning opportunities provided in each district, this was interesting. The

teachers seemed to be learning about the new ideas for reading instruction from other sources and experimenting with changes in their own programs. However, the changes were most often added onto existing practices rather than replacing those practices. The new ideas and the teachers' instruction were "mutually adapted" (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978) as they tried to make sense of what they were hearing from a variety of sources.

Rockville

The teachers in Rockville continued to try new ideas within the privacy of their classrooms. They were limited by administrative mandates to use the old basal materials, but they were muddling through the landslide of information coming from all manner of outside sources about whole language teaching of reading. Farah, a fifth grade teacher, described her program for me.

Well, it is not really a whole language approach, but I try to incorporate many other things into the program. Mostly it is based on reading novels for large units and reading for information in small units. For example, my unit on earthquakes and on baseball were short units of reading for information. I also try to put writing into the reading program, that's what I hit hardest. I believe reading improves with writing, and writing improves with reading, just like in multiplication and division. I need to do more creative writing. I don't do as much of that; it is harder for me to teach it cause I'm not as good at drawing creativity out of the child. I'm better at putting factual material together to draw conclusions from. . . . Then I try to do a variety of activities. The skills are incorporated into the literature. I use different types of reading like reading with a partner, a group, or I read aloud. I try to do several times a week skills lessons at the beginning of class for a few minutes. Like at the beginning of the year I try to do some quick lessons on phonics skills. These are the types of skills that might be in a workbook, but I don't use the workbook, I teach them in quick, daily lessons. I tend to

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Farah recognizes that her approach is not "really a whole language approach," but that it is based both on reading for information and reading narratives, the types of reading tested on the MEAP. She also talks about using lots of writing and children's novels. Yet, she is still teaching skills in didactic mini-lessons at the "beginning of class," but she is trying to apply these skills to the literature. She increases her skills lessons near the time for standardized testing. Farah is making changes in her program, but she also continues to teach the old skills in preparation for the tests her students must take in March. She is trying to do both the old and the new types of instruction and is experimenting with ways to make that work.

Betty, a first grade teacher, described similar changes in her instruction.

In the fall, I assess the kids for their knowledge of letters and sounds. I observe them during free reading time for the interest they show in books, to see if they are trying to read books or make up stories of their own from books. I look for motivation and interest, those who really want to learn. From that information, I make up three groups. Those who come already reading, I put right into the basal, the pre-primer. A few weeks later, I take those who show real interest and just can't wait to read in the middle group and start them in the basal. I start the groups in the books a few weeks apart so that they are not on the same stories at the same time. If they were, they would hear the answers to the comprehension questions when the first group had reading group, and they would not have the chance to respond to those from their own ideas. I spend the first semester with the bottom group working on phonics so that they will have some decoding skills when they start the basal. They start it in the second semester.

This year everyone is talking about whole language and big books, they are really big this year. I am doing more with them this year, the big books and the Sunshine

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books. . . . They also write their own stories--not so much in the beginning of the year because it is so hard to get around for them all to dictate to you. . . . We do mostly group stories in the beginning of the year. They also write in their daily journals. . . . The journals also help me decide who is in what group. I look at how proficient they are in using the letters for writing (Interview, 2/4/91, pp. 1,2).

Betty described a pretty traditional approach with some add-ons. She continues to rely on knowledge of letters and sounds as a prerequisite for beginning the basal. She continues to ability group and to use comprehension questions after students read a story. She is adding on more writing and more big books with patterned language. Betty continues teaching in many of the same ways as always, while she adds-on some new ideas and techniques. She is experimenting with the new ideas which "everyone is talking about" while she continues practices which are more familiar to her.

Each teacher in Rockville described her program in similar ways. Each teacher was trying out some new ideas while holding onto many traditional, comfortable practices. These changes were described through the teachers' lens of traditional instruction, so it is difficult to tell just how big the changes were, but each teacher was making some changes and taking small steps away from the traditional type of reading instruction.

Fortville

The story was quite similar in Fortville. Most of the teachers described their programs as a mix of old and new ideas. Don, a fourth grade teacher, described his reading program.

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I did more writing and thinking. The year before I tried to separate writing and reading . . . Doris, who taught the top group did more integrated things, and I saw how excited her kids were, and so I tried it, too. I think it was good for me to use the manual at first because I had limited knowledge. Then I grew into using the novel . . . I tried to generate projects like posters, illustrations, book covers. I used the blackline masters, too, to teach the skills. They stressed vocabulary, sequencing, comprehension, contractions, stuff like that, but mostly new vocabulary words. When I tried to do three novels at once, I gave up. Then later I began to emphasize chapters more. I would do more prior knowledge kind of things. I would ask questions before they read and teach the vocabulary before they read. Then I would assign them to read the chapter over about two days. Then we would discuss it. It was the inverted triangle idea, the inverted lesson with more emphasis on the beginning before they read. I learned that in training I did on the side. I would try to get them to think about the title and the pictures and tell what they thought it was about, you know, the prior knowledge stuff. MRA (Michigan Reading Association) helped me. I hit good sessions. That's where I learned the new ideas. I tried to teach my kids to be lifelong readers. To help them see that reading is bigger than reading class. That reading is a powerful tool, not a chore. I was more comfortable letting them read. Sometimes we would take three Fridays in a row and just let them read (Interview, 10/17/90, pp. 2,3).

Don described a mixed program, much as did Farah and Betty in Rockville. Don was using more literature and working on developing students' prior knowledge by asking questions before reading chapters. He was trying to integrate reading and writing. However, he was also using blackline master skillsheets to teach traditional skills. Don had learned new ideas from MRA and from other teachers. He was experimenting with new ideas, but he was clinging to the safety of his skillsheets as well.

Mary, a first grade teacher in Fortville, described her program which seemed to have moved a bit further away from traditional instruction than many of the participants.

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I do a variety of things. I use big books, trade books . . . I use the basal sometimes. I use poem cards that I made which are like song charts. The kids use them during job time to read to themselves or each other. I use experience stories, song charts. I do lots of writing and reading together as a group. I try to use literature as a basis for extension by using the literature and then doing lots of other things from it. For example, we read the book Five Senses by Alikì and then they make their own little books. The pages were like 'I use my eyes to see the clouds in the sky.' Like that. I try to connect reading and writing and to use them to integrate the curriculum.

I try to teach things in context as much as possible. We use hands on things like magnet letters and salt trays and word games, too, but I try to teach the letters in the words we read and write more often. . . . We do journal writing three times a week and story writing two times a week for twenty-five minutes each day. I conference with the kids as they write, and they read their writing to me and to friends.

I do a lot of thematic things to try and pull the curriculum together. I do lots of whole group activities. I do some ability groups, but they change over time. Kid fluctuate in and out of groups as they need to. I have no pull-outs. . . .

I do teach skills, too. I teach phonics, but it is not a major part of my program. When we read words, I try to have them read the words in sentences. . . . Phonics is a part of it . . . I do sound bowls, boxes, and books. We do alphabet books with the letters for the kids who need that. I do Workshop Way Phonics . . . I guess I use "Glass Analysis Phonics." . . . Basically, we do reading and writing all day long (Interview, 11/13/90, pp. 1,2,3).

Mary described a program more nearly like the intent of the policy than anyone else in my study. She was integrating reading and writing into all curriculum areas, allowing children to read, write, and think, using flexible grouping, and teaching things within meaningful contexts. However, she continued to use highly structured and didactic phonics programs which teach the letters and sounds both in isolation and within words. Mary was clinging to some of the more traditional ways, then, while moving her program largely toward the newer ideas of the policy.

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Summary of Teachers' Changes in Rockville and Fortville

In both Rockville and in Fortville, the teachers were experimenting with these new ways to teach reading in their own classrooms. They were talking with other teachers and attending conferences and trying new ideas in their own situations. However, they were also holding fast to traditional skills and traditional ways of teaching those skills. They all seemed to believe that those skills were necessary to teach their students to read and that the more traditional approaches (teacher telling and practice sheets) were appropriate ways to teach those skills. Changes were happening in classrooms, but radical change had not occurred. Changes were added onto existing practices.

Frustration and Confusion as the Work Progresses

Rockville

The fourth year of the work was characterized by much confusion and frustration on the part of both teachers and administrators. As mentioned earlier, meeting sites and dates were changed without warning leaving people unsure where or when to attend meetings. Assignments were often made for teachers to prepare for the next meeting, but these assignments were seldom clear, nor were they ever mentioned again. Instead, at each meeting, the leaders would take the work in some new direction. Teachers' voices were silenced during meetings, and teachers' decisions were seldom enacted. Teachers repeatedly expressed frustration to each other after meetings. The leaders were also expressing frustration with the work. Everyone was frustrated. I spoke with Ms.

Smith, the cochair of the group, after the second meeting. Her frustration was evident.

I think it is time for some action. We need to get this committee going. We need teachers to decide how they want to proceed. My idea is that we should form subgroups now and each subgroup would read the research and become experts on a different topic. Then they would report back to the committee, but they would be our resident experts.

We can't focus on just what we would do at each grade level. . . . They should be considering the whole curriculum as they work on the committee, not just focusing on things by grade level . . .

This is just such a huge job. The teachers need to decide what they want and how they want to do it. I was so frustrated with this meeting. I am very task-oriented, and I want to get moving. I want some action. But Mr. Curt said we needed to talk, so I said okay, let's talk.

Mr. Curt and I structured the agenda to spark ideas and give the teachers the opening to decide what they wanted to do. It was to draw ideas from the teachers. I was very surprised by the way the meeting went, and I think Mr. Curt was, too. We both feel that we should not dictate to the teachers what the committee should do or how. We want the teachers to decide. But we've got to get moving . . . I have ideas of my own, but my ideas may not be the best. I'm not in the trenches everyday, so my ideas are not what we need. We need to hear from the teachers.

I want action, though. I am very task-oriented. But I don't want action like we had two years ago (the document produced in 1989). I still haven't a clue as to what that was about (Informal conversation, 1/11/91).

Ms. Smith seemed to lay the blame for the lack of progress on the teachers. She did not recognize that the teachers were confused about what to do, that they needed more time to learn, and that their voices were silenced by the leadership style of both leaders.

The teachers were also expressing frustration. The following conversation occurred after that same second meeting of the year.

Farah: Frances, were you as frustrated by the reading meeting yesterday as I was?

Frances: Well, it was just like our other meetings. We talked about several things. I would like to see more action, though.

Farah: I feel like I always talk too much at those meetings, so I was trying to be quiet and I thought other people would talk, but no one said much.

Frances: I think we were waiting for some kind of direction. I don't think anyone knew what to say.

Another teacher present, who was not part of the committee, stated that she saw no need for this committee.

Why do we have this committee anyway? People are already doing lots of new things in their rooms. The teachers on my floor are always getting new ideas and changing their reading programs. They keep up on things. Why do we need a committee to tell us what to do?

Frances: That's not the purpose of the committee. We are trying to document what it is that we want to do in reading. Since we wrote the last curriculum, the New Definition of Reading has come up and our curriculum as written doesn't go with that. We need to document all the things people are doing that do go with the New Definition (Informal conversation, 1/11/91).

At this point in the story, everyone on the committee seemed confused and frustrated. The cochairs said they were looking to the teachers to decide what should be done. Yet, the leadership styles of the cochairs discouraged discussion. The agendas, which were prepared beforehand by the cochairs, also led members to believe that the cochairs preferred to control the efforts. The teacher members were discouraged because they seemed to leave each meeting with nothing accomplished and no idea what was going to happen next. The work of the committee reminds one of a "comedy of errors" at this point in the story. Everyone was discouraged, but no one seemed to know how to improve the situation.

A pattern was developing that continued throughout the year and caused much turmoil in the group. Mr. Curt had taken two major

responsibilities on himself after this meeting. First, he stated that he would set up a workshop on whole language for the teachers to learn more about it. This was never done during that school year. Second, Mr. Curt stated that he and Ms. Smith would define whole language before the next meeting of the committee. It is interesting that he felt it was their responsibility to come up with this definition without input from the teachers. They did not complete this definition. Other minor responsibilities such as setting up a display of materials and organizing cross-grade level meetings were also ignored. This style of leadership, promising to follow through on issues after the meetings but not doing so, continued throughout the rest of the year. This was especially important to the morale of the committee. As illustrated, members were already discouraged and frustrated with the lack of progress that the committee was making. Having important requests and issues ignored by the leaders only exacerbated that frustration.

The next meeting of the group was followed by similar frustrations from both the teachers and from Ms. Smith. The following conversations occurred shortly after the February meeting. Demi and Betty had the following conversation the next day expressing their frustrations with the meeting.

Demi: I was so insulted by Ms. Smith reading that philosophy to us. I don't like to be read to. That wasted at least five minutes. That philosophy covers everything possible. We can't critique it in two minutes after just hearing it. If we were going to go over that, why weren't we told, so we could reread it and bring it with us. That was ridiculous. We didn't cover any of those things that we were supposed to cover. I thought we were going to define whole language and talk about developmentally-appropriate curriculum.

Betty: I don't think developmentally-appropriate curriculum would even have come up if you hadn't brought it up.

Demi: I know. When I brought it up and Ms. Smith said we had already decided to go that way, I was shocked. I certainly didn't get that from the last meeting. I already have tons of books and materials. I don't think I need to spend anymore time reading. I sent those things to Mr. Curt because I thought he was in charge and then he didn't even run them off for people. I could have run them off myself, but I didn't want to just take charge. I thought he was the administrator, that he would do it. But I don't know why I even wasted my time. And Ms. Smith didn't even know I had sent them, so they (Mr. Curt and Ms. Smith) must not be talking together much. I am just so frustrated. I went prepared to stay till 5:00 because I thought we needed that much time for everything we were going to cover. Then we didn't cover any of it anyway.

Betty: I think people are tired of giving all of their time on these committees and bringing ideas and then none of it is used anyway. That is the history of committees in this district. The teachers put their efforts in to make changes and the administrators say they want that input, but when decisions are made, the administrators just make them without considering the teachers' ideas. Why put any effort into it?

Demi: And we are working with two administrators who want that control. They say that they want us to run things, but they really don't. Both of them need to keep the control themselves. They are that kind of administrators (Informal Conversation, 2/8/91).

A similar conversation occurred a few days later between Farah and Kaitlin.

Farah: You are really lucky to be off that committee because it is so frustrating.

Kaitlin: I know. I was so frustrated with it that I didn't even list it as a choice this year. I did not want to be on it any longer. I have worked on so many committees in this district and in another district, and they all seem to be the same. Teachers are supposed to make the decisions, but usually the teachers put in hours of work and then the administrators just decide what to do and do it.

Farah: I couldn't believe this meeting Thursday. I had talked with Ms. Smith at length about what she thought should be happening, and I thought I knew what direction we were going to go. But then at the meeting, it didn't resemble that direction at all. She took off in a whole other direction. I couldn't figure out what we were going to do. The teachers didn't say anything, and I kept trying to ask questions to clarify what we were doing, but I couldn't get any answers.

I saw a completely different side of Ms. Smith in this meeting, too. Always before Mr. Curt has led the meeting and Ms. Smith has been an observer to the point that she usually sits to the side and behind Mr. Curt and doesn't say anything. Then suddenly she is in charge, and Mr. Curt is on the sidelines. She didn't welcome people or do anything to break the ice. It was Bang, Bang, Bang--let's start, Agenda item number one. People never got together as a group. She says she wants input, but she is not able to release the control and really accept it. When I asked about testing, she spent five minutes lecturing me about testing. She didn't talk to the group, just talked at me. I really felt intimidated. I wasn't going to ask anything else. Why are we spending thousands of dollars on testing every year? I know it isn't right, but I don't have enough understanding of why to argue with people like Mr. Curt and Ms. Smith.

I thought at this meeting we would get organized and then leave the meeting with something to do before next meeting. But we didn't get anything accomplished, and we still don't have anything to do (Informal Conversation, 2/10/ 91).

The conversations between Betty and Demi and between Farah and Kaitlin illustrate that the committee members were aware that the administrators were retaining control of the group's work, even though the administrators said they wanted teachers to take charge. These conversations also illustrate that the teachers recognized that issues from one meeting were not being surfaced at the next meeting. Demi's comment about the materials she submitted to Mr. Curt for the group to read that were not distributed and that Ms. Smith did not even know about is more evidence that the leaders were not following through on issues of concern to the teachers. Farah mentions that she thought she understood

what was going to happen at the meeting, but Ms. Smith went in a whole new direction. These conversations also illustrate the level of frustration that the teacher members of the committee were feeling. It is also clear that the teachers did not feel free to express their ideas to the leaders. Farah pointed out that she would not argue with the cochair because she felt intimidated, and she was not knowledgeable enough to defend her ideas against the cochair.

The strength of the teachers' reactions to the February meeting was evidenced when on February 12, 1991, five days after the meeting, teachers were still expressing frustration and anger to each other. Farah and Betty each went to their building principal to complain about their frustrations with the committee (Informal Conversations, 2/12/91, 2/14/91).

The teachers were not the only frustrated ones on the committee, though. Ms. Smith was continuing to feel frustrated with the group and the way that the meetings were going. In a meeting that I attended with her the day after the meeting, she asked the reading specialists to solicit information about reading in their buildings for the committee. She stated that she could not understand why the committee members were not responding to her requests for input.

Now I want to talk about curriculum work. We have this reading committee, and we as reading specialists need to find out what teachers in our buildings are thinking about reading. This committee is not giving much response. I can't believe when I ask for input from the teachers, I get nothing. I wonder if they are alive sometimes. There is just no response, none.

At this point, I mentioned that the teachers seemed unsure about how to go about the task.

Ms. Smith replied: I can't believe that. These are knowledgeable strong teachers. They are doing wonderful things, and they have a lot of knowledge to share. I can't believe that they can't contribute more at the meeting. I don't know what the problem is (Informal Conversation, 2/8/91).

Ms. Smith's comments are evidence of three important issues. First, Ms. Smith did not seem to recognize that her leadership style stifled discussion and responses. She stated that she did not understand the problem. Her comment that she wondered if the teachers were "alive" indicates that she was placing the blame for their lack of response more on them than on herself. Second, the response that I received when I attempted to point out the confusion teachers were feeling is more evidence of how Ms. Smith's leadership style discouraged teachers from expressing opinions. She was quick to disagree with my statement without giving my opinion any consideration. This type of response was characteristic of Ms. Smith throughout my study. Third, Ms. Smith's comments illustrate that she was as frustrated with the committee's progress as were the teachers. Everyone recognized that there was a problem, but no one seemed to know how to solve it.

The two teachers who had agreed to become experts on testing also expressed confusion and frustration with their assignment.

Farah: You should have been at that testing meeting that Mr. Curt, Frances, and I set up. It was a farce. First, I went to Mr. Curt's office, and he had forgotten about the meeting. He acted like he had never heard about the meeting and didn't know what I was talking about. He said he had a joint PTO meeting and couldn't come. I said to just give me the stuff, and Frances and I would meet anyway.

So I went up to Frances's room, and she said she had just reminded Mr. Curt about the meeting two days earlier. Frances and I looked at the stuff Mr. Curt gave us and the report Ms. Smith gave us. Ms. Smith said that we could get everything we needed off the paper that she gave us.

Well, we looked at that stuff and felt like we must be idiots. We couldn't understand why we couldn't get anything out of them. . . . We looked at them and said 'Well, this year we were up and this year we were down. So what? What does it mean?' We finally just gave up and went home. I don't know what we were supposed to get from it all.

Frances: We tried to figure out what those test reports told us, but we just couldn't see what it meant. One year we were up and another year we were down. So what? What does that mean? Ms. Smith said that report was all we needed to look at, but we couldn't figure out anything worthwhile from it (Informal Conversation, 3/9/91).

This conversation illustrates two themes which have been consistent throughout my study of Rockville. First, the teachers did not have a thorough basis of knowledge from which to do this work. Frances and Farah were both unsure what the test scores meant. They did not understand what to look for nor what the scores meant. Second, the leaders were not making this work a priority. Mr. Curt knew about the meeting and was reminded about the meeting, but he had other commitments and did not attend. His reaction to Farah, "he acted like he had never heard about the meeting," indicates that this work was not high on his list of priorities.

Both of these themes would suggest that this group would be unsuccessful in making real changes in reading instruction in the district. Teachers' subject matter knowledge may limit their ability to implement instructional practices calling for conceptual understandings which they lack (McDiarmid, Ball, & Anderson, in press). The teachers in Rockville had little opportunity to learn about the policy and what it meant for reading instruction. In addition, they were never given the

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opportunity to discuss their own beliefs and visions and to build some consensus about what they wanted for the district.

The leadership of the group had shown little understanding and commitment to the work. Marsh and McLaughlin (1978) found that both institutional motivation (commitment from all levels of the organization) and institutional leadership (administrative support) were necessary for lasting change to occur. This commitment and support for changing reading instruction in the district to fit the ideas in the policy was lacking in Rockville.

The participants in Rockville were all feeling confused and frustrated as they attempted to figure out what to do and how to do it. By spring of 1991, the frustration had reached a significant level.

Fortville

The situation in Fortville was also frustrating for all involved. The teachers were trying to figure out what the administrators would allow them to do and how to do it. The administrators were trying to force teachers to make changes by controlling materials and resources. The administrators were mandating that the reading teachers become consultants, but the reading teachers and the classroom teachers were not supporting the change. The Language Arts Coordinator and the reading consultants were all confused about what powers they had, what their roles really were. In a meeting of the Elementary Reading Subcommittee, the teachers asked Ms. Jones, the cochair and a principal, "Who makes policy?" Ms. Jones even seemed confused with her reply, "That's not in place. This is a transition year, so that's not always clear. We can

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make policy" (Fieldnotes, 11/15/90, p. 10). No one seemed sure who held what power to make which decisions.

An additional point of frustration had surfaced during the year as well. One touchy, heated issue emerged during a meeting of the Executive Committee. The secondary teachers were quite upset that some of the novels which they taught were being read to students in the elementaries. It was decided that the Elementary Reading Subcommittee would identify which books could be used at which grade levels before the year ended (Fieldnotes, 9/06/90). This heated issue again points out how focused district teachers were on the materials for instruction. There was more concern and disagreement in the district about materials than about almost any other issue. This may have been due to the fact that actual instructional changes had yet to be defined, so teachers could not yet disagree with those. This discussion also points out that teachers were losing control over their reading programs in another way. Now the reading subcommittee would decide which books could and could not be read to/with students in each grade level. It was felt that this was important so that upper level teachers did not "have their thunder stolen" by having students exposed to pieces of literature before they could introduce it.

This issue was addressed at the next Elementary Reading Subcommittee meeting. Mike stated that he saw the list in two different ways: books to cover that you should use in your grade level or books that other grade levels should not use. This list came to be called the "Core Curriculum" by this group. Mike stated that he saw the Core Curriculum as a "hands-off" list, to protect units that teachers wanted to teach.

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Ms. Jones stated that she saw it as a list to help new teachers identify what they should teach, for accountability (Fieldnotes, 11/15/90, p. 7, 8).

Ms. Jones reminded the group that they had to get something written because it was a component of the proposal. The group continued to bat around the issue of these lists and what purpose they might serve, but no decision was reached.

The group finally decided to have each grade level brainstorm what books they would like to keep exclusively for that grade level. This would be done during December grade level meetings. Mike volunteered to compile these lists.

Summary of Confusion and Frustration in Rockville and Fortville

The participants in both Rockville and in Fortville expressed confusion and frustration. The teachers in each district were unsure what power they had over decisions. It appeared that they had little power to make decisions about policy or about resources. This lack of power to act on their charge (to revise district reading curriculum) caused much frustration in both districts. The administrators in each district were frustrated that the teachers were not acting in ways which they expected. In Rockville Ms. Smith expressed frustration that the teachers were not taking any action, yet she thwarted each attempt they made with her style of leadership. In Fortville Mr. Johnson was frustrated that his teachers were wanting to use workbooks and that his consultant was not moving into that role quickly enough. Everyone

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participating in my study in both sites expressed great frustration during Year Four of the work.

Going Through the Motions: Order a Basal Reader

Both districts decided in the end that they would order a new, revised basal reading series for all teachers to coordinate the curriculum and to help teachers understand how to make the changes.

In Rockville the decision seems to have been made in the spring with a sigh of relief after the group had been spinning its wheels for three years. Until this point, buying a new basal series was never suggested nor agreed upon, but suddenly the group was discussing setting up a trial of two series. The teachers supported doing pilots of two series. Each pilot teacher would use one series for part of a semester and then switch to the other series. This set-up was to give each pilot teacher a chance to try both series. Ms. Smith said the committee should hear the textbook consultants do an overview of the programs before they selected them for pilots. So, overviews with the consultants were to be set-up. There was little discussion about the wisdom of purchasing a basal series or what the alternatives might be. It was subtly decided, because no one objected, that buying a basal was the direction they would go. Once headed in this direction, the group moved rapidly and without discussion or questions.

The decision to choose these two basal series to pilot was made with little information. The group did not look at several series and then choose two. They just chose these two on hearsay.

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Farah: Everyone we talked to at Michigan Reading Association conference (MRA) who has piloted did just two series, usually Heath and Houghton-Mifflin.

Ms. Smith: A lot of districts after reviewing lots of series seem to choose either Heath or Houghton-Mifflin

Demi: Why do all the legwork over again? If other districts have already chosen these two, why should we look at all of the series again? (Fieldnotes, 3/13/91, p. 4).

This was the total conversation about which series would be piloted. On the basis of this, these two series were selected to pilot.

After this decision was made, some members found their voices. They expressed concern that a new basal might not work with the changes they were already making in their classrooms. The following discussion ensued.

Freda: Maybe the answer is to have a written curriculum.

Betty: But it's a Catch-22. We need to have new materials to do the curriculum, but we need to have the curriculum to select the new materials.

Ms. Smith: Which way to go first is the question. Do we find a basal that will meet the way we want to teach first? Or do we write our curriculum first and then choose materials?

Frances: For years we've been saying that we don't like the publishers telling us what to teach. Now is our chance to do something about that. (Fieldnotes, 3/13/91, p. 5).

Frances seemed to suggest that writing the curriculum before buying materials was an opportunity to assume control of their reading instruction. However, her point had no impact on the movement of the group. A decision was made to pilot two basal series, and the momentum of finally having a direction carried it onward.

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Ms. Smith summed it up.

So, I hear us saying that we need inservice; we need to look at books and materials; we need to decide how to purchase a basal; we want a preview and overview of some companies' materials. Will everyone feel more knowledgeable then? Then we can discuss what we want to do better?

I know it has been frustrating for all of us. We have thrown out so much to think about. We say that we aren't getting anywhere. But we have a starting point now. We will look at the basals and how they fit in with what we want to do (Fieldnotes, 3/13/91).

Ms. Smith had summed up the discussion and decided that looking at new basals and how they fit with what the committee wanted to do would be a place to begin. Her remark that part of what they would do would be to "decide how (not if) to purchase a basal reading series" settled the matter. The committee had a direction at last, to purchase a new reading series. The committee appeared to agree with her summation by their silence.

In Fortville the decision to purchase a basal had also been decided somewhat quickly with little understanding of how it had happened on the part of the participants (as reported in Chapter Three). In Fortville there was a division of opinion about the merits of buying a basal. Such divided opinions also surfaced in Rockville. The day after the meeting the following conversation occurred.

Betty: I thought that finally we are starting to get it together. It seems that we have more of a direction now than we did.

Demi: Did you notice that only three people from our building said anything much, though. The teachers from the other schools don't seem to say anything. I can't believe that we are just starting to look at new basals. Why don't we scrap buying a basal and start buying lots of good books. I don't want to just buy another basal to follow (Informal conversation, 3/15/91).

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The teachers' comments indicate that a direction, looking at basals, had been set, but that not all agreed that this direction was the best to follow. However, Betty expressed some satisfaction that finally there was a direction and maybe the committee was at last going to accomplish something. These comments also illustrate that the members were still feeling frustrated with the leadership and with the silence of other members. Even though a direction was finally identified, the group remained frustrated, confused about where they were headed, and divided.

Summary of Year Four in Rockville

The 1990-91 year ended with many loose ends. The progress made by the committee was minimal again during Year Four. Teachers were frustrated, confused, angry, and ready to give up. A pilot trial of basal series was planned, but no decisions about which teachers would be involved in the pilot in the fall or how that pilot would work were made. The group did not fully understand or define whole language or developmentally-appropriate curriculum. There was no beginning on a curriculum document.

The agreement that a pilot would take place was the only decision for the year, and no action had been taken to organize that pilot. After school dismissed, a memo was sent to all elementary teachers requesting eight volunteers to pilot basal series in the fall. The committee had no input on this decision. From the teachers who volunteered, the administrators selected eight and assigned them a series.

Again, several patterns emerged or continued during Year Four. There was confusion among members and leaders as to where and when

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meetings would be held. This confusion made it difficult for members to attend meetings. In addition, never did all members attend or stay for a complete meeting. This caused confusion from meeting to meeting about what was discussed or decided.

The leaders continued to ask members to read, think about, or consider materials or ideas, but did not follow up on these assignments. Directions were often unclear or ambiguous. Assignments held little weight because often they were never mentioned again.

The leaders appeared to be confused about what direction the committee would take and said they looked to teachers for direction, even though their actions never allowed this to occur. The leaders did not appear to communicate often with each other about the meetings and about what should be happening. The leadership style of the leaders did not encourage teachers to take charge. This lack of clear leadership, from either the cochairs or the teachers, caused the committee to spend much time going nowhere. The teachers appeared to be waiting for some clear direction to come from the leaders. This confusion about who was in charge was added to confusion about what they were doing, as the direction of the work changed with each meeting. Teachers were never encouraged nor allowed to voice their concerns about reading. Issues they felt were important were seldom surfaced and were never pursued.

When tasks that needed follow-up surfaced, that follow-up seldom occurred. Examples include setting up a workshop on whole language, defining whole language, setting up a meeting of all primary teachers to discuss developmentally-appropriate curriculum, and submitting a letter to the central office requesting funds for first grade materials. These

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were clearly suggested by the committee. The leaders took responsibility to accomplish these tasks. Yet, nothing happened. The pilot was to be set up and ideas were to be set to paper by small work groups in a final meeting of the year. However, no final meeting was called and school dismissed with nothing settled. The few concrete decisions that were made were never implemented.

During Year Four, teachers' opinions were silenced when they did speak out on topics of concern. The policy of using standardized tests with all children every year was clearly one with which teachers disagreed. However, their vocal objection to this policy was never given voice nor consideration. The leaders basically told them that this was not an issue that could be changed regardless of their views. Discussions that did occur were stopped before closure as the leaders attempted to have the group follow their agendas. Decisions were seldom reached. Members were asked to critique materials that they did not have with them and which they had not perused with that thought before the meetings. This pattern of silencing teachers' voices or putting teachers in the position where they could not respond intelligently did much to thwart the progress of the committee.

Teachers were mostly quiet, not offering opinions or volunteering to take responsibilities. This may have been due to a combination of factors. First, there was confusion about what was really happening and where they were headed. Second, their opinions were not valued when they were offered. Third, the teachers were operating from a limited knowledge base, which may have affected their confidence. Fourth, the prepared agendas, which controlled the topics of discussion, limited what

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issues could surface. Last, this combination of factors may have worked to produce such a strong sense of frustration and a feeling that the work was senseless that the teachers did not care to put their energies into it.

The year was characterized by frustration from beginning to end. The leaders were frustrated with the lack of action and with the reluctance of the teachers to set a direction. The teachers were frustrated with the lack of direction from the leaders and with the lack of progress from their meetings.

The organized learning opportunities for teachers on reading instruction were all sponsored by textbook companies. The inservice day's one hour-long session provided some activities to use in classrooms. The other sessions were simply to acquaint the teachers with the materials of the companies. These limited learning opportunities may have been an especially important factor because this was a new committee. The new members of the group were given no opportunity to learn about the New Definition and what it might mean for the district reading curriculum.

The reports at meetings from grade level meetings indicated that teachers were talking about reading instruction during their meetings. However, most of these reports indicated that the focus was on getting new materials for use in their classrooms. The kindergarten and first grade teachers did discuss changes in curriculum and approaches to teaching reading. However, the reports given to the Reading Committee seemed to fall dead on the table, much like delivering the news. No

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decisions, direction, or action followed most reports from grade level meetings.

Year Four ended much as it began. District reading policy was still based on the old basal reading series. In fact, at the end of the year administrative meeting, the leaders of the Reading Committee stressed to the other elementary principals that teachers were expected to order and to use the old basal workbooks the following fall because it was still the approved district reading program (Informal conversation, 6/17/91). This lack of support at the district-level suggests that the district officials still did not understand what changes the policy suggested and/or that they did not see it as a priority to make changes in reading instruction at this time. The district did not acknowledge a mismatch between the approved curriculum and the intent of the policy. There was no real effort to investigate and implement changes in the reading program. Teachers were allowed to make individual changes as long as they continued to use the approved curriculum (the old basal) for part of their program. There was no sense of urgency about implementing the New Definition of Reading in Rockville.

Summary of Rockville's Activity over Four Years

Rockville worked on implementing Michigan's New Definition of Reading through a reading committee. This committee met with numerous obstacles along the way. The leadership changed. The membership changed. Money was not available to support the work. Contract negotiations held up the work. Frustration was rampant. Two major items were completed: a document was prepared and presented to the Board as

the current reading program for the district in 1989, and a pilot of two basal series was recommended for the fall of 1991.

Changes that were happening in classrooms were due to individual teachers' efforts, not to any changes recommended by the committee. The official reading curriculum existed in June of 1991, much as it did in January of 1988, when the work began.

The attempts of teachers to surface issues of personal concern during the meetings is evidence that they were thinking and questioning their ideas about reading instruction. This could have been an ideal opportunity for the policy to take hold; the ideas of the policy could have persuaded the teachers that there were better alternatives to meet their daily challenges in reading instruction. However, the inability of the group to focus on any of these issues long enough to reach a consensus for the group's work illustrates that there was too little attention given to educating the members. They were not able to evaluate and make decisions because they lacked adequate information and knowledge on the issues that surfaced. Not only were members weak in knowledge, the administrators were locked into following their agendas to the point that discussions which might have furthered understanding were often curtailed. Organizational routines such as preparing a curriculum document for the Board controlled the work. The group never reached the point of a study group which was investigating and learning about reading instruction. Instead, it functioned as individuals with differing levels of understanding and differing agendas who rarely connected and learned from each other. The committee appeared to be going through the motions to satisfy the standard operating procedure of curriculum revision, but

getting no where when it came to bringing about fundamental changes in reading instruction at the district-level.

Summary of Year Four in Fortville

The end of Year Four saw the district well into its efforts to implement the Language Arts Curriculum Proposal which was based on Michigan's New Definition of Reading. All elementary teachers had access to new basal readers and teacher's manuals, although they did not have all the supplementary materials from the basal series which they desired. Teachers had attended a number and variety of inservice sessions to help them understand the new materials and the strategies they might use in their classrooms. Money was provided for each teacher to buy materials to use in addition to the basal materials provided for everyone. This money did have some strings attached, however, because purchases had to be approved by administrators.

Teachers evaluated their own progress moving in this new direction quite highly. However, the picture of change presented in my interviews causes doubt that the teachers' responses were entirely accurate. Mr. Johnson felt that a regression had occurred during this year as some teachers began to look to the new basal textbook as the authority in reading instruction, just as they had viewed the old basal textbook. Mr. Johnson characterized the changes in the district as "about halfway there," but pointed out that they had made a mistake by going with a basal because teachers had regressed. "They are depending on the manual to plan for them now, just like in the past" (Informal Conversation, 2/18/91). Mr. Johnson's statement suggests that the teachers had not

made the change to decision-makers in control of their own reading instruction. Instead, he felt many were assigning that role to the textbook again. Teachers were looking to the basal manuals for direction on what they should do and how they should do it.

Ms. Jones also recognized that some teachers were allowing the manual to control their instruction, but she did not see this as a concern.

I think Mr. Johnson is too critical of his staff. His lower elementary staff is doing great things. He is probably referring to his upper elementary staff. They are more traditional. But, the Heath program is so good, that even if teachers are relying on it, I am not worried. You and I can still remember what it's like to be in the classroom. When you get new materials, you want to do it all just right. That first year you spend getting to know the materials and trying what they say. Then after you are familiar with them, you are more able to branch off. Later, you make your own decisions (Informal conversation, 2/19/91, pp. 2, 3).

This recognized dependency on the new basal manuals was especially important, because the new manuals offered pre-planned lessons to teach isolated skills in a linear sequence, much as the older basal had done. Lucy noticed this similarity after studying the new manuals.

The new program is really just like what we already had. It is not much different. We kept hearing that our old series was so awful, but after pouring over the new ones, we are kidding ourselves if we think the changes are real. They are pretty much the same as before (Interview, . 11/13/90, p. 1,2).

Lucy's remark points out that the teachers could not count on the new materials to make the changes in their instructional programs. The new materials offered choices much like the old materials offered. Teachers would need to understand what needed to be different and how to make those changes in order to make the appropriate instructional decisions.

Hence, the changes resulting from the large expenditure for new materials were sometimes more cosmetic than fundamental. Teachers were continuing to look to the materials for decisions about what to teach and how to teach it. The new materials offered teachers the same types of lessons that the old materials offered. So, teachers could easily follow plans that did not fit with the intent of the policy while feeling secure that they were teaching in new ways. Only thorough understanding of the ideas on which the policy was based would allow teachers to make the changes implied by the policy. Following new and revised basal manuals and teaching students new strategies might give the appearance that change had occurred, but fundamental changes in teachers' beliefs about reading instruction and in their instructional practices would be lacking.

Strong leadership had been provided during the implementation efforts by the building principals. These principals had a vision for what should be happening in reading instruction, and they were using their knowledge and power to make that happen. Teachers were expected to make changes in their instruction because the administrators felt these changes were important. However, the teachers were not all as comfortable and committed to the changes as were the principals. Mike, the half time Language Arts Coordinator, provided leadership and training and acted as a liaison between teachers and administrators. Mike was limited, though, because his position was half time. His efforts mostly focused on teaching teachers how to do specific strategies or how to use specific basal materials. His efforts may have left teachers handicapped in their decision-making for two reasons. First, they lacked conditional

knowledge of when and why to apply the strategies. Without conditional knowledge, the strategies become isolated, discrete exercises much as the skills approach of the past. Second, the teachers did not have thorough understanding of ideas on which the policy was based. Without understanding these ideas, teachers would not understand why the strategies were better than what they had always done. Thus, lacking a thorough understanding of the policy and lacking conditional knowledge about the strategies, teachers would have difficulty making appropriate instructional decisions.

Implementation efforts in Fortville were not all smooth nor completely satisfactory. There had been frustration over the number of basal reading books purchased, not every child could have one. Some teachers also wanted workbooks and skill pads which the principals did not want them to use. Teachers at various grade levels were angry over other grade levels using books for which they had already prepared units. Most of the disagreements and problems seemed to focus on materials, not on instruction. Teachers seemed to be focused on what materials they needed and could use to teach reading. There did not seem to be much discussion about the basic philosophical changes or how those might affect reading instruction.

There was resistance to the role change from reading teachers to reading consultants, a major piece of the staff development plan for the district. Many teachers still wanted the reading teachers to provide remedial services for students rather than staff development activities for teachers. At least one of the elementary reading consultants did not appear comfortable with the new role and resisted making the change. The

high school reading teacher could not make the change due to district financial constraints which placed limits on her time. The concept of providing staff support from the reading consultants sounded good in theory, but carrying it out proved to be difficult.

The elementary principals cochairing the committees were required to wear many hats, and their time was limited. This lack of time sometimes caused confusion about what they really expected (as evidenced in the reading teachers' meeting cited earlier). The reading teachers felt that they were unable to capture the principals' attention because the principals were overburdened with responsibilities. The issue of too much to do in too little time was of such magnitude that the elementary principals prepared a presentation for the Board on the subject. They wanted the Board to know that change is difficult and that people can only do so much at one time (Informal Conversation, 2/19/91). Mr. Johnson stated that

. . . (there are) too many demands on people to have them do a good job on any one of them, that goes for administrators and teachers both (Informal Conversation, 2/18/91).

The Board President did seem to recognize that teachers were feeling overwhelmed with the amount of change they were expected to make. She stated that she was "sure our teachers feel overloaded right now" (Interview, 5/6/91, p. 5). The Curriculum Director also recognized this issue of change overload.

I have some fears, too. There are so many changes being required in the next few years, and I worry about the psychological effects it will have on our people. It will need to be monitored by me and the superintendent to protect our staff. At times we have to shield them (Interview, 2/18/91, p. 9).

Many people in the district recognized that people were stretched too thinly. They recognized that this was a concern and spoke about it. However, I did not see any overt efforts to relieve this problem in my study.

Most of the incomplete projects concerning reading were completed by the end of the 1990-91 school year. In June, I spoke with Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson, Mike, and the Director of Curriculum were working together over the summer to develop a reading assessment tool for the district. This had been the job of the Elementary Reading Subcommittee, however, that subcommittee disbanded in effect. As mentioned earlier, most unfinished tasks of that subcommittee fell to Mike, the Language Arts Coordinator, to complete. The disintegration of this subcommittee was probably due to two conditions. First, the members of the committee openly stated they were tired of working on it. Even the cochair, Sue, stated that it was time for it to disband. Second, Ms. Jones, the other cochair, was given a new curriculum area to oversee during the implementation of the reading proposal. Her time was so limited that she did not make scheduling reading subcommittee meetings a priority.

The end of the 1990-91 school year saw the district on its way toward implementing its Language Arts Curriculum; however, implementation did not look quite like it had sounded on paper. How much this curriculum affected actual classroom instruction would be another interesting study.

Summary of Fortville

Fortville was able to begin an organized approach to change within the district during the four years. The initial efforts consisted of

informal efforts to make teachers aware that some kind of change was coming. The first formal committee formed to organize the change floundered and failed. A new leader was identified and new people were recruited. This group worked under frustrating time limits, but produced a proposal for the Board and a Scope and Sequence guide for teachers. These two documents addressed issues of Staff Development, Materials, and Instruction. Satisfaction with these documents was high, and funds were provided for implementation of the proposal.

A part-time coordinator was hired to oversee the implementation efforts. This coordinator developed a systematic approach to provide mini-sessions to all elementary staff on the changes expected and how to make them. These mini-sessions focused on use of materials and strategies to use with expository text. The role of building reading specialists was redefined to provide on-site support for teachers as they learned to make these changes. However, few teachers were making use of these consultants, preferring to use them as remedial reading teachers. The organizational constraints on the time of the reading teachers also hindered their efforts to make the change.

New materials were ordered, both a standard set of basals and other individually ordered materials. Teachers were provided opportunities to learn about the new basal series.

Efforts did not always proceed as smoothly as hoped. There appeared to be some reluctance on the part of teachers to talk with principals about using skill-oriented materials. This reluctance was probably due to the principals' open support for instruction without drill on isolated

skills and worksheets. The principals pushed for changes that they envisioned, but not all teachers seemed to see the same vision.

Overall, teachers in the elementary schools in the district responded to the evaluation survey that they felt they were well on their way to making the desired changes, and they felt happy with the efforts of the district to support them as they made these changes. However, many teachers stated that they were not teaching expository text, a focus of the learning opportunities they had, and many were not using the consultants, a key to the staff development plan. These responses bring doubts that they had made as many changes as they thought.

The focus of the following school year was to move to writing instruction while continuing to support reading changes. At the end of the following school year, the Language Arts Coordinator would be replaced by a Math Coordinator, so it appears that the implementation efforts of 1990-91 were the main thrust of the district to make changes in reading instruction.

Summary of the Stories of Both Districts

Both Rockville and Fortville had approached implementing the state policy by having committees of teachers rewrite the reading and language arts curriculums of the districts. Rockville chose to have an administrator chair the efforts from the beginning. Fortville began with two teachers as cochairs, but eventually moved to a committee chaired by an administrator.

Both districts had standard operating procedures for these committees to follow. There was a cycle of revision to follow. Each

area of the curriculum was revised during a specified year. This cycle was adhered to more closely in Fortville than in Rockville; however, in both districts it did force the production of a document for the Board within a limited amount of time. After the document was produced, Rockville's committee continued to reform and to stall and did not proceed along the cycle plan. Fortville continued to move along the cycle plan and secured funding to begin implementation efforts.

Members of both committees had few opportunities to learn about the policy and what it meant for reading instruction. The reading teachers in each district had attended some of the conferences provided by the Michigan Department of Education. These conferences would have given them an awareness of the policy and what it meant. However, transferring this way of thinking into practice became a matter of teaching teachers new strategies to teach the students. The reading teachers did not have extended learning experiences to help them make sense of what this new philosophy of learning to read really meant. Thus, a strategy instruction interpretation followed naturally.

Both districts expected the reading teachers to play a significant role in educating classroom teachers about the New Definition and the changes it would mean for classroom instruction. Rockville used these reading specialists to provide the beginning inservice sessions to acquaint teachers with the New Definition and to provide some strategies which teachers could use. Fortville used the reading consultants to provide some inservice sessions on the meaning of the New Definition and the strategies and to work with teachers in their buildings on a daily basis as teachers made the changes. This help was to be mostly in the

form of demonstration lessons or help in planning. Fortville's efforts to use the consultants in this role were less than successful, though.

Both districts expected their staffs to learn about the New Definition from their own reading, their own selection of conferences to attend, and the inservice sessions provided within the districts. Rockville seemed to have no overall plan for learning. Teachers in this district were on their own for the most part in learning about the changes and in making them. The few inservice sessions provided dealt primarily with strategies and materials. Fortville had a more systematic approach to teacher learning on paper. The half-time Language Arts Coordinator and the reading consultants were to work together to teach specific strategies to all staff. However, this written plan played out in a less orderly manner. The Language Arts Coordinator had limited time to cover six buildings, so he concentrated on the elementaries and the middle school, leaving the high school to its own devices. He scheduled after school and before school sessions in each building, but found that teachers were sometimes unable to attend, and when they did attend, they were less than enthusiastic about the opportunities. Meetings did not always start on time which cut into the material he could cover. Reading consultants were to follow up his lessons by helping individual teachers, but this was slow to happen and sporadic at best. So, even though Fortville had a plan for staff development, the actual learning opportunities that teachers had were more limited than planned.

In both districts, the control of the revision efforts was retained by the administrators. Rockville administrators controlled the agendas and the discussions at the meetings (This was not true for the initial

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meetings led by the first administrator who retired). These administrators took responsibility for tasks approved by the group, but seldom completed those tasks. Fortville administrators also controlled the efforts. These administrators relied on their own knowledge and vision to define the task, write much of the proposal, submit the final order for materials, and retain the right to approve how teachers spent their two-hundred fifty dollar allotments. The differences in the leadership were that Rockville administrators retained control, but did not define a vision nor follow through on tasks to move toward defining a vision. Fortville's administrators worked to have their vision become the official vision and to force teachers to move toward that vision.

Fortville had administrators who were committed to their interpretation of the policy and the vision they felt it offered for reading instruction. Every administrator that I talked with could tell me their interpretation of the New Definition and what they felt it would mean for reading instruction in the district. Rockville's administrators were less sure what the policy meant or how to approach implementation of it. Rockville administrators responded that the teachers were the experts and that they relied on the teachers to know how to do this. This is especially interesting in light of the way the control of the work was retained by the administrators. This difference of administrator knowledge and commitment influenced the differences found in the stories of both districts.

The issues of knowledge, power, and organizational routines all worked together to influence the implementation stories of the two districts. The differences in how each of the three areas was working

within the district explains many of the differences found in the implementation stories. In Chapter Five, I will examine these issues further.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The stories of district-level efforts in Rockville and Fortville to implement a state policy aimed at changing classroom reading instruction provide interesting insights into the challenges of policy implementation and of changing classroom instruction. When the policy is a "policy as ideas" (Weiss, 1990), such as Michigan's reading policy, the efforts become even more complex. When the policy is constructed as a "curriculum alignment" reform (Cohen, 1989-90), there are additional challenges. Both types of reforms require that those responsible for implementation understand the ideas of the policy and can translate them into practice. If local implementors do not understand the ideas of the policy, they cannot be persuaded to change their practice in ways which would fit with the policy's ideas. They would be confused about how such practice might look. In an aligned reform, where a test is expected to push teachers toward the desired practices, local implementors must understand the ideas of the policy and the expectations of the test to implement such practices. If, as in the case of Michigan's policy, there appears to be a mismatch between the ideas underlying the policy and the assessment approach of the test

instrument, teachers will be more confused about just what they are supposed to do. Thus, teachers who are weak in their understanding of the policy's ideas have two choices. They can learn more about the policy's ideas and work together to gain more thorough understandings of it. Or, they can look for ways to simplify those ideas into something that looks familiar to them, something which they feel they can do with little additional learning.

At this critical decision point, two additional contextual features come to bear. First, teachers work within a public bureaucracy, an organization. Organizations have certain characteristics which inhibit fundamental changes and which push for changes which can simply be added onto the existing routines of the organization. Organizational characteristics push for maintenance of existing routines while planning and reporting to give the appearance of change. Second, teachers work within a hierarchy. Hierarchical control is part of the political power structure of a school system. Administrators typically make decisions upon which teachers are expected to act. Building administrators need to show parents and central office administrators that teachers are following the approved curriculum. They also evaluate teachers on their ability to keep order in the classroom (Cusick, 1983); teachers trying to make fundamental shifts in their instruction would appear less in control and thus, principals would likely push (covertly or overtly) for a return to less uncertain routines. Central office administrators must be concerned with budget constraints and cycles. They strive to fit implementation efforts into existing cycles. Board members must be concerned with public perceptions of the schools. They would likely

expect instruction which could be easily justified with district documentation and which looked familiar to parent and community groups. At the bottom of this hierarchy are the classroom teachers who must continue to teach the students while keeping in mind the agendas of these other groups. Teachers most often face the uncertainties and dilemmas inherent in teaching alone. Making fundamental changes in their practice would be difficult and uncomfortable at best. If they did want to make such changes in their own teaching and in the instructional programs of the district, they would have to convince those above them in the hierarchy of the need for such changes. They would then need leadership which was committed to and understood those changes, or they would need the power to lead the efforts themselves, the power to make and to act on decisions. The organization itself, the hierarchical power structures, and the knowledge and commitment of individuals influence the changes possible in response to the policy.

In both Rockville and Fortville, these three areas, knowledge of individuals, organizational routines, and political power structures, worked in interesting ways to limit the types of changes that could occur at the district-level. However, an interesting sideline of the stories is that in both districts teachers were trying to make changes individually in their own classrooms. In both districts, a majority of my participants were experimenting with different ways of teaching reading than they had used in the past. This was not surprising because I assumed these teachers were the most knowledgeable about the policy in both districts due to their extended service on the reading committees. They at least had some limited reading, discussing, visiting other

places, and inservice opportunities which most district teachers had not had. What was surprising was that when these teachers planned for district-level change, they chose to order new materials and to provide training on the strategies suggested by the Michigan Department of Education. These two suggestions were the bulk of the district level change.

District-level efforts, then, suggested that if teachers had new materials and knew how to teach the strategies, they would be implementing the policy. This type of plan was not what I would have expected from my talks with the teachers. Why did it occur? Why was the district plan or approach so similar in both districts? To answer these questions, I will now discuss the ways in which the individual knowledge, the organizational characteristics, and the political power structures interacted and influenced the district-level efforts to implement Michigan's reading policy in Rockville and in Fortville.

Knowledge of Individuals

Michigan's reading policy was based on a new idea about what reading is and how one learns to do that. However, the New Definition of Reading and "Michigan's Essential Objectives for Reading" are both open to varied interpretations. Neither makes it clear to classroom teachers how instruction of this type would look. This presents problems for local implementors who are trying to plan for district-wide changes. This "policy as ideas" assumes that teacher behaviors can be changed with new information and ideas (Weiss, 1990). However, if teachers do not understand what those new behaviors should be, they will

be unable to implement them in their own rooms, and they will be unable to design district efforts to help other teachers implement them. Were the participants, those in charge of designing district implementation efforts, knowledgeable about this policy and the ideas on which it was based? The answer to that question is both yes and no.

In both districts, the teacher participants could tell me what the New Definition meant. They were able to talk about this definition in a general way. Teachers understood that comprehension was the big focus; that instruction should focus on the whole process rather than on small bits and skills; that students should be applying reading skills in ways which were meaningful to them; that reading instruction should start with what students already know; that reading should be integrated into all subject areas; and that students should enjoy and love reading. All of these ideas were accurate in a general way. Each of the teachers understood the general intent of the policy. However, when asked about putting these ideas into practice, there were differences among the participants' understandings.

Teacher Knowledge in Rockville

My data on teachers' reading instruction was limited to self-reported data. Classroom instruction was not the focus of my study, and I was able to visit only a few classrooms during my study. However, I was able to build a fairly accurate picture of teachers' programs through my interview questions, my observations of their work at the district level, and by observing their classroom artifacts and settings.

I asked Ann, a veteran first grade teacher in Rockville, to talk about her reading program with me. She gave a response that was typical in Rockville. Ann stated that the New Definition called for instruction that "begins with the whole and then pulls it apart" and that "uses better quality materials where language flows like we really talk." Ann spoke of making changes in her classroom over the last few years. She said she had been a traditional teacher using ability groups and workbook skills for her instruction. She had evolved to using lots of big books, shared reading (students read chorally with the teacher), writing in journals, and using labels and charts around the room to help with writing and reading for part of her instruction. However, she continued to use the basal workbooks and tests because her principal required it and because it was more comfortable (Interview, 10/12/90).

Ann did not feel comfortable with her knowledge and ability to implement this new view of reading instruction. When I asked to come and see the changes she had made in her instruction, she refused saying that she was not comfortable with what she was doing yet. In my interview with Ann, she stated that she continues to use the old basal because "it is comfortable" and that "I believe in the new way, but I don't know what I'm doing." Later in the interview she continued

So this (the New Definition of Reading) is from the state. Do we have to do it? Is it different? I don't know (if I teach in this way). This year I am just exploring and trying lots of things out and seeing if they work (Interview, 10/12/90, p. 4).

Ann's uncertainty about what the policy would look like in practice was echoed by every teacher participant in Rockville.

Frances, a veteran fifth grade language arts teacher, talked about the meaning of the policy.

I have asked myself that (what the New Definition means) many times. I can't put a handle on it. It is this nice, long, big definition and I can't remember it. I'm trying to work it into what I'm doing. I just can't put it in words. I try to work within what I feel it's about" (Interview, 1/16/91, p. 5).

Frances described her reading program as structured around ability groups which were predetermined by the fourth grade teachers. Within these ability tracked groups, she further divided the students into ability groups in each section. The lower groups spend time working in Reader's Digest Skill Books and a comprehension skills workbook. Frances stated that she also uses informal reading inventories, a study skills unit and a unit on Bloom's Taxonomy (a hierarchy of thinking skills) to group the students within sections. She said, "I am always hesitant to trust my own judgment" about grouping. The program which Frances described coupled with her comments about the meaning of the policy and her lack of confidence in her own judgment suggested that Frances did not have a thorough understanding of the ideas of the policy and how they would look in practice.

Betty, a first grade teacher, prefaced her remarks about her reading program by saying

Well, it is not really the ideal program, the way that I would like to teach reading, but I have to meet the district demands and use the books they tell me to follow. This year I have broken away from them a bit, though, but the basal is the major part of my program (Interview, 2/4/91, p. 1).

Betty stated that she followed the lessons in the basal manual, used the "Discovering Intensive Phonics" program, and taught three ability groups. However, as she continued to talk, she mentioned using more big

books as she could get them, having students write in journals and write creative stories, and telling students to use context clues before using phonics for decoding. Betty seemed to be experimenting with new ways of teaching reading while continuing the old, familiar practices as well. Betty also spoke of her lack of knowledge and understanding of how to implement the ideas of the policy.

I would really like to get away from the reading groups, but I don't know how to do it in first grade . . . I tried to do it with the whole language activities, but some of the low kids really did not catch on to what they were doing at all (Interview, 2/4/91, p. 4).

Betty was trying new ideas as well as using her existing routines, but she felt unsure about how to make the new ideas work for all students.

Farah, another fifth grade language arts teacher, spoke of her program using children's literature as a basis for writing activities and for integrating content area subjects into the reading program. Farah's instruction was also evolving. She spoke of teaching a traditional approach until about two years ago. Then she began to experiment with using heterogeneous groups rather than ability groups. As she tried this approach, she began to do more cooperative group (small groups of mixed ability which work together toward a single goal or task) activities and more writing. However, she also stated that she teaches skills such as affixes, syllabication, and main idea within the reading lessons, trying to tie them to the literature when possible. She stated that she had evaluated the success of her program at the end of the year by giving the basal test for sixth grade. She stated that students typically do well on this test, so she feels her approach is working okay. This was a strange paradox in that she felt the basal

approach was poor, but that she judged success of her alternative approach by the basal standards. She illuminated her thinking on this practice a bit in my interview.

But the way I teach reading, it is so hard to judge. The basal gives better guidelines and has testing so you can judge growth better. That is, if you consider the tests a good way to judge growth (Interview, 10/23/90, p. 4).

So, Farah did not consider the basals appropriate, yet she was not sure enough about her own ideas to totally abandon the basal. She used it to identify skills to teach and to evaluate success. Farah stated that she did not feel she had a good handle on what the policy meant after attending the limited inservices that the district provided. Farah was experimenting with new ideas in her reading program, but she did not have the confidence to abandon many of her old practices.

Kaitlin, a veteran fourth grade language arts teacher, described her program for me.

Well, I have one major thought about it. I think that by fourth grade kids have had enough of phonics, workbooks, skills, and such, and that my main job is to broaden their view of reading. I provide time for reading and time for skill work, but I use a thematic approach. I work with two premises: reading for imagination and reading for information. For example, if I am teaching Mr. Popper's Penguins, I will tie in informational reading about penguins or map skills about where penguins live, geography, I try to tie in science and social studies. Also, I think kids need to be reading from a variety of media. Reading is not confined to textbook or workbook. We use newspapers, telephone books, comic books. A variety of media and avenues to read and use reading. I guess they could be called "life skills." I also provide reading time like "DEAR" (Drop Everything and Read) or "USSR" (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading) at least two times a week, and I read, too, to model that reading is important. I read to the class everyday for fun.

Testing puts pressure on me, too. I am responsible for the skills that will be on the tests in the spring, so I have to teach those. I mainly teach the skills, but do

not teach to the test. I try to tie the skills into what we are using, but it takes time away from the other activities. But the kids will be tested, and I need to prepare them for the testing situation . . . I don't really believe in the tests anyway. I don't think they are an accurate measure of what kids know, but they are a fact of life, and I have to live with them (Interview, 10/10/90, pp. 1-2).

When asked if her program had changed over the years, she replied, "Definitely, yes!" She stated that she had begun as a traditional teacher using only basals and ability grouping all students. She then experimented with thematic units with the ability groups. Later, she moved to literature with ability groups, and finally moved to heterogeneous grouping using cooperative groups and various types of reading materials and activities.

Kaitlin stated that it was difficult to teach reading because she was unsure "what specific skills I am supposed to teach." She added, "It's hit or miss on what to cover. I worry I am totally off base" (Interview, 10/10/90, pp. 2-3).

I was able to visit Kaitlin's class regularly for one year, and I found her description of her instruction to be quite accurate. She was working toward the type of reading instruction supported by the policy, but continued to cover the old, discrete skills so that her students would be successful on the standardized tests which they were required to take. Like the other teachers in Rockville, Kaitlin mentioned her own lack of knowledge about just what would be included in the new view of teaching reading.

None of the teacher participants in Rockville felt they thoroughly understood how the policy would translate into practice. They were all experimenting with changes in their programs, but were not sure that

they knew what this type of instruction should include. This lack of knowledge and confidence about how the policy would look in practice by the group of teachers with the most experience with the policy suggests that Rockville was likely to have difficulty planning curriculum and implementation efforts that were in line with the policy.

Another interesting point was that each teacher seemed to be teaching skills or using assessments with which they were uncomfortable. The teachers in Rockville appeared to be trying out ideas which they thought might be better for students, while sticking with old practices which were more in line with district expectations. They were adding new ideas onto existing routines. They were not abandoning practices in which they did not believe because of district policies and expectations.

These teachers did have ideas on what was needed to help themselves and other district teachers better understand this view of teaching reading. Kaitlin gave a typical response.

Teachers need to be able to sit in on lessons to see how it looks. A real key is the building coordinator (reading specialist) who works with teachers. You can't go to a seminar and then just change everything you do. It doesn't work that way. . . . It has to be done from the inside, you don't go out and hear something and come back and do it. . . . We have to move slowly. We can't do it all at once (Interview, 10/10/90, p. 10).

Farah echoed Kaitlin's remarks.

When you go to an inservice, you want three quick neat things to do. There is no substance. There are no follow up sessions. There is no time in the day to share ideas. No brainstorming. No sharing units (Interview, 10/23/90, p. 12).

Betty echoed the suggestion that teachers needed time to share with each other, but added that workshops and conferences would also be helpful.

The Rockville teachers were supporting (possibly unwittingly) the literature which states that both staff training and staff support is a key to making changes in instruction (Marsh & McLaughlin, 1978). These teachers recognized that they were unsure how to put this policy into practice. They were experimenting in their own programs, but they believed that they needed time to learn together to really make the changes happen. As we saw in Chapters Three and Four, this time was not provided.

Was the story the same in Fortville? I found similar types of responses about what the policy would mean for practice and a recognition that teachers needed more time and opportunities to learn about these new ideas in Fortville.

Teacher Knowledge in Fortville

My data suggests that the teachers in Fortville were also at various points in their understanding and practice of the policy. Sue, the Elementary Reading Subcommittee cochair, stated that the New Definition of Reading means "reading for comprehension." When I pushed her to explain further, she stated, "I like it because it is simple and to the point. I think it is clear" (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 4). Sue seemed to feel that "reading for comprehension" was a simple concept, one which anyone who heard it with an open mind would understand. Yet, when I asked her about her own instruction she stated

I often don't know what to do . . . I'm not an expert. I don't have much classroom experience . . . I have no idea why I was chosen as cochair of the committee . . . I don't know the answer for all of the kids. I do what I think is right. There is no easy answer as to what

kids need. If I was a doctor and someone had a brain tumor, I would cut it out. But a reading teacher can't diagnose so well (Interview, 11/13/90, pp. 2-3).

So, even though Sue stated that everyone could understand the New Definition, which meant simply to teach comprehension, she stated that she did not always know how to meet students' needs, that she was not an expert, and that she often did not know what to do. These contradictory statements led me to believe that either Sue had not seriously thought about the implications of the New Definition for instruction, or she had limited understanding of how the policy would look in practice. She said that anyone could easily understand the ideas, yet she herself did not really understand how they would look in practice. However, she did not seem to recognize this contradiction.

Lucy, a veteran second grade teacher with a masters degree in reading, showed a similar limited understanding of the policy. Lucy refused to talk with me at first. When I attempted to make the interview as convenient and painless as possible, she finally agreed to give me fifteen minutes. When I asked her what the New Definition means for practice, she replied

(Laughing) These are the kind of questions I did not want to answer. I guess writing, predicting, thinking, not workbook, circling types of questions. Creative, open-ended. Basically, we have talked about the New Definition so much that it is the old definition. It isn't really any different (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 3).

Lucy saw the New Definition as no different from what she had always done. Yet, when she explained to me how she taught reading, she showed me reams of worksheets she had run off to drill students on skills and boxes of vocabulary words isolated on word cards which she used for drill. She spoke of using ability grouping for all reading instruction.

Lucy's teaching did not resemble any version of the policy, but was still a traditional basal-driven, skills-oriented approach. Thus, Lucy's understanding of the policy is in doubt, even though she felt confident that she understood it.

Jan, a reading teacher/consultant, exhibited similar confusion about the policy and what it meant for practice.

Reading hasn't changed much, but we are now focusing on three things more: the reader, we now know that the reader's experiential background is more important than we knew in understanding what they read. When you read you are basically talking to yourself all the time about what the author is saying. The text is important. What you read is viewed in a certain way and when you read, your attitude and effort will affect your reading of the text. The context, or the environment and the purpose you read it for. The situation. So we are focusing on the reader, the text, and the context more than we did before (Interview, 12/5/90, p. 5).

Jan was able to restate the New Definition for me, but she did not see that this was any different. When I asked her about her own teaching, she talked about a program which did not sound as though it fit with the intent of the policy. Jan conducted a pull-out remedial program for low achieving readers.

I do think skills are important and I teach skills. For example, I think a lot of problems in reading are because of the vowel sounds. I teach those, but I tell the kids they don't need to know all of them. We try at least to get the short vowels and hope it might help . . . (I find it hard) to get a child who knows nothing about letter sounds, zilcho, to start getting them to acquire a memory of vocabulary. We do it all, sight words, phonics, context. Some of them know it one time, but not the next. To take zilcho and get them going (Interview, 12/5/90, p. 4).

In talking about her program, Jan consistently concentrated on word-level skills of letter sounds and vocabulary. She never discussed comprehension or constructing meaning. Thus, even though she could

restate the New Definition, she appears to have been teaching a more traditional, skills-oriented approach, and she did not see the policy as calling for much change. Even though Jan apparently was not teaching in the way the policy supported, she felt confident that she understood the policy well. She did not think that there was time for the group to really understand the policy as they wrote the proposal for the district, though.

We worked on writing the goals and objectives for long, long hours. There was not time for any of it to sink in, though. Then it came down to selecting materials. There was just not time to do the job well. It was done much too fast (Interview, 12/11/90, p. 8).

Jan recognized that the proposal was written without a complete understanding of what should happen.

Cory, the third reading teacher/consultant in Fortville, seemed to have a better understanding of the policy's intent. She stated

I think it means understanding that the thrust is comprehension of what you read. That we must be aware that there is so much involved in comprehending something you read. There are three components of the text, the situation, and the reader. That we must integrate these three components and know what to do to help students get the meaning from what they read. It is what I have always believed about reading. In my classrooms, I always taught this way. I never felt that having kids read something and answer questions about it was teaching reading. To teach reading, you must teach the kids how to think and arrive at the answers. They need to know how to understand both what is in the book and what is in their heads and how the two work together (Interview, 12/6/90, p. 6).

Cory seemed to have a view of reading instruction which focused on thinking about what one reads and how to arrive at answers rather than just getting the answers correct. However, she was assuming that all students would arrive at the same correct answer. She stated that she

had always taught in this way and was now pleased that research backed up her views. In describing her program, Cory spoke about working on background knowledge before reading and on developing concepts and vocabulary rather than focusing on word attack skills at the expense of comprehension. Cory seemed to be more near an accurate vision of what the New Definition would mean for practice than were Sue and Lucy.

Cory also stated that teachers in the district "do need help to get thoroughly comfortable with the New Definition and the new series" (Interview, 12/6/90, p. 4). She supported Jan's remarks that the proposal was written too quickly and that teachers did not have time to discuss and to think about the changes carefully.

The reading teachers were supposed to discuss it and make some decisions. But we never did it. We never really talked and came to consensus on the change. I wrote down my own thoughts and brought them to a meeting to discuss with everyone else because I thought that was what we were going to do. But at the meeting no one else had written anything, and we just didn't talk about it. What I had written down just showed up in the proposal with no discussion. I think it happened because we were so rushed all year to get it done. It just went down as I wrote it, and then it became part of the proposal. There was no discussion. It just happened (Interview, 12/6/90, p. 4).

Cory recognized that the group accepted ideas with little discussion or thought. She also recognized that teachers in the district were not all comfortable with the new ideas and needed time and support to understand and implement those ideas.

Don and Mary also held accurate views of what the policy intended and seemed to be experimenting with ways to translate it into their programs. Don stated that the New Definition meant

To be successful outside of school, to be adaptable, to understand the ways that print pops into the heads of different people differently. To be exposed to different ideas through print, to learn this. If two people read the same sentence, each would personalize and interpret it differently. I am concerned that kids realize that reading is lifelong and that it brings enjoyment. I am doing a lot with reading incentives. It also means to use reading skills through the curriculum, that a geography book is just as important for reading. . . . We isolate reading too much. . . . The emphasis is not on skills. It's on using reading to think. It is not isolated. You look at the big picture, then see details in it (Interview, 10/17/90, p. 4).

Don seemed to grasp the big picture that teaching reading is for communication rather than just to teach a lot of skills. He spoke of integrating the curriculum. When describing his own reading program, Don seemed to be working to apply these ideas. He spoke of transforming his instruction over three years from a traditional, skills-based, workbook oriented program to one of using novels with worksheets to one of using novels to get kids to think and to write about their own ideas and reactions. He recognized that he had been a traditional teacher in the past, but felt he was moving his instruction toward the ideas expressed in the policy.

Don also spoke of the lack of knowledge the group had about the policy.

It was so frustrating. Nobody was trained in the New Definition, but our assignment was to come up with a new program. No one knew what the new program should look like. So people were saying 'Let's get a new book' with no criteria for what they wanted . . . I know they say you should write the curriculum and then look for a book, but you have limited time and you will usually copy something from a book rather than reinvent the wheel. But we create a lot of work, and it will be in the book anyway, in the scope and sequence (Interview, 10/17/90, p. 7).

So even though Don talked about the changes he was making in his own reading instruction, he seemed to say that teachers would rely on the book anyway and writing a new curriculum was wasting time. He also talked about the frustration of trying to write a new program when none of the participants had been thoroughly trained in the new ideas.

Mary seemed to grasp the bigger picture of the New Definition.

Mary spoke of the intent of the policy.

It means creating a reading situation where kids bring their own information to the text and they interact with it. They are fully involved with the story. They learn to analyze and extend it on their own. They begin to think about what they read in relation to their own lives. At first grade, extending it might mean drawing a character or patterned rewriting. Mainly it means relating what they read to their own lives. I always have taught that way. It used to be the alternative approach, and now I am the mainstream approach. It legitimized what I have always done (Interview, 11/13/90, p. 4).

Mary seemed to understand that reading instruction under the new policy meant more than teaching a few new strategies. Mary said that she had always taught in this way. A visit to her classroom supported what she said about her program. Her room was a maze of reading and writing materials and examples from students. It was impossible to look anywhere in the room without my eye resting on written material. She talked about using literature, patterned books, and real experiences to help her students think and to springboard into language activities of talking, listening, and writing. The classroom itself supported her statements that she was practicing her vision of what the policy intended. However, she was also clinging to some of her former routines. She spoke of using a commercial phonics program which focuses strictly on word level skills, having the students look at an isolated

word and break it apart into phonemes. This program would seem similar to the approach of DIP in Rockville. It uses isolated words and sounds and has children practice saying sounds in isolation. The teacher follows a prescriptive lesson format, and all students repeat after the teacher, memorizing the sounds rather than thinking about the word and its meaning. This program would seem at odds with the philosophy and ideas of the policy.

Mary was frustrated because she felt the committee had focused on buying a new basal, which she did not see as an accomplishment, rather than on learning more about reading. She went so far as to state that she would never work on the reading committee again because she felt her ideas were not valued by the group. She was frustrated by the time frame which limited the learning opportunities.

There was too much to be done in too short a time. We had to do it all on our own time, and we were always under a time crunch. The short time cut the number of places we could visit or the workshops we could attend to learn more. We didn't explore things other than a basal with any seriousness. Not enough people were able to see other things and ways of doing it. . . . It was the administrative plan. Everything is set out by years in cycles. . . . Because nothing occurred the first year, we were under a crunch the next year. There was no extension for us to really do the preparation and learning . . . (I joined the committee) to explore new ideas in reading. I didn't feel there was any time to explore, though. There was lots thrown at us, but we were told to put it together and write the proposal without adequate time to take in things ourselves (Interview, 11/13/90, pp. 9-10).

Even though Mary was quite strong in her views of the policy, she stated that she felt the committee had been asked to write the proposal with inadequate understanding of the ideas. She felt the time crunch was responsible because it limited their learning opportunities. This same view was expressed by several of the participants in Fortville. Mary

further stated that to make these changes all teachers needed more modeling of the new ideas.

I think people are making good attempts to teach this way. People want more modeling, though. You can't have all the ideas yourself. I would love to have someone come in and model for me or let me go watch someone else teach and get new ideas. . . . We need the consultants to help us. That isn't happening here. . . . Sometimes I feel like an isolated boat adrift with my kids (Interview, 11/13/90, pp. 5, 11).

Mary echoed the concerns of the other teachers. The group was asked to write a proposal in a short amount of time with few opportunities to learn how the new ideas should look. She called for help from the consultants, which was not happening. She felt isolated in trying to put these new ideas into practice, and frustrated with the way her work on the committee had gone.

So, of my participants in Fortville, some of the teachers seemed to have a clear vision of the policy's intent and had ideas about how to put it in practice. These teachers were experimenting with those ideas, while continuing to use former routines as well. They were adding the new ideas onto their existing programs. A few of these teachers stated that they had been teaching in these ways before the policy. Other participants saw the policy as clear, simple, not very different from past practice. These teachers saw the policy in a more traditional view, concentrating on skills practice rather than on constructing meaning. These latter teachers also felt they had always taught in these ways (which is probably true in light of the way they were interpreting the ideas), but they failed to see that their teaching practice fell short of the vision of the policy.

The Fortville participants also expressed concerns that they were weak in their knowledge about what the policy meant. This recognition that they did not fully understand the new ideas was present in the teacher participants in both districts. In each district I found teachers who were teaching in more traditional ways and teachers who were experimenting with more innovative practices. The types of responses that all teachers gave as to the meaning of the New Definition were similar. In both districts, teachers felt uncomfortable with their own knowledge and ability to implement these new ideas without more learning opportunities.

This analysis of these teachers' instructional practices is important in pointing out that teachers may be able to use the rhetoric of the policy, but may not have internalized those ideas to the point of fundamentally changing their own instruction. However, this is what one would expect. These teachers were trying to figure out how to put these ideas into practice while continuing to teach and to manage the complex classroom environment. They could hardly be expected to toss out all that was familiar and to start from scratch, especially since few felt they really understood how these changes should look. Who could survive the everyday chaos likely to result from such an action? Routines allow one to manage complex situations and as such are important and necessary. However, routines also tend to slow the pace of change. Those responsible for implementing a policy which suggests major changes should be aware of and accept the role that routines will play in that process.

Knowledge of the Administrators in Rockville

In addition to understanding the knowledge of the policy which the teachers had, I felt it necessary to understand what the administrators in the districts thought about the intent of the policy. The administrators would be key participants in any implementation efforts at the district level. Marsh and McLaughlin (1978) found that commitment and support of district administrators is critical to successful change efforts.

In Rockville the principals leading the group could state their interpretation of the policy, but their actions did not suggest that they knew how this interpretation could be translated into instructional practice. Ms. Brown, the initial chair, stated that the New Definition meant that

. . . teachers must communicate that excitement (about reading) to kids. Kids must feel that this is something that I must learn to tap into all of the wonderful things in the world of books. They must develop a curiosity about the written word . . . I want teachers to know how to bring about this excitement, how to teach different kids to read, not just one method. To know all of the necessary strategies for teaching all kids. I want teachers to know many methods, including phonetic analysis, contextual skill, providing experience with words and passages, and to address the needs of special kids . . . I have high expectations for teachers (Interview, 10/16/90, p. 4).

Ms. Brown focused on building positive attitudes and excitement about reading in her vision. She placed responsibility on the teacher to know many methods and to meet the needs of all students.

She began the committee's efforts by concentrating on what teachers needed to know. She provided journal articles and discussion time for the group. She formed subcommittees which were to continue the

investigations the following year. Ms. Brown acknowledged that both she and the group needed time to learn about the new ideas in reading instruction before they attempted to plan for change (Interview, 10/16/90). However, Ms. Brown had the advantage of leading the first year of the efforts, the year where learning is allowed.

Once Ms. Brown retired, Mr. Curt did not acknowledge that teachers needed time to learn about the policy. The standard operating procedure of producing a document for the Board quickly took over, and opportunities for the group to learn and to think were abandoned. However, because of financial difficulties and personnel changes, the group which he was leading was not even the same group which had limited learning opportunities the previous year. Ms. Smith later attempted to form subcommittees to become "experts" on various aspects of the curriculum, but this move was met with resistance from the teachers and never happened.

Since the teachers were not provided time and opportunities to learn about the policy, one might wonder if the leaders in the district had a thorough understanding of the policy and were going to provide the expertise. Mr. Curt's actions suggest that he did not have such an understanding. He made statements to the committee such as

So is whole language what we are talking about? How to do it? Even after reading this article, which is good, I keep wondering , 'But how would you do this?' (Fieldnotes, 1/10/91).

I read the passage from the MEAP for seventh grade and I can see why they did poorly. We may decide that it's not all stuff that we want to work on . . . (Fieldnotes, 12/04/90, p. 4).

Mr. Curt's comments imply that he did not fully understand what the policy intended to happen nor how it would look in classrooms. His remarks also suggest that he was not fully committed to the ideas in the policy when he stated that the group might decide they did not want to work on "all that stuff" from the MEAP.

In my interview, Mr. Curt explained how he thought classroom reading programs should look. He mentioned teaching the joy of reading as being most important, but teaching skills "he could put his finger on" was important, at least in the lower grades.

I want to see students actively involved in what they are doing. I also want to see students enjoying what they are doing. Of course, some learning is laborious, but most of it should be enjoyable. I also look for a variety of materials to read available to students. The teacher should be actively involved with the students. If they are using a ditto, which some still do a lot of, they should be moving around and asking the kids to read it to them and to tell them about it. I also insist that teachers read to the kids everyday. In grades one through three, I expect to see skill work, skills I can put my finger on, skills to attack new words. But in grades four and five there is a major difference in the skills. Here they may be dealing with novels and more complicated reading. . . . The skills taught should be integrated into interesting reading material. . . . Most of all I want to see teachers teaching the joy of reading (Interview, 10/11/90, p. 3).

Mr. Curt seemed to believe that students should learn to love reading, but that some learning would be "laborious." He seemed to believe that if teachers were "involved with the students" and were teaching skills, students would learn to read and to enjoy reading. He did not really speak to how that would occur in the classroom, what that involvement would be. He did say that even if students were working on skill ditto sheets, if the teachers were circulating and interacting with students, they would be encouraging this love of reading. Mr. Curt's focus on

teaching skills, his allowance that extensive ditto work could be interesting, his statements that he did not understand how you would teach whole language and that the MEAP might not be "stuff" they wanted to teach all suggest that he did not fully understand nor believe in the ideas on which the policy rested.

Ms. Smith, the cochair of the committee, responded in a limited way when I asked her what the New Definition of Reading meant for instructional practice.

I don't know what you mean. We want them to become fluent readers, of course. We want them to love literature and non-fiction as well and gathering information and knowledge. I would like to see kids working independently and in groups and gaining in skills as independent learners. Lots of exploring and gaining experience. This is a vague question . . . I would expect the teacher to assess what the kids know using tests and other kinds of information like writing samples and then decide what their needs are. To use the many pieces that we know about from their assessment of the needs. To create a program for each child. To be sure that each child has the opportunity to learn . . . I want to see kids who read and understand what they read; I want them to be taught how to do that (Interview, 4/18/91, p. 2).

Ms. Smith seems to put much responsibility for decision-making on the teacher. The teacher would need to know how to assess student needs and then how to meet them individually and collectively. The teacher would need to know much about reading instruction to meet these expectations. However, Ms. Smith required teachers in her building to continue to use the old basal workbooks and skill tests as part of their reading programs. She did not seem to understand that these two approaches were not compatible in philosophy. Ms. Smith did not seem to fully understand nor support the ideas of the policy.

Mr. Curt and Ms. Smith each state that they want teachers to teach kids how to read and to teach them to enjoy reading. Yet, they seem less clear on how that would occur. Mr. Curt speaks of interactions and involvement, ignoring the fact that some of the involvement he mentioned would likely be at odds with the intent of the policy. Ms. Smith speaks of teaching kids to read by using needs assessments and assumes that teachers can identify each student's needs and then provide for those needs. Neither leader expressed a clear vision of what teachers would be doing to meet students' needs in better ways because of the New Definition of Reading.

Were the central office administrators and the Board members more knowledgeable about the policy? Could they have led the efforts? My data suggests this was not the case either. The Director of Educational Services, who was in charge of all curriculum revision work, did not have a real understanding of the policy. When asked what the New Definition meant for reading instruction in the district, he replied

I think it has a different emphasis than in the past. I'm not an expert in reading, though, so I can't really critique it. I rely on my staff in matters of curriculum policy and implementation (Interview, 2/5/91, p. 1).

When I pursued this question, asking who he relied on in curriculum matters, he mentioned the reading teachers and the classroom teachers. Yet, my data suggested that these same teachers felt less confident in their own understandings.

The superintendent gave a similar reply, indicating that he did not fully understand the policy either. When asked what kind of teaching the New Definition of Reading intended, he replied

I'm not really equipped to answer that well, in that I am not a reading expert, but I will give you my perception and if I'm not correct maybe you should tell me. I think it means more emphasis on reading things in context to gain a deeper understanding of the text. That will in turn lead to better application of what you read. Is that right? (Interview, 3/27/91, p. 1).

He was able to state the intent of the policy in a limited way, but was quite unsure if this was accurate and did not touch at all upon how this would look in practice. His tentativeness suggests that he was not leading the efforts to implement the policy, but was relying on the reading "experts" as was the Director of Educational Services.

This uncertainty about the policy was also voiced by the Board President. When asked what the New Definition of Reading meant for district reading instruction, he replied with the following.

This is just my initial impression, we haven't spent in depth time with it, but I have heard it. We haven't really discussed it. I think it offers a lot of promise for reading instruction, for more effective reading instruction. I am excited about it. I am in a certain amount of ignorance about why it is more effective, though. I can't really tell you that (Interview, 5/9/91, p. 1).

An additional piece of the story that casts doubt on the understanding of the policy of the district leaders is the continued inservice and focus on the "Discovering Intensive Phonics" program. Two inservices and one additional meeting were held to train teachers and to help them with implementation of this program. However, as stated in an earlier chapter, this program focused solely on word-level skills of sounding out words and provided scripted lesson plans for teachers to read. Both of these characteristics would put this program at odds with the policy, yet the district continued to encourage teachers to use it.

In Rockville the leaders did not seem to hold a vision of what the policy meant for instruction. They knew it suggested some changes, but they were relying on the teachers to decide how those changes would look in practice. This reliance on the teachers to lead the efforts presented two major problems as the work progressed. First, the teachers were not confident that they understood the policy well enough to put it into practice without further learning opportunities, which the district did not provide. Second, even if the teachers did understand the policy better than the administrators, the teachers were not given the power to lead the efforts, as illustrated throughout Chapters Three and Four.

Rockville was attempting to implement a policy based on ideas which no one in the district truly understood or felt comfortable putting into practice. This lack of knowledge contributed to difficulties for the committee working toward district implementation of the policy in Rockville.

Knowledge of the Administrators in Fortville

The story was quite different in Fortville. At each level in the hierarchy, the administrators and Board President could articulate a vision for what this type of reading instruction would include. The building principals were especially strong in their vision for instruction.

Mr. Johnson, the elementary principal who led the district efforts, talked at length about what he would look for in reading instruction.

Well, there's only one real goal in reading and that's to make sense out of what you're reading. . . . So our instruction has to be targeted at all times toward comprehension and making sense of the text . . . I think the whole idea is to be able to communicate through the written word . . . I look for two things. Number one, I look to see that the teacher is continually reminding the kids what the overall goal of instruction is. . . . If it's reading, they ought to be reminded subtly or directly that the whole goal here is to make sense of what we're reading. Then, I look for techniques that seem to be the most efficient for those kids at that time . . . I think we are in danger right now with the New Definition of Reading of making the same mistake that we made before. And that is to package a bunch of subskills and give them to teachers and teach them how to use them and for them to lose track of applying all those skills to making sense of the reading.

I went to a third grade teacher's lesson last month. She did word mapping, work with prior knowledge, and character analysis. She did all three things and also some vocabulary work. And at no time did she ever integrate the four things, nor did she point out to the kids why they were doing them. And so what we had was almost like the olden days where you give the kids a workbook to fill in the blanks with prefixes or suffixes or whatever skill was being taught. Nobody told the kids there was a purpose for what they were doing. . . . What the problem was, was that this teacher was starting to get the details of the New Definition down, but she still didn't understand what her job was, and that was to teach reading. In an hour's time, I thought the lesson was basically a waste of time. I don't think the kids understood what the point was. And the reason they didn't was that I don't think she understood what her point was.

The big technique is to see that kids understand the big picture and that they are continually trying to get meaning and using the techniques that will get them there. . . . Right now we are offering teachers a bag of tricks to apply to children, and I'm sure there are many more tricks than we're offering them. The trick is to put the teachers in charge of instruction and say to them 'Okay, you've got these kids. It's your job to teach them how to read. You do what you've got to do to get them there.'

I'm fearful that we are just going to give them a shopping bag and they are going to just pull things out of them and apply them indiscriminately to everybody. I buy the concept that the kid brings a certain amount of knowledge to reading and we have to work at prior knowledge, and we have to prepare them for reading a selection and prepare them to prepare themselves to read a selection. I'm sure that story mapping and character

analysis and K-W-L and the other techniques will be useful. But I think there are a lot of other things that teachers can do and good teachers have been doing anyway. And mainly those things are like monitoring to be sure that the kids are learning what they are supposed to be learning and make sure that the kids become knowledgeable about how they are reading and which techniques they use and which ones they can choose to apply later on when they are alone.

I went to a low level fifth grade class, we are still broken up by ability group. . . . These kids were learning strategies they could use. A lot of them had invented their own strategies that the teachers never taught them. But the point is that the teacher had made it very clear that their job was to figure out what was on the page. That was the constant focus of the class. So even though the teacher taught techniques, talk about metacognition, they were really there . . .

I don't think there is a formula that you can slap on all the kids at one time. The answer is that the teacher has to learn to recognize if the kids are being successful or not and then decide what to do in each case every time

. . .
No (I don't think I've seen it happen). I think I've seen people nibbling around at it. I haven't . . . part of the problem is that I'm not real knowledgeable about it. I mean I've read all of the basic material, but the fact is, I've never had a reading class. . . . So, the fact is, I am not highly knowledgeable. I'm not even sure our reading teacher is very knowledgeable on what to do about it. I think we are sharing a lot of ignorance right now (Interview, 6/13/90, pp. 1-6).

Mr. Johnson was able to talk about his vision of reading instruction which would focus kids on constructing meaning from text (the goal of the New Definition), and he was able to recognize the danger in the "strategy instruction" interpretation of the policy. He felt that if teachers were always focused on the goal of making sense of text and would keep students focused on this goal, then the strategies might help. He even recognized that students may construct their own strategies for making sense of text. Mr. Johnson stated, though, that he had not seen teachers consistently teaching this way, nor did he feel highly knowledgeable about how this would look or happen. Mr. Johnson

did seem to be searching for a picture of his vision for instruction and was able to spot instruction that was not in line with that vision. Mr. Johnson was the most articulate participant in my study about what the policy meant and came closest to a vision beyond the "strategy instruction" interpretation. He appears to have been an excellent choice for leading this committee. However, he expressed reservation with his own understanding of the policy just as the teachers expressed a lack of confidence in their understanding.

Mr. Johnson was not the only administrator in Fortville who had a vision for the what the policy would mean for instruction. I found that at every level, the administrators were able to articulate what they felt the policy meant for the district. Ms. Jones, an elementary principal and cochair of the Elementary Reading Subcommittee, stated that the New Definition of Reading meant

. . . that children would have more opportunity to read, really read. For those who already have the skills to do so, there would be longer periods of time for children to truly read. Also, that children would have the opportunity to apply their reading skills to real life, enjoyable situations such as writing plays and putting them on, reading theatres, research that was of their interest and interest level . . . I would have hoped that the teacher had given the children a great deal of background . . . I would like to see more direct instruction for all children in the classroom. I would like to see the teacher directing the children to the specific objective of the lesson more. . . . Also, addressing the comprehension of the story more and leading them to thinking about things that basically a lot of lessons in past years had not done (Interview, 6/13/90, pp. 3-4).

Ms. Jones also has a vision of teachers focusing on comprehension of text using direct instruction and using real-life, meaningful activities

that use reading skills. Ms. Jones does not seem focused on a "strategy instruction" interpretation of the policy.

I found similar visions for the policy in practice at the central office and the Board level in Fortville. The Director of Curriculum spoke of his interpretation of the policy.

It (the New Definition) is not much different than what I am seeing in math, in science, in social studies, in all areas of education. . . . Education is in the midst of a heavy revolution right now with regard to what students need to be successful. In the past, schools needed to determine what skills and/or facts a person needed to know and then how to teach those specific facts to the students. Now with the growth in amount of information, the world situation, the age of computers, and such, we realize, maybe too late because education has typically been slow to respond to changes, that students can no longer just memorize facts. But what they need to know is broader. They need to know how to deal with facts, how to know what facts they need, where they will get those facts, how to dig through information to find specifics that they need and then how to communicate their answers in some form. The New Definition of Reading is not different from that view (Interview, 2/18/91, pp. 1-2).

The Director of Curriculum talked about the need to focus on reading for information and using reading and writing as a communication skills. He was talking about a vision beyond just teaching kids new strategies.

The superintendent did not give such a long response, but he, too, talked of a vision beyond teaching a few new strategies. He focused on the benefits of meeting the needs of more students.

I am so excited about it (the New Definition). It means that finally we can do our jobs better. That all our graduates will be able to read. I think it will eliminate the number of students who are failing. I really anticipate that number to drop. It will help students develop better self-esteem because the differences between students will be minimized. We will finally have all our students reading (Interview, 3/1/91, p. 1).

The superintendent saw the policy as a means to enable all students to succeed. He did not address how that would happen, but seemed to believe it would. He did not mention strategies and seemed to see a vision beyond strategy instruction.

The Board President also had a vision for what the policy intended, however, she did not realize this was a state policy. She thought it came from the book, Becoming a Nation of Readers. She stated

I think it means more integration of reading in other areas. Not just one kind of literature, but reading in science and math and history and making kids think about what they are reading, not just memorize and regurgitate, but to apply what they read (Interview, 5/6/91, p. 2).

She also had a vision of students reading for meaning and applying what they read.

The administrators in Fortville all had a some knowledge of the policy and what it might mean for instruction. The principals were more able to apply it directly to instruction, but at every level the leaders could articulate the intent of the policy in their own words. The leadership in Fortville, then, saw the policy as more than teaching a set of techniques or strategies to teachers. The Board President recognized a difference between knowing what the policy intended and knowing how to do it.

The state department helped us by sending a speaker for our inservice. I was disappointed in this presentation. It was very slick and superficial. The teachers really couldn't use what they got. It was not a good inservice. She started out with a video. It didn't have much substance. It was glitzy and talked mostly about what we ought to do, not much about how to do it. It talked about a more holistic approach, but it didn't address how to make it work in classrooms with many different abilities without tracking. . . . The presentation would have been better for a chamber of commerce, not a group of professional educators (Interview, 5/6/91, p. 1).

The Board President recognized that teachers needed to know how to put these ideas into practice; she felt the state department of education had not provided that kind of help.

So, the administrators in Fortville had a vision for what the policy intended. The principals had some ideas about how instruction should look if it fit with the New Definition of Reading. The group seemed to be unanimously committed to the value of the policy.

The situation in Fortville would bode well for implementation of an interpretation of the policy which fit more closely with the constructivist view of the policy. Most of the participants in charge of the district efforts had a vision of reading instruction which was more innovative than just adding a few new strategies to existing instructional practices.

Yet, in Chapters Three and Four, we saw that in Fortville the implementation efforts concentrated on providing new materials and teaching teachers the strategies from the Michigan Department of Education materials. This scenario was not very different from the what was happening in Rockville, where the knowledge of the participants was more limited and tenuous. Why did both districts end up in basically the same place? To answer that question, we must first return briefly to the policy itself and then to the contextual features. First, as stated earlier, the policy was designed as a "curriculum alignment" (Cohen, 1989-90) reform. This design did not work as intended in my two sites. Second, the organizational characteristics and the political power structures within the districts influenced the way the participants were able to use their knowledge. These two factors were

more similar in the districts, and they offer one account for why the story endings (at this point in time) were so similar.

The Policy as a Curriculum Alignment Reform

Michigan's reading policy provided some problems for local implementation in the way it was designed and disseminated. The policy follows the "curriculum alignment" family of reforms (Cohen, 1989-90). Such reforms attempt to change the way that people think with an overall philosophy and to change the way instruction is conducted with new materials and guidelines. New assessment instruments are used to push teachers toward this type of instruction. Michigan wrote a new philosophy of reading instruction (the New Definition of Reading), a set of guidelines for instruction (Michigan Essential Objectives for Reading), and a new state test to encourage teachers to teach in this new way (the new MEAP). As discussed earlier, there is a problem in the alignment of this reform, however. The New Definition of Reading suggests that readers are busy constructing meanings from text according to their background knowledge and their purpose for reading. On the other hand, the new MEAP tests students on their ability to construct the one correct meaning identified by the test makers. This difference between the philosophy and the assessment can leave teachers unsure what they are to do. Should teachers allow students to construct open-ended meanings or should all students be held responsible for the same meanings? Since the MEAP is expected to push teachers toward implementation, it would seem likely that teachers would interpret the

policy as calling for students to construct one correct meaning in the way they will be tested.

My data did not support the idea that the MEAP was pushing these teachers toward implementation of either interpretation of the policy. The teachers reported almost unanimously that the MEAP did not influence their instruction at all. Only one fourth grade teacher stated that she did some work in the fall before the test was given to prepare students for the test.

I prepare them right from the first day of school by talking about the differences between imaginary and informational text. I teach them the different set-up of each kind and how to read it. They haven't seen the test's story, but they have done many similar kinds of reading in class. They knew how to approach it--the strategies. This year I did get some things from last year's test to help them understand the kinds of tasks they would be asked to do (Interview, 10/10/90, p. 4).

Other than this single response about preparing the students for the test, every other teacher stated that the MEAP did not affect his/her instruction and that they were not familiar with the test itself. Betty, a first grade teacher in Rockville, gave a typical response.

I know I don't have to give it. . . . No, I haven't (seen it). (It has bearing on what we teach) just in bringing an awareness of the New Definition to teachers. I think that is the only way it affects us at first grade. We don't try to teach fourth grade skills (Interview, 2/4/91, p. 5).

Frances, a fifth grade teacher, was similarly unconcerned with the test.

No (I haven't seen it). It is given so close to the beginning of the year, and everyone is so busy. I have often thought that I should walk down the hall and take a look at it, but I just never got to it (Interview, 1/16/91, p. 6).

Similar responses were given by each of my teacher participants. None of them, with the exception of the one fourth grade teacher, saw the test as affecting what they did instructionally.

The teachers also reported that the MEAP scores were not used in any meaningful way in the district. Frances gave a typical response again.

Mr. Curt looks at them. He addresses them in a general way at the staff meeting. Not anything specific (is done with them), though (Interview, 1/16/91, p. 6).

Jan, a reading specialist in Fortville, believed that the MEAP results would be useful if teachers had them available, but that the scores were never made available to teachers.

It would (have bearing on what teachers do) if Mr. Johnson got the scores to us. That information should have been given to us, but it just gets lost in his office. We never get the results. He is supposedly going to have a meeting to go over the results this year, but I haven't seen it happen yet. Last year we didn't even see the results (Interview, 12/5/90, p. 6).

Cory, a reading specialist in a different building in Fortville, felt that the scores were available to the teachers in the principal's office and "a general report on the results" would be given at a staff meeting, but that teachers were not using it in any organized way to guide instruction (Interview, 12/6/90, p. 7).

The theory behind the alignment, that the test would push teachers toward the kind of instruction supported by the philosophy, did not seem to hold true in my two districts. Neither group of teachers felt the MEAP was used to influence classroom reading instruction throughout the district.

The administrators in each district supported this view. Mr. Johnson, the chair of the committee in Fortville, stated that in his district they had not yet figured out how the scores would help them.

As far as how we're going to use it, I don't think the state knows how we are going to use it. So the fact that we don't know how we're going to use it doesn't bother me particularly. I talked to a person in charge at the state, and I don't think she is really clear on what is going on here. If she doesn't know, I guess I'm not too worried that we don't know (Interview, 6/13/90, p. 18).

Mr. Curt, cochair of the committee in Rockville, stated a similar confusion about how the MEAP could be used to guide instruction.

I am really disappointed in the state for not giving us more help interpreting the scores. It is really a problem to figure out what they mean. I am not sure the MEAP is helping us at all (Interview, 10/11/90, p. 7).

The teachers and the administrators working to implement Michigan's reading policy in both districts saw little connection between the MEAP and the instructional changes. The MEAP did not seem to concern the teachers. The administrators saw it as confusing and not helpful. The groups did not use the scores or the test in their work of planning for implementation of the policy. Thus, the confusion in the alignment between the test and the philosophy probably did not have much influence on local implementation efforts.

Even though the MEAP did not push the teachers toward a "one correct answer" interpretation of the New Definition, other factors did appear to push in this direction. First, before the New Definition of Reading, reading instruction was geared toward helping students arrive at the correct answers on tests and worksheets. This was the standard way of thinking about student achievement. Since the policy itself was

unclear about whether this was still appropriate, teachers would not be likely to turn loose of this way of thinking on their own. So, the New Definition may have suggested that students would construct personal meanings from text, but with the standard way of thinking that students should construct the correct answer, which was supported by the way the new MEAP was designed, at odds with this new view, it is unlikely that teachers would have made major changes in their thinking and instruction toward allowing students to construct multiple meanings from text.

A second problem which probably influenced the way teachers thought about reading occurred in the way that the Michigan Department of Education and the Curriculum Review Committee chose to disseminate the policy. The policy was explained in talks and conferences throughout the state. At one group of these conferences, those attending were given scripts to use in training teachers in their local sites in the new ideas and strategies. However, these trainers were essentially novices with this philosophy themselves. Thus, they seemed to grab hold of the simpler ideas that seemed somewhat familiar, the strategies. They simplified the information for their local participants to teaching them how to do some new reading strategies. This focus on the strategies led to the interpretation of the policy I have termed "strategy instruction."

In both of the districts that I studied, the learning opportunities that teachers had to understand this new way of teaching reading consisted of learning how to do these new strategies such as K-W-L (Ogle, 1986) and Probable Passages (Wood, 1984) and learning how to use new materials. These learning opportunities were mostly presented by

textbook consultants or by local reading consultants using the scripts from the MDE. Teachers were not given the opportunity to collectively think about what these strategies might mean for their reading programs nor to collaborate with each other on how to integrate the strategies into their programs. Hence, the state and district efforts to train teachers allowed the new strategies to become synonymous with the New Definition of Reading. Adding these strategies onto existing instruction, rather than fundamentally changing practice, became the accepted practice.

Third, the "Michigan Essential Objectives for Reading" did not make it clear just what instructional changes were needed. These objectives are broad in scope, listing student outcomes that are characteristic of successful readers. However, just what classroom teachers should do to help students achieve these broad outcomes is unclear. This uncertainty about what needed to change could be resolved somewhat by interpreting the policy from the strategy instruction perspective. Then, teachers would need only to teach these new strategies to enable students to perform the outcomes listed as objectives.

All of these characteristics of the policy itself bode problems for local implementors. The questionable alignment, the uncertainty about what the policy means, the lack of clarity about what instructional changes are needed leave the difficult job of interpreting the policy and translating it into instructional terms to local implementors.

Organizational Characteristics

Introduction

Organizations have characteristics which cause behaviors at any point in time to strongly resemble behaviors at previous times (Alison, 1971). Stated more simply, organizations have characteristics which tend to thwart all but minor changes to daily practice. This tendency occurs partly because behaviors within organizations are expected to follow and conform to established routines and procedures. Change efforts within an organization most often follow existing procedures, except in cases where there is an influx of new money, money troubles exist, or a failure in performance of the organization has occurred. Excepting these dramatic occurrences which Alison found to facilitate fundamental changes to practice, change efforts within an organization tend to follow the standard operating procedures previously established by the organization. These standard operating procedures were created to carry on business as usual, not to change daily operations. Thus, trying to fit change efforts into existing routines sets the stage for difficulties as those routines push behaviors toward the accepted way of doing things rather than toward some newer innovative way.

In addition, change efforts must take place while the organization continues to conduct its daily business. Thus, those expected to make changes will often be expected to make those changes while continuing to use existing practices. This expectation that business as usual will continue while changes in how one does that business are implemented will likely limit the nature of the changes to add ons, changes which are merely additions to business as usual.

When calls for change come from government policies, another challenge is added. The government is constantly adding and changing policies. Local districts must interpret what each policy means for their organization, how the changes could happen, and even whether any action must happen in response to a particular policy. Some policies require immediate action and carry incentives which assure compliance such as tying funding for the organization to implementation of the policy. A policy which does not require a visible response and which uses ideas as the policy instrument would be easier to ignore than policies which affect funding. Thus, a policy such as Michigan's reading policy might become overshadowed by other government policies.

Once an organization decides to respond to a policy, other characteristics of the organization will continue to influence what occurs. First, decisions as to what response is appropriate may be difficult to reach and may have difficulty surviving the multiple decision points within the organization. For instance, Michigan's reading policy is open to varied interpretations. Those local educators charged with implementation may not all agree on what needs to happen. Once the group does come to some agreement, possibly by compromise, the decisions reached may be ignored or altered at other points in the organization. The building principals may negate a decision; the central office may veto a decision; the Board may reject a decision. Just because the group charged with implementation reaches a decision does not mean that decision will survive its trip through the organization.

Second, organizations have a variety of means in which they can respond to a policy without actually making the changes intended. Organizations strive for maintenance while appearing to comply with calls for change. The appearance of change can be given by adopting standardized guidelines. Standardized guidelines can be in the form of a new curriculum document. Once this document is approved and distributed or made available both within the organization and to the public, the government and the public may assume that change has occurred. However, in reality, the guidelines in the documents may have little to do with behavior within classrooms. Organizations may also give the appearance of compliance by issuing progress reports as they plan for change. Such reports may restate the plan and offer glowing statements about the value of the plan, yet not really address the situation throughout the organization. For instance, leaders of the group trying to implement changes may report to the Board that all teachers have been trained in some new teaching technique. This may be true; however, whether any of the teachers is actually using the new technique is not really addressed in the report. Organizations often focus on the short term problem of appearing to be in compliance with the policy, while the long range problem of actually changing behaviors within the organization becomes lost in the plans, guidelines, and reports.

So, an organization, though not a living entity, takes on a life of its own as those within it respond to a government policy. The goal of the organization as a whole is to survive with the least amount of uncertainty and change possible. Those working for implementation of

the change will need to frame their efforts within the existing routines and procedures of the organization. Changes must be of the type which can be added onto these existing routines and which will disrupt daily business the least. Decisions must be reached by participants espousing varied perspectives, and these decisions, once reached by one group, must survive a multitude of decision points within the organization before they become accepted practice. The appearance of compliance becomes the goal as standardized guidelines are written and approved, and progress reports are issued. The organization can thus appear to be implementing a policy when a few new techniques appear in practice, new guidelines are made public, and progress reports address the efforts in ways which convince those listening that change, rather than maintenance, is occurring.

Organizational Characteristics in Rockville and Fortville

Competing State Policies

In both districts that I studied, organizational characteristics and routines influenced and limited the work of the committees charged with planning the district's response to Michigan's reading policy. New state policies demanded attention while implementation of the reading policy proceeded. The state revised its approach to math instruction, and a new state math assessment followed the new reading assessment by only two years. The legislature adopted Public Act 25 and the Core Curriculum within a few years of adopting the reading policy. Both Public Act 25 and the Core Curriculum required the local districts to produce reports and documents by specific deadlines. The administrators

of both districts were trying to understand these additional government policies and to satisfy their requirements by the deadlines. These policies demanded more immediate attention than did the reading policy because they required documents and reports to the public and because they were tied to funding. Each administrator with whom I spoke stated that these new state policies went well with the New Definition of Reading. Yet, the attention of the districts was more focused on complying with the new policies.

In Rockville the reading committee was disbanded and teachers were selected to form a new committee in response to these new state policies. This reforming of the committee was seen as necessary to spread the work of satisfying the Core Curriculum requirements across the district. Some teachers who were interested in reading and who wanted to work on the committee were not selected because the district needed enough people to work on other committees. The district successfully carried out this selection process by informing teachers who questioned their exclusion that they could attend meetings, but they could not vote on decisions. These teachers, predictably, never attended the meetings. The need to satisfy other state policy requirements did conflict with the work of implementing the reading policy in Rockville. The committee which had been meeting, albeit sporadically, for three years was replaced with a new committee which excluded many teachers with a real interest in working on the district reading program. When this new group met for the first time, the leaders passed out a stack of paper from the state for members to peruse. Ms. Smith, the cochair, stated that members should begin by

reading "The standards of quality, this is what you should read first" (Fieldnotes, 12/4/90, p. 4). This "Michigan K-12 Program Standards of Quality" was distributed to districts to help them understand what must be addressed in their own core curriculums. Thus, Ms. Smith was focusing the group on the requirements of the Core Curriculum rather than on the meaning of the reading policy. In addition, the district exhibited a focus on other state policies by changing the subject of district inservices. Each year of the implementation work the inservice days of the district had included some attention to reading instruction and the state policy. In 1990 and 1991, the inservice days of the district were either partly or wholly focused on school improvement efforts related to Public Act 25 and Core Curriculum. These actions taken together suggest that even though the committee continued to work, the priority of its work in the district is definitely in question.

In Fortville the implementation efforts moved more quickly and were thus less affected by the newer state policies. However, after the proposal had been written by the committee and approved by the Board, the Language Arts Coordinator added pages which addressed the requirements of the Core Curriculum policy. Fortville's proposal was not changed, but pages which came from the state's documents were added to show that the proposal also addressed the requirements of this new policy. The administrators in the district felt that these two policies meshed well together and were not in conflict, so they did not feel they were trying to implement competing policies. The Curriculum Director explained this view.

We decided that for once the state was right on target. They had put together some good work. Why should we reinvent the wheel? We looked at it carefully, and decided to use it and make the state's curriculum ours (Interview, 2/18/91, p. 7).

He felt the Fortville proposal and the multiple state policies concerning core curriculum and quality education were a "perfect match" because Fortville had basically used the curriculum from the state as their own. The Curriculum Director did see that teachers were being asked to make so many changes that they might become overwhelmed.

I have some fears, too. There are so many changes being required in the next few years, and I worry about the psychological effects it will have on our people. It will need to be closely monitored by me and the superintendent to protect our staff. At times we will have to shield them (Interview, 2/18/91, p. 9).

This fear of too much change expected too fast was echoed by the Board President and by the principals in Fortville. In fact, the elementary principals prepared a presentation for the Board on the need to be realistic about how much change people could handle at once. These comments and actions lead me to believe that the participants in Fortville were being pulled by competing, if not conflicting, policies.

In both Rockville and Fortville, there were multiple state policies to address. Neither district had the luxury of concentrating efforts on implementation of just the state reading policy. The need to address more than one government policy simultaneously added pressure onto the work of implementing the state reading policy. In the case of Rockville, this need redirected and overshadowed the implementation efforts. In Fortville this need added pressure on the participants and pages in the document. Both districts did use the state's Core Curriculum objectives as they tried to revise their reading curriculums.

They seemed more pushed to use the state's philosophy by the new policies than by the ideas or the test (MEAP) of the original reading policy. However, this "use of the philosophy" may have been limited to inclusion within required documents.

Standard Operating Procedure:
Form a Committee

As noted earlier, standard operating procedures allow an organization to operate and carry out daily business more smoothly. Thus, it is not surprising that when local school districts needed to respond to a state policy calling for changes in instruction, they fit their responses into the standard procedure for changing instruction, revise the curriculum. In both districts, the routine way to revise the curriculum was to form a committee of teachers who would work through a standard cycle of steps and produce a new curriculum document. This is the standard operating procedure set in motion in each district to respond to the reading policy. Invoking this standard approach to change limited the types of changes that could occur in each district for several reasons.

As noted before, the teachers charged with writing this new document were unsure that they understood what changes should occur. They needed time to interpret the policy's ideas and to translate them into practice. They wanted time to attend conferences, to visit classrooms, to discuss changes with each other. In both districts, only a few months to read and discuss articles were provided. Fortville also allowed a few committee members to visit other districts, but these visits focused on looking at materials and management techniques.

Neither district provided much time for learning about the policy before the document had to be written. The teachers all recognized that they needed more time to think and learn before they could write the document well. Why did the districts demand that the document be produced so quickly then?

Standard operating procedures were at the root of the problem of time in each district. In each district, the committee was asked to produce a document for the Board within a very limited time. Even though each group of teachers felt that learning about and defining the changes needed was impossible in the time allotted, they were given no additional time to complete the document. The standard operating procedure of producing a document by a certain time in the cycle was followed. In Rockville Mr. Curt merely stated repeatedly that they had to complete the document for the Board with no justification as to why this was required. In Fortville the central office administrators and Board President stated that keeping to the cycle's timeline was essential to insure funding for the proposal. If the committee had been allowed to continue for a longer period of time, they would have lost their chance to have their work funded.

The push to produce a document for the Board within the cycle's timeframe influenced both the understanding of the people involved in writing it and the quality of the document. As noted earlier, many of the teacher participants did not feel confident about their own ability to teach in the ways suggested by the policy. They were trying new ideas, but they were unsure that they were on the right track.

Second, the documents of both districts failed to make clear what should change in classroom instruction. In Rockville the document produced was simply a new philosophy and the goals from the state document attached to the skills copied from a basal reading series written before the New Definition of Reading. The document did not address how to implement the new philosophy and reach the new goals. It simply outlined skills previously taught because they were included in the basal manuals. No one in the district openly questioned the value of this document, yet everyone below the central office spoke privately in my interviews of the uselessness of this document. Mr. Curt, the leader of the efforts to produce the document, replied to my question "What has been done with the document?" by laughing and saying "Nothing" (Interview, 10/11/90, p. 2). However, the superintendent stated that he thought each teacher had been given a copy of the document. My data suggests that copies of the document were never distributed. I was working in the district's reading program at the time, and I never received one. None of the teachers with whom I spoke remembered receiving one. Mr. Curt did not feel anything was done with the document. It appears that after Board approval, the document was shelved.

In Fortville the proposal that the committee produced outlined a plan for implementing a new reading program, but never spelled out what that program would contain. The document dealt with the process of implementation without addressing the substance of the change. The state's objectives were copied in the document, but as discussed

earlier, these objectives are broad student outcomes which do not address how one might help students achieve these broad outcomes.

In both Rockville and Fortville, the standard operating procedure of forming a curriculum revision committee to work through a set of procedures within a certain timeframe was used to respond to Michigan's reading policy. Using this standard procedure to bring about change limited the change because it limited the time allowed to the participants to learn about the changes and to develop plans which would address what needed to change as well as how those changes might happen. Thus, the standard operating procedures of the organization worked to limit the change efforts rather than to facilitate changes in line with the intent of the policy.

Standard Operating Procedure:
Order a Basal Series

Another standard operating procedure that influenced implementation efforts in both districts was the practice of allowing textbooks to define instruction. It is widely reported and accepted that textbooks often control what teachers teach in their classrooms. This has been especially true historically in reading instruction. Teachers have received new basal reading series periodically and have followed the manuals as to what to cover in their reading programs. As shown earlier, teachers in both Rockville and Fortville were still looking to old basals for direction about what to teach and often how to teach it. Is it any wonder then that both districts focused on purchasing a new basal to help teachers make instructional changes in response to the New Definition of Reading? Teachers themselves were not sure how this new

instruction should look, so a new basal program to help them understand the changes seems a reasonable solution.

The committees in both Rockville and Fortville chose to continue providing basals and expecting teachers to use the standard basal program for at least a portion of their instruction. Whether this move was appropriate to the changes intended by the policy was barely considered in either group. It appeared that in both places the committee just gravitated toward the decision to order a new basal series with few members quite sure how that happened. It appeared that the standard operating procedure had always been to have everyone use a basal, and so that practice continued with little question of its wisdom.

In Rockville the teachers did push for a year's trial of two basal series against the wishes of the cochairs. In this instance, the wishes of the group overrode the power of the leaders, and a pilot year was set up. However, there was no discussion or investigation of which companies should participate in the pilot. The group accepted hearsay that most districts who did a pilot used only two specific companies. There was no question as to the accuracy of this hearsay, and these two companies were selected for a pilot of their materials.

In Fortville there was not a pilot, but the teachers again depended on hearsay to narrow the decision among several companies. Then they chose one company based on the service they received during this decision-making time. Fortville did not do a thorough investigation of what the new series would offer that was different from their old series. Lucy, a second grade teacher in Fortville, even stated that

they were kidding themselves if they thought the new series was really any different than the old series.

The pilot in Rockville offers a greater possibility that they will understand how the new series is different. However, the pilot was originally to be set up so that each piloting teacher would try both series for a period of about three months. In reality, the teachers felt that this approach was not good for their students nor their own sanity, so each teacher used only one series for one semester. This group is to make a decision by periodically meeting and discussing what they liked and did not like about the series which they piloted. The decision is to be made in February, 1992, to keep within the revision cycle timeframe. Teachers involved in the pilot overwhelmingly expressed skepticism that this approach will really allow them to choose the best series. "Whichever series you get looks so drastically better than what you had that naturally you want it" (Informal conversation, 1/10/92).

Rockville's decision on a basal reader may not be based on much more investigation than was Fortville's despite the time devoted to the pilot. Both districts opted to follow the standard procedure of ordering a basal series to help teachers understand how to change their instruction, but neither district thoroughly investigated whether the changes in the basal series were in line with the ideas of the policy, ideas which they barely understood.

In both Rockville and Fortville, the changes suggested in response to the policy did not appear very different than existing practices. Implementation efforts were to be planned by a committee charged with

revising the reading curriculum. The timeframe of the standard curriculum revision cycle was used to move the work along on a set schedule. A document was produced for Board approval, but neither district's document had clearly identified what teachers would do differently in their instruction. Teachers were (or would be) provided with a new basal reading series to guide their instruction.

Standard Operating Procedures:
Staff Development

Both Rockville and Fortville realized that teachers did need some learning opportunities to make instructional changes. In an effort to make it more clear what teachers should be doing, both districts provided inservice sessions on the strategies from the Michigan Department of Education's materials. This focus on teaching teachers new strategies allowed the faculty in both districts to interpret the policy as a strategy instruction approach. Teachers could focus on using new materials and teaching new strategies and feel comfortable that they had changed their instruction in the expected ways.

The strategy instruction interpretation of the policy was more acceptable than the constructivist interpretation for several reasons. First, the strategy instruction approach could be added onto existing practices. Teachers could continue to teach reading in familiar ways while adding instruction in the new strategies to their instruction. The constructivist interpretation would require fundamental changes in instruction and in assessment. Second, the strategy instruction interpretation was simpler, easier to understand. It did not leave teachers wondering what they should do and if they were capable of doing

that, as the constructivist view might. Third, the strategy instruction interpretation would be easier for the organization to accept, easier to teach to teachers within short periods of time, and easier to assess the implementation of it. These reasons combined contributed to the strategy instruction becoming the official interpretation of the policy in both districts.

In Rockville the efforts to teach the teachers about the policy were random and quite limited. Standard inservice days were partially used for teaching teachers about the strategies. No extra efforts were made to educate district teachers about the New Definition of Reading.

In Fortville the proposal provided a more comprehensive plan to help teachers with classroom implementation by providing on-going staff development. However, these inservice sessions operated in the standard way of pulling a group of teachers together and telling them how to do some new technique. The written proposal added a staff support approach by redefining the role of the building reading teachers. The Language Arts Coordinator provided mini-sessions in each building which introduced the strategies. The building reading consultants were expected to provide follow-up support to teachers as they tried the strategies in their own classrooms. As my data illustrated, this plan was not evolving as anticipated. The Language Arts Coordinator was limited in the time he had available for each building. When he did conduct a session, other factors usually cut his time short. In the time he did have, he focused totally on strategies with only a few remarks about keeping the big picture in mind. He basically told teachers enough information that they were aware of the strategy and how

to do it. The reading consultants were then to provide more help to individual teachers. The evidence is that these consultants were not actually providing that help on any consistent, wide-spread basis. Each of them stated that they had not been able to make this change. The principal in one building stated that it was not happening. The Language Arts Coordinator talked about the slowness of this change. The teachers responded on the end-of-the-year survey that few were making use of these consultants. So, in Fortville the plan provided for extensive staff development over the year of implementation of the proposal, yet in reality little staff development occurred.

Standard approaches to staff development, i.e., approaches operating from a defect model or "teaching old dogs new tricks" (Jackson, 1971) prevailed. Teachers were shown how to do the new strategies and were then expected to implement them in their own classrooms. This approach to teacher learning seldom brings fundamental changes in the teachers' practice. The additional piece of the plan in Fortville, the staff support, offered hope. However, in reality, teachers were not using this additional help. Staff development in both districts followed standard procedures for teacher learning.

Multiple Decision Points

Within a complex organization, decisions reached at one point may not survive other decision points. In both districts, some decisions reached by the committee did not survive scrutiny of the administrators. As shown in Chapters Three and Four, in Rockville the teachers frequently made decisions which required follow-up. For example, the

committee stated that they needed additional opportunities to learn about whole language, a workshop. Mr. Curt stated that he would set this up, but neglected to do so. When teachers questioned Ms. Smith about this, she simply replied that she did not know anything about it. The decision did not survive the next step, the approval and action of the leaders. The leaders frequently took responsibility for follow-up on the group's decisions, but neglected to do so. Thus, the committee's decisions did not survive the multiple decision points of the organization. Their decisions were often stymied by the leadership of the group.

The same situation occurred at times in Fortville. For example, the committee recommended buying the basal series test materials and the initial order contained these materials according to Sue, the cochair. However, these materials were not purchased, and even Sue, the teacher cochair, wondered where the decision was changed. This was a problem of enough magnitude that all the Fortville teachers in my study stated that the principals should just make the decisions and inform them so that they did not waste their time making decisions which would not be accepted by the administration. Decisions did not always survive the multiple decision points in this district either.

The Appearance of Compliance

Organizations strive to maintain the status quo while offering the appearance of compliance with a government policy. Both Rockville and Fortville used familiar tactics which gave the appearance of compliance with the policy while little change was really occurring. The districts

chose to write documents for the public record. These documents did not make clear what changes in instruction would occur, but they did make it public that the group had studied the issue and had produced a report. Producing these progress reports became the focus of the efforts rather than focusing on implementing the changes of the policy. Both districts solved the short-term problem of writing a document and selecting new materials rather than the long term problem of helping teachers make fundamental instructional changes.

Summary of the Organizational
Characteristics as They Affected
Implementation Efforts in Both Districts

The organizational characteristics affected the way in which implementation of Michigan's reading policy was implemented in both Rockville and in Fortville. In fact, the organizational characteristics worked to focus and to limit the efforts in both districts in similar ways. Both districts were trying to deal with multiple state policies which required work and attention. The administrators in both districts seemed more focused on completing the requirements for the policies which demanded documented compliance to maintain funding. In Fortville the administrators recognized that responding to all of these policies was overwhelming to the teachers and mentioned a need to protect the teachers psychologically.

Both districts responded to the reading policy by forming a curriculum revision committee to plan the changes. Once formed, these committees were required to work within district curriculum cycles. This mandate to stay within cycle timeframes limited the time available

for the groups to interpret the policy and to define changes for the district. Thus, the standard operating procedures of the districts limited the knowledge of the participants with the result that the documents produced did not make it clear what teachers needed to change.

This lack of knowledge and definition about the changes led to a simplified interpretation of the policy, strategy instruction. This interpretation satisfied the needs of the organization. This view was easier to define: simply inservice teachers in the new strategies. It was easier to implement: simply add the new strategies onto existing reading programs. It was easier to assess: administrators could clearly see if teachers were using these new strategies. It was easier to explain to the public: show the public how to do the new strategies. The strategy instruction interpretation simplified the policy and decreased the uncertainty teachers and districts would face during implementation. Teachers could hardly argue with the strategy instruction interpretation because the organizational routines had successfully limited their learning opportunities, so they did not understand any other interpretation well enough to argue for it.

The organization issued standardized guidelines and progress reports during this time to give the appearance of change. That is not to say that these guidelines and reports were meant to be deceptive by those involved. The participants involved in writing the documents and giving the reports were busy trying to carry on business as usual while working on the implementation plans. They probably felt they were making some progress. However, in reality, the ideas of the policy became lost in the process of producing plans and reports.

Political Structures

Can the stories of implementation efforts in Rockville and in Fortville be fully understood by looking only at the knowledge of the participants and the organizational characteristics. I think not. One big question remained for me. Since the teachers clearly knew that they did not fully understand the ideas of the policy well-enough to produce a quality plan, why did they allow the organizational routines to push them into doing something which they saw as useless and which they unanimously found to be frustrating? That question brings us to consider the political structures of the school districts.

School districts are hierarchical bureaucracies. The teachers in a school system are at the bottom of the hierarchy. In their own classrooms, the teachers have considerable autonomy to make decisions. Beyond the classroom walls, teachers have little authority to make decisions. This situation presents an interesting paradox for my teacher participants. They were asked to make changes in district-wide reading programs. Yet, they were given no real decision-making power to make those changes. In most cases, they simply acted to rubber stamp the ideas of the administrators. This lack of power to control the work which they were charged to do was evident in both districts.

In Rockville the leaders of the committee retained tight control of every aspect of the work. Written agendas were prepared for each meeting by the cochairs, and members were verbally reminded to stick to those agendas when they got off track. To confound the situation, these agendas did not follow the topics for which members were told to prepare. Meeting dates and places were changed with little or no

notice. Discussion was thwarted by the leadership styles of the cochairs. Mr. Curt responded himself when teachers made statements or asked questions. Ms. Smith ordered teachers to discuss issues which she selected. Teachers mostly sat quietly until four o'clock arrived. When teachers asked for time to discuss ideas in small groups, Ms. Smith delayed the action by promising it would occur at the next meeting, a meeting which never occurred. When teachers questioned the district testing policy, the leaders halted the discussion by letting it be known that it was not open for change. Teachers tried to object to writing the document so quickly and in the manner proposed by Mr. Curt. He simply replied that it was required by the Board and would need to be done. At no time during the three years that Mr. Curt and Ms. Smith led the work were the teachers given any power to make and act on decisions. When the group did make a decision, the power to act on it was retained by the leaders, and as shown previously, this action was seldom taken. Thus, the leaders retained the power to enact group decisions and by their inaction, often negated the decisions.

The story was similar in Fortville. As one might expect in a hierarchy, the control of the group's efforts was retained by the administrators. Mr. Johnson stated in my interview that he relied on the knowledge of the leaders because many of the teachers were lacking in knowledge of the policy and there was no time to "bring them up to speed" (Interview, 6/13/90). The committee was ordered to complete the proposal within the cycle timeframe by the administrators. The teachers involved in the work stated that the writing was mostly done by the leaders because there wasn't time for everyone to be involved. The

writing was then approved by the group with little thought or discussion. The teachers, the reading consultants, and the Language Arts Coordinator all spoke of needing to know what the principals wanted so that they would not waste their time making decisions that would not be accepted anyway. At one Executive Committee meeting, the Director of Curriculum asked if he should issue an ultimatum that all reading consultants cut their caseloads to fifty percent of their time to force the role change (Fieldnotes, 1/17/91). He saw no problem with such ultimatums from his office. The reading consultants, who were not all in favor of the role change, stated that it was a top-down decision from the administration which they were expected to implement whether any teachers agreed with the change or not. The power of the administrators in Fortville to make decisions which teachers would carry out was never questioned. Everyone seemed to accept it was a privilege of rank.

So, in both Rockville and Fortville, the power to make decisions was retained by the administrators. The paradox is that the teachers were the ones expected to do the work of planning for change. The administrators focused on standard operating procedures of the district, i.e., producing a document, ordering new materials, and conducting daily business with little disruption. The teachers wanted to focus on learning about the new ideas in reading. The power to define what the group could do was retained by the administrators. Thus, even though teachers knew they could not write a plan which would define what needed to change, they became largely silent partners in producing a plan which gave the appearance of compliance with Michigan's reading policy.

Teachers involved in this silent partnership unanimously described the experience as "one of the most frustrating experiences of my life."

Does the Story End There?

From the stories of the district-level efforts to implement Michigan's reading policy in Rockville and Fortville, can we conclude that district teachers are then teaching in the same ways in which they taught before the policy? Happily, the answer is no. The teachers in my study were all working in their own classrooms, mostly alone, trying to figure out what these new ideas might mean for them and their students. This is a remarkable tribute to the resiliency of these teachers. Even though their desire to learn more about the ideas was seldom heard or valued, they experimented with what they did know. They added the strategies into their existing programs. They tried alternative grouping practices. They incorporated journals, creative, and expository writing into their programs. They began to pull away from workbooks and worksheets which drill students on isolated skills. They did not make complete changes. They still looked for the correct answers. They still looked for the new basal reading series to tell them what to do. They still taught skills which they knew would be included on the mandatory standardized tests. This nibbling about the edges of the policy's ideas in individual classrooms was happening in both districts.

In Rockville none of the characteristics found by Marsh and McLaughlin (1978) was present to facilitate these changes. There was little "institutional motivation." The administrators in the district

did not understand nor openly support the ideas of the policy. Limited staff training was provided, but no staff support followed. There was no "institutional leadership" to support trying the new ideas; in fact, teachers were expected to continue using outdated materials and techniques merely because it was the approved curriculum. The veteran teachers participating in the district efforts were not allowed to contribute and use their knowledge nor to participate in decision-making. The situation hardly supported successful efforts to bring about change.

The fact that the Rockville teachers continued to experiment with new ideas in their own classrooms and continued to ask for more learning opportunities might be attributed to the autonomy they had within their classrooms to try new ideas. Zumwalt (1988) found the "essence of teaching" to be the ability to make these professional decisions in their own teaching. Even though the administrators required that they use the basal reading series materials for a portion of their teaching, they were allowed to add new approaches as well, to make professional decisions within their classrooms.

Their continued efforts to improve their teaching might also be attributed to the personal sense of efficacy these teachers felt. It was not possible to determine the extent of their feelings of efficacy from this study, but the actions of these teachers would support this conclusion. In spite of the frustrations they felt with the district work, they continued to talk with each other in their buildings and at other district meetings about how they were changing their own reading programs. In addition, when the district had no money for conference

and workshop attendance, Farah and Kaitlin organized a group of district teachers and chartered a local reading council for the county to provide opportunities for teachers to come together and learn about reading. In addition, the fifth grade teachers in the district formed a study group and wrote units integrating social studies and reading as part of a graduate course they took together. The Rockville teachers did not let district constraints limit their opportunities, but by-passed the district and organized other means to continue learning. This speaks of teachers who do have high feelings of efficacy, who continue to ask questions and build networks of support with other teachers (Wigginton, 1985).

In Fortville the picture was slightly different. The leaders of the district were knowledgeable about and committed to the ideas of the policy. There was "institutional motivation" and "institutional leadership." Staff training was provided, however, it focused on strategies. Staff support was planned, but never materialized. The veteran teachers on the committee were not allowed to use their knowledge nor to participate in real decision-making. Fortville attempted to plan for successful change efforts, but fell short of providing the critical factors.

The Fortville teachers were also trying new ideas within their own classrooms. They also largely attributed their new ideas about reading instruction to experiences and organizations outside of the district and to exchanges with other teachers. However, the Fortville teachers did have more district support for the changes which they were making in their own classrooms. The administrators all understood that reading

instruction was changing and were openly supportive of change. The Fortville teachers did not show the tenacity of the Rockville teachers in by-passing district constraints because they were not limited in the same ways.

Conclusion

In both Rockville and Fortville, change at the district-level was hampered by the lack of knowledge of the participants, the organizational routines and procedures, and the political structures. The teacher participants had differing levels of understanding of the policy, but most spoke poignantly of their need for time to think and learn about these new ideas. The administrator participants either had a vision for the policy in practice (as shown in Fortville) or expected the teachers to understand it. However, the administrators are charged with the smooth operation of the organization, and so their focus was often on organizational routines and procedures. This focus limited the learning opportunities desired by the teachers. The power structures of the district insured that the administrators would make the decisions. Thus, the teachers were pushed to follow organizational routines even when they knew these routines were limiting the quality of the work they could do.

These teachers continued to grapple with the ideas of the policy alone in their own classrooms. As Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) stated

If earlier reforms have anything to tell us, it is that time is the essential ingredient in any reform and that the function of time is to provide opportunities to accommodate, adjust, and adapt administration and practice to policy. . . . It means commissioning people who work in

real schools to fashion workable solutions to real problems, and allowing those solutions the opportunity to fail and the time to succeed (pp. 60-61).

Local educators charged with implementing a state policy such as Michigan's reading policy need time to learn about the ideas of the policy, time and power to adjust organizational routines to facilitate implementation efforts, and power to use what they learn to make decisions which count.

Implications

The stories of policy implementation in Rockville and Fortville offer insights into the difficulties of attempting to change instructional practices through state policies and reforms. Changes which are fundamentally different from current practices are especially difficult to effect through government policy. The stories told in this study suggest there are specific challenges which must be considered.

If teachers are to change instructional practices in ways that fit the intent of the policy, they must have time to learn how those new practices would look. This seems a simple statement; one which everyone would already know. Yet, in both my districts this fact was ignored. Teachers were asked to complete written plans with little time to figure out what should be included in those plans. Teachers understood the impossibility of this task.

The first lesson we might learn from this study, then, is that teachers who are asked to make instructional changes in their own classrooms or in district programs need to understand what those changes mean for classroom practice. This understanding will come only as they

work with the changes, learning, experimenting, reflecting. Teachers will not develop this understanding from a few brief discussions or inservice sessions. Therefore, policy implementation efforts must provide time for teachers to work with the ideas and how they translate into practice. In addition, the administration of the district must provide support and permission to suspend existing routines during this learning time. Learning new ways to behave is not always comfortable. Teachers will need time to try the ideas and to discuss them with other teachers. They will need freedom from scrutiny by administrators as the classroom appears less well-organized and orderly. In short, teachers must have the time, support, and opportunities to learn about the new ideas and to adapt them to the district context before they will feel ready to design district efforts.

It seems that the official belief is that instructional change occurs because a new curriculum is adopted. In reality, few participants believed this was true. The new curriculum document was not used to help teachers change instruction. Few teachers even had a copy of the document in either district. The organizational routines demanded that a document be produced within a set timeframe. These routines were used to implement the policy, but in effect crippled the implementation efforts.

Therefore, my data would suggest that not only do teachers need permission to suspend existing classroom routines, but organizational routines and procedures need to be suspended or ignored when they limit the work. The curriculum revision cycle of the districts may have been

inappropriate to the work required. This standard operating procedure should have been examined and changed to allow for better quality work.

In addition, those leading the efforts should realize the organizational characteristics will not facilitate fundamental change happening. Those leading the efforts should be cautious and ever-watchful, alerted to changes in focus from effecting change to producing reports and documents which appear to be changes, but which may be empty rhetoric.

Last, the hierarchical structure of schools needs to be examined. Teachers are being asked more and more to take leadership roles in school improvement efforts. Yet, the power to make decisions which affect the district is largely retained by the administration. This power structure limits the ways in which teachers can use their knowledge to effect district improvements. Schools as hierarchies may need to be reexamined, and power structures may need to be redefined.

Implementing a state policy such as Michigan's reading policy, a policy as ideas, is no simple task. Those attempting such work need to be mindful of what happened in Rockville and in Fortville. Teachers need time to learn about the ideas and to translate them into practice. Organizational routines and procedures need to be examined for their effects on the work. Political power structures need to be adjusted to allow teachers to make decisions based on their new knowledge. These three issues must be addressed simultaneously as they interact in complex ways throughout the implementation efforts.

This study also has implications for teacher educators. If teachers are expected to change instructional practices so that students

receive more intellectually ambitious instruction, then teacher educators must begin to practice intellectually challenging instruction to familiarize teacher candidates with such instruction. Classes at the university must work to develop deeper understandings of subject matter rather than requiring memorization of facts and disconnected bits of information. Students must learn the broad, organizing concepts of subject matter and how those concepts relate to each other and to other subjects. Students must build frameworks or schemata for these ideas, so that they understand the subject matter and how it connects to other ideas which they already hold and which they are learning. If future teachers are expected to provide more intellectually ambitious instruction, they must first experience such instruction.

Many of the reforms calling for improved instruction are based on the constructivist view of learning. If teachers are expected to subscribe to a constructivist view of how one learns, teacher education programs must apply such a view to practice. Teacher candidates must have opportunities to learn through collaboration and dialogue. This is important for two reasons. First, if future teachers experience the power of learning in these ways, they will be more likely to believe it is an appropriate pedagogical style in their own classrooms. Teachers who have never experienced such learning would have difficulty understanding and believing in it. They would be more likely to perpetuate the view of learning with which they are most familiar (i.e., teacher telling students fixed knowledge for memorization). Second, providing opportunities for teacher candidates to experience collaborative learning is important for them to develop habits of

collaboration. As these teacher candidates move into their own classrooms, they will find the isolation of teaching as it is currently structured makes it difficult to hold onto their beliefs in constructivist learning. It will be more comfortable to slip into "teacher-telling" types of instruction. However, if they have developed a strong belief in this view of learning and have developed the habits of collaboration and dialogue, they will be more prepared to build networks of support for themselves. They will be more likely to develop opportunities to continue learning and growing with their colleagues even if their work contexts do not support such efforts.

Teacher educators must also give attention to the contexts of teaching in the courses which they offer. Teacher candidates have experienced schools only as students. They are naive about the contexts of teaching as work. For instance, most students see teachers as powerful people, not realizing that teachers have very limited power past the classroom door. Teacher candidates who adopt a collaborative view of learning and expect to find a culture supporting such efforts in their work sites must realize that such a culture does not currently exist. They must learn how they can make space for themselves within the current culture and how they can influence that culture in positive ways (i.e., building an expectation for collegiality within their schools).

In addition, schools of education must expect collaboration between the departments of teacher education and educational administration. This study pointed out the misunderstandings which developed between administrators and teachers as they considered how to improve reading

instruction because they had different areas of focus. Administrators and teachers must better understand the responsibilities, dilemmas, and constraints that each face in their roles. University departments must work together to help future educators understand and overcome these differences while working together to improve school experiences for all students. The "old" view of school as a hierarchy where teachers' voices are often silenced must be replaced with schools where all educators work together to improve schools for all children.

Teacher educators must join with other educators to reduce the reliance on standardized tests as the sole measure of student achievement. The teachers in Rockville and in Fortville were trying new ways of teaching their students, but these students were still assessed with standardized tests which did not match the instructional goals. The mismatch was apparent to the teachers in Rockville, but they were unable to make their voices heard. Classroom teachers often see the limitations of such assessment instruments, but they are seldom given the power to change testing practices. In today's political climate, it will take the voices of educators from all levels to combat the political pressures which result in simplified teaching to assure achievement on standardized tests.

Teacher educators must work with teachers to develop forums for teachers to come together and celebrate their work. Teachers in my study asked repeatedly for opportunities to discuss their ideas and to learn together. These types of opportunities were not seen as valuable by the organization and were not provided. Such opportunities allow teachers to learn from each other and to wrestle with the complex

dilemmas which they face daily. Such opportunities renew the enthusiasm of the teachers for their work. Teacher educators must recognize this need and work with schools to find ways to support such opportunities for learning, reflecting, and celebrating together.

Policy makers who hope to professionalize teaching must also begin to recognize that classroom instruction is the "essence of teaching." Classroom instruction should be the focus of professionalizing efforts, rather than assuming that to become professionals teachers need new roles outside of their classrooms. Teachers should feel that their work is valued and that opportunities to reflect and refine their instruction are a priority with their school districts and with the policy makers. Teachers are in one of the best positions to wrestle with the issues and to devise workable solutions for the problems within our schools today. Teachers' ideas must be heard and valued as professionals. They must have the opportunity and the power to act on their instructional decisions as true professionals.

Local efforts to improve instruction in response to Michigan's reading policy offer insights into the difficulties of improving classroom instruction. Maximizing efforts to improve instruction requires that all levels of the education community recognize the complexities of such work and coordinate their efforts in support of such goals. Teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and policy makers must all work together to develop ways to make our nation's schools better meet the needs of our nation's children..

Conclusion

Even though the efforts to enact district-level changes which would improve classroom reading instruction fell short of what was intended by the policy, the stories of Rockville and Fortville are yet to be finished. The individual teachers continue to search for better ways to teach reading. They continue to call for more opportunities to learn about these new ideas. They continue to experiment with new ideas and new ways of teaching reading. They were frustrated with the district-level work, but they continued striving to improve their own practice.

These teachers, and thousands more just like them, are working daily to teach students of all ages to read, to love reading, and to become lifelong readers. They may not always know the best ways to do that, but all of my participants were open to learning new ideas.

Those of us interested in improving instruction within our nation's schools need to become more involved with these teachers. We need to understand how the school as an organization affects the teachers' abilities to do their best work. We need to understand how the current hierarchical structures tend to silence teachers and inhibit their abilities to learn and to use what they learn. Current school reforms and school improvement efforts often seem to be focused on inappropriate levels of the system. State departments demand to see higher scores from students on standardized achievement tests. States require documentation that schools are making plans to improve. Seldom do we hear of a state or national reform which directs attention to teacher learning, providing extended and extensive opportunities for teachers to

learn together as they work to translate theory into practice. I believe this is where the hope for the futures of our schools lies, in the classrooms with the teachers!

APPENDIX

PHILOSOPHY (of Rockville)

The ability and desire to read historically has been a sign of distinction. In the world of tomorrow this ability to read will be even more critical to one's success in life. Predicted changes in society will require tomorrow's adults to develop new skills and understandings throughout life. Learning necessarily will be a life-long pursuit. The students of today must learn to read well and to appreciate the importance of that ability in their lives.

A successful reading program will develop capable readers who enjoy reading and who choose to read. Giving students instruction in how to read must be accompanied by experiences which foster a love of reading. True literacy is more all encompassing than figuring out words on a page. Literacy now is defined as "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (Applebee, A.M., Langer, J.A., & Mullis, I, 1987. Learning to Be Literate in America: Reading, Writing, and Reasoning, NAEP). The aim of a reading program should be to develop true literacy.

The elementary reading program is of prime importance in developing literacy. The early school experiences are critical in the reading program. "The beginning is the most important part of the work" (Plato). Developing successful readers requires that primary students have a strong foundation in oral language. Through oral language children develop vocabulary and an understanding of how language works. Language experiences and immersion in good literature build familiarity with the patterns of literary language. Students must be read to and must spend time with books of their choice daily. In addition, numerous opportunities to write their own ideas help children to develop their comprehension and their knowledge of sound-symbol correspondence. Becoming an author oneself aids in understanding authors' style and meaning.

As students move through the elementary school, language experiences, writing experiences, immersion in good literature, listening to stories, and free reading should continue. Developing readers also need to learn the skills and strategies which will make them independent readers. A strong foundation in decoding strategies such as phonics, structural clues, and context clues is essential. A skilled reader must know a variety of ways to figure out unfamiliar words in order to develop fluency. Independent readers should recognize that there are many varied purposes for reading, and that reading strategies should vary according to the purpose for reading. A capable reader understands that his/her own knowledge is important, and he/she will learn to draw upon and integrate that knowledge to better understand the author's meaning. A capable reader needs

to be actively engaged with the material, assimilating, and monitoring as he/she reads.

Reading and writing experiences should expand the student's understanding of his/her world. This can occur through exposure to various genres of literature. Students should have experiences with many different genres. They also should recognize and appreciate the numerous ways one is called upon to use written material daily. Reading should be seen as important and valued in the students' everyday lives--during their school careers and beyond.

Successful readers cannot be developed unless children spend time reading. A successful reading program will provide time for reading and talking about books in school and will offer incentives to encourage reading at home. Reading should be a shared concern between home, community, and school.

Developing truly literate students is our challenge. Our curriculum must include the components most necessary to fulfill that challenge.

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

I am interested in learning how your district is responding to Michigan's New Definition of Reading and the new MEAP. This is part of my dissertation study at M.S.U.

Our conversation will be confidential. Your name will not be used, nor will the name of the school district. Both you and the district will be referred to by pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. The tapes of the interviews will not be available to anyone in your district.

During our conversation today, I will be asking for your views about matters concerning reading and reading instruction and some of the things that are going on today? I would also like to have a copy of any district documents that will help me understand your answers.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

I. ORAL HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

- (A) Tell me about your Reading Curriculum Revision Committee? How it began? What it has done? What it has left to do? Important events?

(Probe: Try to find out any significant phases or changes the committee has gone through. Try to understand what the goals are and the main tasks.)

II. WHAT DOES THE PRINCIPAL UNDERSTAND ABOUT READING INSTRUCTION AS THE NEW DEFINITION DEFINES IT?

- (A) What do you view as most important for children to learn from their reading instruction? Why?
- ① What would you expect to be included in a teacher's reading program?

2. Why would _____ be important?

3. How would _____ be accomplished?

III. THE DISTRICT'S RESPONSE TO THE NEW STATE POLICY

TRANSITION: I would like to think about what has been happening in your district?

- (A) How did you hear of Michigan's New Definition of Reading? When was that?

(Probe: Attempt to find out if it came through MDE notices/materials, district reading specialists, professional organizations, word-of-mouth, etc.)

1. Has your district responded to the New Definition? In what ways?

② Your district has formed a reading curriculum revision committee to revise district reading programs. Who initiated the formation of this committee? Why?

① a. How was the chair selected? (look for mention of expertise or interest in reading, his/her turn to chair a committee, more time due to less other responsibilities)

① b. What types of learning experiences did the chair have to prepare him/her for this work? (look for mention of educational opportunities to learn about the New Definition)

① c. What types of district/board guidelines does the chair adhere to? (ASK FOR A COPY)

③ How were the teachers on the committee selected? (look for expertise, experience, interest, their turn to serve on a committee, volunteers, etc.)

① a. Did the chair attempt to get a variety of experience levels, grade levels, backgrounds, etc. on the committee? If so, what specific actions were taken to ensure this variety?

① b. What opportunities were provided for committee members to learn about Michigan's New Definition of Reading?

① c. What other opportunities were provided to help these teachers learn about reading practices/curriculum?

④ What was this committee's charge? What were some of their specific tasks? (look for mention of learn about reading instruction, write objectives for the district, train other teachers, change own practice, etc.)

① a. How were these tasks explained to the teachers?

① b. Have they been successful in accomplishing these tasks to date? How do you know?

★ ① c. What specific plans/goals do you have for the committee for this year?

(Probe: Attempt to get a feel for just what the principal feels the committee should/will be doing next year and how that will look/happen?)

- (B) Will the committee's work affect the way teachers teach reading in the district? In what ways?

(Probe: Attempt to understand how well the principal really understands the new view of reading through this question.)

1. How will the committee help teachers?
(education, materials, released time to collaborate, change class size/make-up, etc.)

(Probe each of the things mentioned as much as possible to better understand how the changes are really viewed--as fundamental, radical or as easy to do.)

2. What has it already done? How would you characterize the impact they have made on reading instruction within the district? Why?

- (C) The MEAP test is given every fall to your fourth graders. Have you read through the new MEAP test yourself?

1. What types of information do you think the MEAP provides for you and/or your teachers?
2. How is this information used within your building? With whom? For what purposes?
3. Does the MEAP measure the things about reading that your teacher feel are important? How do you know that?

(Probe: If not, what types of evaluation instruments or techniques would be more helpful?)

IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL READING PROGRAM

TRANSITION: I would like to talk about your district's current reading program.

- (A) From your interactions with teachers and your observations, how would you characterize reading instruction in your district?

(B) Does your district have a reading program that all teachers must use? (ASK FOR A COPY IF IT IS WRITTEN)

1. Does the program/guide tell the teachers what to emphasize, what to do, and what to say?

(2) Suppose a teacher wanted to teach reading in a different way or use different materials or evaluation techniques. Would that be acceptable?

(Probe: What are the parameters within which a teacher must stay?)

(3) Do administrators from the district office contact you about your reading program? If so, who contacts you? When?

a. What types of information do they discuss with you? For what purposes?

(b) Do you receive directives about reading from the central office? If so, regarding what?

c. In what ways do you respond to directives from the central office? (specific examples)

(C) How would you and your teachers decide if your reading program needed revision? (Specific examples of types of information used)

1. How would your teachers decide what types of revisions were needed?

(2) How would your teachers know how to make those changes?

ENDING: Is there anything else about the your district's reading program, its response to Michigan's New Definition of Reading, or the new MEAP that you would like to discuss?

Thank you for your time. After I have studied your answers, I may have further questions. Would you be willing to talk with me again?

TEACHER INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

I am doing a dissertation about reading. I am interested in learning about what is happening in your district in the area of reading.

Our conversation will be confidential. Your name will not be used, nor will the name of the school district. Both you and the district will be referred to by pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. The tapes of the interviews will not be available to anyone in your district.

During our conversation today, I will be asking for your views about matters concerning reading and reading instruction and some of the things that are going on today?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

I would like to start by trying to understand what you think about reading and reading instruction.

A. Tell me about your reading program?

When do you have reading?

What do the students read?

What's hard about teaching reading?

(Probe: How much do you teach reading?

What do you find troublesome about teaching reading?

Has your reading instruction changed over time?)

A. When did you hear about Michigan's New Definition of Reading? How?

B. What do you think it means?

Do you agree with that?

What is new about it?

C. Is this how you think most teachers think about reading instruction?

D. Do you know anything about the MEAP in reading?

Has it changed? How?

Have you seen it?

Does it have any bearing on what the teachers in your district do in reading instruction?

E. Here is a question from the MEAP--What do you think this question is testing? How can you tell? Why would that be important to test?

F. When the MEAP results come to the district, who is given the results? Do you know what these people do with the results?

(Probe to understand if they see the MEAP as relevant to all teachers.)

TRANSITION:

Now I would like to focus on the work that you are doing on the district reading curriculum revision committee.

A. Did you know about Michigan's New Definition of Reading before you joined this committee?

(Probe: After joining the committee, did you have opportunities to learn about the New Definition? If so, can you tell me about them?)

B. Who created this committee?

1. Why was it set up?

2. What is it supposed to do?

(Probe: How do you know?)

3. How did you get on this committee?

(Probe: If they volunteered, ask why they decided to serve on it. If they were selected, ask why they think they were chosen.)

C. After having worked on the committee for a period of time, what has it done so far?

*** If the following accomplishments are not mentioned, ask about them directly:

1. I was given a copy of the philosophy statement from your committee. (SHOW IT) What does this say to you?
2. I understand that the committee prepared a document. Who has seen this document?
 - a. What can you tell me about this document?
 - b. What does it address?
 - c. Did you contribute to writing this document? If so, in what ways? If not, who did?
 - d. What does this document do for people in the district?
 - e. What is most likely to happen now with this document?
3. Has the committee been responsible for providing any learning experiences for district teachers? If so, what can you tell me about them?
- D. During your work on the committee, have you had opportunities to contribute what you know about reading instruction? If so, can you give me specific examples. If not, why do you think you have not had such opportunities?
 1. Has working on this committee been a productive professional experience for you?

(Probe: If so, what made it so? If not, what might have made it so?)
 2. Did you learn from working on this committee?

(Probe: If so, what did you learn? How did you learn it? If not, were there things you would have liked to learn?)
4. Thinking about the New Definition of Reading--What would it take to teach reading in this way?
5. How close are the teachers that you know to teaching in this way?

C. What would it take to get them the rest of the way?

Why would these be important? How would they help teachers?

(Probe: Has the committee done these things yet? If not, does it plan to do them?)

D. Imagine a classroom where reading is taught this way: What would it look like? What would the teacher be doing? What would the students be doing? Who would be talking and to whom?

Do many classrooms look this way?

ENDING:

Is there anything else about the work of revising your district's reading curriculum to fit with the New Definition of Reading that you would like to discuss?

Thank you for your time. After I have studied your answers, I may have further questions. Would you be willing to talk with me again?

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

I am doing a dissertation about reading. I am interested in learning about what is happening in your district in the area of reading.

Our conversation will be confidential. Your name will not be used, nor will the name of the school district. Both you and the district will be referred to by pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

During our conversation today, I will be asking for your views about matters concerning reading and reading instruction and some of the things that are going on today. Do you have any questions before we begin?

I. THE MEANING OF THE NEW DEFINITION

A. Have you read the New Definition of Reading?

What would you say it means for your district?

Who would need to know about it?

B. How would you describe reading instruction in this district? Do you observe teachers presenting reading lessons?

II. THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE READING CURRICULUM REVISION COMMITTEE

TRANSITION: I know that a committee was formed to work on reading curriculum. I would like to ask about that committee and its work.

A. Can you tell me some background or history of the committee?

How were the leaders selected?

How were the members selected?

What guidelines were they given to follow?

What time and resources were provided for their work?

What has your role been regarding this committee?

B. What exactly was this committee to accomplish?

Is it expected this committee will influence reading instruction in the district? In what ways? How will it accomplish these?

Who will make sure these things happen? How will they do this?

C. The committee wrote a proposal (document). How does this proposal fit into the overall expectations of the district for reading instruction?

Who gets a copy of this document? What will happen to it? Who uses it?

Does it tell teachers how they are expected to teach reading?

Does it specify materials/methods for them to use?

Are objectives and how to accomplish them clear to teachers?

III. POLICY QUESTIONS/ISSUES

A. Are there written policy documents concerning reading instruction, other than the proposal?

Who uses these documents? Teachers? Administrators? Board?

After the Board approves a policy document, what do Board members do with it? (Do they expect follow-up reports? Do they observe in schools?)

If teachers want to deviate from the policy document in some way (e.g., not using the new basal series or purchasing workbooks), who decides if they may?

B. Do you receive directives or memos from the Department of Education concerning district reading policy?

C. How do you see what your district is doing in reading fitting with other state policies (e.g., Core Curriculum and Public Act 25)?

Do any of them seem in conflict?

D. The state policy in reading contains a New Definition of what reading is and a new test to assess children's progress in reading. What do you think the state wants to see changed in classroom reading instruction?

Has the state helped your district understand and make these changes? In what ways?

E. The new MEAP in reading has been administered for two years now. How have your students done on it?

Who uses the results and in what ways?

What do you think the test reports that could be useful in your district? How could you use it?

Is there anything else you think I should know to better understand the reading program and the work of the committee in your district?

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