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Toward Reading Curriculum Development/Implementation

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Marlene Joy Willink Braunius

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IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHER EMPOWERMENT IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT TOWARD READING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/IMPLEMENTATION

By

Marlene Joy Willink Braunius

VOLUME I

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

1991

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ABSTRACT

IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHER EMPOWERMENT IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT
TOWARD READING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/IMPLEMENTATION

By

Marlene Joy Willink Braunius

This study focuses upon the determination of one school district to bring about curriculum reform through providing opportunities for teachers to become more active in the decision-making process. That district specifically empowered its teachers to design, write, and implement a new reading curriculum.

The overriding research questions addressed within this paper are: How does one district attempt to empower its teachers for reading curriculum change? and What do its teachers require if they are to feel empowered in their attempts to recommend and implement changes in reading instruction?

The methodology of this research was qualitative. The researcher's mission was to report: What is happening in this field setting? What do the happenings mean to the participants? What must these participants know in order to do what they do in this setting? How does what is happening

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The three components which Maeroff (1988) identified as essential to empowering teachers (boosting status, increasing knowledge, and providing access to decision-making) formed the framework for the research data. Cited evidence confirmed the presence of these three aspects within the district studied.

Against that backdrop, empowering and disempowering aspects of three types of staff development aimed toward implementing innovation in the area of reading curriculum were highlighted: 1) a top down model, where an outside expert was brought in; 2) an interactive model, where on-site trainers conducted voluntary Reading Strategy Inservices; 3) a bottom-up model, where a Reading Support Group was formed in keeping with the characteristics of a humanistic teacher center. Deterrents and contributors to empowerment in each model were noted.

The study specifically demonstrated that the Reading Support Group represented one type of staff development that has the potential for empowering its participants, and the path to empowerment for that specific group was traced in detail.

This document concludes with a number of implications and recommendations related to empowerment, staff development, and implementation issues.

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1991

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Dedicated to my husband,

Burt

For the past quarter of a century, our relationship has thrived upon the concepts of *mutuality* and *reciprocity*. You have consistently embodied for me the meaning of the word, *commitment*. This is my gift of love and gratitude to you.

Happy 25th Anniversary!

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ACKNOWLEDEGMENTS

First and foremost, I give glory and praise to God, Who empowered me through His Spirit to complete this task. He gave me the vision, the resources, the capacity, and the support required to make this event possible.

That support was provided in diverse ways, from a variety of sources, through many special people. I can only begin to cite them.

I express my appreciation to my MSU guidance committee members, Dr. George Sherman (Chair), Dr. Charles Blackman, Dr. Donald Nickerson, and Dr. Joanne Simmons for their direction and input throughout this project.

An overwhelming sense of indebtedness is felt toward my family. Burt, you have unconditionally loved, supported, advised, encouraged, and believed in me. Within the warmth of your love, I have achieved what I never dreamed possible. Stephen and Peter, as you have grown and developed physically and emotionally, you have also witnessed your mother's struggle and growth as a person and as a professional. Stephen, I value our many dialogues and your good insights, now including the field of education as well. I am thrilled that you have determined to follow your parents into the teaching profession. Peter, your sharp mind and computer expertise are astounding. Thank you for being available day and night to unravel many a perplexing problem. The prayerful concern and loving support of our parents, Gertrude and Willard Willink and Josie and Lambertus Braunius, throughout the years are also hereby acknowledged with gratitude.

I am profoundly grateful to the Omega school district for their tolerance and patience with my presence as an ethnographer among them. To the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education, the Curriculum Director, the Reading Study Committee Chairperson and membership, the elementary school principals and teaching staff, the Reading Support Group, and the Reading Teachers, I express my appreciation.

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In order to protect your identity, I am unable to list your given names; however, you know who you are, and I wish to have you insert your own names on this page. I realized through this study how truly fortunate I am to be working in the Omega district alongside such professional individuals! Words cannot adequately express my thanks to those whom I called Laura and Shar, Chloe and Patrick, along with Truda, Bonnie, Karina, Chris, Suzann, Jennifer, and Rebekah for their active and/or supportive roles in this drama.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

During the first half of the 1980s, the deficiencies in today's educational system were widely broadcast (e.g., The Paideia Proposal, 1982; A Nation at Risk, 1983) and numerous proposals were made to remediate those faults (e.g., The Holmes Group, 1986; The Carnegie Forum, 1986). Two distinctly different routes to accomplish educational reform were taken. One approach was to impose tighter bureaucratic control and greater regulation of teachers. The second, just the opposite approach, called for less bureaucratic control and more opportunities for teachers to become involved in decision-making processes related to school improvement.

This study is focused upon one school district, the Omega (a pseudonym) Public Schools, which has determined to travel the latter path, that of empowering its teachers to have a greater say in educational matters, specifically as evidenced in the district's attempts to develop and to implement a new reading curriculum.

The Problem

The decision on the part of the Omega district administration to *empower* its teachers to take charge of this change process was a conscious and deliberate effort. When I first approached the district's Superintendent of

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Schools to gain access to the site and to inform him of my proposed research project, I found him to be extremely positive. He said that he would welcome my presence in the role of researcher in the district. He went on to talk of his frustration with the passivity of the district's teachers in the past and of his desire that this apathy could be altered or could be replaced by a more assertive role in the future. He illustrated this with a story that I had heard him tell three years earlier as he apparently attempted to challenge the Omega staff in this direction:

> As Curriculum Director in my former district, I told teachers what I wanted them to do regarding writing, but they got up in arms and changed the mandate to make it their own. And what they came up with was dynamite! When I came to Omega as Superintendent, I said the same things [related to a writing mandate], and there was not one word about it. *Here* teachers just went along with it. [Fieldnotes, 10/28/88]

In a later interaction with him, the Superintendent said that his vision of teacher empowerment had been eight years in reaching fruition in the district, and the Board of Education was impatient at times. He also alluded to future implications: "Once you give teachers power, it's difficult to take it away, as they discovered [in my former district]." [Fieldnotes, 8/29/90].

The process of encouraging Omega teachers to take a greater role in curriculum development was originally articulated publicly in the fall of 1986, when a three-page document was sent from the Curriculum Council to teachers and administrators entitled, "Curriculum Leadership and Change." Within the body of that text, a reorganization of

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the district's Curriculum Council was proposed for the fall of 1988, based on the claim that "authors and nationally constituted committees have uniformly noted that 'success schools' have developed curriculum leadership from teacher ranks." [Site document, 10/21/86]

Statement of Purpose.

It is the purpose of this fieldwork research project to investigate the processes involved in one public school system's attempt to redefine reading instruction within the district. As will be shown, the work of the Reading Study Committee was being grounded in the desire of that district to *empower* its teachers, to give them a greater voice in decisions related to reading curriculum and instruction. To that end, the issue of teacher empowerment, along with congruent staff development for reading curriculum implementation, formed the major focus of this study.

Background of the Study.

From January 1988-January 1990, I gathered and analyzed fieldwork research data in the Omega district where I had been employed for the previous ten years as a Chapter I Reading Teacher/Reading Consultant. As an ethnographer, "to make the familiar strange" (Clark, 1984) was my mission. It was an exhilarating task to attempt to make sense of what motivated my colleagues to think, to speak, and to act as they did. I was constantly challenged to listen for and attempt to understand their reality (their motivations, concerns, frustrations, and satisfactions) as they were

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faced with developing and implementing a district reading curriculum which included a district philosophy of reading, along with concomitant methods and materials.

Historically within the district, elementary classroom teachers had been handed basal reader materials as the reading program and the basal reader teachers' manual, thus, became the reading curriculum. Seldom, if ever, was there an opportunity for colleagues to think, reflect, argue, and/or discuss issues pertaining to reading instruction.

A movement to change the former situation (i.e., "teachers have simply been handed basal reader materials as the reading program and the basal reader teachers' manual has become the reading curriculum") began in January of 1988 with the formation of a new Reading Study Committee. Fourteen percent (24) of the Omega K-12 teachers responded to an open invitation from the Curriculum Council chairperson (who was appointed as the district's first Curriculum Director six months later) to be a part of that Committee.

The mission of the Reading Study Committee was to examine the present status of reading instruction within the district, to familiarize itself with the state's current ("new") definition of reading, and to determine the course of reading instruction in the future. As a result, the Committee was to provide the district with a written reading curriculum and to make recommendations for materials and inservices in order to implement that curriculum.

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Early into the study, the Curriculum Director specifically avowed that the study was to be "teacher initiated, teacher led, teacher developed, and teacher assessed/monitored." [Fieldnotes, 3/17/88] Later that year, he referred to it as "a grass roots effort." [Fieldnotes, 12/1/88] Shortly thereafter, one of the administrators who was on both the Curriculum Council and the Reading Study Committee was the first to use the word, *empower*, in my presence when speaking of this phenomenon: " . . . seeing and knowing that we wanted to empower teachers . . . " [Interview transcript, 2/9/89]

The Committee (convened originally in January 1988) performed three major tasks during my time in the field. First, the Committee built a foundation for its later work through information-gathering (January 1988-October 1988): it studied the current views of reading instruction within the district and familiarized itself with the state's New Definition of Reading along with a variety of attendant strategies. Second, it disseminated this information to the elementary teaching staff by offering voluntary Reading Strategy Inservices (November 1988-May 1989). Third, a tentative reading curriculum guide was written (June-August 1989) and placed in the hands of classroom teachers (September 1989) for the purpose of review and revision.

My research project not only included the work of the Reading Study Committee, but I also studied the activities

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of a second group, a Reading Support Group, which I proposed in order to deal with the second concern listed on p. 3 ("Seldom, if ever, was there an opportunity for colleagues to think, reflect, question, argue, and/or discuss issues pertaining to reading instruction"). This humanistic teacher center-like group (Feiman, 1977 [cited by Zigarmi in Lieberman & Miller, 1979]) met on an almost-weekly basis for the first semester of the 1989-1990 school year " . . . for the purpose of reflecting upon and discussing reading theory and practice as it relates to the new reading curriculum guide and its implementation in classrooms within the district." [Site document, 6/1/89]

The invitation I sent to all 54 elementary teachers in the Omega School District was prefaced by the following statement:

> During the past school year, you have had the opportunity to be exposed to [the state's] Redefinition of Reading, along with strategies that are congruent with that philosophical statement. This summer a new reading curriculum will be written by the members of our district's Reading Study Committee. It appears that the new curriculum will be in teachers' hands this fall, and that textbook adoption will take place in the fall of 1990.

I then went on to state briefly the proposed purpose:

> As I envision it, this would be a voluntary group of elementary teachers who wish to meet on a weekly basis for the purpose of reflecting upon and discussing reading theory and practice as it relates to the new reading curriculum guide and its implementation in classrooms within the district. [Site document, 6/1/89]

The eight individuals who elected to participate in this venture represented a variety of placements (two first grade teachers, two second grade teachers, two fourth grade

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teachers, one special education teacher, and one reading teacher, in addition to myself, a district reading teacher), professional experience (from a first year novice to a twenty-four year veteran), and reading savvy (from masters' degrees in reading to no formal reading courses within the past two decades). More will be said about the make-up of the group in relationship to the first meeting.

It was in conjunction with both the Reading Study Committee and the Reading Support Group that I collected data for this study.

Significance of the Study.

Specifically, this study should provide a focused picture of what teacher-empowerment and staff development look like within a district that is attempting to plan and implement a new reading curriculum. More generally, it is hoped that the findings will add new insights and/or confirm prior studies related to teacher-empowerment, staff development, and reading curriculum design and implementation.

The following quotes related to staff development, change, and the role of qualitative research should help to underscore the significance of this study.

According to Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle, Murray, Dubea, and Williams (1987),

> Schools need to transform what has heretofore been called 'inservice' and interpreted by many as something done *to* teachers into opportunities for teachers to engage in a wide range of growth experiences *that have real meaning to them* [Italics, mine] (p. 1).

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Showers and Bennett (1987) in their summary, "A synthesis of research on staff development," make these observations:

> Teacher involvement in the governance process has been advocated with increasing intensity for the last fifteen years. Since few advocates have generated research, only a handful of studies are available . . . More work is needed on the issue of governance. We believe that *involvement is important and desirable* [Italics, mine] (pp. 81-82).

In their chapter entitled, "Applied qualitative research for education," Bogdan and Biklen (1982) speak particularly to concerns of teachers in regard to change:

> Change is serious because the goal is to improve life for people. Change is complicated because beliefs, life styles and behavior come into conflict. People who try to change education, be it in a particular classroom or for the whole system, seldom understand how people involved in the change think. Consequently, they are unable to accurately anticipate how the participants will react. Since it is the people in the setting that must live with the change, it is their definitions of the situation that are crucial if change is going to work (p. 193).

As the passage continues, the validity of using qualitative research specifically in regard to this topic is discussed:

> These human aspects of the change process are what qualitative research strategies . . . study best. Their emphasis on the perspectives that people hold and their concern with process enable the researcher to sort out the complications of change. The qualitative orientation allows for the researcher to simultaneously deal with participants in change, whether in a single classroom or at the many different levels of the educational bureaucracy. The perspective directs us to see behavior in context and does not focus on outcomes to the exclusion of process (p. 193).

Clark (1984), in his article, "Research in the service of teaching," feels that research should have at least four benefits for teachers; namely, information (describes how

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teaching and learning worked under various conditions and in various settings), inspiration (pictures of how schooling could be improved), vision (sees familiar surroundings in new ways), and support (validates what teachers are already doing well).

When teachers themselves participate in the research as informants, Florio (1981) says that they are given the opportunity to look at their own teaching afresh by being reflective, analytic, and constructively critical:

> Teacher participation in fieldwork research that takes the form not only of answering researchers' questions but of sharing the activities of question framing, data gathering, and drawing and testing inferences can yield multiple professional benefits. By means of their participation, teachers not only stand a chance of enhancing the quality of theory about their practice, but they develop inquiry skills and experience that may stand them in good stead as they approach daily problems within that practice (p. 16).

I believe, like Shulman (1986), that "practitioners simply know a great deal that they have never even tried to articulate." His perspective looks beyond individual teacher benefits to the educational community as a whole:

> . . . a major portion of the research agenda for the next decade will be to collect, collate, and interpret the practical knowledge of teachers for the purpose of establishing a case literature and codifying its principles, precedents, and parables (p. 12).

In that light, it is envisioned that the resultant descriptions and findings from this fieldwork research perspective will have significance beyond the present setting. Not only can personal and professional benefits be anticipated for the teachers who were directly involved in this study, as well as for the district as a whole, but the

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issues addressed here should also be of interest to curriculum directors, administrators, reading consultants, inservice planners and staff developers, plus teacher education departments of colleges and universities.

Definitions

For this project, the following definitions will focus our thinking.

Collaboration. " . . . mutual problem solving, assuming that multiple perspectives are better than single ones" (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 9).

Collegiality. " . . . connecting on a professional level with other school staff, looking for new ideas, advice, a forum to test models of teaching" (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 8).

Coordinator. Freire's (1971) description of his "cultural circle" coordinator is adopted for this setting. The coordinator is a person who is characterized by faith, hope, love, and humility. Faith: there is the belief in the possibility to create and to change things. Hope: there is the certainty that each meeting with the group will leave both the coordinator and its members enriched. Love: there is the conviction that the fundamental effort of education is the liberation of wo/man, never his/her domestication. Humility: there is the desire to grow with the group, to become a part of the group and one of its members, rather than claiming to direct the group.

Curriculum. Curriculum is the dynamic interaction of the *what* and *why* of instruction, along with the *who*, the *where*, the *when*, the *how*, and the *with what results*. The Omega district (1984) has defined curriculum as " . . . all the learning experiences which the schools provide for children and youth. The curriculum of the schools is a dynamic program of learning activities to be continually studied, evaluated and changed if it is to continue to serve the ever-shifting needs of the student population and the community which the schools serve."

Curriculum Council. A group of teachers and administrators whose purpose it is to "study, evaluate, and change" the district's curriculum. The make-up of the council is the curriculum director (non-voting chair), three high school teachers, three middle school teachers, five

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Empowered Teacher. The teacher who is active in his/her own education (Freire [Timpson, 1989]); a professional decision-maker (Keyes, 1988); one who is in control of, and responsible for, the changes which s/he her/himself initiates or takes on (Lieberman [Brandt, 1989]).

Empowerment. To bring into a state of ability to act effectively with strength, capability, vigor, or energy (Ashcroft, 1987).

Facilitator. One who creates a context in which group members are free to have personal interactions about meaningful issues or themes (Braunius, 1983).

Implementation. The carrying out of the specific guidelines for instructional, curricular, or management approaches (specifically here as it relates to reading).

Innovation. Something new to the individual who is going to use it--requires behaviors not usual for the individual who is going to use it (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 55).

K-W-L Strategy. A reading comprehension strategy that involves students in three cognitive steps: assessing what they *know*, what they *want* to find out, and what they *learned*.

Locus of control. How a person perceives contingency relationships between his or her actions and their outcomes (Rotter [Omizo et al., 1987, p. 737]).

Mapping. A technique of structuring information in graphic form.

New Definition/Redefinition of Reading. Adopted by the state's reading association in 1983, the current definition says that "Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the text, and the context of the reading situation." (Wixson & Peters, 1984)

Old Definition of Reading. The state's 1977 definition of reading, which defined reading ". . . as the process of transforming the visual representation of language into meaning. Thus, . . . an idea is being transferred from the written page to the reader's mind." (Wixson & Peters, 1984)

Probable Passages. A reading comprehension strategy in which the teacher selects the key words and phrases of a

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text. Before reading the passage, the students categorize (e.g., setting, characters, problem, resolution) and slot these key words according to the elements of a story frame into a "probable passage." After reading the selection, they modify their predicted passage to correspond with what actually happened.

QAR (Question-Answer Relationship). A reading comprehension strategy which provides the framework for clarifying the different sources of information available for answering questions. The two basic sources are information in the text and information from the readers' background knowledge.

Reading Curriculum. A written document containing the district philosophy of reading, goals and grade-specific objectives, as well as suggested activities (strategies) to teach those objectives.

Reading Recovery. A highly individualized, intensive reading intervention program originating in New Zealand and developed by Marie Clay (1979) for high-risk first graders (bottom 20%).

Reading Study Committee. Originally a group of 24 volunteer Omega district teachers who came together to study the current view of reading within the district, to familiarize themselves with the state's new definition of reading, and to write a curriculum which would set the guidelines for the district's future direction in reading instruction. The group membership at the time of this writing consisted of: the elementary language arts chair/second grade teacher (chair), the curriculum director, one elementary principal, one high school teacher, two middle school teachers, one middle school reading teacher, one fifth grade teacher, two fourth grade teachers, two third grade teachers, one first grade teacher, one kindergarten teacher, and three elementary school reading teachers.

Reading Support Group. The eight voluntary elementary teachers, plus myself as coordinator, who met on a weekly basis from September 7-December 12, 1989, for the purpose of discussing reading-related concerns. The group composite will be described more extensively in the "Situations" section of this paper.

Reciprocal Teaching. A reading comprehension strategy which is a dialogue between the teacher and students, utilizing four components: *generating questions, summarizing, clarifying,* and *predicting.*

Staff Development/Professional Development. Individual, personal self-improvement efforts which engage teachers in a

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wide variety of opportunities for growth in knowledge and skills within the education profession (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987).

Stages. A cluster of concerns, a set of preoccupations (Katz, 1972); as in Katz's four teacher developmental stages; i.e., Survival, Consolidation, Renewal, and Maturity.

Story Grammar. The explicit structure or pattern by which stories are constructed.

Strategic Inservices. Voluntary monthly meetings which were carried out during the 1988-1989 school year in conjunction with the work of the Reading Study Committee for the purpose of disseminating information to K-5 teachers related to the state's New Definition of Reading and its concomitant strategies

Strategies. Systematic plans which the reader uses flexibly and adaptively for achieving a specific goal or result.

Teacher Center. A teacher center can be looked upon as both a place and a concept. As a place, it is where teachers exchange ideas, talk over problems, acquire skill, and have access to resources they can use and adapt to their own classroom situations. As a concept, it shows the value of teachers' taking more responsibility for their own staff development and fosters teachers' understanding more about how children learn and is concerned with what a teacher is thinking and doing in his/her classroom (Zigarmi [Lieberman & Miller, 1979]).

Research Questions

I have raised several questions to give direction to this research. While many will be answered specifically by the data gathered in this setting, others guided the process of investigation but were not directly answered within the parameters of this project. They may bear further research.

The overriding research questions addressed within this paper are: How does one district attempt to empower its teachers for reading curriculum change? and What kind of support (i.e., staff development) do its teachers require if

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they are to feel empowered in their attempts to recommend and implement changes in reading instruction?

The subsidiary questions arising from the main questions can be categorized according to the three areas specified within the title of this thesis; i.e., teacher empowerment, staff development, and reading curriculum implementation.

Teacher Empowerment.

1. How does one district attempt to empower its teachers for reading curriculum change?
2. What happens when these teachers become involved in the governance process? How do they react to an empowerment structure?
3. How do teachers and administrators in this district view teacher empowerment? What does it mean for the district's administrators, teachers, and, ultimately, the students?
4. When do these teachers feel empowered/disempowered? How do they feel about the amount of control they have/do not have? What are the conditions that deter/encourage professional growth and development within this setting?

Staff Development.

Three different types of staff development efforts were made in relationship to the three headings specified below.

Reading Study Committee.

1. How does this Committee, billed as "teacher initiated, teacher led, teacher directed, and teacher assessed/monitored" carry out its duties?
2. What process does the Committee undergo in order to inform itself about current reading research and practice?
3. What kind of situations will be experienced as teachers attempt to plan and implement reading curriculum change?
4. How do these attempts at staff development cause the Committee members to feel empowered/disempowered?

Reading Strategic Inservices.

1. What kind of staff development efforts does the Committee propose to prepare and equip the elementary teaching staff for reading curriculum change?

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2. Who determines what is to be taught? How is that knowledge disseminated?

3. How does what happens within this setting compare to characteristics of traditional inservices? How does it compare to the identified characteristics of "effective" staff development?

4. What is the impact of this kind of staff development on teacher empowerment?

Reading Support Group.

1. What will happen when a group of teachers is provided with the opportunity for engaging in critical reflection of teaching reading with each other?

2. Who becomes a part of the proposed voluntary Reading Support Group? What rationale do these individuals give for participating in the group? What are the perceived needs of these teachers as they seek to implement a new reading program?

3. How does what happens in this setting differ from traditional inservices or continuing teacher education? How does it differ from the Reading Strategic Inservices? In what ways does this type of staff development facilitate or impede teacher empowerment?

4. What are the results when the balance of power and influence in research-based staff development is moved from the researcher and her findings to teachers as initiators and key decision-makers for their own professional growth?

Reading Curriculum Implementation.

1. How does the district attempt to implement its new curriculum?

2. What kinds of concerns do teachers express as they attempt to implement this new reading curriculum?

3. How does the district attempt to meet those needs or address those concerns?

4. What evidences are there that these teachers feel empowered/disempowered as they seek to effect reading curriculum change within their own classrooms and the district?

Participant Sample Used for Study

Three specific groups, already alluded to throughout this chapter, formed the focus for this study. The first two, the Reading Study Committee and the Reading Support Group, were described according to group composite and purpose on pages 4-6. Those who comprised the third group

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were members of the elementary teaching staff who attended the monthly voluntary Reading Strategic Inservices, where information was disseminated by the district's reading teachers about the state's New Definition of Reading and concomitant strategies.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Consistent with the components of teacher empowerment is the methodology chosen for this study; i.e., qualitative research, and specifically, an observational case study. In this type of study, "the major data-gathering technique is participant observation and the focus of the study is on a particular organization or some aspect of the organization" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, pp. 59-61). A major issue in this kind of research is that of control: Who is to provide the information? Who reaches the conclusions for the research group? Who decides what actions are to be taken? In quantitative research, these are the functions of the researcher. Ideally, ethnographic participatory research puts them into the hands of the subjects, as well.

Researchers have traditionally gone into schools as the experts, ready to criticize or to analyze in order to prescribe. In this particular situation, the qualitative method's mission became, instead, *to understand the proposed change from the perspective of those individuals who are closest to the change*, i.e., the elementary classroom teachers of the Omega district. McDonald (1988) calls this listening for the teacher's voice. Florio (1981)

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In sum, it is the role of the ethnographer to report a specification of what the members of a community must know in order to behave sensibly within it and to make sense of the behaviors of others; i.e., What is happening in this field setting? What do the happenings mean to the participants? What must these participants know in order to do what they do in the setting? How does what is happening here relate to and differ from that found in other places at other times (Erickson, 1985)?

Summary Procedures

Data Collection.

Thirty-seven audiotapes, plus several hundred pages of transcriptions, fieldnotes, and site documents provided the data for this dissertation study. Interviews were conducted with the three elementary principals, the Curriculum Director, the chairperson of the Reading Study Committee, the district's three reading teachers, and nine second and third grade teachers (three from each of the three elementary buildings) who had attended the Reading Strategic Inservices during the 1988-1989 school year. As an observer participant during that time, I myself attended all seven Reading Strategic Inservices (both Information and Debriefing Sessions) and eight Reading Study Committee meetings. I made eight visits to the classrooms of each of

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two teachers, one a novice and one a veteran, in order to attempt to determine the levels of concern and use each expressed and evidenced as she attempted to implement specifically the Reciprocal Teaching strategy. Site documents (e.g., staff bulletins, district newspapers, Reading Study Committee newsletters, and Curriculum Council minutes) from as far back as 1984 were perused, as well.

Additional data were gathered from audiotape recordings and participant observations made during the twelve weekly Reading Support Group meetings (9/7/89-12/12/89), as well as through informal interviews with group participants. A questionnaire, which combined aspects of both the Instructor's (1986, January) "Elementary education policy poll" (p. 20) and "The second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa poll of teachers' attitudes toward the public schools: Teacher control of the educational process" (Elam, 1989, p. 793), sent to all Reading Support Group Members (87.5% response) and all 1-5 classroom teachers (60% response) in the district gave additional insight into the circumstances under which and the degree to which Omega teachers feel empowered/disempowered.

Data Analysis Procedures.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) talk about "grounded theory," a method for developing formal theory from the substantive data collected. Hall (1975) says that grounded theory is " . . . theory that is based on real world experiences and phenomena rather than theory that has been developed in some

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ivory tower" (p. 4). The following five stages are the components of grounded theory construction.

The first stage is *data collection*. Theory construction begins with data that has been previously collected, both within the field and from the body of precedent literature. The goal is to obtain a variety of information from a variety of sources (site documents, fieldnotes, interviews, observations) and in a variety of settings (both formal and informal) to determine the typicality or atypicality of events.

The second step is the *codification* of the gathered data. This requires that the data be organized conceptually and accurately in order to codify each incident into as many categories as possible. Bogdan and Biklen (1982, pp. 156-162) list several ways in which coding may be done: according to setting/context, definition of the situation, perspectives held by the subjects, the subjects' ways of thinking about people and objects, process (sequence of events, changes over time, passage from one type or kind of status to another), activity, event, strategy, relationship and social structure, methods, or preassigned codes.

Next, an attempt is made to *integrate categories and their properties*. As categorical incidents are compared, properties, or specific elements of the categories, should begin to emerge which fit specific headings. At this point, categories become more general, conceptual aspects of theory.

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Fourth, *delimiting the theory*, involves making changes "on the order of clarifying the logic, taking out nonrelevant properties, integrating elaborating details of properties into the major outline of interrelated categories, and--most important--reduction" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 110). Reduction synthesizes a smaller set of categories into a higher level concept.

The final stage is that of *writing theory*. This step involves the writing of coded, integrated, delimited data into major themes of theory, linking the substantive findings (focused on this particular setting and with these particular subjects) to formal theoretical issues (i.e., what bearing will these findings have on human behavior in general?).

Limitations

My first concern as I went back into my district as a researcher was my own objectivity. I questioned whether I would truly be able to act with "disciplined subjectivity" (Clark, 1984) in the context of a school setting where I had been employed for a decade, and where, indeed, I was still employed. In conjunction with that, I wondered how my colleagues/peers, as well as my supervisors, would view my attempts to discover and report on what the members of that community must know in order to behave sensibly within it and to make sense of the behavior of others. How would they respond to my genuine or feigned naivete as I probed in an attempt to discover answers to my questions about "what is

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My concerns in this regard were largely ungrounded. From my journal came numerous examples of how individuals tended to be "helpful," making it difficult at times for me to be unobtrusive or fade into the background and become part of the woodwork. Reactions to my presence were many and varied, and the following examples demonstrate just how honestly they spoke in my presence:

surprise. "Are you 'hanging around' here again?" (School Secretary) [I complimented her on her ethnographic terminology: "That's just what I'm supposed to be doing"];

encouragement. "I welcome your research in our district. Your project has my full approval." (District Superintendent);

support. "Let me know if there is anything I can do to help you with your study." (Reading Study Committee Member);

wonder. "Mrs. Braunius, our teacher said you are going to be a reading doctor!" (Second Grade Student);

respect. "I've been encouraged to go on to get my Ph.D., but I don't think I'll ever do it. I've had too many friends get to the research stage and drop out. Now it makes me feel good to give you that support." (Curriculum Director);

curiosity. "Just what is the topic of your research?" (Classroom Teacher);

caution. "I guess I could help you out. What kind of questions would you want to ask me? Could I see them ahead of time?" (Administrator);

misunderstanding. "So you're here to evaluate what we're doing?" (Classroom Teacher);

tolerance. "If it [an interview] has to be done, let's do it now and get it over with." (Classroom Teacher);

cooperation. "Please let me know if I can help you in any way. I'd be happy to tape meetings, save memos, or meet again to keep you up to date." (Reading Study Chairperson);

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appreciation. "I feel like I'm writing a philosophy book as we're talking. It's amazing what comes out when you're asked some good questions." (Administrator).

My second anticipated dilemma related to data gathering. **In observations, how would my presence affect the situation I was observing? In interviews, would the participants be truthful in answering my questions, or would they tell me what they felt I wanted to hear?**

In respect to participant observations, I experienced my greatest sense of frustration and helplessness during this project. It was difficult to sit in a classroom and not interact with the children. It was difficult to lay aside my consultant role in my relationship with teachers. It was difficult to be a silent observer during Reading Study Committee meetings, when I had been its most vocal advocate in the past and since I realized that the decisions made would impact the district for years to come. It was also difficult to be sensitive to the needs of the Reading Support Group on a weekly basis: I realized that each participant came with her own biases and agenda, her own personal and professional perceptions and preoccupations. I felt the heavy weight of responsibility as group coordinator to manifest Freire's (1971) characteristics of faith, hope, love, and humility without manipulating the meetings.

I found the interviews to be exciting and enlightening. I was forced to listen to what my collaborators were saying without becoming preoccupied with considering how I would respond. I felt that the respondents were attempting to be

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open and forthright: to paraphrase one administrator's admission, "It's easier to talk about these issues and express opinions about them than it is to actually put those beliefs into practice." [Interview transcript, 2/15/89]

The third concern related to time. As was stated earlier, change takes time. This was especially evident in the Omega district with its new emphasis upon a "bottom-up" approach to curriculum writing and implementation (e.g., the Reading Study Committee met for a whole year-and-a-half before coming up with a written curriculum rough draft, and that rough draft is to be in teacher's hands for a full school year before it will be modified/revised as a final draft). One teacher put it this way:

> I feel that it takes at least three years for any lasting changes to really take place in a classroom. I was talking to [a first grade teacher], and she said that she had attended a cooperative learning workshop three years ago. First she learned about it. Then she took another year to assimilate it by reading and studying about it. It is just now that she is starting to use it in her classroom. [Fieldnotes, 2/2/89]

What I was able to investigate during my time in the field, therefore, was merely the beginning stages of what promises to be a long process of reading curriculum development and implementation.

In that regard, another Reading Study Committee member spoke to the related issue of overload: "We get so bogged down with everything new. Everyone comes in so excited, you feel like you have to try it. You get bombarded with new things." [Fieldnotes, 2/17/89]

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One principal expressed similar constraints related to innovations within the district. He predicted that teachers would--and some were even now beginning to--experience a "backlash" from everything new being proposed. An example of that occurred concretely some weeks later when one fourth grade teacher brought to a faculty meeting the following written list of such proposed changes had which directly affected her during the previous eighteen months:

-New Reading Strategies
-Doing away with basals and workbooks
-New Social Studies curriculum and texts/or lack of
-New Science curriculum
-Cluster training and teaching [Gifted]
-Joyce Juntune (3 year commitment)-Creative thinking
-"Innovate, Communicate, Motivate" [School Improvement]
-Junior Great Books and Mary Bigler (read 2 times a day)
-AIMS, GEMS, Reading-Writing Workshops, Math--A Way of Thinking
-[Building-wide]: Spring Science '89, Oceanography, Monthly Affect Themes
-Increased social/discipline problems and decreased parent support
-(Future) Problem Solving, Math, Reading Curriculum, Art

*Increase in curriculum expectations and new methods which require increase in planning and implementing
*Increase in classroom management
*Time in school day remains constant!
@Human energy potential

Her written comments concluded with, "Elementary is feeling a tremendous crunch! Would any high school teacher be expected to change so much so fast???" [Site document, 11/28/89]

As a result of her presentation, one teacher representative from each grade met with the school's Curriculum Council representative to discuss his/her grade

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level's related concerns. These were presented at the next Curriculum Council meeting.

In addition to curricular concerns, each of the three elementary buildings has been involved in a building project to add from 4-8 additional classrooms throughout the course of the 1989-1990 calendar years. This means, of course, principal, staff, and student readjustments of major proportions for a rapidly growing school district. Because of so many changes being introduced and occurring, it was often difficult to focus and isolate the factors which were most pertinent to this study.

My freedom of access and mobility within and among the three elementary buildings greatly enlightened me as to the realities of teaching/administering and, consequently, the constraints of innovation implementation. I learned that each teacher and administrator has his/her own agenda, based on his/her strengths, weaknesses, past/present/future goals and experiences. I became more aware of the four kinds of curriculum of which the Curriculum Director spoke; namely, the approved curriculum, the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, and the learned curriculum. As he stated, "It's not always the written curriculum that's the learned curriculum." [Fieldnotes, 2/9/89]

With this bit of background related to the limitations of the study within this context, I realize that the issues in any research project of objectivity, validity, and generalizability must be addressed.

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Objectivity is addressed when the researcher straightforwardly identifies her own values, by doing investigation from a stance that openly and accurately attempts to delimit the research because of those values, by describing and explaining the way in which procedures and findings were influenced by her values, and by seeking to be vulnerable to the values of the co-participants in the research group. This I attempted to do throughout.

Validity is concerned with the accuracy of the data. Social knowledge *is* accurate when it is reported upon in such a way that it actually describes what has been experienced according to the perceptions of the participants. In this study, this was done by taking extensive fieldnotes and checking back with the individuals involved and by triangulating the data to make certain that the perceptions were correct.

Generalizability is limited for ethnographic approaches; indeed, some qualitative researchers are not even concerned with that question. It is, however, often possible to generalize based on the assumption that there are other similar situations with similar characteristics. LeCompte (1982) says that "although research results generated by ethnographers whose positions are limited in scope may be only narrowly applicable, they are none the less legitimate" (p. 37). Cusick (1973) also speaks to that issue when he points out that those who are involved in qualitative studies "feel that men[/women] are more alike

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than they are different, and what is reasonable behavior for one human being in a given situation will, at least in some way, be reasonable behavior for others in the same situation" (p. 5).

Organization of the Study

The written report of this ethnographic case study will contain the following items: empirical assertions, analytic narrative vignettes, quotes from fieldnotes and interviews, synoptic data reports, interpretive commentary framing both particular and general descriptions, a report of the natural history of inquiry in the study, and a theoretical discussion about the findings (Erickson, 1985, pp. 89-90).

Following a review of precedent literature related to issues embedded within the terms *teacher empowerment*, *staff development*, and *reading curriculum implementation* (Chapter 2), I will describe the site and context within which the data collection took place, as well as an expanded chronology of Reading Study Committee activities and a summary of each of the thirteen Reading Support Group meetings (Chapter 3) . A description and interpretation of the major findings will then occur (Chapter 4). The final section will contain a summary and conclusions, including "Implications of teacher empowerment in staff development toward reading curriculum design/implementation," along with recommendations for future research (Chapter 5).

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CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF PRECEDENT LITERATURE

The title of this fieldwork research dissertation project is "Implications of teacher empowerment in staff development toward reading curriculum design/ implementation." I will now attempt to dissect that title in order to discuss the various components forming the theoretical/philosophical underpinnings as they give insights into understanding and hypothesizing about the events which are described and addressed within the body of this thesis and as they relate to further research.

To set the stage, Savage (1989) talks about a recent "shift in theory in reading research:"

> The current view of reading comprehension suggests three components: the person reading, the text being read, and the process of interaction between them. These have become the major foci of research. The next step might be to investigate what might be done in instruction to improve this interaction. In this aspect of research, *teachers* will play a crucial role [Italics, mine] (p. 53).

From this summary paragraph came my focus upon the crucial role that teachers in the Omega district play in the implementation of a new reading curriculum based upon the current view of reading in the state: "Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader's existing knowledge, the

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information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation" (Wixson & Peters, 1984, p. 5).

A significant factor to be considered in this implementation process is the overall setting in which this is to occur; i.e., within a district that has consciously encouraged and enabled its teachers to take a more autonomous role in curriculum development. In Wise's (1988) terminology, this is called "client control," and it reflects one of the two conflicting trends present in today's school reform:

> The future will be determined by local administrators and board members, who must decide whether they prefer state control, with its emphasis on producing standardized results through regulated teaching, or client control, with its emphasis on meeting the educational needs of students through professional teaching (p. 329).

In the body of literature, the crucial role of the teacher is acknowledged. Berliner (1987) says that in *any* subject, caliber and ability of the teacher comes first--superseding methods and materials. Schiffer (1979) reminds us that all of the funding for curriculum research and development culminating in teacher proof and scripted materials and programs will fail if teachers are unwilling or unable to implement them. Apple (1983) talks about what happens when curriculum is conceived outside the schools and when teachers are asked to do little more than execute

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> When individuals cease to plan and control their own work, the skills essential to these tasks atrophy and are forgotten . . . In the process, the very things that make **teaching a professional activity--the control of one's expertise and time--are also** dissipated **(p. 323).**

This concern has been expressly stated by opponents of the reductionist view of reading, a view which purports that all of reading can be broken down (reduced) into discrete skills (as evidenced in basal reader scope and sequence charts, individual state reading objectives, and criterion-referenced/standardized tests). In this view, the teacher is often deskilled and relegated to becoming merely a manager of materials and checklists, inferring " . . . that the teacher's most important role in reading instruction is to put into practice the instructional decisions made by others higher up in the chain of command" (Winograd & Smith, 1987, p. 308). Shulman (1983) calls this "the remote control of teaching."

When reading is fractured and tested according to a prescribed schedule, then most of the teacher's decisions about what to teach and how to teach have already been made, thus reducing the teacher's sense of efficacy and professionalism. As an April 27, 1986 Harris Poll indicated, the need to increase their professionalism is a major issue of teachers. An additional problem is that teachers' boredom or dissatisfaction with being mere

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technicians may be passed on to affect their students' attitudes toward learning, as well.

Indeed, this shifting from bureaucratic mandating of curriculum to allowing teachers to take a more active role in the decision-making process, from state control to client control, from loss of control to increased professionalism, from top down to bottom up--these are the issues dealt with in the literature on teacher empowerment, a buzzword in educational circles today. A recent issue of Instructor (January 1990) calls it "education's hottest topic." Professional journals have dedicated issues to the concept of empowerment (e.g., Educational Leadership [May 1989], Phi Delta Kappan [March 1988], Teachers' College Record [Summer 1988], The Reading Teacher [April 1989], and Language Arts [February 1987]), conferences have been named for it (e.g., the state's October 1988 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Conference had as its motto, "Empowering the Vision"), books have been written about it (e.g., Gene Maeroff's (1988b) book, The Empowerment of Teachers: Overcoming the Crisis of Confidence), and polls and surveys have verified its importance (e.g., Instructor's "What Do You Care About Most?" [1986, January]/"Here's What You Care About Most!" [1986, May], "The Second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" [1989, June], and the National Education

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Teacher Empowerment

Introduction.

"Are you treated like a professional or a tall child?" is the question Weiss (1988) poses to teachers in the title of her NEA Today article. Citing the results of "the first-ever national survey of teachers' working conditions," the Conditions and Resources of Teaching (CART) survey (NEA, 1988), the answer is supplied: it is probably the latter for the majority of America's teachers. The 2,000 teachers who were sampled indicated that "they lack the basic conditions necessary to do their jobs . . . time and space, supplies and materials, administrative support, decision-making authority, and opportunities for professional development" (Weiss, 1988, p. 4).

An essay by the research team which helped prepare the survey provides an overview and appraisal of "the first national effort to empirically identify the specific problems teachers have with the work conditions of schools" (Bacharach, Bauer, & Shedd, 1986, p. 9). Four elements which have been identified by both the private sector and academic research as basic to effective organizations are discussed in this connection; i.e., Job Resources, Decision Making, Communication with Building-Level Administrators,

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The second theme, Decision Making, seems to be the most pertinent for our discussion on teacher empowerment. In brief, the CART survey found that teachers are given extremely little opportunity to exercise their influence on basic school decisions. The study's following interpretive commentary related to Decision Making begins with the characteristics of effective organizations in general, then moves on to speculations related to what happens--or might happen--when these characteristics are lacking, and, finally, makes application to the teaching profession.

> Organizational effectiveness is directly linked to how well individuals in an organization make decisions . . . Research has shown that in effective organizations, decision making is typically a decentralized process. A highly participative decision-making process yields more complete and accurate information upon which to base decisions . . . Furthermore, because participation gives employees an opportunity to be involved in problem solving, they become more committed to the solution chosen, and might work harder to achieve desired results.
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> . . . Over time, researchers maintain, participation results in higher levels of satisfaction, increased cooperation, lower levels of turnover and absenteeism, and reduced stress.
>
> Alternatively, a highly centralized decision-making system where few individuals retain control over organizational decisions might breed suspicion, contempt, and a general dissatisfaction with work . . . powerlessness and lack of control over the work environment may be demoralizing and eventually might lead to the collapse of the generally innovative, almost entrepreneurial spirit professionals bring to their jobs [and] can have a devastating impact on the overall quality of an organization.
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attained. In particular, teachers should be highly involved in goal setting, in decisions concerning the work processes in schools, and in decisions governing resource use and allocation (p. 19).

Definition.

As a term, *empower* can be defined very narrowly or very broadly, and each author who writes about it paints his/her own shades of meaning and highlights upon it.

Ashcroft (1987) says that *empowering* is a controversial word, since the idea of power often intimates that one person controls another. She argues, nevertheless, that empowerment is "a vital concept in any educational system endorsing the philosophy of personal growth and the development of critical, creative learners" (p. 142). In her article, Ashcroft begins "diffusing empowering" with a strict dictionary definition, where the prefix *em* and the root word *power* combine to make the literal meaning approximate "to bring into a state of ability to act effectively . . . with strength, capability, vigor or energy" (p. 144). Lieberman (Brandt, 1989) gives a less dictionary-bound meaning. She defines empowerment as "involving people authentically in dealing with their own personal lives" (p. 24).

From these generic definitions come applications to the educational setting, an arena in which Lieberman says there has been little evidence of empowerment in the past. The ability to act "effectively" and "authentically" in this setting may entail many things. According to Goodman

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(1987), the empowered teacher is an individual who is a reflective practitioner, one who assumes a critical and personally active approach toward the teaching profession. Keyes (1988) calls him/her **a professional** decision-maker, **with which Whitelaw (1989) concurs: " . . . empowerment is teacher participation in decision-making" (p. 84). Lagana (1989) adds a new dimension: "Empowerment is defined as a process in which a person or persons are given the opportunity to take risks and to compete *without repercussions of failure*"** [Italics, mine] (p. 52).

Timpson (1988), in summarizing the views of Freire, says that empowerment meets the learner's need to be active in his/her own education. This is reminiscent of Dewey's (1956) philosophical emphasis in progressive education, where he talks about "the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his[/her] activities in the learning process" (p. 67). Ambrosie (1989) says that Dewey found such participation lacking for *teachers* already in 1903.

Although the discussion on empowerment up to this point has placed the emphasis upon the individual (Mead's [Greene, 1979] "I," Keyes', 1988, "the personal self"), it cannot stop there. It must also take into account the interpersonal "me," "the professional self." In that vein, Lieberman (Brandt, 1989) does not see merely the individual's autonomy at the heart of empowerment. She,

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rather, talks about a collective autonomy: "[I]t means empowering teachers to participate in group decisions, to have real decision-making roles in the school community, which in most places they don't have now" (p. 24). She states that this approach is " . . . different from teachers being put on committees by administrators, as has been customary, as opposed to being in control of--and responsible for--the changes they themselves initiate or take on" (p. 25).

Ashcroft (1987) says that for Freire, "power should not be over someone, it should be with someone" (p. 147). For Gibboney and Gould (1987), teacher empowerment is "the capacity of education to improve the quality of educational practice *through democratic means* to enhance the intelligence and sensitivities of students, teachers, and administrators" [Italics, mine] (p. 4).

Characteristics.

Maeroff (1988) says that for a teacher, empowerment means--more than anything else--working in an environment in which the teacher acts and is treated as a professional. He sees three complementary principles as essential to empowerment: boosting status, gaining knowledge, and providing access to decision making. These would appear to correlate with Keyes' (1988) categories of personal self, self as learner, and self as teacher. The personal self is addressed through boosting status, the self as learner

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Boosting status. This first principle refers to the way in which teachers are viewed and treated by their colleagues, by their administrators, by the community, and by society as a whole. Much has been written and said about the lowly status that teaching occupies among the professions; in fact, Romberg (1988), in comparing the characteristics of a profession (i.e., collegiality, public service, self-regulation, vocation, and autonomy) with the characteristics of teaching, concludes that teachers are not now professionals. He draws that conclusion essentially based upon the lack of collegiality and teacher autonomy. Collegiality will be discussed further under the heading, "Providing Access to Decision Making."

Contrary to other professions that allow the professional to make his/her own decisions without external pressures from clients, from others who are not members of his/her profession, and from the employing organization, *teacher* autonomy is limited and contradictory--teachers have authority over their own students and within their own classrooms, but they often lack authority over school-wide environments and over themselves (Romberg, 1988, p. 233). Often this affects the way that teachers think of themselves.

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This is verified in the "Second Gallup-Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" (Elam, 1989), where the teachers surveyed reflected a martyr complex mentality:

> Overwhelmingly, they believe that they are unappreciated and underrewarded, and they blame almost everybody but themselves for recognized school problems . . . Teachers see a great discrepancy between their value to society and their prestige, three times as great as the gap for doctors, clergy, and public school principals. Teachers don't think they have the authority they need. They are convinced that they do not have enough control over . . . vital aspects of instruction (p. 785), [i.e.,] determining academic standards for their schools and establishing the school schedule, as well as setting grading policy, determining which students are placed in which classroom, setting discipline policy for the school, and determining how school funds are spent on instructional materials (p. 793).

There are many forces in teachers' lives which may contribute to the low morale, lack of professional and personal confidence, and general sense of impotency which this area of boosting status addresses, according to Hanley and Swick (1983). Their synthesis of over 100 research studies and journal articles identify several of these forces.

They specify unrealistic expectations by highly complex school bureaucracies and by parents and citizens as a debilitating factor. They also cite a negative valuing of teachers in today's society, evidenced by inequitable salaries, negative attitudes, as well as inadequate resources.

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Their synthesis also reveals that present-day teacher effectiveness is reduced by changes in both the profession and in society. In regard to changes in the profession, they identify that the "educational ecology" of the profession has been transformed by today's knowledge explosion, altered social values, technological demands, a new emphasis in teacher certification, along with personal and professional stress. There has also been a revolution in the way society functions and in the technological environment.

Focusing on the societal expectations and public trust issue, it can be noted that parents and citizens often look to schools to cure all of society's ills. This is evident by the quote of Lauro Cavazos upon his appointment to the post of U.S. Secretary of Education in 1989: "I pledge I will work very, very hard for the strongest Department of Education. *I think that education will solve most of the problems of the world*" [Italics, mine]. Throughout history, the question has been asked, "What *is* the job of the school/teachers?" For example, Smith's (1986, rev.) The History of American Reading Instruction provides specific evidence for the fact that reading education's roles and emphases changed to reflect and meet the current, immediate needs of society at any one point in history.

Society has also often failed to treat teaching as a profession. Lortie (1975) claims that this is because

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everyone has been exposed to teaching in his/her lifetime, and from each person's egocentric perspective, it appears that teaching requires little effort. Leiter and Cooper (1979) talk about the public perception of teachers in this way:

> The fact that education is a highly visible, publicly financed activity, one that every citizen has experienced to some degree . . . allow[s] all taxpayers to substitute themselves for the teacher and to determine the worth, the scope, and the appropriateness of a teacher's professional obligations . . . the adult public bases its perception of teaching on childhood memories combined with platitudes of the marketplace. The memories, naturally, are vague and undiscriminating, and there is a tendency to confuse the child's day in school with the teacher's (p. 115).

According to Hanley and Swick (1983), teaching within a nonsupportive setting produces negative teachers who have little opportunity to renew themselves. They emphasize that the home-community support system needs to be positive and visible to classroom teachers, and teacher salaries have often been targeted as one way in which society can demonstrate validation for the belief in the importance of the teacher's role in a tangible way. Elam's (1989) study validates this. When teachers were asked why they think others leave the profession, their most frequent responses were "low teacher salaries" and "parents do not support the schools" (p. 789).

Bureaucratic structures also need to be recognized as potentially prohibitive. Gibboney and Gould (1987) set the scene for this area of concern when they state that "the

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pervasive and unexamined presence of the technocratic mindset among practitioners is a major obstacle to making schools better places within which to teach and learn" (p. 9). McNeil (1988) and Wise (1988) have examined this bureaucratic mentality and have concluded that the very thing which was supposed to facilitate learning, i.e., an efficiently-run school, did just the opposite. The original idea was that schools would improve if they were run like businesses, which McNeil (1988b) describes in this way:

> [Schools were to possess] strong management by business-trained executives, not scholars, and they needed to be reorganized to be more efficient like factories: raw materials are the students, who are processed by means of teaching and the curriculum. The final "products" of this process of schooling are young adults with diplomas. In this model, administrators became managers, charged with keeping the school "plant" functioning rationally and smoothly; teachers became the workers (p. 432).

What frequently happened in this business-like setting, he contends, was that the educational goals were subordinated to procedural controls, and states mandated the curriculum and legislated learning through competency and state-wide testing. The result has been just the opposite of what was intended. Teachers reacted in ways that reduced the quality of education. They began to control their classrooms as tightly as they felt they were controlled. Consequently, teachers became marked by a lack of creativity and risk-taking. Teachers became defensive and simply went through the motions of teaching, a teaching intended to merely comply with minimum competency requirements

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This external control, where decisions were made by individuals far removed from the actual implementation location, reduced the responsiveness of schools to students and teachers by ignoring the needs and interests of students and demonstrating a distrust of teachers. In the case of mandated curriculum, a required stimulus does not lead to a predictable response because of the varied needs, stages of development, home environments, learning styles, prior knowledge, and dispositions of the students--as well as their teachers.

As a reaction to the concerns just cited, Wise (1988) puts forth the challenge:

> [It] is time to make teaching a profession where the primary rationale is a need to exercise control of the qualities of a process in which the service provider [the teacher] provides important services to a client [the student] who inevitably knows less than the service provider (p. 331).

In this way, the appropriateness of instruction would be determined within each unique context, much like the professions of medicine and law are practiced.

The authors of the Holmes Report (1986) would concur:

> None of the reform proposals has addressed the central issue of the improvement of teaching--the professional status of teachers. Until this is addressed, we will continue to attempt educational reform by telling teachers what to do, *rather than empowering them to do what is necessary* [Italics, mine] (p. 61).

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In this regard, the New York State Task Force Report, A Blueprint for Learning and Teaching (Abrosie, 1989) gives this specific recommendation:

> Decisions should be made closest to their point of implementation--and in schools, that means decisions affecting children should primarily involve teachers who know the students' capabilities and needs (p. 57).

In the introduction to Maeroff's (1988b) book, today's teachers are described as ". . . determined and burdened, underacknowledged but eager, cynical yet hopeful, ready to recommit themselves to the schools and to the students" (xi). The claim is that when teachers' lives are changed (i.e., their autonomy is increased and they are given the creative power to make institutional change), then schools will change. Consequently, Maeroff (1988b) also calls for the boosting of teachers' status by giving them more autonomy:

> [Teachers must] be recognized as the critical educational authorities; the ones who will guide the learning, growth, and development of students . . . They give shape to what is taught, how it is taught, and in what context it is transmitted . . . It is through involvement in curriculum planning and policy making that teachers can become valued and contributing members of their profession (p. 34).

Barth (1985) succinctly summarizes the contrast between Wise's (1988) "regulated teaching" and "client control":

> Ultimately, there are probably two workable strategies for improving the schools: 1) somehow get teachers and principals to work on closing the gap between the way their schools are and the way people outside these schools would have them be or 2) work toward closing the gap between the way schools are and the way those *within* the schools would like them to be. The latter

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> defines a professional: the former does not [Italics, mine] (p. 20).

Lortie (1975) argues, however, that "teachers do not hold the beliefs necessary to assuming such responsibility; they do not claim to be common partakers in a shared body of specialized knowledge or common contributors to 'the state of the art'" (p. 80). The succeeding section comes in answer to that claim.

Increasing Knowledge. All of the foregoing talk about giving teachers credibility through boosting their status is irrelevant to empowerment if teachers do not possess something that is worth voicing. Bacon's adage, "Knowledge is power," is especially applicable in the teaching profession because teachers are knowledge brokers. Subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge cannot be taken for granted. If teachers are uninformed, misinformed, or ill-informed, if their knowledge is not up-to-date and current, much harm can be done to their students.

Moreover, teachers cannot explain to students principles that they themselves do not understand. Specifically applied to the reading field, Fagan (1989) claims that in order to help students become literate, teachers themselves must be empowered as literates. When teachers lack knowledge, they lose instructional flexibility and credibility. As a result, they are forced to give up control and to lose power by deferring to those who are viewed as "experts."

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Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) iterate the importance of knowledge to empowerment:

> . . . quality decisions mean informed decision-makers. The importance of continued education of responsible parties in a support system cannot be overemphasized. Too often teachers are thrown into new decision-making roles without appropriate support and knowledge. The ensuing decisions are frequently poor ones, adding to the conviction that teachers should have limited decision-making power (p. 28).

Romberg (1988) lists three types of knowledge which teachers as professionals should possess:

> (1) *knowledge of the subject they are to teach*, including the know-how (skill), the ability to explain how (knowledge), and the confidence (disposition or will), *as well as its relationship to other content areas;*
>
> (2) *knowledge of pedagogy*, including developmental characteristics, social interactions, and communication/cases/specific instructional techniques/ instructional materials;
>
> (3) *knowledge of roles and responsibilities and how to manage a complex instructional setting* involving a large number of students, space, resources, and technology.

Garrison (1988) is concerned with the way in which teachers gain such knowledge, an approach which he calls the scientific technique and which he claims is binding. His hypothesis is that teachers are presently disempowered because of the way in which knowledge is produced, distributed, and consumed. According to Garrison, researchers who produce knowledge and administrators who distribute that knowledge are the ones who are empowered: teachers who blindly and unquestioningly consume mandated products do not identify themselves with the process by

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which the final outcome is obtained, and they are, therefore, not as likely to think deeply about them nor feel responsible for the consequences of their decision-making activity. Fagan (1989) agrees, saying that unempowered teachers "are inclined to follow a set of curriculum materials (e.g., basal readers) slavishly, materials which . . . often deny the intelligence of teachers and their roles as conceptualizers, planners, and implementors" (p. 574).

In contrast, Garrison advocates that teachers develop traits that are characteristic of the scientific temper (which he sees as liberating), a research base which could be used to democratically empower teachers: "individual teachers must be empowered to participate in the process of knowledge production and distribution and not just its passive consumption" (p. 501). Garrison claims that the positive consequences of such an endeavor, which Duckworth (1984) describes as "teacher as researcher," would include:

> (1) more valid, more reliable, and more relevant results;
>
> (2) a legitimation of the practitioner's knowledge;
>
> (3) the empowerment of teachers, since knowledge, and the ability to obtain it, is power;
>
> (4) this epistemological empowerment of teachers . . . would produce a reorganization of the current hierarchical structure advocated by an expert-systems, scientific-management approach (pp. 501-502).

Chall (1986) states that teacher collaboration with researchers was common earlier in the 1900s; during the 1940s and 1950s, however, this practice was greatly reduced

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until by the 1960s and 1970s the emphasis was on university-based research, the applications of which would then be presented to teachers. It is predicted that reassuming the researcher/collaborator role will be a slow process for educators, since, "basically they have followed the textbook for years and let that set the tone. Now they are painfully analyzing how they teach" (Maeroff, 1988b, p. 45).

Maeroff (1988b) and Cohen (1989) both acknowledge that using knowledge is more problematic than gaining it; Maeroff, nevertheless, claims that " . . . there is certainly a better chance that once knowledge has been gained, attitudes will change and behavior will be affected . . . freeing [teachers] from ways that stifled their teaching practices and empowering them to act differently" (p. 48).

In order to provide the bridge between knowledge and decision-making, McDonald (1988) feels that those who talk about the teacher's voice today do not understand that voice implies a duality, referring to knowledge *as well as power*: he stresses that *giving* a say may not be the same as *hearing* one.

Providing Access to Decision-Making. Continuing in that vein, when teachers are respected (status) and have something to say (knowledge), they also need to be assured that what they say can and will make a difference. This topic highlights the necessity of building better bonds to

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connect teachers with each other and with their administrators, where each one sees the relationship as collaborative, not competitive. In that light, collegiality must be fostered and power must be shared.

In Continuing to Learn: A Guidebook for Teacher Development, Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) define the terms collaboration and collegiality in the following way:

> *Collaboration* relates to mutual problem solving, assuming that multiple perspectives are better than single ones. It can increase collective understanding, strengthen a sense of common mission, and buoy individuals who might otherwise be swamped by the demands of facing children alone in the classroom (pp. 8-9).
>
> *Collegiality* is more than congeniality; it means connecting on a professional level with other school staff, looking for new ideas, advice, a forum to test models of teaching (p. 8).

Lieberman (Brandt, 1989) sees that this collaboration and collegiality lead to power:

> The power I see in collective behavior is that when it becomes legitimate for teachers to work together, they not only get a sense of themselves as a group; they begin to help each other solve problems they cannot solve by themselves--and we know that teachers have tremendous problems to solve (p. 24).

Both in individual studies (Little, 1982, and VanNote Chism, 1985b) and in group studies (Rand Change Agent, 1974, and Holmes Group, 1986), the importance of collegiality is addressed. Romberg (1988), in summarizing Little's (1982) research, states that a high level of collegiality (in-school, across-school, and outside-of-school) "was related to a positive school environment which in turn was the best

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predictor of school effectiveness" (p. 231). This collegiality comes through talk about teaching and learning, observing and critiquing, planning/designing/researching/evaluating curriculum together, and teaching each other the practice of teaching. These descriptors are congruent with the Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) definitions of collegiality and collaboration. VanNote Chism's (1985b) teachers at Riverside themselves stated the importance of interaction with colleagues as one of their greatest sources of professional growth; their interactions, however, contained limited professional interchange of the kind just mentioned.

Although it is acknowledged that collegiality is important, there are, nonetheless, several impediments to such collegiality. Both the Carnegie Report (1986) and the work of Copeland and Jamgochian (1985), cited by Romberg (1988), identify time and schedule constraints as a major problem in fostering collegiality. Jackson's (1975) hypothesis in this regard is not that teachers are *overworked*; he claims that they are *underworked*. Many of the time-consuming tasks that are required of them are unproductive and could easily be assigned to non-teaching personnel. He says that teacher time must be spent more wisely: what teachers need if they are to benefit from the experience of teaching is time for reflective thinking. He concludes that ". . . if teachers were really given

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sufficient time to think about what they were doing, the overall severity of the demands made upon them likely would *increase*, not *decrease*" (p. 30).

It also takes time to organize and get people working in a different way. To that end, Lieberman (Brandt, 1989) expresses caution: "My fear is that the political energy won't last long enough to allow the little beginnings popping up everywhere the time they need to grow and mature" (p. 25). Karant (1989) also emphasizes this concern: " . . . the process is slow, may be inefficient, and requires patience. And yet, in spite of the obstacles, the payoffs of shared governance can be substantial. Expanding teachers' responsibilities in ways that give them significant influence may be the key to developing better schools" (29).

Little (1984) has expressed some skepticism about summary reports, which she claims often underestimate the amount of organization, energy, skill, and endurance that are required to get educators to work in collaborative ways. In addition to time and schedule constraints, personnel (administrator, principal, teacher) characteristics, organizational and normative barriers, and lack of experience all come into play in addressing the issue of why there is a lack of collegiality within the educational community.

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In relationship to personnel, administrators may misconceive the nature of the teacher's job ("Teachers are paid to be in the classroom"). Principals, themselves, may not be qualified to **set expectations**, model, sanction, and **defend/protect teachers--practices for which they are not typically selected, prepared, or rewarded (Little, 1984). Then, too, they may feel threatened, according to Bradley (1990), as they become "baffled by the demands of restructuring and worried that powersharing will erode their authority"** (p. 22).

Teachers may be the cause of their own isolation. Because of a "middle class conservative" view of teaching, teachers may feel that the current practice is basically good and they see no need to change the *status quo* (Grant and Sleeter, 1985, cited by Romberg, 1988).

Another reason why teachers may be isolated is because of their social misperceptions. Lortie's work ([1975], cited by Barth [1985]), discovered that

> . . . in the eyes of most teachers, learning, success, and satisfaction come largely from students within their classrooms and that "all other persons (parents, the principal, other teachers) without exception were connected with undesirable occurrences. Other adults have potential for hindrance but not help" (p. 5).

Teachers' own insecurity may also be an impediment to collegiality. The "I" and "me" conflict of Mead (Green, 1979) appears to come into play here. The idea of teachers interacting with colleagues, according to Maeroff (1988),

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> . . . can be unsettling because it means unmasking yourself to the person in the next room and acknowledging that you might have something to learn from that person. No one likes to admit to deficiencies, especially in areas in which the person is supposed to have enough expertise to earn a living (p. 50).

In addition, Little (1984) states that outside innovations may result in "creeping exclusivity," where a gulf is formed between the "haves" and the "have nots," the teachers who possess certain knowledge/skill from those who do not possess that knowledge/skill. She claims that normative barriers related to self-sufficiency, privacy, and non-interference may hinder collegiality, as well.

Teachers generally lack experience in this area: Goodlad (1984) talks about the fact that teachers are accustomed to being isolated in "classroom cells." Lieberman (Brandt, 1989) highlights the fact that "working collaboratively requires a new set of skills and attitudes. Ways have to be found to give teachers experience in working together so they can begin to see how other adults can be important in their lives" (p. 25).

Goodlad (1984) speaks of the need to address these deterents:

> If teachers are potentially powerfully influential in the education of children and youth in schools but the circumstances of teaching inhibit their functioning, then we need to modify these circumstances so as to maximize teachers' potential. The directions of school improvement become reasonably clear: diagnose and seek to remedy the impeding conditions; improve teachers' knowledge and skills (p. 168).

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To that end, professionally productive peer interaction does not just happen by itself--a collection of bodies does not form a group; "one shouldn't assume that people know how to work together and make thoughtful decisions, particularly if isolation has been the norm" (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 28). Successful collegiality can be facilitated, however. It depends upon the availability of leadership (Barth, 1985; McEvoy, 1985) that can help to offset the impediments listed above by involving classroom teachers in identifying problems and solutions relevant to their own educational setting. To emphasize this point, VanNote Chism (1985a) gives the example of a cadet principal, an individual who was able to structure in the time and occasion for teachers to meet and work together to examine issues *directly arising from their own situations*, who encouraged both the more and less reflective teachers to engage in professional learning that was rooted in problems and issues that commanded a high degree of engagement. This engagement both generated knowledge and resulted in plans for action which used that knowledge.

In summary, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of the importance of collegial relationships, Romberg (1988) maintains that the reality is that teachers are, for the most part, isolated from each other both within and between buildings. He feels that only by creating a workplace where frequently and over long periods of time teachers can focus

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on crucial problems of curriculum and instruction relevant to their own setting through collaborative participation and where they share equally in the risks, the investment, and the rewards will the desired collegiality result.

Importance.

The district in which I did my research is presently undergoing a reading study which is intended to result in a reading curriculum change; however, Cohen (1988) states that the natural tendency of teachers is to be conservative and to *resist* change.

Kanter (1985) speaks to that issue when she discusses ten reasons why people resist change. The first of these is loss of control. She says that individuals see what is done *to* them as a threat, what is done *by* them as an opportunity. Crucial to this discussion on empowerment is who is in control: the organization (external locus of control) or the individual (inner locus of control). ("Locus of control, as a construct, refers to how a person perceives contingency relationships between his or her actions and their outcomes" [Rotter, 1966, cited by Omizo, Omizo, & Michael, 1987], p. 737). If the individual feels powerless with no choice in the matter, s/he is likely to feel out of control. Kanter says that before commitment must come involvement, and with participation come higher self-set goals.

Guskey (1986) has also hypothesized that change in teacher attitudes and beliefs occurs *after* teachers have had

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Omizo et al. (1987) have contrasted the individual possessing an internal locus of control with the person possessing an external locus of control. The person with an internal locus of control, they say, is noted as being more perceptive, inquisitive, and efficient in processing information, better able to delay gratification, and superior in intentional and incidental learning (p. 738).

Halpin, Harris, & Halpin (1985) have gone beyond those general characteristics to identify the behavioral characteristics specifically related to the internal locus of control *for teachers*. They claim that the internal teacher discounts the importance of luck or fate in his/her professional life, accepts responsibility for the educational consequences of his/her actions, stresses the importance of ability and hard work in successful teaching, sees a clear connection between effort and payoff in teaching, tends to be goal-directed and task-oriented in his/her teaching behavior, feels influential in his/her educational environment, discounts the importance of luck or fate in the professional life of other educators (pp. 138-139).

Their research also hypothesized that teacher locus of control was related to stress:

> The external teacher, feeling that he/she has little control over what happens, does not seem to value

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> planning, ability, or effort but instead attributes educational outcomes to luck, fate, and chance. Teachers reporting the most stress factors associated with the act of teaching . . . were those with an external locus of control (p. 138).

The researchers admit, however, that they are uncertain whether these external teachers experienced stress because of their sense of feeling out of control, or whether they became overwhelmed by a prolonged stressful environment. They conclude that, whatever the reason, if teachers have depleted all psychological and physiological energy potentially available to deal with the stressful events, burnout may result. Burnout can be defined as " . . . an overall feeling of helplessness, of losing self-control, of being overwhelmed and made helpless" (Ban, 1980, cited in Halpin et al. [p. 139]). Brody (1982, cited in Halpin et al. [p. 139]) says that burnout is a "state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion or a cause, way of life or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward." Apple (1983) concluded: "There is no better formula for alienation and burnout than the loss of control on the job" (p. 323).

Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) begin their book by stating that the Carnegie Forum (1986) predicted that 1.3 million new teachers would be joining the teaching force from 1986-1992, replacing current teachers who leave at the rate of 40% a year. The rationale given for this mass exodus supersedes the commonly-touted reason of low pay; it

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is, rather, "the absence of a professional work environment" (p. 1).

On the positive side, Karant (1989) claims that " . . . the payoffs of shared governance can be substantial. Expanding teachers' responsibilities in ways that give them significant influence may be the key to developing better schools" (p. 29). The importance of empowerment has been expressed in this way:

> When teachers set out to improve their own learning and their contributions to schooling, it is thrilling to see the depth of their concerns for their disciplines and their students, the energy they are willing to put into their work, the degree to which they can renew themselves and their classrooms, and their readiness to rededicate themselves (Maeroff, 1988, p. xi).

The Instructor poll (May 1986), in discussing the response to their February 1986 survey, states, "Effective schools research tells us that decision-making teachers--empowered teachers--are crucial to creating the optimum conditions for learning. Teacher empowerment is especially important because state reforms so often go against research by reducing opportunities for teachers to exercise their professional judgment" (p. 30). It summarizes:

> The current reform movement promotes the concept of teacher empowerment. Some studies show that the more decisions a teacher makes concerning her students and the more involved she is in making schoolwide decisions, the better her performance and the higher her morale. Decision-making power . . . produces a stronger commitment to the profession. Respect for professionalism breeds both respect and accountability (p. 31).

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Although up to this point teacher empowerment has been looked upon in a positive light, Murphy (1989) looks ten years down the road and sees some probable distressing results if teacher empowerment is carried to the point of radical decentralization. His concerns can be condensed to the issues of fragmentation and inequity.

He envisions, first, that teacher autonomy may lead to fragmented school systems, with a lack of coordination toward common goals. He also is worried that there may be uneven school performance as strong schools grow stronger and weak schools grow weaker, resulting in growing disparity in school resources, teacher quality, and student outcomes. Murphy is concerned that the results may be a pendulum swing, where "decentralizers are pursued by a new wave of hard-nosed centralizers" (p. 808).

From the world of business, government, and the Catholic Church, Murphy excerpts five lessons which can be applied to the schools in order to avoid the problems associated with "radical decentralization." First, there should be a shift in the idea of what a strong superintendent means, attending more to the gentler, unheroic dimensions of leadership if they are to promote local autonomy. Second, the core values, beliefs and goals of the school system must be identified and articulated throughout the system. When those are explicitly stated,

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teachers should be encouraged to have the freedom to reach those goals in whatever manner is appropriate for them. Third, the central office must become a service agency, where the personnel take the role of facilitators and coordinators. This means that those who work in the central office must have the knowledge, skills, initiative, and time to give help (through technical assistance, staff development, additional resources, released time), not to control. This requires a rethinking of roles and responsibilities, and a development of local leadership. Fourth, the central office needs to shift to "management by exception" for a system of checks and balances, where middle managers concentrate their attention on those units with problems/unrealized potential ("tight management") while giving maximum freedom to others ("loose management"). Fifth, boards need to think differently about their role and what it means to exercise control. The board's most important role, other than raising money, is choosing a superintendent who shares their values, goals and beliefs. The need exists to develop a greater trust of educators, giving the professionals the benefit of the doubt--even before being fully confident they deserve such trust.

Greer (1989) also expresses some reservations with the teacher empowerment "buzzword." He says that it may well be that we are deceiving ourselves into believing that something serious is going on, but "a cliche' does not a

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substantive program make" (p. 294). He also says that the over-familiarity of the terminology may close the mind and heart to what it really means and lead to no one really paying any attention to it.

He challenges that it may be time to refocus from a very narrow view to a broader perspective: "those interested in empowerment tend to talk along a continuum limited to strategies for redirecting the political and administrative traffic flow from 'top-down' to 'bottom-up,' with the clear implication that teachers are at the bottom and the avowed purpose is moving them closer to the top" (p. 294). He feels that " . . . to empower teachers, we have to go to the ultimate source of power--the children themselves: we have to put them at the center, and work our way out to the stuff on the periphery" (p. 297), for " . . . the essence of education is to bring about change *in human beings,* and that the power that finally accomplishes the really important changes in people lies not in the curriculum or the administration or the system, but in the very persons we try to educate" (p. 297).

Finally, Tifft (1990) poses the question which underlies the topic of teacher empowerment: "Does school-based management lead to more effective teaching or merely create problems for already overburdened educators?" (p. 56). She provides specific examples of "gains" and "pains" in schools throughout the United States and concludes that

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the results of the relationship between self-governance and student performance is mixed at this point in time. She predicts that more innovation in this area will occur, and that school districts may discover that allowing teachers to make decisions about education is "like dancing with a bear: once you start, you cannot decide to stop" (p. 57).

Historical Roots.

The introduction to Maeroff's (1988b), The Empowerment of Teachers: Overcoming the Crisis of Confidence, gives a bit of history related to the topic of teacher empowerment. Of the five documents cited within that text and published within this decade, three of them speak to the inefficacy of teachers to bring about educational reform. A Nation at Risk (1983) emphasized the belief that one of the problems in America's schools is the teacher. McDonald (1988), in referring to that report, claimed that it took teachers to be mere puppets of school policy. Horace's Compromise (Sizer, 1984), represented the teacher, although the "key" to reform, as immobile. The Holmes Group (1986) saw teachers as prisoners who could be set free by better management.

In contrast, two subsequent reports see hope through teachers taking charge of change. The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) envisions schools in which teachers help decide what should be taught and how, where teachers are seen to be the school's chief agents, according

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to McDonald (1988). The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher (1986) focuses on the participation of teachers in school management, seeing the teacher as an *ally* in educational reform, where more autonomous teachers are charged with the responsibility of improving education in their schools.

What caused the change? Answers are mixed. McDonald (1988) says that the roots of this shift occurred in 1983 and 1984 with the works of Goodlad (1984), Lightfoot (1983), and Sizer (1984). Shanker (1988), on the other hand, draws parallels with the auto industry's attempts to abandon highly centralized assembly-line production methods.

Michaels (1988), in his editorial, "Caution: Second-wave reform taking place," says that the first wave of reform was based upon an earlier, more rigorous, and narrow concept of education. Its attempts to reform schools by raising standards, increasing accountability, lengthening school days and years, and generally raising the rigor of American public education was a "looking at education through the rear-view mirror," rather than facing the road ahead. He advocates that the second wave be characterized by the following:

> The individual school is the unit of decision making; the development of a collegial participatory environment among both students and staff; flexible use of time; increased personalization of the school environment with a concurrent atmosphere of trust, high expectations, and a sense of fairness; a curriculum that focuses on students' understanding what they

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> learn--knowing "why" as well as "how;" an emphasis on higher order thinking skills for all students (p. 3).

Resolutions for Empowerment.

Landsmann (1988) captures many of the aspects of teacher empowerment that were addressed in this section. In her ten resolutions whereby teachers can empower themselves, she challenges teachers to think, talk, and act professionally:

> (1) Don't give up your birthright. In every action, think about what a teacher OUGHT to do. Take the lead professionally;
>
> (2) Remove the words, "They won't let us" from your vocabulary. Make it, rather, "We can!";
>
> (3) Market your profession. Once a month, tell the world what a teacher does and what teaching is all about;
>
> (4) Don't let your school try to be all things to all people;
>
> (5) It only takes a few waves to start a sea change;
>
> (6) Build your professional base from the bottom up and the top down. Establish your own brain trust. Network. Participate in your own classroom-based research. Collaborate on research projects with colleagues, and share the results;
>
> (7) Shape up your school's recruitment, selection, and induction system;
>
> (8) Acknowledge that there are and will continue to be certain tensions in the area of curriculum;
>
> (9) Enlist your local, state, and national unions on the professional team;
>
> (10) Provide for your own renewal (pp. 373-374).

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Staff Development

Having just completed an investigation of the components of teacher empowerment, it is now appropriate to look into staff development that is congruent with these characteristics.

Introduction.

Maeroff (1988a) claims that one vehicle for pursuing empowerment is already in place--inservice education, however

> . . . a thorough overhaul is needed if inservice education is to fulfill its potential for prying open the door to empowerment. At best, operating in a manner that has been all too infrequent in the past, inservice education can break down isolation and build networks, bolster confidence, increase knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, provide the kind of learning that fires enthusiasm and involve teachers in the kinds of projects that provide access to decision making (p. 474).

The Report of the Commission on Reading, Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985), acknowledges the important role that teachers play in implementing the principles advocated within the body of that text for improved reading instruction. To this end, they recommend that

> . . . renewed attention should be given to the professional growth of veteran teachers so that they can continue to approach teaching with zest and can have access to new knowledge that will allow them to improve their teaching. The nation's core of teachers is older, more stable, and more experienced than any time in history. It is a simple matter of arithmetic that reforms in education depend upon sustaining the vigor and the skill of veteran teachers (p. 111).

After all, as has been stated earlier, the classroom teacher is the ultimate change agent, for in the final analysis, it is what the individual teacher decides to do

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day-by-day with the students in his/her classroom that really matters, and the quality of this daily encounter needs to be the focus of change.

Miller and Wolf (1979) say that "the goal of staff development is the promotion of change in educators and schools that improves the conditions for learning and teaching . . . [and which] focuses on both levels of concern and need" (pp. 144-145). They see dual forces at work in staff development; i.e., to impact on individual teachers and on the social system of the school, for teacher growth and school change are interdependent. Feiman (1989) put it this way: "I think about curriculum development and teacher development as two sides of the same coin" (class notes).

Definition.

A question of semantics has arisen concerning what this continuing education for teachers should be called, whether *inservice*--as contrasted with preservice--*education*, or *staff development*, or *professional development*.

As was stated earlier, Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) feel that "inservice" is interpreted by many as something done *to* teachers. Lieberman and Miller (1979, p. ix) prefer the word *staff development*, a term which puts emphasis both on *staff* (acknowledging the interdependence of the individual with the school context) and *development* (referring to its personal, positive, continuous, often nonlinear and nonrational nature). They say that this term

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rejects the notion of training and accepts the notion of growth; it also acknowledges the teacher's crucial role in planning and implementation.

Loucks-Horsley et. al. (1987) use the words staff development and professional development interchangeably to refer to " . . . a wide variety of opportunities for growth in knowledge and skills within the education profession" (p. 3).

Whatever its nomenclature, it is imperative that the focus be upon individual and personal self-improvement efforts, for in the final analysis, "the essence of all teacher education . . . is to train teachers to train themselves" (Leiter & Cooper, 1979, p. 122). [Note: I will use *inservice education* interchangeably with *staff development* throughout this paper.]

Stages of Teacher Development.

Katz's (1972, reviewed by Feiman & Floden, 1980) research, an extension of Frances Fuller's (1969) work, identified four developmental stages of teacher concerns with their concomitant training needs.

According to Katz, the beginning teacher first encounters Stage 1, or the Survival Stage. This stage is characterized by feelings of inadequacy based on the disparity between one's ideals and the realities of the classroom. It is crucial within this stage to make readily available non-evaluative support and technical assistance by someone who knows well the novice and his/her setting.

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By the end of the first year, Stage 2, or the Consolidation Stage, generally emerges. Here, the teacher begins to concentrate on difficulties encountered with children and situations. In this stage, support is also required by specialists, more experienced teachers, and fellow novitiates.

The Renewal Stage, or Stage 3, occurs about the third or fourth year. At this stage, the individual begins to look beyond the mundane and routine for new ideas, materials, and methods. This renewal, thought of in technical terms, is gained through participation in teachers' centers, attendance at workshops and conferences, professional memberships, professional reading, and classroom visitations.

In Stage 4, usually after three to five years in the teaching profession, the Maturity Stage is reached. Here, "mature teachers have come to terms with themselves as professionals and have the perspective to reflect on more fundamental educational questions" (p. 11). The mature teacher's developmental needs may be met through coursework, conferences and seminars, wide reading, and peer collaboration.

Feiman (1983) concludes that a major part of learning to teach comes on the job within the first five to seven years. After this, experienced teachers fall into one of two camps: the first group stabilizes its basic teaching style, settling into workable routines and resisting efforts

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to change; the second group searches for ways not only to become more effective with students, but also to challenge and intellectually stimulate themselves in their profession. The question she raises is, How can the latter be fostered? One of her answers is teacher centers (which will be discussed further at a later point in this paper) as one example which meets the criteria of a developmental style of inservice education.

Inservice Education.

Necessity. Lieberman and Miller (1979) talk about a crisis in mission and a crisis in resources in education today. In the former, there is a confusion of goals, a new breed of student, and increasing demands. The latter is characterized by budget restrictions and low morale.

Hanley and Swick (1983) put it this way:

> Many effective teachers are leaving the profession physically and/or psychologically, more often than in the past, and with more dramatic effects on the education of children and young adults. For teachers who stay as well as for those who leave there are negative effects: low morale, lack of self-respect, decrease in professional and personal confidence; and a general sense of impotency--all of which decrease effectiveness (p. 3).

Feiman and Floden (1980) talk about the high priority that must be placed upon inservice education for those who stay: the longer a person is in teaching, the greater the need for inservice education and renewal. They make a distinction between inservice education that is oriented toward development and growth ("a view of children and adult learning as mental growth spurred from within" [p. 2,

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quoting Devaney, 1978]) and inservice education that is oriented toward competency-based training (a delivery system where an expert "deluges [teachers] with materials and schemes that guarantee success if properly 'implemented'" [DiShino, 1985, p. 30]). These two types of inservice education appear to somewhat represent the contrast between an inner and an outer locus of control (discussed earlier under "Teacher Empowerment"). DiShino strongly reacts against the latter, saying, "certainly this approach undermines anyone's ability to trust in her judgments" (p. 30).

DiShino's experience in Duckworth's Teacher-Researcher Seminar was an example of the former. According to her own story, DiShino's perspectives and conclusions at the end of the seminar contained specific allusions to Maeroff's empowering principles: boosting status ("teachers need to feel respected . . . need to be helped to trust themselves" [pp. 30-32]), increasing knowledge (quoting Bill and Sarah Hull, 1978, "Teachers need to be in the process of learning themselves in order to be sensitive to kids' learning and respect it" [p. 31]), and providing access to decision making ("opportunities need to be provided for teachers to share--to reflect on their own practice as the source from which determinations about curriculum are made" [p. 30]).

Nature of Teaching. Gage (1978) defines teaching as "any activity on the part of one person intended to facilitate learning on the part of another" (p. 14), and

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Feiman (1983) says that this teaching is a growth process, developmental in nature.

Lieberman and Miller (1979), in their article, "The social realities of teaching" (pp. 54-68), discuss the following generalizations drawn from research studies which they feel have staff development implications. These generalizations are based on personal observation and reflection, along with precedent literature on how "the teacher learns the job and becomes a teacher" (p. 55). They claim that teachers are constantly vacillating between personal concerns and institutional concerns. Teachers need to work not only on the instructional needs and problems of their individual classroom (i.e., personal concerns), but also on the common functions and goals of the organization (i.e., institutional concerns).

One social reality refers to the fact that teaching style is highly personalized, based on individual trial and error. It is, according to Shulman (1987), devoid of a history of practice; consequently, teachers get their knowledge from practice and from other teachers rather than from academics or scholarly articles when reforming practice, according to Lortie (1975). Carr and Kemmis (1984) state that experience (habit, ritual, precedent, opinion, and mere impressions) affects teachers' theory and practice. Some of this is, they say, justified, but other is merely "folk wisdom." Brophy (1984) concludes that teachers are "more reactive than reflective, more intuitive

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than rational, more routinized than conscious" (p. 72). Practice depends on what "works," from the viewpoint of personal experience and individual personality, not from the perspective of history or research. VanNote Chism (1985a) found that the knowledge that **teachers value most is that which occurs primarily on the job, a knowledge that is specifically characterized by relevance, active engagement, and utility.**

Another social reality is that teachers learn the craft in isolation. Teaching is conducted without an audience of peers, and teachers work in isolated classrooms with limited peer dependence. As a result, the best creations of its practitioners are lost to both contemporary and future educators. Lortie (1975) asserts that ". . . to an astonishing degree the beginning teacher must start afresh, largely uninformed about prior solutions and alternative approaches to recurring practical problems" (p. 70). Without a system of notation and memory, the steps of analysis, interpretation, and codification of principles are hard to pursue (Shulman, 1987). Because of that isolation, feedback/rewards come from their students, rather than from other adults (Lortie, 1975).

The next reality, according to Lieberman and Miller, is that since there is a great deal of uncertainty about the links between teaching and learning, teachers are never completely sure that what they are doing will work with these particular students.

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This fact leads to the subsequent reality, which is that teachers are constantly in search of new ideas, materials, and methods. According to Lortie (1975), teachers alleged that their preservice education was "too theoretical" and contained "scant intellectual substance." Lortie (quoting Ladd, 1966), interprets this to mean that "the professors of education inculcate high and difficult goals in students without providing the means for their achievement" (p. 69). As Shulman (1987) confirms, the knowledge base of teaching is weak: the teaching profession lacks "case studies," common in other professions (e.g., medicine and law).

An additional reality is that teaching is an art, full of experimentation, with constant adjustments and readjustments and routinizations: "it becomes for most a daily struggle to control the intangibles" (Lieberman & Miller, 1979, p. 56). The goals of teaching are vague and often conflicting. Each teacher must translate and interpret the goals for him/herself and his/her specific classes or subjects.

There is also the reality that control norms are necessary, both within the classroom and within the school. Their purpose is to provide direction, control, and movement. Cuban (1984) especially views external controls or bureaucratic factors (i.e., mandates from the district and state, public expectations for schools, and organizational configuration/structures) as constrictive.

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Finally, professional support is lacking: isolation, even for the beginning teacher, is the norm. Lortie (1975) calls it a "sink or swim" experience for the novice. There is a demand for improved practice without the authority, support, or incentive to carry it out (Zaltman, Florio, & Sikorski, 1977).

Lieberman and Miller (1979) next go on to describe the dailiness of teaching. There are rules which affect teacher behaviors. The first of these rules is being practical, as opposed to being theoretical and/or idealistic. In the former, the emphasis is upon products over processes, on experience over research, on the short-range over the long-range in thinking and planning. In the latter, the teacher learns to accept the school as it is and to adapt. Hoy and Rees, 1977, discuss this phenomenon in regard to "The bureaucratic socialization of student teachers." Lieberman and Miller claim that, "In essence, the value placed on practicality is a value placed on resistance to change and to expanding the possibilities of teaching" (p. 60).

The second rule focuses on being private, thus giving up the opportunity to display one's successes and reserving the right to conceal one's failures: observation is equated with evaluation and evaluation risks exposure.

Lieberman and Miller's generalizations next relate to the interpersonal relationships of teachers. They found that teacher interactions vary according to the contact. With other teachers, the nature of discussion is typically

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either jousting or griping. Their student interaction is both personal (role model) and instructional. The interaction with the principal is extremely important, since the principal's power, support, and criticism will do much to influence the way in which the classroom teacher functions: with a supportive principal, there is the probability that the teacher will feel free to take risks and experiment with new methods and materials.

The topic of empowerment comes up, as well, in Lieberman and Miller's reflections on the nature of teaching. They talk about the fact that teachers are frustrated about the quantity and quality of control they have--or don't have--in a school. Control is territorial--once outside the classroom, all of the teacher's control disappears. Teachers are constantly moving from a level of almost complete and always necessary control to a level of powerlessness. Frustration and resignation result.

Based on these characteristics of teaching, there are several implications for staff development, according to Lieberman and Miller (1979):

> a. Adopt a public relations facade to engage staff--something which requires an energetic, enthusiastic salesperson;
>
> b. Take a reactive stance, which starts from where people are, not where we would like them to be;
>
> c. Get individuals personally involved in implementation, a process carried on by people who care about and understand the needs of the participants (not a "canned" presentation) and with the provision of additional resources (people, time, material, expertise);

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> d. Discard the idea of a "training model," which is based on a deficit model of teacher education. This type of training does not acknowledge the complex social realities of teaching, but, rather, assumes that one group (trainers) is more able than another (trainees). Jackson (1975) would, rather, advocate a "growth model;"
>
> e. Establish supportive conditions: e.g., principal, personnel/time/materials, peer support, district support, activities, a professional supportive climate (pp. 65-68).

Nature of Adult Learning. Wood and Thompson (1980) claim that those responsible for staff development largely ignore adult learning characteristics. They highlight several of these factors to be considered in planning and conducting staff development:

> a. The goals and objectives of the staff development program must be perceived by the learner as specifically job-related and immediately useful;
>
> b. These goals and objectives must be presented as relevant to their personal and professional needs;
>
> c. Results must be evident and accurate feedback must be given;
>
> d. There is ego-involvement; consequently, evidences of anxiety, guilt, fear, and/or a negative self-concept may emerge as the new learning takes place;
>
> e. The learners come to the learning situation with a vast array of baggage, both positive and negative prior knowledge and experience; therefore, individuating instruction is as appropriate for adults as for children;
>
> f. Teachers may resist imposed, prescribed inservices, especially if they are made to feel that they are deficient or that their professional competence and/or present method of teaching is being attacked;
>
> g. Adult motivation for learning is on two levels: one is to participate and do an adequate job (resulting from a good salary, fringe benefits, and fair treatment), while the second is to commit oneself deeply (resulting from recognition, achievement, and increased responsibility);

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> h. Motivation rests within the adult learner; the purpose of the staff developer is to encourage and create favorable conditions for the learning to take place;
>
> i. Respect, trust, and concern for the learner must characterize adult learning activities (p. 376).

Teacher as Learner. Feiman (1983) cautions:

> The work of teaching cannot be based on past knowledge of teaching. It must be informed by knowledge derived from studying the particular students and classroom situations. The classroom is not only a place to teach children, but a place to learn more about teaching and learning. Learning is part of the job of teaching (p.150).

She goes on to say, "Effective schools have been defined as places where students learn. It is time to include in our definition a requirement about teachers' learning as well" (p. 152). Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) carry this theme into their book by stating that "schools that are true learning communities for adults and children alike are the only kind that hold promise for the future" (p. 1). As can be documented within the following paragraphs, from many voices comes the call for teachers to be reflective, rational, and conscious about their practice.

According to Shulman (1987), teaching is essentially a learned profession. In citing Fenstermacher (1978, 1986), he emphasizes that "the goal of teacher education . . . is not to indoctrinate or train teachers to behave in prescribed ways, but to educate teachers to reason soundly about their teaching, as well as to perform skillfully" (p. 13). In that regard, Shulman lists four components as

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essential to teaching: comprehension and reasoning, transformation and reflection.

When Keyes (1988) talks about Teacher as Learner, he specifies the attributes of reflection, empowerment, knowledge, collaboration, articulation, and self-evaluation. Carr and Kemmis (1984) call for theory ("organized knowledge") and practice ("organized action") to be combined in order to ensure critical analysis ("reflection and revision"). Lortie (1975) intimates that teacher knowledge should be explicit and analytical. Griffin (1979) says that staff development fulfills the requirements of a profession when its members somehow continue to learn, to grow, to renew themselves, so that their interactions with ideas and with clients are reflective of the best knowledge and skill available to them (p. 127).

According to Dewey (1933), the inquiry skills, attitudes, and dispositions which should characterize such a reflective practitioner are open-mindedness (as opposed to close-mindedness or empty-mindedness), whole heartedness (as opposed to duplicity), and responsibility (as opposed to egotism). He says that theories in the past were developed as individuals thought systematically, using the tools of scientific inquiry: i.e.,they observed phenomena/problems, formulated tentative hypotheses, tested the hypotheses, and developed theories. Teachers today can also follow this procedure, he asserts.

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Duckworth (1984) encourages teachers to take the role of researcher, where teachers become learners. She says that learning by figuring out for oneself is different from being told. Teachers should not only use knowledge, but they should also produce knowledge. Indeed, she claims that, ideally, the two (research and teaching) should be one. In that connection, Garrison (1988) asks the thought-provoking question: "Is it not odd that teachers have no part in the production of scientific knowledge that is to empower them as professionals? Unbelievable!"

Berliner (1987) encourages schools to develop a local task force, where individuals and faculties can relate their inquiry to each other (deliberation) and begin to develop an understanding of practice. Individual teachers must be empowered to participate in the process of knowledge production and distribution, not just passive consumption. Talking about practice permits individuals to examine, reinforce, refine, and expand their own theories (whether conscious or unconscious, explicit or tacit).

An example of this is related in the journal of Mary DiShino (1985), a participant in Duckworth's seminar, where experienced teachers were encouraged to take the role of researcher and, within a social setting, to articulate answers to "What did you notice [about a given phenomena]?" and "What sense do you make of that?" This forced them to clarify their own thinking ("much of the learning is in the explaining") and to determine what they still had questions

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about and wanted to understand. Through this process, the community of learners both reinforced and challenged each other's ideas. They became resources and sources of knowledge. Together they discovered that knowledge is fluid, changing--a human product; individuals not only use knowledge but they also generate it, they not only produce knowledge but they know they have produced it.

Kinds. DiShino (1985) gave the following motivation for becoming involved in that seminar: "I needed to become intelligent about my work--thinking about my work and creating a role for myself based on my beliefs, my understandings, my awareness" (p. 23). This professional growth of teachers can take a variety of forms and can be stimulated in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes.

Professional development can be autonomous or self-motivated, where the individual learns by doing. Reflection on practice and professional readings, along with original research (quantitative, qualitative, or action) and/or replication of previous research are examples of learning from oneself and/or by oneself. Professional development can be collegial or peer-motivated, where one learns from and with one's peers. Staff dialogue, staff membership, teacher centers, peer coaching and mentor-novice relationships are examples of this type of staff development. Professional development may be heteronomous/ superior-motivated, where the teacher learns from the

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"experts." Graduate/postgraduate courses and instructional supervision are in this category.

Another way of categorizing professional development is through Lampert's (1989) five models of staff development:

> Model # 1, Individual teacher development, where each teacher's personal and professional growth is the goal;
>
> Model # 2, Staff development through organizational change, where restructuring or reorganizing the institutional structure is done to improve teaching;
>
> Model # 3, Bridging from research to practical knowledge, where the attempt is made to affect teaching practice by applying the knowledge gained from the academic community;
>
> Model # 4, Curricular innovation, where the improvement of teacher instructional materials is intended to improve teaching;
>
> Model # 5, Collaborative school-based change, where through collaborative efforts participants assess needs (according to Hanley & Swick, 1983, "Teachers are their own best resource for identifying and solving many of their own problems" [p. 16]) and design programs for instructional improvement.

Leiter and Cooper (1979), who claim that one cannot impose staff development--one must generate and motivate it--list five somewhat different emphases in their models of staff development: i.e., inservice teacher corps, an individualized staff development program model (similar to Lampert's # 1), helping teachers, teacher centers for teacher-initiated staff development (similar to Lampert's # 5), and faculty development in higher education.

Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987, pp. 43-141) provide extended descriptions of several alternatives to traditional inservice training: teacher as researcher, implementing

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innovative practices, clinical supervision, peer coaching, advising teachers, teachers' centers, teacher institutes, networks, partnerships, training of trainers, mentoring beginning teachers, and individually guided professional development. "The challenge is to select approaches that mesh with individual, school, and district goals . . ." (p. 43).

Characteristics of Effective Staff Development.

Maeroff (1988b) claims that a look at the projects carried out under the aegis of Rockefeller, Ford, and Carnegie revealed some patterns that hold promise of enabling teachers to go on learning in ways that point toward empowerment. Approaches most likely to yield dividends had these characteristics in common: fresh information and new insights, and ways to put this knowledge at the disposal of students or at least the opportunity for the time and encouragement to develop those ways; the building of an *esprit de corps* so that teachers, usually in teams, are fired with enthusiasm and not isolated when they return to their schools with new ideas; follow-up mechanisms to lend support to the teachers throughout the school year in implementing new knowledge and keeping the enthusiasm at a high pitch (p. 41).

Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) contend that there are eight "critical attributes" of effective staff development, namely: collegiality and collaboration, experimentation and risk taking, incorporation of knowledge bases, appropriate

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participant involvement, leadership and support, incentives and rewards both from within and from one's students, integration of school and district goals, and adult learning characteristics (pp. 8-17).

In regard to the final attribute, adult learning, Wood and Thompson (1980) proposed the following guidelines for effective staff development: include more participant control over the *what* and *how* of learning; focus on job related tasks that the participants consider real and important; provide choices and alternatives that accommodate the differences among participants; include opportunities for participants in inservice training to practice what they are to learn in simulated and real work settings as part of their training; encourage the learners to work in small groups and to learn from each other; reduce the use and threat of external judgments from one's superior(s) by allowing peer-participants to give each other feedback concerning performance and areas of the needed program (p. 377). Because adults prefer to learn in informal learning situations where social interaction can take place among the learners, there is the need to plan inservice that occurs in the normal work setting (pp. 376-377).

In addition to all these considerations, Wood and Thompson (1980) also cite research from the 1970s which gives evidence that a higher proportion of adults than formerly thought may be operating at Piaget's concrete operational stage, rather than formal operations stage, of

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Teacher Centers: Staff Development for Empowerment. The question now arises, How can we stimulate the professional growth of experienced teachers in ways that are sensitive to and congruent with a view of *development* as opposed to *training*, *liberating* as opposed to *binding*, *empowerment* as opposed to *disempowerment*? The teacher center concept is provided here as one example of staff development that has the potential to help experienced teachers of any age or stage to share their problems and break through their isolation, as well as to expand teachers' thinking from their own classrooms to the entire institution and beyond--to the field of education as a whole.

Although officially-sanctioned, federally-funded teacher centers reached their heyday in the late 1970s and early 1980s, their legacy remains. Yarger (1990) claims that, " . . . teacher centers were, in many ways, the precursor to teacher empowerment, which has been central to the increasing movement toward the professionalization of teaching. This basic empowerment of teachers constitutes perhaps the most important teacher center legacy" (p. 115).

Lieberman and Miller (1979) talk specifically about the uniqueness of teacher centers: "What distinguishes teacher centers from other staff development practices is the degree to which teachers themselves control the goals and the

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process of their own professional development" (p. 142). Yarger (1990) emphasizes teacher centers' "responsiveness" and "relevance" to teachers' self determined needs (p. 114).

Zigarmi (1979) writes about teacher centers during their prime in the United States. In her article, "Teacher centers: A model for teacher-initiated staff development," she sees teacher centers as both a place and a concept. As a place, it is where teachers exchange ideas, talk over problems, acquire skill, and have access to resources they can use and adapt to their own classroom situations; it is a responsive, supportive, non-threatening environment that promotes sharing and a sense of community, models new possibilities, promotes the active exploration of materials, and emphasizes the study of children's learning as the basis for teachers' professional development. As a concept, it demonstrates the value of teachers' taking more responsibility for their own staff development and fosters teachers' understanding more about how children learn, as well as with what a teacher is thinking and doing in his/her classroom (pp. 192-193).

Zigarmi sees no one single model of a teacher center in American education; rather, teacher centers differ in the areas of organization, function, and ideology. Feiman (1977) has identified three distinct categories, which she terms behavioristic, humanistic, and developmental.

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The behavioristic center focuses on improving specific teaching behaviors through collaboration and dissemination of research findings, possibly also including ready-made programs, packages, or methods. The humanistic center, often short-term, focuses on "creating a learning environment where teachers feel psychologically supported, places where they can benefit from each other's expertise" (Zigarmi, 1979, p. 191). The developmental center, often long-term, provides classroom teachers with advisors who help them develop new understanding of their own teaching and their students' learning.

Maeroff (1988b), in citing the Metropolitan Life Insurance Survey of the American Teacher (1986), reports that 71% of the teachers surveyed thought that having a formal system of teacher centers where they could get help and ideas from other teachers and administrators would improve their working conditions. He goes on to quote from the Teacher Development in Schools (1985) report to the Ford Foundation by the Academy for Educational Development, where

> a dominant theme in teachers' centers was that teachers should control decisions about instruction and that they should also control decisions about their own professional development . . . the process of information exchange and reflection is the essential stimulant for professional growth. An elemental appeal of teachers' centers is that they provide opportunities for collegial exchange about pedagogy that are rarely encouraged in typically organized and managed schools (p. 40).

Maeroff concludes that relatively few teachers across the country have had this as a formalized experience. He states that there is a desperate need to improve the

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delivery system of inservice education to include the Holmes Group Report's (1986) components of competent teaching, i.e., subject matter knowledge (both in liberal and pedagogical studies), systematic knowledge of teaching, and reflective practical experience.

According to Zigarmi (Lieberman & Miller, 1979, pp. 193-195), the three activities characteristic of teacher centers (in many ways congruent with the above-listed "components of competent teaching") which are to be emphasized within the context of this project are: helping teachers get together to work on common problems (i.e., *reflective practical experience*); helping teachers learn more about how children learn (i.e., *systematic knowledge of teaching*); helping teachers acquire skills in curriculum development and implementation (i.e., *subject matter knowledge*).

> *Helping teachers work on common problems.* Activities are planned around teachers' expressed interests and their perceptions of their own staff-development needs. They provide opportunities for dialogue . . . In many ways, the skills or knowledge participants acquire in a workshop at a teacher center may be less important than the new attitudes they develop about their own resourcefulness and expertise through this joint problem-solving process.
>
> *Helping teachers learn more about how children learn.* These activities include . . . interviews with teachers, . . . curriculum development projects, and . . . efforts to help teachers do research . . . bring[s] teachers together to talk about specific problems and ways of dealing with them . . . provide[s] opportunities for sharing among teachers and collective reinforcement for teachers trying out new ideas. The activities in teacher centers that help a teacher explore his/her ways of working with children

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> and help that individual systematically reflect on classroom problems may shake a teacher's self confidence at first, . . . But the more access a teacher has to other teachers' classroom problems, the greater his/her ability to tolerate losses in self-esteem, the more open he/she will be to feedback. . . . The more a teacher is open to feedback, the greater his/her ability is to self-monitor his/her classroom practice. . . . The more able a teacher is at self-monitoring his/her classroom practice, the more likely he/she is to bring about fundamental changes in it.
>
> *Helping teachers acquire skills in curriculum development and implementation*. There is a sense in many teacher centers that new curriculum packages are not what teachers need. What they need is supportive, critical help in evaluating new materials and using them in their classrooms.
>
> Implications arising from these assumptions are:
>
> For the most part, teacher centers accept teachers' perceptions of their own needs as starting points for staff development [and] help teachers uncover their own understandings of teaching/learning so that they can change their approach or attitude or skill. Teacher centers also accept teachers as resources and encourage the exchange of resources among teachers as a way of enhancing personal and professional growth . . . Centers involve teachers as collaborators, provide teachers with support in a way that lowers their resistance to change, and encourage local leadership rather than reliance on outside consultants [all Rand Study characteristics of successful change efforts] . . . Change is more than getting started and support must be extended throughout the change process (Zigarmi in Lieberman & Miller, 1979, p. 199)

Warmth, concreteness, time, and thought are the four components which Devaney (1977) stresses as necessary to make a teacher center work. As she envisions it, *warmth* means access to support, freedom to take risks, a sense of being engaged with colleagues in an important undertaking. *Concreteness* means a focus on particulars and specifics, not generalizations and abstractions. This does not mean "make and take" workshops or "how to" discussions with an emphasis

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only on "what works;" it means, rather, talking about specific dilemmas or problems or instances of learning, specific concepts and how to embody them in activities, specific children and their learning. Learning takes *time*, time from the pressure of ongoing classroom responsibilities. In regard to *thought*, the emphasis is on ideas, ways of thinking, powerful concepts, penetrating questions: teachers deserve intellectual stimulation and need support in becoming serious students of their teaching. It is assumed that in such an atmosphere, teachers will take more ownership and responsibility for curricular and instructional decisions. Devaney says that "teachers' intrinsic aspirations (motivations) for collegiality and professionalism are hidden resources that as yet have not been tapped in traditional in-service programs" (Zigarmi in Lieberman & Miller, 1979, p. 201).

Several areas of contrast can be seen between the teacher center concept and traditional inservice programs: who and what are seen as resources, the nature of assistance, and the issue of teacher responsibility and control (Zigarmi in Lieberman & Miller, 1979, pp. 198-202).

The teacher center concept would seem to be in keeping with what Paquette (1987) called "voluntary collegial support groups," based on the following "principles of professional growth":

> a. Teachers benefit from individual, small-group, and large-group professional development activities, so each must be encouraged in the school;

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b. Professional development is most effective when undertaken voluntarily by individuals;

c. Growth activities should build upon the strengths, interests, and talents of each teacher and must be relevant;

d. Professional development activities can stimulate awareness in teachers of their level of skill development, leading to celebration as well as growth;

e. Growth can be enhanced through a collegial support system that values group activities, provides moral support and facilitates small groups of 8-10 per group (pp. 36-39).

This section investigated issues embedded within inservice education. There was first an acknowledgement of the realities of teaching and learning with a recognition of adult learning characteristics. This led, ultimately, to a discussion of a model of staff development which would appear to complement and foster the concepts of teacher empowerment.

Reading Curriculum Implementation

The goal (improved reading instruction) and content (a redefinition of reading, along with attendant strategies) of staff development in this setting will now be addressed.

Basis for Change.

Current reading research as it is embodied in the philosophical statement known as the state's New Definition of Reading/Goals and Objectives (Wixson & Peters, 1984) was adopted by the Omega Reading Study Committee and formed the basis for its work. The following basic assumptions highlight reading curriculum perspectives congruent with that philosophy:

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Who. The **teacher** *does* make a difference in affecting his/her students' reading achievement. In reading instruction, the **student** is an *active* participant, not a passive recipient.

What. The materials for reading instruction should encompass a wide variety of genre and be read for a wide variety of purposes. Emphasis in reading instruction should be upon interacting with the text (comprehension), not upon discrete and isolated skills.

Why. The purpose of reading instruction should be to produce readers who are *strategic* (they know when comprehension breaks down and how to restore it), *analytic* (they read critically), and *motivated* (they possess the desire as well as the ability to read).

How. In order to construct meaning, students must possess a variety of strategies (specific plans), which teachers can effectively teach through direct instruction (i.e., describe [what it is, when and where it can be used], model, provide guided practice, and, eventually, release control to students).

Where. A literate environment (both in *materials* [a variety of materials on a variety of subjects at a variety of reading levels] and in *uses* [as a social activity integrated with the other language arts--speaking, listening, and writing]) should be characteristic of the classroom where reading instruction occurs.

When. Reading instruction should be integrated with all content areas throughout the school day, not just during the "formal" reading instruction period.

The rough draft of the Omega Reading Study Committee's philosophy reflects many of these components:

> We believe in developing students who will be lifelong readers, capable of and enthusiastic about reading independently for meaning and pleasure. We will teach our students at their own rate and level, developing a reading ability consistent with their potential as learners. Those responsible for the development, implementation, and support of our reading program include our Superintendent, Curriculum Director, principals, reading consultants, teachers, support staff, media specialists, and parents.
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> We consider reading to be the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the

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> reader, the text, and the context of the reading situation. We, therefore, choose to use an integrated language arts approach which does not isolate reading as a separate entity, but includes it in virtually every aspect of a student's learning curriculum. This approach will help students to make higher level thinking connections as they read, enabling them to meet the demands of modern life inside and outside our classrooms. [Site document, 8/89]

With that brief look at the underpinnings of the proposed reading curriculum change, the emphasis in this section will be upon the word, *implementation*, or "the carrying out of specific guidelines for instructional, curricular, or management approaches" (Loucks-Horsley et al., p. 33).

The way in which teachers in the Omega district respond to recommended implementation of a new reading curriculum, both from the perspective of the previous strategic inservices and the present tentative reading curriculum guide, involves individuals in a process of change and innovation. The latter can be defined as something new to the individual who is going to use it and requiring behaviors not usual for that individual (Loucks-Horsley, 1987, p. 55). In that sense, this paper looks at the issue of change and teachers' reactions to that change as evidenced within a supportive environment (i.e., a district that is attempting to empower its teachers and a Reading Support Group fashioned on the concepts and practices characteristic of a teacher center).

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Inevitability of Change.

Mager et. al (1986), in citing the recommendations for educational reform today (e.g., A Nation at Risk, 1983; The Paideia Proposal, 1982; Goodlad's, 1984, A Place Called School), says that "each of these reports would require teachers to re-form their thinking and their practice" (p. 345) in regard to subject matter, students/grade level, and/or organizational structure. He concludes, "the success of the reforms will be, in large measure, a function of teachers' responses to such demands" (p. 345).

Attitudes Toward Change.

Although teachers have frequently been faced with change, not all teachers respond to change in the same way: "Some teachers welcome changes and are stimulated by them. Others accept changes without much feeling one way or another. Still others are overwhelmed" (Mager et al., 1986, p. 346).

Duffy and Roehler (1989), in talking about the complexities of teacher change, relate this complexity to four categories: complexity of the information to be conveyed, complexity of the teacher as learner, the context of instruction, and human resistance to change. The latter specifically focuses on the fact that many teachers are overwhelmed by change:

> Instructional improvement is difficult because teachers, like all humans, resist change. Change signals the end to comfortable practices of the past, the need to generate high levels of energy and the very

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> real risk of failure. Simply stated, teachers resist change because it is energy sapping, emotionally draining and risky (p. 32).

It is crucial to look at the way in which teachers respond to change, for as Goodlad (1984) says, teacher satisfaction influences the classroom learning environment: positively oriented teachers have a positive influence. On the other hand, "when teachers find themselves restrained and inhibited by problems of the workplace that appear to them not to be within their control, it is reasonable to expect frustration and dissatisfaction to set in" (p. 180).

One of the reasons why there are differing reactions to change may be due to the way in which that proposed change is presented, whether as defect or as growth. In his article, "Teaching old dogs new tricks," Jackson (1975) says that the deficit point of view looks upon change as remediation and repair based upon the assumption that there is something wrong with the present way of doing things. This viewpoint sees the old as bad and the new as better. As a reflection of this mentality, an outside expert ("Sage on the Stage") is frequently called in to set up a corrective training program to rectify the teachers' "ignorance." Jackson discounts this type of thinking, arguing that the "new" is often only a new facade, while Bader (1989) makes a case for the fact that what is touted as new is often merely "old wine in new wineskins." Freire (Timpson, 1989) claims that this type of inservice for

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The opposite point of view, change as growth, acknowledges teaching as complex and multifaceted. According to Jackson, the roads to wisdom are many, and the motivation for learning should be to seek greater fulfillment. He contends that the most important source of knowledge is the act of teaching itself, although it is not the experience alone but rather the benefits of that experience which cause the growth. Such benefits occur through the avenues of reflection and professional inquiry. The goal of this type of inservice is to produce teachers at every stage who are as wise as possible and who evidence growth in all directions, resulting in a perception of change as voluntary and internally motivated.

Models of Change.

Miller and Wolf (1979) discuss the fact that "tension . . . exists between the personal concerns of teachers and the institutional needs of the schools . . . Teachers are constantly moving between institutional and personal levels of concern. This situation is exacerbated when the school in which they work is itself undergoing change" (p. 144). Although the change in the Omega district is not one of situational/organizational change as it was in the school which Miller and Wolf studied, there is a change in the area of reading curriculum that is being proposed.

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Miller and Wolf (1979) highlight the characteristics of two change models (CBAM and /I/D/E/A) that influenced the establishment of their own model (SD/SC).

The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) presents a pattern for individual teacher adaptation of a teaching innovation, since its creator, Hall (1975), contends that, "Few seem to recognize that change is only accomplished in fact when the individuals that use these things change" (p. 1). He continues, "Our focus on changing by adding things and our failure to be sensitive to the changes that individuals must make to use these things have become the problem" (p. 2). He warns, "At the overview level, there has been addition of curricula, new organizational structures, etc.; however, on the individual level, there is little change--just system overload" (p. 2). Hall does not discount the importance of system level change; "however, we think that change at this level will not be accomplished unless the individual members are attended to" (p. 2).

The following summary paragraph demonstrates how this "attending to individual members" is reflected in his model:

> Developmental stages are documented based on levels of *concern* and levels of *use*. In the concerns domain, teachers move from the need for information and personal meaning to concerns about strategy and implementation and impact, to concerns about collaboration, and finally to redefining goals. In the use domain, teachers go through a process of orientation to and preparation for the innovation, move toward a mechanical use, and then on to routinizing, refining, and finally integrating the innovation into their teaching repertoire. Finally,

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> teachers begin a renewal process (Lieberman & Miller, 1979, pp. 145-146).

The /I/D/E/A studies (Kettering Foundation's Institute for the Development of Educational Activities) indicate a similar process of development, beginning with individuals:

> 1. First, people talk about the possibility of bringing about some kind of change within the school . . . 2. Activity ensues. Some teachers begin to do something . . . 3. Out of such activity, teachers begin to ask questions . . . 4. The whole program begins to look shabby . . . 5. The large philosophical questions are asked. Teachers begin to deal with goals for the first time. These questions open up others, and the process begins again (quoting Lieberman & Shiman [1973] in Lieberman & Miller, 1979, p. 146).

Miller and Wolf's Staff Development/School Change Model (SD/SC) uses both the CBAM and /I/D/E/A Models to provide a conceptual basis. SD/SC sees an interdependent relationship between school change and teacher change. It begins with individuals and their concerns, moves to collaborations through the use of extensive dialogue, and then moves to institutional change based on those collaborations. The institutional changes, so developed, provide a supportive framework for new growth and change--on both the individual and institutional levels. The process is developmental and cyclical (Lieberman & Miller, 1979, pp. 146-147).

Miller and Wolf had three goals as they attempted staff development/staff change to prepare for an organizational restructuring within the reported district. Those goals were: to develop a variety of teaching/learning strategies that were necessary and appropriate for the new organization

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(individual goals/individual action); to develop norms within the faculty (sharing, collaboration, innovation, risk taking, reflective thinking) that were necessary and appropriate for the new organization (dialogue about action/collaborative action); and to develop optional learning programs for the new organization (organizational changes which support the other levels of change) (Lieberman & Miller, 1979, p. 150).

The /I/D/E/A (1967-1972) and Rand (1974) studies have both looked at school renewal and change and have independently reached similar conclusions:

> 1. The school site should be an important component of the change process.
>
> 2. Teachers and administrators should be provided the skills and time necessary to focus their attention on school-site problem solving.
>
> 3. Staff development activities should flow from and be related to problems identified by the staff. The staff should play a major role in determining the staff-development and in-service activities that it needs.
>
> 4. Teachers and administrators have within themselves a considerable amount of expertise to bring to bear on the problems they face. Collegial sharing within and among schools should figure prominently in staff-development activities (Williams in Lieberman & Miller, 1979, pp. 99-100].

Implementation of Change.

According to Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987, p. 57), there are two phases to implementing innovative practices: planning and institutionalization.

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Phase 1: Planning. The change process begins with acquiring descriptive information and a clear picture for teachers and administrators of how it will affect lives in classroom and school. Then "how to do it" training is conducted.

Joyce and Showers (1980) have identified five elements needed for this training to be effective and durable: theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and classroom application. When used together, they contend, each has much greater power than when used alone. They also conclude that "when we change our repertoire, we have to learn to think differently, to behave differently, and to help children adapt to and become comfortable with the new approaches, so mastery of new techniques requires more intensive training than does fine tuning" (p. 380).
This training is followed by practice with some coaching. Sparks (1983) also adds the component of discussing application with peers.

Training in small increments rather than all at once is preferred so that parts can be mastered one at a time and problems dealt with as they come up. At least one year of follow-up support is needed (problem-solving gatherings, in-class demonstration and assistance, and materials and logistical help). At the end of the year, sessions can be planned to focus on evaluation of progress and refinement of the use in practice (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 57).

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McLaughlin and Marsh (in Lieberman & Miller, 1979), in their synopsis of The Rand Corporation Change Agent Study (1974), talk about four Project-Planning Strategies utilized for bringing about change, as well as typical responses to those strategies:

1. Top-down planning: project plans are made almost entirely in the central office and announced to would-be implementors. This approach is usually met with resistance or indifference from the school staff.

2. Grass-roots planning: plans are devised by teachers or school-based project staff with little involvement of district administrators. Here, it was found to be difficult to sustain initial enthusiasm and motivation when there was little indication that district officials cared.

3. No planning: project plans and project funds were imported into the district with little or no involvement from the district staff at any level.

4. Collaborative planning: project plans were developed with equal input from teachers and district managers. This approach proved to generate the broad-based institutional support necessary to effective implementation and to the continuation of successful practices from preproposal through implementation, thereby gaining consensus and support from teachers, principals, and central office personnel (pp. 73-75).

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Phase 2: Institutionalization. Here, the organization nurtures teachers' use of practice. The proposed change is written into curriculum guidelines, new teachers are automatically trained, it is funded in the budget, supplies are routinely ordered, refresher and renewal training sessions are held for teachers. As a consequence, the practice becomes part of the everyday life of school, teachers, students (Loucks-Horsley et al., 1987, p. 57).

Considerations Related to Change.

Loucks-Horsley et al.'s (1987) work has also identified the conditions necessary for success in implementing innovative practices. These include an acknowledgement of the fact that change takes time, resources, and attention. It is also imperative that attention be paid to the needs and concerns of teachers and administrators, since these fluctuate as implementation evolves. In addition, the leadership must state clearly that using the practice is a priority and that teachers will get the support they need to do it and do it well. This support, both within and outside the school setting, may be a combination of direction, guidance, a realistic picture of what it looks like in practice, and clear expectations for the outcomes (pp. 56-58).

Individuals implementing innovative practices may experience many mixed emotions at the beginning stages. Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) specifically list these: they

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may need to suspend disbelief for a while, to trust a trainer, to try something new that feels awkward or even impossible for an extended period of time, to feel unsuccessful before feeling successful. There is also the possibility that the staff developers may be seen as villains, forcing individuals to implement a new practice against their will (pp. 58-59).

Duffy and Roehler (1989) speak to that latter issue:

> . . . staff developers must bring patience and sensitivity to in-service projects, understanding that teacher resistance to change is natural, and providing emotional and physical support as teachers struggle to implement innovations (p. 32).

Goodlad (1984) sees a logical connection between conditions such as supportive and sensitive leadership, availability of help, and involvement in schoolwide decisions on the one hand, and teacher enthusiasm, professionalism, and career fulfillment on the other.

"Implications for Decision-Makers" (Hall, 1975), based on CBAM research, appear to be extremely relevant to the issues I encountered as Omega teachers face a change in reading curriculum which represents a new philosophy of reading, new goals and objectives, new methods and materials.

> 1. The Legitimacy of Self-Concerns. The crime should not be to have self concerns, but to not accept their legitimacy and address them constructively.
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> 2. Innovation Bundles. It doesn't really matter how we as innovation developers or product disseminators define the innovation. In order to research its effects we have to define the innovation from the

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user's perspective. There are always several different innovations within it ("the innovation bundle"). The Stages of Concern (SoC) and Levels of Use (LoU) with regard to *each* component of each bundle must be acknowledged in order to provide appropriate assistance and guidance to the users.

3. Interventions. Interventions could be more systematically thought about and planned if considerations were given to SoC and LoU. This is also true when the selected adoption strategy employed to implement the innovation is not fully thought out in terms of its consequences for the concerns and use of the individuals directly involved. If something is going to be mandated, then the interventions that accompany the mandate need to take into account the likelihood of a significant increase in self concerns which will have to be addressed before movement toward sophisticated use of the innovation is likely to occur.

4. System Overload. An overall game plan or adoption strategy is required. Each of these innovation bundles requires additional outside personnel in the school, staff development activities, and conflicting signals and requirements in terms of use. The result of this we call system overload. If SoC and LoU were identified and sorted out for all of these different innovations, it would be impossible to focus on anyone of them long enough to accomplish very much. In practice, this results in the grapevine's reporting which innovation's representative will be in the school for that day, then that's the innovation that is pulled off the shelf for use. Much more serious thought must be given to the systemic and systematic planning of innovation adoption in schools and colleges if we are going to get the pay off that we wish.

5. Evaluation. Innovation of practices probably means that the outcomes that are being attained are likely to be worse, at least initially, than they would have been if the innovation had not been implemented at all. We suspect that evaluators need to take into account LoU when they are involved in evaluating curriculum.

6. Time. Implementing even relatively simple innovations takes time--3-5 years. There should be restrictions on how many innovations are being "adopted" by an institution at any one time. The nominal time for users to reach LoU IV-A (Routine) should be published with the promotional materials for that innovation and support for implementation should cover that time period.

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7. Planned Change by Adaptive-Systematic Data-Based Decision-Making. As much attention needs to be given to the adoption of innovations as is presently being given to their development (pp. 27-32).

It would seem appropriate here to acknowledge the fact that the title of this dissertation changed during this project as the data were gathered and studied. Because the Omega district has just begun the Reading Curriculum change process, a process which admittedly takes time (minimally from three to five years, as stated above), as well as within a system with many other innovations (innovation bundles, system overload), the issue of implementation itself necessarily occupied a less-prominent place in this project than had originally been planned. The greater emphasis was, rather, placed upon the first two components, teacher empowerment and staff development, with a view *toward* implementation.

This review of the precedent literature on teacher empowerment, staff development, and reading curriculum implementation serves as a lens for bringing into focus the situations and findings of the following two chapters.

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CHAPTER 3

SITUATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to describe both the setting (Overview of the Site) and the activities (Context for Data Collection) related to the Reading Study Committee and the Reading Support Group which provide the basis for this study.

Overview of the Site

The Omega Community.

A community "steeped in traditional Christian values and a strong work ethic" which attracts "families seeking safe neighborhoods and good jobs" is the way their most recent publicity brochure [Site document, 3/13/89] describes the locale in which the Omega Public School district is located. The city proper is home to 4,900 residents and contains 46 industries which employ 7,000 individuals.

The district itself covers 94 square miles in a prime growth area in a midwestern state. The student population, growing 5% annually, is at the 3,000 mark. An Omega student's K-12 career begins with all-day, alternate-day kindergarten in the new Early Childhood Center. From there, s/he goes on to one of the three elementary schools, middle school, and high school.

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the way the Outstanding Practicing Principal for 1988 Special Award (presented to one of the elementary principals) described the district. [Site document, 1/24/89] The new Curriculum Director, along with committees of teacher volunteers, have begun to update K-12 course offerings to provide what they call, "consistent, challenging education." [Site document, 3/13/89] The district goal is to have a clear, concise, and attractive written curriculum guide in place by 1992 for each major curriculum strand and department, something that is presently lacking and which is now a state requirement. One such study (Social Studies K-5) was conducted during the summer of 1988: its written curriculum guide was placed in the hands of elementary teachers that fall for the purpose of feedback and evaluation. Reading and science "writes" were completed during the summer, 1989, with tentative guides available for teacher input during the 1989-1990 school year. The math curriculum guide was written during the summer of 1990.

The core curriculum is rounded out with advanced offerings in math, physics and chemistry at the high school level. The gifted and talented program has been reorganized to form "cluster groupings" within 3rd-6th grade classroom settings, initiated in the fall of 1989. Special education and reading support services, library, physical education, music, and hot lunch programs are provided in each school. Drop-out rate for high school students is less than 3%,

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compared to 7% statewide. In 1988, 64% of Omega High School graduates went on to further their education at colleges, universities, or trade schools.

At the district Board of Education's request, the state Department of Education conducted **a survey** in November, **1987. Eighty-five percent of area voters polled gave the Omega Public Schools an "A" or "B", the highest percentage rating achieved in the survey's history. A similar survey conducted at the end of October 1989 showed 79% of those** polled gave the district a "B" or better, "far exceeding the statewide average of 50%." According to the State Board of Education's pollster, "Your grades were not quite as high as last time, but they were still excellent. I can't think of enough praise for this school system." [Site document, 1/90] The community not only verbally approves its educational system, but it also consistently supports its schools through the passage of millage renewals and increase requests.

<u>The Omega Public Elementary Schools</u>.

The three elementary schools with their respective faculties provided the focal point for this study.

Eisenhower. The first school, Eisenhower Elementary, is the largest and serves the lower central and eastern areas of the district. This includes a farming community which had shared a great deal of loyalty and pride in its own small elementary school. When that school had to be closed three years ago due to health safety hazards which

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were deemed too costly to rectify, the students from that locale began to be bused to Eisenhower. An 8-room addition was completed three years ago to accommodate those students. An additional four rooms were added the fall of 1989. Twenty-seven full-time and part-time teachers serve the 470 students who are enrolled there.

Its principal has been with the district for 21 years. Until four years ago, he was assistant principal at the Omega Middle School, but at the retirement of Eisenhower's principal, he requested to be reassigned there. As an administrator, this principal is primarily concerned with business matters ("the dollar is the bottom line"), while he allows his teachers to assume the responsibility for teaching matters ("there isn't anything standing in their way"). [Interview transcript, 3/28/89] He told the reading teacher in his building that he sees himself as very supportive of the reading program.

Washington. The second largest elementary building, Washington, has 432 students and twenty-six full-time and part-time teachers. It, too, has undergone a building project of four additional rooms completed the fall of 1989. The school draws its clientele from the northern and central tier of the district where farming and factory work are the norm.

The principal of this school has been with the district for 16 years. He began as a third-grade classroom teacher at Amsterdam Elementary, was promoted to assistant principal

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in that building, and two years later became principal upon the retirement of his predecessor, a 34-veteran of the district. At his own request, he was reassigned to Washington four years ago both because his own children were coming up in the Amsterdam School and he himself was seeking a change. This principal's "remarkable genius for innovative leadership" was listed among his credits in the special tribute plaque awarded to him by two state legislators in January 1989 in recognition of his selection as the state's "Outstanding Practicing Principal for 1988" by the state's Elementary and Middle School Principal's Association. [Site document, 1/24/89] He formerly served as Chapter I Reading director and throughout the years he has, according to his own admission, supported his teachers in experimentation with a variety of methods and materials to replace outdated reading workbooks. He has also taken an active role in supporting the gifted/talented program and in updating the schools' libraries.

Amsterdam. Amsterdam Elementary has a student population of 344, with a teaching staff of twenty-one full time-and part-time teachers. The school serves the western portion of the district, where the more affluent, business and white-collar families of the community reside. Eight additional classrooms were completed by the fall of 1990.

Its principal, hired four years ago when Amsterdam's principal moved to Washington, described his leadership style in the following way: "When I came to Omega, I was

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very autocratic. But since I got messages that I had come on too strong, I took a nosedive, and now I'm trying to go from the visible to the invisible." [Interview transcript, 2/9/89] He has expressed a great deal of interest in reading-related concerns, is the Chapter I Reading director in the district, and is the only elementary principal representative on both the Curriculum Council and the Reading Study Committee. He attends the state Reading Association Convention each year, and he also elected to attend the International Reading Association Convention in New Orleans in the spring of 1989 for his one major district-funded conference.

The individuals in these buildings played the most dominant role in--and were the most directly influenced by--the work of the Reading Study Committee and the reading curriculum write described in this thesis.

Context for Data Collection

This section describes the context for data collection, beginning with a calendar of events which gives a chronological overview of the activities related to this study.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1986

November — Curriculum Council Reorganization Proposal
1. Reorganizing the Teaching Staff
2. Writing Curriculum Guides
3. Defining and Addressing Inservice Needs

December
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December January April	District-Wide Inservices: Defining Grade Group/Department Curricular Concerns
April	Presentation of Concerns to Board of Education Need Expressed for Reading Study
September	Invitation Extended to Serve on Reading Study Committee
October	District-Wide Inservice: Curricular Issues/Writing Curriculum Guides
December	Subcommittee of Volunteers Selected to Determine Starting Point of Committee's Work

1988

January- February	Orientation of Reading Study Committee: Inservice of Committee in New Definition/Reading Strategies
March	Reading Study Committee Leadership Emerges Subcommittees Formed State Reading Association Conference Attended
May	Reading Study Meets with Another District's Reading Curriculum Committee
August	Reconvening of Committee:"Where do we go from here?"
October	Elementary Staff Awareness Session/Needs Assessment Survey
November	Reading Strategy Inservice: Story Mapping
December	Reading Strategy Inservice: Debriefing Story Mapping, Probable Passages

1989

January	Reading Strategy Inservice: Reciprocal Teaching
February Reciprocal	Reading Strategy Inservice: Debriefing Teaching
March	Reading Strategy Inservice: Question Answer Relationships, State Reading Assessment

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May	Reading Strategy Inservice: KWL--Know, Want to Know, Learned
June	Reading Support Group Information Meeting Reading Curriculum Guide "Write"
August	Reworking Reading Curriculum Guide
September	Reading Support Group Meetings 1, 2, 3, 4 Presentation of Reading Curriculum Guide Rough Draft at Grade Group Meetings
October	Reading Support Group Meetings 5, 6, 7, 8 Teacher Inservice Day: Feedback Elicited on Reading Curriculum Guide Rough Draft in Grade Group Meetings
November	Reading Support Group Meetings 9, 10
December	Reading Support Group Meetings 11, 12
	1990
February	Reading Curriculum Guide Presented to the Omega Board of Education
April	Reading Curriculum Guide Approved by Board
May	Reading Inservice: Creating the Literate Environment

Table 1: Chronology of Events

<u>The District's Curriculum Re-Organization Efforts</u>.

A chronology of the Omega district's attempts to empower its teachers for reading curriculum change can be traced back to a November 20, 1986 memo sent from the District-Wide Curriculum Council to the Professional Staff of the Omega Public Schools.

Origins: Growing Frustration. The Council, up to that point merely a figure-head committee with no authority and no financial backing, had reached a point of "growing frustration," finally asking, "What are we doing for this

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school system [in the area of curriculum]?" The Council then proposed a Curriculum Re-organization reflecting "what the teaching staff, administrative staff, and Board of Education have been concerned about for several years." The process of getting teachers to take a more active and autonomous role in curriculum development through Curriculum Re-organization was recommended under the following assumption:

> Effective curriculum change begins at the grass roots, with the classroom teacher who works directly with the curriculum each day . . . The curriculum of the Omega Public School will be the most effective if it is developed by the teaching staff which has formed the organizational structure to accomplish change. Each of you are [sic] being challenged with that task. [Site document, 11/20/86]

The three-prong proposal called for: 1. Re-organization of the department chairperson structure and the addition of grade level chairpersons; 2. Development of a written curriculum scope and sequence for each major curriculum strand by 1992; 3. Defining inservice education needs of the staff and addressing those needs in an organized way. [Site document, 11/20/86]

First Steps: Instructional Program Needs Assessment. Following that memo, a number of consecutive monthly release-time inservices were held at the district's high school. The first meeting occurred on December 1, 1986, where subgroups (according to grade level or department) met to first discuss the Curriculum Council memo described above, giving answers to the questions: "Does the plan have merit?" and "What specific suggestions do you have?" Next, an "Instructional Program Needs Assessment" was to be

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compiled, where teachers were asked individually to list twenty-one of their instructional program improvement needs as they alone saw the district. This was the first step in what was billed as

> . . . a research-proven technique that facilitates large groups in formulating their major priorities for action. The process assures equal opportunity for input and builds group members' confidence and ability to pursue the means for meeting unmet needs; and finally, the priority listings bring focus to the total community on unmet needs. [Site document, 12/1/86]

On January 16, 1987, the entire teaching staff again met at the high school to hear the superintendent speak, to discuss within grade groups and departments the "curriculum reorganization plan" (signifying approval or disapproval), and to provide an instructional program needs assessment (reducing the compiled list to a consensus of the seven areas of greatest concern within that grade group/ department). These seven were later further pared down on April 13, 1987, to reflect each group's three top needs.

One individual representing each of these departments/ grade groups was then invited to present its top three priorities to the Education Subcommittee of the Board of Education on April 30, 1987, in order to "facilitate possible priority items and proposals being further developed for the Omega Education Association, the board and building faculties," while at the same time acknowledging the "limitations imposed by human and financial resource constraints." [Site document, 4/23/87]

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Formation and Functions of a Reading Study Committee.

Orientation. One of the reading teachers' three priority items was the recommendation for a district reading study, an event which was initiated that fall. The rationale for such a study was two-fold.

The first factor to be considered was that the need for such a study existed because of some deficit in the way reading instruction had taken place in the past. Indeed, several realities would warrant such an assumption: 1) the district had no written philosophy or reading curriculum; consequently, the basal reader teacher's manual had been driving the curriculum; 2) to further complicate that fact, the three elementary buildings all had different reading series representing differing philosophical bases for instruction, which resulted in a lack of articulation both horizontally and vertically ("We've got three systems, and the effectiveness of those systems may be very good in a single school, but they won't be very good when it comes to sharing talents, sharing information, stopping gaps from occurring over time" [Superintendent of Schools, Audiotape transcript of 3/14/89 Board of Education: Education Subcommittee Meeting]; 3) these basals had mid 1970s copyrights, and they did not, therefore, reflect the most recent reading research and practice; 4) that concern was a reflection of the orientation of many individuals within the district: a previous reading study, scheduled for the 1984-1985 school year, was preempted for "more-pressing

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concerns," since, as the Curriculum Council chairperson at that time stated, "Science and social studies need more frequent updating than does reading, because of the constant additional new information being discovered and occurring in these areas. *Reading* does not outdate itself [italics mine]." A Board of Education member expressed a similar opinion in the April 14, 1989 meeting: "A basic is a basic. In twenty years they haven't changed. This discussion relates to how old the textbook would be." [Audiotape transcript, 4/14/89]

The second factor looked at the study as a means of growth. Here the emphasis was upon using the information gleaned by the committee as a way to help teachers evaluate "what we are already doing that is working . . . The past is not bad--we're already doing many of these things. [The new definition] gives a new *emphasis*," according to an Awareness Session presentation. [Fieldnotes, 11/30/88]

The chairperson of the Reading Study Committee presented the proposed changes positively in her meeting with the Board of Education, as well:

> The different approaches help the teachers to meet the needs of the kids who aren't developmentally ready for that basal reader but who can start to experience reading through different kinds of methods. And I think we've done a pretty good job of enlightening the teachers as to some of those different methods which may have changed since they went to college. [Audio tape transcript, 4/14/89]

In this positive light, it was envisioned that the Committee's recommendations would help to bridge the gap between on-paper curriculum and its practice in classrooms

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and, ultimately, lead to greater articulation and achievement in the entire district: "Our goal is not just to choose a new textbook: our goal is improved instruction and learning." [Site document, 5/10/89]

In response to an open invitation issued by the Curriculum Council chairperson (who was six months later appointed to become the district's first Curriculum Director), a volunteer group of twenty-four K-12 teachers, reading consultants, and administrators came forward to form the Reading Study Committee. They initially convened in January of 1988 for the purpose of studying the present status of reading instruction within the district, to familiarize themselves with the state's New Definition of Reading, and to determine the course of reading instruction for the future. The Committee was given the mandate to provide the district with a written reading curriculum, along with recommendations for inservices and materials in order to disseminate and implement that curriculum.

The Curriculum Council chair's first letter stated:

> I want to commend you on volunteering to serve on a key committee at a most opportune time. Combined with the "New Definition of Reading/Goals for Reading Instruction" and Omega Public Schools initiating a renewed effort of school improvement through a commitment to write curriculum guides, this team of interested, enthusiastic, and strongly committed teachers has the honor of being the first discipline to start us on the implementation of a reading curriculum. [Site document, 1/18/88]

His stated goal was that the reading study be "teacher initiated, teacher led, teacher developed, and teacher assessed/monitored." [Fieldnotes, 3/16/88]

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Table 2

A diagram of the most pertinent groups for this study is included here, followed by a membership composite of each group. These are included as a way to help the reader envision the position of the Reading Study Committee within the district's organizational structure.

OMEGA PUBLIC SCHOOLS' ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

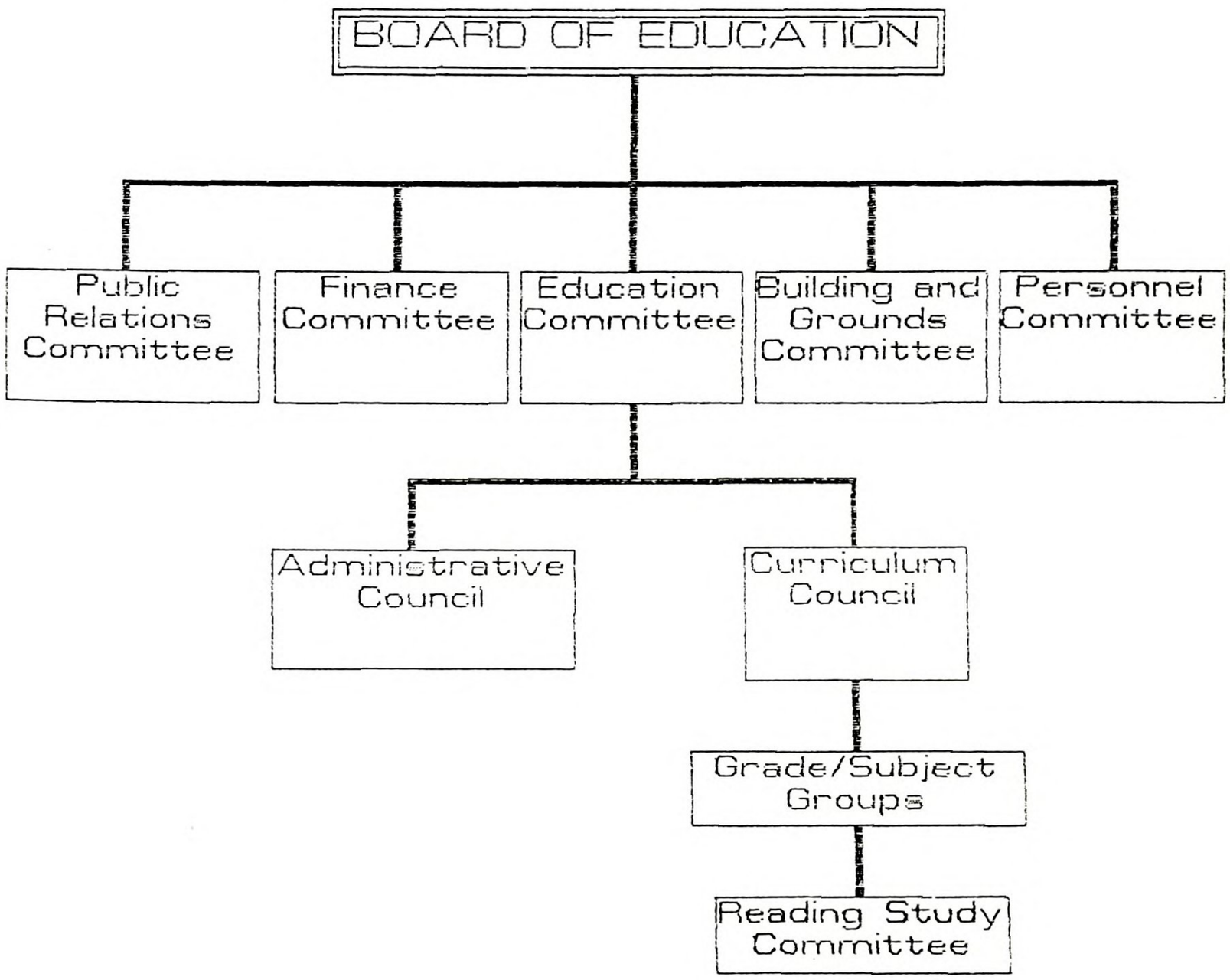


Table 2: Omega Public Schools' Organizational Structure

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Membership Composite within the Organizational Structure

Board of Education. Board member (chair), superintendent of schools, assistant superintendent, seven community-elected board members

Education Committee. Superintendent, three board members

Administrative Council. High school principal (chair) and assistant principal, middle school principal and assistant principal, three elementary school principals, superintendent of schools, curriculum director, community education director, athletic director, special education director

Curriculum Council. Curriculum director (non-voting chair), three high school teachers, three middle school teachers, five elementary school teachers, three administrators, one Omega Education Association representative at large

Grade/Subject Groups. One chairperson for each elementary grade (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6); one chairperson for each elementary, middle school, and high school department (science, social studies, math, and language arts); one chairperson for each K-12 subject (physical education, music, industrial arts, computer science, home economics, and art), plus the teachers appropriate to each of those divisions

Reading Study Committee. Elementary language arts chair/ second grade teacher (chair), curriculum director, one elementary principal, one high school teacher, two middle school teachers, one middle school reading teacher, one fifth grade teacher, two fourth grade teachers, two third grade teachers, one first grade teacher, one kindergarten teacher, three elementary school reading teachers

Initial Activities. Preparation. Since the twenty-four volunteers on the Reading Study Committee were the ones who had been entrusted with the task of writing a new reading curriculum, selecting appropriate textbooks, and providing inservices for teachers to ensure that articulation occurs both horizontally and vertically, it was imperative that the basis for those major choices be credible and reliable.

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The only elementary principal to volunteer to serve on the Committee took the initiative: "I wanted us to look at the New Definition [of Reading]. I had been lucky enough to hear about it, where some people hadn't. I volunteered [to be on the Reading Study Committee] thinking it would be more of a leadership role at that point . . . " [Interview transcript, 2/9/89] After consulting with the Curriculum Council chairperson, he invited two of the volunteers to meet with him in November, 1987, for the purpose of making a determination about how to begin the process.

Upon his recommendation, the first step taken in an effort to ensure that informed and credible decisions would be made, as well as to provide a common ground for the many unique individuals with varied reading backgrounds, nine hours of intensive training was given the Committee by a member of the team who had written the state's New Definition of Reading. This occurred in three three-hour long sessions during February, 1988 (one after school on February 4 from 5:00-8:00 p.m., a second one on Saturday morning, February 13, from 8:30-11:30 a.m., and the third one on release time the following Monday, February 15, from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon). The presenter's role was to inservice the committee [i.e., the "decision-makers"] and to help screen the vast amount of [reading] materials available.

Her agenda was as follows:

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Session One: Introduction and Purpose Setting
Reading Curriculum--Literacy is the Measure of Success
Research and the New Definition of Reading/Goals for Reading Instruction
Schema Theory and Comprehension
Two Instructional Strategies which Employ Schema Theory: DRTA Fiction and KWL
Charge to the Group

Session Two: Megacognition and Strategic Reading
Strategies to Insure Meaning--Comprehension Monitoring
Strategies to Repair Meaning
--Click and Clunk
--Repair Strategies
--Mental Modeling
--Think Alouds
Narrative Text Structure and Comprehension
--Story Grammar
--Story Mapping
Reciprocal Teaching as a Metacognitive Strategy

Session Three: Literate Environment
Construct an Advisory Statement about this Issue
QAR's and Expository Text Structure
Semantic Mapping and Concept Mapping
Wrap-up: Seeking New Reading Objectives

Written comments after the inservice sessions reflected an appreciation for the information: "Provided a good foundation base," "Helped give direction," and "Helped ease the insecurity of not being an expert." One comment to the presenter summarized, "Your knowledge will benefit us in further study, sharing with peers, inservice planning and desire to improve Omega reading curriculum." [Site document, 2/15/88]

Concerns surfaced: "Where do we go from here?", "Changes should not be a directive but should come from teachers," "We need a clear goal--plan as a group in order to be effective," "Dissemination of information [must be made] to all teachers in the district so we can make a

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knowledgeable decision about curriculum and materials." The overriding question appeared to be, "How are this many people going to write a curriculum?" [Site document, 2/15/88]

Leadership Emerges. That concern began to be addressed immediately. At the close of the nine hours, the Curriculum Council chair asked for a volunteer to head the Reading Study Committee. A long period of silence followed that invitation, and no one on the Committee volunteered. The Curriculum Council chair asked the members to go home to think about it.

The person who did offer to assume that role was an already very active lower elementary classroom teacher who needed to resign from her Curriculum Council post to do so. Excerpts from a letter she wrote to me after the meeting expressed her rationale for taking a leadership role on the Committee:

> I am definitely biased toward a language arts philosophy including reading, writing, thinking, spelling, etc. I got the feeling that many people on our committee were not familiar with the concept of that big picture . . . I guess I'm afraid that we might ignore those relationships! I'm also afraid we're never going to get off the ground without chairpersons! I would be willing to help . . . because I think this is the most important revision that will be made in our curriculum! [Site document, 2/25/88]

One reason for the reluctance on the part of any others to spearhead the Committee may have been due to the past history of the district. Prior to this time, according to the most veteran teacher on the Reading Study Committee, Omega's curriculum study committees had been automatically

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chaired by the district's elementary principals. These administrators would then recruit those whom they deemed knowledgeable and interested to comprise their committee. She said that the former reading curriculum guides were

". . . not significant. They were so general--everybody just wrote down what they did, and somebody just put it all together. They were put in a drawer or on the shelf, and that was it. We never basically followed them." [Interview transcript, 3/9/89]

In other instances, a variety of textbooks was ordered from each of several publishing companies, and these materials were perused by the committee. The end result of each committee's work would be a textbook adoption, where, as one principal told me, the textbook teacher's manual became the curriculum.

As was stated earlier, the only elementary principal on the Committee had originally assumed that the Reading Study Committee would also give himself as an administrator a great deal of influence, but he told me that his perception had been altered: "I've had to step back. I was opinionated and had certain ideas I wanted covered . . . yet seeing and knowing that we wanted to empower teachers." [Interview transcript, 2/9/89]

He related to me instances throughout the Reading Curriculum Study which forced him to view himself in a less conspicuous role. Reading teachers asked him to merely go around and take pictures at the Strategy Inservices, while

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the Reading Study Committee chairperson explicitly told him that he should "back off a little." [Interview transcript, 2/9/89] Upon the discovery that his initial expectations needed to be revised, this principal put his energy instead into encouraging the chairperson, Chloe, a teacher from his building, in her role:

> I tried to kindle her leadership. She's been building and showing leadership ability, organizational skills, her peers respect her, she's a worker. She went out on a limb. When she volunteered, I was surprised. I felt it would be a reading teacher. But I went to her and said, "No problem. I'll back you whenever I can to support you on that." [Interview transcript, 2/9/89]

Apparently, he still had been anticipating that the leadership would come from another "expert," i.e., a reading consultant. His change in thinking about that issue was also addressed:

> I did wonder about it not being a reading teacher. But I think it's worked out well, because it's freed those reading teachers up to do what we needed to do in the inservice, whereas the Reading Study Committee chairperson wouldn't have been able to do that. The reading teachers are able, because of their schedules, to get together and do a bit of the planning. [Interview transcript, 2/9/89]

Although the specifics of her principal's support are not stated explicitly, the Curriculum Director provided funding and release time for Chloe to attend relevant conferences (specifically, Reading, Leadership Training, and Curriculum Adoption). Chloe was impacted by all of this encouragement. She talked specifically about one Curriculum Adoption Conference that had legitimized for her all the work of the Reading Study Committee up to that point:

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> It was good because it validates all we're doing. The presenter said, "You should do research for a year." I went up to her and said, "You've just validated everything we've been working on for the last year-and-a-half." That's what she was talking about, not just talking about the book that implements, but it's really the whole change that we're going through and talking about, "When you get your research, do your curriculum so you know what you're talking about." [Fieldnotes, 3/7/89]

After the leadership came forward, the Committee continued to educate itself. In addition to the nine hours with an "outside expert," Reading Study Committee members who wished to attend the statewide reading conference the following month (March 1988) were funded. Approximately half of the membership attended and came back with written session summaries to share at a total-group meeting later that month. Reading materials (books, journal articles, brochures, and state-of-reading bookmarks) and videotapes (the more generic "Teaching Reading as Thinking" and "Pitfalls of Textbook Adoption," and several strategy-specific ones) also provided increased knowledge.

The Curriculum Director, Patrick, spoke of the effect of this accumulated knowledge in comparing it with another group that had, within the course of one week the previous summer, begun and completed their mandate to write a district K-6 Social Studies curriculum:

> I think this group is probably a lot better prepared than the Social Studies group was. I think we have in the time we have spent so far, which some people think is foot-dragging or not going at the speed they would like . . .I think this group has done their homework . . . You've trained yourselves, developed a common language that needed to be there. [Fieldnotes, 2/9/89]

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He felt that this deliberate, painstaking process was in keeping with the original goal set forth by the Superintendent of Schools:

> [The Superintendent's] statement to me was--although we started a year ago this time--he said, "Two year minimum, laying the groundwork and staff development **and doing the research," 'cause you're** not replacing **this book with another book. You're** talking about a *total* **curriculum improvement, a rethinking of the teaching strategies, and what it's all about. We're talking about a major crossover here.** [Fieldnotes, 1/17/89]

Chloe iterated:

> Through the course of research and work, we have come to see that it's not just the basal, not just the text. But now we're at the point of realizing how important it is, too, that we have some kind of focus, a philosophy, a mission, a written curriculum, and scope and sequence, before we decide what's going to fit that. [Fieldnotes,1/17/89]

One member of the committee said, "We didn't know that we were getting into a five-year commitment, did we?", to which Chloe replied with a laugh:

> What the presenter on "The Pitfalls of Textbook Adoption" videotape said is that it's a life-time commitment, because once you implement it, you need to monitor the program. So it really *is* a big commitment. [Fieldnotes, 3/7/89]

Committee Work. Individuals on the Committee were initially asked to sign up to be on one of three subcommittees: Information Gathering, Information Dissemination, and Needs Assessment. The Information Gathering's task was to make opportunities available to increase the knowledge base of the individuals on the Committee. The Information Dissemination Subcommittee planned the following year's Reading Strategy Inservices,

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while the Needs Assessment Subcommittee put together an instrument for determining the initial interests and concerns of the district's elementary teachers.

The following vignette from my fieldnotes gives a description of one Reading Study Committee Meeting at the beginning of the second year of the study. It illustrates the role of both the chairperson, Chloe, and the Curriculum Director, Patrick.

THE READING STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Reading Study Committee convened on January 17, 1989 at 4:00 p.m. in the spacious conference room of the district's newly remodeled Early Childhood Center. Two large tables had been put together, and sixteen chairs had been placed around the outside perimeter of the tables. On the north side of the room, both a television set and an overhead projector were resting atop utility carts. On the east side of the room was a countertop which contained cheese, crackers, fruit, nuts, soft drinks, and coffee. Eleven of the twenty-one committee members were present. It was stated that the meeting had been called on short notice, and that the others had either school or personal conflicts.

The meeting began with a 30-minute videotape, "The Pitfalls of Textbook Adoption." After the videotape was completed, Chloe Hawkinson, Reading Study Committee Chairperson, used the videotape to validate the work that had already been accomplished by the committee and to set the stage for their future work: "I thought it would be good to see this. We've done a lot of those things already. It's a good overview for us now, and it should help us in our summer write and textbook selection."

Chloe then went on to follow her posted agenda. Because the group had not met as a whole for almost four months due to Chloe's maternity leave, Chloe used this meeting as a stock-taking session. She turned the overhead projector on and pointed out the group's progress toward their timeline (Curriculum Review Plan) which had been compiled as a result of the committee's input at the previous meeting in September: "You'll notice that we're making some headway on this."

Committee Updates, Assessment Results, and Strategy Inservice Feedback were the next agenda items.

In regard to Committee Updates, Chloe first expressed appreciation to individuals from the Curriculum Review Subcommittee who had "graciously agreed to help us work on [philosophy], because we had a *low* (chuckle) turnout for the

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Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives Subcommittee." She then passed out a copy of their first draft and asked for the committee to give her feedback after they had the chance to "look at and decide if that's what you think our committee is all about."

The Inservice Subcommittee plans for strategic inservice sessions were mentioned. The Newsletter Subcommittee would be putting together a newsletter in the near future "as a means for letting people know what is going on."

Chloe had brought with her a synopsis of the Needs Assessment instrument which had been filled out by the elementary teachers in the November (1988) Awareness Sessions. She expressed a great deal of interest and concern for respecting what elementary teachers had said were their felt needs, both for the present and for the future: "Now what do we do with that? Well, we have to think about that, especially when we're developing our curriculum, not just the basal, but what else are we going to include to satisfy those people who want that new set of trade books, or whatever. How are we going to deal with that?"

In regard to Strategy Inservice Feedback, Chloe spoke of the fact that, although her maternity leave had prevented her from attending the initial inservices, she had heard good things about them from those who had attended. Two committee members talked about the positive response from each of their elementary buildings and pointed to specific examples of evidences of uses of the strategies. Patrick relayed the positive reaction he had received from Curriculum Directors from other districts regarding the way inservices were being conducted ("from the grass roots, from peer to peer and colleague to colleague"), concluding with the exclamation, "They're excellent! Just excellent!" At that, the members of the group then broke out in what appeared to be spontaneous applause.

Chloe suggested a 10-minute break, after which time she said that she had asked Patrick to give The [Curriculum] Director's Viewpoint. Committee members helped themselves to the food upon Patrick's insistence: "We've got lots of cheese, folks. There are cokes in the refrigerator."

After the break, Patrick stood in front of the group and complimented them on the work they had already done, which he described as "100% dynamite! I wouldn't change a line. We have established credibility, we are a viable group, we have viable teacher leadership, heading in the right direction in staff development, and, ultimately, when we get to writing curriculum, we are going to have a dynamite reading program. We can't miss because of the people who have committed themselves to working on this."

He then went on to give a word of caution about the fact that the work of writing curriculum is "a process, something that's going to take time, and we must be patient." He said that the Reading Study Committee's work

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was "a multi-tined fork: we're not just writing curriculum, we're also talking about staff development, we're also talking about textbook selection."

Following that, he gave a more global picture of the Reading Study Committee's work as he talked about other curricular issues and financial constraints competing for attention. He assured the members of the priority of their work, as well as of his continued support, running the gamut of negotiating with the board about finances to providing clerical help with the summer write project to supplying an environment amenable to the demands of the task before them. He ended his comments by answering questions from the committee members.

Chloe concluded the meeting by stating the Future Plans of the Inservice Subcommittee regarding the next sets of inservices. She said it was good to be back, thanked everyone for "coming on such short notice" and promised that there would be more advance notice for the next meeting.

As the membership left, Patrick reminded them to hand in their feedback and comments to Chloe, because "Chloe will go nose-to-nose with me, and we can get a plan together."

As can be seen from this vignette, Patrick spends a great deal of time both giving encouragement and promising continued support. He sees his role as that of facilitator and of director. He also validates Chloe's leadership by meeting with her and taking a more visible role as she requests. Several examples of eliciting and addressing teacher needs both within and outside the group are evident, from the edibles to the feedback on the philosophy statement to the Needs Assessment.

In an interview with him prior to this meeting, Patrick had told me that for him, "teacher ownership means empowered with support and partnership." [Interview transcript, 1/7/89] Shortly thereafter, Chloe talked of her perception of Patrick's support and partnership: she said that he was no longer advocating basal adoption, but, rather, "listening

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Reading Strategic Inservices. The Inservices alluded to in the previous vignette represented the attempt of the Reading Study Committee to familiarize the teachers in the district with the new philosophy and congruent strategies to which they (the Committee members) had been exposed as a result of the Information Gathering Committee's work: from the initial nine-hour presentation by a member of the State of Reading Curriculum Committee (previously described), to the various conferences they had attended, and, finally, to the written and audio-visual materials they had gathered. A summary was stated in the Committee's newsletter, *The Literate*:

> One of the major undertakings of our committee was to spread the good news about the "new" definition of reading and the strategies associated with it. This was accomplished through a series of voluntary morning meetings at which our dedicated reading consultants enlightened and awakened 95% of our K-5 staff with:
> --An overview of the new definition and the "M" word--meta-cognition (helping students understand and use their thinking skills to become good readers);
> --Story Mapping/Story Grammar used to help students identify the basic structure of narrative stories and enhance their sense of story;
> --Probable Passages--the writing aspect of story mapping;
> --Reciprocal Teaching--a dialogue between teacher and student using questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting;
> --Q.A.R. (Question-Answer Relationships)--helps student to know where to find answers and questions and is directly tied to the new [state assessment]. [Site document, 5/10/89]

As was stated previously, it was decided to begin the reading inservices at the elementary level, since it was

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assumed that the initial impact would be most directly felt there, although one reading teacher stated: "What's also exciting is that the same things are appropriate for both the middle school and the high school . . . and the same information works. [Interview transcript, 2/3/89]

The following vignettes are provided as an example of what the reading strategy sessions entailed. The Reciprocal Teaching (RT) Information and Debriefing Inservices were held on January 25 and February 22, 1989. They followed an Awareness/Needs Assessment Session in late November, 1988 (each elementary building held its own) and Story Mapping/Probable Passages Information/Debriefing Sessions on November 29 and December 14, 1988 (held in Eisenhower Elementary School). For the strategic inservice sessions all three elementary building teachers and reading personnel were divided according to grade levels: K-1 with Kim Jerard, 2-3 with Shar Richards, and 4-5 with Laura Glenn. For the RT inservices, all of the grade sections met at Eisenhower Elementary, where I attended Shar Richards' 2-3 grade level meeting.

The Friday prior to the Wednesday session, publicity had been placed in the mailbox of each elementary teacher in the district. The cover sheet was an invitation and the attached 2 1/2 pages contained a state reading association journal article condensation of the strategy, apparently an attempt to create an awareness ("prior knowledge") of the Reciprocal Teaching strategy.

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RECIPROCAL TEACHING INSERVICE INFORMATION SESSION

January 25, 1989

7:40 a.m. I entered the music room of Eisenhower Elementary School. Upon my entry through the room's southern entrance, my attention was immediately focused on the north bulletin board where there were seven colorful posters replete with illustrations of football-type equipment (footballs, helmets, and score-boxes) and terminology (Game Plan, Goals, Coach, Possession). Each poster gave some message related to an aspect of the Reciprocal Teaching strategy: roles, components, purpose, and evaluation. Behind utility carts holding an overhead projector and a videocassette player/television, a screen had been pulled down over the west wall chalkboard. Piled on a set of music risers in the southwest corner were several books and stapled packets of papers.

Within the next five minutes, fifteen teachers (74 percent of the possible total) and two administrators (Washington's principal and the district curriculum director) entered the room with coffee and rolls (provided by the Reading Study Committee) and made their way to the center of the room, where three tables angled toward a front table. At the front table sat Shar Richards. In each of the seven places set at each table were 33-page packets of materials with "Reciprocal Teaching" and a diagram illustrating teacher/student responsibility in RT on the cover page.

7:45 a.m. An announcement came over the intercom from Eisenhower's principal: "We welcome all of you to our school today. It's great to have people from Washington and Amsterdam here to work together on a project you think is so important." Shar, the reading teacher from Eisenhower and the presenter of this 2-3 session, iterated her welcome.

She pointed to the risers and said, "In case you weren't here before, we have extra materials from the other sessions on the risers. You may help yourselves to them as you leave."

Shar began her presentation by asking the participants the following questions: "To what would you attribute your success if you were successful at a chess game [response inaudible], or a ball game ['other members'], or a gourmet club ['good recipe'], or if your students' test scores were better ['they learn in spite of us']?"

She gave the rationale for Reciprocal Teaching: "Research has shown that poor readers attribute their difficulties to luck or teachers, whereas good readers say it's due to hard work. Our students need to be aware of how to control their learning."

She then went on to emphasize that the Reciprocal Teaching strategy is research-based, and she reviewed what she said had been stated in previous sessions regarding schema theory, metacognition, and text structure. Using the

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posters, Shar gave a brief overview of RT, along with its aim and the process. She also tied it in to the state's new definition of reading.

8:00 a.m. After she put down this foundation, Shar gave up the floor to a Washington third-grade teacher, "who is going to tell us how she uses it."

This teacher came to the front and stood next to the overhead projector. She spoke in a voice that I associate with enthusiasm: "Shar did such a good job (turning to Shar), I'd like you to keep on. [The reading teacher] in my building was such a great help last year. The material is so well organized. In your blue packet (she put a transparency on the overhead projector corresponding to their page) has four parts. You teach one a day. For example, in predicting, walk through the questions listed here (at which time she gave examples). Clarifying, summarizing, and questioning go the same way. Spend a whole day on all four strategies. With questioning, encourage students to use the 4 W's. Almost put words into students' mouths to begin with. I find that this helps them to find out what they know. My personal experience for children who had trouble--our auditory learners--just excel. At the beginning, I would read to them. You should make a 20-day commitment. The quality of thinking rises."

A second grade teacher from Washington asked her, "Did you do this with the whole class?"

She answered, "I just had one group--we do homogeneous grouping, and I had the low group. I did a lot of modeling and gave a lot of positive feedback: from teacher modeling to kids. The kids get pretty excited when it is turned over to them as teachers. It's so cute. Sometimes when they ask a question, they don't realize they have to answer their own question, too."

A third grade colleague from Washington had also used RT the previous year. She added a new dimension: "I have my kids write out questions. I only had one who couldn't do that. The kids would trade papers and try to answer the other kids' questions. The one who got the question from the one who had trouble helped her write some good questions."

At this point, the Eisenhower school principal came and stood in the doorway for about five minutes.

8:10 a.m. Shar resumed her role by tying the RT strategy in with the previous sessions: "This kind of ties in with Story Grammar/Mapping. Use [RT] to clue in to the most important parts of the story."

She then turned on the videocassette player: "This video is a group of first graders using [RT] as a listening activity."

8:15 a.m. When she had shown five minutes of the demonstration tape, Shar turned the VCR off and stated, "Just a few other things. This videotape is available if you would like to see more of it. Also, the strategy can be modified by children tutoring others, by using it in content

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areas with science, with non-readers, and for writing activities. Evaluation can be done by tape recording, writing, or asking orally. If questions arise while you're using it, feel free to call me or the reading teacher in your building or ask others who've used it. Try to use it before we come back on February 22."

Shar pointed out specifics from the packet. She also invited the attendees to look at the materials displayed on the risers as materials appropriate for RT implementation. She encouraged them to look for other materials in the library.

8:18 **Shar dismissed the group by saying, "Thanks. See you February 22."**

As teachers stood up, the original Washington third grade co-presenter offered, "If any of you want posters made to hang around your rooms, let us know and we'll have them made." [There seemed to be a show of interest, but I was unable to determine the number.]

Teachers filed out quickly. I had no immediate obligations; therefore, I stayed behind to help the music teacher pack up chairs and dismantle tables for her 9:00 class.

I met with Shar prior to the Debriefing Session, at which time she told me of her plans for the structure of that meeting. She related that she was prepared to talk for the entire time if no one had anything to share, but her agenda was to be subservient to the differing levels of concern and use expressed by those in attendance:

> [I will begin] with them sharing about it. And I really don't want to get into anything until they've had a chance to hammer it out. If that finishes, I might even do [a Reciprocal Teaching lesson] with them, because I know that there are some of them who have not tried it at all and haven't even read it. Some, I know, do know it well [and] have had more exposure to it . . . I'm going to have to make some decisions as we're going. I hope I can make good decisions. [Interview transcript, 2/17/89]

The vignette which follows illustrates what actually occurred in the Debriefing Session.

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THE RECIPROCAL TEACHING DEBRIEFING SESSION

February 22, 1989

As I entered Eisenhower Elementary School, I walked past the door of a 4th grade teacher who was talking to another teacher, "Are you going to the meeting today? I have lots of questions. I didn't do very well."

I walked to the music room, which was set up in the same manner as described in The Reciprocal Teaching Information Session, except that the videotape machine was missing.

7:49 a.m. Shar Richards greeted the 13 second and third grade teachers (68 percent of the possible total) and the Amsterdam principal with, "Good morning. We're here to talk about Reciprocal Teaching and Probable Passages. I'm not sure how it went for you. Let's start with discussing RT: how you have liked it or how it evolved or what questions you have about it."

A second grade teacher from Washington began: "Well, I kind of jumped into RT. I didn't use everything that [the third grade teacher from the previous session] had. It was like, 'Oh, do I have time to fit all this in before I start my unit?' So I used it as an introduction to a unit on nutrition. I used it with the different food groups, and all the children were given the material and I read them to the children. Then the first day I modeled how I had formulated my questions with the meat group.
And then the second day, I had them come up with questions. And we also did it as a group activity. We divided into groups of four, and the four children came up with a question and they came up in front of the room as a group. One child was the spokesman and the others gave support. And it worked really well as a group activity. And then I also used it with one of the reading groups. I asked them to come up with a question that they didn't think anyone else would think of. It worked out quite well."

7:52 a.m. A third grade teacher then asked this teacher questions related to procedures used within the context she had just described.

Shar gave assurance, "It takes a while--20 days to introduce. You will see carry-over later."

A first year teacher told how she had used the strategy: "I took four days and explained to the children they would take my role as teacher. I did each category with the whole class. Then I moved it to individual reading groups, where I first read to them. Then the children were in that role. Some groups are now in their third or fourth time. They are really taking over. With the stories in the reader, each child takes a page and is teacher for that page. When I first started it, I thought it would take a lot of extra time, but once we got started, after getting over the initial thought of a lot of extra work, it went fine."

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Shar interjected, "It varies with time and material. That's what I've found, too."

"I went pretty much as it said in the book," was the comment of an eighteen-year veteran teacher. "I first introduced [each strategy] to the whole class in four days. Then I used it with my better 14 readers, while the other 8 left for [Chapter I] Reading. It worked really well with the 14. They had good questions and were eager to be teachers. It started out slow, but as I modeled and read to them, they became better listeners. It carries over, too. When I read to them after lunch, the children are asking to have things clarified. It really helped."

Shar suggested, "It will be interesting to share later as more use it longer."

The experienced teacher then went on to say that she finds herself using the strategy with her reading groups, especially the terminology. "I always used some of it, but I'm more conscious of it now."

Shar picked up on that: "With the new redefinition, it isn't that the old is all bad and the new is all good or all different. It really is much the same, but maybe we can do it in a more organized way."

A Washington third grade colleague restated what she had said at the previous session, i.e., that she had children write questions that the others would have to answer about their story.

"There are a lot of different ways to use it. You can use different materials. There is a lot of repetition, and children learn at the same time," stated Shar.

As she heard the classroom teachers talk about how they had used the strategy, another third grade teacher had a number of procedural questions pertaining to differences she detected in the way she had used it.

Shar answered her by saying, "It can be done either way. It can be used as a listening activity, or they could read it to the others, or they could all have a paragraph and follow along as you read it."

That teacher then went on to speak of the adjustments she had made and the benefits she had witnessed, especially in the fact that "children are asking not just 'who,' 'what,' but more feelings, more meat of the story." She also saw an application when she was reading to her students.

Shar confirmed, "More thinking. Good to see carry over."

The third grade co-presenter from the previous session repeated what she had said earlier, "With low readers, auditory learners, when I read to them, they're excelling. They finally have a chance to excel, too. They're thinking all along."

The second grade veteran teacher discussed some adjustments she had made, based on her students' needs: "I had a short story, but it had three short paragraphs. At first I started out reading the whole story. Even though

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they were short, one of my girls brought out that, 'I can't remember what happened at the beginning.' So then I started shortening my paragraphs and cutting them in half. They would tend to ask questions about the end of the story."

Shar stated, "It *is* difficult for them to remember everything. Sometimes I would feel like when I was working on the four days, one for each strategy, I would like to spend more time on one. But when you put it all together, they do get the chance to practice them all more."

The previous co-presenter referred another teacher who had trouble keeping track of student participants ("teachers") to the materials packet for an answer.

8:07 a.m. Shar asked, "Anything more? How about Probable Passages?" Some sharing and procedural questions were asked.

8:13 a.m. Shar pointed to the RT posters and said, "I just want to go through the posters from last time." After reading through each one and adding additional brief comments, she put a visual map showing the redefinition of reading and the strategy interrelationships on the overhead transparency, claiming, "This ties it all together."

Her final transparency said, "TUNE IN NEXT TIME--QAR AMSTERDAM, March 22"

It can be seen that these teachers collaborated as they solved the problems they encountered in implementation of RT the previous month. Collaboration occurred as they shared their own successes/failures/adaptations, as they referred back to the printed materials, and as they spoke words of encouragement to each other.

This section has portrayed the Reading Study Committee's work in staff development through initially gathering information for themselves and then in disseminating that information to their colleagues through voluntary Reading Strategic Inservices.

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Formation and Functions of a Reading Support Group.

As was stated in Chapter I, I had proposed to the elementary teachers of the district the concept of a voluntary Reading Support Group which would give **participants an opportunity to "think,** reflect, question, **argue, and/or discuss issues pertaining to reading instruction." Fashioned on the guidelines of a humanistic teacher center (discussed in the previous chapter) the group of nine (including myself) met on almost a weekly** basis during the first semester of the 1989-1990 school year " . . . for the purpose of reflecting upon and discussing reading theory and practice as it relates to the new reading curriculum guide and its implementation in classrooms within the district." [Site document, 6/1/89]

Shulman (1987) has called for educators to record cases from which conclusions can be drawn and lessons can be learned: so much of what happens in education is isolated and lost to future educators. This section is intended to present a verbal portrait of, to borrow a phrase from the state's New Definition of Reading, "a dynamic interaction among the participants' prior knowledge, the needs expressed by these participants, and the context of the Reading Support Group."

6/8/89 Information Meeting

Fifteen persons attended the 7:45 a.m. Information Meeting. The composite of that group included 6 individuals from Washington, 5 from Eisenhower, and 4 from Amsterdam.

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These individuals were comprised of Washington's principal, along with 2 first grade teachers, 5 second grade teachers, 1 third grade teacher, 2 fourth grade teachers, 1 learning disabilities teacher, and all 3 of the district's reading teachers. Nearly half of those in attendance (7/15 or 46.7%) were members of the Reading Study Committee, including its chairperson. All of the attendees were women, with the exception of the principal, in spite of the fact that 11 (or approximately 20%) of the 1-5 classroom teachers are men. (One male teacher confided to me without solicitation that many of the men were involved in after-school coaching during the fall season.) Eight of the teachers had been teaching for less that ten years, while four of them had taught more than 20 years.

At the information meeting, these individuals were first asked about their expectations ("When you read the announcement, what did you envision or hope such a reading support group would entail?") and anxieties ("What kinds of concerns did you have related to this proposed study?").

These two questions elicited the following verbal reactions which expressed both hopes and concerns.

Positive Peer Influence.

> Karina: I'm just so excited about the people in my building and I was feeling, gosh, if other teachers in Omega are coming out with the good ideas that are coming out in my building, I would really benefit.

Desire for Peer Support.

> Grace: I did it! I got rid of the reading workbooks. I don't have any for next year [laughing, clapping]. I have a commitment from our principal that he's going

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to let me order paperbacks monthly ["Whoa"] from book companies, and I'm going to need some help getting that all organized ["Good!" "That's great!"].

Fear.

Truda: I came out of fear [laughter]. You can't teach an old dog new tricks [background laughter]. No, I'm serious . . . that's what we would need in a group like this--to sit down and say, "This and this bombed. What did I do wrong? What should I do now?" So, I wasn't kidding when I said, "Fear." There's fear involved in this, as far as I'm concerned. I love the concept [of the new reading strategies], I love the idea. We've thrown out our workbooks . . . and we're into paperbacks . . . I'm really fearful.

Lack of Confidence to Implement.

Rebekah (referring to Truda's preceding remark): The same thing. I remember we would come from one of our [strategy inservice] meetings with Laura, and I would stand up in the front and I wouldn't dare put my sheet [of steps in the specific strategies] down, and [I would say], "We're supposed to do this now." I don't want to have to do that. I want it to flow and for me to know exactly what I'm doing--which I didn't. And to know when to use each one: when would be an appropriate time to use this strategy versus another?

In response to these latter two comments, Laura, the person who had conducted their upper elementary strategy inservices, spoke:

Laura: It takes a long time for that to become automatic. We [presumably, the reading personnel] were exposed to this concept three years ago, and even when I went over it, I reviewed and reviewed and reviewed, and I researched and researched to even get to the point that I could explain it to my peers--which is the most difficult concept [laughing]. So, it *does* take time and refreshers and review, and the whole thing. It isn't just a one-time presentation.

Time.

In addition to content-related concerns, the time element issue (specifically related to a weekly commitment, time of day and day of week) was also raised:

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> Chris: I have one [other concern]. And it's one that was expressed to me by other people I don't see here this morning. That was the time commitment of the weekly thing. And I was just wondering how viable a weekly meeting is, and how regularly people would attend. That would be my major thing.
> Karina (a half-time teacher): My concern is whether these meetings would be in the morning or afternoon.

After everyone had been given the opportunity to express him/herself, I described the proposed Reading Support Group in an outline format:

> **What.** Role of TEACHER AS RESEARCHER, an active way of thinking about how we can improve our work as teachers within a Teacher Center atmosphere characterized by:
> warmth, concreteness, time, thought
>
> **How.** During weekly meetings, we will work on case studies, journal entries, reading curriculum guide, and/or literature related to common problems
>
> **Why.** Learn more about how children learn, acquire skills in curriculum development and implementation, increase self-esteem and confidence, increase resourcefulness and willingness to seek and share advice
>
> **When.** [day and time were left blank--to be decided by actual group]
>
> **Where.** [location will also be determined by the group]

Following that, I proposed several examples of TEACHER AS RESEARCHER QUESTIONS related to the Reading Process, the Teacher's Role, and Teacher Professional Growth. The first page of Reimer and Warshow's article, "Questions we ask of ourselves and our students," (1989, p. 596), was handed out, as well, to provide a concrete picture of what such a Reading Support Group might look like.

Leadership Role.

After this, additional concerns were expressed related to who would be in charge of such a group.

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Grace: Will you chair the group, Marlene? . . . We want to pick your brain.

Truda: There has to be someone to hold the group together as far as leadership is concerned, whether it's you or one of the reading teachers.
Laura: You kind of intimated last month that you would be willing to provide materials, etc. Has your thinking changed?

Personal and Professional Conflicts.

Although these were not expressly given during the information meeting, several individuals later specifically stated the following items as reasons for their inability to participate:

Grace: I'd love to attend your meetings. I'm doing some new things and I would like the support, but I have some health problems that are stress-related. My doctor said that I have to eliminate everything that is not absolutely essential. [Fieldnotes, 9/26/89]

Chloe: I'm sending my regrets as to the Reading Support Group. I was really torn but have had to make decisions with family as priority this year. I think it's a wonderful opportunity and I hope you will have a great group to work with. [Site document, 9/12/89]

Shar called school today to tell me that she would be unable to attend the group. She was just too busy. I told her that she didn't need to feel like she owed me an explanation or was obligated to attend. She said, "I know, but I felt I should tell you." She iterated her busy schedule, and said, "I know the worst thing I can do is feel sorry for myself. I know everybody's busy." [Fieldnotes 9/5/89]

Jacki: I'm being trained for cluster grouping [for gifted/ talented education]. I have too many things right now. [Fieldnotes, 8/30/89]

Phyllis was at the first meeting, but she left after 40 minutes for an appointment. As she left, she said, "I'll talk to you tomorrow." She saw me in the lounge and said, "I don't think I can commit myself to that amount of time right now." [Fieldnotes, 9/8/89]

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Kim had been in the position of full-time reading teacher in the district the previous year and had conducted the K-1 strategy inservices; however, in September (upon my return from sabbatical leave) she was assigned to a classroom. The **reality of that** affected her decision to **participate:**

> I stopped by Kim's room today. She said, "I tried calling you last night, but your line was busy. I just can't make the Reading Support Group meetings. My husband said I have to give something up. I'm so busy with my new assignment." [Fieldnotes, 9/14/89]

Even Laura, who played a prominent role in chairing, co-chairing, and providing resources at the meetings, expressed reservations after the first meeting in September because of demands related to completing her coursework for a Master's degree in learning disabilities:

> Laura told me today that she didn't know how long she would be attending. Her coursework (both auditing a class and taking an independent study) obligations this fall may impede. [Fieldnotes, 9/8/89]

Note: It turned out that Laura put her own work on "hold" in order to follow-through on the Reading Support Group. I wondered whether it might be due to the fact that she had invested a great deal of time and effort in the initial stages of information dissemination and reading curriculum writing.

Although he did not speak during the meeting, Washington's principal personally expressed to me these thoughts as we were departing together:

> I would say that the reading study has gone very well. The interest has been very high by teachers. We've had excellent participation in the morning meetings. Where the rubber hits the road . . . we've seen lots of stuff hanging around classrooms that prove that they are implementing, trying new strategies with children. Teachers feel wonderful, but there is some concern about losing control: there's always a bit of a feeling

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about totally losing your structure in a reading plan. [Fieldnotes, 6/8/89]

From the beginning, I could sense the conflict between Keyes' (1988) self as person, self as learner, and self as teacher. Two of Maeroff's (1988) principles necessary for empowerment, increasing knowledge and providing access to decision-making, are also being sought. At this point, what appears to be a traditional inservice mentality of an "expert" doing something to us or "telling us why something didn't work" comes through in individual expectations of what the Reading Support Group would entail.

9/7/89 First Meeting: Let's Get Acquainted

Overview

Let's Get Acquainted Interviews
My Hopes for this Group Questionnaire
Possible Topics Brainstorming
Consent Forms--Highlight, Discuss
Miscellaneous
Journal assignment: Good vs. Poor Readers
Next meeting: date/location, refreshments

I approached the first meeting with a sense of nervous anticipation and excitement: would there be a sufficient number of individuals who would be willing and able to commit themselves to my proposed project? During the first week of school, I had placed an invitation in each elementary teacher's box, but I had not received any comments or acknowledgements as teachers busily attended meetings and prepared themselves and their classrooms for the upcoming school year.

Ten persons (excluding myself) appeared at the district's Early Childhood Center on September 9, nine of

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whom had attended the previously-described June 8 Information Meeting. (The tenth individual was a novice first grade teacher.)

I envisioned that the purpose of this meeting would be **to determine the level** of interest and commitment on the **part of the attendees and to set the stage for future meetings. To that end, I very intentionally made efforts to take the spotlight off myself as *leader* and upon this as *my* group and to place it on the cast who were present and upon** their needs/interests. Throughout the project, I saw my role as group coordinator and facilitator. As *group coordinator*, I embraced the description of Freire's (1971) "cultural circle" coordinator as my model, i.e., a person who is characterized by faith (a belief in the possibility to create and to change things), hope (the certainty that each meeting with the group would leave both the coordinator and its members enriched), love (the conviction that the fundamental effort of education is the liberation of [wo]man, never [her]/his domestication), and humility (the desire to grow with the group, to become a part of the group and one of its members, rather than claiming to direct the group). As *group facilitator*, I attempted to become one who created a context in which group members were free to have personal interaction about meaningful issues or themes.

One way in which I attempted to set the stage was to provide refreshments that were plain and simple, in this case, doughnut holes and apple cider. This model, however,

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was not emulated by the others in subsequent weeks. Rather, increasingly lavish spreads of fresh fruits (melons, pineapple, apples, bananas, grapes), nuts, crackers with cheese/pepperoni/dip, homemade tarts, cookies, and muffins, and fruit juices, herbal teas, and soda pop became the norm. One individual who spoke of her feelings related to reading instruction at the final meeting ("I felt terribly inadequate . . ." [Fieldnotes, 12/12/89]) was the first to volunteer in the refreshment department by emphasizing, "I'm good at *food*." [Fieldnotes, 9/7/89] In fact, the building principal and the school librarian stopped by on a regular basis to partake of the "goodies" and comment, "How can you all not put on weight?"

At the very beginning of the meeting, I asked each person in the group to interview and introduce to the total group one other person "whom you do not know very well." (Because I made the odd-numbered person, I decided not to participate in the interview part of the meeting.) The following questions were listed to aid in the interview process:

How long have you been teaching?
What position do you presently hold?
What other teaching-related positions have you held? Where?
Who/what most influences your teaching of reading?
What formal reading courses have you taken since graduating from college?

The responses of each individual (in order of years of teaching experience) to those interview questions are summarized here:

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Jennifer

-1st year of teaching
-teaches first grade
-"will take any information you can give me on reading"
-looking for different new ideas
-"My biggest fear is that my 1st graders are going to leave, and I'm not going to have taught them how to read. How do I get these kids to read? It scares the living daylights out of me!"
-toured Europe with college musical group the previous year

Karina

-paid for 6 years of teaching, but "taught" 20 years (Sunday School, Boys' Scouts, own sons)
-shares a second grade teaching position
-does not teach reading, but integrates reading across the curriculum
-has just earned her Master's Degree in Reading from a state university, with those classes having the greatest impact on her reading teaching
-is influenced by Bonnie's (grade-level colleague) creative approach, hands-on activities, and cooperative learning
-observes in other classrooms (e.g., Suzann's, Bonnie's)--"one of the advantages of half time teaching"
-concerned with whole language and its assessment, skills as strategies, goals/purposes of reading (i.e., will or skill)

Rebekah

-5th year of teaching
-teaches fourth grade
-member of the Reading Study Committee
-returned to college after her sons were in school
-student taught with Bonnie as her supervising teacher; influenced to return to college by Bonnie's husband, who had been her sons' teacher ("I was afraid I couldn't do it, but he said, 'You're going, and I've made the appointment for you. Be there!'")
-teaching of reading influenced by [the State's] Educational Assessment Program tests and the state's New Definition of Reading
-reading courses: Children's Literature and Workshop Way
-concerns: "We've done so much w/reading strategies, but I'm still not comfortable with all of them. I was hoping for a lot of feedback . . . going out and doing it and then coming back and sharing how it went and how it didn't go, and you can tell me just how I goofed up"

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Suzann

-7th year of teaching
-presently first grade teacher (3rd year)
-did student teaching with Chris
-4 years in learning disabilities classroom
-has taken courses in Workshop Way and Schmerler
-influenced by Chris, Bonnie, and Marlene
-wants to be 1st woman president of the U.S., but is "probably more influential and popular as first grade teacher"
-concerns: how to keep students meaningfully occupied while teacher is working with groups--station-type activities without Workshop Way or worksheets

Chris

-10th year of teaching
-teaches learning disabilities
-just completed Master's Degree in learning disabilities from a local state university
-raised four children and then "went off to do my own thing"
-influenced by needs of her students
-has taken courses in Content Area Reading, Workshop Way
-concerned with skills vs. content and how to meet the needs of *all* children

Laura

-19th year of teaching
-reading teacher
-previously taught second, fourth, and sixth grades
-member of Reading Study Committee
-influenced by reading professor in her undergraduate reading course
-has had "too many reading courses to count" (M.A. in Reading from a state university, presently working on L.D. certification through a private college)
-concerns: literature-based reading instruction
-highly respected by Truda: "after those workshops that she held for us, I almost thought that she wasn't [human]--marvelous!"

Bonnie

-21st year of teaching
-presently teaches second grade, but previously taught remedial reading and 1st and/or 2nd grades in each of the three elementary buildings
-member of Reading Study Committee
-influenced by people/materials related to the reading rewrite, books on reading/writing, workshops

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-has taken a course in Workshop Way reading, but "my philosophy has changed"
-concerns: reading-writing connection

Truda

-24th year of teaching
-teaches fourth grade
-began in 2-room country school teaching grades 4-8
-presently 4th grade teacher
-has a "real desire to do something special for kids"
-one formal reading class through a state university years before
-Suzann graduated with her younger son ("so then you feel old") and Suzann's father taught her sons
-"[State] Educational Assessment Program test absolutely scares us to death"
-concerned with teaching comprehension/higher level thinking and how to evaluate--"the measuring part is quite frustrating"

Since Phyllis and Kim only attended this one time, their profiles will not be highlighted here.

Upon completion of the introductions, each attendee was given a sheet entitled, "MY HOPES FOR THIS GROUP," to be filled out during the next 10 minutes. The areas inviting responses were:

1. *This was billed as a Reading Support Group. What does that mean to you? What are some of the things that you hope this group might do or try to do? What do you hope to gain by being a part of this group?*
2. *Name three reading-related topics that you would like this group to address.*
3. *What do you think the group should have a right to expect from its members?*
4. *Tell what skills/abilities/leadership/jobs you are willing to contribute to the group.*

After that time was up, a period of brainstorming occurred related to the second question on the sheet, "Name three reading-related topics that you would like this group to address." The generated topics are listed in Appendix F.

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I discovered, however, that after all of the "My Hopes for this Group" worksheets had been collected, no one responded to my invitation to assist in the compilation, categorization, and/or prioritization of the proposed topics **prior to the next meeting.** Consequently, I decided to **compile the list myself and let those in attendance help to categorize and prioritize the following week.**

Throughout the meeting, I found it necessary to reiterate:

> I don't want this to be *my* group, I want this to be something that as a group this group decides. What kinds of things are concerns of *yours*, and what kinds of things do *you* want to address? And those are the things that we make arrangements to talk about. If it's a reading support group, then it's not *my* group, it's *our* group together.

I next gave each individual a blank journal as a way to "help us to recall, to recall what we forgot that we'd forgotten, and to be more careful in our thinking" (according to Bill Hull, 1978). An assignment was given for the next time to begin the practice of taking the role of "Teacher as Researcher." Each one was asked to choose two readers in her classroom: one whom she judged to be a good reader and one whom she judged to be a poor reader. Throughout the week she was to observe and interview these two children and jot down in her journal conclusions she reached related to the following:

> What does a good reader look like? What does a poor reader look like? What things do you feel are important in reading that this child does not yet have? Look at the affect aspect, too. How does the child feel about him/herself in relationship to the group?

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Consent forms did not pose a problem to the attendees, but the scheduling of our next meeting did. Preferences for days and times were stated, as were conflicts (e.g., "Wednesday is church," "Once a month on Thursday is Math a Way of Thinking Support Group," "I can't get a sitter in the mornings," "I have to walk my dogs after school," "I like to clean my classroom after school on Thursdays to get ready for the next week," "I have a standing social appointment on Tuesdays"). This difficulty of scheduling continued to be a problem to the end as teachers attempted to juggle their personal and professional lives; indeed, in most instances it was impossible to schedule more than one week at a time. The determination of a permanent location proved a much easier decision to make. The teachers from Eisenhower (who in the final analysis were outnumbered by the teachers from Washington 4:1), readily volunteered that they would prefer to come to Washington than to alternate buildings.

Summary. This first meeting established the climate for future Reading Support Group meetings. As a leader/participant, I took on the role of coordinator and facilitator, establishing a context in which group members would themselves be responsible for deciding issues relating to meeting content and process--including schedule, location, refreshments, topics, and leaders.

During the meeting, persons interacted informally during refreshment time, relationally through the get-

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acquainted activity, and openly about their support needs through the use of a "My Hopes for this Group" activity sheet. Each person expressed a willingness to contribute to the group. The reading-related topics that participants wanted the group to address ranged from the broad ("How to teach reading") to the narrow ("Writing experience stories"), from the philosophical ("New reading concepts") to the practical ("Productive seatwork/group work").

9/14/89 Reaching Topic Consensus

Overview

Review Personal Histories
Highlight Written Responses to My Hopes for this Group
Reaching Consensus
Reading Support Group Worksheet
Good vs. Poor Readers

The meeting was begun with what was intended to be a brief overview of the individual life histories from the previous week, with the rationale being given that " . . . the better we know each other, the more we will trust each other, and the more we can do in the way of support." [Fieldnotes, 9/14/89] Twenty minutes later, I was finally able to introduce the next item, a summary of the group composite of "My Hopes for this Group" statements as they were revealed in the written comments at the first meeting.

I saw the main goal of this second meeting to be for the group to reach topic consensus. To that end, I brought in the compilation of the list of 38 items (with some duplication) which had been collected from verbal and written comments at the previous meeting under the question

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related to, "Reading related topics that you would like this group to address" [Appendix F]. First, individually, then as part of a triad, and finally as a whole group, the nine participants prioritized and categorized the list. I promised to return the following week with an outline and tentative schedule of these topics for group feedback, i.e., discussion, confirmation and/or disconfirmation.

Through dialogue, the group determined to begin with Story Mapping ("the easiest one") for the following week. Laura offered to lead with a brief look first at the state's New Definition of Reading. Chris said that she would "help in any way I can." Laura encouraged group members to bring in examples of story maps they themselves or their colleagues had used.

In order to carry through on the idea of Teacher as Researcher, as well as to help participants begin to articulate their present perceptions and beliefs about reading, I asked the attendees to share from their journals their student profiles, based on observation, of what a good and poor reader looked like.

Chris shared her research with one of her fifth grade learning disabled students who had "made some excellent gains." She said that as he read a passage specifically for this project, he had approached the task with confidence, and he had interacted with the text and made sense of it through the use of context clues. He had also noted punctuation and read with expression. She concluded, "So I

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felt like I got some good insights into his reading just by listening to him."

Karina spoke about the contrast that she had observed between good readers' and poor readers' actions when they "get stuck." The poor reader, she said, loses all confidence and has no strategies to figure anything out: "his brain turns off." The good reader's voice stops, but "the brain is still going," and he has the confidence that he can figure it out: "It's sort of like a plug comes out of the tub for the poor reader . . . and all the water drains out, and he can't figure out that word. With the confident readers, the tub stays full and they know that they're going to be able somehow to figure it out."

Grace, although she was only present for this one meeting, contributed as well. She observed that poor readers lacked self—confidence and were overly dependent on the teacher. To that, Truda made the observation, "Maybe that's where the Reciprocal Teaching [strategy] might be the biggest benefit of all." Based on her previous experience with Reciprocal Teaching, Chris concurred: "I did feel that [my students] would risk more, that they started to question and became more active readers."

Suzann referred to her journal entry and said that she had listed the distinction between good and poor first grade readers as "Kids that can focus and that can't focus attention." Truda responded, "That's in the brain, not the eye, isn't it?"

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Bonnie had a specific list of observable characteristics jotted down, based on a morning devoted to carefully watching one good and one poor second grade reader. According to her, the poor reader had very poor posture, limited verbalization, many off-task behaviors, difficulty following directions, used the rest room frequently, and was eager for recess to come. The good reader was on-task, was respected by his peers, and was a happy child. Rebekah responded that, in spite of the age and grade level differences, she had reached similar conclusions about her fourth grade students.

Truda spoke of her top reader as "a bit of a 'space head' . . . who will join us when we catch up with *her* three pages later." She questioned herself: "Shouldn't I be challenging her so that she's doing something constructive while we're following the rest of these kids around?"

Laura had left early because of a family responsibility, so Jennifer was the only one left at the table who had not yet spoken on the subject. She did have her journal open in front of her, so I addressed her: "We haven't heard from you, Jennifer. You may *pass* if you'd like, but if you are waiting to talk, we'll give you this opportunity."

She had listed specific behaviors connected with Workshop Way-type homework sheets: "The good reader goes *bam, bam, bam,* and she self-corrects when the word is incorrect. The poor reader is fidgety and looks all around

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but at the page. She says words that she may have heard but are unlike those on the printed page."

As time was rapidly passing, I realized that closure needed to be brought to this meeting. I passed out a set of resources: a list of research-based *good vs. poor reader* characteristics ("for you to compare with your observations"), a three-page paper I had written summarizing research on good and poor readers, and a list of Burke's interview questions [Appendix H] ("which you may want to use with your own students").

I had felt very disappointed with the slow pace at the beginning of the meeting, and I regretted having started it with a review of personal histories. These individuals were very relational, and what was intended to be a five-minute activity had lasted about twenty. When I spoke of my concern to Laura the next day, she said that she felt the activity was necessary. Chris, at a separate time, also spoke of the value of the exercise: it helped participants not to be "cliquish," it helped "bond," and it "modeled good listening skills." [Fieldnotes, 9/15/89] This would appear, then, to be an initial step toward establishing a warm climate, one of the previously-stated goals for this group.

Summary. The primary purposes of this meeting were to reach consensus about future meeting topics and to lay the foundation for the role of Teacher as Researcher. We also reviewed personal histories, an activity associated with

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group relationship building. The discussion about good vs. poor readers reflected positive, practical, experience-based ideas about the differences between the two.

9/19/89 New Definition of Reading and Story Mapping

Overview

Business
Next meeting: topic, leader(s), refreshments
Dates for October meetings
Good vs. Poor Readers
Low, average, high readers
Story Mapping
Video
Samples

The third meeting began with business-related concerns: the next meeting topic, leader(s), as well as dates for October meetings.

The topics themselves were handed out in outline form for discussion. Comments were expressed related to the extensive nature of the topics ("There's a lot here!") and the correlation between specific nights and topics ("Will we have enough nights?"/ "No, but there are some things we won't go through separately."/ "Could we combine some?")

There was silence when the question was asked as to who would be willing to assume leadership/co-leadership for the following week's topic, the reading comprehension strategy called Reciprocal Teaching. Truda stated, "Well, you see, I don't feel comfortable with any of these things yet. That's why I'm here." Laura, the reading teacher who had been the upper elementary level strategic inservice presenter the

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previous year, offered: "I don't mind, Marlene." I volunteered to help her.

The dates for future meetings caused a great deal of discussion. Although the feeling seemed to be, as Karina stated, "In terms of dates, it would be helpful to know what we've got," the conclusion Suzann reached after several minutes of discussion related to both professional (at least seven were specifically named) and personal conflicts was, "Maybe we've got to 'hang loose' . . . yet." It was impossible to schedule beyond October 3.

Each of a group of three was then given a transcript of a tape I had made on interviews using Burke's questionnaire [Appendix H] with low, average, or high readers from second, third, fourth, and fifth grades. The groups were asked to react to the responses in order to draw conclusions about the attitudes and perceptions these children demonstrated toward reading.

This led the way to a discussion on the state's "old" and "new" definition of reading, led by Laura. She then showed a video on story mapping being modeled within a classroom context. After that, Laura presented several examples of story maps she had garnered from various teachers. Chris and Karina both shared story maps that they had found to be helpful in their own classrooms. Truda and Rebekah had bought their material from the story mapping strategic inservice and referred to the maps within. A great deal of verbal interaction arose from both the video

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and from the application/adaptation of story mapping to different specific grade levels.

A decision was made by Chris, who had agreed to assist Laura, to forego the original plan to demonstrate story mapping with The Three Little Pigs. She mused, "I'm wondering if this conversation is more valuable than what we were thinking of doing, because I hear such good questions."

Already at the end of this meeting, the tone was set for future meetings when Truda spoke up, "Hey, if we're nothing else, we're honest!" to which Karina responded, "Aren't teachers learners? Model that to children."

Summary. By this third meeting, a climate of mutual respect ("I hear such good questions") has become a characteristic of the group. Participants demonstrated consideration for one another during discussion about scheduling and leadership. Discussion about good vs. poor readers was concluded. Story mapping was presented, modeled, and discussed as the final activity of this meeting.

9/28/89 Reciprocal Teaching

Overview

Business
- *Topical order*
- *Next meeting: date, topic, leader*

Story Mapping, revisited
- *Journal entries*
- *Examples*
- *Benefits*

Reciprocal Teaching
- *Components: Predict, Clarify, Question, Summarize*
- *Video*

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For the first time, we met in the library, which became the home base for all future meetings. Although a round table was not available, I attempted each week to position four library tables (two rectangular and two trapezoidal) into some semblance of a circular arrangement. This was in response to Chris' comment from the previous week: "a round table would be nice."

The first item I passed out was a topical order agenda for group reaction. Next, individuals were sought for leadership for the following week's three comprehension strategies; i.e., KWL, Probable Passages, and QAR. Bonnie, who had demonstrated KWL at the strategy inservice the previous spring, responded when specifically asked that she would be willing to lead the group in that strategy. Laura said she could do QAR, but said that "we need others" for Probable Passages. Karina said that she had "done a few" and "could talk about it."

When another involved attempt was made to schedule beyond the next week, Karina said, "We probably have the very busiest people in the district here--I keep seeing them everywhere," and I concluded, "I guess we'll just go one week at a time."

After an overview of the proposed scheduling, individuals shared story mapping successes: Rebekah with Charlotte's Web, Suzann with The Berenstain Bears and Goldilocks, Laura with I Know an Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly, and Bonnie with a dinosaur story. Truda asked specific

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questions about mapping a whole book, and Chris responded with a McCracken technique for previewing a book with several chapters that she had just discovered and used with great success. All responded positively to Chris's offer to duplicate a description of the technique.

In order to take some of the pressure off Laura, who had experienced a busy week, I offered to review Reciprocal Teaching for the group. Laura had provided me with a videotape of Annemarie Palincsar demonstrating that strategy with a group of children. After highlighting the four components of Reciprocal Teaching, I showed a brief section of the tape and the group discussed it.

Individuals within the group spoke of their own experiences with Reciprocal Teaching in the past. Rebekah said that she had needed to keep referring back to the script, and that she did not follow through on the recommended twenty days. Chris said that she had read "glowing" research reports on Reciprocal Teaching, but that because of her scheduling, she had also not given it the full amount of time. Laura spoke of the fact that Palincsar had designed the Reciprocal Teaching strategy for children who had difficulty comprehending but did not have trouble decoding, a new insight for Chris, who responded, "I'm glad you shared that with me." Suzann spoke of her experience: "When I used this, the best thing for first graders was that they would stop me and say, 'I need that clarified,' and I

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Applications were made to individual classrooms. Truda and Rebekah made reference to their previous strategic inservice where one classroom teacher had spoken of using it with cooperative groups. Chris felt that Bloom's Taxonomy could be introduced into the questioning component. Rebekah's self-evaluation upon completion of the video was, "I tried to stay out of it too much."

After the discussion had continued for a time, Karina said, "I copied for everyone a sheet [on Reciprocal Teaching] that a teacher in one of my [Masters'] classes had prepared. It has good suggestions from somebody who used it."

Although my offer to role play a Reciprocal Teaching lesson with the group was met with enthusiasm ("Model? Oh, yes. Oh, wonderful, marvelous!"), the allotted time was up for that evening, so this was carried over to the following week.

Upon leaving, two individuals said, "Thank you so much, Marlene."

Summary. This fourth meeting was a continuation of the supportive, appreciative, and participative meetings of the past. Four members gave specific evidence of implementing the story mapping techniques from the previous meeting, while two others brought in resources to share with the group. A presentation was made about Reciprocal Teaching

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with application made to individual classroom situations.

10/3/89 KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned), QAR (Question-Answer Relationships), Probable Passages

Overview

Business
Weekly Topic Agenda Calendar
Next Meeting: Date, Time, Leader(s)
Topics
KWL
QAR
Probable Passages
Reciprocal Teaching, revisited

After handing out the weekly topic agenda calendar, minus the dates, another attempt was made to schedule a meeting for the following week. Karina reiterated, "We're probably the busiest people of the school who come to this." When I proffered the option of cancelling the next week, Suzann asked me directly, "But isn't that going to mess *you* up?" I assured her that we had to deal with realities. We tentatively decided to try for the next Wednesday, October 11. (As will be noted, that meeting in actuality was cancelled the very afternoon of that day, due to the fact that over half of the individuals who would have been involved told me throughout the day that they would be unable to attend. The remainder were polled, and the consensus was that it would be better to postpone the meeting for a week, rather than try to hold it for so few.)

An attempt to find a chairperson for the following meeting was met with the offer of Karina to "wing it." I distributed a journal article (Duffy & Roehler, 1987, "Teaching skills as strategies"); an additional article was

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sent out the following week as a basis for discussion (Winograd & Greenlee, 1986, "Children need a balanced reading program").

Photocopies of the McCracken article that Chris had spoken of the previous week were handed out, as well. Rebekah shared the fact that she had tried the technique from Chris's description, but she concluded: "The kids Chris sees are not as good at predicting. It's a bit more of a remedial type exercise . . . I'm not saying I'd *never* do it again . . ." Both Rebekah and Truda asked for suggestions to give literature-based approaches variety. A promise was made to cover that in more depth at a later meeting (i.e., under the topic, "Alternative Approaches: Whole Language, Literature").

Bonnie had brought three posters she had used related to her ocean unit which illustrated the components of KWL. She walked the group through a packet of materials she had prepared. Several in the group then shared personal experiences related to their use of the strategy within their classrooms and asked Bonnie specific "What do you do when . . . ?" questions.

Laura handed out stapled sheets which reviewed QAR, and she had charts posted with diagrams related to "In the Book" and "In the Head." She then role-played the strategy with materials within that packet, materials which could be used directly with students. She offered to provide additional materials to anyone who might desire: "We have the whole

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packet [which had been handed out at the previous year's strategy inservice] stored away."

Karina, although lamenting the fact that she doesn't teach reading in her present position, then gave a review of Probable Passages and showed examples of how she used it that week in relation to a science unit on "sponges." Both Bonnie and Laura talked about the positive reaction of students to the strategy. Truda mused, "I've just been sitting here thinking, 'When am I going to get all this in?' I'm so excited about it. That's the problem. Then it kind of goes back in your head and it has to be brought forward again." She asked her across-the-hall colleague, Rebekah, to "keep hitting me, O.K.?"

I concluded the meeting with a role-play of a Reciprocal Teaching lesson, after which Truda replied, "This is exciting, marvelous. It's all there. Now if I can only do it." Suzann offered that the strategies helped her in her planning to use her time more wisely and to focus on things that were most important, rather than mere "busy-work."

Summary. These are very active professionals who, in spite of their schedules, remain excited about their group. During this meeting, there were presentations about the KWL, QAR, and Probable Passages techniques, as well as a role play of Reciprocal Teaching. Members expressed appreciation for the techniques and related materials which enabled them

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10/19/89 Skills as Strategies, District's New Reading Curriculum

Overview

Where the Basics Fit
Skills as Strategies
Goals of Reading Instruction
District's New Reading Curriculum
Business: date, leader(s)

This sixth meeting began after a 16-day hiatus (conflicts on the part of half of the individuals forced cancellation of the previously-scheduled meeting) with six individuals present. Karina, Bonnie, and Jennifer were attending a Writing Workshop at the county's Intermediate School District headquarters and had informed me that they would be coming at the conclusion of that meeting. Both Karina and Bonnie arrived within the half hour, while Jennifer did not appear at all.

Truda, the most veteran teacher of the group arrived early not only with three varieties of home-made muffins but also with an exuberant spirit: "I feel such a sense of accomplishment!" She spoke about her feeling of success related to teaching reading, specifically the QAR strategy which she had introduced within her classroom since the previous meeting. Both she and Chris addressed the changing nature of both classroom and reading support services.

The members present were then asked to map the Winograd and Greenlee (1986) article, "Students need a balanced

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reading program." Discussion occurred throughout as individuals reacted to and personalized the main points of the article.

The original plan to discuss Duffy and Roehler's (1987) article, "Teaching skills as strategies," was preempted as Karina walked us through her outline of teaching skills as strategies from one of her recent Master's level courses in reading, plus a handout, "Children use questions as reading."

Laura, Rebekah, and Bonnie had been volunteers on the Reading Study Committee from its inception nearly two years earlier, and they had taken an active role in the reading curriculum write during the previous summer (1989), which had resulted in the 89-page document which had been put into teachers' hands six weeks before this meeting. Bonnie spoke of the skills/ strategies interrelationship within the document. Laura gave an overview of the curriculum and talked about the decisions the Committee faced as they wrote it, specifically emphasizing the fact that they had been especially sensitive to the feedback they had gotten from the district's elementary teachers prior to the "write." Rebekah said that they had tried to fit this into the framework of the state's philosophy of reading.

Karina reacted strongly against one section of the proposed curriculum and offered to rewrite it to be more congruent with the state's "new" definition. All individuals were asked to get peer feedback on the

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curriculum guide at their grade level meetings during the next day's district inservice.

As before, several conflicts were mentioned as an attempt was made to schedule the following week. Monday was finally decided upon--only four days hence--on the topic of "assessment." Because no one else volunteered (although Bonnie did say that she needed material on that topic with parent-teacher conferences and report cards coming up within the next couple of weeks), I offered to collect some material for the next meeting.

Summary. At this sixth meeting, one group member shared experiences with the QAR strategy, the group mapped an article, and the district's new reading curriculum was discussed. Expressions of changing perceptions toward the teaching of reading as a result of classroom success was expressed. The group continued to be supportive and interactive, sharing each other's accomplishments and exploring ideas of altering support services.

10/23/89 Formal/Informal Assessment

Overview

Business
Reading Curriculum Input from Inservice Grade Groups
Assessment: Formal/Informal

There were seven individuals at this seventh meeting. Karina had experienced difficulty getting a sitter for her children, and Jennifer, who had been absent the week before, was unaware of the revised schedule. Truda commented, "With fewer people, there could be a lot less conflict . . . and

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maybe if we talk fast, we can finish a little early today." Because both Chris and Laura had spoken of obligations that evening (a hospital visit and picking up a child), I determined that an early dismissal would be the goal. The following week's meeting day was narrowed down to Monday.

Input from the grade group meetings was solicited. I asked, "Did you have a feel for whether people had read it and read it carefully?" Representative comments stated: "They 'fessed up, so we didn't have to *feel--one* person had read it," "In our group, no one had even had a chance to look at it." Individuals spoke of the poor timing ("It came out right at the beginning of the year when things are so hectic") and overload ("I think having social studies [last year] and . . . having two ready at the same time [reading and science] . . . and then math next year . . . and now we're being hit with computers") as being factors which reflected the feelings Bonnie openly expressed in her grade group meeting in the district Superintendent's presence, "You're pushing too much at us too fast. And what's going to happen is that people are going to throw up their arms and say, 'I can't do it!'" Truda, a representative on the district's Curriculum Council, responded, "Maybe we should say to Curriculum Council, 'Teachers feel overwhelmed. It's time now to sit back.'"

Several spoke about the Reading Curriculum guide: "It takes time. Teachers need direction, but it can't be

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forced;" "But, according to the Curriculum Director, you will be held responsible;" "Reading curriculum should verify what we're doing. It should contain intelligent input from teachers." Chris suggested that "experts" on each of the strategies could be listed as resource persons in the curriculum guide, so that if someone wished to receive further information or tutoring, s/he could contact that person: "How many experts do we have in our district? Lots. But no one's an expert on *everything*--or very few."

The assessment theme was introduced with a structured overview which proposed a variety of answers to the questions, "What do we need to assess?" and "How do we do it?" After highlighting five areas of assessment (sight vocabulary, decoding skills, comprehension, fluency, and enjoyment/appreciation), a variety of formal and informal assessment procedures was reviewed and/or introduced (criterion and norm-referenced tests, informal reading inventories, cloze, kid-watching, observational charts). When I described a circular chart that I had used to report the strengths and needs of my Chapter I students, there was a great deal of interest exhibited, and members asked that I share a sample. I promised to make copies and sent them to the individuals in the group the following day.

Laura walked the group through an evaluation form related to the whole language approach, along with the idea of student portfolios for assessing growth in the language

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arts. Chris referred to a professional book which had provided her with "a lot of ways to evaluate."

Individuals spoke of appreciation for the information presented: "This gives me a lot of avenues to go . . . Knowing all these things helps you to pick and choose." There was also a sense of frustration that came up related to the method of assessment spelled out on the district's present accounting system: "It's hard to put into our report cards." Truda said that the report cards wouldn't be changed until the whole curriculum is finished, to which Suzann asked, "In the meantime, do we send them home blank?" Truda answered, "I'm not paranoid about those little check boxes if they don't apply."

At 5:07, when I brought an early close to the meeting, there were multiple expressions of gratitude. As they were leaving, I reminded the participants that they were invited to present remedial techniques for the following meeting. Karina offered to do Reader's Theater and Reading Recovery, while Laura wondered aloud whether the Glass Analysis material would be adaptable for this group.

Summary. During the meeting, participants reflected the overwhelming feelings of themselves and their colleagues related to the innovation overload resulting from several new curriculum guides. Specific informal and formal reading assessment techniques were discussed, a topic which the participants felt to be applicable to their immediate concerns stemming from the upcoming report cards and Parent

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Teacher Conferences. Sensitivity to other group member obligations that evening resulted in early dismissal.

10/30/89 Remedial Techniques

Overview

Business
Journals
Assessment Applications
Remedial Techniques:
-Sight Vocabulary
-Decoding, Context Clues
-Writing
-Comprehension
-Fluency

For the first time in a month, the entire group of nine was present. Jennifer came into the meeting dressed in sweat pants announcing that, "I'm going to be here till the wee hours of the morning working on report cards."

Suzann said that she had been greatly impressed with the organization and thoroughness of the district reading curriculum as she had "pored over" it for the first time during the previous weekend. In addition, she stated that she had begun working on formulating a first-grade assessment instrument that would correlate to that document.

Business related to the topic in two weeks (the following week contained Parent Teacher Conferences), "Emergent Literacy." Suzann offered, "I do so much with Langauge Experience, I can share examples." Jennifer said that she could bring samples, as well. A booklet, Primer for Parents (McKee, 1975), which illustrates the process of beginning reading, was distributed and individuals were

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asked to think about the question, "How did I learn to read?"

The participants expressed less than enthusiastic responses when I asked whether they had been writing in their journals. They questioned themselves: "Why is it difficult? Is it just that we don't want to write?" Chris and Truda both spoke of the fact that, "I can't do it immediately after the lesson; therefore, it slips my mind. By the end of the day . . . It's not because I don't want to, I do." Truda wondered: "It boggles my mind, these people who write books on their family and things like that, they have diaries on their entire lives. What do they do besides sit and write?"

I had seen Suzann, Bonnie, and Chris working on assessment circles since the last meeting in preparation for the upcoming parent-teacher conferences. Bonnie, a member of the Reading Study Committee which had written the reading curriculum, said that she had formulated a circular assessment instrument to highlight her grade level objectives, starring the ones she had covered thus far. Suzann, upon seeing Bonnie's work, determined that she would do a similar one for the first grade objectives. Chris said she had carried the assessment circle into the math area. Rebekah and Truda, upper elementary teachers, said that their grade level peers, not members of this group, determined that such a format was impractical for their grade level: "In the lower grades, reading is a more

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central thing. But with us, we really wouldn't have enough time to go into our science, social studies, etc. So we're just using report cards."

Remedial techniques were next discussed. In the area of sight vocabulary, both Suzann and Bonnie spoke of their own personal, experimental techniques they felt had worked successfully with their students. The two support personnel, Laura and Chris, shared techniques which they had adopted or adapted from published procedures (e.g., SIMS, VAKT).

Truda had earlier arrived at the meeting with a poster rolled under her arm, exuding, "I have something for 'Show 'N Tell'!" Since I was unsure as to the content of her display, I asked Truda where her "Show 'N Tell" would come in. Although she said that it would probably fit better into the next session's theme on Reading/Writing Connection, she seemed eager to share this evening. It took little to persuade her that we were all interested in seeing her offering. She recounted that she had spent 2 1/2 hours that day on a writing project with mapping ("Can you believe [in a whisper] Truda didn't do math? . . . You guys, what you're doing to me!"). She unrolled her paper and read the final product aloud:

> *"This is going to take forever," I exclaimed as I looked at the mess in our attic. Mother had ordered us to clean out the attic. She was having a garage sale.*
>
> *Grandmother said, "We'd better get started."*
>
> *As we started to sort through the boxes, I opened the first one and took out a big book. "Look what I found, Grandma!"*

A surprised grandmother took her old photograph album from me and dusted it off. Her hand lovingly smoothed the covers. As she paged through, tears rolled down her cheeks as memories filled her mind.

We were almost finished and ready to open the last box. It was filled with my baby clothes. Folded neatly on the top was my baby quilt.

"I made that quilt for you," Grandmother told me.

As we went downstairs, we told Mother we wanted to keep our memories. We would find things for the garage sale somewhere else.

At the conclusion of the reading, there was clapping, along with comments: "Great!" "Loved it" "You should have it published." Truda, herself, exclaimed: "I never thought it would turn out like this! Never in my wildest dreams!" Rebekah, who worked with Truda's class on written research projects, claimed the credit: "It was my idea."

Group members then made comments about extension activities and Chris recommended "a book you *have* to share with your kids on memories." There were also procedural questions asked of Truda, Laura related how this approach was similar to Probable Passages, and Rebekah interjected with examples of her teaching fourth graders how to do research with "buzz words." Truda ended this segment by saying, "My whole outlook, and I'm serious, my whole outlook on reading and writing have both changed."

As to context clues, Truda expressed concern related to the difficulty of teaching context clues with inconsiderate text. Because no one had anything to share in that area this evening, I offered to put together some things related to teaching context clues, to which Truda replied, "I'd appreciate that."

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In the area of comprehension, I alluded to the previous year's strategy inservices when I said, "We did so much on that last year. Does anyone have any comments?"

Chris responded, "I'm just so excited that there are ways to teach comprehension now, because that's something that not so long ago we just floundered on how to teach it. I think it's really exciting!"

Both Truda and Chris spoke of the ways in which their students' comprehension had improved. Truda related her pupils' positive experiences with the QAR strategy in recent weeks, while Chris gave evidences of her learning-disabled children's success with Reciprocal Teaching since she decided to utilize it the full 20 days of training. Chris went on to say that more upper elementary classroom teachers were now requesting that their learning disabled students remain within the regular education classroom for reading instruction because of the way in which reading was now being taught there; i.e., whole-group, whole language, literature-based.

The area of fluency was particularly addressed by Karina, who talked about the benefits of Reader's Theater for fluency and for classroom management, based on both research and her own personal experiences. She also directed a role play of a Reader's Theater script with five members of the support group. After the production, Chris said that her first-time exposure to Reader's Theater the previous week was "just so exciting." Rebekah asked

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procedural questions of Karina as it related to her attempt to adopt Reader's Theater to her own grade level and her present Tall Tales unit.

Although I acknowledged that Chris and Laura had brought something they had not yet had the opportunity to share, I stopped the meeting at the 5:30 hour with the promise that we would have to build a "smorgasbord" of unfinished business into one of our succeeding meetings. Karina handed out a Reading Recovery article "in preparation for next week."

Truda stood up and said, "When this is over, we'll have to get together for breakfast once in a while." With that, Chris stated, "You are really growing, Truda!"

Summary. This meeting was filled with a variety of topics. Issues from the previous meetings on the reading curriculum and reading assessment again surfaced. Two members spoke of correlating assessment instruments with the curriculum guide, as well as with content area instruction. It was conceded that writing in their journals had been preempted by the pressures of their personal/professional schedules. Four members participated in the remedial techniques section of the meeting, with examples of procedures or materials that they had found to be useful. One member shared a classroom story based on writing from a story map introduced earlier. Numerous examples were given of how appropriation of their new/extended knowledge had affected these teachers and their students in recent weeks.

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The meeting ended with one member giving a synopsis of Reader's Theater, concluding with group participation in a **Reader's Theater role play.**

11/13/89 Emergent Literacy

Overview

Business
Conference Sharing: Reading Assessment, Revisited
Reader's Theater, Revisited
Reading Recovery
Emergent Literacy
Language Experience Approach

Two weeks had elapsed since the previous meeting because of Parent-Teacher Conferences. All members were present, along with Karina's preschool son, for whom she had been unable to obtain a babysitter.

Determination of the date for the next meeting was again a matter of lengthy discussion. (It had originally been determined to keep Thanksgiving week free of a meeting.) The week after Thanksgiving brought up the reality of additional conflicts. Although Mondays had been utilized in the past, Truda reminded the group that it should be considered as an option only as a last resort: "Monday is really not a good day, it came in by default." Thursday, November 30, was selected, instead.

The topic for that meeting, Alternative Approaches: Whole Language and Literature, was stated. Laura had done an inservice for a neighboring school district several weeks earlier on the subject, and she offered to "try to round up some things."

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After those items were out of the way, the teachers present were asked to give feedback on how they had reported on reading at the previous week's conferences: "How was that done and how was it received by parents?" Bonnie spoke of the fact that both she and Suzann had used their own grade level curriculum-correlated assessment circles, and that "I think it went very well . . . it was easy to talk from." Others expressed the opinion that a similar figure would be profitable at all grade levels in the future.

There was additional carry-over from the Reader's Theater theme, as Laura had photocopied a three-page script for each individual, as well as an address for publishers of additional scripts. Laura also asked the group whether they would like to hear an audiotape of one of her third grade groups performing that script. Chris had written her own script the previous week for Veteran's Day and spoke of how adaptable the procedure was, even using it as a take-off for a writing lesson. The suggestion was made to compile a list of district-available scripts.

Another carry-over from Remedial Approaches was Reading Recovery, an area in which Karina had previously done extensive research for one of her master's level reading courses. Prior to the meeting, Karina had made numerous handouts of Reading Recovery materials for the group at her own expense, and she now spent a good deal of time relating her theoretical understanding of the procedure. Because of the restlessness of her own child, Karina suggested that the

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group read through the materials and come with additional questions or reactions the following week.

The Reading Recovery topic (i.e., a 1:1 program for the bottom 20% of first graders to provide prevention "before the child practices unproductive responses") brought up discussion by both classroom teachers and support teachers about the difficulty of receiving support services due to state guidelines: "It's hard to get into any program. I mean, you've got to fail before you can get any kind of service, so they've already met a failure," and "That's not ours--that's the State's [guideline]." Truda asked, "How do you change the powers that be?" Chris asked how to get teacher commitment and financial backing for such a project. Karina stressed that "[Reading Recovery] is a system intervention. It's not something that a bunch of teachers can get together . . . " Karina was thanked for making the group aware of Reading Recovery, and she left with her son.

Emergent Literacy was the next topic, and both first grade teachers, Jennifer and Suzann, had come with both visual and verbal examples of ways in which they had used the Language Experience Approach with their children. Questions were asked regarding management procedures. Bonnie then demonstrated how she used LEA with her low second grade readers.

The fourth grade teachers talked about their successes and failures (which they termed, "bombs") with their

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children regarding Halloween stories and research projects. In regard to the latter, a discussion arose about how materials already present in the district could be used as resources to correlate with the new science and social studies curriculum. The attendees agreed that this would be a task for the district librarians, since "we don't have the time."

Truda summarized her changing perspective on reading instruction: "Here again, you feel so much better about reading, because I used to think I'm not teaching reading an 'x' number of [minutes], and, bird-brain, you know, of course I'm teaching reading! I'm teaching reading in social studies, I'm teaching reading in science, those kinds of things. But that's never been brought out before."

A reminder was given as to the next week's topic: Whole Language and Literature Base. Rebekah offered to bring refreshments the next time, but Karina entered the room just then with her son (they had been circumventing the playground since they had left a half hour earlier) to offer to take her turn.

As we packed up our things, Truda exclaimed, "Excellent!"

Summary. A number of items were continued at this meeting; namely, assessment and Reader's Theater. The topic of Emergent Literacy was begun when one member gave an extensive overview of Reading Recovery. Three lower elementary teachers related their classroom activities

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surrounding Language Experience stories. Two upper elementary teachers extended the discussion to include independent writing and research projects. One teacher concluded with a statement of a growing awareness of her changing perceptions related to reading instruction.

11/30/89 Alternative Approaches: Whole Language, Literature

Overview

Personal Histories: "How did you learn to read?"
Context Clues
Readers' Theater for Reading/Writing Connection
Reading Recovery Question-Answer
Business: Topics/Dates
Questionnaire
Whole Language, Literature

Chris was unable to attend because of her own rescheduled Math Support Group. She did ask for the audiotape of the session. Jennifer was ill.

In a previous meeting [10/30/89], I had handed out Houghton-Mifflin's A Primer for Parents (McKee, 1975), as a way for teachers to begin to think about beginning reading instruction. Bonnie had made copies of the coded story contained within that booklet for her parent-teacher conferences to simulate for parents the difficulties encountered in beginning reading. Now, as I collected those booklets, I asked the members present what their memories were about learning to read, or what their own earliest memories of reading were.

Rebekah, who had as a child been in the same first grade classroom as her husband, spoke about their contrasting reactions to the same reading instruction from

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the same teacher. She also related examples of her son's and her niece's responses from being read to extensively. Truda admitted that she had always been a very fluent reader, but that her comprehension still was rather weak. Suzann had "picked it up right away [in first grade]," and only recently had she encountered her first grade teacher and inquired of her how she had taught beginning reading. Laura said all she remembered was that she had hated the phonics group. Suzann queried Bonnie, "I'm curious about what you remember." With that, Bonnie shared that her mother frequently still recounts that she had trouble reading in first grade, apparently due to the fact that her much-beloved first grade teacher took a maternity leave and Bonnie had trouble adjusting to a new, overbearing substitute.

In response to the request from Truda and others in the week on Remediation, I had prepared a two-page handout on Context Clues, which I briefly highlighted. I also had come across an article the previous week about the use of Reader's Theater for Reading/Writing Connection, which seemed appropriate to the previous week's topics. Rebekah said that she had tried a Reader's Theater in her classroom, and her "kids loved it."

There were few questions on last week's Reading Recovery for Karina. Bonnie said she would talk to Karina about her specific questions related to the topic privately on their own time.

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I had been concerned that, with the Christmas holidays fast approaching, individuals within the group would experience increased pressures and would welcome an opportunity to condense the following two meetings into one. I did not find that to be the case, however. In looking at the next two weeks, it was decided to hold the final meetings on consecutive Tuesdays for whomever could attend. Topics would be "Alternative Approaches: Basals" for the former and "Classroom Management" for the latter.

I also stated that I would need to do a little debriefing at the final meeting to determine "what we learned." With that came a great deal of laughter, joking, and statements about "deprogramming." I handed out the questionnaire related to empowerment. [See Appendix I] Although this questionnaire would be sent to all elementary classroom teachers in the district, I addressed the fact that I wanted the input from this group to be looked at separately for a comparison. Karina said, "To see how different we are." I said, "To see whether we represent other people in Omega/the rest of the U.S. teaching force." Suzann queried, "You should do it as to how you feel right now? . . . That would have been a hard thing for me to do a year or two years ago--my answers probably would have been a lot different then."

Laura then took the rest of the time to very thoroughly present the area of "Whole Language/Literature." She began with a videotape of Jeanette Veatch and reminded the group

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that this approach has been around "from way back--the 30's and 40's . . . so it's not so new." Laura then walked the group through a booklet she had originally compiled for the inservice she had presented in the neighboring district. The booklet included samples of integrated whole language lessons, schedules of classroom management, and a bibliographic "survival kit." In addition to the booklet, Laura also had a table filled with her own library of resources she had found particularly useful: professional books, magazines, journals, and specific story guides.

In reaction to the many different methods and materials Laura had described and displayed, Truda asked, "How does this fit in with our new approach to reading?" She spoke of her mixed emotions. She began by exuding, "I just felt so victorious over getting through a literature book and the kids loved it." [To which Laura replied, "And that's great!"] Truda went on to bemoan the fact that, "I didn't do it all last year, 'cause I was scared to death. Now you're putting something else on me. I don't think I can handle it!" [Laura responded softly, "No, I'm really not. This is just one way."]

Karina offered:

> What interests me is the struggle. [To Laura] I see you have Transitions (Routman, 1988). I brought it, too, because that's all about a lot of the struggle that we go through, struggling through observation of children and through a dawning awareness of the research, struggling to bring this knowledge of research and this knowledge of children together in the classroom into some kind of manageable way of teaching reading.

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After Laura gave several more examples of methods and materials, the participants expressed appreciation for the variety of resources available and spoke of their desire to have such a professional library available to each elementary building in the district.

As it came time to close the meeting, Karina stated that we had not really defined "whole language." I suggested that we come back to that the following week.

Summary. The discussion began with personal accounts of the participants' own histories of learning to read. Resources were given on the topics of Context Clues and Reader's Theater. Although the opportunity was given to eliminate one meeting due to busy Christmas schedules, the members were not willing to forego it. An empowerment questionnaire was distributed. One member spent the majority of the meeting presenting and discussing the rationale for and implementation of a Whole Language/ Literature-Based approach to reading instruction. Concerns were expressed by individuals as to the struggle involved in attempting to make the transition from research to application of this approach within the classroom context.

12/5/89 Alternative Approaches: Basals, Content Area

Overview

Unfinished Business
- *Questions/Concerns*
- *Whole Language Defined*

Basals
- *Strengths*
- *Weaknesses*

Content Area Reading Strategies

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This eleventh meeting felt like there was a revolving door: only five individuals were present the entire time. Suzann, who was singing in an operetta that weekend, had laryngitis and did not attend at all. Chris had to meet with some parents after school and arrived at our meeting at 4:15. Jennifer arrived at 4:45. Laura departed at 5:00.

I began the meeting with the acknowledgement that scheduling had been difficult throughout and the degree of depth on any one topic was necessarily minimal. There was no response to the question as to whether there were still "any other topics--burning issues to you--that we haven't even alluded to?" For the week on Management, I expressed the hope that, among other things, Suzann would talk about her classroom stations (to which she had previously alluded) and productive seatwork, and that Bonnie would share her experiences related to grouping and cooperative learning.

Since Karina had questioned at the end of the previous meeting what was meant by "whole language," I now asked her how she would define the term. She replied:

> Whole language, to me, includes all the expressive and receptive forms of language, and it would encompass book sharing of various sorts and the writing that we've talked about. But it's always continuous print, or words in context kind of thing. Not that phonics isn't done, but you work from Brown Bear, Brown Bear (Martin, 1970), or whatever. It's done in a meaningful context. I see that as being the emphasis and what I regard as the gift of the whole language approach. That even as we learn to speak, not by getting ready to speak and having tedious exercises of learning to speak . . . we should learn to read the same way we learn to speak: by immersion and modeling. That all sounds so "pie in the sky." Now how do you make that happen?

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Truda reacted to that:

> That's what I have a problem with these theorists who don't teach [skills] until [students] need it or are interested in it. Let's face it, if [students] don't have the skills when they're interested, do you break away from it when they are interested? I don't know . . . To me, whole language is everything: spelling, speaking, writing, reading. To me, that's whole language. Because what you're talking about is still only reading.

Karina said that the curriculum should not be fractured: "It takes a master planner to see the whole picture."

To which Truda responded, "It doesn't take a master planner to <u>see</u> it--it takes a master planner to <u>do</u> it. I don't see how it can be done . . . It doesn't come by osmosis. You have to teach spelling at a given time, so when he needs it, he has it."

Karina acknowledged, "You have put your finger on where whole language backfires. If it makes sense, you don't think about spelling. The child is not operating on a letter level but on a metacognitive level. Maybe that's a weak point if we don't do the other."

Upon that, a rather intense discussion occurred related to spelling. Truda expressed herself in this way: "I have a hang-up with propriety. In society, we should spell things correctly, and not doing it is a sheer lack of discipline." Chris and Karina both spoke as parents. Chris said, "I talk as the parent of a child who has tremendous spelling problems." Karina told the "tale of two sons," with the

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conclusion that, "If I had to give up something, I'd make my priority the fluency rather than the correct spelling."

Although I had stayed out of the discussion up to this point, I felt that I had to bring closure to this segment. I summarized by saying that the opinions expressed appeared to be typical of the debate between process and product. I stated, "I didn't mean for us to spend a lot of time on this . . . I just asked a question [group laughter]. That question was, 'What is whole language?' That was the question we left with last time." I gave my own version of whole language as being synonymous with integrated language arts. With that, I asked whether anyone had mistakenly taken an article the previous week which demonstrated this approach within a third grade classroom, "When teachers decide to integrate the language arts" (Buckley, 1986). Everyone looked through her materials and it was discovered by Bonnie: "so much came around last week." A loud round of laughter followed.

At that, the building principal walked into the room and jokingly said, "I can hardly conduct my meeting down the hallway. Would you please [quiet down]?" "Tell them, they're your overly-dedicated teachers . . .," was Truda's suggestion.

I restated that the following week would be the debriefing. Although I orally gave a list of possible questions, Truda asked whether I " . . . would send us a

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little something so we could think about them ahead of time? That would be helpful."

In introducing the topic of Basals, I began by asking for a list of strengths and weaknesses, starting with the strengths. Laura listed the fact that the new ones contain good literature, and that basals are helpful for beginning teachers. Chris spoke about their continuity. Both Truda and Rebekah told of how their views of basals had changed. Truda said that formerly basals had "led" her:

> Those were the most miserable reading teaching years of my life, because I felt like I was doing nothing more than reading the story, assigning the workbook, calling the next group up, reading the story, assigning the workbook. It was a vicious cycle. And finally I had had it.

In contrast, she and Rebekah agreed that they now use their old basal readers flexibly, picking and choosing only the best offerings to supplement trade books.

Karina was eager to talk about the major disadvantage of basals: i.e., what she perceived to be the damaged self-concept of the child in the "low" basal reader and in the "low" reading group. She saw that the advantage of using literature resulted in increased self-esteem and a feeling of accomplishment.

When Chris asked, "Do we need to spend money on Teacher's Editions?", Karina suggested, "Couldn't we use that money for paperbacks? I might go for a basal if we didn't have to have the Teacher's Edition."

Rebekah asked, "Do [the new basals] have workbooks? I wouldn't order it," and Truda laughingly suggested, "Get

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your picket signs ready, girls. If they make us use workbooks, I'm going to get my picket sign out: NO WORKBOOKS!"

I had taken samples of some of the new basals on the market to the meeting. The participants agreed that it might be more profitable to take them home to peruse at their leisure, rather than to spend time this evening for that task.

In regard to the topic of Content Area Reading, I handed out a map of before/during/after activities congruent with the strategies which had already been introduced, " . . . so that we don't have to say like last week, 'Oh, no, not something else!'" I had wanted to provide the opportunity for the group to work through the fourth grade [State] Educational Assessment Program informational section so the participants themselves might suggest relevant and appropriate before/during/after activities: "I was hoping that taking something like this would show very concretely how the things we've already learned will help the child to take this test. It helps us know how to teach the material so the child has that kind of information." Chris said that such an idea would make for a valid workshop/inservice for the entire staff. Truda agreed: "I really don't think anyone from K, 1, 2, 3 fully understands what the [State] Educational Assessment Program test is like."

At the end of the meeting, Truda stated: "My comment is, 'I've just had a great time!' I know we're coming next

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week, but I really have! . . . I've had a couple of teachers remark to me that they just didn't feel like they could do it. I said, 'Hey, that's your loss, 'cause we're having a great time!'"

Summary. **Personal and professional schedules made continuity difficult within the context of this meeting. In spite of that, all members but one (who was ill) made an appearance for at least part of the meeting. There was extended dialogue related to whole language, spelling, and basal strengths and weaknesses. Opinions expressed were based on readings in the field and personal experiences. There was such a great deal of discussion that I was forced to break in, summarize, and redirect. Through it all, a spirit of congeniality existed. A content area reading overview stressing the utilization of previously-introduced material was presented. The meeting was closed with affirmation of the value of the experience.**

12/12/89 Debriefing, Smorgasbord, Management

Overview

Debriefing
Smorgasbord
-Leveling vs. Readability Formulas
-Graphic Organizers
-Semantic Maps--Word Sorts
-Reader's Theater in the Content Areas
-Paired Repeated Readings
-Basal Reader Evaluations
-"Alternatives to Basal Instruction"
Management
-Reading Stations
-Cooperative Learning

At this last meeting, all were present except Jennifer.

The table was laden with a variety of fresh fruits and sour

cream dip, crackers and shrimp cocktail/cream cheese spread, homemade pecan tarts and cinnamon squares, and chicken croissants. The school's principal came, supposedly for some of the refreshments, but, unlike previous visits, he sat down and stayed for the entire meeting.

After the first half hour was spent on debriefing (presented *in toto* at the conclusion of this section), we went from the smorgasbord of food into a smorgasbord of topics left over from previous weeks.

Karina had spoken to me after the Content Area topic of her preference for the term "leveling" rather than readability formulas, of her possession of various graphic organizers, of the idea of word sorts, and of Reader's Theater in content areas. With her description of graphic organizers, Laura and Truda recalled "mountains" of varieties shared during a recent Virginia Soper workshop held in the district for upper elementary and middle school teachers. Karina's offer to make copies of both a "leveling" list from a former class, as well as several generic expository maps, was met with expressions of affirmation and appreciation.

With the comment, "If you want more information, we have experts here on all of these topics," I switched the focus to Chris who had previously been prepared to share with the group a technique which she had found helpful with her students.

Chris began, "[Paired Repeated Reading] has really worked for my kids . . . I have more fluent readers this year than ever before, and I know it's been because of the strategies we've been using." She then handed out a procedure for helping children to honestly evaluate and critique each other. "This is another one of those strategies that is really good for them to go off and work on while you are working with someone else."

In spite of the fact that everyone had gone home with a sample of some new basal reader the previous week, it appeared that Chris was the only one who had looked at hers in any depth. She felt that there was a big improvement in this series as compared to previous ones she had seen (she herself had never used a basal) in the area of varieties of literature, but she still did not feel that the language was natural or rich.

Discussion ensued in regard to controlled vocabulary. "If Reading Recovery kids can succeed without controlled vocabulary, then no one needs it," was Karina's summation. "It's hard to make a blanket statement," countered Laura. "I wouldn't say that nobody needs it."

"Alternatives to traditional reading instruction" (Eldredge & Butterfield, 1986) was an article that had been handed out the previous week. In response to that, Truda asked, "Why can't we have basals plus literature?" "That's what was done in this article, 'When teachers decide to integrate the language arts,'" said Chris. "I could see

using basals with literature in the whole language approach, using basals for the guided reading part and individualized self-selection for the literature part."

Truda related, "For example, when I did the Big Wave, I used the folk tale which is set in Japan from the basal about the gold fish, which I thought was an enrichment for the kids. Otherwise, you get it stuck in the middle of a bunch of folk tales with not all that much meaning, where here it had some meaning. I don't know why they divorce them completely as though if you have one, you can't have the other."

A lively debate ensued about functions and uses of basals with Karina, Chris, Suzann, and Truda, representing the continuum of Karina's ("I will absolutely not use them unless they contain *real* authors' *real* works"), to Chris's ("They often turn out children who read *nothing* other"), to Suzann's ("Use them for your own purposes and according to children's needs"), to Truda's ("I see nothing wrong with children reading cute little stories from the basal. What does it matter what kids read as long as they read?").

Truda acknowledged that she had been in education long enough to see the pendulum swinging: "We go in cycles--'Now it's time to throw everything out,' and then in a few years, 'Bring everything back.' And that scares me. We have to be a little bit reasonable as far as doing these things." To which Karina admitted, "Yes, we've seen this coming down the pipe before."

I attempted to redirect and begin to bring closure to the meeting with the comment, "We're not going to solve all of these problems tonight ["Aw, shucks!" "We're not going to leave here until we do."], and we haven't even gotten to the management and grouping topics [Truda: "That's going to come when you model for us"]. We need something about cooperative learning and reading stations. Could we just quickly do that?"

Suzann talked of her reading stations, and Bonnie brought in a sample of what her class had done in cooperative groups. In response to Bonnie's examples, Chris affirmed that this was an example of a very integrated curriculum (math, reading, social skills, moral lessons). Suzann asked procedural questions related to this activity. I spoke to the fact that this was also productive seatwork (in lieu of workbook pages): "We've had a lot of these kinds of things come out as we've talked over the past several weeks."

Truda spoke from her experience that in total group instruction, management is not that much of a problem. Chris suggested, "Using total group and then breaking into cooperative groups would be beautiful." And Rebekah responded, "Partner things provide a good variety, because you can't be with that total group every day."

It was difficult to close the meeting and the experience: "This is too good to end."

Karina stated, "I'm going to write in my journal tomorrow." Truda responded, "Show-off!" "No, I think she means for the first time," Chris joked.

The principal said that he had enjoyed the hour and a half very much [Someone commented, "It never seemed like an hour and a half"], and he then asked the group whether they had felt uncomfortable with his being there. Comments from the group were that had it been another administrator they might have, but he was perceived to be a non-threatening individual.

As I handed out "Merry Christmas/Thank You Very Much" notes with personalized messages of appreciation to each of the participants, I was given a beautifully wrapped box "from all of us." Inside was a delicate clay statue of a child reading. The card was entitled, "We believe in you." I was emotionally touched.

Summary. The meeting began with a debriefing: individuals spoke of the benefits of the group to themselves as persons, as teachers, and as learners. One member presented several content area offerings from former classes. Another member shared classroom success with Pair Repeated Readings and commented on the new basal textbooks. As a springboard for an article, suggestions were made to incorporate basal readers with literature, leading to more discussion on basal readers. With an acknowledgement that there were many unresolved topics, the issue of classroom management was briefly addressed through personal examples.

The principal, who had not spoken throughout, stated that he had enjoyed the experience. The meeting was closed with mutual concrete expressions of appreciation between myself and the group.

12/12/89 Debriefing Session

I will present, *in toto*, the Debriefing Session from the Final Meeting. Although it is lengthy, it will be used to illustrate a number of prominent themes that were present throughout the course of this project related to deterring and contributing factors toward empowerment as I "listened for the teacher's voice." Deterrents included: lack of time (due to personal and professional conflicts); lack of adequate inservice training in the reading strategies; lack of support (district/administrative, collegial); external locus of control; lack of readiness. Contributors included those descriptors which mark a humanistic teacher center; namely, the centrality of the teacher (beginning with *her* perceived needs and acknowledging adult learning characteristics), warmth (an *esprit de corps*), concreteness (what works and how we know that), time (extended, non-pressured), thought (open-mindedness, reflective thinking).

DEBRIEFING SESSION
December 12, 1989

Debriefing Questions

1. Throughout this support group, what kinds of feelings/dispositions did you experience?

2. What kind of information (attitudes, skills, knowledges) have you gained that has influenced your thinking?

3. How does what you learned relate to what you previously knew or believed about reading (e.g., confirmed/disconfirmed)?

4. What conclusions have you reached about the issues of reading curriculum implementation and/or staff development as a result of this experience? (To put it another way, What would you recommend to the Reading Study Committee as a result of this type of inservice?)

Marlene: I just want us to kind of look at where we started, what kinds of feelings you had as we went through, and what you think this all says, if anything. As you look at your Debriefing packet and looked at the sheet, My Hopes for This Group, from the original meeting, did you have a feeling for whether or not we had done the kinds of things that were listed here?

Karina: As I read the list, I was amazed at how much we seemed to have done that was on that list. "Talking about approaches in a non-threatening way," I mean, I've got stars, I've got about 8 stars on the side of all things that I feel that we more than adequately did. The only thing that I didn't have starred, and it was the time I missed about assessment, "I hope we look at what works and how we know that," that's where I felt a little shaky, but that was discussed that one time. So probably the group as a whole covered just about everything here. A surprise for me came at the bottom, "What motivates people to change teaching behavior over the years," the surprise for me along those lines was how much we tend to do what we enjoy. That seems very simple, but our enjoyment seems to be keyed in to what is good for kids. I mean, if something's going well or working well, we enjoy doing it. That impressed me at how much more people seem to be enjoying teaching reading now than formerly. And I thought that was a good motivation.

Marlene: I appreciate that input, Karina. Did anyone else have a chance to look over that and have any feelings about it?

Chris: I also felt like we covered the areas really well, whether it was accidentally or very planned and we just didn't know how planned it was. I did think the areas were covered.

Marlene: Did you feel from the next page, then, the things that we should have a *right to expect from the members of this group,* that we lived up to the expectations that we had of each other?

Truda: We could put a big star next to "honesty!" [laughing] That's what was so great about it!

Karina: Yes, I know of forums where honesty is there, but the good feeling isn't. And what's really impressed me is the fact that we can live with the fact that we teach in different ways. And I think that's great! I mean, that's the way to be a community is to be together and be different and to be glad about it.

Laura: That's what I felt, too. I was apprehensive when I started with a group like this, knowing our vast philosophical differences. I thought, "Will it work? Will it all jive together?"
Chris: And I think the openness, too, even though you didn't agree, there was a lot of opening of the way you believed--listening to other people and thinking, "Well, let's try that," or "Maybe this is valid." And there was a lot of persuasion going each way. And it wasn't by one person. It was a real sharing.
Laura: And I think what I also came away with is that there is not just one real way to teach reading.
Marlene: Let's go to that first page where there are four questions, stated briefly but maybe not so briefly talked about. 1. *Throughout the support group, what kind of feelings or dispositions did you experience*? Have we already hit that and talked about that?
Rebekah: One thing, too, I felt terribly inadequate. You know, I still feel, compared to many of you, but I do feel more comfortable with what I do. You know, like Karina said, "We each have our own thing that we like doing and works well."
Truda: I ditto that. When I saw those people sitting around here, "Just what I need!" I thought.
Bonnie: I put down that at times there was frustration due to a lack of time for preparation and classroom implementation on things. There were so many ideas tossed out and I thought, "Wouldn't that really be wonderful if I had time to do that, to sit down and go through what I was doing and plug in all those strategies?" And I think that's where my frustration came in, you know, lack of time.
Chris: And yet--I think I'm skipping ahead a little bit--I put the same sense of frustration, and yet to me this clarified so much. The validity of just having such a support group was the fact that what we were introduced to over the last two years came just in brief meetings, 45 minutes, two little meetings and then you were out there on your own. And I just don't think we can learn and implement, so this then was a further follow-up.
Truda: Start to put it together.
Chris: How much more we were able to use it. So a lot of growth has come out of it, even though there are still those areas when it went too fast for us.
Laura: It showed me, too, that it does take time. I look back to about five years ago when I went to a workshop on story schema. At that point in time, it was like a new concept to me, and I felt like I wasn't interested, and I came away and I didn't get much from it. Until a few years ago when I got back into it again, and then when we did our strategy inservices, it was really familiar to *me*, but then I thought everyone else should have had it quickly, too. And I almost forgot that . . .
Chris: And really when you did that, one month and then a month later you did a quick follow-up thing. If you look at

that, that's no where near enough in order to *truly* implement. You use a little, but now it seems to be fitting together. You look at your reading lesson and you say, "Now what could I use with this story? What would work the best with that?" Now you've got it. It's like you've got so many more bags of tricks out there to pull from.
Karina: I think in order to own anything, to be able to use it as though you own it, you need a lot of hand-holding--at least *I* need a lot of hand-holding, you know, for a couple of years' worth. And I don't think it's realistic to say, "Okay, we're going to have an inservice and then our teachers will have it." I think you've got to inservice them, and inservice them again, and hold their hand for a couple of years and get them in support groups, and *then* you might see some change. Otherwise it's just going to be filed. "Well, it's really pretty interesting, but I really don't know if . . . "
Truda: That's why teachers are frustrated. They throw something at us one time and then they leave us.
Karina: I don't think administrators realize this--how much hand-holding is needed.
Truda: Working it through.
Rebekah: Think of all the conferences you've attended and taken wonderful notes and then you've never done anything with it.
Truda: The notes are somewhere in a drawer. Maybe the leader was peppy and interesting, and that kind of thing, but when you lose that high, well . . .
Karina: Well, the key is to be tied in to **colleagues** who are *peppy* and *interesting*, and then you can . . . That's why even coming together here has been so good, because different ones of us have caught on to different things and we're using different things.
Laura: But you need a readiness. Like Truda, you were so ready and you wanted to know more. If you weren't ready . . .
Truda: Desperate, desperate is the word! [laughing] No, this is right and this is something we have to realize, but it should be available to those who need it. And I think that there are those . . . for example, I know there were a lot more people interested in *this* until it became a once a week. And moving ahead to number 4, if I may for a minute, I think a once a month or a bi-monthly support group is not out of the question. I think it's very, very feasible on a long-term basis. For me it would be great.
Karina: That's talking about on our own time. But I think meeting once a week is a bit much when you think of it as over and above everything else that we run around and do.
Truda: I'm not talking about once a week. I'm talking about once a month or once every-other month.
Karina: That's right. I grant that. I think if it's to be on our own time after school, every two weeks or once a month is a much more viable meeting schedule; however, I was wondering what would happen if we met during a half hour of

lunch hour plus our special, an hour to meet not on own time. When I think of the hassle we had trying to coordinate calendars and people with meetings and appointments and everything. That is such a burdensome thing to have to deal with. If the district thinks that it's important for this kind of thing to go on, and if the district regards its teachers as professionals, it would seem to me that it would not be unfeasible to make some provision that would facilitate those persons meeting together who voluntarily chose to during the week somehow. Because I think it's really important to continue to meet together.

Truda: We have noon hours. Someone could easily eat with our kids . . .

Chris: The ideal thing would be to cut that noon hour down and have that time either before school that you were mandated to be here for that kind of thing, or after school, too. You see, that whole hour noon hour . . .

Karina: The pioneers are willing to do it, come what may, but for everyone to get into this kind of thing, it's something that the administration backs up and makes it much easier to do than it is right now, because right now it's hard to do.

Chris: It's been a real commitment.

Suzann: I think it's really hard to squeeze anything in during the day when the kids are here . . .

Chris: That's my thought, too.

Suzann: Because one of the reasons we can communicate and share so much and so well is because we're not stressed out [laughing]. We come here and we're relaxed . . .

Truda: And eat!

Suzann: If we want to stay and talk to Marlene until six, we can. If we want to, you know, there's no time when we're not interrupted. And to do anything to not rush that--just forget it.

Karina: In Princeton, New Jersey they send the kids home every Wednesday afternoon.

Suzann: Even at 2:30. Like if you had a day a month and they left at 2:30, and then you did something. But to have to be at a meeting where you want to just be free to share, and then go back to teach for 2 hours [laughing]. . .

Karina: Yes, I guess that would be . . .

Chris: If it were at the end of a day, though . . .

Suzann: At the end of a day, and not even at the beginning of the day . . .

Bonnie: Or every-other week . . .

Chris: There are a thousand other things so that one day every week could be used for something special. I mean, everyone is *crying* for time to communicate with each other on different subjects . . .

Marlene: It sounds to me like what we've been talking about is some of the conclusions we've reached and some of the recommendations related to question 4 [*What conclusions have*

you reached about the issues of reading curriculum implementation and/or staff development as a result of this inservice?]

Truda: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get us down there.

Marlene: No, that's fine, that's fine. It's kind of appropriate to talk about this--the Reading Study Committee is going to be meeting tomorrow morning, and they're going to be talking about, "Where do we go from here?" Number 2: *Any information, attitudes, skills, knowledges you've gained that has influenced your thinking.* Have we talked about that? Did anyone else have anything that she wanted to add to that?

Laura: One thing I do a lot more of is listen to the kids, doing more of the think alouds, verbal rehearsal. I say, "When you look at this word, what are you doing?" I try to figure out what they do. And it's been really amazing: when I show them a beginning word, I say, "What do you do when I show you this word?" And there's absolutely nothing. So they try verbal rehearsal, and they usually say the word over and over in their head, and then they write it down, and they improve dramatically.

Suzann: I don't know if this goes in at this number, but I thought the thing that has helped me the most is all the stuff we've talked about, I would consider the "good stuff." So now I hit the "good stuff," and it helps me with my planning, because I don't spend so much time flummin' around with stuff that's not so important, you know. I figure that if I hit some of these things that we are doing, that you've taught us, and focus in on those, and sure, you can make those as creative as you want, but I feel confident that I'm hitting the "good stuff" and I don't have to worry so much about all this fun and games stuff. So it helps me to focus. And the second thing that I like, you know we've been meeting with grade levels, but I really like meeting 1, 2, 3, right up to 5--that went well, because when you meet with your grade level, you don't get the view. When I hear 4th grade teachers talk and 2nd grade--boy, it lifts the burden from me to think that I don't have to do all this stuff. I hear what they're doing, and I think, "Oh, shoot, I don't have to spend all this time . . ."

Truda: Put all that college material away, Suzann [laughing].

Suzann: It really relaxed me a lot to think, "Oh, shoot, why am I so worried about that? They'll get that in third and fourth and more so than just at my grade level." Good at up and down level rather than just the horizontal.

Chris: I think just hearing the philosophy of different unique and individual persons--it helped me to clarify some of those things that were just kind of spinning around in here and I was just questioning so much. It kind of pulled some of that together. Each person's philosophy and sharing together has clarified for me, and I'm more confident than I was when we started.

Truda: I guess it was good for me to hear other people have

failures when they're doing something. Things don't always work out.
Chris: And in turn their joys, too, like the things you shared, Truda, the specific things.
Truda: And the accomplishment, the sense of accomplishment I feel now when I teach reading that I have never ever felt--that finally the kids--for example, the book I finished . . . That really makes you feel good. That really, really does.
Suzann: I loved that day, when you came in here, those words, "The feeling of accomplishment!" I think that is, when you feel that--some people don't [ever] feel that.
Truda: I never did in reading--I never did.
Chris: And that means the kids . . .
Truda: Laura is so happy over me. She feels a kindred spirit.
Laura: We love you, Truda.
Marlene: Is there anyone who would like to add anything to # 4 about conclusions you have reached? Things we should talk to the Reading Study Committee about?
Truda: Oh, I've got a list here.
Marlene: Please.
Truda: Well, the first thing has been talked about. I think we need guidance and inservice, but not one-time shot. Continuing help for teachers on a regular basis, realizing as Karina said, "We need to be spoonfed for awhile if we're going to do it." You know, we get these things thrown at us--the New Definition of Reading--now I would like to have someone carry us through for a couple of years, as you said. Modeling--I think that would be such a help to me, to have you reading teachers come in and model each of these strategies for me with *my* class. Not on a TV tape, not with people who get these small groups, but with *my* class, exactly. To me, that would be such a benefit for me.
Rebekah: Virginia Soper was saying that she does that.
Truda: That's all she does.
Rebekah: I mean, she showed us her yearly schedule: on this particular day she's doing a KWL here. And it would be wonderful for us to sit back and watch.
Bonnie: Watch.
Karina: And then be critiqued as you're doing it.
Truda: Yes, yes, tell me what I'm doing wrong. I don't have a problem with that at all. Tell me what I'm doing right [laughing].
Rebekah: I can critique you from across the hall [laughing].
Truda: I have such a fog-horn voice--everybody hears me--oh [to Bonnie and Suzann], can you hear each other, too?
Suzann: I know it's not going well when that door closes.
Marlene: Any other comments under that?
Bonnie: I put that we must not rush into getting a new text, but we also have to be aware of the need on the part of children and teachers for something concrete and realistic. I just have the sense that some people--for people who haven't had this type of support group, to go

back and say, "This works, this doesn't work, how can I change, what can I do?"
Truda: But even for the "experts"--you know, we talked about, "Don't throw out the basal." Well, it's fine if you use it correctly--that's one little note I have. I learned that the basal is not the Bible, okay? I can use it in an order other than what it's printed, and I'm doing that. And that makes me feel much better. But still, I like to use it for some of the stories.
Rebekah: I found out it's not so terrible. For a few years there, they said, "You don't want to use it." But there are some wonderful . . .
Truda: Like they're short and you can put them in between your literature sorts of things. And some of these stories in the basal are literature, and they get a taste of it.
Karina: I think one of the things that has happened in our relationship to basals is that back when our basals were new, they kind of controlled the reading program. And now we know that *we* can control . . .
Truda: That's right!
Karina: And we can do the managing, and not be controlled by the teacher's manual. And I think that's real significant.
Truda: I think if you threw them out there would be real pandemonium, there would be real panic through the system. Don't you think so?
Marlene: I have a question related to the voluntary-ness of those strategy workshops and people who were not trained in them. Do you have any recommendations for that kind of thing for the future?
Truda: I recommend that everyone do it, but how can you make everyone do it?
Bonnie: There's got to be a time release. They've got to deem it necessary that they've got a time release, because some of us will say, "Hey, look, I spent all my time and I went to those before school meetings," and you know, we can pat ourselves on the back for doing that, but . . .
Truda: Not on a continuing basis.
Bonnie: No, and I think if the administration thinks it's important enough, then they've got to give us time-release. At 2:30, they can dismiss us at 2:30. They don't have to dismiss the high school and middle school. They can dismiss just the elementary buildings, and they can still run the bus runs backwards that day, or something.
Rebekah: And it [teaching of reading strategies] needs to go according to grades. Right now our 1st and 2nd grade teachers don't do anything with it, and they have to.
Truda: That's what the state assessment is based on.
Rebekah: I mean, we give that thing in September.
Truda: I don't think even all of our 3rd grade teachers do it.
Rebekah: No.
Laura: They aren't really using?

Truda: No. So the kids that come to us really start out cold. I mean, we teach from day 1.
Laura: I wonder, too, about the feasibility of a refresher of the strategies.
Truda: Yes.

At this point, because of a full "smorgasbord" of left-over ideas from previous sessions that needed to be addressed, I felt it necessary to bring this portion of the meeting to a halt, although it appeared that the discussion could have continued for some time.

The events described in this section, Situations, will be discussed and interpeted further within the next chapter, Findings.

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IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHER EMPOWERMENT IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT TOWARD READING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/IMPLEMENTATION

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CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This fourth chapter will describe and interpret findings related to empowerment and staff development toward reading curriculum implementation. The descriptions and interpretations will identify areas that answer previously stated research questions (Chapter 1), are consistent with precedent literature (Chapter 2), and have emerged during the various activities/situations of this research (Chapter 3).

Because the issue of teacher empowerment permeates my research data, its evidences within the district in relationship to the work of the Reading Study Committee will first be specifically noted. Subsequent to that will be a discussion of the kind of support, or staff development toward reading curriculum implementation, that is congruent with the principles of teacher empowerment.

The following structure will be used in this chapter to describe the findings of the research. First, the raw data will be interpreted in the light of literature on teacher empowerment and staff development. I will draw from Maeroff (1988, 1989) as a primary source on teacher empowerment and from Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) as a primary source on staff development. In conjunction with the latter, the responses of individuals in the district to three types of

staff development (outside expert, on-site expert, and humanistic teacher center) will also be cited, with particular attention paid to the pre-and post-participation comments from those who were part of the humanistic teacher center group. At the conclusion of this chapter will be a report of questionnaire findings from two national polls on teacher decision-making. The responses of the Omega classroom teachers and the Reading Support Group members to those same questions will be compared.

Teacher Empowerment

The research questions proposed in Chapter 1, which will be addressed in this section on teacher empowerment, are these:

1. How does one district attempt to empower its teachers for reading curriculum change?
2. What happens when these teachers become involved in the governance process? How do they react to an empowerment structure?
3. How do teachers and administrators in this district view teacher empowerment? What does it mean for the district's administrators, teachers, and, ultimately, the students?
4. When do these teachers feel empowered? How do they feel about the amount of control they have/do not have? What are the conditions that deter/encourage professional growth and development within this setting?

I will first examine the three components which Maeroff claims are essential if empowerment is to take place. Whether consciously or unconsciously, it can be demonstrated that the Omega district has followed Maeroff's (1988a) "blueprint" for empowering its teachers: the data are replete with examples of these components (status,

knowledge, and power) in the specific context of the work of the district's Reading Study Committee.

Evidences of Empowerment.

Boosting Status. Three major ways in which the district is attempting to boost the status of its teachers are evident.

First, administrative support is being given. An overview of the events which led to the present state illustrate this point: the Superintendent of Schools caught the vision through his previous research and experiences as Curriculum Director in a former school district; the Superintendent shared his vision with the Board of Education and the Curriculum Council; the Curriculum Council passed the vision on to teachers through a proposed Curriculum Reorganization effort; the district's teachers were asked to give input into the Curriculum Reorganization efforts; the call went forth from the Curriculum Council for volunteers to serve on a Reading Study Committee, the first Curriculum Writing Committee; the Board of Education hired the Curriculum Council Chairperson for the newly-created position of Curriculum Director; the new Curriculum Director stated that the Reading Study Committee's work was to be "Teacher initiated, teacher led, teacher developed, teacher assessed/monitored."

The Curriculum Director explicitly spoke to the Reading Study Committee of support from the top: "I went to the Board of Education Curriculum Committee, and they were very

receptive. I was encouraged by that. [The Superintendent] is in our corner." [Fieldnotes, 2/9/89] The Reading Study Committee chairperson also received positive feedback from the Board of Education in her two presentations on behalf of the Committee. [Audiotape transcript, 4/17/89, Fieldnotes, 2/12/90]

The Curriculum Director himself promised his support in several ways as noted in the Reading Study Committee Meeting vignette, where he gave his viewpoint on broad and specific curricular issues, offered his secretarial staff "to help with the 'nitty-gritty' things that turn teachers off," served as liaison between the Reading Study Committee and the Board of Education, provided amenities, validated Chloe's leadership and met with her regularly to discuss the Committee's future direction, encouraged feedback and input from Committee members, and verbally praised the efforts of the Committee.

Maeroff (1989) specifically states that the "good will and understanding of principals is essential if empowerment is to take root" (p. 9). On the basis of my participant observations, interviews, and site document collection, I concluded that although they show their support in various ways and in differing degrees, the elementary principals are, indeed, attempting to boost teacher status by exerting efforts to provide a supportive climate in which the process of teacher empowerment can take root. To illustrate that point, during my interview with each principal, a decision

which they had made jointly during the previous summer was brought up. Washington's principal is quoted here:

> During the summer, the elementary principals met to set goals for the coming year. Reading was the number one goal. For me, that means to support the Reading Study Committee with inservice time, materials, and budget . . . [Interview transcript, 2/15/89]

By putting the work of the Reading Study Committee on such a pedestal, however, it became evident that the principals' own agendas had to be rearranged. For one principal, this meant that he intentionally held fewer faculty meetings throughout the 1988-1989 school year in order to encourage his teachers to attend the voluntary Reading Strategy Inservices. Another principal allotted at least ten minutes of each faculty meeting time for Reading Study Committee updates. The third principal/Chapter I director allowed reading teachers release time to plan for the inservices.

One of these principals explicitly stated the need for the administration to actively support teacher-initiated change:

> I would say that there are staff people, professional teachers, who have been pushing for the need to have changes--teachers themselves. Some of them are reading teachers, and the classroom teachers have felt, "Something's got to be done [in reading]." And that's going to be the most effective way. And I think our role as administrators has to be supportive, keeping in touch with research and materials that are available, [as well as] what's going on in the classroom. But a forced change will not be as effective as what I think is happening now. It's pretty much a grass-roots desire. [Fieldnotes, 2/15/89]

As can be seen, administrative support is being deliberately and overtly given to the district's teachers.

The second way in which the district is attempting to boost teacher status is through the encouragement of internal leadership. Not only are the district administrators giving support, but they are also beginning to acknowledge local teachers as the educational authorities in reading curriculum change by actively encouraging them to assume leadership roles. This can be seen in the Curriculum Reorganization, where department/chair subgroupings have internal chairpersons who are remunerated for their additional responsibilities. It can also be seen in the effort to encourage leadership for the Reading Study Committee from within the volunteer ranks rather than with administrative personnel as had previously been the case. In both instances, off-site training was provided for these individuals in the work of leadership and curriculum through giving them opportunities to attend specifically-designed workshops and relevant conferences.

Utilizing the expertise of on-site personnel (reading teachers, Reading Study Committee members, and classroom teachers) to conduct district inservices was not only condoned, but it was publicly acknowledged. The district's public relations newspaper, the elementary staff bulletins, the Reading Study Committee's newsletter, the Curriculum Director's presentations in other communities all praised the work of "us teaching us" and the grassroots efforts of "spreading from peer to peer and colleague to colleague." These illustrate the encouragement of internal leadership.

The third way in which attempts are being made to boost teacher status is through eliciting and addressing teachers' needs. The fact is being acknowledged that classroom teachers have concerns and that these concerns must be recognized and resolved. The district is listening for and to the teacher's voice as it pertains to the Reading Study Committee membership itself, to the Reading Needs Assessment and Reading Curriculum Guide Evaluation given to the entire elementary teaching staff, and to the ways in which the reading teachers are offering support to classroom teachers.

The Reading Study Committee vignette gives examples of the ways in which the opinions of the membership are brought to light. Their input was requested on matters of the district reading philosophy ("Look at this rough draft and decide if you think that's what our committee is all about"), subcommittee membership ("We need to talk and think about where we are right now"), reactions to the inservices ("I wanted to ask just quickly for any feedback on the strategy inservices that you got"), and plans for the writing of the curriculum guide ("Will it be release time or summer sessions?"). The Curriculum Director explicitly stated:

> We welcome your input. I think that's the thing we need to think through. [The chairperson] needs to think through the direction, "Where do we go from here?" [She will] talk to you personally and say, "What do you want to do? How do you want to proceed from here?" Yes, there are some tasks that we can fulfill, meaningful, good hard work. [Fieldnotes, 1/17/89]

The needs of classroom teachers are taken seriously by the Committee. The compilation of their concerns as expressed on the Needs Assessment was discussed:

> I know trade books are very popular, and the literature base is, too, but we still have that big core of teachers--90%--who want that structure that the basal will provide them, even those teachers who are totally using trade books now. They say that they would still like the structure of the basal and then go out from there and expand it. [Fieldnotes, 1/17/89]

Teacher input was also sought for the writing of the curriculum guide, itself, through specific grade-level reports to the appropriate Committee membership. As one member stated, "We took what teachers already were doing in the field of reading and expanded on it to fit the New Definition of Reading." [Fieldnotes, 10/20/89] Written comments on the rough draft of the reading curriculum guide were solicited, compiled, and made available to the Committee, as well.

Classroom teachers took advantage of the fact that the local trainers were available to give ongoing assistance and support as the need arose:

> When they have trouble, they come to us. [E.g.,] after they introduce the four parts [of Reciprocal Teaching] to the whole class, then they aren't sure how to do it and [have children] take turns being the teacher and how to manage and still keep it interesting. [Interview transcript, 2/3/89]

The fact that local trainers are being used makes it possible for immediate support to come in at least three different ways: the provision of materials (handouts in the inservice sessions and additional pertinent materials as the need arises between sessions), the sharing of ideas,

successes, and difficulties (again, both within the inservice sessions and between sessions), and the demonstration of techniques within classrooms, as one had done:

> [A teacher] didn't feel like he knew enough from the half hour, so I'm going to go in and help him this week. I'll introduce the two harder ones to his whole class, and we'll cancel my reading group from his room during that time. Then he'll do the next two. [Interview transcript, 2/3/89]

As can be seen, the Reading Study Committee members are told that their opinions are valued, the elementary staff's collective assessment of its needs is prominent in the decision-making process, and the unique concerns of teachers are being dealt with in a personal way by support staff.

In summary, then, boosting status occurs as administrative support is being given, as internal leadership is being encouraged, and as teachers' needs are being elicited and addressed.

Increasing Knowledge. Within this second of Maeroff's components, three major areas can again be identified as the knowledge base is being built.

The first way that knowledge is increased is through the conscious attempt to inform the district's decision makers. These decision makers are the Curriculum Director, the Reading Study Committee members, elementary classroom teachers, administrators, the Board of Education, and the community. The methods used for informing the decision makers are through both external (conferences, inservices, coursework, own professional reading) and internal

(Curriculum Director, reading personnel, Committee members) experts. This occurs on-site (newsletters, modeling, presentations, word-of-mouth) and in other locales. Several examples are given in the Staff Development section which follows.

The second way in which knowledge is being increased is directly related to the fact that local personnel are becoming trainers. The district reading consultants, along with members of the committee, prepared themselves through conferences, their own reading, practice/experience, and dialogue. When I asked both the principals and the reading teachers how that leadership role had come about, who had "authorized" it, their responses indicated that the origin of the flow was not from a top-down, authoritarian, external locus of control, but rather, from a bottom-up, autonomous, internal locus of control. The latter can be seen by the fact that this leadership is attributed to two sources, both teacher-centered. One principal put it this way:

> I believe it's two-pronged. From the Reading Study Committee who said, "We ought to do some of these inservice things." And maybe it's coincidental that it's the reading teachers themselves, maybe they took it over. So I guess the main thrust may have come from the Reading Study Committee and was then given to the reading teachers. [Interview transcript, 2/15/89]

The reading teachers confirmed his diagnosis when they said that they had *assumed* the role on the basis of their training and their confidence in the strategies' potential to improve student learning.

Another principal also talked of the leadership the reading teachers had demonstrated in the inservices:

> So these ladies took it upon themselves after all this talk, and knowing that it needed to be done and that they were the most knowledgeable with those strategies, since they had been to the workshops and had used some of them. They worked their tail off and got them planned. I think the thing here that's important is that they didn't go to the Curriculum Council to get official backing so that they could have it during school time, or they didn't go to get official backing to have an inservice day. They saw the parameters and the teachers were saying, "We don't want to be out of our classrooms." They listened, and [asked], "What is the need?" They made those decisions. I don't know how, but they made those decisions. [Interview transcript, 2/9/89]

This "teachers teaching teachers" model was looked upon so favorably within the district that the Reading Study Committee chairperson informed the Board of Education that this process would continue:

> Basically, we plan on doing a lot of in-house inservices on not only the strategies, but whatever we come up with on our reading curriculum to let people know what we're doing, how they can implement it, and monitor the program once it's in place to make sure it's going along smoothly, to make sure it's meeting the students' needs, the teachers' needs. I think inservice, though, is a real key, and on our survey, teachers really ask for [it]. The two things they asked for most were inservice and quality tools to do their job, materials that were effective and up-to-date. [Audiotape transcript, 4/17/89]

The third aspect of increasing knowledge is through the fact that the elementary classroom teachers and administrators are being educated through Reading Strategy Inservices. The Reciprocal Teaching Information and Debriefing Sessions portrayed as vignettes in the previous chapter give a visual picture of what the "in-house

inservices" looked like. These will be discussed in greater detail under the Staff Development section.

In summary, knowledge is increasing as decision makers are being informed, local personnel are becoming trainers, and Reading Strategy Inservices are being conducted.

Providing Access to Decision-Making. This third category of Maeroff can be illustrated with three subpoints, as well.

The first aspect of providing access to decision-making can be seen as collaboration is being facilitated. This is evident in several ways within the district. The Reading Study Committee members are collaborating to make decisions regarding the district's reading curriculum, the reading teachers are collaborating to make decisions regarding the inservices, and the elementary teachers are collaborating to solve their questions and concerns regarding strategic inservice implementation.

That the Reading Study Committee members are collaborating to make decisions regarding the district's reading curriculum can be seen in the Reading Study Committee Meeting vignette presented earlier, especially as input is requested and difficult issues are discussed. One member of the Committee gave his perspective on that collaboration:

> On the inservice of all teachers, [the Committee] kept talking about, "How do we pass this knowledge on? How do we get our peers to use it?" It's radical! It's much different from what we've been doing! It's going to mean a big change in [teachers'] philosophies and practices. Practices--that's the big thing. And we

> talked and we talked and we talked: "How can we do it?" Well, they kept looking at it, and I'm not sure how it evolved, but at one of the meetings I remember sitting there, and they were saying, "What are we going to do the following year? We've got to run some inservices for our teachers. How do we do that?" [Interview transcript, 2/9/89]

The reading teachers themselves talked about the amount of time they had spent together collaborating to make decisions relating to the inservice presentations. They alone took the burden of deciding what strategies to present and how to present them, realizing that, although they possessed knowledge and materials, there was still the necessity to integrate and adapt this information to the realities of the district. They also made visual aids (posters, charts), tracked down audiovisual materials, and prepared and collated the multiple pages of handouts. This was done in frequent meetings primarily on their own time, in addition to teaching a full case load of remedial reading students.

Two administrators said that they might have done things differently had they been consulted: one felt that both information giving and training for implementation were too much to expect within the constraints of a half hour presentation, and the other felt that the order of the topics was different from what he would have chosen. Each, however, gave the reading teachers the benefit of the doubt and expressed trust in their professional judgment.

Classroom teachers were also collaborating to solve the problems they encountered in attempting to implement the

strategies, as is evident in the Debriefing Session vignette. This was done by sharing their own successes, failures and adaptations, by referring back to the printed materials, and by words of encouragement.

The second way in which access to decision-making is being provided is through the collegiality that is being developed as teachers connect with their peers on a professional level during the voluntary inservice meetings. Again, many examples of this can be seen in the Debriefing vignette. Just the fact that these teachers were there at all denotes collegiality, as one administrator noted:

> It should not be voluntary, everybody should have to go, everybody needs it. The best is to have it [on release time], but it is easier this way, because they're saying to each other and their peers, "This is important." The message they're giving is, "We are a group. We're Omega teachers." So I think, together as a team, trying to build that team--here we're headed toward something. [Interview transcript, 2/9/89]

The Curriculum Director also spoke positively of the collegiality within one Committee meeting:

> The strategies, teacher inservices, the getting together with various elementaries is absolutely dynamite . . . The demonstrations of the strategies, the sharing of experiences, the talking about the way we do our reading business is absolutely great . . . Talking about theory, talking about teaching, talking about feedback and evaluation. I just don't know that you can do any better than that! [Fieldnotes, 2/9/89]

The third aspect of providing access to decision-making relates to the fact that power is being shared. Administrators are sharing their power with teachers, reading teachers are sharing their power with classroom

teachers, and classroom teachers are sharing their power with students.

Administrators are sharing their power with teachers, albeit, sometimes with a bit of uncertainty, as one principal admits:

> Now, I'm not sure where the principal stands . . . Now we have these grade group and department chairs, and in the curriculum areas we're trying to work that out, because we want [teachers] to be facilitators. So as three elementary principals, we're having problems . . . I want to know what's going on in curriculum, [but] I really don't know what [teachers] are doing. I have some ideas, the strengths and weaknesses, and so forth, but I have to trust them in the things that I do see to support that. [Interview transcript, 2/9/89]

One example of such shared power occurred in my initial visit to the field, when one reading teacher told me that she had talked with her principal the previous day about her discomfiture with the fact that her Awareness Session was billed as the final item on a 20-item faculty meeting agenda. He told her that he would see what he could do. At the 7:45 a.m. faculty meeting, that principal quickly highlighted or dismissed the preceding items, and fifteen minutes later, he said to her, "The rest of the morning is yours." [Fieldnotes, 11/1/89]

The fact that reading teachers are sharing their power with classroom teachers can be demonstrated in the Reciprocal Teaching Information and Debriefing vignettes. In the Information Session, the reading teacher shared the stage with a classroom teacher and gave her the tools (overhead transparencies, packets of materials) ahead of

time to prepare her for her task, while in the Debriefing Session, this same reading teacher put aside her own agenda so that priority could be placed upon the attendees' own attempts to implement the strategy in the preceding weeks. One principal spoke, as well, of a "professional decision" which had been made by another reading teacher to change the content of her agenda to meet the expressed concerns related to the relevance of the strategies to the participants' grade levels.

Classroom teachers are also sharing their power with students. This was especially evident in the instance of the Reciprocal Teaching strategy, where the ultimate goal is that children eventually assume the role of teacher. Respondents to my Reciprocal Teaching Participants' Questionnaire intimated that they were aware that their students are being empowered: "The teacher is trying not to be a dictator. Hopefully, we're sharing responsibilities, and I think that's the aim of the [Reciprocal Teaching strategy] anyway." [Interview transcript, 3/1/89]

Teachers see that the new strategies have helped children to take an active role in their own learning, another empowerment issue:

> [The new strategies] make them more aware that they're here to learn, and it's not I'm here to learn reading, but they're here to learn reading, so they take more responsibility for it. [Interview transcript, 3/1/89]

In summary, there are three ways in which access to decision-making is provided in this setting: collaboration

is being facilitated, collegiality is being developed, and power is being shared.

In this section, I have drawn from the Reading Study Committee's activities to identify those situations which demonstrate the components of boosting status, increasing knowledge, and providing access to decision making, which Maeroff has claimed are the underpinnings for teacher empowerment.

When I mentioned these three characteristics to the Omega district's Curriculum Director, he stated that he would add a fourth characteristic; i.e., celebration of success: "I think it's really important that we recognize the workers, the people who put their elbows down and can get the job done." [Fieldnotes, 7/26/90] He spoke of the custom he had initiated of taking the members of the Committee out to a local restaurant for dinner just before they went *en masse* to present the Curriculum guide they had written corporately to the Board of Education. He also said that he was contemplating purchasing special curriculum pins to be given those who were part of any one of the many curriculum "writes." My conclusion to his statements are that these efforts to "recognize the workers," rather than forming a separate category, would well correlate with Maeroff's category of "boosting status."

The reactions to teacher empowerment within this setting will now be identified.

Reactions to Empowerment.

How do teachers and administrators in this district view teacher empowerment? Their mixed reactions to teacher empowerment can be associated with the following facts: empowerment represents a change in the *status quo*, empowerment shifts authority and responsibility, and empowerment takes time.

The first issue deals with the fact that teacher empowerment reflects a change in the *status quo*. This looks at attitudes toward change itself, as well as the social realities and the dailiness of teaching about which Lieberman and Miller (1979) wrote.

The Superintendent, who had witnessed the effectiveness of teachers making decisions about curricular issues as "dynamite" in his previous district, was initially taken aback by the apparent apathy of the Omega staff to his writing mandate. By planting the seed of discontent prior to the Curriculum Reorganization attempt, by educating the Board of Education, and by placing key people in strategic spots, the Superintendent had been preparing the soil for years, according to the Curriculum Director's assessment. [Audiotape transcript, 7/27/90] Consequently, the Superintendent's reaction to the change was one of deep satisfaction. For him, an eight-year effort had finally begun to reach fruition: "[the Superintendent's] in our corner." [Fieldnotes, 1/17/89] The Superintendent also expressed to me the fact that he was aware of the

implications: once teachers gain power, it is difficult for them to release it. [Fieldnotes, 6/5/90]

The Curriculum Director was the administrator who was most directly involved with the more overt and visible attempts at empowering teachers, i.e., writing the various curriculum guides. He spoke of his allotted budget for curriculum as being a "sacred cow," from which the Board could not dip to buy a new bus or to balance out another financial shortfall. He interpreted that to be evidence of the Board's approval for the work being done. He also spoke of the fact that the Board had been "excited and impressed" with the resultant curriculum guides. [Audiotape, 7/27/90]

The Curriculum Director expressed his own pleasure with the professional way in which teachers were reacting to their new responsibilities related to expenditures and collegiality. He was pleased that many of the decisions in the district were now being made by those closest to the action, by classroom teachers who will directly affect what goes on in the classroom. He said that he was encouraged by the caution with which they carefully analyzed first their resource *needs* ("That's different from their *wants*"), thus justifying his faith in their decision making ability regarding expenditures. In addition, he spoke with enthusiasm about the group power, peer support, and professional dialogue that was occurring during the curriculum writing activities.

Under the **umbrella of** teacher empowerment, Omega teachers were being **asked to reform their thinking and practice toward the organizational structure, as well as the philosophy, methods, and materials of reading instruction. Teachers, who had formerly been accustomed to being private and isolated from their peers, were now put into working relationships with them as they accepted responsibility for a major joint project. This required that they learn to work with their peers in collegial and collaborative ways. In addition to breaking down their own isolation and building supportive networks, this also demanded that they take risks and expose themselves to each other. One teacher who worked on another curriculum "write" confided to me: "They've said to us, 'You're the experts. You do it. Who wants to work on this area?' We begin with our strengths and then go from there. There's a lot of feeling of panic, because we have to take the finished product to our peers."** [Fieldnotes, 10/20/89]

Empowerment also shifts power and responsibility. Teachers and administrators have to be prepared to assume new roles. Teachers writing the reading curriculum needed to be willing to give themselves to many hours of subcommittee and committee work, as well as additional time for informing themselves of the issues.

Many of them needed to take leadership roles outside their own classrooms that they had never before adopted. The Reading Study Committee chairperson, Chloe, was one of

these individuals. She asked to meet with me at least four times during the first year of the study to talk of various issues: the role of the Curriculum Director and what could/should be expected of him in the way of support; the role of the members of the Committee who, while they were developing a common mission, demonstrated both distrust and impatience at times; and the role of the district elementary teachers to the Committee. In regard to the latter, Chloe asked five individuals to gather some background data from their grade level peers as a starting point for the Committee's summer write. One of them wrote back to her in protest:

1. What you want is the job of the committee;
2. We don't know what you want;
3. This is terrible timing;
4. Who made the decision? Who does make decisions? It seems like someone is shooting themselves in the foot or [there is] just not a good communication line. [Site document, 5/5/89]

Reading teachers, especially, had assumed much of the responsibility for planning and carrying out the inservices. This turned out to be somewhat disempowering for them, however: "There was not much of a choice not to: there was the choice of *how* to but not *whether* to." [Interview transcript, 2/3/89]

The changing responsibilities for the reading teachers resulted in a greater work load as they sought to add reading staff development to an already full-time case load of remedial reading students. They experienced a great deal of ambivalence regarding that dual role: on the one hand,

they were committed to staff development, but on the other hand, they felt "put upon" because they were having to do so much additional preparation without having either financial or time remuneration ("Even grade group chairpersons and coaches of sports get an extra $2,000-4,000 per year for their work"). [Interview transcript, 2/3/89]

I felt their intense commitment ("I eat and sleep it"), their fears--and tears ("It's so difficult to present to one's peers. I'm a basket case the whole week before"), their frustration ("Sometimes I think, 'What is my main responsibility here?' Here I am with the kids I see daily, and yet I have this many teachers that I'm preparing for on the side. And that is something new to me, so it seems more dominant. I am really pressured in both of those areas"), their exhaustion ("I'll be dead by the end of the year if I have to do another inservice").

Principals, nevertheless, made note of the personal and professional growth in these reading teachers as they enacted their new roles. This was expressly stated by two administrators in regard to Shar:

> I always thought of Shar as being the most shy and quiet of the group, but she was great today! She really jumped in there and was assertive. I really liked the way she did it all together like that at the end. I never would have thought of that. Just think what this is doing to those three reading teachers! [Fieldnotes, 2/22/89]

> I think she was nervous [at the inservice presentations], but she's really starting to blossom. Sometimes we have to be forced into those situations . . . [Interview transcript, 3/28/89]

The attendance at the Reading Strategic Inservices was an issue which proved to be problematic. Although it was billed as "voluntary," a great deal of emphasis was placed upon the percentage of attendance, which was consistently portrayed as being higher than it actually was (the numbers 90-95 percent were constantly bandied about; my calculations ranged from 68-76 percent). In that vein, at least five members of the Reading Study Committee explicitly discussed their discontentment over the fact that two of the grade group chairpersons had not attended the inservices. A complaint was registered with the Curriculum Director, who said, "I'll take care of it." The two grade group chairpersons were at the following meeting. It is probable that their leadership responsibilities had been appealed to, since during the next school year the new reading curriculum guide would be discussed in grade group sessions, something which would potentially be difficult if the leadership were uninformed. Whatever method was used behind the scenes, the "desired" outcome was achieved. The question may be asked, "How empowered did these two individuals feel in this situation?"

This area of enforcement is an issue that needs to be addressed within a teacher-empowered setting. How can the topic be addressed without "disempowering" individuals? If all of this is done by volunteers, what happens when the time comes to ensure that the curriculum guide is followed and not just put on the shelf or in a drawer, as had

previously occurred? Who makes the decision regarding implementation and evaluation: the Curriculum Director, building principals, the Reading Study Committee chairperson, or peers? How will articulation and consistency and continuity be addressed? The Curriculum Director said, "I've already had teachers tell me, 'I'm not going to use [the new textbook]. Go ahead and adopt one, but I'm not going to use it.' That's my problem. So that's difficult." [Fieldnotes, 1/17/89]

Administrators needed to trust teachers to areas that they had previously controlled and for which they had been responsible. This was true especially in chairing committee meetings. The Curriculum Director said at one time that he was unsure whether the Committee was where it should be, and that he needed to be patient. Principals also expressed confusion as to their roles. One principal specifically said that he had to "take a back seat," "go into a nosedive," "go from the visible to the invisible," "wait for them to tell me what they wanted me to do."

In spite of the fact that the administrators stated that they were consciously attempting to provide support, their attempts were not always interpreted in that way. For example, at the Reading Support Group Information Meeting, one teacher mentioned that her principal had allowed her to spend workbook money on tradebooks. Later, however, she related to me that this had not worked out as had been

planned or promised: funding dried up before her allotment of moneys was spent.

Teachers were not reluctant to make public their concerns about the perceived lack of support in front of the administrators themselves. One individual related a time when she had stated the need for administrative support in the presence of the district superintendent:

> Bonnie: Well, [the superintendent] was in there when I was making my statement, "You're pushing too much at us too fast. And what's going to happen is that people are going to throw up their arms and say, 'I can't do it!'"
> Laura: How did he respond to that?
> Bonnie: [He was] just listening. [Fieldnotes, 10/23/89]

Later, both Karina and Bonnie explicitly expressed their concerns about a perceived lack of administrative understanding and support, in spite of the fact that the principal of their school was sitting in the session:

> Karina: I don't think administrators realize this--how much hand-holding is needed . . . *If* the district thinks that it's important for this kind of thing to go on, and *if* the district regards its teachers as professionals, it would seem to me that it would not be unfeasible to make some provision that would facilitate those persons meeting together who voluntarily chose to during the week somehow. The pioneers are willing to do it, come what may, but for everyone to get into this kind of thing, it's something that the adminstration backs up and makes it much easier to do than it is right now, because right now it's hard to do.
> Bonnie: There's got to be a time release. They've got to deem it necessary that they've got a time release, because some of us will say, "Hey, look, I spent all my time and I went to those before-school meetings," and, you know, we can pat ourselves on the back for doing that, but . . .
> Truda: Not on a regular basis.
> Bonnie: No, and I think if the administration thinks it is important enough, then they've got to give us time-release. [Fieldnotes, 12/12/89]

At one Curriculum Council Meeting, the Curriculum Director showed a sensitivity to this issue in his beginning statement:

> Teachers are feeling like a lot is happening, a lot is being asked of them in the change process; for example, school improvement, curriculum guides, core curriculum. The concern was brought up at the last meeting, but there wasn't enough time. We will allow people time to talk today . . . Thank you for bringing this issue **before us. Curriculum is not a one-legged giant: the second leg is staff development. It has not been addressed, but it needs to be. We need to be proactive, not reactive, in this area. [Fieldnotes, 12/14/89]**

The most frequently-articulated difficulty in the area of teacher empowerment was that of time. As was stated earlier, the Superintendent said that it had taken eight years for the concept to come to this point, and "the Board was impatient at times." The Curriculum Reorganization efforts took time to take effect, since teacher input was first solicited. The Curriculum Director spoke of a conversation with the Superintendent, where the expectation was stated that the work of the Reading Study Committee would take a *minimum* of two years.

By the time of the curriculum write, six Reading Study Committee members had resigned because of what they interpreted to be an unreasonable amount of time: "Why do we have to get their input? Why don't we just tell them what to do? We're wasting taxpayers' money. Teachers are laughing at us behind our backs," [Audiotape, 8/6/88] was the way one frustrated member said at her final meeting. A principal said, "Teachers are expecting to have basals this

fall. Now what are they going to say when we have to go back and tell them it won't be for at least another year? What will happen to our before-school meetings if teachers don't get their basals? They'll just fizzle out, won't they?" [Interview transcript, 3/17/89] Both classroom teachers and reading teachers expressed reticence to return to the teachers in their building without a textbook.

It was evident that empowerment increases the time demands on teachers, those on the Committee, those who attended the inservices, and those who have to find time to fit new strategies into an already-filled curriculum. Many saw the new curriculum guides as additional isolated pieces, rather than as part of an integrated whole.

It took time to educate members of the committee as well as classroom teachers, to gather materials for training and implementation, to write the curriculum, to receive input on the curriculum guide, and to make decisions related to materials.

In short, there are realities that have arisen surrounding the topic of teacher empowerment and reactions to it within the Omega district: empowerment changes the *status quo*, empowerment shifts power, and empowerment takes time. Omega elementary teacher perceptions of their own empowerment, elicited from two nation-wide empowerment-focused questionnaires, will be relayed, compared, and discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

Staff Development

The guiding staff development research questions proposed in Chapter 1 are listed below according to the various groups and/or activities described in Chapter 3:

Reading Study Committee.

1. How does this Committee, billed as "teacher initiated, teacher led, teacher directed, and teacher assessed/monitored" carry out its **duties?**

2. What process does the Committee undergo in order to inform itself about current reading research and practice?

3. What kind of situations will be experienced as teachers attempt to plan and implement reading curriculum change?

4. How do these attempts at staff development cause the Committee members to feel empowered/disempowered?

Reading Strategic Inservices.

1. What kind of staff development efforts does the Committee propose to prepare and equip the elementary teaching staff for reading curriculum change?

2. Who determines what is to be taught? How is that knowledge disseminated?

3. How does what happens within this setting compare to characteristics of traditional inservices? How does it compare to the identified characteristics of "effective" staff development?

4. What is the impact of this kind of staff development on teacher empowerment?

Reading Support Group.

1. What will happen when a group of teachers is provided with the opportunity for engaging in critical reflection of teaching reading with each other?

2. Who becomes a part of the proposed voluntary Reading Support Group? What rationale do these individuals give for participating in the group? What are the perceived needs of these teachers as they seek to implement a new reading program?

3. How does what happens in this setting differ from traditional inservices or continuing teacher education? How does it differ from the Reading Strategic Inservices? In what ways does this type of staff development facilitate or impede teacher empowerment?

4. What are the results when the balance of power and influence in research-based staff development is moved from the researcher and her findings to teachers as initiators and key decision-makers for their own professional growth?

In this area of staff development, precedent literature will again help to focus the raw data. Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) will be consulted for characteristics of effective staff development. In addition, Devaney (1977) will give congruent humanistic teacher center distinctives, and Hall (1975) will give implementation of innovation insights.

Going back to the third goal in the original Omega Curriculum Reorganization document ("Defining inservice education needs of the staff and addressing those needs in an organized way" [Site document, 11/20/86]), the question that the district is now facing as many new curriculum guides are being written almost simultaneously is the necessity of meeting the inservice needs of classroom teachers who are challenged with multi-faceted curriculum implementation. The Curriculum Director recognized that fact:

> I think clearly we're being sent a signal that we need staff development. I'm going to throw my financial backing as much as I can in that direction. We need to launch that ship and take it out of the harbor. We need to be proactive and take it back to grade group teachers and say, "What can we do to help you in the next two years?" [Fieldnotes, 1/24/90]

Having just established from the data that there are numerous evidences within the district of the conditions which Maeroff asserts are essential for teacher empowerment, it is now time to consider the naturally evolving question in this setting (the work of the Reading Study Committee), What kind of support/staff development is congruent with the

concepts of empowerment as teachers attempt to implement proposed changes in reading instruction?

As was stated earlier, the teacher is at the heart of curriculum change, for it is what s/he knows, believes, and practices behind closed doors that constitutes the curriculum for his/her students. The district's Curriculum Director put it this way: "There are four types of curriculum: the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, the approved curriculum, and the learned curriculum. And it's not always the written curriculum that's the learned curriculum." [Fieldnotes, 2/9/89]

If we look at teacher empowerment as focusing upon Keyes' (1988) personal self, we can now build on that foundation to explore the professional self as learner (staff development) and the professional self as teacher (reading curriculum implementation) within this setting.

Three types of staff development are described within this paper as they occurred during my research data collection activities. These three (outside expert, on-site trainers, and humanistic teacher center) will be studied and conclusions will be drawn related to teacher-empowered staff development for reading curriculum implementation.

The first type reflects the more traditional inservice education, where an outside expert is contracted for the explicit purpose of informing an audience of a predetermined body of knowledge--here, bridging the gap from reading

Confirm, the teacher [illegible]
[illegible], for it is what o/be known, believes, and
[illegible] behind [illegible] that [illegible] the
[illegible] for [illegible]
[illegible] pur
our [illegible]
[illegible]

research to its classroom implications. My role in this regard was participant.

The second type is conducted by on-site trainers who present a set content (i.e., strategies congruent with the state's New Definition of Reading) and encourage its implementation in participants' classrooms. Here my role was observer as participant.

The third type is a humanistic teacher center-like model, where through collaborative efforts, participants assess their own needs and become their own sources and resources of knowledge. In this, my role was participant (coordinator/facilitator) as observer.

Outside Expert (Reading Study Committee Inservice). The staff development model selected for initially inservicing the Committee was conducted for the specific purpose of establishing a common groundwork and of laying a foundation for future informed decisions. Its format closely resembled that of a "traditional" inservice. An administrator, who related to me that he had anticipated that he would be taking an active role in the Committee's leadership, was the individual who spawned the idea of calling upon someone outside the district to inservice the Committee. This outside expert was a member of the state's Curriculum Review Process: Reading Committee, and she was contracted to come to the district in order to inservice the Committee (i.e., the decision makers) and to help screen the vast amount of reading materials available. She planned

three three-hour long meetings, which were conducted solely for the members of the Committee.

Her audience represented teachers with a wide range of reading savvy (from recent Master's Degrees in reading to no formal reading courses in at least two decades), with a broad scope of teaching experience (from five years to thirty-four years), and spanning the gamut of grade levels (from kindergarten through high school). The one thing they all had in common was an assumed common motivation in reading-related issues. They were billed by the Curriculum Director as "[A] team of interested, enthusiastic, and strongly-committed teachers." [Site document, 1/18/88]

The methodology used was mainly lecture, highlighting printed materials with some related discussion/participation activities. Comments at the conclusion of the sessions stated that "more [participation] would have been helpful" and "more examples would have been useful." In written responses, the recipients expressed appreciation for the content (expressed by one as "your knowledge") and for the organization of the presentation, with some concerns expressed as to the great amount of content ("tons of information!") and the difficulty in organizing and assimilating ("It will take us many hours to soak in and determine the direction proper for Omega"). Additional reactions demonstrated the various levels of knowledge base these Committee members represented, from those on one end who said that it gave a clearer understanding and pulled

everything together for them to those on the other end who said it introduced them to the new strategies.

This type of inservice reflects a top-down model, where the phrase, "I'll do it *to* you," is descriptive of the process. Here, the knowledge base is fixed, and subject matter is central. A deficit is assumed, since the need is perceived by someone other than the participants, and success in reading instruction is presupposed if teachers properly implement the strategies presented.

Unresolved comprehension and contextual application questions surfaced (e.g., "What to use when?" "How do phonics and the strategies fit together?", "How do you introduce [this] into all areas?") and, at least for the time being, they remained unanswered.

The impact of the inservice was seen by one member of the Committee as " . . . a slight introduction into [the strategies] . . . " [Interview transcript, 3/1/89] This emphasis on "slight introduction" was verified by the reading teachers, who had originally assumed that they would receive assistance in the Reading Strategy Inservices from the members of the Committee. Although there was some assistance with refreshments, the bulk of responsibility for preparation and presentation of the strategies rested on the reading teachers, who had prepared themselves for the task outside the parameters of their Reading Study Committee membership.

It can be seen that the effect of this type of inservice education has the potential to be empowering in the sense that there is the basic assumption that knowledge will be increased. It is time efficient, for in nine hours of instruction (supplemented by additional readings) the seeds were sown upon which future decisions for curriculum writing would take root and grow. Because the presenter could control the content and condense it, the process was information efficient: "tons of information!" could pass from the presenter to her audience. In short, she could ideally "educate" a large group of people with a great deal of information in a brief period of time.

There are also some disempowering effects of such inservice education. Basically, it does little to boost the status of the attendees, although, one participant did respond, "It helped ease the insecurity of not being an expert." [Site document, 2/15/88] Since decision making lies solely with the presenter, in this case an outside source who does not know the district or the individuals in the group, she needs to be trusted (external locus of control). A deficit is assumed: "You don't know, so I will tell you."

This type of inservice also gives the presenter and the learner minimal interaction with little recognition of prior knowledge or individual needs. Retention may be limited if this is the sole exposure, since individuals are infrequently active participants in the process, a process

which often requires little reflective thinking and makes accommodation and/or assimilation difficult.

The Reading Support Group members, in their final meeting, dialogued about some of their perceptions regarding the disempowering aspects of traditional inservices in general. (Rebekah was the only one of these individuals who had attended the Reading Study Committee Inservice just described.)

> Karina: I think in order to own anything, to be able to use it as though you own it, you need a lot of hand-holding--at least, *I* need a lot of hand-holding, you know, for a couple of years' worth. And I don't think it's realistic to say, "Okay, we're going to have an inservice and then our teachers will have it." I think you've got to inservice them, and inservice them again, and hold their hand for a couple of years and get them in support groups, and *then* you *might* see some change. Otherwise, it's just going to be filed. "Well, its really pretty interesting, but I really don't know if . . ."
> Truda: That's why teachers are frustrated. They throw something at us one time and then they leave us.
> Karina: I don't think administrators realize this--how much hand-holding is needed.
> Truda: Working it through.
> Rebekah: Think of all the conferences you've attended and taken wonderful notes, and then you've never done anything with it.
> Truda: The notes are somewhere in a drawer. Maybe the leader was peppy and interesting, and that kind of thing, but when you lose that "high," well . . . [Fieldnotes, 12/12/89]

If we look at Loucks-Horsley's (1987) critical attributes of effective staff development, we note that there was little collegiality and collaboration, little experimentation and risk-taking, little participant involvement in goal setting, implementation, evaluation, and decision making. There was little time to assimilate new learnings and little recognition of adult learning

characteristics. Because the inservice was district-funded, it could be considered as having a place in attempting to integrate individual goals (or at least the Reading Study Committee's goals) with the schools' philosophical and organizational structure.

On-site Trainers (Reading Strategic Inservice: Reciprocal Teaching). The second type of staff development effort conducted in the district to facilitate reading curriculum implementation was a series of seven Reading Strategic Inservices espousing the new definition of reading (theory) and congruent strategies (practice). Here the attendees (in the second and third grade level, 71% of the possible total was present at the Information Session and 76% at the Debriefing Session) were the elementary classroom teaching staff who voluntarily chose to attend the meetings on their own time (from 7:30-8:15 a.m. one day a month during the 1988-1989 school year). The Reciprocal Teaching Inservice/Debriefing Sessions can provide insights into the way in which the Committee decided to disseminate the information it had acquired.

This interactive model can be summarized by the phrase, "I'll do it *with* you." The presenters of these inservices were on-site trainers, i.e., primarily, the district's reading teachers and, upon occasion, members of the Reading Study Committee or classroom teachers familiar with particular strategies. The reading teachers said that the

intent of the meetings was two-fold, to provide information and to encourage implementation:

> Shar: We are trying to inform them and I know some people in there were exposed to [Reciprocal Teaching] before, but they wanted to again go over it. And for some people, it was totally new. To inform them and also so that they will really use it. I think we're doing a real selling job, too, not just so that they know it and can say, "Oh, yes, I've heard of it," but actually try it.
> Laura: That's the thing, not only inform, but you're providing them with the materials. "This is what you can do. You can use this and come back and talk about how it works."
> Kim: And I think the come-back session is really important to share how they're doing. [Interview transcript, 2/3/89]

Two principals, from an outsider perspective, gave their perceptions. One saw the inservice goals in this way:

> For me, the priority would be the information, but they have also gone, secondly, into the training aspect of it. In fact, they are encouraging the use of it by scheduling a sharing session 2-3 weeks after the initial presentation. [Interview transcript, 2/15/89]

The other emphasized the affective aspect of the inservices:

> To challenge, to give encouragement to others, and just that interaction that I've seen in those groups. The mere fact that some of their ideas have been around for a long time, but they've just kind of been forgotten. A reinforcement. There are the teachers who attend faithfully, and they are really anxious and willing and want to experiment and try some changes for the kids' sake. [Interview transcript, 3/28/89]

Since the individuals making the decisions (the reading teachers) were cognizant of the district's endemic situation, they were able to tailor the material to local teachers' needs. According to their own admission, they assumed responsibility for the task based on the fact that

they were the most knowledgeable due to their prior training and experience, and because they believed that the information/strategies would empower teachers and students alike.

The relationship between the presenter and the audience still had the "them"/"us" mentality, since the reading teachers were looked upon as the "experts:" "I think the reading teachers are offering us teachers different new ideas that are coming out." [Interview transcript, 1/25/89] Indeed, instead of seeing them as "just reading teachers," some were now raising them to a new status, as was stated by a former reading teacher-turned classroom teacher: "I see reading teachers becoming more consultants--which I never wanted to be." [Interview transcript, 3/7/89]

In planning the meetings, these "consultants" determined the time, location, and content, all the while being aware of the parameters of classroom teachers' concerns. The format of the Reciprocal Teaching Information Inservice followed this outline: Anticipation Set, Overview, Explanation, Modifications/ Adaptations, Videotape Demonstration, Reinforcement and Extension (highlighting a 33-page booklet "to get you through the month"), Challenge (with the promise of support throughout the month from building reading teachers). This all occurred within thirty minutes. It is not surprising to have heard the comment upon leaving the meeting from both presenters and attendees, "There just wasn't enough time."

Evidences of empowerment took various forms. Teachers were given the opportunity to *gain knowledge* of and exposure to new reading methods. *Decision-making* occurred as they had the option of attending, and if they decided to attend, they had the choice of whether or not to implement. If they did decide to utilize the strategy, they were given varied on-site support if and when they determined they needed it, from modeling within individual classrooms to the provision of additional materials. The presence of the district's elementary principals and the Curriculum Director *boosted the status* of both the presenters and the teachers in that they thereby validated the efforts exerted and demonstrated the fact that they, too, were learners.

I used an open-ended questionnaire to interview nine second and third grade teachers (three from each elementary building) who had attended the Reciprocal Teaching Inservices to determine their reactions to the sessions. The respondents listed the total composite of the voluntary Reading Inservices as having the greatest impact on their current reading thinking and practice, while their building colleagues (peers and reading teachers) came in second. Conferences and workshops (external experts) were listed as far less impactful than their local indigenous context.

The respondents gave reasons for attending the inservices as a way to learn new things and get helpful ideas. The emphasis in "learning new things" and "getting helpful ideas" was on the practice, not the theory. The

references to the fact that a classroom teacher had shared from her experience (which was interpreted as being closely identifiable with their own situation) "sold it" for several teachers: "If she says it works, I believe her," and "I didn't think I would try it until [she] told us how well it worked for her." Those who had not attempted the strategy said that they would ask a grade level peer as frequently as they would a reading teacher when they were ready to attempt to implement Reciprocal Teaching. This confirms what Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) discovered: "Teachers accept new learning better from peers and colleagues who understand their reality and with whom they can identify" (p. 128).

The presentation itself was rated as helpful and the packets were seen as reinforcing the session; however, some mention was made of wishing to see the strategy enacted more concretely "in our own district," as opposed to the videotape presentation.

Overall, these teachers viewed the Reciprocal Teaching strategy in a very positive light. Three, although they had not used it yet, were making plans to do so, "possibly later this year." Two others were beginning to use it, and two others had made major adaptations (correlating aspects of it with predetermined lessons or previous reading practices). The final two were continuing their use from the previous year ("It's a vital part of my reading program. I would be at a loss without it"). Nearly half (six of the thirteen)

of the individuals attending the Debriefing Session had shared their implementation attempts.

Those who used the strategy saw both students and teachers as benefiting. Five teachers saw greater student accountability and two spoke of success for all levels, especially reading disabled students. As for benefits to themselves, five teachers stated that it validated their beliefs and practices, while another said that it was generic enough to integrate well with other subject areas.

The principals related evidences of the use of the strategies in general as they visited classrooms and walked through the halls; however, Reciprocal Teaching was perceived by these administrators as more complex and less visible. One reading teacher spoke of the empowering impact of the reading strategies as a whole:

> I think the information flow is changing. It's exciting to see, it really is. There is more common ground to discuss with teachers. To get a teacher that's excited about it, that makes it worthwhile . . . [I've been] seeing it with teachers who aren't noted for trying new things get so excited. One said, "[Probable Passages] worked so well that I'm going to do it every week!" They're looking at how they can do it with other than the basal, with whatever content area. It's an empowering thing we're giving them. [Interview transcript, 2/3/89]

Disempowerment resulted from the fact that classroom teachers were exposed to a great deal of new information in a very brief time. Many also perceived the fact that the inservices were held on teachers' own time as a lack of administrative support.

Members of the Reading Support Group specifically dialogued about the disempowering aspects of the strategy inservices in the Debriefing Session several months later:

> Chris: The validity of just having such a support group was the fact that what we were introduced to over the last two years came just in brief meetings, 45 minutes, two little meetings, and then you were out there on your own. And I just don't think we can learn and implement, so this then was a further follow-up.
> Truda: Starts to put it together.
> Chris: How much more we were able to use it.
> Laura: It showed me, too, that it does take time. I look back to about five years ago when I went to a workshop on story schema. At that point in time, it was like a new concept to me, and I felt like I wasn't interested, and I came away and I didn't get much from it until a few years ago when I got back into it again. Then when we did our strategy inservices, it was really familiar to *me*, but then I thought everyone else should have had it quickly, too. And I almost forgot that
> . . .
> Chris: And really when you did that, one month and then a month later you did a quick follow-up thing. If you look at that, that's no where near enough in order to *truly* implement. You use a little, but now it seems to be fitting together. You look at your reading lesson and you say, "Now what could I use with this story? What would work the best with that?" Now you've got it. It's like you've got so many more bags of tricks out there to pull from. [Fieldnotes, 12/12/89]

If we see the Omega district's strategic reading inservices as an attempt to master *new* teaching strategies, rather than fine tuning skills already in place, the research conclusions of Joyce and Showers (1980) regarding more intensive training applies. The five elements they claim are essential for training to be durable are: theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and classroom application. By looking at the inservices as they were conducted, we see that the time factor significantly affects the amount of things that can be accomplished. What we see

there does not smack of *intensive training*; rather, in the half hour allotted to the presentation of new information, the theory and a bit of "demonstration" (e.g., videotape and a teacher relating what she had done) were in place. It appears that the extensive packets of materials chosen to be handed out at the sessions were intended to provide extra support in this area, assuming that classroom teachers themselves would be responsible for studying and making application. Practice and feedback did not occur within the Information Sessions. Classroom application (i.e., practice) was encouraged between the strategy inservice Information and Debriefing Sessions; consequently, some feedback took place in the Debriefing Sessions.

According to this brief overview, it would appear that teachers received little more than an *awareness* of the new strategies, rather than a *training* in them. Therefore, judged solely on the format of the inservices, it is not surprising that concerns would be expressed. Without further support (e.g., Spears' (1983) coaching and discussion), it would follow that minimal long-term effects could be expected.

Looking at this type of staff development in the light of the Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) characteristics once again, we see that each area could be rated as "somewhat" meeting those requirements in each case: there was some collegiality and collaboration, some experimentation and risk-taking, some incorporation of knowledge bases, a little

participant involvement in goal-setting, implementation, evaluation, and decision making. There was some time to work on staff development and implementation of the new learnings, some leadership and sustained administrative support, some incentives and rewards, some principles of adult learning characteristics, some integration of individual goals with school and district goals, plus, some placement within the philosophical and organizational structure of the school and district.

The crucial issue to be considered, now, would be the follow-up or support that is provided for the Omega elementary teachers in the future if they are expected to implement the reading curriculum guide, since the written curriculum is not always the taught curriculum. As Hall (1975) cautions, "As much attention needs to be given to the adoption of innovations as is presently being given to their development" (p. 32). He also legitimates teacher concerns by saying that it is not wrong for teachers to have self-concerns: it *is* wrong for change agents to fail to recognize and address those concerns. The next type of inservice was introduced to provide just such an opportunity to recognize and address teacher concerns as they began to implement new reading methods.

Humanistic Teacher Center (Reading Support Group). This third type of staff development was the one which provided the major focus for my study. These Reading Support Group Meetings were summarized in Chapter 3. Here

the model could be described as bottom-up or grass-roots, with an emphasis on the teacher, not the content. The descriptive phrase in this setting might be, "*You* will do it." It was my underlying assumption in proposing this support group that a humanistic teacher center-like setting would be one type of staff development that would have the potential to empower a group of volunteer Omega teachers for reading curriculum implementation.

The most obvious and evident impact of the Reading Support Group meetings could be seen upon one individual, Truda, the senior member of the group. (It should be realized that, although Truda's comments are frequently cited throughout the Reading Support Group meetings, she did not dominate. Her comments and actions were deemed most pertinent for the topic under scrutiny.) Truda's following excerpted comments from each of the thirteen meetings reflects a shift in focus from self concerns to impact concerns, from anxiety to exhilaration, from passivity to accomplishment, or, I would contend, from disempowerment to empowerment:

> Information Meeting: I came out of fear. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. There's fear involved in this.
>
> Meeting # 1: The measuring part is quite frustrating--educational assessment absolutely scares us to death!
>
> Meeting # 2: I am so unsure of those things. It scares the living daylights out of me! I'm not kidding!
>
> Meeting # 3: I don't feel comfortable with any of the strategies. That's why I'm here. I definitely need help.

Meeting # 4: My doing it unsuccessfully all these years--If we don't pull it all together, we're still stumbling along.

Meeting # 5: We come here with bated breath. This is exciting, marvelous! It's all there if I can only do it. I'm so excited about it!

Meeting # 6: I am having a ball! It's fun! It's marvelous! It's just so much fun! I just have so much a feeling of accomplishment, which I never had in reading before.

Meeting # 7: Knowing all these things helps you to pick and choose.

Meeting # 8: I never thought it would turn out like this--never in my wildest dreams! My whole outlook, and I'm serious, my whole outlook on reading and writing have changed. Oh, it makes me feel just wonderful!

Meeting # 9: Here again, you feel so much better about reading, because I used to think I'm not teaching reading an "x" number of [hours], and, bird brain, you know, *of course* I'm teaching reading! I'm teaching reading in social studies, I'm teaching reading in science, those kinds of things. But that's never been brought out before.

Meeting #10: I didn't do it all last year, 'cause I was scared to death. Now you're putting something else on me. I don't think I can handle it.

Meeting #11: Get your picket signs ready, girls. **NO WORKBOOKS**! If they make us use workbooks, I'm going to get my picket sign out: **NO WORKBOOKS!**

Meeting #12: And the accomplishment, the sense of accomplishment I feel now when I teach reading that I have never ever felt--that finally the kids . . . that really makes you feel good. That really, really does!

A note might be inserted here as to the comments of Meeting #10, which stand out in sharp contrast to the progression of the remainder of the quotes, and it could be viewed as a discrepant case. When one sees this statement, however, in the context of the Tenth Meeting, it is discovered that the excerpt follows a forty-five minute

presentation by Laura on Whole Language/ Literature. The awe that Truda had originally expressed toward Laura's reading expertise in the Information Meeting now seemed to come back to haunt and overwhelm Truda once again. The interesting thing to observe, however, is that at the Final Meeting, Truda closely identified herself with Laura: "Laura is so happy over me. She feels a kindred spirit." [Fieldnotes, 12/12/89]

Set against the backdrop of Fagan's (1989) claim, "When teachers lack knowledge, they lose credibility and are forced to give up control and lose power by deferring to 'experts'" (p. 574), it is possible to follow Truda's newly-discovered feelings of empowerment beyond the parameters of the Reading Support Group and her own classroom. Five months later, she became the "expert" as she volunteered to model a QAR lesson before an audience of her peers in a district-wide Reading Inservice, Creating the Literate Environment (5/2/90).

Truda's changing perception illustrates the fact that the longer a teacher is in the profession the more crucial is the need for staff development (Feiman, 1983). In addition, it also discounts Truda's own claim at the Information Meeting, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." [Fieldnotes, 6/8/89]

Other members spoke of the impact of the group on their emotional and psychological state, as well. The following

terms from the final meeting [12/12/89] illustrate several of these components by contrast:

then	now
terribly inadequate	more comfortable
apprehensive	sense of accomplishment
shaky	confident
threatened	makes you feel good
frustration	satisfaction
need support	lifts the burden, frees
burdened	relaxed

What caused this change in Truda and the others? I would assert that their participation within the Reading Support Group was a major factor in that personal and professional growth, and a focus upon four specific Reading Support Group meetings makes that growth toward empowerment more vivid and explicit. On that journey, these meetings represent a starting point, a mid-point, and a culminating point: the Information Meeting (6/8/89), where initial hopes and concerns were expressed by the somewhat-interested and the First Meeting (9/7/89), where the "committed" group's characteristics and potential contributions, hopes and expectations, concerns and proposed topics were stated; the Sixth Meeting (10/19/89), where a conscious awareness of changes in knowledges, skills, and attitudes was acknowledged; and the Final Meeting (12/12/89), where the participants' personal evaluations of the experience were articulated.

Information Meeting. All fifteen of the teachers who attended this Information Meeting could be described as being at the highest level (Stage 4: Maturity) in Katz's

(1972) stages of teacher development. Within this context, however, these same individuals (with the probable exception of the three reading teachers who had been the presenters at the previous strategic inservices) were at the lower levels of innovation-related concern and use in Hall's (1975) Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) hierarchy. Because of their very presence, it can be assumed that no one attending this meeting represented Stage 0, Awareness, where there was "no indication of interest in or concern about the innovation." It can, rather, be illustrated that the levels of concern in the Information Meeting ranged from Stage I-Informational (at least two had not attended the inservices) to Stage II-Personal. Allusions to beginning Stage III-Management Concerns were evident. The Levels of Use ranged from 0-Non-Use to I-Orientation to II-Preparation to III-Mechanical Use.

The following are examples of each of these SoC and LoU.

SoC I-Informational

> Karina: I'm just so excited about the people in my building and I was feeling, if other teachers in Omega are coming out with the good ideas that are coming out in my building, I would really benefit.

(Here it can be seen that Karina's attitude to change is positive, i.e., for growth.)

SoC II-Personal

> Grace: I got rid of the reading workbooks. I don't have any for next year. I have a commitment from our principal that he's going to let me order paperbacks monthly from book companies, and I'm going to need some help getting that all organized.

(With this comment, Grace legitimates collaborative learning.)

SoC III-Management

Principal (based on his observations): There is some concern about losing control. There's always a bit of a feeling about totally losing your structure in a reading plan.

(He acknowledges the fact that change involves risk-taking.)

Rebekah: While it was still fresh in your mind, it was okay, but we don't have the confidence to pull that out like we would.

(Rebekah demonstrates that change is more than getting started. Support is needed throughout.)

LoU 0-Non-Use

I had assumed from Karina's statement, "I would really benefit," that she had not used the strategies. I learned, however, later within the context of the Reading Support Group Meetings, that she had just completed a Master's Degree in Reading and was very knowledgeable about the strategies. Since she had not attended the strategic inservices, her knowledge did not come from the district inservices. Others who had not attended did not speak at this Information Meeting.

LoU I-Orientation

Truda: I came out of fear. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. I love the concept [of the strategies], I love the idea.

LoU II-Preparation

Truda: We've thrown out our workbooks, and we're into paperbacks.
Grace: I got rid of the reading workbooks. I don't have any for next year . . . and I'm going to need some help getting that all organized.

LoU III-Mechanical Use

Rebekah: I remember we would come from one of our meetings and I would stand up in front and I wouldn't dare put my sheet down and [I would say], "We're supposed to do this now," and you know, I don't want to have to do that. I want it to flow and for me to know exactly what I'm doing--which I didn't.

The similarity between the lower levels of the CBAM hierarchy (Hall, 1975) and the Survival/Self-Adequacy Stage of Teacher Development in the first year teacher (Katz, 1972) is striking. Just as in the stages of teacher development, one level must be satisfied before the next can occur, so in the CBAM model, one level of concern must be met before the next can appear. The Reading Support Group was proposed as one way to help alleviate those lower stages of concern and raise their levels of use.

From the beginning, I could sense the conflict between Keyes' (1988) personal self ["One of our teachers has a younger child. She was concerned about morning meetings, and she would be interested if it were afternoons"], professional self: learner ["That's what we need in a group like this--to sit down and say, 'This and this bombed. What did I do wrong? What should I do now?'"], and professional self: teacher ["I want to know exactly what I'm doing . . . and when to use each one. When would be an appropriate time to use this strategy versus another?"]. These latter two

quotes also illustrate Maeroff's (1988) principles for empowerment related to increasing knowledge and providing access to decision-making.

At this point, what appears to be a traditional inservice mentality of an "expert" doing something to us ["Will you chair the group, Marlene? We want to pick your brain."] or for us [" . . . telling us why something didn't work"] comes through in individual expectations of what the Reading Support Group would entail. This is in contrast to what I envisioned a Reading Support Group to be: a group of, by, and for the teachers.

In summary, then, the feelings of disempowerment at the Information Meeting reflected on individuals' prior knowledge of reading instruction and arose as a result of insufficient knowledge of the innovation (reading strategies), along with a corresponding lack of confidence in the decision-making process, i.e., specifically, when and where and how to use the innovation within the classroom. The individuals who attended the meeting focused on the need for a supportive environment in which to be learners first and teachers second, a place where individuals could develop confidences as they collaborated on problems incurred in the implementation process, a context where they could together celebrate successes and provide insight into failures (all teacher center characteristics), an acknowledgement and legitimation of the fact that, according to Laura, "the process takes time and refreshers and review."

First Meeting. The number of participants who volunteered without coercion to be part of the group appeared to be significant. From the original fifteen who had attended the Information Meeting at the end of the previous school year (at least five more who had expressed an interest but were unable to attend that meeting), nine of those appeared at this first meeting. (As was stated under the Reading Support Group meetings summary of the Information Meeting, a number of personal and professional conflicts were prohibitive.) The final count of those who committed themselves to this venture turned out to be eight (excluding myself).

Paquette (1987), Hull (1975), and Duckworth (DiShino, 1985), while instituting similar groups meeting for similar purposes all *intentionally* had similar numbers.

> Hull: At first, we limited membership in each seminar to no more than ten, which seemed to provide opportunity for free and open discussion at the same time that it was clear that the functioning of the group was the responsibility of each of its members. When group size was less than six because of illness, [etc.], discussions sometimes seemed less productive (p. 16).

> Paquette: Growth can be enhanced through a collegial support system that values group activities, provides moral support and facilitates small groups of from 8-10 per group (p. 39).

> DiShino: Eight of us were able to participate. One withdrew because of other commitments (p. 6).

One member of the group, Chris, who conducted her own Math Support Group on a monthly basis, reacted to the number positively, as well: "How did you feel about the meeting

yesterday? I thought it was the right amount for that type of support group." [Fieldnotes, 9/8/89]

A word about my participation in the group would seem appropriate at this point, for it seemed at the first meeting that I spent a great deal of time talking. Although I felt that I needed to take a directive role in this first meeting in order to give it structure, I hoped that those who were present would not interpret this as *my* group. I consciously attempted to solicit a great deal of involvement on the part of the participants, ranging from a relational get-acquainted activity at the beginning, to a written input assignment, to a resultant brainstorming segment, to an "action-research" project (i.e., good vs. poor readers), to a discussion about the most convenient day and time. I also stressed the fact that it was not, first and foremost, *my* group based on *my* agenda; rather, it was to be *their* group based on *their* perceived needs. As time went on, my role as group facilitator/coordinator became less directive, so much so that by the final meeting, Chris observed: "I felt also like we covered the areas really well, whether it was accidentally or very planned and we just didn't know how planned it was." [Fieldnotes, 12/12/89] I silently took that as a real compliment: it reminded me of Dewey's quote that "by indirection we direct."

The emotional factors that these teachers felt to be essential to the success of the Reading Support Group were either explicitly articulated or tacitly intimated time and

again. The following characteristics were supplied at this First Meeting (in response to the question, "What are some of the things that you hope this group might do or try to do?"):

-provide support as we try new techniques;
-that we support each other when the going gets rough and that we have people in our building who can be called upon for reading "advice;"
-that we can talk about different reading approaches and discuss what worked and what didn't work in a non-threatening manner--respecting individual teaching styles;
-a support group is one in which the members are willing to share their ideas, frustrations, etc.
[Site document,9/7/89]

When asked what the group should have a right to expect from its members, the following components were listed:

-dependability and responsibility
-enthusiasm
-regular attendance, except for important reasons otherwise
-honesty (listed 4 times)
-respect
-privacy
-everyone shares (listed 4 times)
    -no one leader
    -sharing questions, doubts, misgivings
    -sharing what is working, as well as what isn't
    -willingness to share ideas
-understanding
-positive attitudes toward learning
-support each others' right to teach in *different* manners [Site document, 9/7/89]

Vulnerability and openness, honesty and humility, tolerance for both ambiguity and for other persons' differing opinions, patience over the long haul, commitment and enthusiasm were all present from the beginning. Emotional and personally-unveiling phrases like, "Hey, we're slow learners," "my insecurity," "fear," "lack of confidence," "scares us to death!", "not comfortable," "so

afraid," "frustrating," "overwhelming," "scares the livin' daylights out of me!" permeated especially the first three meetings to such a degree that the third meeting closed with this dialogue:

> **Truda: Hey, if we're nothing** else, we're honest!
> **Karina: Aren't teachers learners? Model** that to **children.** **[Fieldnotes, 9/19/89]**

During the Debriefing at the Final Meeting, the same two individuals were joined by two others to reiterate this theme in answer to the question that was posed, "When you went through original list of My Hopes for This Group, did you have a feeling for whether or not we had done the kinds of things that were listed here?":

> Truda (laughing): I put a big star next to "honesty!" That's what was so great about it!
> Karina: Yes, I know of forums where honesty is there, but the good feeling isn't. And what's really impressed me is the fact that we can live with the fact that we teach in different ways. And I think that's great! I mean, that's the way to be a community is to live together and be different and be glad about it.
> Laura: That's what I felt, too. I was apprehensive when I started with a group like this, knowing our vast philosophical differences. I thought, "Will it work? Will it all 'jibe' together?"
> Chris: And I think the openness, too, even though you didn't agree, there was a lot of opening of the way you believed--listening to other people and thinking, "Well, let's try that," or "Maybe this is valid."
> [Fieldnotes, 12/12/89]

This confirms several precedent literature findings. It illustrates the existence of Devaney's (1977) teacher center characteristic of warmth. It also reflects the fact that, in keeping with Hall's (1975) recommendation, self-concerns were legitimated. Additionally, it demonstrates Wood and Thompson's (1980) conclusions about ego involvement

in adult learning: anxiety, fear, guilt, and a negative self-concept may initially arise as new learning takes place. This also confirms Knott's (1987) paradox of empowerment: she says that to be empowered first involves the experience of powerlessness, of feeling defenseless, of being vulnerable and exposed to pain.

At the First Meeting, the participants were asked to relate what they felt that they would be willing to contribute to the group. Their comments reflected their varied levels of perceived individual expertise ranging from both confidence and uncertainty about leadership responsibility; all, however, specifically offered to provide something: food, journal articles, supplies, or "whatever," "as needed--just ask!" In actuality, seven of the eight did chair or co-chair at least part of a meeting. I stepped in only if no one else expressed an inclination to do so. All members willingly supplied samples of classroom applications related to the topics covered, some with a great deal of enthusiasm and pride, as seen from the Reading Support Group synopses.

I was astonished by the vast number and wide variety of reading-related topics that these attendees wished the group to address, from the very concrete and practical to the very broad and philosophical. The compiled list would have made for a very thorough syllabus in a college or university teacher education course in reading. It affirmed the fact that staff development should start from where people are,

not where they should be, based on the belief that teachers are professionally competent people who can and will select priority areas for their own inservice needs.

In conjunction with the call of Duckworth (1984) and Chall (1986) to encourage these teachers to be researchers as well as to be reflective about their own teaching, I proposed an "action research" project and the idea of a journal. The teachers did follow through on the former assignment, but the concept of writing in a journal, although received as a "good idea," did not become a reality. Comments on that actuality occurred during the eighth meeting when I queried them on the topic. Their response reflected time and schedule constraints: "Why don't we do it? It isn't that we don't want to--we do. It's just that it's not possible during the day, and by the time the end of the day comes, we forget or are busy with other things." There was also concern that *I* would read their journals already at the second meeting, which seemed to be considered an intimidating thought. When I asked at the Final Meeting whether anyone would volunteer to allow me to read hers, not one person responded. The issue of the journal came up again at the conclusion of the Final Meeting:

> Karina: I'm going to write in my journal tomorrow.
> Truda: Show-off!
> Rebekah: No, I think she means for the *first* time.
> [Fieldnotes, 12/12/89]

The dailiness and the realities of teaching, previously discussed under "Staff Development" in Chapter 2, appeared

to impede journal writing. Not only were they "busy" and/or they "forgot," but they also seemed to want to protect their privacy by not displaying what they had entered in their journals. The underlying feeling seemed to be that observation was equated with evaluation, and evaluation risks exposure.

The members of the group listed a number of factors as influencing their teaching of reading: the strategy workshops, reading teachers/colleagues, course work, professional reading, peer observation, participation in the curriculum write, the needs of students. It was testimony to the fact that "the roads to wisdom are many" (Jackson, 1975). Staff development, therefore, it is concluded, must be offered in a variety of forms to meet individual unique learning styles and needs.

It was obvious that the individuals themselves had diverse concerns related to their personal and professional selves. They had differing self-perceptions, differing personal and professional histories, reflected differing levels of prior knowledge and feelings of success in teaching reading. As those who write about the characteristics of adult learning challenge, these uniquenesses must be recognized and utilized. Specifically, Wood and Thompson (1980) cite these characteristics of adult learning: the learning must be job-related and immediately useful, relevant to personal and professional needs; there must be evident results; there is ego involvement; there is

the need to individualize instruction; motivation rests with the adult learner, so the purpose of staff development must be to create and encourage favorable conditions; there must be respect, trust, and concern shown for the adult learner.

As was just demonstrated, in the Information and First Meetings there were many of the lower level of Hall's (1975) Stages 1 (Informational) and 2 (Personal) Concerns expressed. By the halfway point, the Sixth Meeting, those personal concerns had given way to Stage 4: Consequences or Impact Concerns.

Sixth Meeting. The sixth meeting reached somewhat of a climax, both in time and in significance. It illustrates a number of issues which recurred throughout the twelve sessions. The issues related to time and schedule constraints, as well as to the climate of the meetings, characterized by Devaney's (1977) teacher center components of warmth, concreteness, time, and thought.

Time and Schedule Constraints. This meeting had originally been scheduled for Wednesday, October 11, but it was cancelled by afternoon recess of that day because at least half of the individuals throughout the day had spoken to me of personal or professional conflicts. As I heard of more and more people who were not going to be in attendance, I contacted the person who was in charge of refreshments. She said it would be preferable to cancel than to meet with so few, and she offered to freeze her "wonderful treat" for the next time. She also talked of the fact that she had a

personal commitment that evening which would have made her schedule tight: "I would have left early anyway." [Fieldnotes 10/11/89]

It can be seen that the meeting times were flexible in an attempt to be sensitive to individual obligations. The meeting the following week, October 19, started out with six persons (including myself). Karina, Bonnie, and Jennifer were attending a Writers' Workshop at the area Intermediate School District headquarters. Each had told me that she would be coming a bit late to the Support Group Meeting. By 4:30, both Karina and Bonnie had arrived, but Jennifer did not come at all.

It was evident time and again that these individuals had numerous personal and professional obligations. They were constantly juggling, constantly vacillating between personal and professional levels of concern (Lieberman & Miller, 1979). Hall (1975) emphasizes that it is imperative to respect--not to ignore--those concerns.

Climate. These participants had developed an *esprit de corps* throughout their time together, and the factors which Devaney (1977) identifies as characteristic of a teacher center (warmth, concreteness, time, and thought) surfaced and are reflected here.

Warmth. Role of Facilitator to Members. Murphy (1989) says that for empowerment to occur, the "soft side" of leadership must be evidenced: through gentle, unheroic leadership comes local autonomy. To that end, the multi-

faceted role I took upon myself can be demonstrated concretely within the context of the Sixth Meeting:

confirm/affirm--"That [reading curriculum guide] is a real work!"

question--"When not using basals in the prescribed way we used to, what kind of materials will the district come up with? What do you think are the alternatives?"

active listen--"So, [reading teachers should take] more of a consultant role?"

provide a springboard for discussion--"There are three people here on the Reading Study Committee. What kinds of decisions did you have to face as you wrote [the curriculum guide]?"

offer materials--"I brought three extra copies of the curriculum guide for those of you who don't have one."

summarize--"I don't know whether we've come to any conclusions today. I don't know that that was our purpose."

orchestrate--"I think that is a good basis for the next article." "We've got to bring this to closure."

be flexible--(To Karina who had unexpectedly brought in a one-page summary from a course of basic strategy groups) "Would you be willing to walk us through this, rather than through the other article?"

invite participation--"Is anyone willing to chair the next meeting? Does anyone have any material on assessment? Bringing our own report cards may be a good way to start."

Warmth. Role of Participants to Each Other. Celebrating successes and sharing disappointments characterized the environment that evolved. As was stated earlier, vulnerability and honesty were traits that surfaced almost immediately. These members focused upon the support aspect and gave each other constructive criticism and positive feedback.

Rebekah (gesturing toward Truda): Hey, this is the "Queen of QAR"!
Truda: I am having a ball!
Laura: Well, how rewarding!

Truda: If I could think of any excuse in the world to not teach reading, I would do it.
Chris: That's the way I used to feel with math.
Truda: Today I made the kids write their own [questions].
Laura: It's interesting. See, it wasn't that hard!
Truda: It's marvelous!
Suzann: You changed your tone of voice when talking about workbooks and QAR.

Truda: That's [the reading curriculum guide] your baby . . . When I see that thing, it boggles my mind to see what you guys accomplished in four days!
Bonnie: You've got to remember we broke it down in four days.
Chris: They were working months before.
Truda: I understand. But I still, I still am impressed. There's no doubt about it.

Concreteness. These individuals dealt with concerns that were close to their own situations. The learning that took place was concrete and clearly adaptable to individual classrooms and teacher personalities. The focus upon what was best for their own students was also of prime importance.

Chris: We had a special education meeting this morning. I was sharing with them about some of the implications I was seeing in being able to have kids mainstreamed into regular education classrooms so much more productively for reading now than I ever was before, because they're getting it in a manner in which they can meet success in the classroom, and then I can take them and work. They can do what we ask of them, and they have so much to offer.

Truda: I would like to completely do away with pull-out programs, because they can never schedule you at the right time. Kids go out during language, so what do they do? They miss language.

Suzann: I have gone to flashing words, but I hate it. I feel [another teacher] is doing it and so and so's doing it, and I sit there and I just hate it--flashing

words. Do you ever expect them to read just words off cards? I think if I don't do that, they'll look like non-readers.

Truda: Today I made the kids write their own Right There and Think and Search--and some did it right! It was fun!

Time. This concept was not directly discussed at the Sixth Meeting, but it was addressed at the Final Meeting:

Suzann: One of the reasons we can communicate and share so much and so well is because we're not stressed out. We come here and we're relaxed . . . If we want to stay and talk to Marlene until six, we can. If we want to [do that during the day], there's no time when we're not interrupted. And to do anything to not rush that--just forget it.

Thought. As time went on, individuals began to reflect on their own past perceptions and practices, as well as to trust their own judgments when it came to current classroom management, methods, and materials. They began to see that their own learning clearly impacted on student learning (i.e., a sense of teacher efficacy); consequently, they also became cognizant of the fact that teacher satisfaction correlates to student learning. These excerpts reflect those issues.

Guilt

Truda: I never felt like I was doing anything in reading. Read a story, answer the questions, try to find something--you know, that kind of thing. And I saw it was going nowhere. But now, we *really* have a good time. And see, my whole problem was my guilt--my guilt about not going through that dumb textbook. And now I'm barely into it, because I feel like, "Why go into these stories until we've got this comprehension down pat--the 'what you've go to look for,' and things like that?"

Critique of Commercial Materials

Truda: We lived and died by the workbook. Therefore, our grading was, "Is the workbook page right or wrong?" Not, "Do they understand thus and thus and thus?" or "Can they answer the reflective questions at the end?" Which is a terrible basis, because I'm convinced that anybody who writes those workbooks doesn't know anything about reading or teaching of reading. I'm not being facetious. I'm serious about it. We gave it up. That's not to say everything's bad. I don't want to be totally negative. But I never really had a sense of accomplishment.

Rebekah: It was so obscure. They threw in a comprehension page that was bizarre, and then all of a sudden it was a phonics-type thing.
Truda: No carry-through, no continuity--just pick and choose.
Laura: I asked my daughter in fourth grade, "Why do you do the workbook?" Not a clue. "Do you think it will help you in your reading?" "No, it's not reading. It's just fill-in-the-blank."
Karina: Nowhere do you find eight words and eight blanks in reading.

Impact on students

Chris: What they're doing here wouldn't get to what *my* kids need.

Chris: William Glasser's book pinpoints that kids don't have choices any more in school, and that's why they're turned off, and they don't take as much responsibility because everything is dictated. They have no control over learning any more. We need to build in choices within the structure.
Karina: If we go K, 1, 2, 3, 4 and teach strategies and when and how to use them and let them have ownership . . .
Chris: And freedom of their own interests.
Karina: Then are we going to see a revolution here?
Chris: You're going to see kids more turned on. That sure beats amnesia!
Karina: As a professional educator, I would hate to think that a school could do that much harm; however, when you look at the evidence, it's pretty damning.

Teacher as Learner

> Truda: It's like Rebekah told [her students] when she was teaching Reciprocal Teaching, "This is new to me, too." And [my students] know this [QAR] is new to me, too, and they love it, they love it. Some of [the Question-Answer Relationships] are really hard to decide, and we work it out together. That working together and coming up with an agreeable solution is so good for the kids . . . so I might teach that all year. I figure I'm on a roll. It is just so much fun, [which] I never ever have had in reading before.

Teaching and Learning

> Truda: To me, one of the hardest things in the world is to get kids to realize that *they* are responsible for their own learning, that I can't take my finger and drill a little hole in their head. I can show them the way and I can teach them, but the learning is their responsibility, and it's frustrating.
> Karina: Why are school children like that? Preschoolers take the responsibility for their own learning . . . I don't know what happens by fourth grade that you feel that you have to drill holes. Is that a critique of the schools, or a developmental stage where amnesia sets in?

Educational Pendulum

> Truda: May I mention one more thing? In education, we tend to throw everything that was before out instead of using the best of everything. We're not throwing phonics out, for crying out loud, we're just finding that you go beyond that. Educators are very good at that--like new math.

The meeting ended with the individuals (Laura, Bonnie, and Rebekah) who had been part of the Reading Curriculum "write" the previous summer, illustrating that Omega teachers were given access to decision making, how seriously they took their task, and how their peers responded to those efforts.

Laura: We got input from everyone on the staff.
Chris: They're the ones that have to carry it out.
Laura: They gave the input and we had to try to assimilate it and put it into the framework.
Rebekah: We kind of "freaked out" when we came back one day and someone said, "This could have appeared ten years ago."
Bonnie: We didn't comprehend what we were supposed to be doing. There was a lot of frustration that day. Is it too cumbersome? Is there too much there?
Truda: But when you think about all the child will need for life right there . . .

These snippets of conversation during the Sixth Meeting portray the growing collective autonomy of these participants as they together grappled with issues relevant to their personal and professional lives.

Debriefing Session. During the Debriefing Session (presented *in toto* under the Reading Support Group Meetings), the participants who were involved in this project expressed a number of satisfactions (empowering aspects) and frustrations (disempowering aspects). These will be categorized according to Keyes' (1988) the personal self and the professional self both as teacher and learner.

Personal Self. As was stated earlier, the group had developed a real sense of community throughout their four months together. Within the warmth (the ability to take risks without repercussions of failure) of the environment provided by the group, these teachers spoke of an increase in self-esteem. This is in keeping with the CART survey (National Education Association, 1988) discussion, where the conclusion is reached that greater participation results in higher levels of satisfaction and reduced stress.

There is evidence of empowerment in the fact that these teachers were renewed and energized by this experience. They spoke of satisfaction in the fact that the proposed topics were more than adequately covered in a non-threatening way. There was an appreciation expressed for the honesty, along with the good feeling, of the interpersonal communication. There was an opening to the viewpoints of others, as well as a clarifying of one's own thinking. There was the feeling of being more relaxed, freed, and having the burden lifted in daily planning because of the newly-acquired knowledge. There was an acknowledged contrast between the terribly inadequate feeling experienced originally to the more comfortable feeling with what is now being done. There was surprise exhibited related to the awareness that what teachers enjoy is directly correlated with student learning. There was a celebration, both individually and collectively, of growth and sense of accomplishment. There was the recognition that original feelings of discomfort in unmasking oneself and comparing oneself to the others in the group was replaced by an appreciation for individual differences.

The expressions relating to a lack of power came mainly from contrasts to the beginning. There was admission to an original apprehension regarding the workability of such a philosophically and experientially diverse group, as well as a sense of inferiority in contrast with the others' expertise. The one recurrent theme throughout was an

acknowledgement that the weekly meetings had required a real commitment on the part of the members. Truda said, "When I thought of coming here every week, I [groan]." To which others chimed in, "Yes, yes." Chris confided, "When four o'clock comes each day, I wonder why I have committed myself to yet another activity. But by the time I get home after each meeting, I tell my husband how great it is. I get more out of this than classes I take."

Professional Self: Learner. Empowerment evidences came as these individuals saw the Reading Support Group as a viable learning experience. The activities and discussions focused on their concerns, expressed interests, and perceptions of their own staff development needs. They saw the new learning as an extension of the strategy inservices: "It helped to start to put it together." They had developed into a community of learners, and they celebrated their differences: they could appreciate the fact that they had different needs at different times, and that they had different philosophies of teaching. Individuals began to trust their own judgment as to methods and materials. There was a real open-mindedness, a listening to each other, with "a lot of persuasion going both ways:" no one person dominated. The conclusion was that there was not one best way to teach reading; rather, it was recognized that each had her own style which "worked" for her.

In many ways, however, the skills or knowledges were less important than the new attitudes they developed about

themselves individually and collectively. The affective domain far outweighed the cognitive domain when the participants reflected on the "attitudes, knowledges, skills, and dispositions" that had resulted from their group participation. They expressed appreciation for the benefits of sharing each other's joys and failures; in regard to the latter, it was comforting to recognize that other teachers experienced frustrations in teaching, as well.

As to the future, there was a call for ongoing, voluntary support with resource persons and colleagues of different grade levels. Such support was desired on a regular basis (although *not* weekly), and it should be at a time when teachers would not be rushed or preoccupied with classroom responsibilities.

Several allusions were made to time as a disempowering factor. The weekly time commitment was difficult for these busy individuals ("a thousand things out there are vying for our attention"), and it was stated that interested colleagues would have joined the group had it not demanded such a great time commitment. Lack of time for the preparation and classroom implementation of the new learning was expressed also. Another factor in this regard was the realization that ownership in the innovation implementation takes a great deal of time ("at least a couple of years") and support ("a lot of hand-holding"). The prior inservices were viewed as insufficient to truly implement: some felt that seeing the strategies modeled within their own

classrooms and with their own students would be the most desirable.

These members talked about the need for overt administrative support, specifically for release time to allow their peers to take advantage of similar collaborative groups on other than their own time: "everyone is crying for time to communicate."

Professional Self: Teacher. In this connection, student achievement, managing the tasks of teaching, and a general sense of efficacy were empowering (Mager, Myers, Maresca, Rupp, & Armstrong, 1986).

Comments here related to the realization that teacher satisfaction is tied in to student learning. To that end, teachers in the group were perceived by themselves and their fellow members as enjoying teaching reading now more than formerly. Again, individual preferences were legitimated: "we all have our own thing that we like doing and works well."

The knowledge gained had practical benefits for planning: "not so much flummin'," as well as "more bags of tricks to draw from." As a result of the learning they themselves experienced, these teachers felt that their students were benefiting also.

Several spoke of personally controlling reading materials and trusting their own judgment rather than being bound by the materials, as formerly. In fact, a member of the Reading Study Committee stated that the Committee should

not rush into purchasing a text, the opposite of what had been advocated in the initial stages of the Committee's work. To sum up the benefits, one participant said that she felt a "sense of accomplishment [in teaching reading] that I've never felt before."

The disempowering aspects stated in the Debriefing Session related to the former use of scripted materials (i.e., "slavish use of basals"), the lack of a concrete picture of what the strategies looked like (modeling and peer coaching in their own classrooms would be welcome), and a lack of carry-through from previous grades (other teachers from feeder grades were not using the strategies).

In summary, the deterrents to empowerment related to lack of time (due to personal and professional conflicts); lack of adequate inservice training in the reading strategies; lack of support (administrative, collegial); lack of control (external locus); lack of readiness (will/desire). Contributors to empowerment included warmth (*esprit de corps*--access to support, freedom to take risks, sense of being engaged with colleagues in an important undertaking), concreteness (focus on particulars and specifics, not generalizations and abstractions), time (extended, away from pressures), and thought (open-mindedness, reflective thinking).

The Loucks-Horsley et al. (1987) characteristics of effective staff development can again be used for comparison here. A resounding, "yes," can be given to several: the

Reading Support Group fit these characteristics very well in the areas of collegiality and collaboration, experimentation and risk taking, incorporation of available knowledge bases, appropriate participant involvement in goal setting/ implementation/evaluation/ decision making, time to assimilate new learnings, incentives and rewards. In addition, this was built upon principles of adult learning and the change process. The characteristics related to overt administrative support and formal placement of the program within the philosophical and organizational structure of the school and district would have to be judged as non-existent. This relationship of personal goals to organizational goals, along with the tandemness often associated with teacher centers (Rogers, 1976), are worthy of further study.

Portrait of an Empowered/Disempowered Teacher. After nearly four months of "listening for the voice" (McDonald, 1988) of these "very special natives" (Florio, 1981), I excerpted evidences of empowerment and disempowerment from each Reading Support Group Meeting to form an overall composite of an empowered and a disempowered teacher in this setting.

Portrait of an Empowered Teacher

She sees herself as a life-long learner, a "pioneer." She is receptive to new ideas, and she seeks new ways of improving her teaching. She recognizes that there are many

roads to wisdom; therefore, her learning occurs in a number of ways and through a number of individuals (e.g., peers, observation, reading, coursework, her own experience within and outside the classroom).

She works in a supportive environment, and she looks for and receives continuing support: resources and materials, plus personnel (administrative, collegial [dialogue and modeling]).

She is willing to take risks and make herself vulnerable to others. She gives and receives suggestions; she asks questions of herself and others; she is willing to share her knowledge and skills with others.

She takes time to reflect, to discuss, to listen, to clarify, to understand, to reach resolutions. She validates her own beliefs and actions, seeking congruence between research and practice. She conducts her own research within her classroom: she trains herself to observe and to make sense of her observations.

She is open-minded, willing to change when new knowledge warrants it. She recognizes her own growth and development.

She is flexible as she plans, knowing her students' interests and needs. She has a large repertoire ("bag of tricks") and knows when to draw out the one most appropriate for each situation.

She feels that her teaching directly influences her students' learning: she has a sense of efficacy about her

teaching. She is able to manage well the tasks of teaching: both she and her students are productively learning and they enjoy learning.

She is able to use methods and materials as a tool, not as a handcuff; she is a manager, not a slave.

She trusts her own judgment (internal locus of control), and she is willing to champion for causes she believes in and/or to challenge "the system" if she deems it necessary. She feels that what she says can and will make a difference.

She has a general sense of well-being, satisfaction, and accomplishment.

Portrait of a Disempowered Teacher

Overall, she is self-deprecating, frustrated, desperate, anxious, guilty, intimidated, lacks confidence, does not feel comfortable, feels inferior.

She feels out of control. She feels time pressures and schedule constraints: she perceives that she does not have time for preparation and classroom implementation. She feels overburdened by innovation bundles and system overload.

She does not possess sufficient knowledge and understanding of subject matter (here, reading methods and materials) to teach and/or implement the innovation with confidence.

She blames others for her lack of knowledge: she possesses an external locus of control. She is influenced by peer pressure.

She feels isolated, "crying for time to communicate with her peers."

She does not trust her own judgment; she is text- or script-bound and test-driven.

She perceives a lack of administrative support, both in time and resources. She resents, but feels helpless to do anything about, bureaucratic mandates (here, regarding legislated testing and special services guidelines). She feels that her voice is not heard.

She sees little impact of her teaching on her students' learning. She goes through the motions of teaching without ever feeling successful.

Empowerment Questionnaire. At the end of my two years of data-gathering, I assembled an empowerment-focused questionnaire which combined the "Elementary education policy poll" (Instructor, Landsmann, January, 1986, p. 20) and "The second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa poll of teachers' attitudes toward the public schools: Teacher control of the educational process" (Phi Delta Kappan, Elam, June, 1989, p. 793).

The former poll began with the question: "Do teachers really care about shaping education policy?" Based upon the editors' explicitly-stated assumption, "INSTRUCTOR knows that you do" (Landsmann, 1986a, p. 20), this survey was

billed as a way to " . . . provide teachers for the first time ever with an opportunity to directly influence education policy at the very highest level." Participants were informed that their input would be incorporated into a report to then-Secretary of Education Bennett. Along with a tabulation of the 8,500 responses to the poll four months later, the Instructor editors gave this very brief and general profile of the individuals who chose to complete and return the survey:

> While respondents do not represent a conventional random sampling of teachers, their characteristics are very similar to those of INSTRUCTOR subscribers and to teachers in general. They are much like those who testify at public hearings--concerned enough to try to make things better (Landsman, 1986b, p. 32).

The latter poll appeared in print three years later. This Second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll (the first poll by that name had been reported five years earlier) was carried out more formally and scientifically. It was conducted as a mail interview to a sample of 2,000 teachers selected from a Market Data Retrieval list to represent public school teachers as a whole nationwide. Region and grade level were stratified proportionately. The return rate was 830 respondents (41.5%). The results were tabulated in the June, 1989 issue of Phi Delta Kappan (p. 793).

I gave the combined surveys [Appendix I] to both the Omega elementary teaching staff and the Reading Support Group members. The sheets were color-coded to discriminate between the two groups. I assured all recipients, "This task is completely voluntary and anonymous. You are free

not to participate at all, and you may refuse to answer any questions without recrimination." [Site document, 12/6/89]

Twenty-seven (60%) classroom teachers and seven (87.5%) Reading Support Group members responded to the questionnaire. Comparisons among the groups (the nation-wide Instructor and the Second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll respondents, the Omega classroom teachers, and the Reading Support Group members) will now be made for both surveys [see Tables 3 and 4]. A summary of the results for each group will now be given.

Discussion for Table 3:

Instructor's Elementary Education Policy Poll

1. **Curriculum**

The national average listed 38% of the recipients as feeling that they make *most* of the decisions related to curriculum. Omega's classroom teachers felt much the same (41%). In contrast, 71% of the Reading Support Group members felt that they make *most* of their curriculum decisions. Eleven percent of the national respondents said that they make *none* of the decisions in this area. No Omega teachers (either classroom or Reading Support Group) felt that they make *none*.

2. **Texts and Supplementary Material**

In this area, only 22% of Omega's classroom teachers felt that they make *most* of the decisions. This was somewhat below the national average of 30%, and less than half of the Reading Support Group average of 50%. Thirteen

PART I: INSTRUCTOR's Elementary Education Policy Poll

WHAT DECISIONS DO YOU MAKE?

I make important decisions related to:	most	some	none	nr
1. curriculum				
Nat'l	38%	50%	11%	
Class	41%	60%	0%	
Support	72%	29%	0%	
2. texts and supplementary material				
Nat'l	30%	56%	13%	
Class	22%	74%	4%	
Support	50%	43%	7%	
3. instructional methods				
Nat'l	76%	20%	3%	
Class	89%	11%	0%	
Support	100%			
4. test selection				
Nat'l	39%	36%	25%	
Class	63%	9%	11%	7%
Support	43%	14%	43%	
5. inservice training in my school				
Nat'l	7%	45%	47%	
Class	0%	37%	4% 60%	
Support	14%	43%	43%	

I have opportunities:	many	some	none	nr
7. during the school day to talk to my colleagues about teaching				
Nat'l	15%	68%	16%	
Class	15%	74%	7% 81%	
Support	0%	14% 86%	0%	
8. to observe my colleagues teach				
Nat'l	5%	33%	61%	
Class	37%	4%	56%	4%
Support	0%	68%	14%	

	always	sometimes	never	nr
6. I participate in decisions about hiring teachers in my school				
Nat'l	3%	17%	79%	
Class	4%	4%	93%	
Support	0%	29%	72%	
9. I am meaningfully involved in choosing the subjects and grades I teach				
Nat'l	24%	45%	28%	
Class	26%	52%	19%	4%
Support	29%	57%	14%	

	frequently	infrequently	never	nr
10. My principal provides me with useful guidance in instructional matters				
Nat'l	16%	56%	26%	
Class	11%	59%	30%	
Support	14%	14% 43%	29%	

	will	might	will not	nr
11. More training in subject matter will make me a better teacher				
Nat'l	40%	41%	18%	
Class	44%	48%	7%	
Support	43%	57%	0%	

Nat'l n=8,500 Class n=27 (41.5%) Support n=7 (87.5%)

Table 3: Instructor's Elementary Education Policy Poll Results

percent of the Instructor participants felt that they make *none* of the decisions, while 7% of the Reading Support Group members and 4 percent of the classroom teachers felt that they make *none*.

3. **Instructional Methods**

All (100%) of the Reading Support Group members and 90% of their classroom counterparts felt that they make ***most*** of the decisions about instructional materials. This compares to 76% of the nation-wide average.

4. **Test Selection**

Feelings of teachers nationally (39%) were rather closely correlated to those of the Reading Support Group members (43%) in making *most* of the decisions in this area. Just as many Reading Support Group members (43%) felt that they make *none* of the important decisions related to test selection, as compared to 25% nationwide. In contrast, 63% of the general Omega teaching population felt that they make *most* of the test selection decisions, and only 11% felt that they make *none*.

5. **Inservice Training**

A mere 7% of teachers nationally felt that they make *most* of the decisions related to in-school inservices. Reading Support Group members doubled that number (14%), while more than five times as many Omega classroom teachers (37%) felt that they make *most* of the decisions in this area.

7. **Collegial Dialogue**

Both the Omega classroom teachers and the national averages came to 15% in regard to *many* opportunities for collegial dialogue during the school day. No one in the Reading Support Group said that she had *many* opportunities in this area; however, one member (14%) did mark her answer between the categories of *many* and *some*.

8. **Colleague Observation**

More than one-third (37%) of the Omega classroom teachers said that they had *many* opportunities to observe their peers teach. In contrast, none of the Reading Support Group members stated that she has *many* opportunties here. Only 5% of teachers nation-wide claim that they have *many* opportunities in this area.

6. **Hiring Decisions**

None of the Reading Support Group members claimed to *always* be meaningfully involved in hiring teachers in their school, and 72% said that they *never* are. Very infrequent meaningful involvement in this area was also evidenced nationwide (3%) and by Omega classroom teachers as a whole (4%). National percentages (17%) evidencing *some* opportunties in this area were four times higher than for the Omega classroom teachers (4%), and in each instance the category *never* was most frequently marked (79% and 93% respectively).

9. **Subject/Grade Selection**

Percentages across the board were rather consistent in

this area: 24% of the nation-wide sample, 26% of the Omega classroom teachers, and 29% of the Reading Support Group members felt that they are *always* meaningfully involved in choosing the subjects and grades they teach. None of the Reading Support Group members felt that they were *never* meaningfully involved in subject or grade selection. **Approximately half of the teachers in all three samples (45% nationally, 52% Omega classroom teachers, and 57% Reading Support Group members) stated that they are *sometimes* meaningfully involved in this area.**

10. **Principal Guidance**

Only 11% of the Omega classroom teachers, 14% of the Reading Support Group members, and 16% of teachers nation-wide feel that their principal *frequently* provides them with useful guidance in instructional matters. Nearly one-third of all the Omega teacher respondents (both classroom teachers [30%] and Reading Support Group members [29%]) felt that they *never* receive useful guidance from their principal. These results are slightly above the national average of 26%.

11. **Subject Matter Training**

Again, teachers in all three settings were remarkably consistent in their perceptions regarding this category: 40% of teachers nationally, 43% of Reading Support Group members, and 44% of Omega classroom teachers feel that more training in subject matter knowledge *would* make them a better teacher.

Summary.

The discussion on the nation-wide Instructor survey draws the following portrait:

> Nearly all of you make important decisions about instructional methods you use--76 percent make most instructional decisions, and another 20 percent make some. And all of you have *some* say about curriculum, texts, and tests.
>
> **But only three in 10 are involved in textbook selection *most* of the time. That condition, along with the fact that more than a quarter of you are never involved in deciding the grade or subject you teach could have a significant impact on the ability to make your *best* decisions on methods of instruction.**
>
> Most of your authority involves decisions affecting your students. Few of you make decisions affecting your schools. Only a fifth are involved in hiring teachers in your schools. Nearly half have no say in decisions about inservice training, although nearly all believe more inservice for beginning teachers will improve teaching.
>
> . . . You tell us that talking about teaching, observing colleagues, and receiving instructional feedback from the principal . . . doesn't happen often.
>
> More than 60 percent of you never have a chance to observe other teachers. A shocking 81 percent rarely or never get instructional guidance from your principal. But 83 percent report that you have some chance to talk to teachers about teaching during the school day (Landsmann, 1986b, pp. 30-31).

Nearly all of the Omega classroom teachers felt that they make important decisions about instructional methods--90 percent make most instructional decisions, and another 11 percent make some. Sixty-three percent felt that they make most of the decisions about test selection. In the areas of curriculum and textbook/supplementary material, virtually all of the teachers felt that they make some or most of the decisions (100 percent and 96 percent respectively).

Although more than 75 percent of these teachers felt that they are meaningfully involved in choosing the subjects and grades they teach, 92 percent said that they never participate in decisions about hiring teachers in their schools. Nearly 60 percent of the teachers felt that they make none of the decisions related to inservice training in their schools, in spite of the fact that 93 percent believed that more training in subject matter would or might make them better teachers. All but one teacher said that s/he had opportunities to talk to his/her colleagues about teaching during the school day, yet more than half of the respondents (56 percent) said that they had no opportunities to observe their colleagues teach. Just three of the teachers (11 percent of the respondents) said that their principal frequently provided them with useful guidance in instructional matters, while 30 percent said that their principal never provided such guidance, and the majority (59 percent) said that they infrequently received such help.

All of the Reading Support Group teachers felt that they make important decisions about instructional methods. All of the teachers also felt that they make some or most of the decisions (100 percent and 93 percent respectively) related to curriculum and textbook/supplementary materials. In the area of test selection, 43 percent felt that they make most of the decisions, while just as many (43 percent) felt that they make none of the decisions. Although 86

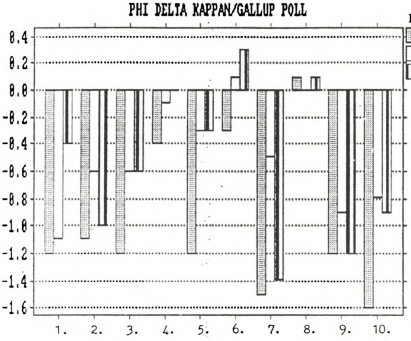
percent of these teachers felt that they are always or sometimes meaningfully involved in choosing the subjects and grades they teach, 71 percent said that they never participate in decisions about hiring teachers in their schools. Forty-three percent of the teachers felt that they make none of the decisions related to inservice training in their schools, in spite of the fact that 100 percent of them believed that more training in subject matter would or might make them better teachers. All of these teachers said that they had some opportunities to talk to their colleagues about teaching during the school day, and all but one said that she had some opportunities to observe her colleagues teach. Only one of the teachers felt that her principal frequently provided her with useful guidance in instructional matters, another marked frequently-infrequently, and 29 percent said that they never received such guidance. The majority (43 percent) said that they infrequently received such help.

Discussion for Table 4:

The Second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll

The following table and graph show the degree of satisfaction/dissatisfaction the participants in each group displayed in the ten areas polled. This was determined by taking the differences between the average responses to "actually have control" and "should have control." [Note: Although the Second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa Poll gave respondents choices on a five-point Lickert scale, a four-

point scale was used as this portion of the poll was replicated for this study.] The resultant score was interpreted as the indication of the degree of satisfaction (+ *n* = saturated with decision-making participation opportunities, 0 = amount of decision-making opportunities alright as is, - *n* = deprived of decision-making participation opportunities) experienced in each area.



	Nat'l	Class	Support
1. Student Placement	-1.2	-1.1	- .4
2. Textbooks	-1.1	- .6	-1.0
3. Disciplinary Policies	-1.2	- .6	- .6
4. How to Teach	- .4	- .1	0
5. Grading Policies	-1.2	- .3	- .3
6. Homework	- .3	+ .1	+ .3
7. Academic Standards	-1.5	- .5	-1.4
8. What to Teach	+ .1	0	+ .1
9. Expenditure of Funds	-1.2	- .9	-1.2
10. School Schedule	-1.6	- .8	- .9

Table 4: Gallup/Kappa Poll Decision-Making Responses

Summary.

In the national survey, teachers perceived themselves as lacking actual authority in nine out of ten cases. The single exception was determining what to teach. The two areas in which teachers felt most seriously deprived of authority were determining academic standards for their schools and establishing the school schedule. Not far behind were: setting grading policies, determining which students are placed in which classes, setting discipline policy for the school, and determining how school funds are spent on instructional materials.

The Omega classroom teachers who responded felt like they lacked authority in eight out of ten cases. They also felt that they had sufficient authority in the area of determining what to teach, and that they had slightly more than enough say in the area of determining the amount of homework given to students. They felt most seriously deprived in the area of student placement. Not far behind in dissatisfaction were determining how school funds are spent on instructional materials and determining the school schedule. Next came the tied areas of selecting textbooks to be used in class and setting disciplinary policies for the school. Following closely behind was the area of determining school academic standards. A somewhat lesser degree of dissatisfaction was expressed in the setting of grading policies. There was merely a slight dissatisfaction in deciding how to teach.

The Reading Support Group members felt that they lacked authority in seven out of ten cases. They felt most satisfied in the area of deciding how to teach a given class. They felt that they had more than enough decision-making authority in the areas of homework and deciding what to teach in class. They were most dissatisfied in determining academic standards for the school, followed closely by the expenditure of school funds for instructional materials. Next came a dissatisfaction in textbook selection and determining the school schedule. Slightly less dissatisfaction was expressed regarding their role in student placement and setting grading policy.

Toward Reading Curriculum Implementation

The following questions were proposed in Chapter 1 related to the topic of reading curriculum implementation:

1. *How does the district attempt to implement its new reading curriculum?*
2. *What kinds of concerns do teachers express as they attempt to implement this new reading curriculum?*
3. *How does the district attempt to meet those needs or address those concerns?*
4. *What evidences are there that these teachers feel empowered/disempowered as they seek to effect reading curriculum change within their own classrooms and the district?*

Of the three major topics dealt with in this project, this area of implementation was especially difficult to assess adequately, due to at least two major factors. First, according to Hall (1975), implementation of innovation can take from 3-5 years, a time framework beyond the scope of this study. Second, there are several other

curricular areas presently being addressed, an occurrence which Hall calls innovation bundles. Many of the Omega elementary teachers expressed concern about such overload as they were involved in writing and/or receiving several curriculum guides at once.

This research project can, therefore, only investigate the very beginnings of implementation. Many of the research questions for this topic can be answered by referring the reader back to the discussion on each type of inservice just covered in this section.

The impact of the Reading Study Committee initial inservice is especially difficult to isolate. The comments of the individuals immediately upon the completion of the final session were used in this manuscript to judge the effect.

The impact of the Reading Strategic Inservices can be judged on the basis of the participation of the attendees at the Reciprocal Teaching Debriefing Session, along with the post-Debriefing interviews and the Information Meeting stated concerns.

The impact of the Reading Support Group on reading curriculum implementation was synopsized throughout the meetings and summarized at the end of each session, as well as reinforced and extended by the comments at the Final Meeting: Debriefing.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this document, I have focused upon the issue of teacher empowerment and its evidences within the Omega district. I identified the factors in this setting which facilitate and impede empowerment, as well as reactions toward teacher empowerment. Subsequent to that, I investigated staff development for reading curriculum implementation, seeking a staff development model that would be congruent with the components of teacher empowerment. A top down model (an outside expert), an interactive model (on-site trainers), and a bottom-up model of staff development were studied as they occurred during my time in the field. The major concentration was on the third one, a Reading Support Group, fashioned on the concepts of a humanistic teacher center. Finally, an empowerment questionnaire was discussed, and comparisons were made between the national averages, the Omega teachers in general, and the Reading Support Group members.

This final chapter summarizes the study, draws conclusions, and looks at the implications and recommendations of teacher empowerment for staff development toward reading curriculum implementation. It also contains questions for further study.

Summary of the Study

It has been shown that the Omega district has made many attempts to empower its teachers. This empowerment was specifically examined in relationship to the work of the district Reading Study Committee, originally a group of twenty-four K-12 volunteer teachers who were commissioned to study the present state of reading in the district, inform themselves of recent research in the field, and make recommendations for the future direction of reading instruction within the Omega Public Schools. The end product was to include a district written reading curriculum guide and procedures for dissemination of information to classroom teachers, as well as decisions about appropriate materials.

Evidences of Empowerment.

The three components which Maeroff (1988) identified as essential to empowering teachers (status, knowledge, power) formed the framework for the research data. Cited evidence confirmed the presence of these three aspects within the Omega district. Status was boosted through providing administrative support, encouraging internal leadership, and eliciting and addressing teachers' needs. Knowledge was increased through informing the decision makers, utilizing on-site trainers, and educating classroom teachers and administrators. Access to decision making was provided through facilitating collaboration, developing collegiality, and sharing power.

Mixed Reactions to Empowerment.

The mixed reactions to teacher empowerment (e.g., satisfaction, excitement, pleasure, but also ambivalence, confusion, misinterpretation, impatience, and even withdrawl) arose in relationship to the realities that teacher empowerment changes the *status quo*, shifts power, and takes time.

Impediments to Empowerment.

The Maeroff principles were seen as facilitating empowerment, but there were present several impediments to teacher empowerment in this setting, as well.

First, time again came into play here: time to learn new roles, time to get input from "the ground up," time to acquire new knowledge, time to write a curriculum, time to plan for innovation, time to implement new reading methods.

Second, the nature of previous inservices caused teachers to feel uncertain about implementation of innovative strategies, since the inservices were seen as insufficient in duration and content. Individuals also perceived a lack of support in implementation, both in personnel and in resources.

Third, there were concerns expressed related to innovation overload, due to the fact that several new curriculum guides and additional changes within the teaching context were simultaneously being recommended and/or required. Staff development plans for all of these

curriculums were lacking: integration of curriculum guides was recommended, but it has not yet become a reality.

Fourth, external pressures were experienced in the form of bureaucratic mandates, especially with regard to state assessment testing and reading support service guidelines.

Fifth, a history of teacher isolation in the district made it necessary for teachers to learn how to work collegially and collaboratively.

Staff Development for Empowerment.

Three types of staff development aimed toward implementing innovation in the area of reading curriculum were highlighted. The first type, the Reading Study Committee Initial Inservice, represented a top down model where an outside expert was brought in. Its benefits and deficiencies for teacher empowerment and reading curriculum implementation in this context were noted. The second type represented an interactive model where on-site trainers conducted voluntary Reading Strategy Inservices. Its strengths and weaknesses toward teacher empowerment and reading curriculum implementation in this setting were identified. The third type, the Reading Support Group, represented a bottom up model where a group of eight teachers met on a weekly basis to discuss topics related to their own identified concerns. Its empowering and disempowering aspects were cited.

A comparison of the three with the Loucks-Horsley et. al (1986) essential characteristics of effective staff development for successful change efforts was made.

The final criterion, follow up

the members of

Conclusions of the Study

Not only did I give evidence that teacher empowerment is a reality in the Omega district, but I also confirmed my original hypothesis that the Reading Support Group represented one type of staff development that would empower teachers.

When measured by the characteristics listed for effective staff development, the Reading Support Group conformed to them very well except in the areas of "sustained administrative support," "integration of individual goals with school and district goals," and "formal placement of the program within the philosophy and organizational structure of the school and the district." This reflects the concern expressed in the literature on teacher centers about their "tandemness" (Rogers, 1976).

The characteristics of the Reading Support Group also correlated with the criteria which Maeroff (1988b) cited for inservice education *at its best*. As such, it (a) broke down isolation and built networks (an *esprit de corps*), (b) bolstered confidence, (c) increased knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy (providing fresh information and new insights, along with ways to put this knowledge at the disposal of students), (d) provided the kind of learning

that fires enthusiasm, and (e) involved teachers in kinds of projects that provided access to decision making (at least within this group context and within their own classrooms). The final criterion, follow up mechanisms, was recognized by the members of the Reading Support Group as essential for the future, specifically, at times convenient for more colleagues to participate ("every other week or once a month would be viable" and, ideally, on release time).

Furthermore, the Reading Support Group met the requisites that Berliner (1987) validated for bridging the gap from theory to practice: talking about practice permits individuals to examine, reinforce, refine, and expand their own theories.

In addition, it possessed the /I/D/E/A (1967-1972) and Rand School Renewal and Change (1974) recommendations: (a) the school site should be an important component of the change process, and teachers (and administrators) should be provided skills and time necessary to focus attention on school-site problem solving; (b) staff development activities should flow from and be related to problems identified by the staff who play a major role in determining staff development and inservice activities and needs; (c) teachers (and administrators) have expertise to help solve roblems, and, therefore, collegial sharing should figure prominently in staff development activities.

Wood and Thompson's (1980) composite of Adult Learning Characteristics also were congruent with the Reading Support

Group content and context: (a) the topics were job-related and immediately useful; (b) they were relevant to personal and professional needs; (c) there were evident results; (d) because of ego involvement, there were indications of anxiety, fear, guilt, and negative self-concepts as new learning took place; (e) there was the need for instruction to be individualized, since each individual came with a unique past history; (f) this staff development effort aimed to encourage and create favorable conditions (Devaney's [1977] warmth, concreteness, time, and thought) for learning, since motivation for learning rested with these adult learners; (g) there was respect, trust, and concern demonstrated for the learner.

Lieberman and Miller's (1978) implications for staff development, based on their perceptions of the realities of teaching (social realities and dailiness) apply, as well: (a) the Reading Support Group engaged the individuals; (b) it took a reactive stance, starting from where these teachers were, not where they should have been; (c) it got individuals personally involved in implementation with and by people who understood these participants' needs; (d) it established supportive conditions; (e) it looked at staff development according to a growth model. In harmony with the final implication, Feiman (1983) has singled out the teacher center as one example which meets the criterion of a developmental style of inservice education.

Based on the literature on teacher empowerment and staff development, in conjunction with the evidence gained from the field, I concluded that a humanistic teacher center *does* have the ability to empower teacher participants.

Implications/Recommendations Resulting from the Study

Overall, I feel that this study has confirmed the route that the Omega Superintendent and Board of Education have begun to pursue in an attempt to provide a facilitative climate within which teachers of the district have been encouraged and enabled to take responsibility for designing and implementing improvements within their respective curricular areas (i.e., *teacher empowerment*). This study, however, has also pointed out several areas of concern and challenge that appear to be worthy of further note at this critical time.

There are several implications which arise from this study, and they will again be classified according to the categories embodied within the title of this study. I will follow the stated implications with recommendations to the Omega Public School's Board of Education as they continue on the path they have chosen. The recommendations specifically relate to the areas of: (1) awareness of mission, (2) support from administrators, (3) evaluation of teachers, (4) use of personnel in creative ways, (5) need for developing collaboration and collegiality, and (6) concern for teacher overload.

Empowerment Issues.

For the district.

The district must have a clear sense of mission, and administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community must be aware of that mission and must work together to accomplish it. With that mission clearly stated as a priority, it will be possible for each to exert his/her own efforts to see that it is accomplished in the way s/he sees fit.

Recommendation # 1: Awareness of mission. I recommend that increased attention be given to informing school board members, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community of the mission of the school district. This may be done through presentations and publications.

For Administrators.

Administrative support is crucial. This includes giving recognition, reinforcement, and respect. It means providing teachers with the opportunity to have a say, as well as legitimizing that say. This administrative support must be overt and ongoing. Administrative support must take a variety of forms, including financial, personnel, and resources backing.

Administrative leadership must be strong, but not autocratic; rather, it must be "soft." In sports terminology, it can be likened to a playing coach. In music terminology, it can be likened to an orchestra conductor directing the many different instruments into one harmonious

symphony. Other descriptors are coordinators, facilitators, and enablers.

Administrators must share their power with teachers, assuming that the best decisions which can be made in regard to the classroom are made by those closest to the situation. This may mean that administrators initially need to trust teachers before teachers have proven worthy of that trust.

Recommendation # 2: Support from administrators. I recommend that in-service education be made available for administrators in order to provide them with the facilitative skills and process orientation that is associated with empowerment.

For teachers.

Teachers should assume leadership roles within the district, and they should be given the time, encouragement, and training necessary to help them to succeed in those roles.

The empowered teacher moves toward an internal locus of control, resulting in reduced stress, higher levels of satisfaction, a discounting of luck or fate, an acceptance of responsibility, and a feeling of influence in her educational environment. S/he is energized by her/his teaching.

Recommendation # 3: Evaluation of teachers. I recommend that consideration be given to the relationship between teacher empowerment and the criteria by which teachers are evaluated. As teachers take on new

responsibilities, the tasks and roles of these teachers should be acknowledged as vital to their employment.

Staff Development Issues.

For staff developers.

The goal of staff development is the professional development of teachers (i.e., teacher empowerment). Staff development must be continuous and ongoing, it must take a variety of forms to meet the individual needs of each teacher (one size does *not* fit all). It must be long-term and sensitive ("handholding," "spoon fed").

Staff development does not happen by itself--collaborative leadership is needed.

Teachers tend to resist imposed, prescribed inservices which are often interpreted as an attack on their present teaching or an assumption of incompetency.

Teachers can be helped to identify and solve their own problems. Staff development should start where teachers are, not where they should be. This is based on the belief that teachers are professionally competent people who can and will select priority areas for their own inservice needs.

Self-concerns must be legitimized. There must be an acknowledgement of and respect for self concerns, as well as overt attempts made to address and resolve those concerns.

Teachers, like students, come to the learning situation with a great deal of baggage. Instruction for teachers as learners must be individualized, just as it is for students.

Teachers should be made to feel that what they know and do will be respected and does make a difference. Teacher prior knowledge must be recognized and extended.

Staff development should discard a training model for a growth model. It must be acknowledged that growth is slow and not even-paced; development is non-linear.

The focal point for staff development is the individual, working with others, trying to do the best possible job of educating children. Norms must be developed within the faculty that encourage sharing, collaboration, innovation, risk-taking, and reflective thinking.

Recommendation # 4: Use of personnel in creative ways. I recommend that, in addition to administrative support, teachers also need to have professional assistance on a regular basis from non-administrative colleagues. One method of support might be to assign teachers already in the district to assume the role of helping teachers, those individuals who can take the role of facilitators and coordinators in each curricular area with the knowledge, skills, initiative, and time to give help as needed. This help may be through technical assistance, staff development, additional resources, or released time. A second method of support could occur in split-time positions, where teachers assume the role of consultants/coordinators to their peers half time while teaching children half time. A third method of support might be the hiring of a staff development

coordinator, a person who can serve as an advisor and advocate for staff members, one who can help teachers clarify and follow up on their development experiences.

For teachers.

Teachers must continue to be learners if they are to be empowered. This allows them to create and use their own knowledge, as opposed to depending upon outside experts.

Teachers, not curriculum, are the most important part of the instructional program, for the reality is that teachers become the curriculum in their own classrooms when the doors are closed.

Teachers must be active in their own education: they must be trusted to recognize their own needs, form their own purposes, and direct their own activities in the learning process.

Teachers are their own best resources for identifying and solving many of their own problems: they have different needs at different times, and they are in the position to best know their own needs.

Recommendation # 5: Need for developing collegiality and collaboration. I recommend that better use be made of the present structure of department/grade group chairpersons. Since it takes time to develop a sense of collaboration and collegiality, these groups should meet on a regular basis (at least once a month) in order to help teachers identify and solve problems most closely related to their own settings. To demonstrate to teachers that the

administration views this as a priority, these meetings should occur on release time, possibly dismissing school an hour earlier or starting school an hour later once a month.

Implementation Issues.

For staff developers.

Teachers do not change teaching behavior because they have a curriculum guide or because they are told to. Teachers need to take ownership if change is to occur.

Teachers will take greater ownership if they are empowered through involvement and participation and if they are at least partially responsible for defining their own education problems and delineating their own needs and receiving help on their own terms. ("You *can* teach an old dog new tricks.")

Change takes time. It is more than getting started. There needs to be support provided throughout. Teachers must be assured of on-site assistance as innovation of the implementation occurs.

Teachers must be aware of the requirements for implementation of the innovation, with clear expectations given. Innovation must be presented as something that can be done a little at a time: needed skills must be clearly outlined.

The teacher must be encouraged to trust his/her own judgment, to adopt or adapt as s/he sees fit.

Teachers cannot empower their students if they themselves do not feel empowered. If teachers are tightly

controlled by bureaucratic mandates, they will tightly control their students.

Teachers' satisfaction (efficacy) is tied in to children's learning.

When evaluation is made, it is important to remember that, as with any new innovation, initial results may be worse rather than better.

Recommendation # 6: Concern for teacher overload. I recommend that the district be especially sensitive to the issue of elementary teacher overload at this point. Since even relatively simple innovations take time, there should be restrictions about how many curricular areas are addressed at one time: less may be more. To that end, it would be advisable to have one teacher representative from a specific curricular area meet with either the Board of Education as a whole or the Education Subcommittee of the Board monthly in order to share their unique goals, concerns, and successes. Teachers should be given assistance (peer, consultant, administrative, and resources) as they attempt to integrate the varied curricular areas.

Questions for Further Study

There remain additional questions to be answered, both in the context of the broader educational community and within the narrow confines of the Omega district. Again, they will be divided into the categories of teacher empowerment, staff development, and reading curriculum implementation.

Teacher Empowerment.

How do teachers become empowered? Do they assume certain decision-making roles because of experience? Are they encouraged by their administrators? Have they had certain training? Are they a special breed: i.e., do they have certain cognitive, emotional, social, or policital characteristics? Can anyone/everyone be empowered?

What is the impact--long and short term--of teacher empowerment on student achievement?

Staff Development.

To what extent should staff development concentrate on the practical day-to-day needs of teachers as opposed to also being concerned with larger questions dealing with educational theory, research, and philosophy? Can teachers grow without consideration of these broader questions?

What should the role of administrators be within the context of staff development? Should staff development be so exclusively teacher centered that principals and other administrators are excluded from participation? C a n schools change very much if administrators are not involved? How can staff development include both administrators and teachers without threatening either group?

How can staff development programs attract reluctant teachers? How can they meet the needs of beginning teachers?

How can staff development avoid the tandemness that seems to dominate so much of their offerings and instead provide a more coherent, sustained, and continuous help for teachers?

Reading Curriculum Implemention.

How will the new reading curriculum guide be perceived and utilized by the teachers in the district?

What challenges and concerns will teachers face as they actually implement the new curriculum?

How will curriculum implementation be monitored and assessed in a teacher-empowered setting? How can the topic be addressed without "disempowering" individuals? If all of this is done by volunteers, what happens when the time comes to ensure that the curriculum guide is followed and not just put on the shelf or in a drawer, as had previously occurred? Who makes the decision regarding implementation and evaluation? the Curriculum Director, building principals, the Reading Study Committee chairperson, or peers? How will articulation and consistency and continuity be addressed?

How will the New Definition of Reading and its concomitant strategies impact on student achievement? How will student reading achievement be assessed in the future?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZABCDEFGHIJKLM

June 1, 1989

Dear Elementary Teachers,

During this past school year, you have had the opportunity to be exposed to [redacted]'s Redefinition of Reading, along with strategies that are congruent with that philosophical statement. This summer a new reading curriculum will be written by the members of our district's Reading Study Committee. It appears that the new curriculum will be in teachers' hands this fall, and that textbook adoption will take place in the fall of 1990.

As many of you know, I have spent this past year on a sabbatical leave in order to complete the course work associated with my pursuit of a Ph.D. degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a major emphasis in Reading/Language Arts from MSU. To that end, I have begun to gather data relating to the work of Reading Curriculum Implementation and Staff Development in the [redacted] Public Schools over the past semester: I have attended meetings, interviewed teachers and administrators, observed classrooms, and collected documents. The cooperation and support I have received in these undertakings had been phenomenal! I would like to continue with the next stage of data collection for my dissertation by setting up a weekly reading support group for the first semester of the 1989-1990 school year.

As I envision it, this would be a voluntary group of elementary teachers who wish to meet on a weekly basis for the purpose of reflecting upon and discussing reading theory and practice as it relates to the new reading curriculum guide and its implementation in classrooms within the district.

No one is under any obligation to attend; however, if you would be at all interested in becoming a participant in this group, you are invited to attend an informational meeting on Thursday morning, June 8, 1989, at 7:45 a.m. in the Early Childhood Center. To be discussed at that time will be issues related to:

Rationale for a Reading Support Group,
Leadership and Support Roles,
Goals and Expectations,
Meeting Day and Time.

Please let the reading teacher in your building know if you plan to attend the June 9 meeting.

Sincerely,

Marlene J. Braunius

Marlene J. Braunius

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZABCDEFGHIJKLM

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION SESSION
for
PROPOSED READING SUPPORT GROUP
June 8, 1989

Personal Hopes/Concerns

Hopes. When you read the announcement, what did you envision or hope such a reading support group would entail?

Concerns. **What kinds of concerns did you have related to this proposed study?**

Proposed Reading Support Group

What

Role of TEACHER AS RESEARCHER, an active way of thinking about how we can improve our work as teachers within a Teacher Center atmosphere characterized by:

warmth--collegiality and collaboration, non-threatening
concreteness--real-life, focus on specific and concrete
time--time to discover needs, genuine change takes time
thought--take more responsibility for curricular and instructional decisions

How

During weekly meetings, we will work on case studies/ journal entries, reading curriculum guide, and/or literature related to common problems

Why

Learn more about how children learn, acquire skills in curriculum development and implementation

Increase self esteem and confidence, increase resourcefulness and willingness to seek and share advice

When

day

time

Where

TEACHER AS RESEARCHER QUESTIONS

READING PROCESS

1. How did I learn to read?
2. What is reading?
3. What do people in have to know in order to teach reading?
4. How do they get that knowledge?
5. How is reading taught in ? Text/Context
6. How do I teach reading? Why do I teach that way?
7. How does what I teach relate to the total reading curriculum?
8. Why do some children have difficulty reading?
9. Who is a poor reader that I know? What makes that person a poor reader?
10. If a person is having difficulty, what would I do to help him/her?
11. Who is a good reader that I know? What makes that person a good reader?

TEACHER'S ROLE

1. What is the purpose of the reading instruction I provide for my students?
2. How do I plan for reading instruction?
3. What do I do to promote students' movement toward reading expertise?
4. How do I assess my students in reading? Why do I do it in that way?
5. In my classroom, what kinds of things do I do to help my students become more literate?

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

1. How do I grow and develop professionally, especially in reading?
2. Who/what most influences my thinking regarding reading instruction?
3. Since I began teaching, how have my ideas about reading instruction changed?
4. If there were no constraints, what would an ideal reading program look like in my classroom?

MY OWN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

APPENDIX C

August 23, 1989

Dear

You attended an information meeting on June 8, 1989 in which the possibility of carrying out a voluntary reading support group during the first semester of the 1989-1990 school year was briefly explored. On the basis of that meeting, I put together the following proposal for my research project entitled, **Implications of Teacher Empowerment for Staff Development and Reading Curriculum Implementation.**

ABSTRACT

This ethnographic case study will document, describe, and attempt to explain the concerns that elementary teachers in one district face as they begin to implement a new reading curriculum which incorporates current reading research into classroom practice.

The context for this research project will be a voluntary reading support group which will meet weekly from Septemeber 7-December 14, 1989. The format of the meetings will follow a teacher center concept, where the teacher participants will be encouraged and enabled to set their own agenda for topics related to the concerns they encounter in the process of reading curriculum innovation and implementation. I will take the role of observer participant and will assume the duties of group coordinator. All meetings will be audio-taped.

In addition to attending the weekly meetings, the participants will be asked: to keep journals within which they will reflect on their classroom reading practice (tensions, questions, successes); to voluntarily and anonymously fill out surveys or questionnaires related to the topics under discussion; to agree to be interviewed by the researcher (a maximum of two times during the course of the term) as to their perceptions of their role in implementation and support group participation; and, if they volunteer without coersion or recrimination, to take the role of group facilitator at one or more of the meetings.

ANONYMITY/CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality will be dealt with by protecting the identities of those involved in the study. The identification of the town and schools will be disguised and identifying characteristics altered. No actual names will be used at any point throughout the study. Pseudonyms will be used in all observational field notes and transcripts. When audio-tapes are used during reading support group meetings and interviews, the information will be transcribed and the original tapes will be erased. No names will be attached to school, classroom, or group documents.

The research report itself will not be made available to the administrators in the district in which the study is conducted.

The raw data will not be used in any evaluation and will not be released to any personnel of the school district. It is conceivable that at some future date a summary of the findings may be shared with the district curriculum director for consideration in future planning for curriculum innovation implementation.

RISK/BENEFIT RATIO

I do not foresee any physical, legal, or economic risk to the subjects. There are some potential social and psychological risks which I will attempt to minimize. First, there is the lack of anonymity. Here, the promise of confidentiality will be given as listed above. Second, the procedures of data gathering and any public revelation of the analyses of that data may cause some psychological and emotional concerns (e.g., self-consciousness). In this area, the participants will be reassured that the purpose of the study is for information, rather than for evaluation. Third, the time commitment involved in preparation for and attendance at the weekly meetings, as well as for the individual interviews, could be considered prohibitive factors. An attempt will be made to offer the meetings at a time when it is most convenient for a majority of the participants. Interview schedules will also be set to coincide with personal preferences.

Benefits to the participants will focus upon the opportunity afforded to gain insights into their own thinking and practice, and, hopefully, into their students' thinking, as well. The emphasis upon collegiality and self-governance should also contribute toward the participants' feelings of support and worth. I also feel that the results of this project will help this district, as well as other educational communities, to better understand the role that empowerment has upon reading curriculum implementation and staff development.

CONSENT PROCEDURES

The consent form on the subsequent page(s) lists the requirements, the benefits, and the assurance that individuals are free not to participate at all without any recrimination and that they may refuse to answer any questions or to withdraw at any time without penalty.

You are asked to read the consent form(s) carefully and check those items which you feel you understand and to which you can give your endorsement. If you intend to participate in this project, please take the completed form(s) to the first meeting on September 7, 1989 at 4:00 p.m. in the Early Childhood Center.

Should you have any questions or reservations about any or all of this summary, contact me at School or at home

I am excited about this project and look forward to collaborating with you on it!

Marlene J. Brannin

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM FOR READING SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS

The research project, Implications of Teacher Empowerment for Staff Development and Reading Curriculum Implementation, has been explained to me and I voluntarily agree to participate in this project. I know that the research study is being done in partial fulfillment of Marlene Braunius' doctoral degree from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Michigan State University and will be carried out from September through December, 1989.

I understand that as a collaborator in this research, I will be asked to do the following:

_____1. Attend thirteen 1 1/2 hour weekly reading support group meetings from September 7-December 14, 1989 (exempting November 9 [Parent-Teacher Conferences] and November 23 [Thanksgiving]);

_____2. Share my reflective journal entries with the members of the reading support group;

_____3. Permit Marlene to act as an observer participant (audiotaping and/or taking field notes) during the weekly reading support group meetings of which I am a part;

_____4. Allow Marlene to interview/tape record me regarding my view of reading instruction, the support group's work, and my role in it (maximum: one hour);

Benefits which may result, but cannot be assured, from this study include the following:

_____1. I will have the opportunity to gain insight into my own thinking and practice regarding reading instruction;

_____2. The results of this project could help the district to better understand and implement the Reading Study Committee's recommendations in terms of bridging the gap between on-paper curriculum and its practice in classrooms, and ultimately, lead to greater articulation and achievement in the entire district;

_____3. Marlene will serve as a resource person whenever that assistance will not interfere with her research activities.

I also realize that:

_____1. I am free not to participate at all without penalty, and that no peer or administrative pressure will be exerted, either directly or indirectly, regarding this decision;

_____2. I may refuse to answer any questions at any time without any negative consequences;

_____3. I may withdraw from this study at any time without any recrimination;

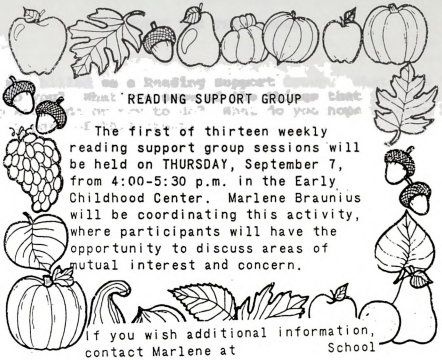
_____4. Data collected will be used in Marlene's doctoral dissertation and may also be used in articles, presentations or instruction;

_____5. All data collected will be kept confidential and reported without any individual identification of teachers, schools, or school district;

_____6. I may waive my personal confidentiality, should I wish to do so, as in the case of authoring papers or making joint presentations about our research.

_____ _____

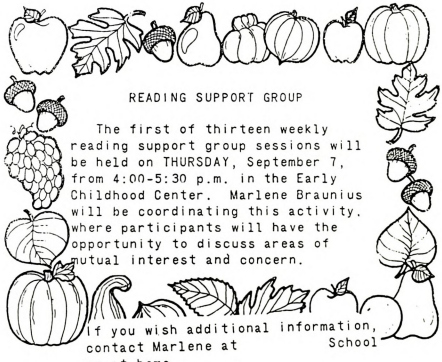
Signature Date



READING SUPPORT GROUP

The first of thirteen weekly reading support group sessions will be held on THURSDAY, September 7, from 4:00-5:30 p.m. in the Early Childhood Center. Marlene Braunius will be coordinating this activity, where participants will have the opportunity to discuss areas of mutual interest and concern.

If you wish additional information, contact Marlene at School or at home



READING SUPPORT GROUP

The first of thirteen weekly reading support group sessions will be held on THURSDAY, September 7, from 4:00-5:30 p.m. in the Early Childhood Center. Marlene Braunius will be coordinating this activity. where participants will have the opportunity to discuss areas of mutual interest and concern.

If you wish additional information, contact Marlene at School or at home

APPENDIX F

MY HOPES FOR THIS GROUP

1. This was billed as a Reading Support Group. What does that mean to you? What are some of the things that you hope this group might do or try to do? What do you hope to gain by being a part of this group?

2. Name three reading-related topics that you would like this group to address.

3. What do you think the group should have a right to expect from its members?

4. Tell what skills/abilities/leadership/jobs you are willing to contribute to the group.

MY HOPES FOR THIS GROUP

Meeting # 1: September 7, 1989

1. This was billed as a Reading Support Group. What does that mean to you? What are some of the things that you hope this group might do or try to do? What do you hope to gain by being a part of this group?

It means that together we will be able to share ideas which can be adapted to other classrooms and other subjects. I hope to get a broader resource of possible materials and ideas.

--provide support as we try new techniques
--I hope we look at what works and how we know that!
--be a better diagnostician of reading problems

My hopes are that we can share ideas and problems with possible solutions. That we support each other when the going gets rough and that we have people in our building who can be called upon for reading "advice."

--learn how to get children to break the code--reading and writing
--learn how to gear my expectations (goals)
--learn how to recognize where children are in their reading development and what their next step is
(grouping & gifted)

I hope that we can talk about different reading approaches and discuss what worked and what didn't work in a non-threatening manner--respecting individual teaching styles

I want to understand what motivates people to change teaching behaviors over the years--implications for staff development which interests me

I feel a support group is one in which the members are willing to share their ideas, frustrations, etc.

A reading support should help each member in difficult areas of reading. I am not confident in my teaching of reading. I would like to know what I am doing right and how to improve.

2. Name three reading-related topics that you would like this group to address.

writing experience stories
beginning reading--how to get them going
skills vs. meaning
how to meet the needs of all children in our settings
how do we **measure** success
whole language
grouping for instruction
fitting everything in
working with heterogeneous groups
effective materials
beginning reading/writing
expectations of the young reader (goals)
whole word versus phonics
whole language
literature-based instruction
integrated curriculum
new reading strategies
Zeeland reading text adoption
whole language (across the curriculum)
implementation and assessment
literature-based instruction
reading/writing connection
whole language approach
putting the "new" reading curriculum to use in my classroom using the two approaches listed above
MEAP
comprehension/higher level thinking
measurement/assessment
skills vs. content--weight of each
strategies feedback
meeting needs of all students
productive seatwork/groupwork
time management
how to teach children reading
goals of reading instuction
teaching comprehension
measuring comprehension skills
teaching higher level thinking skills
new reading concept

CATEGORIES IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

3. What do you think the group should have a right to expect from its members?

dependability and responsibility
enthusiasm

regular attendance, except for important reasons otherwise
honesty
respect

honesty and privacy
everyone shares--no one leader
understanding

honesty
positive attitudes toward learning

support each others' right to teach in <u>different</u> manner

honesty
sharing questions, doubts, misgivings
sharing what is working as well as what isn't
(especially with reading strategies)

willingness to share ideas

involvement on a weekly basis
contributions of ideas
give and accept criticism
freedom to ask--challenge--etc.

4. Tell what skills/abilities/leadership/jobs you are willing to contribute to the group.

I don't feel comfortable being a leader because of my inexperience, but I am willing to do whatever.

as needed--just ask!

I'll be glad to supply treats and supplies.
It would be fun to team teach in our buildings.
Leadership??

snack
make reservations for dinner sometime

share journal articles, etc.
refresher on previous strategies (QAR, Reciprocal, Mapping, Webbing)

chair or co/chair
share about--Reading Recovery (Marie Clay)
--Readers' Theater across the curriculum

food
sharing any articles that have been read recently

bring refreshments
photocopy
work with others
anthing - really - if it is possible for me to do

READING SUPPORT GROUP TOPICS
(as proposed 9/7/89, and as categorized 9/14/89)

I. "New" Definition of Reading

A. Congruent Strategies for Comprehension Revisited
1. Story Grammar/Mapping
2. Reciprocal Teaching
3. KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned)
4. Probable Passages
5. QAR (Question-Answer Relationships)

B. Role of Skills Instruction
Skills as Strategies

C. Assessment
1. Goals--Omega's New Curriculum/Textbook Adoption
2. Evaluation
a. Formal--State's Education Assessment, etc.
b. Informal--Classroom diagnosis/remediation
e.g., Reading Recovery

II. Emergent Literacy

A. Expectations

B. Beginning Reading/Writing

III. Alternative Approaches/Materials

A. Whole Word vs. Phonics

B. Language Experience Approach

C. Whole Language (Across the Curriculum)
e.g., Readers Theater

D. Literature-Based

E. Integrated

F. Reading/Writing Connection

IV. Management

A. Implementation

B. Grouping for Instruction

C. Meeting Needs (low, average, high/gifted)

D. Productive Seatwork/Groupwork

E. Time Management

READING SUPPORT GROUP WORKSHEET

Date	Topic	Leader(s)	Food
9/ 7/89	Get Acquainted My Hopes for this Group	Marlene	Marlene
9/12/89	Reaching Topic Consensus	Marlene	Rebekah
9/19/89	New Definition Story Mapping	Laura Chris	Bonnie
9/28/89	Reciprocal Teaching	Marlene	Suzann
10/ 3/89	KWL QAR Probable Passages	Bonnie Laura Karina	Jennifer
10/19/89	Where the Basics Fit Skills as Strategies Goals Omega's New Reading Curriculum	Marlene Karina Bonnie Laura Rebekah	Truda
10/23/89	Assessment: Formal/Informal	Marlene	Chris
10/30/89	Remedial Techniques	Karina Suzann Chris Laura Bonnie	Laura
11/13/89	Emergent Literacy Language Experience Reading/Writing Reading Recovery	Suzann Jennifer Bonnie Karina	Marlene
11/30/89	Alternative Approaches Whole Language--Literature	Laura	Karina
12/ 7/89	Alternative Approaches Basals Content Areas	All Marlene Karina	Rebekah
12/14/89	Management Evaluation	Suzann Bonnie Marlene	All

APPENDIX H

READING INTERVIEW
by
Carolyn L. Burke

1. When you are reading and you come to something you don't know, what do you do?

   Do you ever do anything else?

2. **Who is a good reader that you know?**

3. **What makes him/her a good reader?**

4. Do you think that she/he ever comes to something she/he doesn't know when she's/he's reading?

5. Yes When she/he does come to something she/he doesn't know, what do you think she/he does about it?

   No Suppose / Pretend that she/he does come to something that she/he doesn't know. What do you think she/he does about it?

6. If you know that someone was having difficulty reading, how would you help him/her?

7. What would a / your teacher do to help that person?

8. How did you learn to read?

   What did (they/you) do to help you learn?

9. What would you like to do better as a reader?

10. Do you think that you are a good reader? _____ yes ____ no

APPENDIX I

To: Elementary Classroom Teachers
From: Marlene Braunius
Re: Attached Questionnaire
Date: December 6, 1989

I am completing data collection for my dissertation research project, IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHER EMPOWERMENT FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND READING CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION, and I would greatly value 10 minutes from your very busy schedule to complete the attached questionnaire* before December 15.

This task is completely voluntary and anonymous. You are free not to participate at all, and you may refuse to answer any questions without recrimination. The results of the survey will be used to help set the context for my study.

If you have any questions, feel free to call me at home (669-3675) or at school ( ). Please send the completed questionnaire to me in the inter-school mail (MARLENE BRAUNIUS/ SCHOOL).

Thank you sincerely for your cooperation in this matter!

*The questionnaire is excerpted from Instructor (January/May 1986) and Phi Delta Kappan (June 1989), where nation-wide results are discussed..

PART I: **INSTRUCTOR's** Elementary Education Policy Poll

***What** decisions do you make?*

Circle the appropriate underlined word below:

1. I make most some none of the important decisions related to curriculum for my students.
2. I make most some none of the important decisions related to texts and supplementary materials for my students.
3. I make most some none of the important decisions related to instructional methods for my students.
4. I make most some none of the important decisions related to test selection for my students.
5. I make most some none of the important decisions related to inservice training in my school.
6. I always sometimes never participate in decisions about hiring teachers in my school.
7. I have many some no opportunities during the day to talk to my colleagues about teaching.
8. I have many some no opportunities to observe my colleagues teach.
9. I always sometimes never am meaningfully involved in choosing the subjects and grades I teach.
10. My principal frequently infrequently never provides me with useful guidance on instructional matters.
11. More training in subject matter knowledge will might will not make me a better teacher.

PART II: PHI DELTA KAPPAN's Second Gallup Poll

*In your opinion, how much control **should** teachers have over the aspects of the educational process listed below? Use a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents something you think teachers should have no control over and 4 represents something you think teachers should have complete control over.*

*Next, please indicate how much control teachers in your school **actually** have over these same aspects of the educational process. Use the same scale, where 1 represents something you think teachers in your school have no control over and 4 is something you think teachers have complete control over.*

	should have	actually have
1. Determining which students are placed in which classes	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
2. Selecting textbooks to be used in class	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
3. Setting disciplinary policies for the school	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
4. Deciding how to teach a given class	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
5. Setting grading policies	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
6. Determining the amount of homework given to students	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
7. Determining academic standards for the school	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
8. Deciding what to teach in class	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
9. Deciding how school funds are spent on instructional materials in school	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
10. Determining the school schedule	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

APPENDIX J

FINAL SESSION OF READING
SUPPORT GROUP-DEBRIEFING

The word "debriefing" is a military term, according to my husband. Before going into combat, soldiers are briefed about their roles/ expectations with a summary of what may happen. After the battle, these same soldiers are asked, "How did it go?" and "What actually did happen?"

Hopefully, you were all adequately "briefed" in the initial information sessions. You have been in the "battle" for the past 4 months. Now it is time to take stock: How did it go? What actually did happen?

I would like to submit these four questions to guide our discussion for Tuesday's meeting:

1. Throughout this support group, what kinds of feelings did you experience?
2. What kind of information (attitudes, skills, knowledges) have you gained that has influenced your thinking?
3. How does what you learned relate to what you previously knew or believed about reading (e.g., confirmed/disconfirmed)?
4. What conclusions have you reached about the issues of reading curriculum implementation and/or staff development as a result of this experience? (To put it another way, What would you recommend to the Reading Study Committee as a result of this type of inservice?)

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