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# Organizational Change: A Case Study of a High School's Changed Educational Practice in Response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF A HIGH SCHOOL'S  
CHANGED EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN RESPONSE TO THE  
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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December 2009

Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
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Title: Organizational Change: A Case Study of a High School's Changed Educational Practice in Response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

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No Child Left Behind has impacted every public school across the country. Schools must address the mandates set forth within the Act to ensure they are meeting adequate yearly progress and ensure that all students will attain proficiency by the year 2014. This case study examines whether NCLB has influenced organizational change as it relates to instructional practices in one suburban high school in Western Pennsylvania.

A qualitative method was chosen as it best fit the needs of the study, which is to document organizational change in terms of changed teaching methods to improve student achievement on the PSSA in one western Pennsylvania high school. A descriptive case study provides a more in-depth look and will be conducted in a vertical manner; comparing PSSA scores before and after implementation of improved instructional strategies. Interviews, archival PSSA data, and documents will be analyzed. Hall and Hord's Stages of Concern will be used for the theoretical framework for this study. The case study will focus on new implementation of learning skills through instructional practice in core academic secondary classrooms, roadblocks and supports in the transformation, and the effectiveness of the initiative.

The results of this study suggested that teachers' instructional practices were changed in order to meet the requirements set forth in NCLB. The manner in which a change initiative is approached and sustained impacts the sustainability of the proposed transformation. This study proposes that by utilizing reading strategies across all content areas at the secondary level and providing students with a strong foundation in reading, student achievement will thus increase in this area.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

In order to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) and increase proficiency to one hundred percent, schools must reevaluate current practices. Within secondary classrooms, reading standards must be integrated into all content areas. Students must see a direct link between all academic courses. This linkage among curricula improves student attainment, because pupils see how ideas relate to one another, and are then able to make a connection. In addition, students receive repetitive instruction on basic skills, which instills the concept within the student. Learning skills within the high school setting are enhanced by challenging the way teachers teach. The greatest factor in learning and thus student achievement is instruction (Schmoker, 2006). Studies have shown that a teacher can have a more profound impact on students even if the school does not (Marzano, Pickering, Pollock, 2001). The enhancement of student learning skills should have a direct impact on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores if instructional capacities are maximized by teachers. This study is about organizational change and directly focuses on implementing a new instructional strategy to insure 100% proficiency in the area of reading on the PSSA.

Education in the United States is replete with reform efforts. Since the 1960s school reform has gone through many stages. Currently, education is in a phase of reform that relies heavily upon data; the data collected is that of student achievement. The data is used to identify probable successful interventions and how effective those interventions are when implemented (Marzano, 2003).

Since the 1950s, the presence of the federal and the state government in education has steadily grown. Beginning with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) which clearly gave the federal government a presence in state and local school decisions (Cuban, 2004); since then, the federal and state governments have usurped much of the local autonomy of school districts. The next big push in reform by the government was initiated with the Nation at Risk report in 1983 which covered over a decade of public school concerns.

“The ‘art’ of teaching is rapidly becoming the ‘science’ of teaching, and this is a relatively new phenomenon” (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001, p. 1). Before this time, teaching had not been scientifically studied. In the 1970s a shift occurred in educational research. As Marzano, et al. point out, a shift was made to analyze the effects of instruction on student learning; until recently many believed that schools did not make much of a difference in student achievement (2001). Two studies were conducted by James Coleman and Christopher Jencks that supported the assertion that schools had little impact on student achievement. They espoused that students were affected by items out of the schools’ control, such as student’s natural ability, socioeconomic status, and home environment. Since that time, however, other researchers have found flaws in these assertions. It is evident through more recent legislation that this is no longer the belief of many; schools do impact student achievement.

With the advent of the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 teaching practices must be transformed in today’s schools. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is, “An Act to strengthen and improve educational quality and educational opportunities in the Nation’s elementary and

secondary schools” (Meier, Kohn, Darling-Hammond, Sizer, & Wood, 2004, p. xx).

Through this legislation the federal government has become an active decision maker in local schools (Cuban, 2004). The Act clearly defined the idea of standards and the guidelines of assessing standards. It also provides that schools accepting federal funds must make AYP toward state standards. If AYP is not met, schools will fall subject to consequences and sanctions. The two key ingredients to improving student achievement and meeting the goals of NCLB are the teachers and the students; teacher quality is one of the most important school variables (Meier, et al., 2004).

According to NCLB, one hundred percent of the students must achieve at the proficient level by 2014. One hundred percent proficiency will become the responsibility of administrators and teachers. Proficiency of students does not rest solely on the shoulders of those teachers in the assessed areas and the assessed grade levels. Thus, student attainment is a collective process which builds from one school year to the next in all disciplines. NCLB seeks to guarantee that all students are receiving the highest quality of education. Thus, data must be utilized to influence planning, implementation, and assessment across five or more years and specific teaching strategies must be incorporated to improve student attainment. As noted in *Implementing Change* innovations in education take at least three to five years to be implemented at a high level and demand specialized training and ongoing consultation (Hall & Hord, 2001).

### Need for the Study

NCLB has forced many school districts into examining teaching practices in order to meet the requirements of AYP. The new reform mandates have required schools to revisit the mission of the school and how to increase achievement of all students. If

schools fail to meet AYP they will be subject to a progressive system of sanctions; school leaders are held accountable for ensuring progress of all students. In Pennsylvania, after two consecutive years of not meeting AYP, schools will be put into a school improvement cycle; after two more consecutive years of not meeting AYP, they will be put into corrective action cycle (U.S. Department of Education, May 30, 2006).

In this study, the district has spent six years scrutinizing data and implementing instructional initiatives to adjust teacher instruction through in-house professional development to enhance student achievement. Through the analysis of PSSA scores, teachers were directed by the administration to incorporate new strategies and standards into their respective courses. Until this point in time, teachers in the study only taught their respective subjects. To nearly the entire faculty reading strategies were a foreign concept; teachers utilized predetermined reading strategies across the curriculum. A shift in instructional practices was not an easy one for many teachers; however, they were asked to become leaders of the school and take ownership of the initiative. As pointed out by the authors of *Implementing Change* people tend to hope that change is something they try to avoid personally and professionally (Hall & Hord, 2001). Fear of change is inevitable, continual support was provided throughout the transformation. Teachers were provided with a reading coach, in-service training, numerous sources of data, and common planning time to collaborate with peers.

#### Theoretical Framework

The framework of the qualitative descriptive case study is examined through organizational change theorists (John Kotter, William Bridges, Allison Zmuda, Robert Kuklis, and Everett Kline) to provide a basis for organizational change. Kotter and

Bridges provide a map for organizations to maneuver through as they undergo a transformation. Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline provide the shift in paradigm needed to exemplify a successful transformational process. In addition, learning and leadership theorists, Michael Schmoker and Robert Marzano provide a frame for individual and organizational learning and leadership patterns.

In *Managing Transitions*, Bridges points out those members of the organization must first realize the need for change in order for a transformation to take place and be successful (2003). If members do not see a reason or need to change; they will not. As pointed out by Bridges, change is situational, but transition is a psychological three-step process (*Managing Transitions*, 2003). The school in the study was maneuvering through a transformation in academic teaching practices; practitioners were asked to let go of past practice and institute new strategies and take collective responsibility for student achievement on the PSSA. Members of the organization must have closure before they are capable of moving into a neutral zone, and finally commence the new beginning or change effort. The administrators in the district in the case study were not asking for a radical change, but a shift in instructional practice. In any group this can produce feelings of fear and pain. Figure 1 from *The Heart of Change* depicts the stages of change within an organization and the new behavior exhibited by members of the organization. The diagram provides a basic pattern for successful large-scale change. Members must navigate through the different stages before a change initiative can provide long lasting success. The steps are not set in stone and transformations within organizations do not follow the flow of the eight steps rigidly, because every process is not identical. Some stages may overlap, while other stages may be quite short depending upon the group. In

addition, there are times when it is necessary to regress and repeat step one, which is typically the sense of urgency, to keep the organization moving forward during the transformation.

Step	Action	New Behavior
1	Increase urgency	People start telling each other, "Let's go, we need to change things!"
2	Build the guiding team	A group powerful enough to guide a big change is formed and they start to work together well.
3	Get the vision right	The guiding team develops the right vision and strategy for the change effort
4	Communicate for buy-in	People begin to buy into the change, and this shows in their behavior.
5	Empower action	More people feel able to act, and do act, on the vision.
6	Create short-term wins	Momentum builds as people try to fulfill the vision, while fewer and fewer resist change.
7	Don't let up	People make wave after wave of changes until the vision is fulfilled.
8	Make change stick	New and winning behavior continues despite the pull of tradition, turnover of change leaders, etc.

*Figure 1* Chart is from *The Heart of Change* by Kotter demonstrating changed behavior during a transformation (2002, p. 7).

As stated in *The Heart of Change*, when asking people to institute a change, one must appeal to the emotions and feelings of the members (2002). It is not as much finding ways to make individuals think differently, but feel differently. Without affecting the feelings of the members change will not occur. Through the eight stages of change, the crucial stage is changing people's behavior (2002). In most change initiatives within organizations, leaders aim to analyze too much and appeal to the emotions of the



members too little. The former goal will not transpire in an organization without the latter step.

As pointed out by Bridges, the transition starts with an ending and finishes with a beginning (2003). For any transitional effort to succeed people must be affected to do things differently (Bridges). The change must be viewed by the members as a beginning, because it will be an innovative way of doing things. The utilization of data is quite assistive in this process of change. Teachers see the value and the necessity in changed practices by results.

The transformational process must be clearly understood to reach the desired results of the district. As shown in Figure 2, a total shift was necessary as described by Zmuda, et al. in *Transforming Schools* (2004) in educational philosophy of the organization. Teachers and administrators were asked to make complex and significant shifts as shown in Figure 2. Zmuda, et al., state that members must embrace collective autonomy to close the gaps between current reality and the shared vision, and embrace collective accountability in establishing the responsibility.

Continuous school improvement is a never ending process. Zmuda, et al., warn against regression even if the organization has experienced great success (2004). The authors of *Transforming Schools* provide means of avoiding regression; to maintain systems from reverting, schools must revisit core beliefs and shared vision, collect and examine new data and revisit old data, determine new staff development content to close gaps between reality and the shared vision, assist teachers in the learning process, while building collective autonomy and accountability to meet higher expectations for the school as a competent system (2004).

FROM:		TO:
Random thinking	to	Systems thinking
Teachers working in isolation	to	Development of a community of learners
Concern over perceived reality	to	Data-driven learners
Individual educational autonomy	to	Collective accountability

*Figure 2* Shifts in educational organizations as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Marzano through his book *Classroom Instruction That Works* provides a checklist of items that benefit student learning the most (2001). In the book, he states that students need to utilize graphic organizers, learn how to take notes and summarize continual practice, cooperative learning, set objectives and feedback, and recognition. *Classroom Instruction That Works* (2001), was one of the texts utilized to institute the instructional change by the school in the study, because these strategies translate into percentile gains. These concepts were taken into account when instituting the reading strategies.

As Schmoker states, leadership is the institutional muscle of an organization (2006). Kim Marshall refers to emptiness in the professional relationship between teachers and school leaders (as cited in Schmoker). Administrators must take an active role in the learning process, and push the organization. Through the building administrator, curriculum is aligned, outcomes followed, and feedback given. Schmoker reveals that only through a large-scale shift to instructional and supervisory practices will schooling transform (2006). As Tongeri found in his study *Beyond Islands of Excellence*, large-scale improvement will elude schools until leadership is redefined (as cited in Schmoker, 2006).

Furthermore, Schmoker in *Results Now* (2006) states that if student achievement is to improve instruction will necessarily have to change and improve. He has conducted numerous studies to support his findings. The status quo will no longer be accepted from schools. If teachers taught critical reading effectively, exactly as it should be taught, then students would do exceedingly well on state assessments (Marzano, 2006). Conventional practices must be altered if schools want to have all students achieving at higher levels. School leaders must look within classrooms at the quality and substance of instruction and assure that the curriculum is aligned to state standards (Schmoker). Teachers must not be allowed to teach in isolation, because isolation ensures that new learning seldom leads to changes in practice, in what teachers teach or how well they teach (Schmoker). This new era of accountability education should be viewed not as a problem, but an opportunity.

#### Purpose of the Study

Presently there is not an abundance of research in the field of secondary school reform related to NCLB. Some research has been conducted at the primary level, but is not common at the secondary level. The purpose of this case study is to examine the organizational structure of a high school. Although the results of a case study are relative to the particular setting, the outcomes of this case study will provide and document useful data and information to districts across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as the nation, as all high schools and districts are faced with similar issues regarding NCLB and the challenges of meeting AYP. The implementation of the proposed changed teaching practices analyzed in the study and the effectiveness of such an instructional change could be instituted by other secondary schools.

The case study is descriptive in nature. The purpose of this study is to document the change process and how the implementation of a proposed instructional innovation in a high school impacted PSSA scores. The particular secondary school studied initiated a reform movement that began in 2002 with the implementation of improved integrated teaching practices and enhanced supervision. The district as a whole looked at data from various grade levels on the PSSA to set the direction upon which to reform instruction in order to advance student achievement. All teachers were instructed to “become teachers” of reading. This case study looks at four elements of change within the secondary setting during the proposed instructional change process. The following areas of organizational change were examined: utilizing new teaching strategies, professional development, handling of problems, and accountability. In addition, learning theories were evaluated as they apply to student learning and leadership theories as they applied to the not only the individuals but the entire organization.

Administrators in the district instituted the initiative to meet the demands set forth in NCLB. It was realized by school leaders that one hundred percent proficiency would not be attained by 2014 unless the educational program and curriculum within each building of the district were evaluated and improved upon. Steps were taken beginning in 2002 to meet the guidelines of AYP by refining the teaching techniques of the staff.

### Significance of the Study

With the enactment of NCLB public schools must ensure that one hundred percent of the students are meeting the proficiency level by the year 2014. The law has forced schools into addressing curriculum and teaching strategies to guarantee student proficiency. This case study depicts the process of changing teaching strategies in one

western Pennsylvania high school. This one suburban school provides a broad picture of what many schools are facing as they address the requirements of NCLB and meeting AYP at the secondary level.

It is estimated that results from this case study will be utilized by other districts when implementing such changes when meeting the mandates within NCLB. This study is a continuation of other studies analyzing teaching practices. The type of curricular strategies employed in the school is more common at the primary level, but are atypical at the secondary level. All too often reforms have centered on student outcomes, but have failed to recognize the importance of teaching practices, which directly impact student achievement (Marzano, 2005). The study furnishes a documentation of a single high school undergoing such an educational transformation and the results from the change. It gives a model for what strategies were instituted, what changes provided successes, and what road blocks were met during the transformation.

#### Research Questions

1. How has the shared vision of No Child Left Behind most impacted the school?
2. What factors hindered or facilitated changes in organizational activities in response to the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act?
3. Were the perceptions different or paralleling between administrators and teachers in dealing with the shared vision and the plans for change?
4. How have teachers perceived NCLB throughout the past five years regarding the overall organization as well as their personal teaching strategies?
5. How did NCLB have an impact on organizational changes that directly impacted on student achievement?

6. Are teachers and administrators aware of change theory and do they see such a theory as having a positive impact as related to NCLB?

### Study Design

A qualitative method was chosen as it best fit the needs of the study, which is to document the effectiveness of changed teaching methods on student achievement on the PSSA in one western Pennsylvania high school. A descriptive case study provides a more in-depth look and was conducted in a vertical manner; comparing PSSA scores before and after implementation of the proposed improved instructional strategies. Interviews, existing PSSA data, and documents will be analyzed. The case study focuses on new implementation of learning skills through instructional practice in core academic secondary classrooms, roadblocks and supports in the transformation, and the effectiveness of the initiative.

A qualitative study is more descriptive in nature and this study provides documentation of a proposed change in instructional practice. Only the high school from the district was considered, as it was the only secondary building moving through the proposed instructional initiative. All teachers incorporated reading strategies into all curriculums. As pointed out in *Intelligence Reframed*, “much of what we teach takes hold through habit” (Gardner, 1999, p. 177). To assure a successful transformation, teachers were provided with a reading coach, common planning time, student data, and continual professional development. The assistance of the above mentioned tools aided practitioners in incorporating new strategies into their respective courses. The study will focus on the implementation of the strategy, the effect of changed practice on student

achievement scores on the PSSA and the school leaders' perspective of a transformational process.

The implementation of the innovation is studied through interviews with teachers and district administrators and documents analysis. The effect of the initiative is examined via PSSA scores. These methodologies are discussed in greater depth in Chapter Three.

### Information of Setting and Participants

The case study was comprised of secondary school teachers and faculty in all curricular areas, the building principal at the time the initiative was initiated, the superintendent of the school district, the assistant superintendent, and the students' PSSA reading scores in the eleventh grade across six school years. Teacher interview participants were selected through stratified purposive sampling. The building administrator at the time of the initiative and the superintendent of the district was interviewed throughout the study. All scores from PSSA that were considered were that of a group, such that the entire eleventh grade class as a whole spanning a six year time period; individual student scores were not a consideration. The researcher collected data from the Pennsylvania Department of Education website on PSSA scores for the particular school ranging from the 2002-2003 school year through the 2007-2008 school year. The study analyzes the scores of eleventh grade students from each of the school years. Each school year the number of students varies amongst the entire eleventh grade class as a whole.

Presently, there is great emphasis on NCLB and meeting AYP. The particular high school was chosen because of the innovation implemented in order to increase

PSSA scores in the area of reading. The building employed new reading strategies usually reserved for the primary grades via the reading coaches. This presented itself for an interesting study of how tactics usually used in younger grades can be instituted successfully at the secondary level.

### Study Site

The secondary school that served as the site for this descriptive case study was Grove City Area High School. The school is a nine through twelve building servicing approximately 800 students per year. It is located in a small, suburban community in western Pennsylvania. The district places a high priority on PSSA scores and the proficiency of all students within each school. The district is continually looking for ways of improving student scores. The latest instructional innovation implemented took a great deal of time and planning and was done so over the course of four years starting in 2002. A guaranteed and viable curriculum was implemented, standards aligned and backward mapped, continuous training provided, communication lines improved, a professional learning community developed, and innovation instructional strategies implemented. The process not only took time, but issues such as change, leadership, and learning styles had to be considered.

To institute the instructional shift, data was first analyzed to perceive any weakness and strengths of the current educational programs. The school then devised a schedule in which to employ writing activities, reading strategies, and mathematic standards across the entire curriculum. As pointed out by Karl Popper, reading and writing are the “major events in one’s intellectual development” (as cited in Schmoker, 2006, p. 64). Starting in the 2002-2003 school year, teachers were asked to put into



practice writing across the curriculum using a predetermined matrix using the Pennsylvania state scoring rubric. The following school year, teachers continued working writing across the curriculum, but also began to execute four prescribed reading strategies in all courses. In essence, all teachers are teachers of reading and writing. Reading coaches helped the faculty institute the instructional changes. Even though the process began in 2002, the teachers and administrators are still continuing their work in these areas. The school instituted an in-house professional development, such as teachers observing teachers program, to reinforce the strategies.

By asking teachers to make a shift in their instructional practice, administrators were required to deal with organizational change as a process within the school. Along with the difficulty of change, administrators considered a shift in professional development in order to effectively affect student achievement through instruction.

#### Limitations and Delimitations

Because a qualitative case study approach was selected, there is the potential that findings may not be able to be generalized and applied in other schools. However, the intent of the study was to analyze and document the impact of changed instructional practices instigated by NCLB, the change process, and how these changes affected PSSA scores. The findings from this study would be enlightening to those schools thinking about changing instructional practices to improve student proficiency. In addition, the findings would provide insight into the process of educational change and the improvement and strengthening of secondary curriculum.

## Definition of Terms

Achievement: Student scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): No Child Left Behind states that all students must reach the proficient level or above in reading and mathematics by 2014. Under NCLB, states were mandated to report their respective definitions of AYP by January, 2003. AYP is the way the state knows that schools and districts are making progress towards that goal. School districts and schools must show AYP in several measurable indicators: student achievement, attendance or graduation rates, and test participation (Pennsylvania Department of Education).

Civil Rights Act (1964): One of the most important pieces of civil right's legislation in the nation's history. The act ensures all persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965): The act is an extensive federal statute which funds primary and secondary education. The Act is reauthorized every five years, and provides funds for educator's professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs, and parental involvement

Innovation: An innovation is what will be changed throughout the change process. There are two types of innovations: products and processes (Hord & Hall, 2001, p. 8).

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): A sweeping comprehensive fundamental reform movement which redefines the federal role in K-12 education to help improve the

academic achievement of all American students and to ensure that all students are receiving a high quality education so that no child is left behind. It has led to higher standards and greater accountability throughout the Nation's school systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA): The PSSA is a standardized test administered in all Pennsylvania public schools. The test was first implemented in 1992 and became mandatory in 1998. Presently, the content areas on the test are reading, math, and writing grades three through eighth and eleventh grade (2004-05 AYP and PSSA Results: Frequently Asked Questions, p. 1). The area of science will be field tested in 2006-07 school year.

### Summary

To meet the demands of NCLB school administrators and teachers must change present teaching practices to include cross-curricular strategies. Through interdisciplinary teaching, students are reinforced with concepts from varying curriculums. This is more practical and common in primary grades, but has great value in the utilization in secondary schools. As more schools struggle to meet AYP, teachers and administrators will be forced to reevaluate themselves and their practices. Administrators must not only analyze the instructional practices of their staffs, but also look at their own supervision practices for a transformation effort to be effective (Schmoker, 2006). This transformation is both costly and emotionally difficult for the organization, but must be faced by districts across the Commonwealth and the nation. Continuous school improvement is that it never stops, for envisioning the possibilities never end (Zmuda,

Kuklis, Kline, 2004). Educators will not experience a slow down in the pace of change in any case (Fullan, 2003a).

Chapter 1 looked at the need for the study, the purpose of the study, and the theoretical basis for the study. Chapter 2 envelops change theories that provide the framework of the case study at both an individual level and that of an organizational level. The next chapter also provides a context for learning theories, leadership theories, and how these theories apply to student achievement and instruction.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to describe the relationship of instructional initiatives designed to fulfill the demands of No Child Left Behind to teacher affect, instructional practices, and student outcomes. To improve student achievement, teaching practices must be altered to include cross-curricular strategies. The process is explored through a case study conducted at one rural western Pennsylvania high school. Although case studies typically generalize situations and experiences, the related theories explored help to strengthen the legitimacy of the study and how it can apply to other organizations.

There is currently an abundance of literature of implementation of such instructional initiatives at the elementary level, but is in need of further investigation at the secondary level. Chapter Two will review the literature that is relevant to the study. First the area of educational reform is presented. Second the foundation of NCLB is discussed through the four pillars of accountability, flexibility, research-based education, and parent options. Third a review of changed teacher practice concerning teacher beliefs and transforming those beliefs into continuous improvement is explored. In addition, change theory as it applies to moving an organization through a transformation and creating a sustained paradigm shift is investigated. Fourth, a brief depiction of culture is presented. Next, the component of leadership is exposed. Finally, learning theory as it applies to student achievement is presented.

## Educational Reform

Education in the United States is replete with reform efforts (Marzano, 2003). Since the 1960s school reform has gone through many stages due to the growing disappointment with American schooling (Cuban, 2004). Currently, education is in a phase of reform that relies heavily upon data. Data is collected in terms of student achievement and attaining proficiency; schools are accountable for outcomes in the form of student progress (Gordon, 2006). The data is used to identify probable successful interventions and how effective those interventions are when implemented (Marzano).

The federal and the state governments have made their presence known in public education since the 1950s. Cuban (2004) clearly states that the federal and state governments have usurped much of the local autonomy of school districts; this process was initiated with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). ESEA permitted the federal government a presence in state and local school decisions and funded primary and secondary education. Funds were to be used for professional development, instructional materials, resources to aide educational programs, and increased parental involvement. Through ESEA funds were targeted to disadvantaged children. Since ESEA was enacted, it has been reauthorized every five years.

American schooling was impacted by the Nation at Risk Report in 1983. This report encapsulated a decade of public school concerns, which went beyond mandating minimum competency tests to increasing high school graduation requirements, lengthening the school year, and requiring more tests (Cuban, 2004). The report was utilized to exemplify the faulty schooling for American children in terms of preparedness

for the changing workplace and the low labor force productivity (Cuban). Even though the report provided goals and standards, it lacked the guidance on resources to utilize and strategies to implement (Fullan, 2003a).

In response to the public scrutiny of American education the No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George Bush. The United States Department of Education clearly stated that NCLB reauthorized and amended federal education programs under ESEA of 1965. According to the Department, the intent of the enactment is to provide all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education.

Before this time, reform movements did not clearly address how programs produced results or how it impacted the local needs (The Whitehouse, 2007). Due to these oversights, there has been a negative build up. The federal government spends \$120 billion a year across 39 states in hundreds of different programs to answer this problem (The Whitehouse). Even though a great deal of money has been spent, it alone has not been enough. The ever widening gap is becoming larger and larger between the rich and poor, and the Anglo and minority (The Whitehouse). NCLB called for national goals, curriculum, and tests. With NCLB harsh arbitrary timetables were put into place with powerful negative incentives for those schools that do not meet accountability measures.

#### No Child Left Behind

“This (NCLB) is the most sweeping reform of the ESEA” (U.S. Department of Education: Fact Sheet, p. 1). In no other time in history, has the federal government had such a voice in public education. In *Change Forces with a Vengeance*, Fullan emphasizes there is no slow down in sight for school reform, so it is unwise for educators to sit back

and assume the pace will taper off. “NCLB’s requirements constitute unprecedented federal involvement in American education” (Gordon, 2006, p. 25). Initially, the Act was greeted by many as a necessity that has been long overdue in response to the disparities in the quality of public education in America (Public Education Network, 2006). One major criticism is the lack of funding provided to meet the goals in the Act promised to schools (McColl, 2005; Mitchell & Reutzel, 2007).

The bill focuses on four pillars: accountability, flexibility, research-based education, and parent options. Through the institution of the four pillars, the achievement gap should close and insure that all students receive a quality of education. Programs are to be implemented that have demonstrated to be effective. It is an extension of the standards-based education reform (Elmore & City, 2007). The following section provides an overview of the four pillars.

### *Accountability*

Accountability is major thrust of NCLB in order to ensure that disadvantaged children are provided instruction to reach academic proficiency (Office of the Superintendent). Accountability is assessed through state measurements given in grades 3 through 8 and 11. Student progress is measured on these assessments given to children at the designated grade levels. The results of the assessments are intended to empower all stakeholders (U.S. Department of Education: Fact Sheet, 2007).

“One underlying NCLB premise is that if data about school and district performance is made available, the public and policymakers will act on the data and demand conditions that enable schools to become proficient” (Public Education Network, 2006, p. 2). In *Many Children Left Behind* (2004), Meier and Wood indicate that



accountability should be a two-way street between state and federal support. It is a union between state and federal support that will ensure quality teachers and schools with plenty of resources (Meier & Wood). They continue by stating that these two items must be accompanied by high expectations of students and schools. The Pennsylvania Department of Education addresses sanctions by stating that they are not meant to punish schools or districts, but to increase student achievement by identifying where improvement is needed within a school (2006).

States and districts are issued report cards that inform parents and communities about the progress of schools. The United States Department of Education states that report cards include performance data that is disaggregated according to race, gender, and other criteria (U.S. Department of Education: Fact Sheet, 2007). In addition, the report cards indicate if schools are closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other students. If schools fail to make progress, they are mandated to provide supplemental services, such as free tutoring or after-school assistance; or take corrective actions (U.S. Department of Education: Overview of Four Pillars, 2007). If schools still fail to make adequate yearly progress after five years, major changes must be made in the operation of the school.

Today, high school students' scores fall below those of students in other countries, such as Cyprus and South Africa (The Whitehouse, 2007). A study conducted by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center found at the end of the 2005-06 school year, 1,200 schools had failed to meet student achievement targets for five consecutive years (Viadero, 2007). Furthermore, according to the U.S. Department of Education, 800 schools did not meet improvement goals for four years in a row

(Viadero). In addition, approximately a third on college freshmen must register in remedial classes before entering into the regular curriculum (The Whitehouse, 2007).

By requiring annual state assessments there is assurance that goals are being met by every child, every year (The Whitehouse, 2007). Through annual testing the appropriate data is produced to provide information to appropriate parties. There are very detailed sanctions against underperforming schools, and there are awards and rewards for those schools that meet or exceed proficiency.

### *Flexibility*

Through NCLB, schools, and other educators now have greater flexibility in how they may utilize federal program funds to support state and local school improvement efforts (U.S. Department of Education: Flexibility & Waivers, 2007). NCLB reauthorized certain sections of ESEA that permitted school districts to adapt federal programs in ways that best educate children and improve teaching and learning (Flexibility & Waivers). Most schools will have the freedom to transfer up to 50 percent of the federal monies they receive amongst other programs without approval. Some of the initiatives included are: Ed-Flex, waiver, and other forms of flexibility including school-wide programs and certain provisions of Title IX of ESEA (Flexibility and Waivers). This flexibility allows districts to utilize monies for needs that fit their particular situations, such as hiring new teachers, increasing teacher pay, and improving professional development (U.S. Dept. of Education: Four Pillars, 2007). Even though there is greater flexibility within the confines of the legislation, there is an inequity of resources available (Public Education Network, 2006).

States receive additional funding and are granted flexibility if they implement rigorous accountability for results:

- set high standards;
- establishes annual assessments for every child in designated grades;
- require progress reports on all student groups;
- expects adequate yearly progress for disadvantaged students;
- help state with technical assistance funds to help turn around low-performing schools;
- increases flexibility for schools;
- provides corrective action for low-performing schools and districts;
- rewards schools and states that narrow the achievement gap;
- puts in place consequences for failure; and
- protects home schools and private schools.

Funding is one way to ensure that districts are taking the necessary steps to increase achievement of all students.

### *Research-based Education*

Research-based education and reforms is conceivably the most noticeable addition to the mandates. The research-based reforms are integrated within stringent district implementation responsibilities that include:

- assuring that classrooms are directed by “highly qualified teachers;”
- improving the quality of teaching through proven professional development programs;

- making AYP each year in increasing the number of students proficient each year in reading, math, and science;
- closing the achievement gap among students; and
- relying on scientific research-based methods to improve the quality of the school and the academic performance of students (Porterfield, 2006).

Research-based education emphasizes best programs and practices that have proven successful through scientific research (Office of Superintendent). This is conceivably the most considerable change in practice (Porterfield, 2006). Danielson (2002) agrees with this claim as she states, “Arguably the most critical body of research for educators to incorporate into their practice is that on learning...Only by understanding how people-both children and adults-learn can educators hope to design instructional programs that will maximize that learning” (p. 22). Funding is targeted to improve proven methods of teaching and student learning and not to experiment on children with unproven methods (U.S. Dept. of Ed.: Four Pillars), but to ensure that students are receiving suitable instruction.

The emphasis on scientifically based research has altered the way instruction is regarded (Mitchell & Reutzel, 2007). There is concern that other areas of academics suffer due to the emphasis on areas that are not assessed. Narrowing of the curriculum has some districts focus on “passing the test” and increased pressure on teachers and students (Mitchell & Reutzel). Through NCLB it is urged that schools utilize strategies grounded in research and evidence to support its success.

### *Parent Options*

“NCLB mentions parent involvement literally hundreds of times and parent empowerment is the basis of the law’s two major interventions” (Public Education Network, 2006, n.p.). Parents are now presented with options as it pertains to their children’s education. In addition, parents can request supplemental educational services, primarily after-school tutoring, for their children; and they can select the providers of these services (Public Education Network).

Schools that are failing to make adequate yearly progress will enable parents to use these options. The first year schools that do not make progress will receive assistance:

- If after assistance the school still fails to make progress, the school will be placed under corrective action.
- If a school fails to make progress two consecutive years, parents may place their children in another school and the school is in corrective action.
- After three consecutive years to make progress, an option for a parent of a disadvantaged student includes to transfer their child to a higher-performing school within their home district through Title I monies. In addition to selecting a different school, the district must also provide transportation through Title I funds. Schools must make supplemental services available again through Title I monies, such as tutoring, after-school services, and summer school.
- If a school is considered dangerous or has statistics of violent crime, then students have the option to transfer to a safe school that would be within the same district boundaries.

- Students can elect to remain at the school of choice until their natural graduation year at the failing school. The choice options are still provided for two years after the school has made progress.

It is through such sanctions that disadvantaged children will not sacrifice an education to preserve the status quo (The Whitehouse, 2007). If schools consistently fail to make progress, students should have the freedom to attend another school and better themselves. “Administration seeks to increase parental options and influence. Parents, armed with data, are the best forces of accountability in education. A parent, armed with options and choice, can assure their children get the best, most effective education possible” (The Whitehouse, 2007, p. 12).

Even though parents have been given more power in their children’s education, very few parents are exercising their rights. As reported in *News Leader*, research illustrates that few parents are utilizing the transfer options, and participation in supplemental educational services is relatively low. This is more prevalent in the high schools than in primary schools. Gerald Tirozzi, Executive Director of National Association of Secondary School Principals, argues that school choice will take away from school resources and staff time that should be targeted towards increasing student achievement (Taylor, 2007).

“The central message for school districts resulting from these four mandated tactics is drastic change in teacher practice, resultant changes in school culture, and improved student performance” (Porterfield, 2006, p. 17). This descriptive case study explores the first proposed change. Due to the mandates set forth in NCLB, this Act

provided impetus to change for the school in the study; instruction had to be addressed to increase student proficiency rates.

### Changed Teacher Practice

In answer to the mandates set forth in NCLB, schools must rise to the challenge of increasing academic achievement of all students. The high school being studied believes through teacher instruction a great deal can be accomplished. "...the one factor that surfaces as the single most influential component of an effective school is the individual teachers within that school" (Marzano, 2007, p. 1). NCLB evokes feeling of uncertainty, ambiguity, instability, risk, chance, crisis, and challenge. These very characteristics describe situations in which innovation thrives (Morgan, 1993). The first step is changing the beliefs of the teachers.

Initially, the individual needs and feelings of teachers must be attended to. According to a study in an elementary setting conducted by Porterfield (2006), in order to change teacher practice, one must think beyond motivation and the stages of concern. Hunzinger (2004) states one must consider the moral and ego development of an individual and what stage he/she is in (as stated in Porterfield).

### *Changing Teacher Beliefs*

This qualitative study explores how secondary teachers move through a change process to advance instructional capacities and the impact upon student achievement scores. The change was prompted as a response to NCLB. "True innovation is much more likely to take root when it starts at the local level" (Gordon, 2006, p. 28). That is the problem with most reform initiatives is that they come from the top down and there is no

teacher buy in into the initiative (Gordon). Without buy-in from the stakeholders, no initiatives will prove to be long-lasting or successful.

A descriptive case study completed by Miller, George, and Fogt (2005), concluded that the best way to change students is by changing or altering teacher behavior. In a study by Grimes and Tilly (1996) it is demonstrated that it is possible to close the gap between research and practice; however, the best way to do this is by involving teachers in the reform process, applying principles of organizational change, and building capacity (as cited in Miller, et al.). By making these changes and including teachers, beliefs will begin to change, because teachers will buy into ideas that they have a vested interest in.

Needs and feelings of the individuals in the organization must be addressed from the start. Many authors (Jensen, 1998; Nuthall and Alton-Lee, 1993) agree that in order to change a teacher's belief system a feeling of disequilibrium must be created between current beliefs and new information (as stated in Porterfield, 2006). New information can be presented in many different manners, such as observations, professional development programs, and literature. Borko and Putnam (1985) suggest that the information in any forum should foster teachers in developing new ways of thinking about learners, learning, and subject matter (as stated in Porterfield). There is not a quick solution, any effort takes time.

### *Transforming Beliefs into Continuous Improvement*

“The No Child Left Behind Act has interrupted the status quo of schools and has forced educational leaders to reconsider various methods or organizational change” (Thornton, Peltier, & Perreault, 2004, p. 222). Changes must go beyond standards and



accountability testing and change what occurs in schools on a daily basis (Gordon, 2006). One way of accomplishing this is by maximizing and enhancing teacher practices. Lou Gerstner, former Chairman and CEO of IBM, says, “In the end, management doesn’t change culture. Management invites the workforce itself to change the culture” (as cited in Gordon, 2006, p. 211). To have successful sustained change it must come from within the organization.

The analytical framework of this qualitative descriptive case study draws from the organizational change findings of John Kotter, William Bridges, Allison Zmuda, Robert Kuklis, Everett Kline, and Peter Senge to provide a basis for organizational change. Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline provide the shift in paradigm needed to exemplify a successful transformational process. Kotter, Senge and Bridges provide a map for organizations to maneuver through as they undergo a transformation. In addition, learning and leadership theorists, Michael Schmoker, Robert Marzano, Thomas Sergiovanni, and Michael Fullan will provide a frame for individual and organizational learning and leadership patterns.

In *Managing Transitions*, Bridges points out those members of the organization must first realize the need for change in order for a transformation to take place and be successful (2003). “People espouse the desire for change but all kinds of factors with the existing situation reinforce the status quo” (Morgan, 1993, p. 141). It is difficult to break from “normalcy” and “cut loose and do what needs to be done” (Morgan, 1993, p. 150). “People do not want to pay the price – anxieties, loss, etc. – of so doing” (Fullan, 2003a, p. 99). If members do not see a reason or need to change; they will not. As pointed out by Bridges, change is situational, but transition is a psychological process (2003). People must be affected to do things differently. The school in the study was maneuvering

through a transformation in academic teaching practices; practitioners were asked to let go of past practice and institute new strategies and take collective responsibility for student achievement on the Pennsylvania System of State Assessment (PSSA).

The case in this study centers on reading strategies utilized in all content area and across all grade levels at a high school. Silverman (2006) acknowledges that in similar situations teachers are concerned, because they feel they do not have the knowledge to teach reading and are not adequately informed about successful reading strategies. He continues that this is an overpowering feeling to most people. However, if the proper steps are taken throughout the change process, the incorporation of reading strategies across all content areas in a high school does not have to be overwhelming (Silverman).

In dealing with this challenge of change, the establishment of a clear, authentic, and convincing story about the relevance of a change initiative must be present (Senge, 1999). It is difficult for people to change their thought processes as they are ingrained within them (Morgan, 1993). Senge expresses that the members of the organization must see the initiative as important not only to themselves, but to the entire organization. Reforms can result in an increase in teacher knowledge and skills but are not directed at teacher motivation, creativity, and do not go to the root of the change effort; in this instance the transformation will dwindle out of existence (Fullan, 2003b).

Moving through a transition requires that the members of the organization must have closure before they are capable of moving into a neutral zone, and finally commence the new beginning or change effort (Bridges, 2003). Brown and Moffett (1999) affirm this belief, "...the implementation of an innovation involves change, it also involves loss: 'loss of ease with comfortable practices.' Inevitably, accepting something

new often means letting go of something old” (as cited in Zmuda, Kuklis, Kline, 2004, p. 52).

The administrators in the case study were not asking for a drastic change, but a shift in instructional practice. Every system is unique; however, there is a high degree of predictability in the types of concerns that are raised throughout the implementation of the innovation (Zmuda, Kuklis, & Kline, 2004). In any group change can produce feelings of fear and pain. These are normal emotions when the result is unknown (Senge, 1999). Teachers are cautious of constant change and are concerned if the latest program will really be an improvement from past practice (Danielson, 2002). It is commonly heard, “this too shall pass.” Senge stresses “Fear and anxiety should not be seen as ‘problems’ to be cured. They are natural, even healthy responses to changes in the level of openness” (1999, p. 242). People find comfort in consistency and the feeling of control. After all, it has been found that people attempt to control those situations that affect their lives (Zimmerman, 2005). However, to be successful people must internalize the change needed (Fullan, 2003a; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

There are leverages that can help limit the feeling of fear and anxiety and can be accomplished in several different ways (Senge, 1999). The organization must start with small hurdles and build momentum (Kotter, 2002; Senge, 1999). In addition, Senge urges building a psychologically safe environment. This is a process that takes time. Those that “resist” should not be ignored, but the issues causing the resistance should be pacified (Eck & Goodwin, 2007). The safer people feel, the more apt they are to work together and share ideas. People must be reminded that fear and anxiety are normal feelings (Kotter, 2002; Senge, 1999).

The following diagram from *The Heart of Change* depicts the stages of change within an organization and the new behavior exhibited by members of the organization.

Step	Action	New Behavior
1	Increase urgency	People start telling each other, "Let's go, we need to change things!"
2	Build the guiding team	A group powerful enough to guide a big change is formed and they start to work together well.
3	Get the vision right	The guiding team develops the right vision and strategy for the change effort
4	Communicate for buy-in	People begin to buy into the change, and this shows in their behavior.
5	Empower action	More people feel able to act, and do act, on the vision.
6	Create short-term wins	Momentum builds as people try to fulfill the vision, while fewer and fewer resist change.
7	Don't let up	People make wave after wave of changes until the vision is fulfilled.
8	Make change stick	New and winning behavior continues despite the pull of tradition, turnover of change leaders, etc.

*Figure 3* Chart is from *The Heart of Change* by Kotter demonstrating changed behavior during a transformation (2002, p. 7).

The diagram provides a basic pattern for successful large-scale change. Members must navigate through the different stages before a change initiative can provide long lasting success. The steps are not set in stone and transformations within organizations do not follow the flow of the eight steps rigidly, because every process is not identical. Some stages may overlap, while other stages may be quite short depending upon the

association. There are times when it is necessary to regress and repeat step one, which is urgency, to keep the organization moving forward during the transformation.

The importance of these steps is echoed in a case study by Zimbalist (2001) in a change effort. He acknowledges that even though every school is unique, following these steps is necessary for members involved in a change effort. This was evident with the school in the study; some steps were repeated, such as the increasing urgency or reminding the staff of the urgency of the situation. Some steps were progressed through much swifter than others. The staff of the study school moved through the formation of the guiding team very quickly compared to other stages. Elmore and City (2007) point out that the road to school improvement is hard and bumpy. They state that there is no predetermined set amount of time; “it takes as long as it takes” (p. 1).

Along the journey, successes must be celebrated. This is the step that is typically skipped, recognizing and celebrating success (Danielson, 2002). She clarifies by stating that this step is important as it validates the staff. This builds momentum amongst the members and helps to sustain productivity. Wins also help build confidence amongst the staff (Viadero, 2007). “Successes are not isolated events; they build on and reinforce one another” (Danielson, 2002, p. 13). Although, “the essence of the program were trying to achieve” must not be lost (Morgan, 1993, p. 167). In the end, each success must be earned (Morgan). Victories cannot be artificially manufactured, if they are to be meaningful.

When asking people to change, one must appeal to the emotions and feelings of the members (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). It is not as much finding ways to make individuals think differently, but feel differently. Without affecting the feelings of the members,

change will not occur. Through the eight stages of change, the crucial stage is changing people's behavior (Kotter). In most change initiatives within organizations, leaders aim to analyze too much and appeal to the emotions of the members too little. The former goal will not transpire in an organization without the latter step.

Kotter (1996) provides a compass for an organization to navigate through change; however, he does warn against common mistakes that steer organizations off course.

There are eight roadblocks to implementing a successful innovation that can be avoided:

- Permitting too much complacency;
- Failing to create a powerful guiding coalition;
- Under communicating the vision;
- Permitting obstacles to obstructing the vision;
- Failing to create short term wins;
- Declaring victory too early; and
- Neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the culture (Kotter).

Change cannot come about in a quick fix; it is “a multi-step process that creates power and motivation sufficient to overwhelm all the sources of inertia” (Kotter, 1996, p. 20).

As pointed out by Bridges, the transition starts with an ending and finishes with a beginning (2003). For any transitional effort to succeed, people must be affected to do things differently (Bridges; Fullan, 2003a). The change must be viewed by the members as a beginning, because it will be an innovative way of doing things. The utilization of data is quite assistive in this process of change. Many confirm that the use of data to assist in planning in any organization makes it a more successful venture (Viadero, 2007; Thornton, et al., 2004; Marzano, 2003). Marzano expands by stating the school reform

now depends on data. Teachers see the value and the necessity in changed practices by results. Senge (1999) concurs that people must see how the proposed changes translate into results. Kotter's framework as well as Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline's framework for organizational change provides the framework for part of the interview questions used in this study as it relates to the process of change of the entire organization.

The transformational process must be clearly understood to reach the desired results of the district. "It takes time for these new practices to mature and become part of the working repertoire of teachers and administrators. Schools that are improving recognize and allow for this time and don't switch gears if they don't see immediate results on state tests" (Elmore & City, 2007, p. 2). While Kotter provides the framework for change amongst the whole organization, Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline address the needs of the individual members of the organization. Change must be concentrated on both units to achieve sustained success.

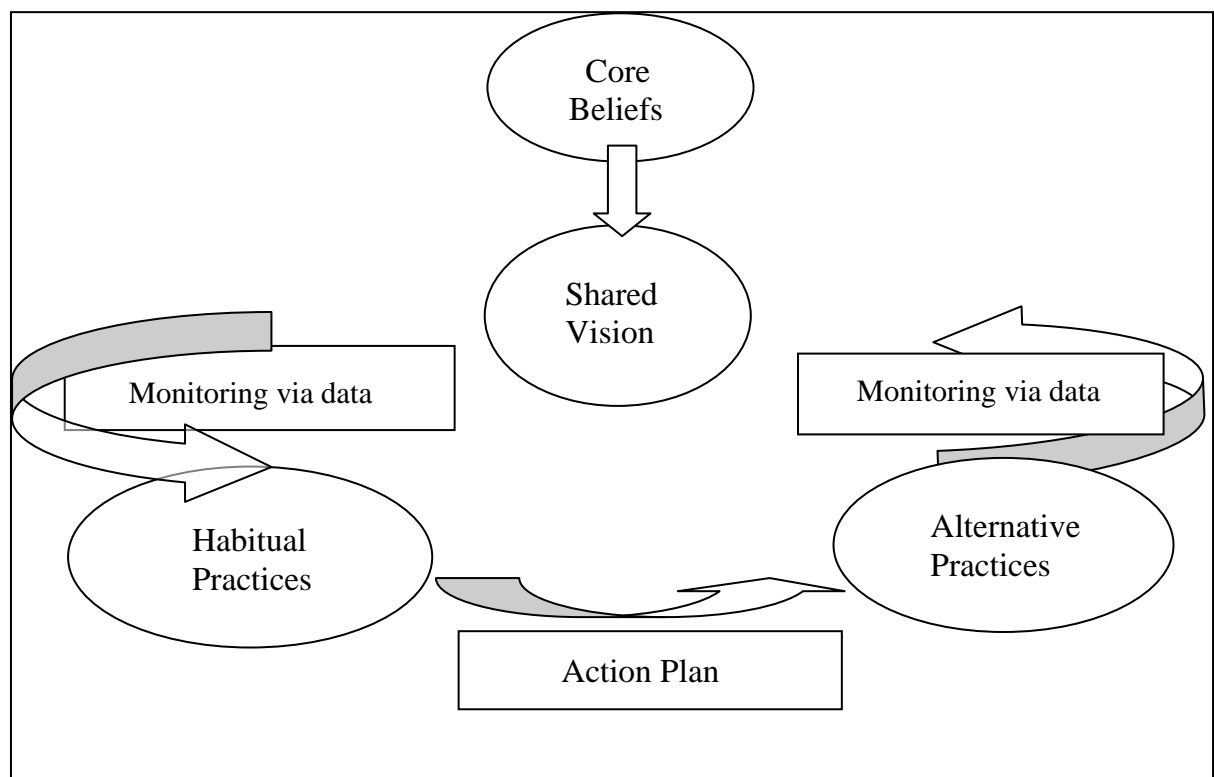
According to the framework provided by Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline (2004), before a school can move through a change effort and sustain the desired change they must:

- Identify core beliefs;
- Clarify core beliefs and what they will resemble in practice;
- Collect, analyze, and use data to determine the status of the school and how to close the gaps;
- Identify the innovation that will assist the school in realizing the vision and turning it into reality;

- Develop and implement an action plan that supports teachers through the change process; and
- Embrace collective autonomy as the only way to close the gaps between the current reality and the shared vision. In addition, collective accountability is embraced.

These steps and beliefs must be valued and embraced by all members of the organization.

Figure 4 provides a look at the process of moving through a change effort that will result in permanency within the culture of the organization; it becomes part of the culture.



*Figure 4* Chart is from *Transforming Schools* by Zmuda, Kuklis, & Kline depicting how conversations are centered on continuous improvement in a competent system (2004, p. 90).



As shown in Figure 5, a total shift was necessary as described by Zmuda, et al., in *Transforming Schools* (2004) in educational philosophy of the organization. Teachers and administrators were asked to make complex and significant shifts as shown in Figure 5. Zmuda, et al., state that members must embrace collective autonomy to close the gaps between current reality and the shared vision, and embrace collective accountability in establishing the responsibility (2004). Seeing the innovation successfully implemented, there is a culture of collective autonomy and builds consensus (Zmuda, et al., 2004). This shift in thinking should become a norm of the school culture.

FROM:		TO:
Random thinking	to	Systems thinking
Teachers working in isolation	to	Development of a community of learners
Concern over perceived reality	to	Data-driven learners
Individual educational autonomy	to	Collective accountability

*Figure 5* Shifts in educational organizations as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act.

In an ethnographic study by Quinn (1999), it was found that without this shift in thinking and practice by the members, there will not be a paradigm shift. “Danielson (1996) has called upon teachers to embrace the responsibilities as well as the benefits of being considered a profession” (as cited in Zimmerman, 2005, p. 34). The staff needs to see the value of the innovation on not only a theoretical level, but also make the connection between the innovation and the achievement of students (Zmuda, et al., 2004).

In a cross-sector research review conducted by Public Impact it was discovered that when leaders sought continuous improvement they also found flourishing initiatives (Viadero, 2007).

Continuous school improvement is a never ending process. Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline (2004) warn against regression even if the organization has experienced great success. The authors of *Transforming Schools* provide means of avoiding regression; to maintain systems from reverting. Schools must revisit core beliefs and shared vision, collect and examine new data and revisit old data, determine new staff development content to close gaps between reality and the shared vision, assist teachers in the learning process, while building collective autonomy and accountability to meet higher expectations for the school as a competent system (Zmuda, et al., 2004).

Collegiality, continuous improvement, and accountability demand a new way of thinking in schools” (Zmuda, et al., 2004). In theory the school then becomes “a competent system driven by systems thinking” (Zmuda, et al., 2004, p. 41). The school operates with a sense of purpose. In a meta-analysis completed by Marzano (2003) he found there is a relationship between effective teaching and student achievement (as cited in Zmuda, et al., 2004). The meta-analysis demonstrated that when the teachers and school are effective, students who enter at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile achieve at the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile after only two years. This concludes that good teaching is the property of both the teachers and the school (Zmuda, et al., 2004). The conceptual framework provided by Zmuda, et al., in *Transforming Schools* provides the outline for change within individuals in the organization.

Elmore and City (2007) found that in this age of improvement and accountability, teaching is moving from an individual to a collective activity. “Empowerment, recognition, satisfaction, and success come only from being an active participant within a masterful group – a group of colleagues” (Barth, 2005). By tapping into the wells of rich human resources, schools are alleviating isolation among teachers and creating a community of learners (Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006). In doing so school communities are more effective in attaining their educational purposes. In addition, all resources must be aligned around the same purpose (Elmore & City, 2007). Again, this is a process that takes time. Schools cannot afford to “get stuck in taken-for-granted ways of thinking and stuck in actions that are inappropriate for dealing with the problems and situations at hand” (Morgan, 1993, p. 264-265).

### Culture

There has been sweeping change in the nature of schooling and the structure of teacher’s work (Mac an Ghail, 1992). The culture of an organization influences all that transpires within the group. In schools it is quite distinct. “The culture of most schools is characterized by norms of privatism and isolation, which keep teachers apart” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 88). This must change in the age of accountability for schools to improve student achievement. In the past, this sense of isolation was propagated by bureaucratic norms of leadership (Sergiovanni). “Educators who understand that schools are complex interdependent social systems can move their organizations forward” (Thornton, et al., 2004, p. 222).

Senge (1990) believes the notion that schools can learn is becoming a more prevalent notion (as stated in Thornton, et al., 2004). By doing so, schools must change to

a systems thinking organization. “While it is relatively easy to implement structural change, it is very difficult to change the culture of an organization” (DuFour, 2007, p. 42). “Systems thinking requires leaders to see the whole school as complex organization with interdependent components” in which leaders encourage and “use concepts as continuous incremental improvement, organizational learning, and feedback loops” (Thornton, et al., p. 222).

People within the organization want to maintain the “normalcy” they know. “They ...will be inclined to filter improvement initiatives through the lens of the existing culture, distorting the initiative to fit the culture rather than changing the culture to align with the initiative” (DuFour, 2007, p. 42). First, it must be recognized that frustration and anger are common (DuFour, 2007; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Secondly, intentional leadership must be exercised to observe cultural change (DuFour). Lastly, DuFour advises that leaders take advantage and fully engage the staff in the change process.

To adjust the culture of the school, leaders need to foster organizational learning, identify the causes of poor achievement, and systematically craft adjustments (Thornton, et al., 2004). An assistive device is data. Through data timely feedback is provided, which improves access to significant information and brings all shareholders within the organization together (Thornton, et al.). It is wise to use evidence to alter the beliefs of those that are resistant (DuFour, 2007). DuFour stresses that when systems thinking becomes part of the school’s values and ideals, student achievement will show enormous results (2007).

## Leadership and Learning

Public schools are under pressure to change due to the demands of the twenty-first century (Zimmerman, 2005). “What standards were to the 1990s, ‘leadership’ is to the 2000s” (Fullan, 2003a., p. 91). In order to make necessary changes, there must be strong leadership at the helm to navigate through new demands placed upon public education; leadership provides a blueprint for what the school hopes to achieve (Danielson, 2002). In a three year study of which records were reviewed dating back to 1970, it was found that leadership at the top of an organization was a vital ingredient for successful change (Viadero, 2007). Due to these demands, building principals are involved in leading change efforts (Zimmerman, 2005). As Schmoker states, leadership is the institutional muscle of an organization (2006); principals are critical to the success of schools (Gordon, 2006). Ultimately, to lead a sense of purpose must be present (Heifetz, 1994).

Kim Marshall refers to emptiness in the professional relationship between teachers and school leaders (as cited in Schmoker, 2006); teachers and administrators must unify around a common vision of what is possible with student outcomes (Gordon, 2006; Laine, 2000). To lead however is on dangerous ground, “when you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear—their habits, tools, loyalties, and ways of thinking-with nothing more to offer perhaps than possibilities” (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 2). Administrators must take an active role in the learning process, and push the organization. The principal must support the staff and provide time in order to successfully implement initiatives. In an ethnographic study by McGee (2006) this was found to be true. If the staff does not feel supported, there will not be a shift in attitudes and beliefs.

The role of the principal as an instructional leader has come center stage with the accountability stakes so high (Klump & Barton, 2007). Making a priority of helping staff members learn and grow is an essential tool; teachers need intellectual stimulation and opportunities to explore to remain fully engaged in their jobs (Gordon, 2006). The principal must set an example to the staff. Principals are judged by their actions (Senge, 1999). “You can’t lead where you won’t go” (Barth, 2005, p. 33).

Kenneth Leithwood maintains that developing people is one of the basic tasks of leadership (as cited in Gordon, 2006). Through the building administrator, curriculum is aligned, outcomes followed, and feedback given. Schmoker emphasizes that for transformations to take place in schools that there must be a shift in instruction and supervision (2006). After all, teaching is “at the heart of a school’s instructional program and makes the largest single contribution to student learning” (Danielson, 2002, p. 112). Newmann and Whelage (1995) report on research completed at the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found after analyzing data from 1500 schools over a five year period that those schools where administrators and teachers work together collaboratively to modify instructional practice to improve student performance were more successful than other schools (as stated in Danielson, 2002). By providing a purposeful system and defining beliefs, purpose is given to one’s work (Zmuda, et al., 2004). As Tongeri found in his study and reported in *Beyond Islands of Excellence*, large-scale improvement will elude schools until leadership is redefined (as cited in Schmoker, 2006). Once leadership is redefined, that of the staff is redefined in turn. “Good teaching is the property of both teachers and schools” (Zmuda, et al., 2004, p. 142-143).

Even though the principal is the instructional leader of a school, all stakeholders must be included for there to be buy-in for any change initiative. If stakeholders are not included, organizational values may be overlooked (Hannay, Erb, Ross, 2001). By empowering teachers, there is greater collaboration. Even though some studies do not find a direct relationship between empowerment and teacher change, there is an indirect influence between teacher empowerment affecting pedagogical content and student achievement through the school organization (Marks & Louis, 1997). Without teacher buy-in, change will not take hold. As found in a study by Malloy (1996) innovations were not implemented uniformly across classrooms due to uneven teacher commitment. When members have direct participation in an initiative there is a greater sense of job satisfaction (Danielson, 2002).

The initial decision to implement the reading initiative in the study was autocratic in nature; however, over time teachers took the helm. To build commitment in the school within the study, teachers led the way. “Leadership may be exercised by anyone in the school” (Danielson, 2002, p. 26). Teacher leaders were selected by the principal. In this manner, they acted as coaches to the other staff members to assist them with the implementation of reading strategies in their classes. Principals are needed that foster leadership skills in others, this in turn strengthen the organization (Fullan, 2003a). In addition to coaching, another program was instituted called Teachers Observing Teachers. In theory more is learned among one another, than bringing an “outsider” into the building. There are experts among us; there is a collective knowledge among the staff. Dyrli (2007) remarks that many agencies, such as curriculum associations and state departments of education support such programs. He goes onto emphasize that such

programs “help weak teachers become better and good teachers become excellent” (p. 41). “As educators gain experience, they are more able to explain how what they’re doing will lead to results they want and choose...” (Elmore & City, 2007, p. 2).

Furthermore, Schmoker in *Results Now* (2006) states that if student achievement is to improve, instruction will necessarily have to change and improve. He has conducted numerous studies to support his findings. The status quo will no longer be accepted from schools. If teachers taught critical reading effectively, exactly as it should be taught, then students would do exceedingly well on state assessments (Marzano, 2005). All too often reforms have focused on student outcomes, but have ignored teaching practices, which directly impacts student achievement. Dyrli (2007) warns “that even veterans teachers make strategic errors repeatedly, because no one showed them better ways” (p. 43).

Conventional practices must be altered if schools want to have all students achieving at higher levels. Gordon (2006) states that students must be given opportunities to grapple with high-level challenges in areas to learn about the subject in transformative ways. Teachers must be challenged to instruct in new and different ways. Teachers and administrators must be willing to “open themselves...and reach beyond the limitations of the status quo and allow new possibilities to emerge” (Morgan, 1993, p. 16).

Zimmerman (2005) acknowledges that if leaders want to encourage risk-taking and innovation in instruction, support must be provided.

Principals are the instructional leaders of schools. Numerous authors (DuFour, 2002; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Short & Greer, 2002; Sparks, 2002) have linked the leadership and reform efforts of principals to improved instructional practices (as stated in Zimmerman, 2005, p. 29). To be effective an organization, it must be a learning



organization and the principal must be the lead leader (Fullan, 2003a). School leaders must look within classrooms at the quality and substance of instruction and assure that the curriculum is aligned to state standards (Schmoker, 2006). Finding better ways to enlist talented teachers and principals and helping them to cultivate the potential within each student each day is a necessity of today's schools (Gordon, 2006). As Gordon points out, this should be the primary concern of schools as it affects student achievement more than any other factor.

The first step in improving student outcomes is identifying and leveraging the underutilized talents of students, teachers, support staff, and principals (Gordon, 2006). Hall and Hord note that innovations in education must be implemented at a high level and demand specialized training and ongoing consultation for at least three to five years to be successful (2001; Fox, 2003; Rojtas-Milliner, 2006). The authors assert that continual high-quality staff development is crucial if successful implementation is to take place.

“Local school districts are riddled with autonomous departments, independent school leaders, and teachers who close their classroom doors” (Cuban, 2004, p. 88).

Eaker admits, “The traditional school often functions as a collection of independent contractors united by a common parking lot” (as stated in Schmoker, 2006, p. 23).

Typically educators feel they do not need to know what their colleagues are doing; lessons are thought to be content- and level-specific (Coke, 2005). Teachers must not be allowed to teach in isolation, because isolation ensures that new learning seldom leads to changes in practice, in what teachers teach or how well they teach (Schmoker). By working collaboratively, teachers not only gain confidence but realize they are not in the process alone (Fullan, 2003a).

Researchers have found that productive schools incorporate collaborative activities and staff participation in school improvements (Gordon, 2006). He goes on to proclaim that in great schools, teachers share expertise and knowledge and apply skills through the lenses of their dominant talents (2006); schools can be transformed by educators sharing their rich craft knowledge (Barth, 2005). Most expertise a school will need is found within their own building (Danielson, 2002). In a study by McCann (1983) he found that sharing of ideas amongst teachers actually facilitated the change process. Despite the sharing of knowledge, there must also be continual professional development and current research to support it. In an ethnographic study by Chapman (2004), she found that without training, a shift in beliefs, and current research, teachers will not implement content reading strategies in their classrooms. Just as students can continue to learn, so too can educators (Danielson, 2002). The more comfortable and confident people feel, the more open they will be with one another (Morgan, 1993).

Colleagues can provide the impetus for change amongst one another. Through these efforts the walls that separate teachers and create the isolation barriers are broken. Barth in his book *Improving Schools from Within* (1990) claims, “The relationship among adults in schools are the basis, the precondition, the *sine qua non* that allow, energize, and sustain all other attempts at school improvement. Unless adults talk to one another, observe one another, and help one another, very little will change” (as cited in Gordon, 2006, p. 219). Communication and working together “provides a means of breaking the usual patterns of discourse in an organization and helping new insights, new dialogue, and new action opportunities...” (Morgan, 1993, p. 214). This new era of accountability education should be viewed not as a problem, but an opportunity.

It is a great irony that schools operate within a small space and time with a common mission and that much of the work is carried out in “self-imposed and professionally sanctioned isolation” (as cited in Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 87). Isolation is one roadblock the school in the study has worked tirelessly to overcome. Teachers must continually work to advance their knowledge and skills to provide students with the optimal learning opportunities (Danielson, 2000). The Teachers Observing Teachers program assists this goal. Teachers are able to observe one another and discuss the reading strategies they observed. The program was utilized as part of the Reading Coaches program. The discussion is held with the entire staff. It seemed to have a great impact because teachers were taped instructing classes and the tapes were shared with the staff and discussed. “They give each other feedback regarding what worked well...They capture and archive collective knowledge gained from these efforts for other to build on” (Marzano, 2003).

The Teachers Observing Teachers’ program has helped teachers become more at ease with their colleagues being in their rooms and the sharing of successful classroom practice. Danielson (2002) points out that these observations are utilized to learn from one another and not to provide them with feedback; the beneficiary is the observer. The focus is not on the student, but on the teacher (Danielson). “Teachers cannot be aware of approaches and strategies that other have found successful, and might even be working at cross purposes without even knowing it” (Danielson, 2002, p. 62). Danielson clarifies that teaching is a complex practice where perfection is never found, but can always be improved.

Collegial relationships are a cornerstone of school improvement; yet, they are not very common in schools. The ideal staff is one that works together and forms a professional learning community; however, this can be difficult because nobody wants to look incompetent. Collegiality promotes better working conditions, improves teaching, shares leadership and gets better results (Sergiovanni, 1992). The school in the study set out on this task in order to improve instruction and in turn increase student achievement, because this is a powerful way to learn by observing others (Barth, 2005). Barth states that a professional learning community is built on continual discourse about important work. By having this collegial atmosphere, teachers are making their practice more visible (Barth). Teachers are typically unaware of what approaches and strategies their colleagues are utilizing that are successful (Danielson, 2002). The Reading Coaches program was of assistance in achieving this goal. Teachers were no longer working on their own, but as a member of a team. Teaching became transparent. Educators must have opportunities to work together and share craft knowledge to develop effectual strategies that address the needs of students (Darling-Hammond & Ifill-Lynch, 2006).

### Leadership Theory

Leadership takes many forms and adheres to numerous theories (Sergiovanni, 1992). One can prescribe to the philosophy of the style that fits his/her nature best, such as adaptive leadership as described by Heifetz, Collin's theory of level five leadership, Kanter's depiction of world class leadership, connective leadership depicted by Lipman-Blumen, or transformational leadership characterized by Burns. However, these theories have failed to address "the complexity of human nature and the capacity of people to be motivated for reasons other than self-interest" (Sergiovanni 1992, p. 18). Administrators

must appeal to the emotions, values, and connections with others (Sergiovanni). Moral leadership “can help us stop ‘playing school’ and start ‘living school’” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 27).

School leaders must walk the talk, in doing so credibility is earned. Leadership is not a privilege, but an obligation (Senge, 1999). Burns (1978) defines transformational leadership as characterized by engagement between leaders and followers bound by a common purpose (as cited in Zimmerman, 2005). Bass and Avolio (1994) maintain that transformational leadership effects an organization by:

- stimulating others to see their work from new perspectives,
- creating awareness of the organization’s mission or vision,
- developing other’s abilities to higher levels of performance, and
- motivating others beyond self-interests toward the benefit of the group or organization (as stated in Zimmerman, 2005).

When leadership shifts from “leader as commander” to “leader as servant,” people will notice the difference (Zimmerman). Sergiovanni (1992) asserts that servant leadership is the highest form of transformational leadership (as cited in Zimmerman). As a servant leader there seems to be a sense of a team among all members. Senge (1999) goes on to explain that the servant leader will have more freedom and authority, because of the relationship with his/her staff. Fullan (2003b, p. 31), states that the criteria of moral purpose are:

- that all students and teachers benefit in terms of identified desirable goals;
- that the gap between high and low performers becomes less as the bar for all is raised;

- that ever-deeper educational goals are pursued; and
- that the culture of the school becomes so transformed that continuous improvement relative to the previous three components becomes built in (as cited in Zimmerman).

Servant leadership allows for the essential legitimacy of those in the position to lead and address the needs of the school (Sergiovanni, 1992). People respect and follow those who they know will operate in the best interest of the collective whole (Kanter, 2005).

One of the highest forms of moral leadership is creating an organization “where all students learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens and workers in morally based knowledge society” (Fullan, 2003b, p. 29). One of the greatest moral imperatives of the principal is that of changing the context within which both teachers and students learn (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992). Figure 6 from *Change Forces with a Vengeance* represents how moral purpose fits into a general theory of education. “The principal of the future must lead a complex learning organization by helping establish new cultures in schools that have deep capacities to engage in continuous problem solving and improvement” (Fullan, 2003b, p. 28). It must be authentic in a psychological sense (Sergiovanni, 1992). “What is rewarding gets done” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 26). In theory, teachers will work diligently for rewarding efforts. This is the feeling because when moral leadership is observed in an organization there are shared values, ideas, and ideals (Sergiovanni).

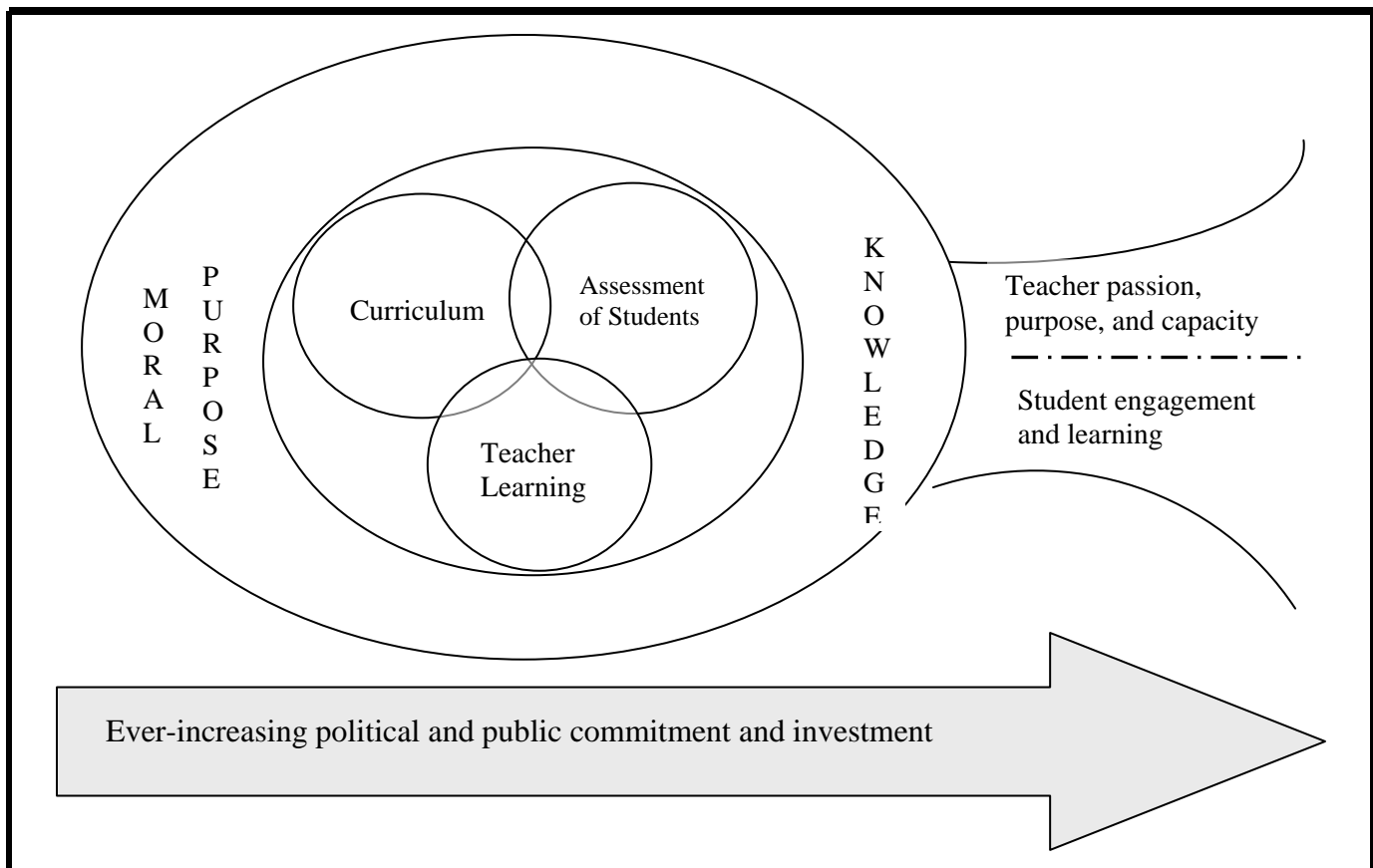


Figure 6 Diagram from *Change Forces with a Vengeance* demonstrates moral leadership as it applies to a general theory of education (Fullan, 2003, p. 69).

Without proper leadership any change initiative will be unsuccessful within a school. In *Leading Change*, Kotter indicates that the success of an organization going through a transformation is based 90% on the leader of the organization. A leader must encourage people to face the challenge, adjust their values, change perspective, and develop new habits of behavior (Heifetz, 1994; Fullan, 2003a). “Leadership is not about the leader; it is about how the leader builds the confidence of everyone else” (Kanter, 2005). Fullan (2003, p. 67) adds, “Leaders have a responsibility to invest in the development of organizational members, to take the chance risks, tackle difficult

problems, and be supported in this endeavor” (as cited in Zimmerman, 2005, p. 37).

Through moral leadership, a principal can cause large-scale improvement and turn an average organization into a learning community (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992).

### Student Learning Theory

The most important thing educators can do is to teach our students how to learn; the instruction of strategic knowledge, the procedures people use to learn, to think, to read, and to write (Wilhelm, 2001). The school in this study built its change effort around this premise; students must have a strong foundation and be able to utilize reading skills and construct their own meaning. “Academic or learned intelligence can be directly enhanced by deepening the experiential base of students indirectly enhanced by a combined program of wide reading...” (Marzano, 2003, p. 143).

In deciding how to improve instruction, students must be the top considerations in the decision-making process. Reading strategies for students were the focus of this particular school. If students are taught reading strategies, and given adequate practice, then they will be able to apply reading strategies independently. Without guided practice, students will most likely forget the skills and not employ them. In studying past practices in American education, most time is spent teaching students information rather than equipping students with new and more efficient ways of reading, problem solving, and making meaning (Wilhelm, 2001).

Major and Palmer (2006) found in their study that by equipping students with new skills, students take a more active role in their learning. They go onto state that student learning becomes more a part of the pedagogical design for faculties. The school in the study made the implementation of reading strategies the responsibility of the entire



faculty, not just the English department. Danielson (2002) affirms this notion that topics must be coordinated amongst all teachers for a school program to be successful.

There should be an implicit sense of what is valued, which is to be a successful learner (Danielson, 2002). More potential is evident as more emphasis and more focus are placed upon the student; teachers began to see students as co-learners (Danielson). Teachers provide instruction and practice on each reading strategy, but it is the student who must take ownership of the strategy and know when to employ it.

All teachers were asked to utilize reading strategies within their particular content area. “Skilled readers emerge from classrooms where effective reading strategies in specific content areas are taught and practiced” (Silverman, 2006, p. 71). Teachers could choose from 12 different strategies focusing on pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading activities. In this manner, students begin to see the same strategies repeated from class to class. As clearly stated in *Intelligence Reframed*, “much of what we teach takes hold through habit” (Gardner, 1999, p. 177). In theory, teachers are teaching strategies in hopes that these are skills that if repeated students will activate on their own in the future.

Dyrli (2007) affirms that there are two fundamental principles about teaching and student comprehension: students learn best by doing; and students need to do their own thinking and exploration. “The curriculum should be conceptual, help students apply knowledge, and enable students to experience constructive learning” (Thornton, et al., 2004, p. 224). This is clearly part of the effort of the school in the study. When connections are made amongst different subject areas, everyone gains because the developmental needs of students are met (Coke, 2005). After all, “reading instruction is a responsibility shared by all teachers, regardless of level or content area...” (Silverman,

2006, p. 71). Student achievement is not the responsibility of each teacher's effort, but is "a product of a program and the school's effort around the program" (Zmuda, et al., 2004, p. 180).

In another study centering on improving reading achievement, one of the most effective elements of the process was the consistency of methods across classes (Ross, Nunnery, Goldfeder, McDonald, Rachor, & Hornbeck, 2004). The school in the study did this by instituting reading strategies across the entire faculty. By doing so students became competent with each strategy because of multiple practice opportunities. It was hoped that the utilization of each strategy would become second nature to students when reading any type of passage across the curriculum.

Marzano through his book *Classroom Instruction That Works* provides a checklist of items that benefit student learning the most (2001). In the book, he states that students need to utilize graphic organizers, learn how to take notes and summarize continual practice, cooperative learning, set objectives and feedback, and recognition. *Classroom Instruction That Works* was one of the texts utilized by the school in the study to institute the proposed instructional change, because these strategies translate into percentile gains.

In teaching reading strategies to students, they must be given ample opportunity to practice. Several texts were utilized by the school in the study in implementing the instructional initiative. One text was *Improving Comprehension: Modeling What Good Readers Do* by Wilhelm (2001). He claims there are six steps to teaching reading strategies to students.

1. Teacher explains *what* a strategy consists of.
2. Teacher explains *why* this strategy is important.

3. Teacher explains *when* to use the strategy in actual reading (e.g. what to notice in a text that tips off the reader that this particular strategy should be used).
4. Teacher *models how* to perform the strategy in actual context (e.g. by doing a think-aloud using a real text) while students observe.
5. Teacher *guides learner practice*. Teachers and students work through several increasingly challenging examples of the strategy together using authentic texts. Teacher gradually releases the responsibility to the students, allowing them to do what they are capable on their own and intervening and supporting only when needed and only as much as is absolutely needed.
6. Students *independently use* the strategy as they pursue their own reading and projects (Wilhelm, 2001, p. 13-14).

By employing such steps Wilhelm implies that this is teaching, because it actively assists and promotes growth.

Effective teachers motivate, relate, and activate learning (Gordon, 2006).

Successful teachers are engaged; teacher engagement is related to student achievement (Gordon). He believes that there is a relationship between employee engagement and student performance. Teaching and learning is collaboration between student and teacher. “According to Vygotsky and his followers, we must learn new ways of reading and thinking in order to participate fully in our culture and making meaning within it; these have to be passed from experts to novices in the context of meaningful, collaborative activity” (as cited in Wilhelm, 2001, p. 9). In this thought, the expert reader teaches

conventions that the novice reader understands then assist him to a higher level of understanding (Wilhelm).

“Children can and will learn, no matter the obstacles, if they are given the right help” (Wilhelm, 2001, p. 15). Vygotsky would argue with Piaget, that if children are not progressing that the instruction has not been appropriate (Wilhelm). George Hillock’s research (1995) builds upon Benjamin Bloom’s (1976, 1985) research on human potential (Wilhelm). Both researchers assert that almost any child can and will learn given the right opportunities and instruction (2001). Wilhelm surmises by giving readers the right kinds of help they in turn will ultimately be better readers because they have become better learners due to more powerful teaching.

#### Summary

School change does not involve only one entity within the organization. In a meta-analysis conducted by Marzano, Gaddy, and Dean (2000) concluded that both effective teachers and effective principals effect student achievement (as stated in Thornton, Peltier, & Perrault, 2004). In concept this sounds quite easy; however, effective changes within an organization take time (Thornton, et al., 2004). Leaders are needed who “create fundamental transformations in the learning cultures of schools and the teaching profession itself” (Fullan, 20003a, p. 92).

Through the literature reviewed, NCLB was outlined and how it has impacted public education. The presence of the federal government has made education transparent to all stakeholders. Due to accountability and transparency of schools, schools must adjust their instruction. Literature related to the four pillars of NCLB: the change process, culture, leadership, and student learning, have been reviewed. The conceptual

frameworks of individual change by Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline and that of the organization by Kotter were presented and help in framing interview questions outlined in Chapter Three.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the change process in one Pennsylvania high school in response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and specifically examine whether NCLB has had an impact on instructional strategies and learning outcomes. This chapter defines the rationale of the study, design, procedures, population, setting, instrument, pilot study, and data analysis methods that were integrated into the study.

There is an abundance of positive and negative research and studies related to NCLB. This study concentrates upon one high school and builds upon a previous study by Porterfield (2006) that focused on organizational change at the primary level in one school district in response to the Act. This study describes the impact of NCLB on teacher practice across a five year time period at the secondary level and is guided by the district's vision regarding mandates set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

#### Statement of Problem

No Child Left Behind has impacted every public school across the country. Schools must address the mandates set forth within the Act to ensure they are meeting adequate yearly progress and ensure that all students will attain proficiency by the year 2014. This case study examines NCLB's impact on organizational change as it relates to instructional strategies in one suburban high school in Western Pennsylvania.

### Research Questions

1. How has the shared vision of No Child Left Behind most impacted the school?
2. What factors hindered or facilitated changes in organizational activities in response to the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act?
3. Were there perceptions different or paralleling between administrators and teachers in dealing with the shared vision and the plans for change?
4. How have teachers perceived NCLB throughout the past five years regarding the overall organization as well as their personal teaching strategies?
5. Did NCLB have a positive or negative impact on organizational changes that directly impacted on student achievement?
6. Are teachers and administrators aware of change theory and do they see such a theory as having a positive impact as related to NCLB?

### Research Design

This study examined a proposed change process that impacted instructional strategies within a secondary school. The study explored whether change did occur over a five year period, what if any changes looked like, and if the changes impacted PSSA scores. A case study approach was selected for this study as it allows a more in-depth look at the process and of the effects of the proposed change in practice in response to NCLB. It is more exploratory in nature rather than a fact finding mission. The aim of this study is not to generalize the findings, but rather to study the change process as it applies to instructional strategies in one school. “Qualitative studies can provide a deep perspective on the inner workings of schools and classrooms that suggest the needed explanations” (Slavin, 2007, p. 137-138). (Cresswell, 1998).

The primary vehicle for collecting data for this study was face-to-face interviews with individuals at the study site involved in the change process. Interviewing is a central feature of data collection for case studies as it allows the researcher to learn how the participants perceive the situation (Eisner, 1998). A second source for data collection was Pennsylvania System of State Assessment (PSSA) scores at the eleventh grade level starting in the 2003 school year and ending in the 2008 school year. Scores were obtained from the Superintendent of the district and the Pennsylvania Department of Education website. A five year period was selected as Hall and Hord (2001) clearly state that educational initiatives must be implemented at a high level and require specialized training for at least three to five years to be effective. Document analysis was the third source of data. The documents illuminated how change directives were perceived and supported by administration. Items included: reading strategy trainings, videos, reading strategy implementation schedule, professional development activities, evaluations of professional development, and other procedural documents.

Through the interview process, the researcher is provided with insights into the phenomenon being studied, but interview responses can also provide personal opinion and further avenues for investigation (Yin, 2003). The interview was selected rather than a focus group to provide an individual perspective of organization (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Interviews not only capture verbal responses, it can capture non-verbal cues follow-up questions. Case study research allows for multiple perspectives on a specific topic; the perspectives can come from either multiple data sources or multiple accounts (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The aim of the interview process in this study was to gather data from multiple sources to provide varying perspectives on the phenomenon (Ritchie



& Lewis, 2003). This study includes interviews with at least 15 individuals that include teachers and administrators; teachers were asked to participate by subject area, years of experience, and teacher leadership qualities. In addition, teachers were chosen randomly. Those participating will not be evaluated by the researcher for a two year period. Each teacher was be interviewed a total of two times for approximately 45 minutes each time over a three month period. This allowed the researcher to corroborate information from each interview with the individuals. “It is likely that a single encounter that is brief and informal will not have the same depth, complexity, or resonance as a research relationship that spans several months” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 138).

In selecting participants for the interview a stratified purposive sampling was conducted as individuals from different content areas and different levels of experience will be chosen as well as the reading coaches for the building. The aim was to have a group that displays a variation on the change process; it represents diversity amongst the staff (Patton, 2002). When small samples are used, there needs to be good purposive which ensures that the sample is rich in constituencies and diversity it represents (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Teachers were asked to volunteer from the subject areas of mathematics, English, science, social studies, and elective areas. The teachers also had varying years of experience to insure that contrasting viewpoints were represented as well as those that were leaders amongst the staff and those that are not. In addition, interviews were conducted with members of the administrative staff, such as the principal at the time of the initiative, the assistant superintendent, and the superintendent. This allows for the comparison of administrative and faculty perspectives regarding the organization.

The privacy of each of the participants was protected by the researcher. Their names were not used to protect their confidentiality. In addition, before interviewing began the participants were provided with a written summary of the purpose of the study (Appendix A and B) and were allowed to withdraw at any time. The intent of the study was fully explained; the study was not about the individual teachers but the concept of organizational change within the school (Patton, 2002).

The interviews were semi-structured. The questions were open-ended in nature which allowed the respondents more latitude in their responses; however, there was a list of predetermined questions that maintained focus throughout the interview. The interviewees knew the nature of the questions, and were provided the questions before the actual interview.

The interviews were conducted at the high school or a location of the interviewee's choosing. This made it easier for the interviewees in that they did not need to travel any distance for the interview. It also provided them with the comfort of talking at a location where they were at ease. I contacted each teacher either via email or telephone to set a date, time, and exact location for each interview. The locations were chosen that limited interruptions and provided privacy.

The interviews were longitudinal in the sense that the subjects were interviewed more than once to provide a "broader context within which change takes place...and capture the full set of factors that participants perceive as contributing to change..." (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 54). Throughout the study there were a total of two interviews with each person. Each interview was going audio-taped to provide a verbatim transcript and allow the researcher to focus more on listening to the respondent; however, the

respondents were not comfortable with this and thus were not taped. The first interview was held with each individual and will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The second interview was held 3 to 4 weeks after the initial interview and was conducted in small groups by content area of the teachers and lasted approximately one hour. After each interview the responses were transcribed into a typed document before the next interview occurred to allow for follow-up questions that helped fill in any gaps.

### Research Site

This case study was conducted at Grove City Area Senior High School, because the district is promoting changes in teacher practice to meet the demands set forth in NCLB. The district is a suburban one located in Mercer County in Western Pennsylvania. The district covers 86.8 square miles and is comprised of a kindergarten center, two elementary schools, a middle school, and one high school. Within the high school there are 47 teachers and two guidance counselors. The high school was selected for this study because the major thrust of the change in teacher practice originated within the high school. In addition, the implementation of the reading program into other buildings within the district was conducted by the reading coaches from the high school.

Enrollment in the high school has grown steadily over the past few years and the school serves approximately 800 students per year. The school receives a great deal of community support for academic programs and extracurricular activities. The demographics of the school remain quite constant from year to year with:

- 20% of the students qualifying as economically disadvantaged,
- 99% of the students being Caucasian,
- 10% of the students enrolled in special education programs, and

- 75% of the students involved in extracurricular activities.

The school offers six advanced placement courses and has three dual enrollment programs with colleges in the surrounding area. Typically, 85% of the students in the senior class go onto post secondary education.

#### Instrument

Over the course of the study, the researcher was involved in multiple settings including administrative meetings, department meetings, level meetings, teacher training sessions, accountability presentations, and faculty meetings as each of these settings provides insight into the dynamics of the organization and the change process. The primary vehicle for data collection for this study was face-to-face interviews of teachers and administrators. Additional data collection was reading PSSA results spanning a chronological five year period and conducting a document analysis from the study site.

The interviews resembled guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2003). Rubin and Rubin (1995) explain that the line of questioning were predetermined; however, it is fluid rather than rigid (as stated in Yin, 2003, p. 89). Answers cannot be ignored, but built upon; unanticipated responses guided follow-up questions. The researcher tried to pose questions that encouraged the interviewee to talk freely (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The follow up questions provided the richest data as they were built upon the replies given by the respondents.

The research questions outline the intent of the study. The interview questions help in the understanding of the research questions; the questions were more specific in order to frame the intent of the research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The interview questions in this study have been slightly modified from Porterfield's (2006) study of

organizational change for the specific content of a secondary school; the questions materialized from theories described in *Transforming Schools* by Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline and *The Heart of Change* by Kotter. Porterfield's questions were adapted with permission as this study is an extension of her 2006 research. The interview questions are presented on pages 67 and 68. The alignment of interview questions to the research questions is presented in Figure 7 on page 69.

### Interview Questions

1. Describe your perception of the district's vision. Do most teachers' perceive the district's vision the same across the content areas, such as English, math, and science?
  - a. How would you symbolize the district's vision in five words or less?
  - b. How would you describe the principal's vision?
  - c. How would you describe how most teachers perceive the vision?
2. What are the shared beliefs that were identified in the implementation of the reading strategies? Overall, describe how other teachers define student learning?
3. Describe your perceptions of the content of teacher training at the high school over the past five years.
  - a. What did most teachers find beneficial?
  - b. What would have improved the teacher training?
4. Describe the impact of the mandates in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 on the high school.
  - a. Describe the impact on reading.
  - b. Describe the impact on teachers.
5. Describe the term collaboration in regard to opportunities for teacher' to collaborate.
6. Describe the school as you remember it in 2003 and compare it to 2008.
  - a. How would you symbolize the school in 2003?
  - b. How would you symbolize the school in 2008?
7. Describe your beliefs about how students learned five years ago. Have your beliefs about how students learn evolved or changed over the past 5 years?

8. Describe any factors that impeded and/or facilitated the process for implementing the reading strategies.
  - a. How was reading emphasized?
  - b. Have the strategies changed or not changed the school?
9. Describe your current reading strategies? Do they differ from what you were doing 3 years ago? Describe any impact you have seen.
10. Describe how No Child Left Behind affected your professional experiences in regard to your instructional strategies.
  - a. Describe your strategy for promoting problem solving.
  - b. Describe your strategy for assessment.
11. Describe how changes in your instructional practice impact the results on PSSA scores.

1. Has the shared vision of No Child Left Behind had any impact on implementation by the school?	Interview Questions 1-4
2. What factors hindered or facilitated changes in organizational activities in response to the mandates set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001?	Interview Question 8
3. Were there differences in perception between administrators and teachers in dealing with the shared vision and the plans for change?	Interview Questions 1-5
4. How have teachers perceived NCLB throughout the past five years regarding the overall organization as well as their personal teaching behavior?	Interview Questions 8, 9, 10
5. Did NCLB have an impact on organizational changes that directly impacted on student achievement?	Interview Questions 8, 9, 10, 11
6. Are teachers and administrators aware of change theory and do they see such a theory as having a positive impact as related to NCLB?	Interview Questions 10, 11

*Figure 7* Research question alignment to interview questions.

## Validity and Reliability

Case study allows for a wide range of evidence to be utilized. The collection of data from multiple sources allows for converging lines of inquiry (Yin, 2003). Thus, the use of multiple sources of evidence makes the conclusion of the study more convincing. Sources in this study were interviews with teachers and administrators, student assessment results on the reading component of the PSSA, and document analysis.

Multiple sources of data builds construct validity because the same phenomenon is examined through numerous measures (Yin, 2003). The use of multiple and varied source provides corroborating evidence and allows for a deeper understanding (Yin; Eisner, 1998). Schwandt explains that, “the process reduces bias and increases the validity and reliability of the conclusions made” (as stated in Slavin, 2007, p. 133).

This case study used numerous measures of the same phenomenon to demonstrate convergence. Fielding and Fielding (1986) explain that the use of various sources does not only make the findings more secure or certain, but rather provides a fuller picture of the phenomenon (as cited in Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 44). This study utilized interviews with teachers, interviews with administrators, PSSA data and the review of documents, such as teacher trainings, reading strategy implementation schedule, observation schedule, and other procedural documents. The documents were examined to determine if there was support provided to the teachers throughout the process and support interviewee responses. There is more integrity in the findings through the corroboration of these data as they provided clarity and affirm the research findings (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).



Multiple forms of data were gathered through different methods to increase construct validity. The document analysis supported what was done and how it was done to initiate and support any changes made in instructional strategies; this was a precursor to the interviews as it provided insight. Documents from the site were analyzed and coded on Hall and Hord's Stages of Concern just as the interview responses were. The documents showed if there was a progression of change within the organization. In addition, the documents supported responses made by the interviewees. PSSA results illuminated if the phenomenon did in fact have a relationship to academic achievement.

The interview questions utilized in this study were modified from a previous study completed by Porterfield (2006), since this study was an extension of Porterfield's study. Where Porterfield focused on a change at an elementary level, this study continued the study at a secondary level. Porterfield based the development of her questions on ideas presented in *Transforming Schools*. In addition, Porterfield consulted a panel of teachers and administrators to provide their insights into the quality of the questions as well as this researcher conducting a pilot study. Through the consultation of experts in Porterfield's study and the piloting of this study, the interview questions have received a great deal of attention to enhance validity.

With case study there is the concern of bias and validity. The fact is the researcher is a part of the study site and interview process. Yin (2003) reminds the researcher that he/she must remain unbiased and asks questions in a friendly and non-threatening manner. The researcher acts as a facilitator, in the sense that the researcher has an active role in enabling the interviewee to talk about their thoughts and feelings while remaining on topic (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). There are shortcomings with in-depth interviews;

however, this process permits access into the experiences and worlds of those that are at the heart of a study. It is not impossible to draw meanings from these interactions (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This researcher did not enter into the study with any predetermined ideas, but rather this researcher is committed to understanding the phenomenon. In addition, the multiple sources of data strengthened the results of the research.

The researcher in this study is employed by the district within which the study took place. The purpose of the study is to describe and understand a phenomenon, not to judge. Eisner (1998) defines connoisseurship in educators studying their own environments (as stated in Porterfield, 2006). He recognizes this as “the means through which we come to know the complexities, nuances, and subtleties of aspects of the world in which we have a special interest” (Eisner, 1998, p. 69). Accordingly, the researcher took all precautions to insure the validity of the study. First, the researcher received the permission of the Superintendent of schools. Teachers interviewed were not observed by the researcher for the next two years. This helps to insure open and candid response and protect the interviewee. In addition, participation was completely voluntary and respondents were permitted to withdraw from the study at any point. The aim of the study was not to judge teacher effectiveness, but to describe how the educational organization has changed as a result of NCLB. Teachers and administrators were made aware of the purpose of the study prior to the start of the interviews (Appendix A and B).

#### Pilot Procedures

A pilot study was conducted to insure the validity and reliability of the interview questions and to practice interviewing techniques. The pilot was conducted at Grove City

Area Middle School. Three teachers and the building principal were interviewed. I met with the employees through the permission of the superintendent and the building principal. The interviews lasted for approximately 45 minutes for each participant. Participation was on a voluntary basis. The respondents were made aware of the intent of the interview (Appendix A and B), signed a release and assured that they would remain anonymous. The responses provided during the interview disclosed and filled any gaps in the interview questions that needed adjusted before the actual study begins.

The process was quite informative as I learned a great deal about my interview questions and interviewing techniques. The first interview was a little uncomfortable for me because it was a new role for me; however, after the first ten minutes, I felt much more at ease and the following interviews flowed much better. I began each interview with the same brief overview of my study and where I was in the entire dissertation process. I told the interviewees that I was examining change and academic practices within the district and that this was the pilot, the precursor to the actual study.

A study of this nature did cause me some hesitation in that respondents would be weary to respond in fear of retaliation. To my pleasure, I was incorrect in my notion. The respondents were very open with their responses and did not seem “worried” or “concerned” about answers. They actually seemed proud to talk about their school, their students, and their programs.

The questions used in the interviews were based upon an earlier study conducted by Sharon Porterfield (2006). Her study focused on the same central idea of instructional change as this study; however, her study centered on the primary grade levels. After the interview process, I quickly realized that some questions needed to be omitted because

the interviewees had a very difficult time providing answers, such as question 1 which asked interviews to illustrate the vision. This proved to be a problem as it would break the momentum or the flow of the conversation. Other questions were reworded following the pilot. The questions were adjusted to elicit richer responses. The specifics regarding question changes are detailed in the following section.

### Pilot Results

Pilot results were first analyzed to examine the quality of questions asked during the interview. I quickly realized some questions were not eliciting a thorough response or no response at all. For example, all respondents found it difficult to illustrate the district's vision in question 1. It was not that they could not characterize the vision of the district, but the word illustrate caused them hesitation. They could not think of a picture. Therefore, I eliminated that question; however, they had no difficulty explaining the district's vision and the perception of the staff of the vision in five words or less.

In addition, I realized that the wording made some questions confusing as well. In every interview the interviewees became confused by the word "plan" used in questions 2 and 8. In retrospect, what I was trying to get at were the reading strategies used by the teachers. In two of the interviews I did change the word from plan to strategy during the course of the interview to prompt a response. In those two interview responses I received much more detailed responses. The word "test" also brought more of a negative response. The teachers seemed to identify more with the term "assessment." I found when I replaced "test" with "assessment" I received a more in-depth response. The last major change I made to interview questions was the use of the word describe. Most questions previously began with words such as "what" or "has." I found the word "describe" to

have a less judgmental connotation and elicited a more open response. This way that could not just provide a yes or no response; they had to elaborate and explain what they were saying.

For the most part, the questions elicited thorough responses. Questions 3, 4, 6, 8, and 10 were easily answered and actually elicited some follow up questions that I added to the initial interview questions. I found the follow up question responses provided more specific details on topics, such as teacher trainings and teacher perception of NCLB. These additions are reflected in the Interview Questions on page 68.

In addition to wording and phrasing of questions, I quickly found some simple things I could do to make the process smoother. I preferred using a full size tape recorder. I found the buttons easier to manipulate than those of a mini-recorder. I also preferred using a cord rather than batteries in the tape recorder. I missed approximately fifteen minutes of one interview, because the batteries died. I found it helpful to let the respondent pick the meeting place and time. Even though it caused some inconvenience for me, I believe it sent a positive message to the interviewees. To make the process easier, I have hired a transcriber for the study. During the pilot, I did this myself and it was quite labor intensive. I do not feel I could do the transcribing and maintain an adequate interview schedule.

### Data Analysis

This study required the analysis of multiple sources of data. The multiple sources illuminated converging lines of inquiry which made the findings more accurate and credible. This study highlighted convergence through interview responses, PSSA results, and documents from the study site. The interview responses and document analysis were

coded according to Hall and Hord's Stages of Concern. The third piece was the reading PSSA results that served as archival data to support improvement in relation to the initiative. The three sources of information provided varying perspectives of the process. The researcher employed content analysis to the participant's interviews and the documents analyzed to identify themes, so that the researcher could see how the phenomenon was presented, perceived, and applied (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Documents, such as professional development trainings, training evaluations, and videos, and interview results were examined to emphasize the process and context of change. As in Porterfield's (2006) study, responses were coded according to "concerns" in relation to the change process as explained by Hall and Hord (2001) as shown in Figure 8. Hall and Hord's (2001) framework provides the means for organizing the procedural aspect of the change process according to each respondent's responses. Each response was analyzed to determine which stage or phase was the most appropriate category for the response. Based upon this model, responses were categorized according to themes, topics, and similar characteristics (Porterfield, 2006). Interview questions and interview responses are then provided. A chart was developed to code the response to each interview question according to the 'Concerns': awareness (A), informational (I), personal (P), management (M), consequence (CN), collaboration (CL), or refocusing (R). Figure 9 is a representation of what the completed chart looked like if there had been only 5 interviewees. The same process was completed for administrative responses and the documents from the site.

PHASE	STAGE	CHARACTERISTICS
Unrelated	Awareness - 0	Little or no concern with the innovation
Self	Informational - 1 Personal – 2	Some interest in details Uncertainty & inadequacy; commitment issues
Task	Management -3	Process & tasks of innovation
Impact	Consequence – 4 Collaboration - 5 Refocusing – 6	Impact on clients in the immediate sphere of influence Cooperation & coordination with others Exploration of more universal benefits of the innovation

Figure 8 Stages of concern in the change process adapted from *Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes* by Hall and Hord pgs. 139-147.

Interviewee	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Q 9	Q 10	Q 11
1	A	P	P	R	CL	P	I	P	M	R	R
2	I	A	M	R	M	CL	A	CL	I	R	
3	M	I	P	CN	CL	P	A	R	R	M	A
4	CN	A	CN	I	P	P	M	A	CL	R	A
5	CL	A	R	P	I	R	I	R	M	CL	R

Figure 9 Matrix of interviewee responses based on Hall and Hord's Stages of Concern.

The organization as a whole was held to the same Stages of Concern using the responses from the interviews. Each stage was characterized and supported with quotes from interview questions and documents from the site. Initially, the researcher described individual concerns. The next step was to apply the concerns to the entire organization to describe where it is on the continuum of change.

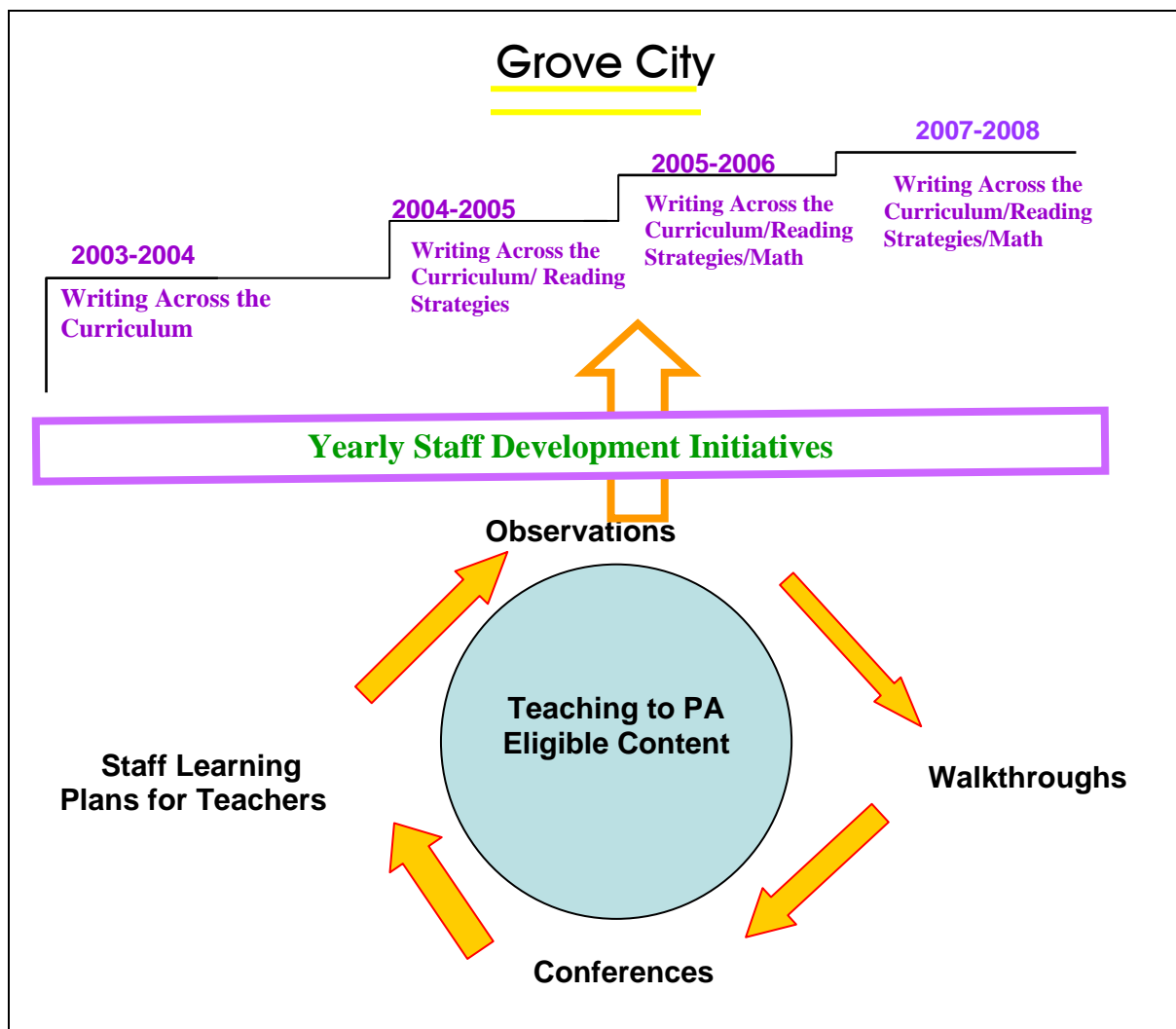
PSSA results were then used as archival data to analyze against reading strategy implementation to display any relationship between the two items. The impact of PSSA results were depicted as shown in Figure 10. The table displays the scores of eleventh grade students over an eight year period. The first three years (2001 – 2003) were presented to provide an idea of where the scores started before implementing any reading strategies. In addition, the state PSSA reading assessment average is provided to show where the school measures in accordance to the overall proficiency rate of the state.

Year	Reading Advanced and Proficient	Pennsylvania State Average
2001	62%	60.8%
2002	73%	59%
2003	77%	59.2%
2004	79%	60.8%
2005	81.4%	65%
2006	85.8%	65.1%
2007	73%	65.4%
2008	80%	65%

*Figure 10* PSSA scores for Grove City Area Senior High School 2001 – 2008.



Review of documents was the final piece of data analysis. Timelines, trainings, and other procedural documents were analyzed according to Hall and Hord's Stages of Concern to provide a third source of information to look at the implementation of the innovation, the support provided to the staff and according to the documents where the organization was on the continuum of change. An example of this type of data is shown in Figure 11. The figure displays the implementation schedule of new instructional strategies of the school. Another example would be professional development activities and the evaluations from these programs. They were coded just as interview responses were coded. The analysis of documents supported the respondent's responses and illuminated what happened at the school through an additional perspective. It shed light on whether there was a systematic buy-in or a resistance to change.



*Figure 11* Innovation implementation cycle for years 2003 – 2008.

### Summary

This chapter detailed the design of the study, the setting, the methodology, the pilot procedures, and the strategies for data analysis. Even though qualitative studies are more particular in nature, this study presents the challenges of implementing change within an organization and the process that the individuals and the organization transition through during a proposed change.

The analysis of this research was gathered in multiple forms and assisted in analyzing data on individual and organizational change as it relates to changed teacher practice at the secondary level. These data are addressed in Chapter Four.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Background

The purpose of this study is to describe the change process in one Pennsylvania high school in response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The analysis portrays data collected from both teachers and administrators through an open-ended interview process. The responses were categorized according to Hall and Hord's framework to underscore the context and the process of organizational change through the interviewees' responses. In addition, PSSA scores were evaluated over an eight year period as well as documents from the study site.

Demonstrated through research, the same types of concerns continuously arise when people are involved in any type of organizational change initiative (see Figure 12). There is a progression of seven stages that individual's transition throughout any transformation; however, it is not a rigid transition and does not follow a prescribed order. It is unique to each individual depending on the individual's background, life experiences, and perceptions. Hall and Hord go onto suggest that the types of responses that leaders need to provide during the process are typical as well. Leaders must align interventions with the concerns of those involved in the initiative. The authors define a concern as, "The composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought, and consideration given to a particular issue or task" (Hall and Hord, 2001, p. 61). It is typically the person's perception of the event that creates the concerns, rather than the reality of the situation (p. 62).

		Stages of Concern	Expressions of Concern
<b>IMPACT</b>	{	6 Refocusing	I have some idea about something that would work even better.
		5 Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what my co-workers are doing.
		4 Consequence	How is my use affecting clients?
<b>TASK</b>	—	3 Management	I seem to be spending all of my time getting materials ready.
<b>SELF</b>	{	2 Personal	How will using it affect me?
		1 Informational	I would like to know more about it.
		0 Awareness	I am not concerned about it.

*Figure 12* Stages of concern: Typical expressions of concern about the innovation from *Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes* (Hall and Hord, 2001, pg. 61).

Data was gathered in this study according to Hall and Hord's levels of concern of the teachers and administrators in regards to a change effort to see if in fact a shift in practice had occurred. Interview questions were created to answer the following research questions.

1. How has the shared vision of No Child Left Behind most impacted the school?
2. What factors hindered or facilitated changes in organizational activities in response to the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act?
3. Were there perceptions different or paralleling between administrators and teachers in dealing with the shared vision and the plans for change?
4. How have teachers perceived NCLB throughout the past five years regarding the overall organization as well as their personal teaching strategies?

5. Did NCLB have a positive or negative impact on organizational changes that directly impacted on student achievement?
6. Are teachers and administrators aware of change theory and do they see such a theory as having a positive impact as related to NCLB?

The responses of eleven interview questions were then analyzed according to the continuum of change as shown in Figure 7 to address the research questions. The questions were designed to illuminate the elements of organizational change through the interviewees' responses. Through the responses not only was the process and context of organizational change explored, but also the outcome in regards to the impact on student achievement on the PSSA.

Responses were examined several times to insure appropriate coding. The examination of documents from the study site helped to corroborate interviewee responses, which included teachers and administrators. By looking at these responses, documents, and PSSA scores a more thorough picture was attained.

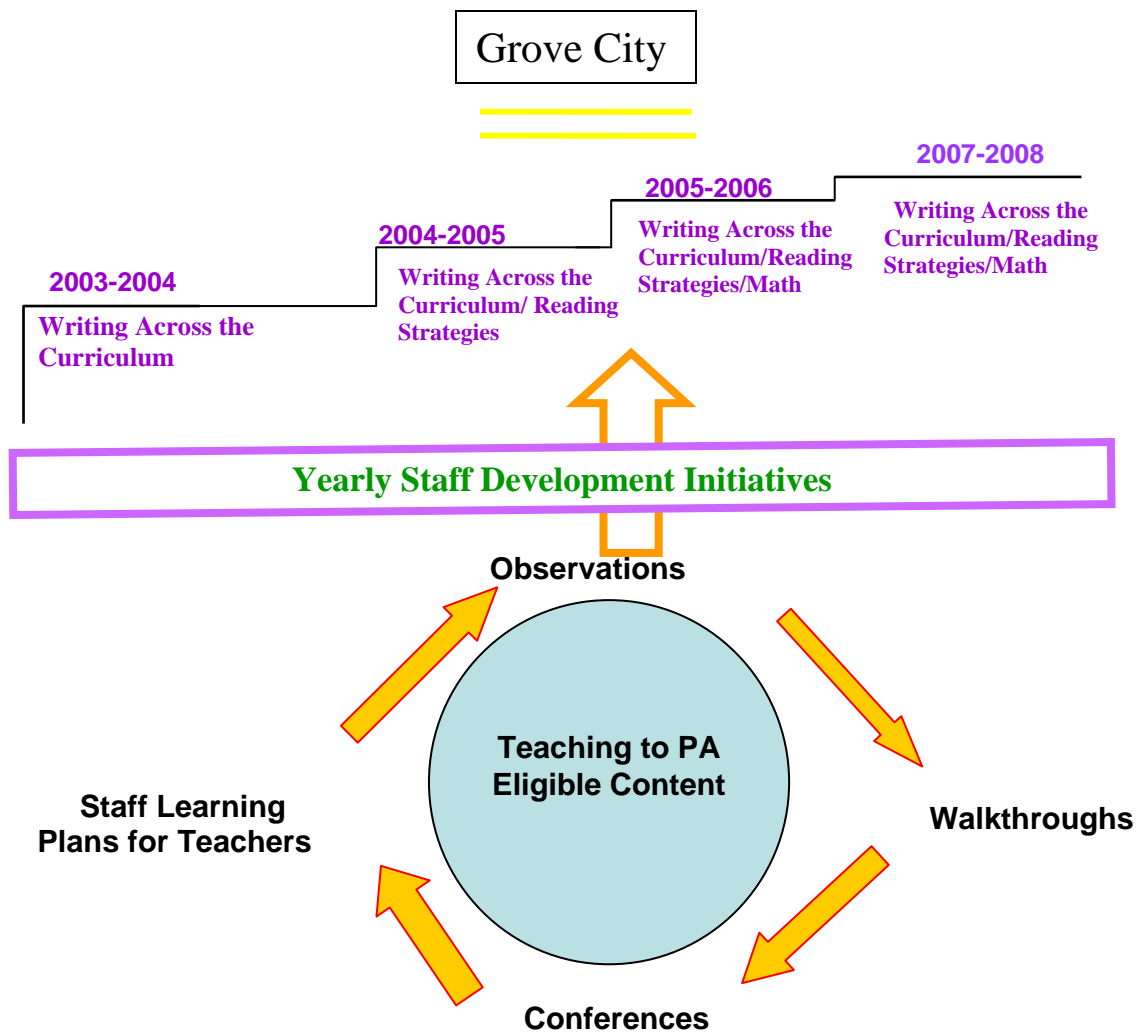
In this chapter different pieces of data are examined. First, documents from the study site are analyzed. Next, individual interview questions are presented with summative interview data. Group interviews are evaluated next to provide another layer to the initial teacher interviews. In addition, administrative interview responses are analyzed. The last piece of data that will be addressed are PSSA scores for eleventh grade students at the study site.

### Document Analysis

The district in the study adheres to the belief of continuous improvement. Beginning in 2003 the school created and instituted an initiative in order to improve

student achievement in the area of reading. Before the start of the reading strategies initiative, the administration met as a team to discuss and develop an implementation plan. The administration indicated the need to make it a gradual process as not to overpower any members of the organization to insure a smooth transition in instructional practice. The thought was to make it simple and to institute the overall plan in stages to make it less overwhelming and threatening to the stakeholders; it allows time for buy-in among the members of the organization. Fear and anxiety are common reactions to any change and should be expected and it was hoped by taking these steps it would help bring down barriers to change.

The first document is the initial diagram that summarized the initiatives to improve student achievement; the administrative team met several times. Figure 13 is a diagram that summarizes the end product of the district's planning. In speaking with administrators from the district, it was indicated that writing was the initial focus of the entire instructional change initiative. The belief was that it was the easiest curricular area to begin a school wide strategy and would allow the staff ease, comfort, and some instant success. Along the journey, successes must be celebrated. This is the step that is typically skipped, recognizing and celebrating success (Danielson, 2002). It helped to build momentum and acceptance for each phase of the entire plan. Once the staff felt comfortable with writing across the curriculum and began to see some success, the next implementation was reading strategies across the content areas. Celebrating wins however big helps build momentum and sustain forward progress of the program, which in the end will help to insure long-lasting change.



*Figure 13* Innovation implementation cycle for Grove City Area School District.

This document indicates that the administration had taken the time reviewed data, developed a plan, and then a strategy for the implementation of the initiatives. Figure 13 also shows the progressive and ongoing process on the entire initiative. According to the stages of concern, the figure displays refocusing level concerns. The administration did look at the impact upon the students, but they also considered more universal concerns; the impact on professional development and learning for the teachers were also key factors. An overarching aim was to make the staff a more cohesive and focused group.



After a blueprint had been created to institute the initiatives, the administration realized the need to select the right guiding team. The safer people feel, the more apt they are to work together and share ideas (2002). By selecting the right individuals for the guiding team, fear and anxiety are lessened and rapport is much easier to establish amongst the members. If the right people are chosen, people seem more apt to work with them.

The guiding team for this particular initiative was made up of the reading coaches and the building principal. Three members of the English department were selected as the reading coaches. The individuals selected had built a reputation of working well with others, being team players, and were quite knowledgeable in the area of reading. The coaches along with the building principal met to discuss the best avenue to pursue to begin the institution of reading strategies across the curriculum. The coaches divided the staff members amongst themselves. The coaches would then work with their respective teachers to assist them throughout the process. This provided a constant touchstone for the teachers. In addition, the coaches brainstormed ideas with the teachers, co-taught lessons, and met for debriefing after lessons. Many teachers involved in the interviews commented on the importance of the coaches. In question eight over 50% of the respondents indicated the value of the coaches, for example one teacher said, “The fact that the principal got a core group of teachers within our building was great...The coaches helped tremendously. They eased our anxiety.” The coaching clearly displayed a collaboration level concern.

There were video tapes made of some of the sessions between the reading coaches and the content area teachers. The tapes were of great assistance to the investigator as

they allowed for than just a verbal account of the interactions between the coach and the teacher. The video captured the pre-lesson meeting, the co-teaching experience, and the post-lesson meeting between the pair. This provided the researcher with another insight into the atmosphere during the phases of implementing strategies. It displayed what was actually transpired during each step between the coach and the teacher and what the relationship was like between the pair. After viewing the tapes, it was evident that each of the coaches did have a good rapport with those that they worked with. It seemed to be a very collegial atmosphere. It was obvious in the initial meeting between the coach and teacher that the teacher relied on the coach for the majority of ideas and practical application of the strategies as the coach did a great deal of the talking and asked a lot of questions of the teacher; however, by the post-lesson meeting the teacher was doing more of the talking than the first meeting. There was more of an exchange between the two with each meeting. Regardless of the first or third meeting, there was a good exchange between the duo clearly demonstrating concerns at the collaboration level on the continuum of change.

After reviewing professional development activities from 2003 through 2008, documents indicate that the administration made a concentrated effort to provide educational opportunities for the staff in the areas of reading and student achievement. This supported the vision set forth by the administration. The following provides a summary of activities that teachers participated in through professional development activities at the school to specifically support the reading effort:

- Reading in the content areas                      31 hours
- PSSA preparation    8.5 hours

- State adopted anchors and curriculum alignment 10.5 hours
- Data study 8 hours
- Formative assessment 4 hours

Over the course of the five year period, the staff was provided with 62 hours of professional development activities related to the reading strategies. To gain perspective, on the amount of time there were a total of 5.5 days of professional development days worked into each school year, which is approximately 185 hours over the course of five years. In addition, there are other meetings throughout the year that provide professional development. The reading initiative constituted 34% of the professional development days. Even though there is a considerable amount of time not devoted to reading, the teachers were provided with support in other areas, such as mathematics and writing. Overall, constant support was provided over the five year period for this particular initiative to help maintain positive momentum, instructional insights, time for collaboration, and support for the staff. The staff realized this as one member said, “It (reading) was clearly emphasized, because we had a lot of professional development on reading.” This was not a program without follow through, which demonstrates the impact phase on the concern continuum.

The reading coaches attended all of the professional development activities listed above for the staff, but they also attended other activities outside of the district. They gathered knowledge about reading in the content area and then came back and shared with the rest of the staff. From descriptions provided by the coaches and the teachers,

they coaches were part of the team. This attitude seemed appreciated by everyone and was beneficial in instituting reading strategies.

The teachers also completed activities that were not logged as official professional development activities but were a focus during meetings. Between September, 2005, and June, 2007, teachers also observed their colleagues to gain perspective of what was taking place in other classrooms in relation to reading strategies; this particular practice was coined Teachers Observing Teachers by the building principal. Figure 14 is an example of the observation schedule for a period of one month. during the 2006-2007 school year (the schedule for the entire school year can be seen in Appendix C). The schedule was developed by the building principal and distributed and discussed during the in-service days prior to the start of the school year. This was done so teachers could plan accordingly and allow time for any questions or concerns.

When planning the observations, people were asked to observe people in their respective departments as well individuals outside their departments. The aim was to look for good practice in the area of reading strategies that could be gleaned and put in place in other curricular areas. Sharing of best practice is an important aspect of professional development. The principal believes that teaching can be a very isolating profession; it was indicated by the principal that by observing one's colleagues the walls of isolation are being broken down.

As a reminder, the following teachers should be prepared to summarize, comment, and reflect on the lesson they observed during the next monthly meeting.		
Teacher	will observe	Teacher
A	will observe	D
B	will observe	I
C	will observe	J
D	will observe	K
E	will observe	L
F	will observe	M
G	will observe	H
H	will observe	N

*Figure 14* Monthly observation schedule during the 2006 – 2007 school year.

As part of Teachers Observing Teacher program there was a one hour meeting once a month with the building principal and the staff to reflect upon the observations completed that month. Figure 15 represents the schedule for the entire year of when the monthly meetings would take place. This exemplifies another aspect of planning and the importance of the initiative. During the meetings, each teacher that had observed a colleague would give a summary of the lesson, the positive aspects of the lesson, and what they could take from the observation and apply in their own classrooms.

	Time	Room	Topic
9/13/06	7:00 – 8:00 am	LGI	TOT
10/11/06	7:00 – 8:00 am	LGI	TOT
11/14/06	7:00 – 8:00 am	LGI	TOT
12/20/06	3:00 – 4:00 pm	LGI	TOT
1/10/07	7:00 – 8:00 am	LGI	TOT
2/07/07	7:00 – 8:00 am	LGI	TOT
3/07/07	7:00 – 8:00 am	LGI	TOT
4/04/07	7:00 – 8:00 am	LGI	TOT
5/02/07	7:00 – 8:00 am	LGI	TOT

*Figure 15* Monthly meeting schedule for the 2006-2007 school year.

After each meeting, the principal provided the staff with a summary (see Figure 16). Most items listed in the summary related to the reading initiative; however, other helpful strategies that were observed and commented on during the meeting were also included. The principal indicated that the summary was provided not only as a reference tool to the staff, but also as another vehicle that exemplifies the importance placed on the initiative by the administration.

Thanks to all for contributing to this meaningful discussion of past practices.

**Technology** – A science teacher explained how to link a PC and a television so that display teaching objectives can be displayed.

**Use of a Song** – To get students to remember days of the week in a foreign language this can aid in retention of information and can be adapted to almost every subject area.

**Warm up Activities** - Engaging students on a personal level prior to class is a great way to build relationships and create a positive climate in your classroom.

**Questioning Strategies** – The use of probing questions and the ability to draw the answers from students is a strategy we all need to continually hone. In addition, the teacher's ability to provide students time to think (wait time) about how they want to verbalize their answer before speaking is a powerful tool.

**Higher Level Thinking** - Lesson design, selection, reading materials, and use of higher level questions in combination led to a great lesson on the Constitution.

**Proximity**– Moving around the room is a good way to monitor student involvement and engage students in classroom discussions.

**Dealing with Wrong Answers** – Handling incorrect student responses without hurting egos – use of appropriate humor and suggesting an alternative way to look at a problem.

**Creative Group Work** – Having students develop a newscast of an historical event is a strategy that can be adapted to other subject areas as well.

**Notetaking**– The two column method – 1<sup>st</sup> column what you have read – 2<sup>nd</sup> column what does it mean. This is a good way for students to glean meaning from the text. This strategy can be used in any subject area.

**Writing Rubric** - The PSSA writing rubric was reviewed with the staff. In the future we will practice holistic scoring of sample papers.

Thanks to all for contributing to this meaningful discussion of past practices.

*Figure 16* Summary of monthly meeting during Teachers Observing Teachers.

Through the teacher interviews and the pilot study conducted with staff members found the program quite insightful and useful. A teacher with over 25 years of experience commented in the pilot study, “This was one of the most rewarding professional activities

that I have ever participated in.” In fact 50% of those interviewed during the study, indicated that this was the most beneficial aspect of the initiative. As was stated by one teacher, “The part I really liked was watching my peers. I learned a lot from my colleagues.” Another teacher said, “The most beneficial part was watching other teachers. I sometimes wish I were still a student.” It was indicated by many that they were apprehensive about this at first, but then saw the benefits of the program. Teachers Observing Teachers is at the impact phase of change which encompasses the consequence, collaboration, and refocusing stages. There was an impact on the client, cooperation and coordination amongst the staff, and exploration at a more universal level.

The staff was also given support through literature they were provided with during this time. The Superintendent bought books for the entire staff to provide background knowledge and a learning and reference tool during the process. The staff was given:

- The Art and Science of Teaching by Robert Marzano,
- Change Forces with a Vengeance by Michael Fullan,
- Failure is not an Option by Alan Blankstein; and
- Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies by Jeffrey Wilhelm.

Each year the staff was given one of the texts to read and then discussions were held. In addition, the reading coaches were given:

- The English Teacher’s Companion by Jim Burke, and
- Reading Reminders: Tools, Tips, and Techniques by Jim Burke.



The books for the coaches were an instrument to help them prepare to work with the other teachers.

In addition, when classroom observations were conducted by the principal, the teacher was utilizing a reading strategy; this was announced at the start of the school year so the teachers were aware. The principal was either informed by the teacher or through the submission of weekly lesson plans when a reading strategy would be employed. This reinforced to the teachers the importance the administration was placing upon the initiative. One interviewee indicated, “I know reading is important, because it was an emphasis in principal observations.” In another teacher interview it was said, “Reading was emphasized through observations. We had had to use a reading strategy when we were observed.” It was made evident to the staff the importance of the new reading initiative. This emphasis on reading demonstrates the impact phase on the continuum of change.

Documents at the study site reviewed provide a picture of the manner in which the reading initiative was initiated and supported. There was a commitment to the initiative as can be seen through the professional development hours, the coaching perspective, Teachers Observing Teachers program, literature, and the emphasis of classroom observations. Thought, planning, and support were given to the project. All of the activities and programs assisted the staff and showed the significance of the reading strategies.

The following section analyzes the interview questions as well as samples of the teacher interview responses.

## Teacher Responses to In-Depth Interviews

The first area addressed is the individual teacher interviews; each question is shown with representative responses shared below the question. This provides a broad understanding of the responses given by the interviewees and where they fall on the change continuum in terms of level of concern. The questions cover a wide range in that some were designed to be very specific while others were broader in scope to provide an array of answers. A benefit of this analysis is that the coding of each question helps illustrate where the organization is as a whole in the change process.

### **Interview Question 1:**

**Describe your perception of the district's vision. Do most teachers' perceive the district's vision the same across the content areas, such as English, math, and science?**

All twelve teachers responded with the same or quite similar vision statement.

Teachers have a clear picture of the vision of the district and of the school, sample responses follow:

Vision is global by nature. Our goals are more specific; our Program of Studies booklet outlines the district's goals in terms of AYP and PSSA scores. The principal and the teachers all know the vision. It is measured in terms of data. We are frontrunners. We know what is on the line and we want our students to do well. In essence, we are preparing students to be successful.

I think the district's vision is one that is proactive. We may not necessarily be controversial or flashy; we simply, from my vantage point, attempt to be ahead of the game. We prepare our students for success here and for their futures.

I would say a large portion see the vision the same way. We are geared towards having our students be successful on the PSSA, which in turn also helps them to be successful in their futures.

Simply, the vision of the school is to equip all students to be effective readers and lifelong learners. This will give them the tools to be successful.

I definitely think it is in terms of equipping students for their futures. Having all students proficient on state standards is our ultimate goal. If you can do that, then you will be successful.

The responses demonstrate that the administration conveyed the shared vision for the school. Each response to the question overlapped the next, showing that the staff had a clear understanding of what the administration wanted to accomplish, which is to prepare students for success on the PSSA and in their futures. The level of concern in regards to this question could be categorized as consequence as the interviewees associated this with student performance on the PSSA, which like this stage the focus is on the impact of the innovation on the client (Hall and Hord); however, “the overarching theme of Stages 4, 5, and 6 is always concern about improving the impact of the innovation on students” (p. 62).

### **Interview Question 2:**

**What are the shared beliefs that were identified in the implementation of the reading strategies? Overall, describe how other teachers define student learning?**

The responses to this question were all quite similar in nature but the descriptions were done from varying viewpoints. The respondents all provided different steps taken by the administration to implement the reading initiative; however, not every person listed every step. The first set of responses represents the global perspective of the initiative:

Initially we wanted to improve PSSA scores, that is why we did the reading; however, on a more intellectual level it was done to improve reading in all content areas. That helped the teachers buy into the idea, because it helped them. It wasn't taking away from what they were

teaching, it was enhancing their own content for the students. It was elevating their content.

There is a shared belief that reading is a skill that can be taught. Reading is imperative to success in all disciplines; there are ways to teach students to read that increase their opportunities for success.

With regard to shared beliefs identified in the implementation of reading strategies, I think several things stood out. First, it was clear that our building had clear commitment. It was not transparent at surface level. This was evident in the significant amount of professional development, peer tutoring, and preparatory time devoted to this endeavor. It was stressed that teachers are not robots. We were encouraged to experiment and adapt so that student needs were met.

A few teachers were still focusing on the process of the initiative when discussing shared beliefs. Interestingly, these teachers were teachers of elective courses that typically do not focus on topics of this nature in their curriculum. The following responses display the more concrete and basic responses to the implementation of reading strategies which demonstrate management level concerns:

First, we were all observed using reading strategies. We knew it was important. We came up and were introduced to strategies we didn't know, i.e. K-W-L charts and such.

In-service and co-teaching strategies and the school believes and I do to that reading is important. Reading in disciplines will make the students better readers in every subject.

The first year was the most effective. A period was set aside to coach, then the process of meeting to plan, meet again before the lesson, did the lesson (team taught the lesson), then they taught the lesson themselves.

In responding to Question 2, most interviewees wanted to describe the implementation of the reading initiative. There were some interviewed that did speak regarding student learning. The following demonstrates teacher perspectives to student learning:

While I cannot speak for how other teachers define learning, I can assure you that my definition is simple: I want students to apply learned material to both their academic and personal lives from the day they leave my classroom for the rest of their lives.

On a course level, succeeding on a test is one measure of student learning. That is difficult for me to define on a large scale. I see the “light” go off when a student gets it.

At Grove City it has always been that all students can learn. That philosophy starts when they enter kindergarten.

The answers run the gamut of how one could approach this question; however, 83% of the responses hit on the same point in their responses. Ten of the twelve interviewees’ answers were in the Impact Phase, while two responses were categorized in the Task Phase. The responses demonstrate understanding of the district’s vision as one that is shared amongst the organization. Even though the respondents did not use the exact same wording in providing an answer, they did provide the same meaning in their messages.

### **Interview Question 3:**

**Describe your perceptions of the content of teacher training at the high school over the past five years.**

The responses to the question provided an array of responses. Nearly 42% of those interviewed demonstrated that they were in the management stage of the innovation. They were focused on the process and tasks of teacher training. The remaining individuals had moved past the management stage, but were dispersed across the consequence, collaboration, and refocusing stages, which all fall under the Impact Phase. The following provides a variation of the responses:

It has become more focused. It used to be a collection of one shot wonders that we never heard about again. Now, everything focuses around student achievement and PSSA’s. There is a common theme now.

I find that the best teacher training comes from teachers themselves. It is less threatening and more practical. And that is exactly how we did the reading here.

We are really well prepared. We are always well informed about new things. I never feel like we are playing catch up. We are usually at the cutting edge. What I mean if you look at the surrounding schools we are always so much farther ahead of everyone else.

It has been a lot of hands on training. We learn a concept, try it, and report back to everyone. We share our practices so that others can be helped by it. It became a group effort. We knew everyone was trying new things, so we did not feel alone.

I think it has been very good, especially all of the training regarding the different strategies for standards in reading and writing. It is nice to see everyone working together.

Although many teachers responded in a positive manner, some did not as can be seen in the following:

Most of the conferences we (the coaches) went to felt a bit redundant, because I felt we were ahead of what these people were doing. Too much information and not as much hands on was the biggest complaint.

Some of it was really good. Other trainings were not as beneficial to me. I do not like things that are not directly related to instruction and student achievement in my content area.

It is a 50/50 shot. Sometimes I benefit because it directly impacts what I do in my class and the other half I would be better off just working in my classroom. As a whole, the administration does try to come up with meaningful learning.

While the majority of the staff shares the district's vision, many have not moved past the tasks involved in creating a sustained change. Those in this phase seemed positive about the professional development, but need to look past the tasks involved to the bigger picture of student impact and collaboration.

#### **Interview Question 4:**

**Describe the impact of the mandates in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 on the high school.**

The responses to this question provided one of the widest arrays of answers. The responses range from the personal to refocusing stage concerns. No Child Left Behind is a subject that all educators can relate to in some way as it has profoundly impacted the educational arena. I found that when discussing this piece of legislation many respondents went a bit off task. The question was answered, but many people added irrelevant details because it struck an emotional chord. The following provides examples of responses that pertain to the question:

I definitely think it has impacted our instructional time. In terms of allotting time, such as novels, etc. we do this. We had to be creative to integrate state standards into the curriculum in a seamless fashion. Nothing is done in isolation. Things are more integrated, like a piece of fabric it is woven. The standards are woven into the curriculum

It has dramatically impacted reading. Besides the reading strategies, I see more students reading. In fact, many times I have to ask students to put their books away when it is time to start class.

While many have been quick to criticize NCLB, I think it is imperative to acknowledge its unquestionable success in recognizing a need for improvement and bringing crucial issues to the agenda. No one can question the need for all schools to improve. Similarly, it is difficult to say there are not flaws with the current plan.

NCLB has made standard based instruction and evaluation the norm. Everything is measured now. There have also been shifts in vocabulary

My impression it has forced everyone to evaluate what they are doing. This evaluation has forced us to change things to insure that students do well on the PSSA. We are afraid what might happen if students don't do well. It is just so much more pressure.

Well I think it has forced us and other schools to really push our students.

It has changed how we teach. It has made us focus on skills that students need, such as reading, writing, and math.

The reactions indicate that 75% of those interviewed see the value represented in the NCLB legislation. The remaining 25% did not disagree to the mandates set forth in the law, but rather were focused on the process of implementing initiatives, such as:

I think we have made some changes as a district. It (reading strategies) have helped us with test scores, but there are still a lot of loose ends. Reading will not solve everything.

More students are reading. Students are taking more Accelerated Reader (AR) test.

Even in the replies that do not indicate a level that has moved passed the Task Phase, there is still a benefit of the reading initiative.

#### **Interview Question 5:**

**Describe the term collaboration in regard to opportunities for teacher' to collaborate.**

The replies to this question provided the most consistency amongst interviewee responses than any of the eleven questions. All but one of the teachers interviewed responded in a manner that displayed that they were either in the collaboration or consequence stage. The following demonstrates the type of responses received:

Webster's defines collaboration as "working together, especially in some literary, artistic, or scientific undertaking." With that in mind, teachers have clearly worked together in all three phases. With regard to literary undertaking, the purpose is clear. Most significantly, the phrase "artistic undertaking" is appropriate. Teaching is an art; a craft. This has been honed more and more with teachers working together. Finally, the art of teaching is also a science. Some methods are tried and true. With NCLB, data has become more and more important, thus the scientific end.

Collaboration can be defined as getting teachers to dialogue and share what works in their classrooms and use it from there. It has improved our meetings, because it (reading strategies) wasn't done in isolation.



Collaboration to me is meeting and discussing topics and ideas with my colleagues. Everything is a group effort here. We observe each other and meet twice a week, once by department and once by grade level.

Yes, I think there are, but I must say that it is driven by the teachers. Definitely in this school there are probably more opportunities than in most, because the teachers are very committed. Collaboration is very important and should continue.

Our meetings foster collaboration. Collaboration in terms of the reading coaches project was largely one way. My colleagues were gracious, and this made all the difference.

We collaborate a great deal. We meet as a department once a week and a grade level team once a week. I know what is going on throughout the building and what is working for some of my colleagues and what is not.

I see it a great deal when we are trying something new at the school. There is a lot, but not nearly enough. Everyone in the building is helpful when you go to them, but that is the essence of it to me.

Although, the responses indicate that the district has done a good job at providing opportunities for collaboration, there was one response that indicated that more could be done. In this response it came down to the matter of time, as seen in the following:

Sharing of lessons is one thing, but I do not think it is as collaborative as it could be. We need more time to collaborate with teachers below in us in the middle school and the elementary school and see what they are doing in terms of the same initiatives.

Overall, the answers indicate that collaboration is taking place within the school amongst the faculty. It seems an overarching theme is that the faculty feels that the reading initiative is a group effort and that there have been opportunities provided to them to work towards the initiative.

#### **Interview Question 6:**

**Describe the school as you remember it in 2003 and compare it to 2008.**

This question seemed to be difficult for all respondents. When the question was presented, I initially asked those participating to symbolize the school in 2003 and then again in 2008. There was no issue in providing details about how the school has changed, but when asked to symbolize the school the interviewees had a difficult time. The word symbolize seemed to be a stumbling block; however, when the question was slightly altered by replacing symbolize with describe the school interviewees had no difficulty responding. The first two responses indicate minor changes that have taken place throughout the five year period:

Academically, I don't know if it has changed that dramatically. We were good in 2003 and very rigorous. We are slightly more rigorous now. It is hard to increase greatly when you are already achieving at very high levels.

The only real observation I have is that the purpose of our methods is clearer. PSSA's are less misunderstood and therefore the impact on day to day teaching is more understood. We are more organized, efficient, and purpose driven.

The next set of responses demonstrates a larger transformation in the school. Most of the changes centered on testing and data collection as seen in the following comments:

The biggest difference is that there was no accountability and no curriculum mapping per se. A twelfth grade teacher and seventh grade teacher could be teaching the same thing. Basically, NCLB is state mandated curriculum. Students should know these things. This was designed by teachers. It redefined the curriculum from kindergarten to twelfth with the emphasis coming from educators themselves. There is still time to teach other things that the district feels important. The standards are just the minimum.

I came in when the changes started, like writing across the curriculum. In terms of state testing and PSSAs, the staff takes the PSSAs seriously and this has trickled down to the students. We don't have to sell it as hard to students. The students have bought in now too. It is a shared vision even with the students. It is a hurdle we are overcoming together.

I would say that because of the focus on reading and all the best practices

and demonstrations, we have focused more on our marginal readers. I don't think we are done yet, but we are focused on them more and I feel we have helped a number of kids.

We are more test and data oriented.

There is definitely increased assessment with PSSAs and 4Sight. There is a lot of measuring the pig, and less the feeding the pig. We are more transparent now too, with online grades. I don't mind accountability, but I don't ever want to miss kids' strengths. In terms of Howard Gardner's theory of MI, we are hitting the verbal linguistic and logical mathematical kids hard, but I have concern about the bodily kinesthetic, visual-spatial, musical rhythmic, interpersonal kids.

The responses indicate that all those participating in the interviews agree that the school has changed to some degree, which was to be expected since change is inevitable. Some view the changes as minor while other respondents feel there have been more major changes taking place. In the age of accountability, testing and data are synonymous with education. This was apparent when speaking with the interviewees. Responses were characterized as 36% of the responses were at the management level, 55% at the consequence level, and 18% at the collaborative level. Overall, the changes were viewed in a positive manner regardless of the level of concern.

#### **Interview Question 7:**

**Describe your beliefs about how students learned five years ago. Have your beliefs about how students learn evolved or changed over the past 5 years?**

The purpose of this case study was to examine organizational change in relation to NCLB. This particular question was vital in order to gather an understanding of the mindset from teachers on student learning. Essentially, this drove how the initiative was implemented. If there is a strong understanding on how students learn, it is then much easier to develop a plan to employ an initiative.

Of the twelve professionals interviewed, only one teacher felt unable to answer the question. The teacher felt he/she understood how students learn, but felt he/she did not have enough experience in order to state whether student learning has changed in the past five years since he has only been a teacher for five years. Nine of the remaining individuals all fell in the collaboration stage as seen in the following:

Yes, I think so primarily because of the Internet. Everything is at their (students) fingertips. That makes them more willing to do many more things, because it is much easier.

Definitely, the integration of technology has changed it. There is a place for traditional lecture, but they want hands on. I practice the philosophy, “I do, you do, we do.” This way you catch all learners: audio, kinetic, and visual. They do it independently and cooperatively...it takes the anxiety out of it.

Oh, heck yeah. Technology has greatly changed students today. It has improved things. Kids are so technologically advanced.

Oh sure, definitely. **Why?** I think there attention spans are shorter and it is harder to get them to focus. It is hard to get them to understand why they are learning what they are learning. So, because of the techniques and strategies that we are using, we are able to get those things. They are able to attack the content.

Two of the twelve respondents believed that there have not been any changes in the manner that students learn over the past five years:

Human nature hasn't changed in the last five years. Students still need teachers who connect with them and build a sense of community with them, otherwise the best reading strategy in the world will fall on deaf ears. I believe rigor, relevance, and relationships model, the 3 R's, still count.

No , I don't think so.

With the advancements in technology and the application in schools, it is not surprising that most of the remarks to this question attribute most of the changes in student learning to technology; however, as the responses indicates there are

characteristics of people that do not change. The value of forming relationships cannot be forgotten even in the age of technology.

#### **Interview Question 8:**

**Describe any factors that impeded and/or facilitated the process for implementing the reading strategies.**

Half of those responding were in the collaboration stage and the remaining fifty percent were in the management stage. This question lent itself for respondents to easily give responses that concentrated on the process and tasks of implementing the reading initiative due to the wording; however, six of the individuals did respond in a manner that focused more on cooperation and coordination with others that took them from the task phase to the impact phase. The following are a few examples:

It was a great help that English teachers from our own faculty were the facilitators. I felt comfortable with them. They were always there if I had a question. I believe it moved the whole process along much faster.

The fact that the principal got a core group of teachers within our building was great. He was very methodical in the implementation and he did not try to do everything all at once. The coaches were a tremendous help and they eased our anxiety. It was nice to use the talents on our own staff.

Reading was emphasized across the curriculum which was great. It was also helpful that the strategies were incorporated into classroom observations by the principal. The value was recognized by the entire building even the students.

A number of things helped the process, such as the reading coaches, professional development programs, and things like that.

While some touched on the positive aspects of the initiative, others focused on what would have made the process better. Time is always a factor, and this idea was touched upon as can be seen in the following responses:

I think the only factor that has impeded the reading strategies is time. My only struggle and complaint is that deep, meaningful reading that enriches

student learning often comes at the cost of another learning objective. I feel time constraints to teach my entire course.

I needed more time, but I don't know where it can come from. There is just not enough time in the day.

The issue of time was the only factor mentioned that impeded the process of implementing the initiative. The overall factor amongst all respondents that facilitated the process was the use of individuals from the school's staff as the coaches. The concept of trust had already been established and the coaches were always in the building to act as a touchstone for the entire staff.

Selecting the right guiding team is critical in a change effort as they set can set the tone. The principal was wise to realize the influence of having experts among the staff take ownership of the initiative.

#### **Interview Question 9:**

**Describe your current reading strategies? Do they differ from what you were doing 3 years ago? Describe any impact you have seen.**

This particular question clearly demonstrated that the teachers interviewed have made great strides throughout the process and have altered their teaching practices, which was the intent of the initiative. All teachers responded that they in fact do utilize reading strategies in their respective courses. Twenty-five percent of those interviewed do utilize the reading strategies in their classes, but still focus on details of the implementation which would indicate management level concerns. The remaining seventy-five percent have realized the impact of the strategies on the student and the benefits of working as a cooperative group which would place their concerns at the collaboration level. The following provides a few examples of responses:

Everything I learned in this process I still use. Before we started with the reading strategies, I was not aware of many.

I definitely used the strategies and just didn't use the terminology. Once you teach students the terminology they feel like they know the secret. It is neat to watch everything unfold with kids.

I have been exposed to so many more strategies than I ever knew before. I have branched out at each grade level that I teach. I am on more than just comprehension level now.

I now use reading strategies in my course. I have been introduced to several different strategies which have helped in my science content. I do believe they help my students with the text. I continue to use the strategies, so that must say something.

One respondent gave a slightly different answer than the rest, because of years of experience. This particular teacher has five years of teaching experience and came into the profession using many of the reading strategies already due to his educational preparation. This was not a new concept for the teacher, which provided a different insight than those teachers with many years of experience.

Overall, I would not say that they have changed much. As a newer teacher and one enrolled in a graduate program, I was more in touch with reading strategies than most of my colleagues. I currently use RAFT, Think-Pair-Share, KWL, Frayer Model, Essential Question, Graphic Organizers, Active Reading, Prior Knowledge Brainstorming, Prompt Responses, and Semantic Analysis.

After reviewing and evaluating the responses to this question, it is evident that a change in teaching practice did take place amongst the faculty in terms of utilizing reading strategies. Every person interviewed indicated that they now use reading strategies in their classes to some degree. Overall, the interviewees indicated that they observed benefits to their students from the use of the strategies. As one teacher stated, the initiative was "woven into the curriculum." Many teachers stated that the reading strategies were overlapped from one class to the next for the students; there was

continuity from amongst classes and repetitive practice provided to the students. By equipping students with new skills, students take a more active role in their learning (Major and Palmer, 2006). As clearly stated in *Intelligence Reframed*, “much of what we teach takes hold through habit” (Gardner, 1999, p. 177). In theory, teachers are teaching strategies in hopes that these are skills that if repeated students will activate on their own in the future. From answers given when interviewing the administrators, this was one of the goals of the initiative.

#### **Interview Question 10:**

**Describe how No Child Left Behind affected your professional experiences in regard to your instructional strategies.**

Responses to this question revealed that teachers fell anywhere from the personal level to the end of the change process at the refocusing level. Like question 4, this question supplied a wide range of reactions, which was expected by the interviewer. NCLB typically evokes a wide range of responses from those in the educational realm. Since the 1950s, the presence of the federal government has slowly become more apparent; however, at no other time in history has the federal government involved themselves in education.

The first two responses demonstrate those individuals that still perceive many of the negative aspects of the legislation:

It is very frustrating to me to think that all kids, even kids with disabilities, will be proficient. All kids are not the same and we must take individual differences into account when it comes to learning.

At times I feel like I am teaching random concepts that are on the PSSA, because there is a need to get them in before the assessment.



The following remarks exhibit those teachers that have moved through the initial steps of change and perceive the benefits of the law. The following are few examples given during the interviews:

I don't know. I never adjust, I just teach. I guess I would say there are now concrete objectives and standards. In our school, there is a strong emphasis on reading and writing. It is a more focused effort.

Overall, it has made all of us more accountable, teachers and administrators alike.

It has forced teachers to focus on certain areas, such as reading, writing, and math. I know this is a good thing, but I think some other important items get lost.

I don't know how much it has, but I guess it did. It made me look at my role more closely as a teacher. It made me consider the overall responsibility of an educator.

Overall, eighty-three percent of those individuals interviewed are either in the task or impact phase. In question 5, the responses revealed that eleven of the twelve teachers looked positively upon working collaboratively with their colleagues. Cooperative work helps individuals to not feel isolated and alone through a change initiative. The idea seemed to be instrumental in the implementation in this particular study. NCLB has had other positive impacts at the school. Not only has it forced some to closely examine the impact on students, but the teaching profession as a whole.

**Interview Question 11:**

**Describe how changes in your instructional practice impact the results on PSSA scores.**

Eleven of the respondents felt they did have a positive impact on the PSSA scores. There was one individual that found this question hard to answer, since the respondent's course is a senior level class and the students have already taken the PSSA;

however the respondent does work with students who need to take the senior PSSA retest. The respondent does utilize the strategies, because the value of sound reading skills for the students is apparent. Although, all teachers felt they contributed, it was at varying degrees. Not all teachers felt they had as much of an impact as another, but did work for the common goal of improving student achievement. Teachers' responses follow to provide an overview of their thoughts:

I have used reading strategies to help students learn how to attack reading, which would help on the PSSA.

Our PSSA scores are strong. The test is not assessing anything the students shouldn't be able to do. Good teaching ought to lead to good scores. Also, let's face it, we've been dealt a good hand here at Grove City in terms of community support and demographics.

The ability to read critically is an effective practice tool. Specifically, reading with a purpose and having the ability to analyze both open and closed ended questions. Frankly, if students are not challenged in classes like mine, hopefully state assessments will be less difficult.

I think that raising the standards above the level of the PSSA automatically brings up the PSSA scores. I use the standards as the bare minimum for what should be done.

I would like to think so to some extent. I would like to think by emphasizing the importance in every class like we do, kids do focus and get the importance and that helps.

Honestly, I really don't think I do as much as some other teachers due to my content. I do use reading strategies in my curriculum and I would like to think that that does help the kids when they take the assessment.

The responses indicate that there is a shared buy-in to the idea that everyone does play a part in student achievement on the PSSA regardless of their specific content area or grade level. The last response indicates that some teachers do not feel they play as big of a part as other teachers. These responses exemplify the impact phase in which the responses demonstrate consequence and collaboration. Responses indicate that teachers

understand what is taking place within the school in regards to curriculum, the impact of instructional practice on standardized test and the role that they each play.

Overall, the initiative in this district has surpassed many of the task concerns that are typically associated with first year initiatives when people are more concerned with task type concerns and not the philosophy (Hall and Hord, 2001). At this point, the teachers have been working with the reading initiative for five years. They are more concerned about impact concerns where the focus is consequences, collaboration, and refocusing, which is typical three to five years after the initial implementation of the initiative (Hall and Hord).

Teacher response categorizations are shown in Table 17 below with a key provided in Table 18. The administrators' response categorization are shown in Table 19 on page 131. A key is listed below each table to display the codes applied to the responses.

Teacher Number	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Q 9	Q 10	Q 11
1	C	CO	C	P	C	M	CO	C	M	CO	I
2	CO	R	M	R	CO	C	CO	M	M	C	M
3	C	R	C	M	C	CO	CO	C	CO	R	CO
4	R	C	C	R	C	C	X	M	CO	X	CO
5	C	M	CO	M	C	CO	CO	M	C	C	CO
6	CO	C	M	CO	C	CO	CO	M	P	P	CO
7	CO	M	C	CO	C	M	CO	M	M	M	CO
8	CO	C	M	CO	C	M	CO	C	CO	CO	CO
9	CO	C	C	CO	C	CO	CO	C	CO	R	R
10	CO	C	C	CO	C	CO	CO	C	C	CO	CO
11	CO	C	M	CO	C	M	CO	C	CO	M	M
12	C	C	M	CO	M	CO	M	M	CO	M	CO

*Table 17* Coding of teacher responses according to Hall and Hord's Stages of Concern.

Code for Stages of Concern Categorization	
A	Awareness
I	Informational
P	Personal
M	Management
CO	Consequence
C	Collaboration
R	Refocusing
X	No Answer

*Figure 18* Matrix of teacher response categorization based on the Stages of Concern.

#### Stages of Concern Summary of Individual Teacher Responses

The interviews conducted with the secondary teachers are presented next in a broader context relative to Hall and Hord's seven stages of concern, which provides the organizational perspective as it applies to the change process at the study site. The concerns bring to light the level of readiness and implementation level of the change initiative and whether a change in fact did occur within the organization. It is a more of a generalization of the initiative implemented rather than the particular nature presented above according to each interview question. In addition, the characteristics of organizational change which is substantiated by a wide body of literature (Fullan, 2003, Hall & Hord, 2001, and Senge, 1999). Next, each of the seven stages of concern is analyzed according to the interviewee responses: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing.

#### *The Awareness Stage*

The awareness stage is depicted by little concern about or involvement in the innovation is indicated (Hall & Hord, 2001). Surprisingly, no interview question elicited

a response that would be placed in this category. The responses clearly exhibit that all those interviewed have accepted the initiative to some degree. This is most likely because the initiative was instituted five years ago. The teachers have had time to become comfortable with the reading strategies and work through this on the change continuum.

### *The Informational Stage*

The informational stage concerns can be described as a general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems unworried about himself/herself in relation to the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner, such as general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use (Hall & Hord, 2001). Like the awareness stage, there were not many responses that be categorized as informational. Out of the eleven interview questions posed to twelve teachers that participated in the study, only one individual replied in a manner that would be classified under the informational stage. The response was given to question 11 and was because of the level of the particular course. The teacher instructs seniors only and the students have already taken the state reading assessment therefore the teacher does not see a direct correlation. However, the teacher does see the benefit of teaching reading strategies, especially since the students are moving onto college; the teacher does not see the direct relation on the 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA reading assessment. Again, the question that elicited the informational stage was not one regarding the implementation of the initiative, but rather teacher impact on the PSSA.

### *The Personal Stage*

The personal stage can be characterized as an individual that is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her

role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision-making, and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected (Hall and Hord, 2001). Two of the eleven respondents supplied answers that required a categorization of the personal stage to 3 different questions. One interviewee gave this type of response to two separate questions: questions 9 and 10. One question dealt with NCLB and the other with reading strategy usage and has it changed over time. The other respondent's personal stage response dealt with the NCLB as well. In response to other questions it was evident that both respondents saw the need and benefits of the reading strategies to the students; however, they did have some trepidation when it came to NCLB.

### *The Management Stage*

Concerns in the management stage are characterized by attention focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost (Hall & Hord). Detail-minded people seem to get "stuck" in this stage; it is at times difficult for them to get past the details to see the big picture. Twenty-two percent of the total number of responses warranted a management stage classification. Ten of the twelve individuals' responses were coded in this category. Questions 3 and 8 elicited the most management type responses. Interestingly, both of these questions focused on the implementation of the initiative. Due to the nature and wording of the question, it is understandable why management responses were given. Rather than giving an answer

that would address the “big” picture, respondents discussed the details of the implementation of the initiative.

### *The Consequence Stage*

In the consequence stage attention focuses on the impact of the innovation on clients in his or her immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for clients evaluations of outcome including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase client outcomes (Hall & Hord, 2001). Most responses were either categorized in the consequence or collaboration stages. The majority of respondents appeared to relate their beliefs and practice to the impact on client, which would be the student. Every question drew out this type of response at least once, except for questions 3 and 8. Again, these same two questions were the ones that primarily the answers were at the management stage. The highest concentration of consequence answers were observed in questions 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 11. Questions 6 and 9 both had 50% at the consequence stage; questions 1 and 4 were at 58%; questions 11 at 67%; and question 7 at 83%. Question 11 asked for the respondents to describe their impact in terms of instructional practice on the PSSA. It was enlightening to see that a majority of the teachers have bought into the idea that it student scores are a shared responsibility across grade levels and curriculums. Question 7 addressed the idea of student learning and how, if at all, it has evolved over the past five years. These concepts were integral to the reading strategies plan. One must understand the learner in order to provide a viable curriculum.

### *The Collaboration Stage*

The collaboration stage focuses on coordination and cooperation with others in regards to the utilization of the innovation (Hall & Hord, 2001). The same interviewee that could not provide a response to question 7 could also not answer this question due to limited years of experience. Questions 2 and 5 yielded the most responses that would be at the collaboration stage. Question 2 was developed to elicit responses in regards to shared beliefs about the initiative and the implementation. Seven of the twelve responses to the question were at the collaborative level. Question 5 dealt with the idea of collaboration and opportunities available to work collaboratively within the building; there were ten responses at this stage. The responses demonstrate that the administration has communicated the shared belief and has provided opportunities for the staff to work with one another towards a common goal.

### *The Refocusing Stage*

During the refocusing stage the focus is on the exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. The individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation (Hall & Hord). Interestingly, there were only a total of eight responses that would warrant a categorization of refocusing. The eight responses were provided by five different teachers. Two of the teachers are in the English department and two are in the social studies department. It is not surprising that English teachers would be at this level when discussing a change in practice in the use of reading strategies. The strategies leant themselves easily to the material and curriculum in the social studies department. In addition, these two above mentioned departments do



meet on a weekly basis to discuss curriculum and lesson planning as their lessons are taught in conjunction with one another. In total, there were 132 responses given by teachers. Of the 132 responses only 5, or 6%, were categorized as refocusing. Obviously, the staff has bought into the concept of reading strategies across the curriculum, but there is still room for more buy-in as the idea of more universal benefits have not been the priority to organization as a whole.

The following provides a summary of the level of concern and the corresponding questions with the corresponding responses:

The awareness stage: There were no responses at this level.

The informational stage: There was only one response at this level to question 11 (teacher perception of his/her impact on the PSSA).

The personal stage: There were three responses at this level. Question 4, 9, and 10 each had one personal stage response. The topics of the questions were NCLB's impact on schools, instructional strategies, and reading strategy utilization.

The management stage: Twenty-nine responses were given that would be categorized as management level. Question 8 (factors impeding or facilitating the implementation of the initiative) had the most management level responses with a total of six out of 12 responses or 50%.

The consequence stage: This level was represented fifty times throughout the interviews with the teachers, which represents 39% of the responses given. Question 7 (student learning and changes in learning) had the most responses at this level.

The collaboration stage: Thirty-nine replies were given to the collaboration level constituting 30% of the total replies. Question 5 (opportunities for collaboration) had the greatest number of such answers provided.

The refocusing stage: There were a total of eight refocusing level responses.

Questions 2, 4, and 10 warranted the most responses at this level with a total of two for each question.

### Analysis of Group Interviews

The teachers who participated in the initial interview questions, were also assembled in small groups by content area approximately six weeks after the original interviews. During these meetings, questions were posed to the entire group that arose out of the initial interviews. The follow-up questions emerged in the second phase of data gathering and affirmed data from the interviews with each separate individual. “It is likely that a single encounter that is brief and informal will not have the same depth, complexity, or resonance as a research relationship that spans several months” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 138).

After analyzing the reactions to the primary interviews, additional questions arose regarding the reading initiative. As shown through the reactions to question one, there was a clear understanding of the staff regarding the vision of the school; however, had that vision changed. The following are examples of responses to this question.

No, I don’t think it has changed. We even have plaques in the school and in every classroom stating our mission...Equip all our students for their successful futures.

I don’t think the vision has changed, but the mission has changed to insure that we are meeting our vision. It is no secret that our goal is to have all students proficient on the PSSA.

Even when I interviewed here 10 years ago, many of the questions focused on PSSAs and standards. I knew before I was even hired that this was a focus.

When we see a deficiency in order to make that goal that clearly becomes a focus of the entire building. We take pride in our students' successes and how well they achieve on the PSSA. It gives everyone a sense of pride.

Not a single individual among the twelve commented that they believed the vision of the school has changed in the past five years.

Through responses to several of the initial questions, it was said that the PSSA scores at the school were quite good compared to other neighboring districts and across the state. With that in mind, the question was posed to the groups why they believe that the PSSA scores are quite good at Grove City compared to other high schools. Examples of responses are provided below.

Everyone here has bought into the idea of reading. Plus, the kids here are very teachable. They want to learn and do better. They are proud of their achievements.

At the district level there has been a huge emphasis, a real emphasis, on student achievement. The administration keeps things going.

We like to try new things to keep ahead of the curve. The district is never satisfied with our accomplishments. They, meaning we, like to try new things to keep getting better.

At some point in the discussion on this topic, the question was then raised why they believe that everyone has bought into the ideas, such as in the area of reading. The following are some of the reactions.

Because we are shown the value of any effort. When talking about the reading initiative, I felt very supported by the administration and my colleagues.

We were well prepared. I came from another district and the environment was quite different there. I have been here six years now and I have

noticed such a different environment or should I say culture here. People are truly open to change and you don't typically see that.

During this exchange the concept of the faculty at the school being open to change was brought to light, which can typically be a roadblock for many organizations. It led to the following responses that highlighted teacher perception to this concept.

Because we are given support and guidance and to do and try different ideas. The environment is not threatening at all.

I know reading strategies well and I am not an English teacher. I feel I could even go out and teach them to other people.

It seems clear that the feeling among the respondents is that the faculty is willing to try new ideas because of the support and environment at the school. In addition, it was stated several times that they did not feel threatened during the initiative as can be seen in the following comments.

We were supported all the way around from the coaches to professional development.

I didn't feel threatened because I felt prepared and that there was a support system within the school

We knew them. It was easy to go and talk to them. At first I was like, "I am not qualified to teach reading, but then I realized I am not teaching reading so much but teaching strategies for my students to use. There is one reading strategy I use every year now. Before the reading push I would not have gone out and looked for this type of instruction.

There was always a touchstone with the coaches or even your neighbor. We really relied on each other.

We were taught well too. We all clearly understood the strategies. I feel anyone in this building could go to another school and teach different reading strategies.

It provided so much of a focus our meetings. It helped me build relationships with teachers I did not know very well. It built a sense of community.

The above statements have some powerful words within them alluding to the idea of a professional learning community being created and growing within the school. Concepts such as “sense of community” and “support system” seemed to help this initiative thrive amongst the organization.

During the initial interviews factors that impeded or facilitated the implementation of the initiative were discussed; however, to have a deeper understanding the interviewer wanted to know from the perception of the faculty what role they felt they played throughout the process. The answers received were similar to the initial question, but the teachers seemed more forthcoming. This may be due to the fact that individuals were more comfortable speaking amongst a group, or it was easier where they could build off of each other’s ideas, or for the fact that they had reflected on this question since the initial interview. Samples are provided below.

Everyone really did work together. I know in our level meetings we discussed the strategies and then we decided to use them at the same time across all different subject areas. So in history and English everyone was using the summarizing in 25 word technique. Kids used it more than once and felt comfortable.

We were very accountable for the implementation. Since some of our colleagues were the coaches we openly worked for them or I should say we wanted to do well for them or do what they were asking us to do. They worked with us. It wasn’t like the administration came in and said here do this, but we were given the tools, the support and the practice to do it.

It also wasn’t one shot in the dark. It was a continual process that we worked on with our colleagues. We were able to observe each other and share are experiences. That is one of the best things I have ever done in terms of professional development.

The last two questions addressed through the group interview were also asked in the original one-on-one interviews; however, more information was needed on these

topics. The first question posed to the group was how each person's instructional practice has changed due to NCLB. Samples to the question are as follows.

I don't feel like we are like most districts. We are not teaching to the test, but we are giving our students the skills to be successful here and after they leave us.

Everyone needs to be a good reader no matter post high school plans. We are giving them the tools to do that. They can now attack reading on their own now.

I have been in education for over 25 years and at no other time has the level of accountability been here. I am more aware of my practice and how it impacts students.

I feel like we work more like a team now. Before there were not many initiatives where we had to work with each other that is common practice now.

The reactions indicate that there has been a shift in thinking at the school. The staff works more as a cohesive group and there is a sense of pride amongst the members. This was seen through the responses, and also in the way the members supported with one another by affirming what the others were saying through body language, such as nodding one's head, and verbally saying that they agree.

The second repeated question asked them to describe student learning. This question was asked again because originally it was constructed as part of question 7 and a majority of those involved focused on the other part of the question dealing with how student learning has changed over the past five years. Examples of reactions follow.

I think we would all describe this differently.

Exactly, I would describe student mastery as it applies to my content area.

Students take the information digest it according to their experiences and then use it.

That is hard to say, because all students learn differently. This generation is wired differently than us and thus

I am a hands-on course as well. Student learning is demonstrated by the use of the equipment. It is not a typical class where there are traditional tests. Although, I don't think too many of our classes are like that even the traditional subjects like math. Kids do take tests, but here they also do a lot more to show what they have learned.

It is evident that each of the teachers views the idea of student learning slightly different; however, each definition or description appears appropriate.

In evaluating the responses to the second interview, many ideas from the initial responses were reaffirmed. It is apparent that the organization (the school) is not in the unrelated, self, or task phase. By and large the group responses indicate that the concerns are in the impact phase, which could be consequence, collaboration, or refocusing. The above mentioned responses only corroborate what was found through the original interview process; the reactions gave more description and allowed for follow-up to enhance the previous answers. The responses and non-verbal cues indicate a positive environment where members are working towards having a positive impact on students through working with one another and reaping the benefits individually and as a collective whole.

#### Analysis of Responses from Administrative Interview Questions

Even though the interview questions were the same between the teachers and the administrators (see Appendix D for Interview Questions), it seemed as though the administrators had an easier time responding to questions than the teachers as they answered questions with less hesitation. In some respects, the administrative responses were also easier to analyze as they had a solid understanding of the initiative and the

implementation plan. After all, they created and initiated the plan. They had a broader understanding of the entire process due to the nature of their positions.

In the analysis of administrative responses the process moved much smoother than that of the teacher response analysis because of their experience, knowledge, and the sheer number of responses to examine. Because of this, the administrative responses are provided below in a manner that corresponds to the association of concerns. No response was categorized in the unrelated or self phase.

The lowest level of concern represented in the administrative interviews was at the management level. Question 8 brought forth the largest percentage at 66%. The question asked which factors impeded and/or facilitated the initiatives, and responses that impeded are demonstrated below.

There should have been more and continual feedback provided to the teachers.

Time is always an issue in education.

The following are responses given in which factors that helped the initiative were discussed.

The trainings provided to the teachers through professional development seemed to be quite useful and I received a great deal of positive input about them.

Reading was emphasized through trainings, professional development, and classroom observations.

It seems there were more factors that helped the initiative than hindered it. From the administrative interviews, the perception is that the initiative has changed the culture of the school, "The strategies have changed the school and it has made it more unified and



focused.” The administrators indicated that this was necessary for change to occur and make it last.

Question seven had the most responses at the consequence level of concern with 66%. The question was regarding beliefs on student learning and if there has been a change in the past five years regarding how students learn. The following represents a sample of the reactions.

Somewhat...I think traditional learning of knowledge in the content areas is extremely important; however, students are changing. The new current technology has changed kids today. For the first time that I can remember in education teachers are adapting to students. We (the educators) are playing catch up. It is a good! Teachers are learning along with the students. Now, it is teachers teaching students, students teaching teachers, everyone learning from everyone...a learning community.

Yes, my beliefs have changed. In our district, we have asked teachers to put the standards on the board and in their plans. Nothing is a secret. The kids now know the standards. The goal is known by everyone.

Questions two and five both elicited all collaborative level responses. Question two focused on shared beliefs identified during the implementation and question five dealt with collaboration and the opportunities for collaboration. Responses to shared beliefs for the implementation of the initiative follow.

The process was one of complete staff involvement. There were no outside presenters to model or teach the strategies. We used teacher leaders within the English department to pair up with content area teachers. We adopted a coaching model that involved demonstrations, video taping, and sharing tapes with the entire staff to increase the instructional capacity of everyone.

The principal chose a teacher leader at each grade level. This allowed teachers to bond, build relationships, and admiration. Rather than receiving help from outside the building, the building looked inward for expertise.

The benefit of the coaching model was recognized prior to implementation and so was the importance of looking within the organization for leadership.

Next, responses to collaboration and the opportunity for the staff to collaborate are provided.

Yes, we provide opportunities for collaboration several ways. We have hours built into the contract, grade level meetings, content area meetings, Act 80 Days, etc.

Collaboration is people working together in spirited cooperative manner for a common goal. The staff here does collaborate, probably more than we realize. People are always working together.

We have provided opportunities for collaboration for more than 25 years, such as grade level meetings, department meetings, meetings to map the curriculum, opportunities to observe one another, committees (such as Act 48), inner building meetings, etc.

The responses presented display the value the administration places upon collaborative opportunities for the staff. Collaboration is integral to any change effort. Everyone must realize the individual and group benefits of the initiative for success to follow. The opportunities provided to the staff to collaborate fostered the need and the importance of the initiative.

All of the administrators that participated in the interview process had a clear and definite picture of the district's vision. All three administrators interviewed responded at the refocusing stage to question one that asked about the school's vision and the teachers' perception of it. As one administrator replied, "To improve reading scores on the PSSA and to improve reading skills in the content areas." The other administrators echoed the same sentiment as can be seen in the following.

Everyone is a teacher of reading. Simply put that is it. It is everyone's responsibility to infuse strategies into their curriculum to enable students to comprehend the content that is specific to the discipline. The teachers

grew into the vision when they were able to see it grow into academic success of the students.

We want to see success for all students. To accomplish this vision we knew that there was more expertise in our own faculty than there was from an outside source. Through our model strategies were shared and in turn insured that strategies were being institutionalized in the classrooms. The perception has changed from heading to being something done in English to helping all students be successful. Everyone has taken ownership of reading.

Deep down the teachers did perceive the vision. At the beginning there was a little resistance, but they did understand the importance and bought into the idea over time.

Obviously, the administrative team had a clear vision of what they wanted to accomplish.

The vision must be in place for a transformation to take place.

Even though question one displayed the most refocusing level responses, questions four and six both had one refocusing level responses. Responses to question 4 that centered on impact of NCLB on the high school can be seen below.

The biggest impact has been focusing attention on students with special needs. We have made great strides, but we are not there yet. There still needs to be more of a focus of students who have not been successful in the past. To this point it hasn't really changed the impact on "college bound" students; they typically do very well. Teachers have gained a genuine source of pride for teachers, because of the success of students.

It has improved accountability. When you start pushing nobody want to be at the bottom. In our case, we are very fortunate. Our teachers take great pride in their accomplishments and want to continue to do well.

Wow...it has given us direction that is focused. It has provided a road map for instruction. It has made everyone more accountable and more responsible for their respective programs. It has also united the staff.

Question four included a follow-up question that related directly how NCLB impacted reading and teachers at the high school and is provided below.

It helped us to realize the need for change. In addition, teachers are now more accountable and use data to determine instruction. You can no longer teach units without considering all aspects.

Reading impacts every subject area. NCLB has brought much, much more of a focus on reading because of testing and the availability of scores. It has made the teachers more accountable. Accountability is the name of the game.

Reading became a focal point for instructional improvement. In terms of teachers, it has of course made them more accountable now. They (teachers) have more of a cohesive focus on instruction. In addition, it raised the level of concern.

Overall, question four was represented by the collaborative to refocusing level of concern. Through the interviews conducted with administrators, the importance and impact of NCLB on education was evident.

Question six asks the respondent to compare the school in 2003 to 2008.

The biggest difference is that there was no accountability and no curriculum mapping per se. A 12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher could be teaching the same thing. Basically, NCLB is state mandated curriculum. Students should know these things. This was designed by teachers. It redefined the curriculum from k to 12 with the emphasis coming from educators themselves. There is still plenty of time to teach other things that the district feels important. The standards are just the minimum. Education is now more transparent with a common goal is known by everyone.

The academic achievement of the students is certainly better. The school is more directed and more focused.

There were three questions that were difficult for the administration to answer due to the nature of the question. Questions 9, 10, and 11 all presented an issue as they dealt with current instructional strategies utilized in their current instructional practice and the impact on the PSSA. Obviously, the administrators do not have classes that they personally instruct.

Table 19 provides a summary of concerns as they pertain to change from the administrative perspective and Table 20 provides the key.

Administrator Number	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7	Q 8	Q 9	Q 10	Q 11
1	R	C	C	C	C	R	C	M	X	X	X
2	R	C	C	R	C	C	CO	M	C	CO	C
3	R	C	CO	C	C	CO	CO	C	X	X	C

*Figure 19* Coding of administrative responses according to Hall and Hord's Stages of Concern.

Code for Stages of Concern Categorization	
A = Awareness	
I = Informational	
P = Personal	
M = Management	
CO = Consequence	
C = Collaboration	
R = Refocusing	
X = No Answer	

*Figure 20* Matrix of administrator response categorization based on the Stages of Concern.

### Review of PSSA Scores

Figure 17 displays the scores of eleventh grade students over an eight year period at Grove City Area Senior High School in the area of reading on the PSSA. The first three years (2001 – 2003) were presented to provide an idea of where the scores started before implementing any reading strategies. In addition, the state PSSA reading assessment average is provided to show where the school measures in accordance to the overall proficiency rate of the state.

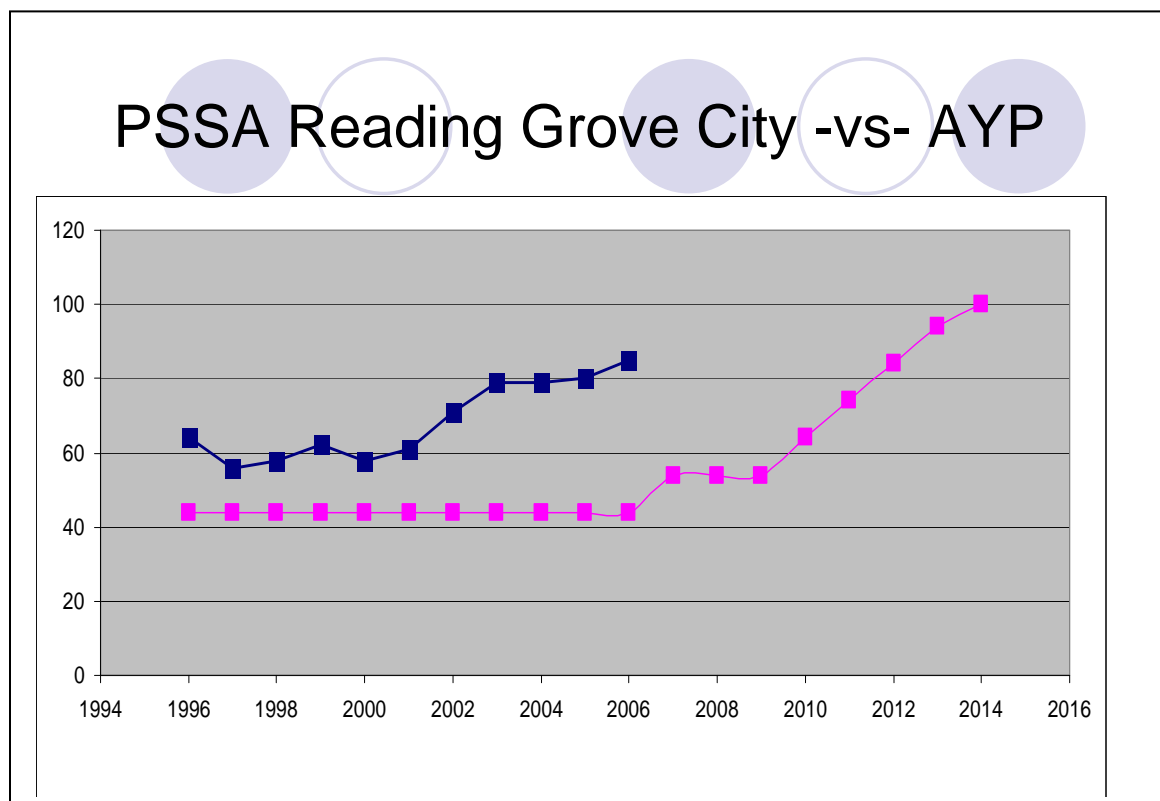
Year	Grove City Reading Advanced and Proficient	Pennsylvania State Average
2001	62%	60.8%
2002	73%	59%
2003	77%	59.2%
2004	79%	60.8%
2005	81.4%	65%
2006	85.8%	65.1%
2007	73%	65.4%
2008	80%	65%

*Figure 21* PSSA AYP in reading for Grove City Area Senior High School at the eleventh grade level for 2001 – 2008.

There is an upward progression in student achievement as shown in Figure 21. Even though there was a dip in the 2007 scores, the scores rebounded the following school year. The reading strategies initiative was instituted in 2003, but there was an increase before this time as seen in Figure 21. The subject was brought up in the group interviews; the teachers were asked why they believed there was an increase in scores before the implementation of the reading strategies. The teachers attributed the increase to the emphasis placed on PSSA testing by the district. One teacher commented, “It was around that time (2000-2001 school year) that the district really started putting emphasis on the PSSA. They asked that we also emphasize the importance to the students.” Every day the teachers also posted what state standard was being addressed and why. A great deal of time spent at building level meetings was on the topic of the PSSA and

curriculum. Teachers were also attending state level meetings to learn more about the PSSA. Another point brought out in the discussion, that the English department had begun to require students to read twelve novels a year in addition to the novels taught as part of the curriculum. Even though the reading strategies initiative had not begun, there was an emphasis on reading in the building.

Figure 22 was utilized as part of professional development activities. The chart displays the school's adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the area of reading compared to the state AYP. Overall, the eleventh grade students at Grove City are achieving at a higher level than the state average.



*Figure 22* PSSA reading scores versus state AYP.  
Pink = State AYP  
Blue = Grove City AYP

## Summary

The analysis of data for this particular case study was provided in Chapter Four. Through the analysis of the responses of teachers and administrators to open-ended questions gained through interviews it provided the data to look at the school as a whole on the continuum of change. The interview responses were then analyzed according to organizational change frameworks. In addition, this chapter analyzed documents from the study site as well as student achievement scores on the PSSA. In the next chapter, the research questions for the study will be addressed by providing a summary of the findings and lending a connection to the interview questions, and will make recommendations for further research in the area of organizational change as it applies to education.



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The previous chapter of the dissertation focused on organizational change, the initiative instituted, the perceptions of those within the organization, and the evidence presented that supports the topic. The purpose of this chapter is to return to the original research question with a critical reflection and relate findings to existing literature.

The first section of this chapter will provide a summary of the analysis from Chapter 4 regarding teacher and administrator interviews and how they relate to the research questions. Each research question is provided with teacher perspectives provided first followed by administrative view points with relevant literature provided to support the findings throughout both. Conclusions are then presented. Finally, recommendations for future research are presented.

NCLB is a highly recognized acronym in today's public educational arena. Across the state of Pennsylvania, schools are re-evaluating current practice to insure one hundred percent proficiency by the year 2014. High stakes testing is a way of life for educators and students in the twenty-first century. If proficiency is not met to according to standards set by the state, schools will face a progressive system of sanctions. In order to have high achieving students and avoid penalties, schools are analyzing current practice to insure increased student proficiency.

Research has supported that change can take place within an organization if the proper steps are taken (Bridges, 2003; Kotter, 2002; Senge, 1999; Zmuda, et al., 2004). In addition, leadership must set the direction and navigate the journey; without strong

leadership, initiatives will be unsuccessful. It is imperative that principals change the context within which the teachers and students learn (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992). The reading strategy initiative that is central to this study was used to increase student achievement to meet proficiency as specified in NCLB. Hillock (1995) and Bloom's (1976, 1985) research that almost any child can learn given the right opportunity and instruction; giving students the right tools in turn will produce better readers as they will become better learners due to more powerful teaching (Wilhelm, 2001).

Continuous school improvement is a never ending process. The purpose of this case study is to examine the organizational structure of a high school. Specifically, this study is to analyze the change process in response to NCLB and how the implementation of the proposed instructional innovation in a high school impacted PSSA scores. The primary research question that guided this study examined if change in fact did take place and at what level. Additional research questions further explored the concept of change, the implementation of the initiative, and the impact the initiative had on PSSA scores. The research questions were: How has the shared vision of No Child Left Behind most impacted the school? What factors hindered or facilitated changes in organizational activities in response to the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act? Were the perceptions different or paralleling between administrators and teachers in dealing with the shared vision and the plans for change? How have teachers perceived NCLB throughout the past five years regarding the overall organization as well as their personal teaching strategies? How did NCLB have an impact on organizational changes that directly impacted on student achievement? Are teachers and administrators aware of change theory and do they see such a theory as having a positive impact as related to

NCLB? The answers to these research questions provide qualitative data that will permit other public secondary schools within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to assess the value of instituting similar initiatives in order to build greater instructional capacity in order to achieve one hundred percent proficiency by 2014.

### Summary of Research

*Primary Research Question: How has No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Impacted Instructional Strategies in Order to Increase Student Achievement within a High School?*

The primary research question is comprised of three components. The first component of the primary research question examines if a change in instructional practice did occur within the study site. The second part of the question determines what the change looked like. The third part questioned if the changed practice had an influence on PSSA scores.

The responses of teachers and administrators highlighted how teachers' instructional strategies were enhanced through the initiative to have all teachers be teachers of reading. The initiative focused on the implementation of predetermined reading strategies across all content areas and grade levels to improve students' achievement in reading. The administration developed a five year plan to institute the shift in instruction and then selected three coaches that would work well with the teachers in assisting them with classroom implementation. It was simple; reading must be addressed, emphasized, and taught if students are going to become better readers at the secondary level. "Simple plans" work the best (Collins, 2001, p. 177). Teachers began meeting with reading coaches to apply the strategies in their respective courses; they would have a pre-lesson meeting, co-teacher, and then a follow-up after the class. Over

the course of five years, teachers were provided continual support via professional development, literature, and guidance from the coaches. The aim of the program was to provide the students with strategies to attack content area reading with the thought that they would take some ownership in their learning. The concept was to give repeating strategies across all courses. It has been proven in studies that reading achievement of students improves when there is consistency of methods among all classes (Nunnery, Goldfeder, McDonald, Rachor, & Hornbeck, 2004). The thought was that repetition would lead to a learned habit (Wilhelm, 2001). Gardner (1999) affirms the idea that “much of what we teach takes hold through habit” (p. 177). Through the increased utilization of reading skills it was hoped that there would be an increase in student achievement.

The professional development activities were developed around the reading initiative. Administrators wanted to continually build the teachers’ repertoire of strategies while building a community of learners around a common focus. The texts provided each year also provided a reference tool for teachers and a starting point for discussion. Teachers commented that at meetings now there is not as much idle chatter about unrelated topics. Everyone seems focused and is aware of the task at hand.

As teachers began to embrace the use of the strategies in class, walls that had isolated them from one another started to erode. Teachers became excited and proud of what they were witnessing and were eager to share with one another. Words such as collaboration and focused were used repeatedly during the interviews with teachers. The new emerging culture along with improving PSSA scores created a momentum to keep working towards the implementation. Kotter (2002) repeatedly emphasizes the

importance of keeping the momentum moving in a positive direction to sustain a successful change.

The administration had begun the initiative, but as time passed teachers took ownership of the program. Teachers Observing Teachers is a significant example. This program was created to help the teachers along the journey. Teachers were paired and then assigned a time period in which they were to observe one another. The aim of the observation was not to criticize but glean ideas they could take back to their own class in the area of reading. At first, teachers were hesitant about having peers watch them, but once it started it gained momentum. People were excited to share what they were doing and were volunteering to be observed and share. Peer observation was reported as a powerful professional development tool.

Through teacher responses it was communicated that the manner in which the administration had approached this movement was appreciated. It was done in a non-threatening manner, where individuals felt supported and a feeling of “we are in this together” permeated throughout the building. The coaches provided continual support to the teachers by working with them to institute the strategies and engage the students. The responses in teacher interviews overwhelmingly displayed the support the coaches provided to the staff. The fact that the coaches were part of the faculty was instrumental as there was a good relationship already established. This study affirmed Danielson’s (2002) belief that most expertise a school will need is found within their own building. The principal rolled out the initiative in stages as not to overwhelm anyone. In addition, there was importance placed on the initiative from the top down. The staff felt the value the administration had placed on the initiative. When teachers were observed during this

time, the principal wanted to see them utilizing a reading strategy. This reinforced the importance of the strategies.

The teachers and the administration indicated through their responses that instructional practices had changed throughout the school. Teachers had made the shift and started using the reading strategies across all content areas. Thus, giving attention to Smoker's (2006) belief that students benefit from being a good reader in every subject. Both groups, teachers and administrators, believe the use of the strategies has increased student skill level and in turn increased student achievement scores on the reading section of the PSSA.

*Research Question Number One: How has the Shared Vision of No Child Left Behind  
Most Impacted the School?*

*Teacher Perspective*

No Child Left Behind has impacted all schools. NCLB has forced schools to evaluate current instructional practice to meet one hundred percent proficiency by 2014. This in turn has influenced the vision of schools. The status quo is no longer acceptable; schools must consistently re-evaluate work to achieve higher and higher expectations. In this age of accountability teaching is no longer an individual activity, but a collective effort (Elmore and City, 2007).

Teachers commented on how NCLB has not only changed their instructional practices, but has added a whole new feeling of accountability that they had not experienced before the enactment. A teacher commented, "NLCB has made standards based education the norm. Everything is now measurable."

The responses of teachers indicated that NCLB has impacted the vision of the school. The presence of the government is felt in the classroom through academic standards and examinations (Spring, 2005). Schools are now driven by data. It was indicated in the interviews that PSSA scores became the priority of all teachers, regardless of content area or grade level. Before this time, teachers at the eleventh grade level in the areas of mathematics and English carried the brunt of the responsibility, since that is the grade level in which students are assessed. With the advent of the reading strategies across the curriculum, this changed. The vision was for the entire school and was a collective responsibility. For a program to be successful it must a coordinated effort and responsibility of all teachers (Danielson, 2002). As one teacher stated, “Before this time we were not as united when it came to a theme for student success. It was an excellent idea to get a common theme (reading strategies) that we are all on this together. We got on the same page.”

All agreed that NCLB has specifically impacted each of them in the way they approach reading in their respective classrooms and their instruction in general. One teacher pointed out, “It (NCLB) has changed how we teach. It has made us focus on skills that students need, such as reading, writing, and math.” The respondents stated that they had always done these things, but now because of testing it is a much more concentrated effort amongst everyone. Another faculty member states, “While many are quick to criticize NCLB, I think it is imperative to acknowledge its unquestionable success in recognizing a need for improvement and bringing crucial issues to the agenda.” The new emphasis on student achievement drives the school now. Not just in terms of PSSA scores, but high student achievement in general. As one teacher puts it, “It (the reading

strategies) has moved us up Bloom's Taxonomy...we now focus on concepts past comprehension, we are now teaching skills for analysis and interpretation." NCLB has forced those in educate to evaluate current practice to provide students with the necessary tools to be successful.

The last way in which the shared vision of the school has been impacted by NCLB is by providing focus. One teacher said, "It has focused teaching without sacrificing anything." Some of the teachers also talked about focus in terms of common language, one teacher commented how terminology is the same amongst everyone. A simple example was provided, "Everyone in the building now uses the word thesis. Before this time some would use topic or arguable point when assigning a paper. Now there is a common vocabulary." Meetings and professional development activities are now more focused in terms of topics as well. "Nothing is done in isolation. Things are more integrated, like a piece of fabric it is woven."

#### Administrative Perspective

The administration clearly had a vision of where they wanted the school to go. Each felt the pressure from the state of increased student achievement on the PSSA. It was mentioned that the goal was always to produce high achieving students; however, now there is a sense of pressure on schools that have emerged in the twenty-first century (Zimmerman, 2005). Standards, accountability, and high stakes testing are a way of life for schools. The administration understood that the vision must become more specific and tailored to the needs of the students in the school. Loose generalities do not provide a clear picture of what needs to be accomplished.



The administration indicated that the vision for the school had always been to equip students for their futures, but with the advent of NCLB it became more concentrated on student achievement scores. Kotter (2002) emphasizes that the right vision must be in place for transformation to take place. The institution of reading strategies was initiated to accomplish just that. It was understood by the administration that changes must go beyond the standards set forth by the state and high stakes testing and focus on what happens in the school on a daily basis (Gordon, 2006). Any change of this type, must start with the right vision. The administration took time and developed a five year plan which started with the vision for the school as well as the entire district.

In the beginning the administrators reported that they did feel a little resistance from the teachers, but after time the teachers understood and embraced the ideas presented to them. As the building principal commented, "...the teachers grew into the vision when they were able to see it grow into the academic success of the students." They also indicated that they realized that this had to be a gradual process with the right people leading the way. The right people must be on the bus in the right seats to have success (Collins, 2001). The principal goes on to say, "The process was one of complete staff involvement. There were no outside presenters to model or teach the strategies. We used teacher leaders within the English department to pair up with content area teachers." Leadership provides the blueprint for the vision of the school (Danielson, 2002).

*Research Question Number Two: What Factors Hindered or Facilitated Changes in Organizational Activities in Response to the Mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act?*

Teacher Perspective

The responses of the teachers and the administration about factors that hindered or facilitated changes in the institution of the reading strategies were similar. Regardless of position within the district, the same types of responses arose from this question. Overall, there were not many items that hindered the implementation of the reading strategies: there was one from the teacher perspective and one from the administrative perspective. There were a number of factors mentioned that helped the implementation process.

The number one issue that arose repeatedly during the interviews was time. There is never enough time to accomplish everything. This was the standpoint of the teachers and the administration. Many commented that each year they feel there are more responsibilities placed upon them, especially due to NCLB. As put by one faculty member, "I think the only factor that has impeded the reading strategies is time. My only struggle and complaint is that deep, meaningful reading that enriches student learning often comes at the cost of another learning objective. I feel time constraints to teach my entire course." Another teacher adds, "More time was needed, but I don't know where it would have come from. There is just not enough time in the day." It was not that teachers were not willing to utilize the strategies, but they wanted to be able to do it well. The underlying theme that came through in the responses is the amount of pressure teachers feel due to NCLB to insure student success is great.

Even though time was an obstacle that could have helped the initiative, there were numerous items that facilitated the smooth implementation. The aspect that was

overwhelmingly brought up was the coaches. It was reported throughout the interview process that the coaches made the initiative non-threatening and were always there to answer questions, as was seen through the following comment, “it wasn’t like the administration came in and said do this, but we were given the tools, the support, and the practice to do it.” The teachers appreciated the selection of coaches, as one teacher stated, “The fact that the principal got a core group of teachers within our building was great...The coaches helped tremendously, they eased our anxiety.” Another teacher reported, “I found the coach stuff to be the most refreshing...because, it was people from our own English department and I like that I knew them and could touch base with them.” People must feel comfortable in order to change behavior. Kotter (2002) states the most crucial stage in any change is changing people’s behavior; all too often leaders forget about the emotions of their members. Hall and Hord’s (2001) model enabled this research to specifically focus on this element.

A number of staff commented that they found the focus provided throughout the process as quite beneficial. Focus was provided in a myriad of ways. First, there was a great deal of professional development provided to the staff to support the effort. There was now a focus to meetings. As shown through documents on pages 88 and 89, 62 hours were devoted solely to this effort over a five year period. In addition, there were other professional development activities related to it, such as student achievement in other areas that are assessed. There was continual support given by the administration. As one teacher said, “It was not one of those one shot wonders where someone comes and speaks for a few hours and then you never hear about the topic again.” Everything was integrated around student achievement.

Focus was also provided by the literature provided over the five year period. Each year every staff member received a book on the subject. The books were discussed throughout the school year at different building level meetings and served as a reference tool. In addition to the books, the staff was provided with articles as well. The literature was provided by the building not only by the building principal, but also the superintendent. Again, this demonstrated a united effort that existed well outside the walls of the high school.

Classroom observations were another manner in which the strategies provided a clear focus. The principal at the time of the initiative explained the new observation procedures in which when a teacher was observed they must be utilizing one of the pre-determined reading strategies. One teacher commented, “It was part of classroom observations by the principal. We were being graded on what the kids were being graded on. It could have been stressful, but wasn’t. We felt supported. I never felt threatened.” That theme was echoed again and again in teacher interviews. Many indicated that helped in the implementation, that it was not threatening; but rather, a team effort. When there is value placed upon something by the administration, this is one more sign to the members of the importance and this assisted in the implementation of reading strategies throughout the building.

The variety of strategies available and that the fact that it was done across all curricular areas were other factors mentioned during interviews that proved to be beneficial. Teachers were not pigeon-holed into just a few strategies, but were introduced to new strategies each semester. Fear and anxiety are normal part of any change effort, but there are steps that can be taken to alleviate these emotions (Senge, 1999). “He (the

principal) was very methodical in the implementation and did not try to do everything all at once.” The slow integration eased anxiety of the staff. If the proper steps are taken and everything is not done at once, introducing reading across the curriculum does not have to be overwhelming (Silverman, 2006). A teacher pointed out, “It wasn’t done in isolation. It was done in all subject areas.” Another reported, “It became a group effort...we did not feel alone.” This helped build the idea of collegiality; there was a sense of fairness and equality.

#### Administrative Perspective

Even though a majority of the views to this question were similar amongst teachers and administrators, there was a hindrance talked about only by the administrative team. They recognized the amount of feedback provided to the staff was not adequate. One administrator believed that more continual feedback was needed; however, not one faculty member indicated this need. In fact, through responses it was shown that they felt they were given feedback through the coaches and the classroom observations conducted by the building principal. One administrator commented that more feedback should have been given; however, it was believed the staff was receiving feedback from the coaches and the principal did not want to overwhelm them with too many responses. Danielson (2002) points out that anyone in the building can be a leader and take on leadership roles. Essentially, the principal had assigned teacher leadership roles to the coaches.

After creating the need for change, the second step is building the guiding team (Kotter, 2002). The administrative team realized the expertise amongst the staff and capitalized upon that. The principal stated that he purposefully chose the three coaches

because of their talents. Each of the teachers selected as a coach were well versed in reading, worked well with others, and have proven themselves in the past as teacher leaders. The principal stated, “The most beneficial step taken was using the expertise we have in the building. Because of this trust, the relationships, and credibility already earned the implementation went much smoother.” Kotter (2002) stresses the importance in selecting the right guiding team in a change effort. He asserts the team must be powerful enough to guide the rest of the organization and assist in buy-in from the group while also being able to empower others. The coaches set the tone for the entire building.

The administrators reported that they knew the teachers needed to feel competent in the strategies to utilize them at a high degree. They purposely mapped out professional development activities throughout each school year to accomplish this. In addition, a text was purchased for each teacher in the area of reading each school year. The last piece of the puzzle was Teachers Observing Teachers. These programs did much more than break the isolation barrier; it opened communication and provided a wealth of ideas to the staff. Through such exercises all would improve; “weak teachers would become better and good teachers would become excellent” (Dyrli, 2007, p. 41). After all, student achievement will not improve, if instruction does not do the same (Schmoker, 2006).

An additional aspect added by the administration was the willingness of the staff throughout the entire initiative. As one coach said, “The staff’s willingness to work with us definitely facilitated the process.” All of the steps listed previously as facilitators helped to build the willingness amongst the staff. The concepts of collegiality, continuous improvement, and accountability can only be created through a new way of thinking in

schools (Zmuda, et al., 2004). Success can be seen when one becomes an active participant within a group of colleagues (Barth, 2005).

*Research Question Number Three: Were the Perceptions Different or Parallel Between Administrators and Teachers in Dealing with the Shared Vision and the Plans for Change?*

**Teacher Perspective**

The responses provided by both teachers and administrators displayed that there was a parallel between each of their perceptions regarding the shared vision and the plans for change. If there was not a shared vision, the school would not be a successful one. After all, student achievement is “a product of a program and the school’s effort around the program” (Zmuda, et al., 2004, p. 180).

The first step was clearly communicating and articulating the vision to the teachers so that it would become a shared vision. Through teacher responses it was indicated that teachers bought into this vision, as one teacher stated, “My impression it (NCLB) has forced everyone to evaluate what they are doing. This evaluation has forced us to change things to insure that students do well on the PSSA.”

The evidence ascertained during the interviews among teachers and administrators alike were in complete agreement. All twelve teachers interviewed responded with the same vision statement for the building; there was one hundred percent agreement. The vision was instituted and communicated to the stakeholders in the building; the administration also supported and emphasized the importance of the vision through professional development, the programs, and classroom observations. Everything in the school must be aligned around the same purpose (Elmore & City, 2007). All

teacher responses in the area of shared vision were coded in the impact phase in regards to Hall and Hord's stages of concern demonstrating that the staff had moved quite far on the change continuum; this indicated that there was an understood vision throughout the school building. Zmuda, Kuklis, and Kline (2004) affirm that educational organizations must move from random to systems thinking to be successful in the era of NCLB; members must embrace collective autonomy to close the gaps between current reality and the shared vision, and embrace collective accountability in establishing the responsibility.

Each teacher interviewed provided similar responses when asked about the school's shared vision. If there is not a shared vision, one would not be able to communicate buy-in and continue in the pattern of changed behavior to institute a change (Kotter, 2002). The members must know and understand what they are working towards. The core beliefs of the district are communicated by the vision (Zmuda, et al., 2004). All respondents talked about the importance of PSSA scores and student achievement.

The high degree of buy-in by the teachers indicated in the responses was an interesting aspect of this question. The teachers attributed the buy-in to four factors. First, the value of the strategies were clearly explained and demonstrated to the staff. This is likened to increasing the urgency or need for the change (Kotter, 2002). If there is not a need, people will not feel compelled to change. Secondly, in the group interviews it was pointed out that they felt well prepared. The strategies were clearly explained and continual support was provided. Next, the teachers indicated the coaches themselves made a difference. There was a positive pre-established relationship between the coaches and the staff. There was no need to build trust. As one experienced teacher said, "The coaches were always there that we could go with questions or get their expertise." The



last reason stated by the teachers was that they did not feel threatened. After the initiative, they claimed that felt more as a cohesive unit working together. They did not feel as isolated. Isolation ensures that new learning seldom leads to changes in practice, in what teachers teach or how well they teach (Schmoker). Zmuda, et al. (2004), point out that a shift must take place in the age of accountability from working in isolation to that of a community of learners.

### Administrative Perspective

After interviewing teachers and administrators regarding the shared vision, it is indicated that they were parallel with one another. The teachers realized what the administrators were trying to do as exhibited in the following response, “We knew it was the principal’s vision to improve reading. Kids have to be able to read well. He made it his focus.” The data concerning student achievement provided the impetus for change for everyone. It increased the urgency to initiate reform and set the stage to build buy-in (Kotter, 2002).

The administrators realized the deficiencies in the present curriculum to meet the needs of the students. As one member of the administrative team stated, “Reading is critical in high schools. In most districts there is a good reading program until students hit the secondary level. It fizzles out.” It was known that reading is a critical skill needed for success in every subject area as well as on the PSSA. With that in mind, reading needed to be a top priority. Skilled readers are produced when they are taught effective reading strategies (Silverman, 2006). An administrator reported, “With NCLB everything is transparent. “When you start publishing scores nobody wants to be at the bottom.”

There were indicators in teacher responses that they realized the plan, the administrators made this a clear emphasis throughout the building to teachers and students alike. In order to be successful, there must be an implicit sense of what is valued (Danielson, 2002). This emphasis reinforced the shared vision amongst the stakeholders. There is a direct relationship between teacher engagement and student performance (Gordon, 2006). It is collaboration between the two parties. There needs to be the same sense of collaboration between teachers and administration. Instructional quality will not improve until there principals and teachers work cooperatively with one another (Schmoker, 2006).

The principal deliberately designed a professional development plan along with appropriate resources to support the vision and the implementation of the plan for change. He realized the needs of the teachers; the need to feel supported and not overwhelmed (Kotter, 2002). It was evident that the shift did not happen over night, but as the principal witnessed, “teachers grew into the vision.” He indicated that he realized the need for a gradual implementation to have a shared vision. “Change is a multi-step process that creates power and motivation sufficient to overwhelm all the sources of inertia” (Kotter, 1996, p. 20).

All the faculty members now had a blueprint for curriculum within the building or as the principal stated, “It has provided a road map for instruction.” It brought the faculty and entire staff to the same page; they are now a more focused and united group...a community of learners. Little (1990, p. 520) affirms this notion, “...collective effort and intelligence are the most power force for improvement – more powerful than ‘even the most knowledgeable individuals working alone’” (as stated in Schmoker, 2006, p. 111).

*Research Question Number Four: How have Teachers Perceived NCLB Throughout the Past Five Years Regarding the Overall Organization as well as Their Personal Teaching Strategies?*

**Teacher Perspective**

NCLB has impacted every school and every teacher to some extent. At no other time in history, has the government had such a presence in public education. Schools are losing local autonomy, so it would be hard to imagine not being impacted by the legislation.

“I have been in education for over 25 years. At no other time has the level of accountability been there.” This teacher’s comment summarizes the majority of teacher remarks about NCLB over the past five years. Schlechty (2001) advocates accountability for improvement in student learning should “reflect the principle of collective accountability” (as stated in Zmuda, et al., 2004, p. 177). Another teachers adds, “When you look at scores you know how you are doing and how your peers are doing. NCLB has forced us to be accountable.” Everyone is accountable, teachers and principals alike. Although some may look at this in a negative manner, in the responses the teachers gave they thought this was a positive effect of the legislation on education. Data can provide a powerful impetus for fostering an intrinsic desire to improve (Zmuda, et al., 2004). It was noted by a staff member that all too often teachers are quick to criticize the law, but one must also acknowledge how it has forced us to evaluate practice in order to improve.

Before NCLB, many teachers felt they worked alone within their classrooms. The legislation has changed all of that by forcing schools to change; isolation must end in order to see academic gains (Schmoker, 2006). It was commented that the work at the

school is now a cooperative effort. There is a focus to everything that is done. It is a collective effort to build a competent system, realize the shared vision, and accomplish the desired outcomes (Zmuda, et. al., 2004). An overwhelming number of the teachers now have a feeling of community has been one of the greatest benefits of the enactment of NCLB.

Another shift in the past few years is the concept of assessment. The way in which teachers develop and administer tests has changed. Many commented on the use of standardized tests now given throughout the school year, such as 4Sight to monitor student achievement and adjust instruction. Teachers also responded that a testing has evolved, as seen in the following, “I work hard to ask the same sort of questions the students confront of the PSSA test...I am modeling more of my assessments after standardized tests.” Teachers want the students to feel comfortable when taking standardized tests. Test questions have also altered so that answers provide the teachers with what the student knows. “...there’s been a similar shift from assessing content to assessing skills...students do not need to remember every detail from a story, but they had better have a firm grasp of figurative language, alliteration, inference, etc. These are the real skills that they will bring to any text they encounter in the future.” Tests now indicate the depth of each student’s problem solving capacity and what skills they have attained.

Furthermore, the use of test results has been revolutionized. Tests are no longer just to provide a grade to students. Teachers are now using assessment to modify instruction. It provides a guide on how instruction needs to be adjusted; it is an instructional tool. This use of data is critical for improvement (Fullan, 2003a). It is just

one more piece of data now available. Once goals are met, the bar must be raised yet again (Blankenstein, 2004). While the value of assessment is noticeable, there were a few comments to the contrary. The new priority on test scores is unnerving. One teacher put it, "...lots of measuring the pig, less feeding the pig." The amount of data can be overwhelming and if it is not used to improve, what is the purpose.

The last major shift in instruction at the school has naturally been the use of reading strategies by teachers. This is not a new concept to English teachers, but it was a new way of thinking for other curricular areas. "I now use reading strategies in my course...I do believe they help my students with the text." Teachers see the benefit of the strategies on the students. People must see how changes in instruction translate into results (Senge, 1999). If there are benefits, people see the value. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) observe, "People are willing to make sacrifices if they see the reason why...people need to know the stakes are worth it" (as stated in Fullan, 2003a, p. 30).

#### Administrative Perspective

The aim of this research question was to gain insight into the teacher perception of the school and their own instructional practice as it has been impacted by NCLB. With that in mind, the administrative viewpoint is just that. It is interesting to have an insight into how the administrators perceive the teacher perceptions. They too commented on the same topics as teachers, such as focus and accountability, and they had additional insights.

The major theme that emerged from administrative responses was the amount of exposure teachers have now to information. The school is rich with data that is available

at the touch of a button. Schmoker (1996) states, “that data are ‘sign posts’ on the road to continuous improvement” (as stated in Zmuda, et al., 2004, p. 87). Administrators believe that teachers are now using the data to adjust instruction in order to improve student achievement and close the gaps. Where some teachers saw this as overwhelming, the administration can see only the positive aspects of data.

Information also included the reading strategies teachers have been introduced to as a result NCLB. This in turn created a learning community within the school. The principal commented that the staff had always worked well together, but now it is at a more professional level. “There is a great deal of sharing that takes place at a collegial level.” It is not a surface level collegiality, but the teachers now focus on issues related to teaching and learning. The principal remarked that there is not much unrelated chatter at meetings now between teachers; they are more eager to get down to the business at hand. This is a clear indicator of a change in the culture of the building (Blankstein, 2004).

*Research Question Number Five: How did NCLB have an Impact on Organizational Changes that Directly Impacted on Student Achievement?*

**Teacher Perspective**

Teachers at the school believed that they have had an impact on student PSSA scores due to the instructional change made concerning the use of reading strategies. Changes would not have been made as quickly if the need would not have arisen out the standards set forth in NCLB.

Due to the use of the reading strategies, the staff felt they had made adjustments to the curriculum in which provided the knowledge and skills to the students in order for them to be successful on the state assessment. The staff along with the administration

spent a great deal of time aligning standards into the curriculum. In addition, to a viable curriculum, the reading strategies taught to the students provided the students with the skills needed to be successful. One teacher said, “Good teaching ought to lead to good scores.” Teachers realized that even though the initiative was proposed to improve PSSA scores, “the ability to read critically is an effective practical tool.”

It was recognized by one teacher that due to the changes made throughout the school, attitudes of the staff changed as well. The whole approach to testing transformed from a topic of dread to one of excitement. “I believe my attitude toward the testing process is somewhat contagious.” As scores improved teachers become more positive and wanted to see the trend continue in an upward movement. Teachers also commented that they sensed a more positive attitude from the students as well. When there is success individuals are more willing to try new ideas and work with one another (Senge, 1999). A new attitude permeated throughout the building.

#### Administrative Perspective

The administration was reluctant to take any of the credit for the success of students on the PSSA. They believed that organizational changes that were made had helped tremendously, but the credit was given to the teachers and the students. As it was stated, “All the teachers impact PSSA scores across every curricular area and in every building. It is a building process and we are all in this together. By focusing instruction and strategies we see students scoring higher on the PSSA and overall academic achievement.”

Even though the administration gave the kudos to others, it was their forward thinking that created and initiated the initiative. Fullan (2003) espouses that it is the

responsibility of those leading any organization to develop its members to overcome issues and provide support to maintain forward progress (as stated in Zimmerman, 2005). It was pointed out through the interviews that the leadership in the district approached the plan in a non-threatening manner, provided focus and emphasis, and supported the members throughout the process. In any transformation the success is based 90% upon the leader (Kotter, 1996). This is factor in the successful implementation of the reading strategies that the administration looked more at the efforts of the teachers than themselves. Real leadership builds capacity and confidence in others (Kanter, 2005). The administration got the ball rolling, but then the teachers took ownership to sustain the successful implementation.

*Research Question Number Six: Are Teachers and Administrators Aware of Change Theory and Do They See such a Theory as Having a Positive Impact as Related to NCLB?*

#### Teacher Perspective

The teachers indicated through their responses that understood that the building in general as well as their own practice had changed. Furthermore, they realized that this was the vision set for the school by the administration as well as some of the steps the principal took to insure success; however, not one teacher used any terminology associated with any change theory.

Elements of effective change theory were alluded to in interviews, but that was due to the fact the teachers saw the benefit of certain steps taken, such as coach selection or the choice of professional development activities. Even though they did not refer to any change theory, teachers did perceive the changes that had made related to NCLB as



positive in nature. Overall, teacher responses to the interview questions reflect that the staff as a whole has moved past the initial stages of concern as the majority of the responses were at the task or impact phase on Hall and Hord's Stages of Concern.

Teachers looked past the increased PSSA scores, and discussed constructive impacts made due to change. Teachers commented on a more cohesive and focused environment due to the changes made in response to NCLB. The reading strategies brought everyone together in terms of collaboration, because everyone was working on the same items together. Teachers took ownership and cultivated a positive and productive environment. Another positive effect of the changes was that reading permeated throughout the school. Not only were teachers emphasizing it, but students were reading more as well. One teacher affirmed this by saying, "There has been a dramatically positive impact on reading...More students are reading period."

Even though change theory was not discussed specifically by teachers, it was indicated through their responses of the positive changes made throughout the school at all levels due to NCLB. Many times those in education look at the mandates set forth in NCLB as obtrusive, but the teachers at this study site realized many of the benefits that have arisen out of the legislation.

#### Administrative Perspective

Due to the educational background and nature of their positions, the administrators had knowledge of change theorists and theories. It was shown in their responses that the whole approach to the reading strategies was based on what has worked well as seen through literature and experience.

The plan to try employ reading strategies across the curriculum took extensive planning. It seemed as though they had understood the mindset of the staff and took these characteristics into consideration. PSSA scores and the standard of proficiency set forth in NCLB increased the need for change. After the plan was created, the next step was to implement. The selection of the coaches was critical as they helped to set the tone. The principal could have gone outside the district and found individuals with extensive reading backgrounds, but they saw the value in selection coaches from within. Furthermore, the process was slow and gradual as not to overwhelm the teachers. This also allowed time to celebrate success at any level which in turn built momentum and confidence. The continual support through literature and professional development activities as well as the ease of accessing the coaches kept the initiative moving forward. Teachers felt supported. The last major piece of the plan was to emphasize the importance of the strategies. This was displayed through all of the items listed above and in the observations done by the principal. The principal wanted to observe everyone use a strategy at least once.

The proposed timeline in this educational initiative was not far removed from the steps in Kotter's *The Heart of Change* (2002) for creating changed behavior within an organization. The principal did not act alone; he relied on the expertise from the district level administrators as well. It was a cohesive effort from the top down. This study affirms that beliefs regarding change in the business world are useful and appropriate to the educational world; change is change.

## Conclusions

Researchers have studied organizational change as it impacts educational organizations (Kotter, 1996, 2002; Senge, 1999; Zmuda, et al., 2004). They found that when the appropriate steps are instituted members of the organization are less reluctant to the idea of change. Even though fear and anxiety are unavoidable, there are steps that can be taken to alleviate these emotions, encourage buy-in and sustain the proposed change. Change is vital in today's schools to insure improvement as schools have responded to NCLB by analyzing current practice in order to improve student achievement..

This study concluded that teachers' instructional practices were altered in order to meet the demands set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Organizational change, leadership, and student learning all played a role in the successful implementation of the reading initiative. The use of teachers within the building as the reading coaches was viewed as significantly impacting the successful implementation of the reading strategies across the curriculum by both the teachers and the administrators. Additional factors that facilitated the successful implementation were the focus and support provided by the administration. There should be an implicit sense of what is valued (Danielson, 2002). Teachers felt less isolated; there was a great deal of communication and collaboration occurring due to the implementation of the reading program. There was now a much greater sense of purpose to professional development.

The school in this study built its change effort around the premise that students need to be taught the skills to learn, to think, to write, and to read; students must have a strong foundation and be able to utilize reading skills and construct their own meaning (Wilhelm, 2001). "Academic or learned intelligence can be directly enhanced by

deepening the experiential base of students indirectly enhanced by a combined program of wide reading..." (Marzano, 2003, p. 143). Teachers provided the instruction and practice on each reading strategy, but it was the student who needed ownership of the strategy and utilizes it. By providing instruction on the strategy and then repeated practice in all classes, students would become competent and use the strategies almost as second nature.

The results at this particular high school pointed out that the use of reading strategies across the curriculum at the secondary level should continue to be studied and improved upon. It has been shown that past practice in American education is spent dispensing information, rather than providing students with the tools to read efficiently, problem solve and make meaning (Wilhelm, 2001). Academic intelligence or what some call learned intelligence can be developed in a program that specifically deals with wide reading (Marzano, 2003).

There was considerable evidence that the purpose of increasing student achievement was successful through adjustments in instruction. "Skilled readers emerge from classrooms where effective reading strategies in specific content areas are taught and practiced" (Silverman, 2006, p. 71). The use of coaches and professional development activities to alter instruction was instrumental. Furthermore, the gradual implementation, focused and continual professional development and the reading coaches cultivated the right environment for a successful change in instructional practice to occur at the school in this area. The culture of an organization influences all that transpires within its walls. In order to make alterations to the culture, principals need to promote organizational learning by identifying the causes of poor achievement and making

systematic adjustments to instruction (Thornton, et al., 2004). Cultural change is accomplished when intentional leadership is exercised (DuFour, 2007).

Both the administrators and teachers believe that implementation of reading strategies across all curricular areas did positively impact the increased achievement of the students on reading PSSA scores. Although other factors could have also played a role, they believed that the collective effort was a major contributor. Collegiality, continuous improvement, and accountability demand a new way of thinking in schools” (Zmuda, et al., 2004). “Reading instruction is a responsibility shared by all teachers, regardless of level or content area...” (Silverman, 2006, p. 71).

This study indicates that by focusing on the concepts of organizational change that instruction can be improved in the area of reading at the secondary level to improve student achievement. One aim of this study is to outline successful steps that were taken and needed for a successful change. In order for there to be a successful and sustained change, there needs to be strong leadership at the helm (Fullan 2003b, Heifetz,& Linsky, 2002; Senge, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992).

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Case study research does present certain limitations; as in this study examines only one high school’s journey to improve student achievement through the implementation of a reading initiative across the curriculum. Schools across the Commonwealth are undoubtedly evaluating current programs and instruction to improve PSSA scores. It is the responsibility of the reader to examine the results of this study and conclude if the specific initiative fulfilled the needs of a reform initiative to influence a

change in teacher instructional practices and student achievement. There were additional areas that presented themselves as areas of further study.

Other secondary schools that feel the pressure and constraints to meet one hundred percent proficiency by 2014 might take principles from this study regarding organizational change in relation to instructional practice in any of the assessed academic areas. Schools could utilize similar research questions in this study to gain teacher perspective on the concept and process of change.

An additional area of potential study that resulted from this particular study was the concept of collaboration throughout the entire district; administrators need to provide the opportunity to make external connections, or outside the building. It was indicated in responses to question five that there has been plenty of occasions to make internal connections. Teachers felt it necessary to have time to collaborate with the teachers in grades below them in the elementary and middle schools. The need to understand what other buildings are doing in the area reading would assist the high school faculty.

Another area recommended for prospective study is the strong sentiments that emerged regarding Teachers Observing Teachers program and the use of such programs to improve instruction. This program was a powerful component of the professional development activities in the building. Many teachers are isolated by the nature of the profession. It appeared this program broke down any isolating barriers and provided a great opportunity for teachers to share and collaborate.

The last area that emerged for potential study was the use of coaching initiatives to institute changed practice in schools. The use of coaching can assist in overcoming many obstacles that are typically associated with change, such as fear and anxiety.

## Summary

With the advent of the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, No Child Left Behind, schools of the twenty-first century are transforming in order to meet the expected standards of proficiency set forth in the legislation. This qualitative study attempted to illuminate organizational change through interviews, documents, and PSSA scores within one secondary school. Theories of organizational change, leadership, and learning were related to shifts in instructional practice in relation to reading. It was the aim of this study to highlight change in order to produce higher achieving students in order to meet AYP and share the information with schools across the state facing the same challenges.

School improvement is necessary. Today's schools must make a shift in educational philosophy and become systems thinking, data-driven, a community of learners, and take collective accountability (Zmuda, et al., 2004). By doing so the school the gaps and becomes a competent system. This new phase of education which centers on accountability is an opportunity not a problem.

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## Appendix A

### Purpose of the Study for Teachers

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Phone (724)679-7006

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to describe the change process in response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The study will specifically examine whether NCLB has had an impact on instructional strategies. The second goal is to determine if any changes that occurred impacted PSSA reading scores. For those reasons I will be interviewing high school teachers and select administrators and asking them to participate in two semi structured interview. If you are willing to participate, the interview will focus on how your instructional strategies as a high school teacher have been impacted by NCLB. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study, nor are there any direct benefits to you. This is an entirely anonymous interview, so your responses will not be identifiable in any way. All responses are confidential and will be kept under lock and key. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the project at any time. This study will be conducted by Rae Lin Howard, and she can be reached at (724)679-7006.

## Appendix B

### Purpose of the Study for Administrators

Rae Lin Howard  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Phone (724)679-7006

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to describe the change process in response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The study will specifically examine whether NCLB has had an impact on instructional strategies. The second goal is to determine if any changes that occurred impacted PSSA reading scores. For those reasons I will be interviewing high school teachers and select administrators and asking them to participate in two semi structured interview. If you are willing to participate, the interview will focus on how your instructional strategies as a high school teacher have been impacted by NCLB. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study, nor are there any direct benefits to you. This is an entirely anonymous interview, so your responses will not be identifiable in any way. Due to the size of the school district it would be foreseeable that people may be able to discern who you are due to your position. If this is not an issue for you, I hope you consider participation. All responses are confidential and will be kept under lock and key. However, the name of the high school is mentioned in the study and the years the study was conducted. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the project at any time. This study will be conducted by Rae Lin Howard, and she can be reached at (724)679-7006.

Appendix C

## Teachers Observing Teachers Schedule 2006-2007

Period	Teacher	Observes	Teacher	Month
2 <sup>nd</sup>	A	Observes	C	September
3 <sup>rd</sup>	B	Observes	OO	September
7 <sup>th</sup>	C	Observes	B	September
1 <sup>st</sup>	D	Observes	A	September
3 <sup>rd</sup>	E	Observes	OO	September
1 <sup>st</sup>	F	Observes	P	September
7 <sup>th</sup>	G	Observes	O	September
7 <sup>th</sup>	H	Observes	Q	October
8 <sup>th</sup>	I	Observes	PP	October
8 <sup>th</sup>	J	Observes	X	October
8 <sup>th</sup>	K	Observes	V	October
1 <sup>st</sup>	L	Observes	T	October
8 <sup>th</sup>	M	Observes	OO	October
6 <sup>th</sup>	N	Observes	QQ	November
5 <sup>th</sup>	O	Observes	X	November
7 <sup>th</sup>	P	Observes	Y	November
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Q	Observes	EE	November
2 <sup>nd</sup>	R	Observes	RR	November
8 <sup>th</sup>	S	Observes	FF	November
8 <sup>th</sup>	T	Observes	CC	November
8 <sup>th</sup>	U	Observes	DD	November
1 <sup>st</sup>	V	Observes	II	December
8 <sup>th</sup>	W	Observes	SS	December
6 <sup>th</sup>	X	Observes	GG	December
5 <sup>th</sup>	Y	Observes	LL	December
7 <sup>th</sup>	Z	Observes	HH	December
3 <sup>rd</sup>	AA	Observes	I	December
2 <sup>nd</sup>	BB	Observes	Q	December
1 <sup>st</sup>	CC	Observes	R	December
3 <sup>rd</sup>	DD	Observes	BB	January
1 <sup>st</sup>	EE	Observes	NN	January
7 <sup>th</sup>	FF	Observes	TT	January
7 <sup>th</sup>	GG	Observes	R	January
2 <sup>nd</sup>	HH	Observes	U	January
3 <sup>rd</sup>	II	Observes	J	February
7 <sup>th</sup>	JJ	Observes	AA	February
1 <sup>st</sup>	KK	Observes	OO	February
3 <sup>rd</sup>	LL	Observes	EE	March

2 <sup>nd</sup>	MM	Observes	FF	March
3 <sup>rd</sup>	NN	Observes	X	March
7 <sup>th</sup>	OO	Observes	B	March

## Appendix D

### Interview Questions

1. Describe your perception of the district's vision. Do most teachers' perceive the district's vision the same across the content areas, such as English, math, and science?
  - a. How would you symbolize the district's vision in five words or less?
  - b. How would you describe the principal's vision?
  - c. How would you describe how most teachers perceive the vision?
2. What are the shared beliefs that were identified in the implementation of the reading strategies? Overall, describe how other teachers define student learning?
3. Describe your perceptions of the content of teacher training at the high school over the past five years.
  - a. What did most teachers find beneficial?
  - b. What would have improved the teacher training?
4. Describe the impact of the mandates in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 on the high school.
  - a. Describe the impact on reading.
  - b. Describe the impact on teachers.
5. Describe the term collaboration in regard to opportunities for teacher' to collaborate.
6. Describe the school as you remember it in 2003 and compare it to 2008.
  - a. How would you symbolize the school in 2003?
  - b. How would you symbolize the school in 2008?
7. Describe your beliefs about how students learned five years ago. Have your beliefs about how students learn evolved or changed over the past 5 years?
8. Describe any factors that impeded and/or facilitated the process for implementing the reading strategies.

- a. How was reading emphasized?**
  - b. Have the strategies changed or not changed the school?**
- 9. Describe your current reading strategies? Do they differ from what you were doing 3 years ago? Describe any impact you have seen.**
- 10. Describe how No Child Left Behind affected your professional experiences in regard to your instructional strategies.**
  - a. Describe your strategy for promoting problem solving.**
  - b. Describe your strategy for assessment.**
- 11. Describe how changes in your instructional practice impact the results on PSSA scores.**