

**STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH:
EXPERIENCED TEACHERS COMMENT ON CHANGE EFFECTIVENESS
CHARACTERISTICS**

EILEEN MARGARET CHIVELDAVE WEIR

B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 1988

A Project
Submitted to the Faculty of Education
of the University of Lethbridge
in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF EDUCATION

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

April 2000

Abstract

The project, *Straight from the horse's mouth: Experienced teachers comment on change effectiveness characteristics*, examines the presence or absence of factors which enable or impede the implementation of new primary curriculum. Based on Carney's (1990) research study in Kentucky, this researcher who also teaches at the rural primary school in British Columbia, investigated the presence of Carney's ten change effectiveness characteristics. Research took the form of a case study, basing its results on the interviews conducted with twelve staff members at the school. The staff members spoke of their past experiences of curricular implementation and reflected on the process and professional changes throughout their careers. Hoping to convey a deep understanding of the teachers' dilemma during implementation, the researcher has taken a creative approach and presented information, results and personal reflections in the forms of free verse, prose, drama, questions and illustrations. This study concludes that some degree of Carney's change effectiveness characteristics were present during the implementation process, that collaboration and teamwork were powerful forces in this study situation and that vision was an important aspect to these participants. Some change effectiveness characteristics impacted on some participants more than others: some participants voiced a need for a positive risk-taking environment whereas communication and information were seldom mentioned. Directions for further investigations are suggested.

Dedication

I
truly believe that:
“I am a part of all that I have met.”
(from Ulysses by Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

So
whether I liked it or not
whether I sought it or not,
I am
what I am
because of
the people and experiences
in my life.

So
to the all the people in my life,
past and present,
personal and professional:
“Thank you.
You
have shaped me
into becoming
who
I
am,
eileen
margaret
chiveldave
weir.”

Acknowledgements

I have been truly blest:

Personally,

I have been supported by many friends and close family as I struggled with time and energy to fulfil my intellectual goals.

Professionally,

I have been trusted, supported and encouraged by the living high ideals of dedicated colleagues.

Intellectually,

I have been nurtured, challenged and empowered by teachers who constantly strove to raise the intellectual bar.

To you...

all of you...

Thank you.

All your efforts are
gratefully acknowledged
and greatly appreciated.

emcw

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Introduction

During the past thirty-two years I have been educating young children in the public school system in British Columbia. During that time a wide range of educational philosophy and aligned programs which espoused those philosophies were implemented. I have witnessed varying degrees of successful curricular implementations. Recently this master's program has provided me with the opportunity to study curricular changes; specifically, the factors which would assist in successful implementation.

The research study was conducted in the more traditional way in that I have examined published literature, questioned primary teachers and analyzed their interview transcripts; however, I have chosen to present information in a more creative manner. The project format is unusual in many ways. In its format, this paper reflects the multifaceted yet ambiguous nature of the topic of implementation and change effectiveness characteristics. As this relationship of clarity-confusion is examined from many perceptual positions to gain greater understanding, so, too, questions are posed and suggestions are made. An explanation of my thoughtful choices will help the reader understand my point of view.

Firstly, I view the topic of curricular implementation as a multifaceted general topic; as such, many parts encompass the whole. The perspective of the whole or any of the parts from any of its individual parts would most likely differ. It is through becoming aware of and recognizing these differences, and understanding how they relate to each other and the whole, that one truly develops a deeper understanding of a concept. Thus, this awareness was very important to this study.

This aspect acknowledges that when dealing with human behaviour one can not arbitrarily, unilaterally or rigidly, state absolute values about one aspect without considering the impact or dependence of the other. There are many shades of rightness and wrongness, depending on the perceptions and on the relative positions of those perceptions. This yin/yang-like position of opposites complementing and creating a wholeness also resounded in my creative mind as I attempted to formally describe and delineate the research study. Why should this project be written formally while the right side of the brain was denied expression? How could the wholeness of the thought processes be represented to reflect the wholeness of the study; the creative as well as the

logical?

After much thought I decided that the following intentional methods could represent the perceptual differences. The right side of the brain would ask the emotional questions, possibly pose intuitive explanations, and allow for cerebral leaping. These thoughts would be presented in forms typically deemed right-brained formats: poetry, artwork, dramatic scenarios and literary imagery such as metaphors. The left side of the brain would ask the logical questions, pose rational explanations and insist on a sequential linear progression of thought. These thoughts would be presented in forms deemed typically left-brained formats: formal writing with its close adherence to sequence, format rules, and clean pagination. To assist the reader in these shifting positions I have used various writing techniques: formal and informal styles of writing presented in fonts which portray formality or informality, differing fonts to declare changes of perception, justification of text to declare and parallel the source of brain activity.

My intention is to make the reader stop and think, prompt an awareness of different aspects of the topic and consider the possibilities. By manipulating the text I hope to facilitate a deeper “whole-istic” understanding of the topic. At times the message content may seem to conflict with the format. This dissonance is intentional: which perceptual stance would you, the reader, choose?

Secondly, the use of the horse metaphor presents a perceptual uniqueness and conjures up other images; some subtle and others, obvious. My decision to use the horse image began with the need for a project title and a metaphor to represent this honest, no nonsense body of knowledge shared by a group of experienced and highly professional teachers. I asked myself: “What phrase could I use for a title? What phrase has a regional or universal connotation of common sense, infers practical experience testing theory, and embodies the integrity and diversity of the voices heard? Which voices speak sparingly, thoughtfully and precisely and, thereby, draw attention and elicit respect when they do speak?”

The answer percolated up from my rural roots and the remembered conversations of my childhood: horses! As a child I loved horses. I can visualize my dad and me taking a break from farm work. We frequently passed the time talking about horses. I cannot recall his exact words but the essence of one memory is of my dad saying to me, “The horse is

one of the quietest animals we have on this farm. The chickens seem to be clucking all the time they're awake. The dogs bark at everything that moves. The crows? They're never quiet! But the horse: he's quiet. Because of his size and strength he makes a lot of noise with his hooves but not with his voice. His voice is quiet for the most part. Have you ever wondered about that? Horses quietly go about their work. If they're thirsty they'll drink: if they're hungry they'll graze. But, when a horse uses his voice, it's rare. When a horse's voice issues forth a clear call and the other horses seem to agree, then it's an important message. So, Daughter, if you ever hear a horse's voice, pay attention and learn! It's important." Since then I've always noted the behaviours of farm horses.

Another memory which intensified (for me) the appropriateness of the horse metaphor was our family attendance at community meetings and what happened there. Before these meetings began a cacophony of sound would echo off the walls and across the roomful of seated country folk talking to each other. Then someone would quietly stand: the voices would subside, and the conversation would die. In the respectful silence the individual would begin to speak with confidence and substance. The audience elevated its respect with a recognition of the issue's import by focusing its attention, its willingness to think about and understand the issue. In later references my father could frequently be heard to say, "Straight from the horse's mouth, eh?" and look straight at me.

As this study progressed different aspects of the horse metaphor just grew along with it and enriched it. To many western Canadians the horse symbolizes: strength, patience, resourcefulness, common sense and practicality, perseverance, nobility, the personification of the unbroken spirit or the devoted supporter. I am one of these Canadians.

Over the years I have seen these same traits in my fellow teachers. It is with these traits in mind that I present their voices. Let us focus our attention, listen, think about and try to understand the issues of change effectiveness characteristics which these teachers shared openly with me.

Rationale: What? What Have I Ever Done To Deserve This?

What?

What have I ever done to
deserve this??



Here I sit
alone
at the kitchen table
covered by manuals, program guides
and sample lessons
which would sound like Greek
even at the best of times.

Yet here I am
alone
trying to make sense
out of that which
I have read,
re-read,
and re-read yet again;
trying determinedly
to derive meaning
from words which refuse
to recognize and to
ignite my weary synapses.

The overhead light fixture
seems to weaken,
shed less light
and conspires
to camouflage the meaningful secrets
that I search for fruitlessly
and yet
I know
lie hidden somewhere
within these guides.
WHERE IS THAT KEY???

Even the dogs
have forsaken me.
They have chosen
the comfort of their beds
over companionship
and loyalty to me.

Maybe
another cup of coffee
would kick start a meaningful process...
Goodness knows
I've tried just about
everything else.

It's taking so long
for that coffee to brew.

The moonlight
is streaming through the patio doors.
The sky is crystal clear.
The stars are so bright
and seem so near.
And yet
I know
they are millions of miles away!!!
(Seemingly,
just like my comprehension
of this curriculum!)

The sky is studded with
millions of shining points of light!
Yet I feel
no cerebral illumination
within me.

I feel
so insignificant
looking up at them.

Is this program
really
so important
when you think about it
and its place
among all those stars???

I suppose
that this program does have a place.
It has wide research study support.

I suppose
that this program may be better than
that which I have used
with my students
for the last ten years.
Society does progress. Methods of doing things need to
become more effective and responsive to
the more sophisticated students that we work with now.

I suppose
that I could learn how to use
this new program.
I am smart. I want to learn. I want to make things easier
and better for my students. You can teach an old dog new
tricks: it just takes us a little longer.

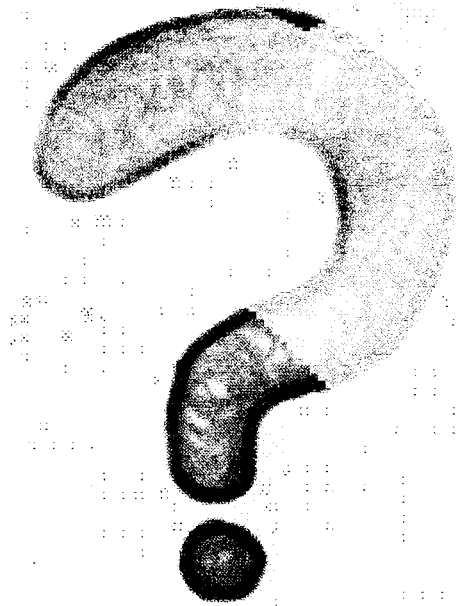
BUT...

How many other teachers
are feeling frustrated
with this
dictated
learning-in-order-to-teach-process
called program implementation???

THERE HAS GOT TO BE A BETTER WAY
for teachers
to learn,
to develop expertise,
and effectively employ
new theories,
new curriculum,
and new instructional practices.

Research Question: How Can Teachers Be Supported?

The question,
then,
is:
How can teachers
be supported
so they can
safely and comfortably
learn,
develop expertise,
and effectively employ
new theories,
new curriculum,
and new instructional practices?



So,
let's answer this question
the logical way...
Let's consult the gurus,
the experts
who have studied
and developed
professional experience
within the field
of curricular implementation,
the ones
who are aware and recognize
the various nuances and impacts
no matter how big
or how small,
the ones
who
offer suggestions,
give advice,
and proffer theories
to us,
the practitioners in the field.
Let's ask
THEM
and
hear what they have to say.
AND THEN,
let's listen
to the field practitioners.
Let's compare
the two.
Will they agree?
Will the theories be
recognized, acknowledged, supported?
Or
will they be
skirted, rejected,
and trampled into the dirt
beneath the hooves
of an angry stampeding herd?

So,
let's begin.
Let's listen to the gurus
and
examine the prevailing winds of research
to determine
just what the signs tell us
about this landscape
of curricular implementation
and change effectiveness characteristics.



Literature Review: Let's Consult the Gurus

Some questions arose as a result of this research question: Which factors does literature purport to be present when successful implementation of new primary curriculum occurs? A literature search revealed a doctoral dissertation by Carney (1994), titled *The Use of Effective Change Characteristics In Implementing Kentucky's Primary Program: A Case Study*. Since Carney courageously and unequivocally stated specific factors, her study immediately necessitated closer examination. That it took place in an elementary school and involved the implementation of primary curriculum made investigating her study very relevant to my research.

Carney's study took place in rural Kentucky in 1993. During her research she conducted twenty-three interviews, reviewed twenty documents, observed in classrooms and attended implementation meetings. Her reference list contains sixty-five sources. It is these that Carney studied, analyzed and on which she based her conclusions.

Carney's study draws three main conclusions.

The first conclusion states that there were ten effectiveness change characteristics evident in her study. They were described as: collaborative leadership which is a type of leadership which involves staff participation and input into decision making; training in the understanding and skills necessary to implement the new curriculum; risk-taking which referred to an environment which promoted taking the risks to learn new skills; teamwork and collaboration which described the mutually supportive non-threatening interaction between members of the group; communication and information system which was depicted as the strategies of networking or exchanging information between the various stakeholders; evaluation and revision were benchmarks, systems or methods of assessing the degree of implementation and making changes based on those results; vision referred to the image or goal of implementation and was shared by the staff; support systems referred to any resource which supported the implementation of that program; planning time describes the time allotted specifically to planning some aspect of program implementation; and recognizing and overcoming barriers refers to the process of analyzing barriers to implementation and resolving the issues.

Carney's second conclusion describes the three levels of impact effectiveness.

According to Carney the characteristic with the greatest impact is collaborative leadership. In her study Carney found that collaborative leadership was provided by the principal, resource teachers (similar to our learning assistant teachers) and other teachers. He did this by empowering them and involving them in staff decisions. He also took an active role in supporting implementation by locating resources and helping resolve any barriers.

At the second impact level of change effectiveness characteristics Carney found the characteristics of risk-taking, collaboration and teamwork, information and communication, evaluation and revision. She felt that the principal empowered the staff in decision-making opportunities and that he facilitated faculty collaboration and teamwork. There was evidence of communication and a general exchange of information between school staffs and parents in the form of newsletters, workshops and meetings. She also saw information impact the process of evaluation and revision which in turn led to a change of the implementation process.

At the third impact level of change effectiveness characteristics Carney found vision, support systems, planning time, and recognizing and overcoming barriers. She explains that the support systems of administration and resource teachers were always available to implementing teachers. She portrayed the implementing teachers as intrinsically motivated and dedicated. They felt their successes with students compensated them for any additional time required to implement the new program. And, with regard to the recognition and resolution of barriers, Carney says: “..the principal played a key role in recognizing barriers, by analyzing test scores, obtaining feedback from staff and parents, and reflecting on the progress of the primary program.” (Carney, 1994, p. 155)

Another voice experienced with the concept of change and reform is Evans (1993). In his article, *The Human Face of Reform*, he does not describe studies to support his concept of reform. Instead he bases his concept of reform on the ideas of the eighteen references which he has listed in his article. Some of these references include Deal (1990), Sizer (1984) and Sergiovanni (1990).

In his opinion Evans conceptualizes reform by stating, “Implementation depends on five dimensions of change: the content of the reform, the faculty’s willingness and capacity to

change, the strength of the school as an organization, support and training and leadership.”
(Evans, 1993, p. 20)

When comparing Carney's and Evans' statements, one can detect areas which support both authors, areas which complement or elaborate one and yet other areas which are unsupported by any of the statements. Evans' reference to "the content of the reform" does not have an equivalent in Carney's list of factors. This seems to be because Carney views the implementation of a curriculum change as change no matter how great that degree of change is. Evans' factor of the "faculty's willingness to change" can be encompassed within Carney's risk-taking, vision, the recognition and resolution of barriers. Evans' "faculty's capacity to change" could refer to teaching style, flexibility or openness of thought as well as training, support systems, planning time, collaboration, risk-taking. Evans' "strength of the school as an organization" infers the sharing of information and communication and teamwork. A strong organization would have strong levels of these elements. It might also have provisions for support systems in which planning and planning time would be included. Evans' statements seem to be less collaborative than Carney's. However, that may be because Evans is dealing with greater generalities. Carney's study is a case study; it is based on research and yields results qualitative in nature. Evans' opinions are based on an analysis of other prominent opinions. Both proponents consider training support and leadership as essential factors. However, it is only Carney who qualifies the leadership as collaborative leadership. Only Carney mentions evaluation and revision as an essential aspect of implementation.

It seems that Carney's list of effective change characteristics appears to be the more appropriate list to research. Carney's list encompasses Evans' but Evans' does not encompass Carney's. Carney's list is more recent and, therefore, more relevant to 1999 practices. As such, I have based my investigation on Carney's study.

Journal articles provided secondary sources with support for some of Carney's ten effective change characteristics.

Evans supports motivation and shared vision as important factors in enabling implementation. He feels that people are uncertain about the change process. If they are uncommitted to the proposed change, no amount of support will create that necessary

commitment. In order to commit to the change individuals must want to achieve the goal and visualize it as attainable.

Evans states:

Teachers are most likely to accept change when it is espoused by someone they trust, its content linked to values they hold important and its target focused and practicable....Because resistance is inevitable, the primary task of managing change is not technical but motivational: to build commitment to innovation among those who must implement it. (Evans, 1993, p. 20)

Thus, Evans lays the responsibilities for motivation and shared vision with authentic leadership which he defines as:

Authentic leaders link what they think, what they seek, and what they do.

They join, in Sergiovanni's terms, "the head, heart, and hand" of leadership. They make their assumptions explicit about such questions as:

Which basic values guide my work?

What motivates teacher performance?

How do I define my role as leader?

What are my goals for this school?

How do my actions demonstrate my values and goals?

Principals whose personal values and aspirations for their schools are consistent, coherent, and reflected in daily behaviour are credible and inspire trust—they are leaders worth following into the uncertainties of change. (Evans, 1993, p. 21)

In this way Evans describes the general importance of the leadership role as an implementation characteristic but he does not insist specifically on collaborative leadership.

Evans also recognized the necessity for curricular support in the form of in service training and skill development for teachers, materials and resources. He also quickly conceded that in situations where curricular implementation was involved the perception seemed to be that the training was never good enough and there were never enough supportive resources.

Risk-taking, and teamwork and collaboration seem to belong together. According to

another observer of change, Wagner says, "Without trust and respect, there is no safe ground for dialogue, and without dialogue and rigorous inquiry, there will be no change" (Wagner, 1998, p. 517).

Wagner further stresses that:

A constructivist approach to change...is based on collaboration rather than on compliance. It is a process of action research and development in which everyone works to understand the problem, engages in discussion to reach agreement on the goal, shares in the responsibility for implementing change, assessing progress, and achieving results. Ultimately, a constructivist change process helps to create and becomes embedded in a new school and district culture that values continuous learning and improvement both for adults and for students. (Wagner, 1998, p. 517)

So, according to Wagner, without risk-taking you won't have teamwork, collaboration or successful implementation. As Wagner mentions assessing progress one assumes it to be synonymous with Carney's recognition of barriers although that is not stated. As well, no emphasis is placed on the resolution of any problems.

Miles and Louis (1990) also support these same enabling factors although they frame them a little differently. They studied five high schools between 1985-1986 and carried out a national survey of one hundred seventy-eight principals whose urban high schools were involved in change. To begin with they speak of five issues which must be present to effect change: a clarity of knowledge, relevance of knowledge, images of the knowledge in action, the will to use the knowledge, and the skill to use the knowledge. They then talk about these issues in conjunction with their study's four topics: the context, vision building, resources and problem coping.

Their context refers to the structural organization and the relationships within it. Their findings showed that change was most successful when there was a high degree of school involvement and staff participation as well as a tendency toward openness and less restrictive management methods. An implementation site which

revealed the least degree of reform was also the site which was most rigidly managed. Their vision building refers to “shared images of what the school should become”. (Miles & Louis, 1990, p. 59) They feel that school staffs can develop these shared images by investing time, energy and patience. They also feel that vision building is a process which requires empowerment.

They also stress the importance of collaboration on vision building:

The basic skills of collaboration are key. Visions can't be shared without direct, joint work on decisions that matter, nor without the ability to support and encourage others in dreaming. Advice: Spend time on team building and on training in group problem solving and decision making. (Miles & Louis, 1990, p. 59)

The necessary resources to which Miles and Louis referred are money and time . They state: “Effective change takes money and time...Most of these funds should go to internal coordination and shared planning...Successful schools also scanned actively for a broad range of resources...that furthered their vision.” (Miles & Louis, 1990, p. 59)

Miles and Louis's final topic is that of problem coping. They state:

The problems arising during school improvement efforts are multiple, pervasive and sometimes nearly intractable...Good problem coping (dealing with problems promptly, actively, and with some depth) is the single biggest determinant of program success...One essential skill is the ability to locate and state problems as natural, even helpful occurrences (“Problems are our friends.”) without blaming anyone, arousing defensiveness, or implying a predetermined solution. (Miles & Louis, 1990, p. 60)

It would seem to me that this topic resonates with Carney's recognition and resolution of barriers and Evans's capacity for change, although that has not been spelled out.

Carney, Evans, and Miles and Louis are mutually supportive in their thinking. As Springfield, Billig, & Davis (1991) discussed program improvement with reference to Chapter One Programs in many of the states in the United States their

credited keys of success included being team centered, having a locally controlled implementation process, team training according to systemic methods and focusing on student learning and student outcomes. Their vision and goals were connected to student learning outcomes. The nature of leadership was not specifically qualified although the reader got the idea it was the kind of leadership which needed to work effectively with teams. Support systems such as materials and resources were not dealt with.

Goldman and O'Shea (1990) describe their improvement changes in *Educational Leadership*. They worked within the Gorham, Maine school system which enrolled two thousand students in four elementary schools, a junior high school and a high school. Faced with difficulties of financial restraints, combined with poor learning results, they instituted a form of collaborative decision making which required goal setting input from all stake holders.

As well, Goldman and O'Shea (1990) state:

...they succeeded in forming a partnership with the University of Southern Maine. The gatherings gave teachers the opportunity to discuss their teaching practices with colleagues from our own system and from other systems connected to the partnership. These meetings emphasized the key questions about reflective practice--what am I doing and why am I doing it? While they might feature a speaker or a reading, these meetings always asked the teachers what they thought. (p. 42)

Goldman and O'Shea attributed their successful educational improvements in Gorham, Maine to good planning and collaborative decision making. Involved in their implementation were: input from all stakeholders, collaborative decision making, and teacher involvement in planning. The long list of achievements seems to range from student achievement to changes in involvement: from teacher involvement to involvement by all stakeholders in the education system.

Cavanagh and Styles (1983) attribute great impact potential to vision. The authors state:

In terms of what people choose to do, the importance of beliefs can be compressed into a cryptic paradigm:

ideas cause beliefs to surface;
beliefs shape attitudes;
attitudes influence decisions;
decisions generate actions;
actions lead to consequences;
that result in
commitment
or rejection. (Cavanagh & Styles, 1983, p.14)

Combs (1988) and Schwahn and Spady (1998) stress the importance of motivation and vision as factors in implementing change. Combs felt that reform implementation would fail or cause adverse reactions if the implementers were not committed to the changes. This opinion was strongly held by Schwahn and Spady ten years later in 1998. In their article, *Why Change Doesn't Happen and How to Make Sure It Does*, Schwahn and Spady (1998) state:

What's missing in most cases is a concrete, detailed vision statement that describes what the organization will look like when operating at its best ideal to accomplish its declared purpose, as well as a systematic process we call strategic alignment. Strategic alignment occurs when the structure, policies, procedures and practices of the organization totally support the organization's vision. (p. 45)

According to the published literature which was reviewed, vision or motivation has a great impact on the implementation of new curriculum. This contradicts Carney's conclusion, which stated that vision was one of the lesser influences on implementation in her study. It will be interesting to see just what results the analysis of my research interviews will yield. However, she does qualify her findings and state that they are based on her study and do not necessarily apply in other situations. Therefore, perhaps Combs' and Schwahn and Spady had differing configurations and time frames.

Communication and information along with evaluation and revision seemingly are important enabling factors, but their lesser prominence in the published literature seems to reflect their lesser importance and impact. I was unable to find any published literature

which focused on communication and information and which stated they merited primary or even secondary importance. Good communication and information exchange was always placed in a supportive position rather than a primary one. Articles referred to them but they were not emphasized.

Recognition and resolution of barriers seem to be closely aligned with commitment. In turn they also seem to relate to the degree of motivation to change. It seems that if an individual were committed to the reform then that individual would strive to overcome the barrier. On the other hand, if an individual were not committed to the change then the barriers may be of greater significance.

In summary, the published literature for the most part seems to support Carney's views on change effectiveness characteristics. Different characteristics seem to dominate in different situations. Different characteristics seem to impact different individuals. It will be interesting to see which characteristics predominate in my study.

And
so
...let us listen
to the field practitioners.

Let us compare
the two groups:
the theorists and the practitioners.

Will they agree?

Will the theories be
recognized, acknowledged, supported
by those who are expected
to change,
to implement
and in the end
be responsible for the program delivery?

Let's compare
the two.

Will they agree?

Will the theories be
recognized, acknowledged, supported?

Or

will they be
skirted, rejected,
and trampled into the dirt
beneath the hooves
of an angry stampeding herd?

Methodology: The Horse Handling Principles

Research Design: The Structural Layout

Changes in school curriculum involve and impact on human behaviour and thought: that is, curriculum changes impact on the behaviours and the thoughts of educators within the schools. To answer the research question, therefore, it is necessary to examine the thoughts and behaviours of those educators involved, including any changes in their thoughts and behaviours. For this reason, an investigation must be considered within the parameters of human change and, therefore, from a naturalistic inquiry perspective.

Thus, in order to answer the research question, “Are Carney’s effective change characteristics present in the implementation of new primary curriculum in this primary school?” the question has been investigated in a case study format. The research was centered on a particular group, the teachers of a small primary school in eastern British Columbia. The study focused on a staff of experienced primary teachers. In this way it paralleled Carney’s study which focused on an elementary school in rural Kentucky.

My role as a teacher researcher and writer has been: to ask questions to gain an understanding of each teacher’s implementation process, to identify the commonalities and differences compared to Carney’s effective change characteristics, to offer possible explanations of agreement and/or disagreement with Carney and to postulate possible implications, and to identify areas which require further investigation. I also reflect on the responses given and how they resonate with my perceptions and experiences.

Case study evidence is defined as qualitative and descriptive rather than quantitative and empirical. Therefore, I have relied on first person narratives, in the form of interviews which dealt with the present situation, current implementation processes, as well as past experiences. The professional reflections on explanations and of changes over time have enriched and given greater weight to the teachers’ comments on implementation.

Limitations and Implications: Trouble Shooting

There are many differences between Carney’s study and this researcher’s study which may impact the results. One of the differences is that of culture. Carney’s school was an elementary school (Kindergarten through Grade 6) in rural Kentucky; my own study school is a primary school in rural British Columbia. There are cultural differences between

the United States and Canada. Historically, Americans and Canadians have evolved from similar European origins. However, over time Americans and Canadians have made different choices when faced with similar cultural dilemmas. For example: Americans won their political independence through military means and resisted British influence while Canadians developed political self-determination within the context of the British Commonwealth and have maintained those political family ties. The modern American approach to immigration and their melting pot policy of assimilation differs greatly from the Canadian approach of multi-culturalism and dual official languages.

Education of the nation's young by the elders in that nation seems to be a universal role. Traditionally this responsibility has fallen to the federal or provincial/state government in power. As education is also a part of the social-cultural arena, one would also expect it to reflect the traits of its organizers. Thus, an awareness of possible cultural differences in methods, organization and decision-making is advisable.

Another difference is that of type and content of implementation change. Carney's new curriculum was an implementation of an all encompassing changed curriculum. In 1990 the Kentucky State Government passed the Kentucky Education Reform Act. This legislation in conjunction with the research study report, *The Wonder Years* (1990), required great changes to be implemented in the public school system in Kentucky. These revolutionary changes were similar in scope and depth to British Columbia's Sullivan Report (Sullivan, 1988) and *The Primary Program* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989) of the 1980's. Some of the proposed changes were: great philosophical changes in instruction and learner outcomes; the roles of teachers and learners; decision making policies and responsibilities; the shift to perception of parents, teachers and students as partners in learning.

This study involves the implementation of three primary programs: Quest 2000, Lions-Quest, Guided Reading. They are all much smaller in scope and involve less change than the implementation of the Kentucky and B.C. primary programs. As such they might not involve all the effectiveness change characteristics that Carney's study did. However, the present study does involve implementation of programs and, as such, information will present increased awareness of the implementation process and provide value of its own.

Another difference is that of the degree of involvement or participation of professionals on site. In Carney's study all professionals on site were involved to some degree in the change. In this study the degree of involvement varies. At minimum all teachers were agreed to the implementation of the measurement unit of the Quest 2000 Program. All other implementation action was voluntary. Some teachers were involved with the implementation of three programs; some, with two; some, with one. This openness and flexibility of the implementation process and the accommodation of individual choices made the study less threatening and facilitated greater involvement in the future. However, it initially minimized the evidence available to substantiate implementation research by allowing this very same flexibility in participation.

The impact levels were different, also. The parameters of this study accommodated for differing impact levels of the effective change characteristics. This was done by using a fairly unstructured form of interview which would invite information from the experienced professionals who have displayed analytical and reflective teaching practices. The degree of discussion and emphasis on particular effective change characteristics which each participant places on the particular change factor will be duly noted in the results. It will, thereby, yield information on which characteristic is most important to these participants.

The Sample

The Site: The Home Range.

The public primary school is located in a small village in rural British Columbia. All the children aged five through nine living within a five kilometer radius come to this school. Their parents represent the local population which depends on forestry, tourism, some mining, and some agriculture for their economic livelihood, as well as the local professionals who provide community, social and business services. A wide range of socio-economic levels are represented by these children. The classes are composed mainly of Caucasian children with some minorities represented. The school is supported and well thought of by the parents and the general community. During the 1998-1999 school year approximately two hundred children enrolled in this school.

The classes were configured thusly: three Grade Three classes, two Grade Two classes, two Grade One classes, and three half-time Kindergarten classes. In addition to the

classroom teachers, there was a Librarian/Learning Assistant and a part time Music teacher. A full-time principal who teaches part-time completed the teaching staff roster. A secretary and a custodian were the two other adults who worked at this school: they both worked forty hour weeks. As well, a Native Home School Coordinator worked with individual students of native ancestry. The number of teaching aides or student aides varies from year to year depending on student need. That year there were four such aides with varying part-time positions.

The Teacher Sample: The Nature Of The Herd.

As I taught at this particular school, the teaching personnel became a very convenient source of research participants. This meant that nine teachers of children from four to nine years of age participated. Unfortunately, the logistics of time and professional responsibilities prevented one enthusiastic teacher from contributing data in the interview format and technological difficulties damaged the data from two interviewees. Thus, out of the ten school based teachers only seven teachers contributed usable data.

These teachers ranged in age from thirty-five to fifty-five years of age. Their years of teaching experience ranged from ten to thirty years. They were a very professional staff. All the teachers (except for one) have their Bachelor of Education degrees, two have their Masters of Education degrees and two others are presently pursuing their Masters degrees. These teachers can be described as “life long learners”: they readily participated in professional discussions and activities, facilitated professional development activities for others and voluntarily became mentors for colleagues in a variety of roles. This staff is relatively stable: in this past year only two half-time teachers have joined the staff on a temporary basis. Many teachers have worked at this school for longer than ten years.

The principal also teaches students. He is involved in teaching the students for a total of four and a half hours per week. During this time he encounters every student in this school in a teaching-learning situation. The principal’s age and experience fall within the parameters of the rest of the staff. His teaching and administrative experience has been mainly at the upper elementary level until he joined the staff five years ago.

In addition, two other professionals were invited to participate. A speech pathologist who is connected with this school expressed a professional interest in this study and

commented that new trends are also evident in her work and needed to be dealt with. A student teacher who was assigned to the study school stated that much of everything was new to her. Both these individuals seemed to present information from positions different from those presented by the teaching staff. Since they would enrich the study and help confirm, reject, or support the findings I decided to include these individuals and their broadening input into the study.

In total, this study is based on the data analysis of these ten interviewees.

The Curriculum Sample: The New Feed.

This project studies the implementation of three primary programs: Quest 2000, Lions-Quest, Guided Reading. The decision to implement Quest 2000 in the study school came about because the existing instructional program could not provide the changing instructional demands of the teachers. A survey of available programs had not supplied a promising program. The newly amalgamated school district was overwhelmingly in favour of this Quest 2000 Program for a variety of reasons. Wanting to be open about its value, supportive of the new district and finding no viable alternative, the teachers agreed to implement the basic Quest 2000 Program. Inservice training consisted of five proposed and postponed sessions. The presentation which was given by the publisher's salesperson finally took place in June and still left many teachers with many questions. Support materials arrived in September and implementation began despite the lingering questions.

The Quest 2000 Program consists of a variety of modules, activity books, manuals and even a homework book to involve parents. In order to understand the big picture of how all these pieces fit together it is important to have access to someone who knows. Although the study school still actively seeks them, to date resource personnel has not been made available to them.

Lions-Quest, on the other hand, is a program which each teacher has voluntarily decided to use with their class to facilitate their students' social responsibilities. The program modifies its activities to meet the learning objectives for each grade as organized by the Ministry of Education. The only way to obtain the instructional materials to this program is to participate in a full day training workshop. The Lions Service Club sponsors the presentation of these workshops and has financially enabled teachers to attend them.

Teachers are in various stages of implementing this program. Eleven out of twelve teachers are using this program. The twelfth teacher is trying to find a workshop she could attend for required training and legitimately obtain the program materials.

Guided Reading is a recently popularized instruction-management method of teaching Languages Arts in the primary grades. The implementation of Guided Reading evolved as a result of teachers' workshop attendance outside the district and other professional activities. A few teachers became interested in this new technique, investigated further and spread the word. They went looking for solutions to resolve some reading and writing problems of meeting student needs: they encountered enthusiastic responses from workshop participants and prompted other teachers to participate in implementing Guided Reading practices. Four full day workshops were sponsored locally. In addition visits to professional sessions at other venues were financially supported. Resource books were purchased for all teachers. Instructional materials were also provided.

Process Outlined: The Actual Horse Handling Process In Action

At a staff meeting especially called for the purpose of explaining this research study these educators were informed of the study: its purpose, its process, its parameters and its implications to them. During the following weeks, this researcher then approached the teaching staff individually and in private. In this way no one was put in an untenable position or coerced to participate. The privacy and confidentiality allowed for the airing of areas of concern and sensitive issues. Then each was invited to participate voluntarily.

One hundred per cent of the teaching staff readily agreed to involvement. In addition, the speech pathologist and student teacher joined the sample pool.

Once the decisions to participate were made and agreements signed arrangements were made for interview appointments. Some participants wished to do video-taped interviews: others preferred audio interviews. Each participant was presented with a list of questions several days before the interview so that he/she would be able to reflect on past experiences as well as the present implementation circumstances. Unfortunately, due to some unforeseen difficulties such as technological problems and scheduling difficulties, three participants were unable to contribute their data. In the end, ten interviews were used for this study.

The interviews ranged from twenty to forty-five minutes in duration. As the participants answered the open-ended questions and reflected on their implementations over the years, they conveyed a large volume of information. The ten interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

The information from these interviews is used in a number of ways. It is used as evidence and analysis for the research question and a reality check of published literature. Actual quotes are drawn from the interviews and presented as the teachers' voices in the dramatic scenes. As well, they provide thought-provoking concepts for the illustrations and the reflective free verse.

Straight From The Horse's Mouth: A Drama Based On Actual Research Interviews



This drama is based on the research interviews results. Creative license is taken to intensify and to accentuate certain aspects of the plot. At times, direct quotations from interviewees or published literature are used: these are given the appropriate credits.

The Cast:

JANE

PETER

MARY

DOREEN

HANNAH

SHANNON

VIRGINIA

MISS BROWN

NARRATOR

THE SETTING

A small staff room in a small primary school
in rural Western Canada

ACT ONE

Scene 1: January 12, Wednesday, 3:15 p. m.

ACT TWO

Scene 1: February 2, Wednesday, 3:15 p. m.

Scene 2: February 9, Wednesday, 3:15 p. m.

ACT THREE

Scene 1: February 29, 12:00 p. m.

Act I

Scene 1

JANE, PETER, MARY, DOREEN, HANNAH, SHANNON, and VIRGINIA are seated in padded armchairs around the large tables in the crowded staff room.

As the visitor enters the staff room a hush comes over the room. The group is not relaxed: they are wary of this visitor. The heads turn and tilt upwards and sideways slightly so that the eyes can easily detect minute body movements, capture non-verbal exchanges and generally observe messages radiating within this group. Their ears seem to perk up ready to register nuances of tone. They are wondering about this person.

THE NARRATOR:

Here they sit...

JANE,
PETER,
MARY,
DOREEN,
HANNAH,
SHANNON,
and VIRGINIA...

the practitioners in the field...
prepared to frankly voice their opinions,
describe their experiences
and forthrightly insist on
being heard and understood.

They are here,
all seven of them,

JANE,
PETER,
MARY,
DOREEN,
HANNAH,
SHANNON,
and VIRGINIA...

waiting
to present their views

and VIRGINIA...
 waiting
 to present their views
 to the visitor
 who purports to be
 genuinely interested
 in learning their truth
 about the curricular implementation process:
 the success stories,
 the dismal failures,
 the involvement and the indifference.

Enter MISS BROWN.

The visitor introduces herself to the group. She clarifies her position: she is here from the Ministry of Education with a special request of this staff. It appears the Ministry is interested in having a particular primary program piloted.

MISS BROWN: You have an excellent reputation for professionalism. Will you seriously consider active participation within this pilot project?

An uneasy silence permeates the small room. A few glances are exchanged. Some individuals seem to have inhaled and are holding their breath. Some faces are actually smiling and their bodies a quiver with excitement. Others seem to physically lean forward willing the visitor to elaborate further. And yet others lean back in their comfortable chairs, fold their arms in front of them and entrench themselves into their immovable positions. Some eyes are averted from the visitor's face, unwilling to state direct opposition; yet, other eyes are beginning to sparkle with excitement.

Finally the silence is broken and a dialogue begins.

JANE: What's the program?

PETER: Why do we need it?

MARY: Why should we do it?

DOREEN: Is it based on research?

HANNAH: Whose research?

VIRGINIA: Would we have to do it?

HANNAH: Whose research?

VIRGINIA: Would we have to do it?

SHANNON: When would we have to do it?

PETER: How would we learn how to do it?

JANE: What if we don't learn very well that way?

MARY: What if some of us can't do it very well?

DOREEN: Will anybody help us?

HANNAH: How accessible is this help?

VIRGINIA: Will we have to do it even if we don't want to do it?

JANE: Is there a lot of change?

PETER: What about the parents? Can you help get their support?

SHANNON: What about money? Changes usually cost money for materials. Is there extra money for supportive materials?

And on and on and on go the questions and answers: honest, candid questions being countered and parried by appeals to the intellect, the nurturing traits, the professionalism, the dedication and experience of these individuals. The visitor's answers seem to fall on deaf ears. Finally the information exchange between the Ministry visitor and the teachers wanes. There doesn't seem to be anything more that the visitor can say to convince the teachers. They need time to reflect. The teachers promise to consider the request by a specific date and the visitor leaves the room.

Exit MISS BROWN.

The room erupts in relief; then erupts again in indignation, excitement and disbelief.

PETER: My God! Did you hear what that woman was suggesting??? Another new program...I don't have a handle on those last IRP's and I've been teaching for twenty years!!!

VIRGINIA: Implement another program?? Not in this life! My husband would kill me! Just last week he went to Whiteswan Lake for four days of fishing with his buddies. He doesn't even like those guys. He did it just to give me time to catch up on the regular stuff. Never

last week he went to Whiteswan Lake for four days of fishing with his buddies. He doesn't even like those guys. He did it just to give me time to catch up on the regular stuff. Never mind all that extra stuff that you have to do when you're learning something new and making mistakes and then having to redo it until you get good at doing things the new way. Implement a new program?? It would be Divorce City for sure!

SHANNON: It might not be so bad. We really don't know exactly what this program involves.

DOREEN: Yeah, but change is change. It takes effort to change. Sometimes we've gotten support (moral and financial) and sometimes we've been left high and dry. And personally, I don't like the high and dry feeling. It gets frustrating and I feel powerless. If it's like that I'd rather not start at all.

MARY: So you might be interested if she promised financial and moral support??

PETER: Yeah, I might be...But then I think there'd have to be some form of guarantee...I mean, what's the point of promises which are not kept? I mean look at all that training we were promised but never got for our new math program. It wasn't a local problem. The accessibility just wasn't there. And, now, you know what's happened: everybody's doing their own thing with a program that nobody can quite figure out completely. How can we hope to attain consistency that way?

JANE: Hey, maybe what we need is to get all the materials and all the the instruction in the new program first. Then if the program works: then we could pay for it! What do you think? Isn't that revolutionary?? Well, maybe it is kind of a crazy thought but it might get a point across. What do you think?

SHANNON: Maybe we wouldn't have to change much. Most of us have kept pretty involved with the current practices. Maybe we should look at the program first and then decide.

HANNAH: I really don't have much time right now to check it out. I've just started that extensions course but I'd be interested in hearing more about the program.

MARY: I've always felt that my program in this area just isn't working as effectively as I would like. I've been looking for something to give me a boost. Maybe it will give me some ideas. If no one else wants to do it I'll check it out and get back to you.

DOREEN: Hey, thanks! We really appreciate that! You do know it's going to take you some time to get exposed to the program? Then you'd have to digest the whole thing and get back to us. That's a big commitment of time over and above your regular responsibilities.

MARY: That's OK. Jane's been doing the techie stuff. Peter has been doing the advanced learners. Everybody on our staff has had a job. I can do this one. Besides I'll just incorporate this into my Professional Growth Plan.

HANNAH: Great! If you need help just give us a shout.

VIRGINIA: Hey, I'm sure glad you're doing this because...I tell you...I'm not going to commit myself to any implementation plan until I get a good look at the new program. I've seen too many "good" programs never fly off the ground or bite the dust after a couple of years. There's no point in anybody putting in all that effort unless it's been well thought out and planned. At least I've got other things to do with my time and energy than waste it on program that goes nowhere.

MARY: OK. Well I'll go to the all day seminar next month. I'll also see if I can read up on some of the supporting literature if I can get a hold of it. Maybe I can get some help from the Resource Centre. When do you want me to get back to you with some information?

VIRGINIA: Let's wait until after report cards go out.

PETER: That's just before Spring Break. Can we wait that long? Do we have to decide before then?

HANNAH: How much time do you need to check things out and still do your regular school jobs?

MARY: I should be able to get this part done by February 2nd. Let's set up a meeting for then and I'll present any information that I have gathered as well as my impressions. OK?

EVERYONE: OK. We'll talk some more then.

MARY: By the way you guys, if you find anything interesting about implementation pass it around.

CURTAIN

Act II

Scene I

It is February 2nd, 3:15. JANE, PETER, MARY, DOREEN, HANNAH, SHANNON, and VIRGINIA are seated in padded armchairs round the large tables in the crowded staffroom. Mary is about to report information gathered about the new pilot program under consideration. In front of Mary are stacks of papers, books, texts, binders, manuals and curriculum guides.

MARY: So...are you ready? Which do you want first; the good news or the bad news? Just the news? OK. Here's the long and short of what I learned. First, let me outline my known general facts. Then, we'll have a general discussion and you all can jump in with your questions or comments. Finally, we'll make a decision regarding implementation and make some plans.

The pilot program is based on current research which seems solid, from what I can see, at this point in time. No great controversies, at any rate. The program philosophy is a shift away from the way most of us operate now. Of course, there are new instructional methods to support this new philosophy. Because of some of the characteristics of the new program it has to be organized in a particular way; another new thing to learn and become skilled at. New resource materials will be made available, notably new technologically compatible materials.

If we did this we would have to realign our thinking with the new philosophy, learn new instructional techniques, learn new organizational strategies and, it wasn't said but I would predict, that there will also be new methods of assessment, evaluation and reporting skills which will also reflect this change of philosophy.

What would all that mean to us? Some teachers would need to change a lot and others not so much. And you know that would be easier for some than for others. This is quite a lock-step, sequential program. The guides seem quite explicit. There seem to be a fair number of components to this program. It's complicated in that way. Here are various grade level samples of the components. Take a look at them and then ask questions or react to the idea of implementation. Your questions? Your reactions?

A disquieting silence followed. It wasn't comfortable. The mood is a little disillusioned. It was the same feeling you experienced when you realized that the movie you had been looking forward to all week long was a re-run of a particularly bad movie and you would have to endure it again from start to finish.

VIRGINIA: *(Feeling disheartened and yet feeling the weight of professional responsibility)* Let's tell them what we really think. Maybe then things will change.

MARY: *(sensing the general disheartened consensus)* So, what do you want to tell them? How do you want to tell them? Tell who? We have three questions here. Let's take them one at a time. Let's start with who should we tell about how we feel about implementations and pilot projects, past and present. Tell Miss Brown? Tell our superintendent who is technically the ministry's local representative? Or, go directly to the Ministry itself?

A general discussion ensues. Everybody is talking loudly, arguing and listening to nobody.

MARY: *(clearing her throat loudly)* So, am I hearing Miss Priss's name mentioned?

A general assent is murmured. No definable negatives are heard.

MARY: Is it the general consensus that we respond to Miss Brown in some way? Yes? Could someone please explain why we want to communicate with her rather than with our superintendent?

HANNAH: Well, you see...Miss Brown asked us. When someone asks something of you they are more likely to listen to what you have to say and you just might be able to win some concessions. We just might be able to negotiate some changes which would really make a difference for us when it comes to implementing a program. I think this is our best chance.

PETER: Our superintendent's power is at a lower level than Miss Brown's. I think he wouldn't have the impact that she would.

MARY: So, what I'm hearing is tell Miss Brown?

A general consensus is given: tell Miss Brown.

MARY: Now, I think the next two questions kind of go together: "What to say to Miss Brown?" and "How to say it?" I think "the how" will dictate "the what."

Brown?” and “How to say it?” I think “the how” will dictate “the what.”

PETER: So, what are our options?

HANNAH: We can always have her come back here and tell her.

VIRGINIA: Do you want to be the one that does that? No. I don't feel comfortable saying it face to face.

DOREEN: Yeah, there could be all sorts of unpleasant reactions.

SHANNON: We need some distance when we're being very honest.

JANE: So, then, I guess we need to write a letter. And...I guess we'll all need to sign it just to make it official. Sort of “putting our money where our mouth is”. How do we want to do that? Does someone want to write the letter and then we can all read it and make changes?

PETER: Yeah. I can write the letter. I've been listening to you guys for years. I pretty well know what you have in mind. I'll have a rough draft ready for the ninth, that's in a week's time. Then you all can add your two bits. OK?

CURTAIN

Act II

Scene 2

It is February 9th, 3:15. JANE, PETER, MARY, DOREEN, HANNAH, SHANNON, and VIRGINIA are seated in padded armchairs round the large tables in the crowded staff room. Each has some books and/or files in front of them. Virginia is marking papers.

PETER: OK. Here's the letter I drafted for you. I went around to each of you in private. I got your opinions on the implementation of this program. Some of you said you didn't mind being quoted anonymously. So, let me read it to you. You visual learners can all have a copy. Anyway, here goes:

Dear Miss Brown,

As a group we are writing to inform you of our very deep concerns with regard to the implementation process of primary curriculum. Here is a list of our concerns. They are supported by actual quotes from our interviews with our widely experienced staff. It is these concerns which will need to be addressed before we can consider willingly participating in another implementation procedure.

- We are concerned with the importance of understanding and acquiring a common vision.

INTERVIEWEETWO: ...it has to be consistent with what I believe. And if it isn't or if I don't see that right away I need the time to see that. Oh, yeah. [I need to see] that is good for kids...[otherwise] I wouldn't necessarily jump in.

My commitment to it. I don't become committed really easily. So that is part of becoming committed, deciding that is what I want.

INTERVIEWEE ONE: The Year 2000...They sure knew how to do that one...They took us down there and wined and dined us...They took us to a conference and they got us all rah, rah, rah. It was just like a religious revival. Everybody got so excited about it because we were all ready for a bit of a change because we were all so tired of the same stilted old manuals and whatever...For the most part I think people got on board and were really excited about it. That just right away paved the way for the Year 2000 curriculum to flow into our school. And of course the principal went.

and were really excited about it. That just right away paved the way for the Year 2000 curriculum to flow into our school. And of course the principal went. And, I think, all of us went. It was a massive indoctrination. I think, maybe that was why it went over really well. . . . They showed us where we were going to go. And, experienced people have done this already. It works and you're fine. And you're not going into uncharted waters. It's time for a change. And it's backed up by research and all that sort of thing. I think there was a lot of money around then to do that sort of thing...."

- We are concerned with the availability of long term financial support to implement curriculum.

INTERVIEWEE ONE: How about the Applied Science curriculum? I recognize that for me to implement that program I need specific materials that the school does not have and I am not willing to buy myself..So yes, for me, that is a barrier to implementation...

I mean it's great that they ask us to do all this stuff but they don't support us with money...

But I find I'm spending more and more money and time trying to search through all this stuff to try to find materials and that wears me out. Trying to find the back up materials to teach the concepts. That's when we put together those bins...That was a big help...like when I do magnets now all that stuff is in there. I don't have to search around any more. But we did that. We figured that out. The Ministry didn't do that . We as a team figured it out that for Science we needed to have the stuff in a bin so you don't have to search and spend all your valuable time trying to dig things up.

- We are concerned with the accommodation and the support to enable risk-taking while changing.

INTERVIEWEE ONE: But I can see for other people it might be a problem because they like what they're doing and they don't want to try something else...They're worried it might ruin a program that they've already got set up or whatever. So I can see that they might not be willing to take a risk to

INTERVIEWEE ONE: *But I can see for other people it might be a problem because they like what they're doing and they don't want to try something else...They're worried it might ruin a program that they've already got set up or whatever. So I can see that they might not be willing to take a risk to try something new. You could hold back from implementation."*

INTERVIEWEE TWO: *I think that's why I need lots of information, to see other people doing it, to talk to them about how and why, what they're doing. So, that reduces the risk for me....*

INTERVIEWEE THREE: *I'm the kind of person who just hears about it and I start trying it. Through the trial I end up investigating it more...*

- We are concerned with the lack of time which also becomes a financial support issue.

INTERVIEWEE ONE: *My vision? It's pretty hard to develop a vision until you have a pretty good understanding of the curriculum.*

Never enough....[planning time]...never given. It's all on my own time.

And if I make the time it turns out better.

INTERVIEWEE FIVE: *Although, I have to say, when people are asked to implement things I have to believe that the suggestions for organization effecting change have come from research that shows that these things are good. And the implementation we always have to be ready for change as long as it is slow. And maybe it has to work through a few years to see if it is worth, before you discard it or increase focus on it.*

INTERVIEWEE SIX: *I also think that some people put too much emphasis on what was a curriculum change. What I'm saying is: if it's not broken, why fix it? Sometimes I think we rush to fix things that aren't broken to be looked upon as modern or progressive and my feeling is that if you're going to implement something new, it better be to fix something that doesn't work... .*

I see Guided Reading as a pendulum swing back to a basal reader approach. I say that because when I first heard about it the things that struck me were: homogeneous groupings, materials that start with very

to fix something that doesn't work...

I see Guided Reading as a pendulum swing back to a basal reader approach. I say that because when I first heard about it the things that struck me were: homogeneous groupings, materials that start with very simple reading material and works up to something more complex, teacher involvement in small groups. And, to me that is just the way that a basal reader is used except that we don't use the words 'basal reader' any more. And, although I haven't used it in the classroom, I can see that if I were in a classroom that's the way I would approach it. So I guess what it does is give a wider range of material, literature based material for kids to learn to read. And I guess that's important for many kids: but for some it has to be so basic and there has to be so much repetition that I wonder that if even Guided Reading is good for everybody. I'm thinking of the kids that I work with I still have more success on a basal reader than I do on what I would call literature based material.

INTERVIEWEETWO: Well, first of all I found I need to have a commitment to the change my self. Sometimes you don't have a choice and it doesn't necessarily fit with your values or what you're doing or what you should be doing [or] fit with what you think. I could be quite resistant. Actually, I think I'm quite slow to change anyway. And that's one of the things that affects implementation for me: I need a long time. So some of the changes by the time I decide it might be a good idea find out enough about it to feel comfortable about (it) doing something I have never done before and maybe have looked around and seen other people doing it and its working, it's a good thing. Sometimes it's already gone by then. We're onto something new....

There's never any planning time. In the part of your life that you consider your job part. Like you never have time when you're not teaching. During the teaching day that's set aside . That's a good one. That's why things don't change faster. That's why they don't change sometimes. It's because you don't have time to think

your job part. Like you never have time when you're not teaching. During the teaching day that's set aside . That's a good one. That's why things don't change faster. That's why they don't change sometimes. It's because you don't have time to think about it. The prep time is adequate for the teaching part of my teaching but it's not adequate for the change part. It's not adequate for planning a change that is significant. And (during) the prep part I prepare for my active teaching part.

But I need thinking time and planning time that is separate from that.

I think actually that one of the problems with change is that we don't really have enough time to really do our jobs. We're so focused on what we have to do day to day: the management of the kids, the management of the courses and the management of the actual teaching. We don't have time to do what we should do: getting ready for new ideas and figuring out how to implement them. Sort of too much on the survival mode, I think.

Whereas, if we had time in the day set aside to meet in collaborative groups we would do wonderful things.

INTERVIEWEE FIVE: Planning time, to me, would not be a big issue because as professionals I think we should make time to do our planning. I would see that as not a barrier.

INTERVIEWEE THREE: Time. And definitely financial resources frustrate me right now. We just had our budgets cut way back so I don't have any money to buy. That's really frustrating when you think you can do something really creative and you have nothing to make it. I usually make do.

- We are concerned with the lack of time and availability for/of training.

INTERVIEWEE ONE: ...we have time we open it up. And we're told when the curriculum implementation date is. There's very little training that happens for implementation. I find that very disappointing. Most of the curriculum that I've implemented is self-taught. I'd like to see more professional development with every new curriculum that comes in. For example, our language arts curriculum that came in which most us just cracked the cellophane off of...and hadn't even looked carefully at until

of the curriculum that I've implemented is self-taught. I'd like to see more professional development with every new curriculum that comes in. For example, our language arts curriculum that came in which most of us just cracked the cellophane off of...and hadn't even looked carefully at until some of us went to the implementation meeting at the Resource Centre. And we didn't even discuss the whole curriculum at the meeting either. But that's the closest I've ever been to some kind of training. I find that's lacking. Very lacking.

INTERVIEWEE THREE: Self training of the new stuff...Unless it came from when I was going through school the new things you have to go to the conferences, you have to do reading.

- We are concerned with the importance of clear and concise communication of information between implementers and the implementees.

INTERVIEWEE FOUR: You have to know which direction you're going in. So, you need to know that information.

- We are concerned that the recognition and resolution of barriers is so vulnerable to communication.

INTERVIEWEE TWO: Recognition and resolution of barriers is ongoing. It is a process of refinement... unless I can figure out what went wrong and make it more successful I sometimes just put it away and go back to what I was doing. Because it worked!

INTERVIEWEE THREE: Definitely. [I'm constantly evaluating myself?] Because if it doesn't work or if I feel like I'm wasting time, then I get the feeling that it's not right. Then I'll pursue more or go to a conference. For instance, I was just at a conference on Thursday. That was on literacy. So that the stuff that I learned there, the little handout that they gave there, I can try to implement them here.

- We are concerned with the necessity of recognizing the differences in the learning styles and teaching styles of the individual teachers.

INTERVIEWEE TWO: I feel less risk. I guess if you, before hand, you

and teaching styles of the individual teachers.

INTERVIEWEETWO: I feel less risk. I guess if you, before hand, you reduce whatever risks. So, whatever you're going to do is at a level you're comfortable with.

But risk-taking is maybe why some people probably embrace change more easily. They maybe like...They don't mind taking a chance and trying. I'm not a terrific risk taker...

I guess earlier on I would have said, "Oh, wow! Oh, this is exciting! This is dynamic. Oh, boy we're going to..." And then I found out that I wasn't really that jumping in kind of person after all. And, also you tend to get a little cynical in a way. Then there's that: "Oh dear, here comes something new. If I wait it out, it will disappear." There's that, too.

If I were giving advice to a new teacher I would say: "Be patient with yourself." I think it's really easy to be overwhelmed by the amount of change that we are expected to deal with. And actually, probably, it's impossible to deal with the change at the level we're expected to. Just even in our lives. But, it takes time. And for me Not for everyone, I know. For some people. But probably for some people.) You need time to grow into changing. You need time to change your ideas maybe.

"Yes, different people would deal differently with implementing curriculum." I know they do. You can see it . Everybody is doing things differently I would say. Maybe with the same framework on the bottom. I think everybody approaches something new differently.

There needs to be some awareness that that is part of changing in an institution. That there has to be a lot of flexibility for people to change in the way that works for them while we're still going in the same direction.

INTERVIEWEETHREE: I'm the kind of person who just hears about it and I start trying it. Through the trial I end up investigating it more.

INTERVIEWEETFOUR: I don't think I need teamwork and collaboration because it's just me. So that's probably for my position is a little different. I

INTERVIEWEE THREE: *I'm the kind of person who just hears about it and I start trying it. Through the trial I end up investigating it more.*

INTERVIEWEE FOUR: *I don't think I need teamwork and collaboration because it's just me. So that's probably for my position is a little different. I like working on teams. I enjoy it a lot but I don't get much opportunity. I don't know. They're all pretty important I think for me.*

•We are concerned with the necessity of recognizing the differences in educational situations.

INTERVIEWEE THREE: *It's the physical restriction and the time. If I was at _____...That's just like they are at the States. I would be assigned to one school. Think of all the fun stuff I could do. I could team teach with people. I could teach whole classes lessons on listening like they do down there. So it's not reasonable to expect us to implement things that have not been tried here, in these kind of situations. I don't know if that's the same for teachers. It might be. . .*

If we were like they are down there then we could implement all those things. I think you have to look at your situation and you have to say, "This isn't feasible for me." even though everyone out there is saying to you: "Oh, yeah, I do classroom work. Oh, What? You do pull out? How come you're doing pull out still? That's like the dinosaur." But I don't have a choice. What can I do?

•At our school collaboration, teamwork and collaborative leadership are not a great concern as evidenced by the following comments. In fact, it is frequently used as a strength to overcome barriers.

INTERVIEWEE ONE: *We've got an awesome group of teachers here. We work together really well. We support each other. We always talk about, "How's it going with this or that?"....Getting back to the risk taking. Nobody's afraid to go up to someone and say, "_____, I just bombed a lesson." or "I'm having a terrible time with this new math curriculum." We talk a lot and nobody is worried that "Oh no...Now she will tell somebody"*

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INTERVIEWEE TWO: I think collaborative leadership is important. Actually I think all of these things are important but collaborative leadership allows you to a certain extent to leave it to someone else. Share it more. For me the best thing is for me to be working with maybe one other person, a mentorship or a friend. Let's try it. Let's get together or our classes and try it.

INTERVIEWEE THREE: Not anyone here has to look to [someone] for leadership. Not in a person, per se. I've got journals and things like that. I look for that [leadership] through that. There's not really a person. Although the first AO I had was a wealth of information for me. So there I felt that I had leadership.

Please seriously consider our concerns and respond positively to them. We

DOREEN,
HANNAH,
SHANNON,
and VIRGINIA,

The Teachers at The Primary School

PETER: (*looking at each teacher around the table*) Well, what do you think? Does this letter reflect your thoughts and feelings?

JANE: You did a good job, Peter.

MARY: I think that expresses what I feel.

DOREEN: Where do I sign?

HANNAH: Good on you!

SHANNON: That's exactly how I feel! And the words are plain, simple!

VIRGINIA: The words are plain and simple. The feelings are honest and down to earth. If you wanted to be "literary" you could say they came straight from the horses' mouth!

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

Scene 1: February 29, 12:00

In a large old office in a very old building. The ceilings are very high. The light fixtures are insufficient for such a large space. On the desk are several large stacks of papers, books, texts, binders, manuals and curriculum guides. The windows are tall and narrow. MISS BROWN is standing beside the window reading a letter from a group of teachers. The NARRATOR stands on the left front stage and speaks to the audience.

NARRATOR: There she stands: Miss Brown... reading carefully, trying to absorb as much information as she can from that piece of paper. She has a dilemma. She needs to determine a plan of action to implement this particular curriculum. It is no easy task. Consider this. She must find a middle ground between the desires of the policy makers and the needs of the teachers. She must stay within a preordained fiscal budget and yet provide as much support as is necessary. She must carefully tread the fine line between encouraging and demanding change since these two approaches result in some very opposing reactions.

So many decisions to make.

So many possibilities of doing it right and succeeding.

So many possibilities of doing it wrong and failing.

So...

What about *you*?

Sitting there

on the sidelines?

What would *you* do?

Would *you* dare to speak *your* mind

honestly, directly?

If you were to speak

straight from a horse's mouth

what would you say?

CURTAIN

Results and Conclusions: You Can Lead A Horse To Water But...

Upon close examination the interviews yielded very candid information. I have organized these results and conclusions according to the effective change characteristics listed in Carney's study.

All participants in this study considered collaborative leadership very important to the success of implementation. However, according to the participants, collaborative leadership does not and did not necessarily emanate from the traditional role of the administrator. In fact, in this school the collaborative leadership emanated from the various available local experts or staff members who were passionate about the subject. When no leader or person who was passionate about the particular subject maintained the enthusiasm, the program failed to succeed. This is particularly evident in the mediocre status of the Quest 2000 implementation. Despite requests for assistance, The Quest 2000 Program publishers provided no available expert to deal with growing frustration nor to foster enthusiasm within the staff members. The Lions-Quest Program provided leadership in the form of mandatory workshop training before teaching materials were made available. Also, a teacher network was fostered. For Guided Reading leadership was provided by teachers on staff who were passionate in their belief that this program could be the answer to the reading/writing difficulties some students were having.

In reference to this change effectiveness characteristic of collaborative leadership my study supports Carney's findings. However, it is important to note that within this group of teachers the leadership came from passionate members of that group.

Some teachers found training to be important, particularly if the new program was very different in some aspect. Changes in methods, philosophy, resource materials were more easily understood if they were demonstrated. However, training was given secondary importance by most teachers. The Quest 2000 Program training was considered by all the participants so poor that it could be considered non-existent. Lions-Quest Program training was considered by all participants as superb and helpful to implementation; even the one participant who cannot implement the program because she could not attend a workshop recommends the training. This is due to the frequent positive comments she has heard about the training. The Guided Reading Program training began informally at the school

level and was supported formally on a school and district level as more teachers became committed to implementing small changes. Self-initiated training on site in the form of informal discussions and consultations, shared experiences and resources with colleagues maintained enthusiasm, clarity of purpose, and refined skills assisted implementation.

In reference to this change effectiveness characteristic of training, my study supports Carney's findings: however, much training was initiated by the teacher interests and requests. In the case of Quest 2000 these requests were unfulfilled and teachers struggled with implementation.

Risk-taking was an issue for some participants. All participants were willing to try the new programs to some degree. Six out of nine participants were eager to try a new way of presenting/teaching new curriculum and leapt right into it. Three participants were reluctant and felt uncomfortable with some aspects of the new approaches and needed to proceed slowly. They reserved their judgments of the new programs. They voiced their knowledge of the types of changes which would be difficult for them and how they would need to approach these areas to overcome them. The primary concern in motivating them to accept the risk of change was whether this change was, in fact, a good one for their students. Most participants lacked confidence in implementing the Quest 2000 Program. The participants attributed their reluctance to the lack of knowledge and understanding of the program, which in turn was attributed to the lack of training, vision building, and communication of information. With regard to the Lions-Quest Program all trained participants leaped into the implementation of the program. All participants have continued to be enthusiastic about all facets of the program. With Guided Reading all participants have implemented some degree of the Guided Reading methods. Some participants have leaped into the new management method and are now in the process of refining the program to suit their teaching styles. Some teachers have been reading, observing, trying small steps and have now implemented organizational plans. However, most participants have implemented at least the basic organization for Guided Reading: ie., all teachers are familiar with the Guided Reading concepts, language and program features and most are comfortable with the new organization.

In reference to this change effectiveness characteristic of risk-taking my study supports

Carney's findings in that it is quite important to some of the participants. Three of the nine participants chose to go slowly and six leapt. The question is why? Perhaps the high level of collaboration and teamwork help foster a risk free environment and encouraged those who wanted to leap, to leap, and those who wanted to go slowly, to choose to go slowly. More careful study and inquiry is necessary to determine the underlying reasons for their decisions.

All participants stressed the importance of teamwork and collaboration as change effectiveness characteristics. They seemed to use them as strategies to overcome barriers of money, time and training. They also maintained enthusiasm and a shared vision, and fostered the ideas of professional growth and support. With the Quest 2000 Program all participants felt teamwork and collaboration were present in this process. These were used to bolster waning enthusiasm in the program and allay concerns. However, at times, the discussions tended to reinforce the negative aspects of the situation: there was no consensus on the program and no one was really sure how things were supposed to be done. With the Lions-Quest and Guided Reading Programs all participants felt teamwork and collaboration were present in the programs. They maintained high teacher and student enthusiasm in program activities.

With reference to these change effectiveness characteristics of teamwork and collaboration my study supports Carney's findings in that it was quite important to all of the participants. In fact, these factors were the most important change effectiveness characteristics from the participants' point of view. Interviewee One comments:

That collaboration seems like second nature to us. I would miss it terribly. That's why I stay here. At this school. Because I feel like I'm in a nurturing, collaborative warm atmosphere of teachers that support what I do and I can support them.. I don't know if I could grow and take the risks that I do in another place.

With regard to the impact of change effectiveness characteristics of communication and information, the results were secondary. With Quest 2000 most participants felt that there was little communication or exchange of information with program publishers or with those officials responsible for the implementation process. All participants felt communication

and information were minimally successful. With the Lions-Quest Program all participants felt the communication and information exchange was highly effective. A local network of teachers who had participated in the training workshops was established by the program providers and used by the local teachers. Teachers on staff frequently discussed successes in the staff room and, further, maintained enthusiasm and vision. With the Guided Reading Program all participants felt communication and information exchange was present. However, the Guided Reading Program was a teacher initiated implementation so the communication was more frequently that of the teachers asking questions and getting clarifying answers from different sources, rather than from a program/curriculum creator. Teachers on staff frequently discussed successes and difficulties or asked questions in the staff room.

With reference to these change effectiveness characteristics of communication and information in the implementations, where there was a substantial exchange of information (such as Lions-Quest or Guided Reading) there were degrees of successful implementation. Where there was limited information communicated, such as in Quest 2000, implementation was limited. Direct communication in the forms of workshops, discussion, etc., were the most beneficial methods of communication. All participants reflected on the impact of information and communication or the lack of it.

All participants except one felt that the evaluation and revision change effectiveness characteristics were ongoing self assessments. One participant viewed evaluation and revision in the larger sense; that of having input into formal curricular revision. This, she felt, was a professional responsibility on which all teachers needed to act. The high degree of collaboration and teamwork encouraged staff level or grade level discussions and problem solving to overcome barriers to implementations. With the Quest 2000 Program all participants felt they were assessing the program, their own understanding and the skill levels and the impact of student learning and then revising it as they saw fit. Most program assessments were satisfactory to negative in nature. This negativity was attributed to lack of information /understanding of the program. Attempts to remedy this situation by accessing more information or training were unsuccessful. With the Lions-Quest Program all participants also felt they were assessing the program, their own understanding and skill

levels, and the impact on student learning and then revising as they saw fit. Little revision was necessary as all participants had participated in the pre-training. With the Guided Reading Program all participants felt they were assessing the program, their own understanding and the skill levels and the impact on student learning and then, revising as they saw fit. Any negative assessments were attributed to the large scope of the change and taking steps which were too large rather than establishing small steps in change and then proceeding. After adjusting to smaller steps of change, frustrations diminished.

With reference to these change effectiveness characteristics of evaluation and revision all but one participant saw them as integral aspects of teaching.

Shared vision is the motivating reason for implementing a program. It provides the basis for commitment to implementation and answers the question, "Why?" With Quest 2000 all participants agreed that they had difficulty understanding and developing a vision for this program. They attributed this to the fact that they had little initial training, poor communication and information exchange with program publishers/providers, and materials were supplied late, giving teachers little time to study the materials before implementation. With Lions-Quest all participants agree that they became enthusiastic about the program at the mandated training session which was sponsored by the local Lion's Club. If you did not attend the workshop you did not get the program materials to use with your class. The teacher network maintained the vision and the enthusiasm. With Guided Reading the vision was spread and maintained by the teacher success stories. This was a local teacher initiated program. Teachers who went to Guided Reading workshops came back enthusiastic about the new instructional methods and organizational techniques.

With reference to this change effectiveness characteristic of vision, my study does not wholly agree with Carney who says that vision was not a guiding light for the implementation. The participants in my study felt that vision was the motivator for implementation: they struggled when there was no clear vision.

Notice Interviewee Six's description of the importance of vision and how it interrelates with all the other change characteristics:

Quest 2000: I'm doing bits and pieces and I've tried it all. But I don't have the overall picture still of how the whole outcome or the flow of it. When we were given the little workshop, not being math oriented, and not seeing flow, I would love to see a lesson on what a Quest 2000 lesson looks like. Like we did with Guided Reading. Not that it needs to be like yours or the same or whatever. I want to see what they ask using the journal that they put out the reflective question and they do the exploring or they do things. I've done all those things but I still haven't pulled it together. So, next year going up to Grade One it will be a whole new thing again. But hopefully I'll get a better grasp of the philosophy and the idea behind it which is not really the outcome of the numbers that they know two plus two. But it's the thinking and how did you get there? Show me a different way. Those kinds of things. That one I'm going to have to work a little harder on.

To some participants there was a question of whose vision was important: the implementer's or the curriculum designer's? The thought was that, after all, as teachers one of our responsibilities is to implement the curriculum upon which the mandated government has decided. Despite this confusion, when the group vision was not clearly understood, such as in Quest 2000, the direction and implementation were not successful.

The change effectiveness characteristic of support systems was important and available to the participants committed to change. However, with regard to Quest 2000, all participants agree that outside program support was poor. Publishers presented some of their materials after many requests and postponed inservice dates. The materials arrived late for study and use in the classroom. Internally, the staff attempted problem solving strategy sessions and, at times, they were successful at overcoming some difficulties. This process was attributed to their highly developed collaborative nature. With regard to Lions-Quest all participants agree that program support was outstanding. Involvement was voluntary. Financial support for training was provided. Training and materials were provided

simultaneously. A local network was set up for problem solving and maintaining enthusiasm. With regard to the Guided Reading Program all participants agree that the program support system was good. Involvement was voluntary. Those who committed to involvement in this program were financially sponsored to attend professional development sessions. Materials were provided to extend understanding of the techniques. Visits by experts were arranged during professional development days. Substantial materials were provided from the school budget. Teachers used their own professional development funds to learn more about this area.

With reference to this change effectiveness characteristic of support systems, my study indicates that support systems were present at the school level: there were books, resources, and access to experts. From external sources, however, there was little support available for the Quest 2000 Program.

With regard to the change effectiveness characteristic of planning time, the provision of planning time for the purposes of enabling the implementation process has been limited.

The only professional planning time which the participants have been given has been as a result of their own decisions to use their own professional development days to further study a particular topic. Sometimes portions of staff meetings have been dedicated to reports of workshops attended, general discussions of these programs or discussions of budgetary needs. All other planning time has come from teachers' own personal, non-instructional time: i.e., during recesses, lunchtimes, after schools or evenings. With Quest 2000 all participants felt that planning time was inadequate before the implementation process began. Informal planning sessions occurred when necessary at grade level. With the Lions-Quest Program all participants agree that the planning was done for them at the training session before implementation as the materials were being provided. With the Guided Reading Program all participants felt that planning time was taken from personal time. However, six out of nine participants did not have a problem with that as they were very committed to the program.

With reference to this change effectiveness characteristic of planning time there were no professional periods provided solely for the purpose of teachers getting together to reflect and to plan action with regard to implementation programs. All planning time was expected

to come from personal time or from time usually used to prepare for regular class lessons. Most teachers felt they did not have enough time to study, to plan and to implement the new programs as they would have liked. The question of time might be explained in relation to the scope or content of the changes being implemented. Some teachers were in the process of implementing three programs in varying degrees: others were implementing only units or one program. When one considers the numbers of materials to peruse and the strategies and complexities to understand and learn with each program it would be reasonable to assume that implementing fewer changes would require less time and effort than implementing greater changes. However, eight out of nine teachers felt the lack of time regardless of the number of programs they were implementing. Therefore, in this situation time did not seem to be related to the level of change being implemented. There must not have been enough time for what teachers felt was needed to be done.

The recognition and the successful resolution of barriers and, therefore, the resulting implementation of the programs varied. With regard to Quest 2000 all participants felt that many barriers arose with this program implementation. Internal attempts to resolve these barriers were minimized through internal professional collaboration, experience and trouble shooting discussions. However, all participants were overwhelmingly disappointed in external assistance and resources. With the Lions-Quest Program no participants voiced any unresolved difficulties which arose within the implementation process of this program. This has been attributed to the methods of program introduction, training, vision building and program support. The fact that this was a teacher initiated program implementation may also have had an impact on these results. With the Guided Reading Program all participants felt that their collaborative nature was a major component of resolving problems and issues in implementing this program. Here, too, the self-initiated implementation decision maintained a high commitment to resolve problems during periods of frustration. Six out of nine teachers chose to implement this process.

With reference to the change effectiveness characteristics of the recognition and the resolution of barriers all participants seemed to consider them as ongoing professional practices.

Interviewee Two describes the general attitude:

Say, I take out a new program. I'm really keen on it. I look through the teacher's guide. I think this sounds good. It will be a good lesson. I really think it's worthwhile. And then, it's not a good lesson. And then you naturally start to think if I had done this or this. The next lesson. Try it again. I know this is a great idea. I didn't like that lesson either. I wasn't happy with it. The kids weren't interested, whatever. If I have very many of those, then pretty soon I say I have better things to do. Usually what happens is I put it away. I'll do this my old way.

In this study the degree of program implementation varied. With regard to the Quest 2000 Program, implementation is very limited. This program is being heavily supported by the instructional materials and activities arising from strong professional experience and expertise. With regard to Lions-Quest, the program is fully implemented in all classrooms initiating implementations. With regard to Guided Reading, the degree of implementation is developing. This is evidenced by the teachers' increased understanding, increased skill, comfort and use of techniques of the program. It is termed as developing because one can not yet say that this program is fully implemented: it is a massive program to implement. However, substantial changes have been made and the forward direction and movement is being maintained as is evidenced by increased numbers of success stories, increased comfort and refined levels of new methods.

In the opinion of this researcher two successful program implementations out of three implementations attempted is not too bad! That's a pass! The successes were terrific successes: the relative failure was actually a mediocre success. But, you can look at it another way: this was a 33 % failure to successfully implement a program up to the standards to which these teachers generally strive. 33 % is an enormous number when considered in a negative connotation. There were no changes in participants who were involved. The difference was inherent in the program implementation process: "the relative failure" lacked a communicated vision and program understanding, accessible leadership and an initial enthusiasm. These practitioners supported the importance of vision as a motivator. I must agree with Combs, Schwahn and Spady, Cavanagh, and Gray: vision is

a very important change effectiveness characteristic of the implementation process.

In summary, this study concludes that some degree of Judith Carney's change effectiveness characteristics were present during the implementation process, that collaboration and teamwork was a powerful force in these implementation processes in this study situation, that vision was an important aspect to these participants and that some change effectiveness characteristics impacted some people more than others.

Recommendations: Which Trail To Take Next?

When asked about feelings toward implementation Interviewee Six elaborated:

I think it comes down to where you are at in your teaching career; where you're at [assignment] if you've been at the same Grade level a long time or if you've been flip flopping grades like me. I also think it depends on your personality: if you want to just go in and jump right into things or if you want to sit back and know more before you start it. I think it's also your commitment for trying new programs and going along with it even if you don't understand it or know the philosophy or don't agree right away or you're cranky because you have to do yet another one. I think that your commitment and your willingness to try it, so it flops or so you're not happy with it for the first little while you can still go back to some tried and true. Or modify or do whatever. That is the perfect thing with double K: what I do in the morning if doesn't work I can modify it because it's new and go back and try it again. And that's neat. And I'll pencil in what I've done. I think it changes over time, too. Your needs and opinions on these on implementation. A long time ago I would have been overwhelmed with doing a lot of change.

A number of questions piqued my interest as I conducted this study, listened to teachers and analyzed their comments. Then these very same questions precipitated more questions. I would be interested in learning the answers. I recommend further investigations in the following areas.

This study centered on the presence of the change effectiveness characteristics. Some characteristics had more impact than others. It would be interesting to investigate possible correlations to explain the differences. It took place in a primary school. Primary school staffs are composed primarily of female teachers. A common belief is that there is a female tendency to have a nurturing, cooperative characteristic: Is this so? Would there be a gender issue correlation between the collaboration and teamwork in the implementation procedure? Would this correlation then extend to differences in the high school situation which generally involves more male teachers?

The question of learning styles and teaching styles of both students and teachers would be interesting to pursue to determine their impact on implementation and change effectiveness characteristics. If there were different approaches to teaching new skills to the teachers would there be greater implementation success? What if there were flexible or multiple possibilities in the teacher learning situations: would that impact on implementation success?

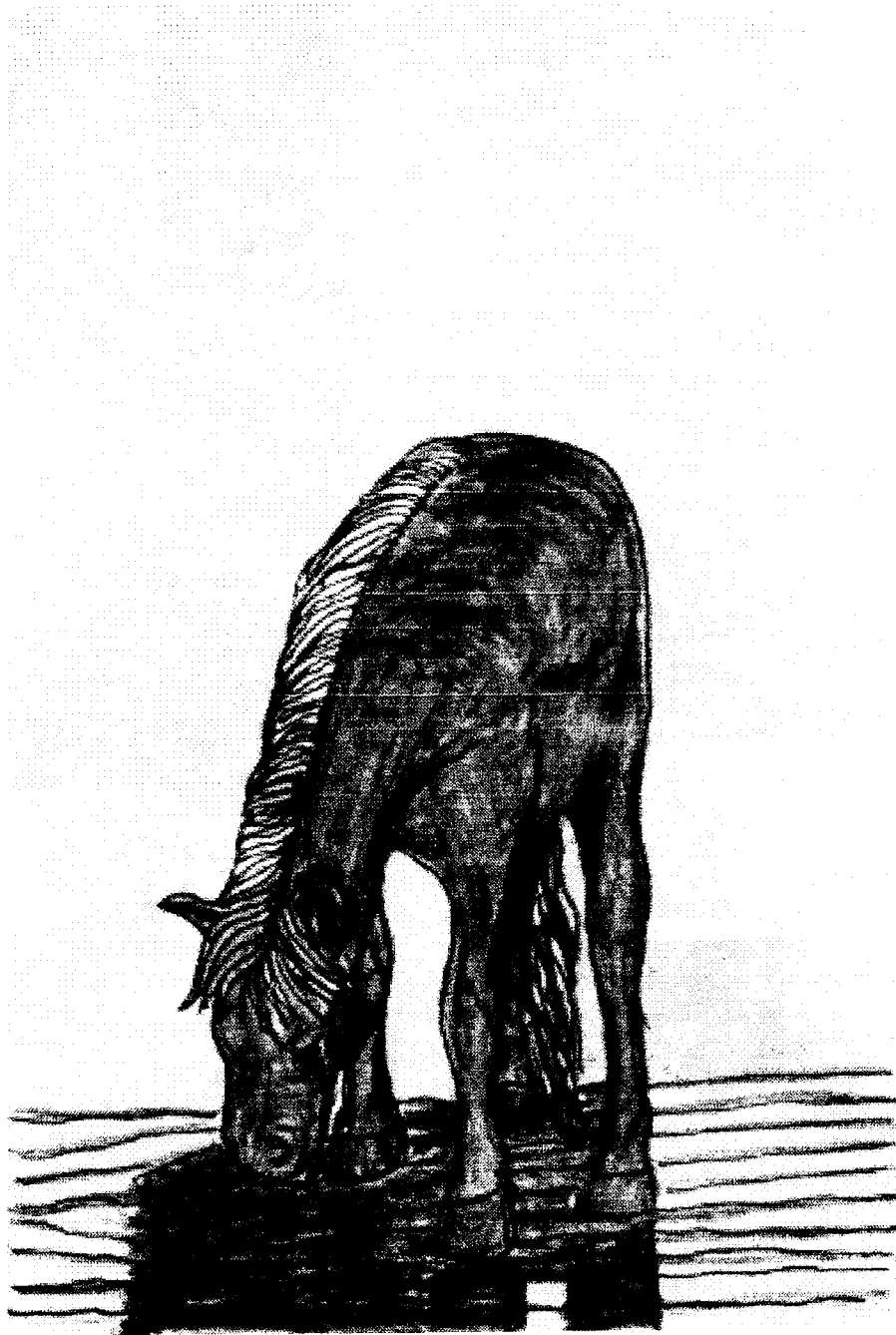
The teachers in my study were very experienced in the delivery of primary curriculum and knowledgeable in the development of primary age children. Would this type of teacher characteristically approach implementation differently from other, less experienced teachers? Would this impact the implementation process, change effectiveness characteristics and necessitate flexibility in the process?

Most of the teachers in my study had taught together at this same school for at least ten years: some have taught here for thirty years. They have developed long term relationships. Do long term staff relationships impact the implementation process? Does it create issues or correlations for leadership, communication, teamwork, evaluation and revision, training, and risk-taking? Does it create another barrier which needs to be resolved?

Answers to any questions on implementation and change effectiveness characteristics would be interesting and valuable to the program implementation process. The answers to these questions about the implementation process and the change effectiveness characteristics are of particular personal interest to me.

Researcher's Reflections: Pensive Rumination

To help the reader develop a deeper understanding and awareness of curricular implementation I share a collection of my thoughts and images which I have gathered throughout my study. They ring true when struck against my professional experiences. Will they resonate within you?



My Reaction to The Implementation Of New Curriculum Guidelines and Policies

I have just re-read Cavanagh and Styles' article, The Implementation Of New Curriculum Guidelines and Policies. It was published in Education Canada in Spring 1983.

The way they organized their article is in a question-answer format.

As I reread these questions and statements I thought to myself: "When was this written?" I was astounded to be reminded that they were published seventeen years ago! These questions/statements, which could almost be termed demands, could have been written last week. They scream with emotion: frustration, distrust and disillusionment. I know these emotions. I might have uttered these very same words had I the wherewithal to have the long view rather than be focused on the short view of survival.

Why is it that teachers are still experiencing these very same emotions now, some twenty years later?

Now let me list some of the phrases which I have heard at various times during my own career when implementation was mentioned and are reiterated in the previously mentioned article.

Why should I change? I don't want to change.

There are no materials or books to use with this new program.

Is it really a good thing for this age of student?

Are there enough gains to justify my time, energy and frustrations in my learning the new program?

Is the pendulum going to swing back in three or four years time?

How many new programs do you expecting me to implement?

With the class dynamics I don't see how I can do justice to a new program.

Which comes first, this implementation or the rest of my teaching responsibilities?

I am an experienced professional. I know how to teach children so that they will learn. Let me do it.

My workload is ridiculous now. What are you going to take away before you load something more on me?

There's no follow-up or follow-through. There's no support further down the road.

They just get us started and then leave us high and dry.

Why don't they put their money where their mouth is? We need money for meeting time, planning time, materials and training. Don't they know that implementation means money will be needed?

If they don't allow my input into its planning and designing I won't be as emotionally involved in ensuring its success.

Why do they want to know how much implementation has taken place?

I like it when we use PRO-D days to plan or work on the new program.

Surely, we can not be termed intellectually challenged as a group. Is it a case of not being able to see the forest for the trees? Are we stuck doing the same thing over and over and over again and hoping for a different result? Is it a case of not having the time to cooperatively make inroads on a common problem? Is it an inability of teachers to cope with the rapid change within our society? Is it comfort with the known and a fear of the unknown which paralyzes some of us?

We need to become more aware of the conditions in our profession, evaluate trends and become proactive in determining a way to improve the quality of our professional lives! Perhaps these teachers speaking out will be the beginning! Perhaps someone else besides me is listening!

One implementation process for all?

Is that like “one size fits all”?

WE are NOT all the same!

Teachers are not all the same!

We do not all have the same fears or the same passions.

Neither do we all have the same weaknesses or strengths.

Nor do we teach or learn the same way.

Like the Percheron and the Arabian

we,

teachers,

need the flexibility and the recognition

within our environment

to allow for our individual differences and similarities.

This is particularly important

during the increased instability and unpredictability

of the implementation process.

Thank you to those who

foster clear communication

provide a nurturing

and stimulating environment

for teachers

and, thereby,

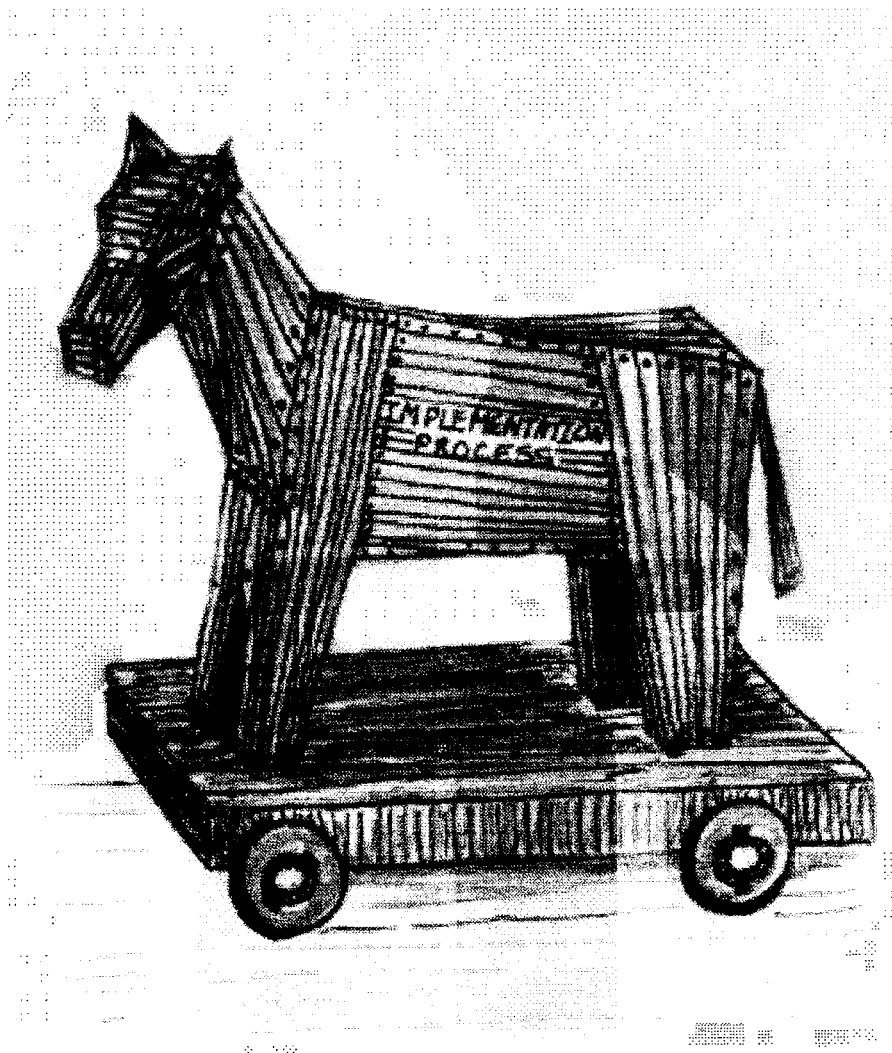
honour the differences.

**In Education
there is a season,
a time,
and a purpose
for everything a teacher does:**

**a time to implement and a time to refuse;
a time to assess and a time to report;
a time to reflect and a time to act;
a time to be supportive and a time to question:
a time to tread softly and follow
and
a time to throw caution to the wind and lead;
a time to demand and a time to invite ;
a time to keep and a time to throw away;
a time to separate and a time to unite;
a time to keep silent and a time to speak;
a time to plan and a time to instruct;
a time to explore and a time to present
a time to read and a time to write;
a time to assign and a time to mark;
a time to listen and a time to speak;
a time to laugh and a time to cry;
a time to teach and a time to retire.**

**In Education
there is a season,
a time,
and a purpose
for everything a teacher does.**

New curriculum?
Different?
History has proven that
not all new or different gifts which are bestowed
are necessarily
beneficial
to the recipients.



Advice To A Beginning Teacher

Learn from Icarus. Think seriously about the new ideas.

Field test your new methods. Take small testing steps.

Only then put your heart and soul into it!

Only then can you avoid Icarus' fate!



And

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.

.

yet

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.

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in the end

.

.

.

a teacher

is

the master

of his

or her

own fate

with the power

to agree

or disagree.

And,

to that degree,

he

or she

impacts

the fates

of his

or her students.

What a tremendous power base!

What an awesome

(in the truest sense of the word)

responsibility!

What a privilege!

In
the
end,
only
he
can decide for himself.

Only
she
will decide
who,
what,
and
when,
it is appropriate
to do
in the classroom.
Only they
can decide
to agree or disagree
with
“why” or “how”
and then
act
upon their decision.

What a tremendous power base!
What an awesome responsibility!
What a privilege!

Post Script

I began this paper with two personal questions:

What?

and

What did I ever do to deserve this?

My answers lie within my personality framework.

I upheld the vision.

I committed to implementations.

I have refused to let the vision and
the program implementation fall by the wayside
due to the lack of time,

money,

knowledge, understanding, skill,

faulty communication,

struggling teamwork or

indifferent leadership.

I robbed my personal time
to invest in my professional skills.

I used my take home pay
to buy books for my class.

I recycled my sons' toys
for resources in my classroom.

And now....
I am older.
I have less
energy,
time,
money
and fewer personal physical resources.

I must safe guard what is left
of me.
I must not squander my limited resources
needlessly.

I must use
those resources
which teachers bring to the implementation table:
experience, knowledge and skill
effectively and efficiently.
Other factions of society
and the educational system
must now find the way
to provide
the enabling characteristics of
time,
money,
and
encouragement.

I will not settle for less.

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Interview #1

I guess this is year twenty. I started off at _____. Taught a year there. That was Grade 1. Taught 1,2,3 in _____, the second year. And since then I've been teaching Grade 1 and Grade 2 and Grade 3 for the next eighteen years. Primary...never Kindergarten, yet. From the basal reader swing to the tail end of the phonics swing to the basal reader swing to the whole language swing and now back to the mixed bag kind of reading thing. Too many swings!

Was there a particular implementation that went really well?

The Year 2000...They sure knew how to do that one...They took us down there and wined and dined us...They took us to a conference and they got us all rah, rah rah. It was just like a religious revival. Everybody got so excited about it because we were all ready for a bit of a change because we were all so tired of the same stilted old manuals and whatever...For the most part I think people got on board and were really excited about it. That just right away paved the way for the Year 2000 curriculum to flow into our school. And of course the principal went. And, I think, all of us went. It was a massive indoctrination. I think, maybe that was why it went over really well.

That's the vision, then?

Yeah. They showed us where we were going to go. And, experienced people have done this already. It works and you're fine. And you're not going into uncharted waters. It's time for a change. And it's backed up by research and all that sort of thing. I think there was a lot of money around then to do that sort of thing...We were a pilot school then. Since then...Lions Quest Program. That's an awesome program. We went for two days training. And there's that missing element that we didn't find in all these other curriculums that are just handed out from the Ministry! That's something I chose to do and spent two days of my professional days doing it. And there, again, it was explained that you cannot teach this unless you have these two days because we will give you the vision. We will show you why you are doing the things. We will tell you the steps you can take to get to this point. And through activities and the bonding of the group, working together in little groups and big groups, going through the curriculum that was laid out in those two days I became a believer of that program or an advocate for The Lions Quest Program. I had

already wanted to do it ahead of the time so I was already in the right frame of mind and wanted to do it. So you're open to the thoughts and suggestions of the group or the leader that was teaching us about it. I guess if they fed you something perverse you wouldn't have gone for it. It was a great way of doing it. We all came out of there saying, "We can do this!" They even said, "Go and schedule this into your day." You could even top load in the beginning of September. Do lots and lots to get you going. That way you're right into The Lions Quest Program. That was probably my most recent experience of successful implementation. And I'm still doing it and believer of that program.

When I was going through this sheet that you gave me, _____, all of these things have come up some time or other..Maybe not with every curriculum we've done but...they are definitely factors in many of curriculum I've had to implement. Well, collaborative leadership, I'm a little shaky about what that means...but so far as I understand it...it is a group of people who are leaders in our school who will basically work together and lead each other...Is that basically it?

Basically, that's it. But it isn't the same person all the time. It means sort of an expert who is encouraging and has some expertise in a particular field.

We seem to trade that job around really well around here...Depending on the different curriculum that's coming in...Somebody might have expertise in it or whatever. We really help each other out with it. I really find that really valuable.

So you found leadership in the curriculum areas here?

Yes...

What about training in the curriculum areas?

Most of the time we get curriculum we don't get training. The curriculum comes in a little cellophane package...Whenever we have time we open it up. And we're told when the curriculum implementation date is. There's very little training that happens for implementation. I find that very disappointing. Most of the curriculum that I've implemented is self-taught. I'd like to see more professional development with every new curriculum that comes in. For example, our language arts curriculum that came in which most of us just cracked the cellophane off of...and hadn't even looked carefully at until some of us went to the implementation meeting at the Resource Centre. And we didn't even

discuss the whole curriculum at the meeting either. But that's the closest I've ever been to some kind of training. I find that's lacking. Very lacking.

So you'd like to see more of an emphasis there?

It's a big investment of time, and the time and effort of the people who wrote the curriculum. And, here all you do is shove it in all the different schools and say, "Go at it."...with really no time to get a good look at it and see if its good or not.

I've never had trouble with this. So far as myself...I just get in there and do it. I don't feel worried about it. But I can see for other people it might be a problem because they like what they're doing and they don't want to try something else...They're worried it might ruin a program that they've already got set up or whatever. So I can see that they might not be willing to take a risk to try something new. You could hold back from implementation.

In the past when you've implemented curriculum have you noticed many other colleagues that didn't want to take the risks? What kind of environment was it?

I think it was more that they were being sensible and saying, "Let's hold off a bit and see what's going to happen here." For example, the Year 2000., ..Bang we all roared off to Vancouver and had our little weekend of immersion and came back. Not everybody was convinced. And I don't think it was risk taking. I think what they were saying was, "Hold on. I've seen the pendulum swing....I'm going to sit back and take it easy and check it out first." I don't think it was risk taking. It was more "Let's wait and see." And because I haven't really worked with many inexperienced teachers I haven't really run across people who aren't confident in their skills. So I wouldn't say in my experience that the people I work with have problems with risk taking.

So there's, more than one of you that takes a plunge (into curriculum implementation)?

Yeah, sure.

That works right into teamwork and collaboration?

Yeah. That's the backbone of what we do here. We've got an awesome group of teachers here. We work together really well. We support each other. We always talk about, "How's it going with this or that?"....Getting back to the risk taking. Nobody's afraid to go up to someone and say, "_____, I just bombed a lesson." or "I'm having a terrible time with this new math curriculum." We talk a lot and nobody is worried that "Oh no...Now

go up to someone and say," _____, I just bombed a lesson." or "I'm having a terrible time with this new math curriculum." We talk a lot and nobody is worried that "Oh no...Now she will tell somebody" or "I look like a weak teacher compared." I think our egos are pretty solid. That collaboration seems like second nature to us. I would miss it terribly. That's why I stay here. At this school. Because I feel like I'm in a nurturing, collaborative warm atmosphere of teachers that support what I do and I can support them.. I don't know if I could grow and take the risks that I do in another place.

Is this communicating the curriculum?

If it's (communication) between the participants who are implementing..it's vital. Between the Ministry and the teachers it's also very important, too. Because we need to know when it is we're supposed to implement it. What is our timeframe? What are the materials that we are going to be using?

What has your experience been in that area?

I find the package arrives. The principal says,"You're to implement it in the year whenever. And we work towards that. I find there is very little communication in terms of the Ministry about anything else that is going on with that particular curriculum. I find the information and communication among the people on staff implementing is fine. I'm not worried about that. Other than the fact there is not enough time to do it...built into your day...which I will talk about later.

I have not ever had the opportunity...Well, when we developed the primary curriculum for math.. I worked on that committee. That's my only experience in evaluating curriculum, making it up, deciding what would be appropriate for certain age groups and revising that. When I get something from the Ministry I don't ever feel that I've been involved in the evaluation or revision of it. I don't know how that happens. 'Cause I've never experienced it. As a regular ordinary teacher I don't think I have that window of opportunity. It's never been presented to me.

As you evaluate on an informal level as it fits your style of teaching...and the students needs in your classroom and their progress...you evaluate in some manner shape or form. You know whether its working or not. It's ongoing

Do you have a system where you revise things and change the way you implement?

I wouldn't call it a system. Its just something I just do. Lots of times I'll take the lesson just the way its presented in the book just to give it a chance or use the actual materials that are given to me. Give it a chance and see how it goes. And if I don't like it then I make some notes in the margin of the book or whatever. Or I might even do it again. Or I might even say,"Oh, that didn't do a very good job teaching that concept. I better do it my way." And I'd do it my own way if I felt it didn't get through to the kids.

Do you give feedback to anybody (with regard to the curriculum)?

To the authors of the curriculum?

Just informally to the other teachers...Sometimes when we're out on our walk and we'll say, "How's it going with the new math program?" ...We talk back and forth that way... But not in a forum where we sit down and say, "How did everybody do on that measurement unit?" "What did you think of that unit in that book or whatever?" And then, I guess, the actual Ministry curriculum I copy it and keep it in all my files...I keep adding notes to it . You've got your four concepts or your objectives that you're supposed to be cover for say, space, and you just add notes to that. And then your file becomes a revision because you add things to it to enhance it and change the program to suit yourself.

I was torn between "Is it my vision what it's supposed to turn out like or the ministry's?" I guess it's helpful if the Ministry say,"This is what we're hoping will come be the bigger outcome of this curriculum. This is great because then you know where you're headed or the way they want the child to come out as a learner at the other end of the curriculum. That's important.

My vision? It's pretty hard to develop a vision until you have a pretty good understanding of the curriculum. And I suppose its intertwined with my vision of a learner, say in Math. And I try to make the curriculum fit my vision. Say a self-sufficient mathematician who understands math in the real world, or something like that, in terms of the curriculum that I do.

So you don't have a distinct understanding of whose vision and where it comes from?

No. I can't say I've read what's the vision for the new language arts curriculum? I don't know. I don't really know. It's probably there but I haven't read it.

So then you haven't had a chance to ask questions or discuss it or get it clearly in your

So then you haven't had a chance to ask questions or discuss it or get it clearly in your mind...? No.

If a person doesn't understand that, then you really can't bridge it can you? You can't go from A to B if you don't know where B is?

Uhhh

I saw support systems as time for prep. Preparation, to get ready for implementing the curriculum, time to support in terms of time to evaluate the curriculum, how are things going...what do we think of this, time for discussions, that sort of thing...That sort of support isn't there...Colleagues support each other in terms of informal discussions. But so far as the school or the administrator providing support in teachers implementing new curriculum, I don't feel it's there. Colleagues support each other. But it's up to me to find the time and make the effort to implement the new curriculum.

So you find support system as teacher initiated?

Definitely.

Planning Time?

Never enough...never given. It's all on my own time. And if I make the time it turns out better.

Recognition and resolution of barriers? ...Recognizing something is standing in the way of successful implementation and what you do about it?

I guess I just go around it because I've never found anything that was so bad that I couldn't somehow get around it. That it would somehow stop implementation or it would hinder it. I can't think of an instance that would do that...Here's a curriculum. How about the Applied Science curriculum? I recognize that for me to implement that program I need specific materials that the school does not have and I am not willing to buy myself..So yes, for me, that is a barrier to implementation. Because they want you to discuss closed and opened circuits with Grade 2's. I'm not to go out and get (my husband) to hook up a bunch of things...He would love to....But that's not ...I don't think that's my role...I think that stuff should be in school.

So what would you do?

Well, I guess a person should somehow apply to your principal for those materials and

Well, I guess a person should somehow apply to your principal for those materials and lobby on behalf of the school to have some make this stuff for a fee. You also need resource materials, too. The curriculum doesn't talk about...Well, in the back it does...But, we don't have them in our school...The appendix with it's recommended resources...Those kinds of resources aren't in the school and yet that applied Science is something we're supposed to be teaching. In the same six hours that we're supposed to be teaching kids twenty years ago.

So when you frustrated implementing which thing do you run across being responsible for it? (ie.What frustrates you?)

Lack of time.

A few others that are a little less important but impact you...

If I didn't have my colleagues to help me and be a team and support me. That would be a biggy.

Would you put that under teamwork and collaboration or collaborative leadership?

Teamwork and collaboration. If I felt like that I was out there all on my own on a limb I think it would be a lot harder. This way at least I know that I'm struggling along with other people. We can struggle together and support each other. And that links right onto support systems, right in there...That's all the time I need to spend talking to my colleagues and it's not there...So you need to build it in yourself in snatches of conversations here and there. Yeah...And you're recognizing and resolving barriers...

Part of the support system that is missing is actual materials. I remember when I came out of university the social studies program came out and it was in a box. All the cards were there and there were books and everything went with it. And the curriculum (guide) was there And this material supported this curriculum... And I didn't have to go down to the store to buy things myself. I didn't have to run down to the librarian and (ask) to please may I borrow this book which I'm sharing with the other Grade 2 teacher. I had my own materials right there and I could do it and everybody had their own. Now the curriculum comes in and "Oh, sorry. We don't have any materials to go with it. But there are recommended resources at the back. And your school could purchase them if they want. And then I have to share the book with the other Grade 2 teacher when we can. That part of

the support system is very, very weak. With the new curriculums coming out...I mean it's great that they ask us to do all this stuff but they don't support us with money. It wouldn't be possible.

So this way of accommodating different styles of teaching you don't really appreciate, then? You'd rather have it ready to go?

Sure...And then you could have the option of using it. So then if you don't want to you could go out and get your own. But I find I'm spending more and more money and time trying to search through all this stuff to try to find materials and that wears me out. Trying to find the back up materials to teach the concepts. That's when we put together those bins...That was a big help...like when I do magnets now all that stuff is in there. I don't have to search around any more. But we did that. We figured that out. The Ministry didn't do that. We as a team figured it out that for Science we needed to have the stuff in a bin so you don't have to search and spend all your valuable time trying to dig things up.

So when you look back to implementations from your first year teaching how have your feelings toward implementation have changed?

I think when I first started teaching you didn't know any better and you implemented just the way you were told in the manual to do it or in the curriculum guide and you did it exactly that way. And you didn't have any background experience to help you filter some of the ideas through:"Hmmm...Maybe not with Grade 2's" And I did it just exactly the way it was supposed to go. And now I'll go,"I'll try a bit of this. I'll try a bit of that. I don't feel like I have to go through the whole thing step by step by step...I can try it out and use my own ideas and yet still get a good understanding of it without doing it.

Advice to a beginning teacher?

Well, probably you would have to go through a lock step...Because how else would you know what is important and what isn't. And the people who've written it are supposed to be experienced people. So probably that's a good way to go through the first time. And then as you get more experienced you won't need to go through it so systematically.

Interview #2

So changes in teaching that I have been involved in? Lots of curriculum changes. Most recently we've implemented a reading program in our school, a new math program. Even the Primary Program. There were a lot of changes that went along with that gradually over the years...back further than that ...There were some district initiated changes and approaches and things that we started out maybe 8 to 10 years ago here. I can hardly remember them. There were these labels. There was this big push to teach a new way, in a different way. Those are some of the things I can remember.

I think sometimes...Well, first of all I found I need to have a commitment to the change my self. Sometimes you don't have a choice and it doesn't necessarily fit with your values or what you're doing or what you should be doing [or] fit with what you think. I could be quite resistant. Actually, I think I'm quite slow to change anyway. And that's one of the things that affects implementation for me: I need a long time. So some of the changes by the time I decide it might be a good idea find out enough about it to feel comfortable about [it] doing something I have never done before and maybe have looked around and seen other people doing it and its working, it's a good thing. Sometimes it's already gone by then. We're onto something new.

If it's really a good thing to implement and to work on. I need a really long time. Sometimes just seeing it used successful by other people...Seeing the value of it...A philosophical explanation and saying, "Yes, it is true."...and that is what we want...it is helping.

Vision is really important to you?

Yes, it is. And it has to be consistent with what I believe. And if it isn't or if I don't see that right away I need the time to see that. Oh, yeah. [I need to see] that is good for kids...[otherwise] I wouldn't necessarily jump in.

My commitment to it. I don't become committed really easily. So that is part of becoming committed, deciding that is what I want.

I think collaborative leadership is important. Actually I think all of these things are important but collaborative leadership allows you to a certain extent to leave it to someone else. Share it more. For me the best thing is for me to be working with maybe one other

person, a mentorship or a friend. Let's try it. Let's get together or our classes and try it. Or talking about it and then I have to be more involved. Or I can stand back and be more iffy about it. If it's a group thing and I can take any part I want to ...of commitment.

I think part of the reason that it takes me a long time to change is that I am not a risk-taker. So I want to make sure that the risk is not too big before I do it. I think that's why I need lots of information, to see other people doing it, to talk to them about how and why, what they're doing. So, that reduces the risk for me.

I haven't worked in a partnership with a teacher very many times. I think it takes a certain amount of similarity of philosophy to work really well. If it does work well it reduces the risk, too.

I feel less risk. I guess if you, before hand, you reduce whatever risks. So, whatever you're going to do is at a level you're comfortable with.

But risk-taking is maybe why some people probably embrace change more easily. They maybe like...They don't mind taking a chance and trying. I'm not a terrific risk taker. Another thing that's useful, really useful, is ongoing talk as you make the change. I think that's teamwork and collaboration. I think that lots of times we don't talk enough. We could save each other a lot of work. But it's not structured in so we don't do it. Like a few minutes talking about; say report cards. "How are you doing yours? You know every so often somebody says,"You know we should get together and talk about and share about..." But we never do. And that would really help.

That could come with planning time.

There's never any planning time. In the part of your life that you consider your job part. Like you never have time when you're not teaching. During the teaching day that's set aside. That's a good one. That's why things don't change faster. That's why they don't change sometimes. It's because you don't have time to think about it. The prep time is adequate for the teaching part of my teaching but it's not adequate for the change part. It's not adequate for planning a change that is significant. And (during) the prep part I prepare for my active teaching part.

But I need thinking time and planning time that is separate from that.

I think actually that one of the problems with change is that we don't really have enough

time to really do our jobs. We're so focussed on what we have to do day to day: the management of the kids, the management of the courses and the management of the actual teaching. We don't have time to do what we should do: getting ready for new ideas and figuring out how to implement them. Sort of too much on the survival mode, I think. Whereas, if we had time in the day set aside to meet in collaborative groups we would do wonderful things. I'm half time now and it's not so bad. As a full time teacher I really feel I don't have enough time to do my job properly, period. I know I'm not very efficient and I don't make decisions very quickly because I don't want to make the wrong one. But I really feel that we don't have enough time to do what we have to do. And we definitely don't have the time to learn new things, except for on our feet, basically. At least, at the rate we're expected to learn them and change I don't think that's enough time.

[My] Ranking: vision, risk taking, teamwork, collaboration, planning time, communication and information, support systems, recognition and resolution of barriers. I'd have to put it up pretty high. Because what happens with me sometimes is I get discouraged and then I give up. So, unless I can resolve the problems then I...

Say, I take out a new program. I'm really keen on it. I look through the teacher's guide. I think this sounds good. It will be a good lesson. I really think it's worthwhile. And then, it's not a good lesson. And then you naturally start to think if I had done this or this. The next lesson. Try it again. I know this is a great idea. I didn't like that lesson either. I wasn't happy with it. The kids weren't interested, whatever. If I have very many of those, then pretty soon I say I have better things to do. Usually what happen is I put it away. I'll do this my old way. Or, I'll do it. Maybe I won't do it quite as intensely as I was going to. So, unless I can figure out what went wrong and make it more successful I sometimes just put it away and go back to what I was doing. Because it worked!

Recognition and resolution of barriers is ongoing. It is a process of refinement.

Feelings toward implementation?

I thought maybe it was, "Oh, no!" But I don't think so. I tend to think. I guess I'll get around to this sometime. Now, when a new IRP comes out, say, I think I'll have a look. Or, I'll probably get around to it.

I think in terms of: "Yeah, I think there'll be time for this." I kind of have a long time

frame now. So now instead of thinking: “Oh, dear, now what’s happening? What are they pushing on me now?” If it’s going to happen, it will happen. I guess maybe I’m more patient and have a longer term view. So I know that if I don’t get a terrific Kindergarten Science program going this year, next year I’ll at least have gotten this math together. Because I did a pretty good job on it this year. And by next year maybe the science will be better. And next year something else will be better. And so eventually I’ll get around to it all.

I guess my thoughts have changed over the years.

I guess earlier on I would have said, “Oh, wow! Oh, this is exciting! This is dynamic. Oh, boy we’re going to...” And then I found out that I wasn’t really that jumping in kind of person after all. And, also you tend to get a little cynical in a way. Then there’s that: “Oh dear, here comes something new. If I wait it out, it will disappear.” There’s that, too.

Advice

If I were giving advice to a new teacher I would say: “Be patient with yourself.” I think it’s really easy to be overwhelmed by the amount of change that we are expected to deal with. And actually, probably, it’s impossible to deal with the change at the level we’re expected to. Just even in our lives. But, it takes time. And for me (Not for everyone I know. For some people. But probably for some people.) You need time to grow into changing. You need time to change your ideas maybe.

“Yes, different people would deal differently with implementing curriculum.” I know they do. You can see it . Everybody is doing things differently I would say. Maybe with the same framework on the bottom. I think everybody approaches something new differently.

There needs to be some awareness that that is part of changing in an institution. That there has to be a lot of flexibility for people to change in the way that works for them while we’re still going in the same direction.

“ in the same direction, with same goal...BUT the way we’re going to get there is different?”

Yes.

So any implementation process will need to accommodate any individual differences?’

differences?'

Yeah.

Other comments?

Sometimes we have inservice when we have a new curriculum. I think of inservice as someone coming from the math program showing you what you can do or how to use it. Sometimes we give too much credit to inservice. The person is going to come (at least in my experience). The person comes and shows you the materials you've already looked at and worked with and tried. And the inservice doesn't really move you on further. And, where we use something new like a math program what I think we need to do is inservice ourselves. Set aside time to look at the materials together and talk about it together. See how different people are using it and what's working for them and what's not working for them. I think that's much more useful than someone coming in and telling you something. What you want is the real hands on experience and the teachers are the ones who have that.

Interview #3*Thoughts about implementation?*

Speech and language are changing a lot. They like you to do more in classroom things. Most of our changes are driven from the States where they have a different model of speech-language pathology. So what will happen in the States is they want all speech paths to work in the classroom. And that's a great thing. And I've tried it twice and it hasn't worked out because my caseload is too huge. I can't. I don't have time to collaborate with the teachers. Whereas in the States they're assigned to one school and they have a maximum of twenty kids per week: whereas I probably see fifty kids a week. So to implement that change is difficult for us in Canada because our caseload is so out of whack.

And another, that is just recent for speech is literacy. Very heavy into literacy. And so that's more what I can implement because that's so individual because it doesn't have to take time away from a teacher or try to slip yourself into the classroom. I can just change the structure of my lesson plan.

The drives to change are coming from within and from outside of me. If I wanted to I could just ignore the trends: no one would know. No one even knows about the trends. Except I do through reading and through talking to other SLP's. So most of the changes are driven by me. They are initiated by me. No one tells me to do it. But you know how the pressure gets. You hear about the other SLPs starting to do in class things. Or everything you're reading tells you how to do it. So you kind of get pushed to do it 'cause you're like a dinosaur if you're not. But it's definitely self-driven. I'm the one that decides. No one tells me.

I'm the kind of person who just hears about it and I start trying it. Through the trial I end up investigating it more. So for instance with literacy: I heard about phenomenological awareness and I said, "OK. I kind of know what this is. I read one article. Yeah, I know what this is." So I just plow right through it and then I find all the little things I don't know. So then I go back and maybe purchase a test or purchase some more materials to help me get to my goal. So, I'm a trial and error kind of person.

You're constantly evaluating yourself?

Definitely. Because if it doesn't work or if I feel like I'm wasting time, then I get the feeling that it's not right. Then I'll pursue more or go to a conference. For instance, I was just at a conference on Thursday. That was on literacy. So that the stuff that I learned there, the little handout that they gave there, I can try to implement them here.

Support system: It's tricky when you're the only person in the area that does what you do, but I rely heavily on my support system in the East Kootenays Association. So, for instance, if I'm having problems or something, or I didn't really understand something, I can call on one of the other SLP's and maybe they'll be able to help me out. So I rely heavily on my outside support. So even though I don't really have anyone here to contact I have people I can call.

Not anyone here has to look to [someone] for leadership. Not in a person, per se. I've got journals and things like that. I look for that [leadership] through that. There's not really a person. Although the first AO I had was a wealth of information for me. So there I felt that I had leadership.

Do you find leadership in other areas which may not have anything to do with your area?

I'll use teachers. We're all on the same team kind of thing. If I need some materials or locate materials or get ideas or sometimes even in the lunchroom I get good ideas. Yeah. I just don't think that the word leadership doesn't apply to me.

Self training of the new stuff...Unless it came from when I was going through school the new things you have to go to the conferences, you have to do reading.

I love risk-taking. I like trying new things. But you see I'm in a different area. I've got a very controlled environment. I can take a risk because first of all no one is around to see it except me. And if it doesn't work I just throw the stuff out to the side and pull out something else. I like trying new stuff.

I think it [teamwork and collaboration] applies [to me], especially with regard to the special needs kids. Because I definitely work with their teachers and brainstorm ideas: for instance, Miss McCorry has asked me to work on something with a student that has a problem in class. That's not really a speech thing but I can do my speech goals while I'm doing it. It's a visual motor thing and so I can easily incorporate anyone's goals into my

goals. Language and speech is so flexible.

So you're implementing a lot?

I like working with teachers I'd like to do it more.

Sometimes getting all the stuff and having the time to read about things is hard to learn new things. And certainly no one ever calls me up and says, "Have you ever tried this?" It's all self-driven or a conference or something. I'd like to be better at talking to teachers and others about what I'm doing. As far as communicating the new things I'm doing 'cause that would be kind of fun to share with somebody some of the things that have worked or didn't work. It would be funny. Some of the little stories that I have that are crazy that didn't work at all. They lose something in translation if you don't understand what I was doing in the first place.

You wouldn't know there was a change in what you were doing in the first place. You wouldn't have a clue unless you came in and sat there. You wouldn't have a clue that I changed the way I'm dealing with the kids. And I've changed heads and tails since I've started. I'm different, way different. I think better.

That fits into evaluation and revision.as you're going along?

Yes. And I had one evaluation by my AO way back when. And that was interesting. What I did was video tape my stuff. And they knew my goals and evaluated my performance. And that was good. But I think it is mostly self-evaluation which is good if you're the right kind of person and can evaluate yourself. But if you're not, you might not make any changes at all. I don't go into self-denial.

I'm not that good at vision. I tend to be here and now driven and I have to force myself to do long range planning and say, "OK. This is where I want to be instead of "This looks great. I'm going to try this now..." and not think of where it's going to lead me. I have to get better at that...

Where do you get your vision?

What I have to do, I think, is first I have to jump in with both feet. And then, based on what happens, the kids' performance or the ease of the materials or whatever, that I've made up, then I have to think about how is this going to apply to real life? or social? or educational? As long as I use that as my guidance for vision (I'll be fine). Because if I take

the little things that I doing here they may seem totally ridiculous, right here in this therapy session. But if I take them and apply these skills to what the child will have success with later then I can get my vision for the long term: Where do I want him to be? But, I think, initially I jump in without much vision. I would have to say that.

So you don't have someone giving you the vision?

Sometimes I do. If a parent is overly concerned and tells me what they want, that's great. I love that. Or if a teacher says I really want him to do this in Sharing: I love that because someone else is giving me that. That's a goal to head for: I get that occasionally and I really like that.

No, I don't have planning time built into my daily schedule. I plan after school in my office. My hours are until 4:30. So, I have a good hour and a half to plan. And like teachers, sometimes you're doing it late at night. Sometimes if you have a really good idea you have to take stuff home.

Do you find that that [ack of planning time] ime may interfere with any implementation you may want to do?

ABSOLUTELY! I have a great idea right now. But the time to make these binders for the children. Like it's a peer tutoring program that I want to try 'cause I've heard about someone else doing it and I've tried it once and it's great. And I want to implement it down in the 'Flats but I have to make the binder, make all the games and all the things for the peers to use with the child. I just don't even want to start because it will take so long. So, I find that the planning holds me back a lot. Particularly for the very creative ones. I will do it. I've already appointed the peer tutor so that will force me to. I picked them two weeks ago so now they're bugging me and saying, "When are we going to work with this student?" And so now I have to just force myself to do it. So I put it in the daytimer and ignored it. Put it in my daytimer and I put it to the side. It's not the most pressing thing but I will have to get it done by Wednesday. So, I imagine I will do it tomorrow night.

Risk taking [is] number one because if you don't feel confident you don't want to take risks you'll never try any thing new. Especially when you have no one to watch. You have to just jump in. Being able to evaluate yourself and how it went is the other thing in for me in my job, too. Because if I can't say this didn't work or see the real potential in it, then

you don't go anywhere in the new thing that you're trying.

The other thing that I really value...the ability to call my colleagues in Cranbrook/Golden and say, "I just tried this and what do you think? Do you think? How do you think I could change this so that it is more effective?" Or this is the problem that I have with a student, do you have anything I could use?"

That's more change. That's more problem solving. But there are definitely trends in speech.

I don't think I need teamwork and collaboration because it's just me. So that's probably for my position is a little different. I like working on teams. I enjoy it a lot but I don't get much opportunity. I don't know. They're all pretty important I think for me.

I don't have easy access to journals and things. The way I get those things is through...I have one journal that I subscribe to but they are very expensive and they come out of my budget and I pick and choose. But I subscribe to a very good one. "Cause I subscribe to a school one. So if I find a good article I might photocopy it and give it to one of my friends. And they do the same for me. And, so for me, I'm picking up things. Or, we have a newsletter, two newsletters that I get monthly. You look through there and they tell you new innovations and things like that and you can pursue it then. You might go on the internet or you might call someone up and see. And I also meet up with other SLPs every two months and we do sharing ideas and sharing resources. So anything new that comes across your desk you bring. Then also we problem solve on things we're trying to do.

Time is the most frustrating. Student absenteeism is very frustrating to me. I miss a week every time a student is absent. Anything that upsets my schedule or I have to be away.

Time. And definitely financial resources frustrate me right now. We just had our budgets cut way back so I don't have any money to buy. That's really frustrating when you think you can do something really creative and you have nothing to make it. I usually make do.

Change is almost like when something new comes out for SLPs. If you're not doing it you're doing the wrong thing. And there's no self evaluation or anything. For instance, classroom collaboration and consultation. I thought it was a great idea, excellent. I get to

work in the class. So I made that as one of my personal growth plans. So I said, "I'm going to work in the class." Well, I couldn't at all. Well, I'd walk in and it wouldn't be conducive to what I was doing and I couldn't get together, say with you, and say, "I want to work with so and so during this time. Could I come in to your Language Arts?" I would have been able to see only three or four kids at _____ in a day. And so I find it really frustrating that we take for our Canadian SLPs we take what the States is doing because they are a very strong, strong body. I envy what they have done there 'cause they have so many SLPs working in schools. They've got reasonable caseloads. So they take/find this really great thing and they do it down there. And in Canada, everyone jumps on the bandwagon and thinks we're going to do this, too. This the best thing. Look at all these studies. They all say that this is the best thing." Well, it's just not reasonable. My girlfriend down in Cranbrook has a hundred students on her weekly caseload. She sees groups of four and five. How is she going to do that in a class? You just can't. If we were like they are down there then we could implement all those things. I think you have to look at your situation and you have to say, "This isn't feasible for me." even though everyone out there is saying to you: "Oh, yeah, I do classroom work. Oh, What? You do pull out? How come you're doing pull out still? That's like the dinosaur." But I don't have a choice. What can I do?

It's the physical restriction and the time. If I was at _____...That's just like they are at the States. I would be assigned to one school. Think of all the fun stuff I could do. I could team teach with people. I could teach whole classes lessons on listening like they do down there. So it's not reasonable to expect us to implement things that have not been tried here, in these kind of situations. I don't know if that's the same for teachers. It might be. Urban versus rural...

Interview #4(This person has thirty-two years teaching experience.)

[I] started teaching in 1966-68 in _____, taught intermediates 4/5's there in a couple of different schools; quit teaching after that for a year; did something else; ended up in Prince Rupert for a year teaching combined Grade 5/6. I think it was moved down from there to this valley for one year. That was 1970. Taught in _____ for 5 or 6 years; moved from there to Laird, mostly intermediate; oh, Grade 8 up in _____ and some primary. Up to _____, 5 or 6 years there, moved to _____. I was head teacher, vice-principal there, K-Grade 7, a small school. Went from there as principal to _____ School: K to 7, 120 kids, teaching at various levels there from primary through to grade 7. And then was principal of both schools for a few years, _____ and _____, which was interesting. Then moved to _____ as principal, a [Grade] 4 to 7 school. Then moved to _____ which is a Kindergarten to 3 school. And I believe this is my sixth year here.

I would think that if we looked at the first one [Carney's factors], collaborative leadership: that's everybody working together as a team. I think that perhaps that was not necessarily always the case. Looking at it now from an administrator's view and looking back as well I was a full time teacher; that it was often top down. That you will do this. I think by the time that I became an administrator that positional strategy had changed and it was more "What are our needs?" for the students. I think that's something that 's changed as well. It used to be a lot "What is it we can do to make things better for us as teachers?" and now we are more on "What is it we can do to make things better for kids?" What are those needs?

There's been a shift in emphasis?

There's been a shift. There's definitely much more collaborative, now. Generally, I think, generally teachers are more professional now then they were a long time ago. That teachers often seize the initiative themselves. They're not resistant to change. Some are, of course. I guess to some extent we all are. The only constant in their lives is change. So there's a major change. I think there's a huge collaborative opportunity. Of course, I'm looking specifically at this school. I can't really say how it works in other places. But in this school people definitely work together. They are keen to get things done.

There's always a lot of collaboration, working together. I think what has happened in the last five or six years [is] that the amount of change has increased enormously. At one time, and you'll certainly remember this, _____, there wasn't much change. Things tended to go along. We got a new reading program, a new math book. That was fine. We got by on that. And suddenly we got huge amounts of stuff being done to us by the Ministry. I'm not sure we really liked that very much. I'm thinking back to ___ and the Year 2000 stuff, new reporting system. When I was looking at material I wasn't really comfortable with it, wasn't comfortable with a lot of the stuff. But, this is what we were told to do. It was my job to see that we did it as a staff. And I would say there certainly were blockers on the staff with regard to that even though this was Ministry dictate. "You need to do this." I think we're pretty successful at circumventing what we don't like and carrying on regardless.

I can remember talking with a few people on occasion, individually, who were very much opposed to some of the changes. And I think what I essentially was saying to them was: "Don't block it. Don't be a blocker. You may not jump on board with this but don't try to physically or emotionally try to stop this. If you're not going to do this. Well, OK. but the rest of us are going to do this."

We are fairly distinctive in many, many ways.

And collaboration is one of them?

Absolutely. Very much so. With our staff everybody has their say. Sometimes everybody has a lot more than their say. Sometimes its difficult to get something done which you think, like painting those darn boards. You think this simple. This is one. This is a two minute discussion. And it's a forty-five minute discussion. You think: "Where are we going?" But everybody needs the opportunity to contribute what they have. And on a lot of staffs that won't happen. People will just keep quiet. But, here, people feel comfortable talking about those things and come up with some excellent suggestions.

I still think that the change has been overwhelming with regard to books. The amount of stuff that comes from the ministry is astronomical. And I do not believe that one person, one educator in this province who has read it all. You would never have the time. No administrator or teacher would ever have the time to read it let alone study it.

So then one of the big problems would be time? To implement things, would you say?

I think there's a level of frustration as well. You just finished doing one thing where you just get going on one thing and there's something else put on top of you. I don't think that is educationally sound. I think if you're doing Quest 2000 which we just started this year. We said we would get into it gently. We were told we would do this regardless of how we may feel about this new primary program. We'll just get going on this we'll find something else coming in on top and another thing on top. With our staff, for instance, I think the most fabulous thing that's happened to this staff for years is the Guided Reading program. This came from the staff. This wasn't a Ministry dictate. It wasn't a district dictate. It wasn't from the administration of the school. It was from us collectively. Because we were the ones who came up with this. We got on board with it. We are doing a fabulous job with it. So there's a big change but it was our change.

So it was teacher initiated? So bottom up?

Teacher and administrator initiative on this particular staff. Or, very much supported.

Risk taking varied?

Yeah. I think that this staff is much more risk takers than any other staff I've ever worked with.

And in your experience as a teacher?...

It was done to us.

Did you feel secure?

Yeah. I didn't have a problem with that most of the time. I have some difficulty with some of the dictates that came from the Ministry. For instance I could never understand the staggered entry for Kindergarten. I even asked the Minister of Education sitting across the table from him "Where did this come from?" and he didn't know. "But that's what you're going to do."

So would you say that that would be communication and information wasn't there as much as you thought between school level and ministry?

Ministry just told you what to do. Still does.

Previously they told you what to do and you did it. And now there is more of a relationship where they listen? Do they listen now?

Previously they told you what to do and you did it. And now there is more of a relationship where they listen? Do they listen now?

I still don't believe that they listen very much at all. The difference of this staff at this school is that, all of us collectively, have a huge experience in our business. And sometimes when we're told to do something we may say, "Well, that ain't necessarily the best thing for the kids in our experience." So we are clever at avoiding tactics, perhaps, if there's something that we feel is not best for kids. Then we probably won't do it. Whereas, a younger, less experienced staff may just do it.

So (teacher) experience has an impact on implementation?

Absolutely. Absolutely.

It would be professionalism of staff. Teamwork and collaboration. That's what makes it work.

All those other things (are important)?

You need vision.

Where would you put vision? Up near the top as very important?

Well, it's meant to be near the top. But I don't think it really is. I think a lot of the time we know where we're going. We know what we believe is best for kids. We don't need the big vision statement. Although working through that is OK. But I doubt that there is one person on staff who can give us what the _____'s vision is at the moment. Maybe you could.

No I can't..

Neither can I. But I think we all know what's good for kids because we've worked with kids for so long. So team work and collaboration. Risk taking is right in there because as a staff... There's something called a perfect failure. So, if you go into something that you feel is really good you do everything possible to make that work. You did your research before. You worked hard. You prepared. You did the evaluation. And at the end of that you say: "You know, that didn't really work." To me, that's the perfect failure. And there's nothing wrong with that whatsoever. That is enormous risk-taking. But I think on this staff, that would be OK. If something didn't work nobody is going to feel threatened by other staff members and certainly I hope not by me. People want to try things I'm

usually pretty amenable to them.

If we're thinking information with regard to change then we're looking to a large extent at this huge pile of documentation coming from the Ministry. It's too much. It's overload.

So, does it make a difference in implementation?

Yes, it does because if you have four IRPs in front of you, all brand new, you say: "Oh, my gosh! Where do I start?" If we had one and we can look at it and could take something out of it and use it and make it work for the kids and the rest of us [it's] still too much.

Right. But how much of an impact does that make on curriculum implementation?

It [implementation] doesn't happen.

In this scheme of things can you be successful without paying attention to the IRPs?

With regard to change?

You can't change if you don't know where to change, right?

You have to know which direction you're going in. So, you need to know that information.

So, if there's too much it would impact hugely?

Yes

And if you had impact of IRPs that you really didn't know but you had the collaboration?

You could get out. Through osmosis, almost.

So you could almost do a jigsaw thing. You learn this one. You learn this one. You learn this. We'll trade around?

That is not really a very good way of doing things. You'd be better off to take one unit and study it. "Now we will look at this."

I look at support systems. Like let's look at the Quest 2000. I think we did not have a very good support system. Even though the people who were providing the support thought it was. Did you sit in on the Quest 2000 stuff here?

Up to a point..

This is a program that was done to us. It was not done with us. And then the support behind it has not really been there.

With greater support would we be in a better situation with regard to Quest 2000?

behind it has not really been there.

With greater support would we be in a better situation with regard to Quest 2000?

One of the problems that I see with Quest 2000 is philosophically. [There is] such an enormous shift from the way you and I have traditionally probably taught mathematics. Certainly as we get to a higher grade 3, very different. I think most of our teachers, here, said: "Yeah, we'll be going to be doing this unit in Quest. But we're going to change it a little bit to suit us and make it a little better for the kids. We'll be sticking with some other things that we know work well." I really doubt that Quest 2000 will be fully implemented in this district before something else comes along.

I look at training. I look at what was self-initiated here; Guided Reading. We had two teachers here, yourself included, who went to Golden. We had other teachers who had gone to Golden before to work with experts. We chose to put some of our funds from this school in to bringing people in. This is nobody telling us what to do. This is what we said we wanted to do. We have had a number of people including myself who have been at workshops in Calgary with regard to Guided Reading.

Support materials? We've had actual books which were provided to each and every staff member here. That's the sort of stuff that gets things done. Then as a school we chose to put a very large amount of cash money into providing materials that would help this program.

Which would you consider more important, the training or the teamwork and collaboration?

I would say the teamwork. Because that provides intrinsic, as well as extrinsic rewards. It will provide the training.

Interviewee #5

The years [teaching experiences] I've had are: 33 years, grades 1 to four in the classroom. . . .

I've encountered all of these [Carney's] factors, to some extent. What I found about change was that in education sometimes it's been a top down model and people who are in charge of implementing the change are expected to change. It doesn't work out because of barriers and it's dropped and another change comes along. Sometimes there hasn't been enough time to let these things evolve. What I'm also saying is that the pendulum in Education is going back and forth, even now.

Which factors?

I think the biggest problem would be someone in authority or a management position expecting someone to implement curriculum change or any kind of change and then the person who's doing that change feeling threatened by the authoritative figure, at least it seen as a authority figure and then being judged them: you know, in ways being threatening.

So then you think risk-taking is the biggest problem if the conditions for the implementers was not a safe situation?

Right. On the other side of that when someone in management or authority is seen as a supportive person and willing to let people try things it seems that the person who hasn't changed is more relaxed and things do work better. If the change is a good one. Sometimes changes are not good, in my opinion.

Would you elaborate on that?

I think that one of the changes that came into B.C. schools was Whole Language. Some people thought, like me, had seen especially the reading curriculum start with a basic beginning to read skills and do basic words and do phonics and everything. And we got used to do that. And then the Whole Language Program comes in. And I've taken lots of courses in it, and I still believe that for some kids it's not the right way for them to learn. And now we're coming back to where we know some kids are . And many kids aren't. And when Whole Language came in as a change, I think, if you didn't embrace it wholeheartedly you were looked upon as a dinosaur in education or you weren't forward

thinking or you didn't understand reading. I think that feels threatening. But it was also very critical of some people who taught a reading curriculum that worked. And if you didn't change to the Whole Language one you weren't appreciated. Whereas, now I think people are recognizing that there isn't just one way to do things. So maybe the change back when the pendulum swings back to a more developmental model, I guess, I think is a good change. But sometimes you can be labelled in some form or fashion if you don't jump into these things.

So, the philosophy, could another word for that be vision? Could be quite different and create a problem then?

Yep.

So, that in actual fact, if the philosophy were the vision, coincides with a particular teacher's, then they'll feel empowered but if it doesn't they will feel threatened?

Yes.

And if it doesn't it creates the reverse problem?

Yes.

So then risk-taking and vision would be the two you see most impacting?

Yes.

What do you think as being the least impacting?

Planning time, to me, would not be a big issue because as professionals I think we should make time to do our planning. I would see that as not a barrier.

Have your feelings about implementations changed from the beginning of your career to now?

I don't know if it's change but what I see is modification. For a while we were: for example, when the Primary Program first came in a long time ago people saw those big blue binders and their resistance went up and I think that some of that has never left. Although, I have to say, when people are asked to implement things I have to believe that the suggestions for organization effecting change have come from research that shows that these things are good. And the implementation we always have to be ready for change as long as it is slow. And maybe it has to work through a few years to see if it is worth, before you discard it or increase focus on it.

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I also think that some people put too much emphasis on what was a curriculum change. What I'm saying is: if it's not broken, why fix it? Sometimes I think we rush to fix things that aren't broken to be looked upon as modern or progressive and my feeling is that if you're going to implement something new, it better be to fix something that doesn't work.

Do you have any recommendations for anyone who is just starting teaching?

I would suggest that they get involved with their teaching association, Ministry, Special Ed., Libraries Programs, Primary programs. There's always been an avenue for feedback like a survey or something. Too often people say that they've never been asked but we have been asked many times. But some people never have taken the responsibility of responding to things. Even though the changes can come from the top down I think the rank and file people who are in schools do have an opportunity to respond and we have to do that: for example: the Ministry right now in Special Ed. is right now putting out a document and they're asking for feedback and all kinds of things about Special Ed. And it's my responsibility as a teacher to respond to that. Everyone needs to get into that practise or habit of responding because I think it's their responsibility. So when a change comes you can at least say: "I was part of it."

Have you ever been in a teacher initiated change?

I probably have been but I can't think of any specifics.

How do you think it would be different from the top down?

I think that a feeling of ownership would come with that, so you would feel like...A simple example would be a timetable change that comes from the staff. People are involved in the change instead of being imposed by the administration. If you have this little idea that you are going to do this little change you are more likely to make it be successful because you have been involved.

The kinds of curriculum you have implemented in you classroom? You've implemented Whole Language in your classroom which was a big philosophic change. And, so, it meant a lot of changes in instructional techniques, etc. How do you compare that with curriculum that did not have the philosophical change? Were there differences in implementation and how you felt about it?

differences in implementation and how you felt about it?

I think that since Whole Language thing was such a big....It wasn't like getting a new spelling book to try or something. It was the whole thing. About how you were going to teach children how to read and the acquisition of literacy. And I think because it was done in such a big way that had a more of an impact than smaller changes such as the Social Studies curriculum changes. And also, because in the primary system Social Studies and Science, although they are important, they aren't given the great emphasis that learning to read and write are. So the bigger the subject, I guess, the more the impact it's going to have.

Guided Reading is a reading and writing thing. How would you compare it to how you feel and Whole Language?

I see Guided Reading as a pendulum swing back to a basal reader approach. I say that because when I first heard about it the things that struck me were: homogeneous groupings, materials that start with very simple reading material and works up to something more complex, teacher involvement in small groups. And, to me that is just the way that a basal reader is used except that we don't use the words 'basal reader' any more. And, although I haven't used it in the classroom, I can see that if I were in a classroom that's the way I would approach it. So I guess what it does is give a wider range of material, literature based material for kids to learn to read. And I guess that's important for many kids: but for some it has to be so basic and there has to be so much repetition that I wonder that if even Guided Reading is good for everybody. I'm thinking of the kids that I work with I still have more success on a basal reader than I do on what I would call literature based material.

Interviewee #6

I did Speech and Language pathology for thirteen years for the district. And then I went back and finished my Ed. Degree. I did Kindergarten half time and Speech Therapy halftime. And then I went to Germany for three years and did Kindergarten there full time in Laar. And two years of Speech Therapy there. I set up the program there so that was kind of neat. And then I came back here and, by golly, I was guaranteed a job, not necessarily my job. So, here I am teaching again. No Speech Therapy so for the last seven years I've been doing either Grade One or full time Kindergarten.

In that time you have implemented new curriculum?

Many new ones.

Well, I think a perfect example of what happened this summer when we all decided we were going into Guided Reading. We were having this workshop at the end of August. I believe it was you who phoned around and asked people, "Should we get together in little study groups? Let's read this and read that. And have this ready. And sit around casually and non-threatening...and whatever.." And for the first one I wasn't prepared because I'd lent out my Guided Reading out but there I was. I found that the most effective way to get the whole picture, to see what others were doing, to piggy back on what others thought, to say: "I didn't understand that." or "What did that mean?" or "I read this." or "What are you going to do about that with your grade level?" I think that is a perfect example of the way it should be. However, that's the only time I've ever in my career done it that way.

So, that's referring to teamwork and collaboration?

Yes. Teamwork and collaboration is the most effective. And I believe also on top of that you had to be a risk taker because if you didn't want to jump in and try something new this wouldn't work. You had to be prepared and you had to chitchat when you hadn't really experienced it or tried it or refined it.

I found that an overall vision was important, too. So you knew what the picture was going to look like; what you were going to do in the end; what the kids were going to be doing. And I could only gain that finally after going to our full day workshop. And again, how many months later, revisiting at another workshop and even though it was the basics. "Oh, yeah ... Oh, yeah ... Oh, yeah ..." So, I don't think you're ever finished having your

correct vision because I think as you go along with time your vision changes: with the needs of your kids; the kids you have in your class at that time; meeting your needs, and with following into, of course, the primary program and out comes.

Planning time? Well, that's never, ever, ever given. So that's for me, that's always been on our own time, and at our own expense a lot of times.

Support systems? Once again were very, very important. Given that we could get together and say "How're you doing? And if that didn't work then try this. Or I talked with the class, Don't do read around the room during Literacy Centres. Do that during..." "Oh...Okay." So I find that that really helps. As you're going along not only in the year that you're trying it or in your first evaluation and revision, I think you're always evaluating: What works? What didn't work? How could I do it differently? What will I do next time? I didn't get that. What happened when you did that with your class? All of those things. Brainstorming, again, "What to leave out? What to do?"

Training? I don't think has any bearing whatsoever to do with it at this point. A lot of it is because it's what's happening now...NOW...We need background knowledge and whatever obviously helps comes into play with lots of those kinds of things. But for the here and now and what you're doing I think you learn as you go. You just jump into it and you change and be flexible.

Do you think that some of that training is part of the teamwork and collaboration?

I think so. In that way, yes. Yes I do . Once again when you're doing that teamwork and collaboration I believe that is part of the learning process, too. That reflecting off each other.

If you consider materials as part of the support systems: ie., if you're going to implement Guided Reading and and you need certain kinds of books. Have you found in your experience that any materials that you have needed you've gotten? Not necessarily a luxurious amount but have you had an adequate amount of materials?

It has been far better recently. For instance, take back the Guided Reading. We were provided with the overall handbook. We were provided with the kits for the actual personal little reading books. We were provided with some time whether be it with groups or alone to do that.

When we did Lions Quest we were provided with materials. I chose not to do Just in Time Books for Kindergarten. But, once again, we were given that opportunity the first year. With Quest 2000 new program, that makes three new things we've tried this year. I don't think that Kindergarten could have done it without coming with the tub that came with all the manipulatives, all the hand out sheets, all the practise sheets, all the mats that you call, everything was there. So that not only were you doing it the night before but you could run them off or laminate them or do whatever. And I didn't have to run around. Yes, I had some more manipulatives and I had some other things. But basically, everything I needed and to me that's incredible. And then what you don't have, like the Lions Quest or whatever, it told you how to make them. You could easily make the materials the night before or if you're organized, earlier.

But in days gone by, like for instance when I got started with Speech Therapy or when I first started teaching Kindergarten you made everything. You scrounged everything. You changed everything. You Mactac-ed boxes. You didn't get bins or anything. So, yes I do believe over time and that's been twenty years for me. I think we're a little smarter on how we do present things and expect teachers to learn new things. But in lots of ways we're not smarter. For instance with the IRPs I find that still the biggest thing where we weren't given enough support to really fully understand what we were doing and what we were supposed to do. We jumped in and, yes, over time we have but that's still a big lack there.

So ,there's the difference in the two situations. What would you say accounted for the difference?

For me, with the IRP it was the lack of not being able to get the things and to have them when you needed them: whereas, the other things came with basically everything you needed plus they were smaller units of things that you could wade through. Whereas, with the IRP you're given all these packages and all this information and everything. And even though it was over a couple of years, I mean, has it been four or five years that we've had them now? I don't know..four years? I still re-read, go back , go back. I still haven't got my hands on some materials I should have or have a good understanding of what they really expect us to do for the outcomes in technology area or drama. I don't know if it's a lack of concrete things or if the IRPs are far too much to know. And when nobody knew

what they were doing. That made it harder too. Whereas, with Guided Reading, you went down to the workshop we had a few more people who were a little more knowledgeable. And yet math we all decided to do what we wanted and try it. We [ended up] supplementing with other things.

One of the things you mentioned as you were doing Lions Quest, Quest 2000 and Guided Reading. And how's it going?

Actually, I must say that I'm really really enjoying it. I'm finding with Lions Quest that the kids love everything about it: the stuffed animal, Q Bear, couldn't be a better little mascot. He shows up in all lessons no matter what we're doing, that little bear. They remember the lessons that they learned from him. I'll cue them: "Q Bear, I wonder if he'd like that. The rule is ..." whatever. They really enjoy it. That's fun. It's all there and it's quick and easy. And the kids respond well.

Quest 2000: I'm doing bits and pieces and I've tried it all. But I don't have the overall picture still of how the whole outcome or the flow of it. When we were given the little workshop, not being math oriented, and not seeing flow, I would love to see a lesson on what a Quest 2000 lesson looks like. Like we did with Guided Reading. Not that it needs to be like yours or the same or whatever. I want to see what they ask using the journal that they put out the reflective question and they do the exploring or they do things. I've done all those things but I still haven't pulled it together. So, next year going up to Grade One it will be a whole new thing again. But hopefully I'll get a better grasp of the philosophy and the idea behind it which is not really the outcome of the numbers that they know two plus two. But it's the thinking and how did you get there? Show me a different way. Those kinds of things. That one I'm going to have to work a little harder on.

I'm thrilled with the Guided Reading because, hopefully, that some of the children that I have this year will be able to help some of the children who haven't had it or had it in a different way in the other kindergarten class. Then we'll be able to start sooner and I'll be able to modify. I have lessons all set and ready and that will be a review. Then I'll just have to start later in the year with doing a little harder activities. So I'm quite excited that everything that I have for September, October, November should be in place. I'll just have to go day to day in Quest 2000.

Which of the factors have more impact on you? And do they vary, like do some have more of an impact on Lions Quest than Quest 2000?

I think it comes down to where you are at in your teaching career; where you're at [assignment] if you've been at the same Grade level a long time or if you've been flip flopping grades like me. I also think it depends on your personality: if you want to just go in and jump right into things or if you want to sit back and know more before you start it. I think it's also your commitment for trying new programs and going along with it even if you don't understand it or know the philosophy or don't agree right away or you're cranky because you have to do yet another one. I think that your commitment and your willingness to try it, so it flops or so you're not happy with it for the first little while you can still go back to some tried and true. Or modify or do whatever. That is the perfect thing with double K: what I do in the morning if doesn't work I can modify it because it's new and go back and try it again. And that's neat. And I'll pencil in what I've done. I think it changes over time, too. Your needs and opinions on these on implementation. A long time ago I would have been overwhelmed with doing a lot of change. With being a Speech Path you always worked by yourself.

O.K. Rating the factors.

I think that I'd have to come back to teamwork and collaboration as being the most important to me, what helped me the most. And then, again, the overall vision, kind of knowing where you're going and why you're doing the little bits. I did rank training as number three 'cause I guess I felt training was those little bits and pieces that we did do. Those PRO-D days and the little meetings that we did do.

Then I kind of went to risk-taking because if you don't want to try, if you're not into it, it's not going to work.

Support systems? I think that's what we have here. We're very supportive. We can laugh if it didn't work. We can say, "Try this." We can say, "I've got this for you." We can say, "We can help you." We can say, "Do you need anything?", whatever. We can share materials. So I think that's good.

Communication and information: I think that has to happen all along. And with the experts. Say with the people from the book company or the Lions Quest people or people

who had training. Not just with ourselves who are struggling or not struggling.

Then down to evaluation and revision because I think that comes naturally when you're doing it. That you're always doing it anyway so I put it lower. But I think that's happening all the time.

And recognition and resolution of barriers? I don't know why I have it down there and I can't say other than because if you're always revising and re-evaluating it's happening at the same time. It's not one of those that's way down there.

Interview #7

Currently I'm teaching Grade Three. This my second year teaching Grade Three. Previous to that I have about twenty-five years teaching experience. I began teaching in intermediate grades. Then I majored in Special Education and I taught Special Education for five years. Then I decided to go half time for a while while I was raising my family and I taught kindergarten for ten years. And more recently I've been teaching in primary grades and I've switched back I've switched back and forth. And I taught a multilevel class in there. Most of my teaching experience is in British Columbia; but I have taught in Alberta and Ontario, as well.

You've had quite a varied career there. In all those experiences you must have introduced some new curriculum.

Yes, I've introduced quite a bit of curriculum. The first positive one I really had was the introduction of the new kindergarten curriculum. And this was probably in the mid eighties. At that time they revised the British Columbia Kindergarten Curriculum. It was really well done. There was a lot of inservicing. The document that was published was a very workable document and helped teachers implement the curriculum. So that was a very successful experience. There was a lot of time to share and interact with other kindergarten teachers. Not only in our district but throughout the East Kootenays, as well.

Have you had other experiences more recently?

Yes. Following that...well, I'll go back in time and try to do it chronologically. After the kindergarten curriculum then I moved to Ontario. And in Ontario I taught in Dufferin County. And they were implementing a new primary curriculum there. So I was involved in that as well. There was a lot of inservicing with that and a lot of opportunity to interact. Lesson plans and that came out in a comprehensive binder. I found this very similar to the British Columbia curriculum in introducing The Year 2000 document. Ontario was actually a forerunner in doing some of those things. Now our district jumped right in to The Year 2000 curriculum so we again had a lot of opportunity for training and interaction. There was a lot of enthusiasm about it. The binders and documents as they were revised became more workable. There was a lot of teacher input into the revisions which I thought was very worthwhile. The philosophy was good. There was a lot of parent education, support

materials for use with parents and that. As it was being implemented though I found an obstacle that came along and that was the dual entry. It was introduced as we were trying to do the curriculum and work with it . And this seemed to cause problems with teachers and parents because there were quite a few problems with dual entry. Just logistics had to do with its success.

Did that affect the enthusiasm?

Initially, I think everyone was enthusiastic about it because it was child centred. A lot of good descriptors for evaluation, focussing on the child. Then I felt when the dual entry came along that the teachers didn't understand it all that well and the parents were really questioning it. And then when it ended suddenly we were faced with: Where do the children go that are partway through a grade? It caused a lot of problems in that the teachers had to counsel the parents and we really didn't know the best way to go. That sort of thing. So,, I think that it was one of those things that was introduced too hastily.

So there wasn't a lot of thought?

The vision wasn't really in place there.

Then a personal curriculum I chose to introduce to my class was Lions Quest. I found that very successful. Probably because I had a vision and I had heard a lot about it. I felt it was a very effective way of dealing with socialization and behaviour problems and having children be caring and considerate of others.

Was it addressing a need in your classroom?

It definitely was addressing a need. For this there was excellent inservice. I got to go to a two full day workshop. I got to talk to other people with common concerns that were not just from our district. I felt the support materials were very good, too. And a lot of chance to have feedback talking to other people, about how it worked for them. Now maybe this was so successful because it was a real interest of mine and not something that I had to do; but, I made a personal choice about this.

Then the next most recent curriculum are the new IRPs, The Integrated Resource Packages that are coming to B.C. And I felt initially that they were introduced quite well. When the first few came out there was adequate time for training and time to discuss and work through with the staff. But as more sections have been added on I found there isn't

the time for that training and that you are just presented with a package and you have to investigate and deal with it yourself.

On your own time?

On my own time, by myself. And we haven't really had a chance on our staff to work through these things. Another concern I have are the resources that go along with it. There are recommended resources but they are not necessarily readily available. Or we don't have the opportunity to view the resources and really look through them and decide what we want to use. And that's a concern.

I hear you mention time a lot in this last few comments, so you're finding time was a concern with the latest curriculum implementation?

Yes. I think they've just come in too quickly.

And another concern that I have is we have the child centred philosophy of The Year 2000 and now we're going back to curriculum driven sort of assessment. And I think there needs to be a happy medium between the two. This is why I think we need more time to reflect about what we're doing, just re-evaluate and slow down a bit and figure out what what's going to work for us.

Then, I guess the most recent implementation is on our staff right now. We are introducing Guided Reading, and also the Quest 2000 Program. I feel that maybe we rushed into the Quest 2000 program because we needed to, as a district, decide on a math program to use and we were given an introductory workshop. But we didn't really have a hands on type of workshop to work with materials. Also, the materials were very late arriving this year. Not in time to start this year so we got a late start with it. So I thought that maybe we've taken on too many things.

So, particularly with the math, it was too much. It was too fast. And the resources weren't there to study them before you needed to use them.

We talk about vision. I think sometimes we have a short term vision. That we don't look far enough into the future: we may get excited about an idea or a new program and we don't really consider the impact it may have or the time needed to implement effectively.

Are you making a distinction between effectively and successfully?

Successfully is probably the word that I want.

Please comment on change effectiveness factors.

One of them is called collaborative leadership. During implementation periods was there collaborative leadership involved? Showing you the way?

With some implementation there has been and in other areas I feel that there really hasn't been enough collaborative leadership. I think that even on a staff you need to have one person that is the coordinator. Often we have one person go off and attend a workshop and come back and it's their job to inform the rest of the staff. So if we're going to do it that way we need to make sure that the person going off to take the workshop is really well informed by the leadership there and then have the time to involve the staff in training and to use the materials.

In your mind that is person fulfilling that role of being a collaborative leader Is that person just informed and passing information or do you see that person as being a cheerleader type? Where they maintain enthusiasm and that sort of thing?

Ideally that would be the case. Maybe that person has volunteered to go for the training. He really thinks it's a good idea or is committed to it.

So he had a passion.

Right.

Another one was the training of the teachers before. I think you've mentioned that.

I think that's very, very important that all teachers have the training before stepping in to do it. They need to have some practise, a chance to view the materials that they're going to work with and sharing with other people how they think they can incorporate it into what they are already doing or how it will work in their classroom.

You need to consider, especially with the math program what manipulatives and materials that you already have for use. You have to consider if you have to make a lot of new materials. These are things you need to look at before you jump right in.

So I see you have talked about teamwork and collaboration already. What about risk-taking?

Well I think risk-taking is very important. I feel most teachers are risk-takers. We are pretty open about jumping in and trying new things, willing to take a chance. I feel we need time after we work on something to reflect on it after. See if we're happy with the risk

we've taken. We also have to consider our comfort level.

So you've mentioned evaluation and you've also, mentioned revision. What about support systems?

I think support systems are very valuable. Sometimes when you're implementing new curriculum you feel very uncertain about things and you have your own personal vision. And you might feel that you're not meeting it or that something is not working successfully. So it's really valuable to be able to talk to other people on staff or even at grade level to see how things are working for them: sharing both your successes and what you perceive as failures and getting ideas from others. It usually helps you get back on track and feel better about things.

The support system, what it mainly means to you is mainly the time?

In a way, actually I'll jump back to when I was implementing new curriculum in Ontario. Now in a larger school district you usually have directors of instruction. And their job is to help to implement curriculum. They visit fairly regularly or you can call them up. You can question them about things. They are usually very familiar with the new curriculum coming in. In some cases, they would give demonstration lessons and assist you in that way. At times I feel that in a smaller district you're missing that type of support.

Would that not put you in a position might be threatening? To have a director of instruction coaching you?

Not really. Because I think that's how we all learn. From someone who we perceive as the expert. You can do this with your staff which is interesting, too. But it is difficult for the other person to come into your classroom and do a demonstration lesson. And I think there's probably a chance of arranging time off if you observe someone else. And I know we used to do that a little more in the past but we haven't been doing it that much. And I think that's really valuable. At times you need to see how other people are implementing the curriculum.

So that involves money?

It does.

So money must be part of the support system?

And it seems more recently that we have had less money to implement than we have had in the past.

So would you say that there was...that that impacted on the more recent implementations that you've been doing as compared with The Year 2000?

I certainly would. I felt that there was a lot more support and money available with The Year 2000 implementation.

The math program that you mentioned and the Guided Reading are different in that they are local curriculum versus provincial curriculum?

Yes. That's probably the money factor involved there because they are local.

You talked about planning time. One of the other factors that the literature has mentioned is the recognition and resolution of barriers. What would be your response to that? What would you say could be a barrier to implementation?

I feel that time can be a barrier to implementation. If you don't have a common vision or if you don't have your vision clearly in place, that can also be a barrier. Another barrier can sometimes the new curriculum is not as child centred as it was a few years ago and we lose track of the individual student and get caught up in just trying to teach the curriculum as it's outlined. And when this happens you may have more behaviour problems and things like that because you're not meeting the needs of individual students. I think you always have to keep that in mind: How is the curriculum going to impact on them?

So in your school when there is a dissonance, where is a problem like that how is it dealt with? If there is a problem that kids are just not learning fractions or they're not listening and this is part of the new curriculum? What do you do? What can you do?

I think most people try to deal with it on an individual basis. And one of the things that was mentioned as being important was revisiting and evaluating how things were going. And I think if we could do that more effectively then we would not come up with as many barriers.

So constantly adjusting to what the situation is?

Yes.

If you think of all those factors which would you consider the most important?

Well, I looked at this check list that you have, Mrs._____. I'm not very good at

rating things 1 to 10 and I looked at it. I think that they're all very important. I think getting off to a good start is a key factor. As number ones I would place collaborative leadership, the training, the risk taking and the vision as being really, really important because that where you establish your broad vision: Does that make the decision? Do you really want to go in this direction?

And then following up close behind teamwork and collaboration are important there. And that you have support systems in place, and the time, the time to plan and that... And then as you progress along I think the others fall into place. I really couldn't rate them one to ten.

A lot of times I've heard that when new curriculum is implemented there's a wide range of emotions just flying around. I've heard of frustration, resentment and excitement, feelings of being overwhelmed. I was wondering if you could comment on that. If you could describe what you felt and what you attribute those feelings to.

Well, I've felt everyone one of those feelings! I think with most new curriculum I've been pretty excited. I was especially excited about the new kindergarten curriculum. And I was also excited about the Year 2000. You know the ideas seem to relate to the children so well, giving them hands on experiences and still realistic in expectations and ideas for assessment that were all in place there.

So it wasn't just the newness of the curriculum?

Well, it was the newness, too. It was content, too. The Lions Quest, I was really excited about that, too. I think a lot of excitement was the enthusiasm of the person who was presenting the workshop plus the interaction that you had. It was a very interactive workshop where people shared ideas. You could see how the curriculum could work and it tied into my value system. I really thought it would help students be less self centred and more focussed on each other and the community. I think that this is a very important [part] of education, so I was excited about that. Frustration, I certainly felt that at times. A lot of frustration comes with a lack of time and a lack of materials. With each new curriculum you'll frequently have to order new materials, looking a lot through books, figure out what [to get] for the money you have to buy. The new Science curriculum is very heavy. It requires the use of a lot of materials to do experiments and that. It's very time consuming

for the teacher to assemble this. On the other hand, it's very expensive to buy a pre-packaged kit. I think you have frustration dealing with that sort of thing.

Have your feelings towards curriculum changed over the years?

I think with some curriculum [implementation] I am less enthusiastic. I think that's because I've seen things go a full cycle. We seem to change every so many years. I'd like a little more reflection on keeping what we figure is good, doing it [the change] but not doing a complete change. What I find is we have a lot of curriculum now. Teachers have less freedom to be their own person and teach in their own way. I think you do need to have guidelines but if we have too many guidelines it is too restrictive. For new teachers the guidelines are very, very helpful. But even with having student teachers I find that sometimes they're very, very focussed on what's outlined in the implementation guidelines because that's what said to be required. For example, one of the things that's recommended in the new curriculum that is coming out is response logs. And I find with primary children, (perhaps it's my approach) I find it very difficult to use with small children: their range in ability in writing and thinking skills. They are so different at that age that I think that to put the expectation for all these children to write at such an early age is putting too much of a demand on them and I don't know how adequate an assessment tool it is. I think that a lot of these children need to respond orally to their learning or demonstrate their learning through drawing or some other form. So I find things like that frustrating.

And I guess the thing I keep coming back to is time, time for us to reflect on what we've been doing and get together as peers and talk about it. We don't seem to do as much as we did in the past. We used to have organizations like Primary Teachers where we got together and got a chance to do that.

Along with curriculum implementation we seem to have a lot of other new things; revisions of handbooks, and things like that. Teachers seem to be getting more and more involved.

So if you had a choice to implement or not to implement, what would you choice be?

Well, I definitely think we should implement! I just would say we should go slowly. We should give ourselves time. On our staff this year I think perhaps we made an error in judgment. We went into two new curriculums at the same time. Well, it's actually three.

The new Social Studies curriculum is out and we're trying to look at that, too. We're trying to look at that as well. [But] I think we should go a little bit slower, feel comfortable with what we're doing before we pile too many other things on. And I think we need to look back a little bit to programs like The Primary Program, where we're taking our curriculum and involving it in our themes. Because what I tend to find is the introduction of new curriculum and the IRPs is that we tend to be chopping up our days more and not integrating our days as fully as we used to. I'm finding I'm not having as much fun because I'm trying to do it that way and I think a part of being in the classroom is having fun with your children. If you are too focussed on trying to get these goals covered you may lose some of the effectiveness.

Interview #8

I've been in school for the last four years to become a teacher . In the last two years, this year and last year I've done a couple of practicums. Last year it was just a two week practicum and it wasn't taking over the entire class. It was just a lesson here and there. Starting with PE and Art and Language Arts was mainly all we can do. And then this year before Christmas I did a six week practicum. And the most we went up to was about eighty per cent so, we didn't have the entire class. We didn't take over everything, but almost. And that was for six weeks and that was in Grades Five/Six. The first one was in Grade Three/Four. And then this one that I'm doing now. This is my sixth week that I'm starting now. It is my final practicum and it is with a Grade One class

Please comment on Carney's thoughts on implementation.

Definitely. Communication and information as well as teamwork and collaboration for me have been very important because all I have ever worked from is a IRP. So, that is all I've ever done is implement the curriculum, in that sense. But for me, because I'm starting out teamwork and collaboration and communication and information with other teachers who've had more experience and who've actually in some way they've already implemented that curriculum before they've tried it. They've done it before. So just talking with them and the information from them, communication with them and the resources...the information ..I would say those have been very important to me so far. It's setting the stage for me to implement. It's not as I'm doing it. It's setting the stage so that I can implement it.

In the collaboration and teamwork were things like a vision there?

Yeah.

Vision is communicated to you?

Yeah. When I've started every practicum I've been told sort of what curriculum I need to implement. So that starts to shape my vision. And then I develop the units that shape that involve the curriculum. And it's sort of gone down from a vision. It starts with a vision and then the goals and then what I'm actually going to do and how I'm going to do that.

When you're in a classroom as a student teacher do you have planning time that has been worked into things? You say you worked up to eighty per cent of the time. The other

twenty per cent . Is that planning time or is that observation time or what?

Observation time. And at this practicum I've been at a hundred per cent. So the last two to three weeks I've been at a hundred per cent. So what that is is a hundred per cent of what the teacher teaches. So, naturally Nancy doesn't teach music so that time would be my planning time or my preparation time or whatever. And the other when I was teaching only eighty per cent the other twenty per cent that Nancy was still teaching, for example, I would observe to see how she was implementing curriculum and see what she was doing and how she was doing it.

And so any planning time you would get would when the teacher was off also?

Yes.

Which one is the most important to you...which I think you've already answered?

It's starting out . In looking now if I were going to start now...I could see that support systems would be very important because for me teamwork and collaboration was my support system, in a way. It was helping me: for example with Guided Reading. With implementing that new system, that new kind of reading that you're doing in the classroom, Nancy was my support system. But if I wasn't doing teaching, then I think that would be really important to have. You know people who have done it, experienced, the resources, the books, everything would be up there. But, because _____ was my support system I would say communication and information for me have been the most important.

So support systems if it is supporting material you would put it right where?

If I'm thinking of my practicums then I would say third, but if I'm thinking of starting (teaching) in September then I would say first for me now. And those other two would be right below it.

The other two being?

Teamwork and collaboration and communication and information.

Because Nancy acted as my support system. But without her in September I would need.

Tell me the secret. What do you do when you don't have some of these things? Do you worry?

A little bit.

Between colleagues you mean? Or between someone else to collaborate with?

I guess I try to muddle through it myself.

Check through with what you know?

Exactly.

And now I would find that a lot easier. At the beginning of my practicum I constantly needed to be quite a bit. I needed to check with Nancy to get those little things that help implement. And now I think it's not quite as important to me. I don't need it as much. Now, I think, if I didn't have anyone to collaborate with I would be able to go through with what I know exactly.

What would you tell someone else who was implementing? You just take this Care Kit and do it in your class? What kind of suggestions would you give them?

First of all I would tell them to look at it. So that they would look at it and spend a lot of their time looking at the in's and out's . So they knew what they were going into, so they really understood it. And then I would tell them to try and set up some kind of support system, either with teachers who have already used it, done it , a school that's already done it before, talking to somebody. I would definitely get some. Because just using the Guided Reading. I read the book before I came to my practicum. And a lot of the things in there I thought: I'm not sure how you do that. And then coming in, _____ said "Oh, I've changed this a little bit." and/or "This is how I do this." And those little tips made the world of a difference. If I had gone in there and just had the book as my support system I don't think it would be nearly as successful. Whereas, Nancy went and observed somebody. She got to collaborate with other teachers who had already done it, were working with it, saw these other little tricks. So, I would definitely recommend that if someone had to put in place new curriculum that they talk to somebody (if at all possible) who already has because they already have worked out some of the kinks already. They've done part of your job for you.

So you would say number one: know your material?

Yes.

Number two: find a mentor?

Yes.

And then plunge?

And then try it. And then you'll find new things that you need to change but at least those initial things that might have caused your downfall have maybe been eliminated or you see them now and you know that you need to get around them now . Or, this is how I need to do this.

Interview #9*Teaching experience?*

This is my final year of teaching. I'll be retiring this year. I started teaching in 1964 in Invermere. I am finishing my teaching in the same district I started. My teaching has mainly been at the primary level but I have also taught intermediate and secondary for two years.

And in that time you must have implemented some curriculum or some programs, right?

Lots.

Response to Carney?

Well, I did as they asked on the paper, here. I rated them. When I was doing this I understood that this was looking at Ministry curriculum that was being prescribed or district created curriculum such as our Kokanee Salmon Unit.

You can define it that way.

Ministry is far more structured, obviously, because we're told this is what you should be doing. District, you have an opportunity for a lot more input and you can be a little more flexible in what you want to do. So I rated these. But as I rated these I was thinking of them more in terms of prescribed curriculum. It's already been done and we're being told to do it. So what would you like me to do.? Would you like me to go through it with a quick comment?

Or with an extensive comment, your choice.

For number one I put collaborative leadership down.

As the most important?

As the most important. Because I don't think anything happens unless someone takes the responsibility for overseeing it. And the word collaborative implies to me that someone is not imposing upon you. There's an opportunity for people to have input towards those leadership decisions.

In your mind and in your experience how has it been? Where has the leadership come from?

If it's new curriculum the leadership has either come at the school level from the administrator or a teacher who perhaps has a real interest in the subject area. So if it's Language Arts, somebody who has a keen interest in Language Arts would take on the

responsibility of overseeing the implementation of it with the staff.

If it's district curriculum then someone at the district level takes on the responsibility of saying, "O.K. I'm going to oversee this being implemented. I will come up with some ways that we can do some training, etc. But someone in my mind always has to be in control.

And that someone is particularly interested in the particular project?

The second that I took right after that was training. I think if we're going to implement new curriculum you can't implement it unless you have some training in what some of the new outcomes are. Often there are new skills, new methods involved. And to expect someone to just suddenly implement new curriculum without having some training in the areas is almost impossible. Well, I guess it's possible but it's not successful.

Right...Not effective in that you spend a lot of time, a waste of time, in that you spend a lot of time trying to become successful?

Yes, and if some of the outcomes, at times,...I'm thinking back to when we were as a school we were doing a lot of Susan Close activities. And as a school we had decided that this was a philosophy that we would like to work on as a staff. There was new Language Arts curriculum and some of the new outcomes could more successfully be implemented by using a different strategy from what we had used in the past.

But without the training and that, how do you successfully do that?

I took training as number two. But, followed right behind that is planning time. Because if you don't have time to sit down and look at old curriculum: How is this new one changed? What in the old curriculum do I have to do away with? What can I possibly retain? These are the new strategies I would like to use. I have to plan them. Planning them takes a long time until they become a part of your repertoire of teaching skills. So planning time is number three for me.

Number four I put down teamwork and collaboration and that's partly because of the type of school we are. We don't do things in isolation. And, I think, the teamwork and the talking back and forth and agreeing with each other is really important when we're implementing new curriculum, either at the school level or sometimes even at the grade level, the grade level teachers working together. And that's where the teamwork ties back

in with the leadership.

So would you include in communication and information at that level?

That's number five. Yes, it is. My first five actually really fit together. Sometimes when I was looking at them I thought, "You can almost change some of them around and it really wouldn't matter."

The leadership fits in when you're looking at teamwork. When you're looking at the communication it could be at the school level or at the grade level. You've got three grade level teachers. One of those teachers may become a leader and may simply go and discuss with another and then go and make some decisions about what should be done. So those would be my first five.

Number six which ties in with the others is support systems. How are you being supported in what you are trying to do? And that again could be at the school level or the district level.

Seven was evaluation and revision. If you're going to put in all this work into looking at new curriculum and trying it before you fully implement it you have to take a look at what's worked and what hasn't worked? Do we have to change any of our approaches? Or is there some of it this just doesn't fit with, say, Grade Three? This is far too easy for Grade Three. What's it doing in here? Or this is far too difficult for Grade Three. Why are we trying to do this with our kids? Talk about it and then maybe revise the approach.

Then this would not be the informal direct evaluation and revision that you do within the classroom? This would be on a formal level, would it?

I did not see this as classroom evaluation at all. That puts a different perspective on it. No. I saw it as "Here's the new curriculum. And usually there's a year or two that you're asked to work at implementing it and then three years down the road it's prescribed. So, I see the evaluation as "What has been successful with what you've been doing in implementing this new curriculum? What part of the new curriculum is not acceptable? Too easy? Too difficult?" So I didn't see it as classroom evaluation.

Number eight sort of ties in with that; recognition and resolution of barriers. I found that one rather interesting because it could be a personal barrier: ie. It could be: "I don't like this curriculum at all." and you have to work at overcoming that because its going to be

prescribed and so, you're going to have to teach it. Or, it could also be "What is there in this curriculum that we are really having difficulty teaching because we haven't any of the materials?" So, that could be a more simplified barrier. That one I was a little unclear of and I put it down low anyway.

Number nine, this may not surprise you. Not being a risk taker I didn't feel that was very high on my priority list. Because I didn't see risk taking as important because the curriculum is prescribed. So you're not risking trying something new and extraordinary or unorthodox. You're trying or you're implementing something that everyone is expected to teach. The risk-taking might be in the changing your teaching style. And if that is how it was viewed than I would probably put that up as being higher because often new curriculum means you do have to change your teaching style. But, I viewed risk-taking as we're really all going to do to be doing this curriculum anyway. It's nothing that's far out, so what's the risk in it?

I'm glad you defined that.

And number ten is vision. The vision has already been done. That's way back at the Ministry level with the committee that's putting this curriculum together. If I was looking at the committee that was creating the curriculum, I would put vision up near the top. "What do we want these students to be able to do? But, by the time we get it in the classroom as classroom teacher I think we're well beyond vision. We're basically being told this is your curriculum, you implement it.

So you don't think it's important or as important to have a shared vision? Because you're not in the decision making mode which the curriculum people have made then you feel you don't need the shared vision?

I'm not saying you don't need the shared vision. But, to me the vision is already in place. I can look at the curriculum and I can do the training, the talking, the trying, the lesson planning, etc. I don't need vision to do that. All I need to look at it and think all right. This is what they want me to be able to do. It's pretty clear in their outcomes. The vision, maybe, is what you could do with the curriculum if you could take it further as a teacher. That's where some vision might come in. But as far as actually implementing I saw vision as being fairly low on the importance. That is already been taken care of by the

planning committee.

In talking to some of the other teachers, they mentioned The Year 2000, too. You're one of the people who had to implement the Year 2000. What did you feel about that?

I was one of the people actually who was on record as being against it and I was actually interviewed, exactly as I'm being interviewed right now, by the Ministry people and I spoke against the curriculum. The one comment that I made, that was crucial to The Year 2000 was that if The Year 2000 was to be successful the Ministry had to be willing to fund class sizes at about sixteen students. Because it could not be successfully implemented in classes of twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight students. And maybe that's vision, I don't think it is. I think it was reality. I looked at the curriculum. I looked at what they wanted to do. I didn't agree with all the child centred philosophies because I don't think that children at this age are capable of directing their own learning. I think that's our responsibility. I think, it's our responsibility to direct them on what we feel is important for them to learn. Give them flexibility in how they learn it.

But, the Year 2000, especially with the multi aging, after we spent years getting away from split grades suddenly it has a new name. I was against it. I implemented it to the smallest degree possible. I retained most of my teaching styles and beliefs and strategies through it. But, if we could have been guaranteed that we would have small class sizes of sixteen students I would have been far more willing to try it. And interestingly enough my interview was not part of the video. Surprise, surprise.

Do you want any more comments on....?

If you would like to share, especially with regard to implementation. I would like to hear any comments with regard to successful or unsuccessful implementation that you've been a part of or you have seen happening.

The Year 2000 was an implementation of a new philosophy which was quite radical from the traditional philosophy. I consider that The Year 2000 was basically dumped on us. I don't think we had much say at the district level or the school level on whether we wanted to be a part of this philosophy or not. One of the reasons why I was not in favour was because it was imposed very quickly. It wasn't over time. It came very very quickly, I thought. Personally I was against it. It was against my whole philosophy of what

education should be. So, I'm glad that we have moved away from it. I think that it was, as far as public relations, it was the most damaging change that negatively affected the image of teachers that I have seen in my whole career. Because, I think it made us look as though we were simply letting children do as they wanted and that we weren't giving them direction and the structure was gone. And all of the traditional beliefs that had come into our system over years and years of time we were suddenly expected to flip flop in a short amount of time. We did not sell it to parents and we are still getting backlash from parents on that. And that's, like I say, I started teaching in '64 so that's going back a long time to how I think it negatively affected the public image of teachers and the job we do.

So, what would you say to young things starting up in teaching and she's faced in her second or third year and she's faced with Hey, here's a new program. Implement it in September. This is June. You'll be implementing in September. What do you say?

Well, hopefully it's never going to be done that way to start with.

So then you have recommendations of how to introduce the curriculum?

Well, over time, obviously. You have to have time when the teacher has an opportunity to look at the new curriculum, to do some analyzing of it, to look at what it's replacing, 'cause everything new that's coming in is supposed to be replacing something old. And personally, I think, too many times some of the old that we discard is better than the new that we bring in. So the new teacher, or any teacher, has to have an opportunity to do some analysis. And then we go through all of my ratings here. You've got to have training. You have to have the opportunity to talk with your colleagues. to try some lessons and to discuss them: What went well? What didn't work very well? How could we do it differently?

So that you're saying that you just take small bites?

You know me...of course.

So implementation...you do it a unit here, a unit there?

Oh, yeah. You have to chunk it. If you try and do the big picture I think it's too overwhelming. And maybe that's where we talked about vision and I put it down at number ten here, based on my interpretation of what vision was. If vision was if you have got a big picture of what this new curriculum is? And the answer is Yes I do. Then can you

take that big picture and break it down into smaller chunks? Yes, I can. That's a vision. That's another form of vision. And then I'd have to put it up higher on the rating scale because it's a form of analysis. But no, if you can't take your curriculum and implement it in little unit chunks then I think it overwhelms you again. And same with the beginning teacher. The beginning teacher has to take "What this year am I really going to work on to become an expert at?" Obviously you should pick Language Arts or Math because they're core. Really work hard on that until you get that in place until you feel comfortable with it. Obviously you're still doing the others but you're not going to do them all to perfection the first year or two or three.

And my final comment to beginning teachers would be: find a mentor on your staff, someone with experience who will help you with your new curriculum and your learning of the skills. And I guess if I'm looking at this then it would be...partly collaborative leadership because you're looking for someone on staff that would help give you some direction with some discussion and it would fit in there with teamwork. A good school staff will not let a beginning teacher come in without a support system in place. But we've had so much. One of my comments on here, _____, is "Have your feelings about implementation changed over the years? Yes, they've changed a lot. The biggest change I thought (or I wrote down) was that they're just happening too soon too quickly and too many at once. Like....

the changes, the IRPs?

Yeah. Over the last..starting with The Year 2000, It feels like everything is being dumped on you and you almost want to go in a corner and almost say, "No. I don't want to even touch that. I'm going to stick with my old way because it's too much." And in the past I can remember curriculum coming and saying, "OK. It's the year for Language Arts." And three or four years down the road you get a new math curriculum and then it wouldn't change for a long time. Now it seems we're just snowballed with change and I think for new teachers that must be really tough. Because for people like us who have experience we have a foundation that we work from.

It seems to me the trends.. Tell me what you think...The trends lately.. when we have had curriculum changes...in previous years they were a long ...there were long periods of

time in between. They were more program changes: like use this math program. And so you didn't get involved with philosophy?

Yeah.

But it seems that any new curriculum seems to have some change in philosophy?

Uhhmm

And that makes it a little more difficult to accept and implement?

It does. I think as you teach you mold yourself into a teacher through your philosophy. This my belief in what a teacher should be and how a teacher should be teaching. And that directs your career. You can't flip flop from "This is my philosophy this year and next year it's different."

You're right. And when the new philosophies come in...?

And this is why The Year 2000 for the more experienced teacher was such a shock because it was just a total reverse of everything we had believed in. Our whole belief foundation was being told not only that we would have to change it BUT we were being told and at times being ridiculed. I can remember being at workshops where people ridiculed the old style way of teaching with basal readers, etc., etc. And all of a sudden the people that were doing the ridiculing aren't quite as vocal any more because some of the newer methods have been shown "Hey, they don't work."

But you're right ...a change in philosophy. My other note here is that it's far more complex and less simple. There's a lot more expected at a younger age of the students. And when you look at Grade One curriculum and compare it to let's say ten or fifteen years ago and Grade Three curriculum. It's almost overwhelming what we expect these children to take away. And I wonder whether we're doing too much, and just touching base with too much and not doing a really good job of less.

Just the surface?

Yes. Well, I've covered this. Now I've got to move onto the next one because Holy Mackerel, look at how much time I have left and how much I have to do. As opposed to "Let's do a really good job of a lot less skills."

And I actually think that our district when we were doing our critical outcomes was on the right track when we were trying to say, "What are the basics that we really want the

students to come out of Grade One with?..Out of Grade Two with?...How can we build? ”

I actually think our district is far ahead of the Ministry. They should have just left us alone.

Interview #10*Teaching experience?*

I've been teaching for a very long number of years. I taught 1,2,3 in Airdrie. And then when I came here I taught Kindergarten and play school and grade 1, 2 and three. I've been in this district for fourteen years. I've been in this school for ten of those years.

Response to Carney?

I think I'm one of the ones that get excited by an idea in the practise stage. I see it working and then I want to learn more about it. Other people I think, read about it and start from a philosophical base. But I think I work backwards a little bit. I see a program working really effectively and people getting excited by it. I want to jump in almost immediately with the very, very practical and with the support of who I am watching and seeing working successfully with the new program. And then I jump back and I do lots of reading and perhaps some research and more talking to other people and then more of this zig zag effect: more practical back to more reading, more practical back to more reading and more practical back to more reading.

I think that one of the things that works really well for me is time to plan, team planning where you use some of these very lovely mergers of the very practical "How are you going to use it tomorrow?" and "OK. We've done our reading. We know what the experts say. How can we take the planning further?" So I think one of the factors is planning time. The support that's built into that with a buddy system or a whole staff often as well.

So has there been planning time and support system in the implementations in your experience?

Historical, let me take you back in the loop. The year after the big start of The Year 2000 Primary Program. We had money in our career fund or our professional development fund (I think). And we had time in school where we had a prep with a buddy. We had to write up our project: This is what I want to learn about. This is what I want to get better at. And if there's someone else in the school then you worked together. We had a whole morning, or at least until 10:30, I believe, when we planned together and implemented. In that amount of time you not only brought your ideas but you could get it

right done to the xeroxing and the packaging and the evaluating where you look at what did we do successfully the last time? Or what can we improve on? Or what do we need more of?

Through time that was our rich swing. And now we are in our more impoverished financially not idea-wise...financially stage Now we're at that kind of stage where there isn't time and money being handed out in that respect.

But we have those start up days at the beginning with our Professional Development planning time. I think those are phenomenal. Except I think we have to guard against jumping onto a brand new ship because we've got the tools and the thinking and the support from one another and thinking that those two or three days up front will carry us through the whole year. I think that in those two or three days when we say, "OK. We're going to do Lions Quest or Guided Reading." we have to say AND in November we will meet with team partners, or grade groups or as the whole school.

So you'd suggest it would be better if it were a systemized approach? So that we would have it preplanned?

Well, I think we really need to recognize that that's not going to do it.