IMPROVING TEACHER PRACTICE:

A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL-BASED

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

by

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IMPROVING TEACHER PRACTICES:  A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOL-BASED

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract


This case study, which involved interviews, observations and document analysis, investigated a curriculum development setting in which the writing ability of elementary students had improved. The purpose of the study was to determine why teachers participated in developing the writing curriculum in their school, what were the characteristics of the setting which promoted their curriculum development practices, and what did curriculum leaders do to promote teacher participation in curriculum decision-making.

The population consisted of ten individuals who were associated with the curriculum development process in one elementary school in a British Columbia school district. Three of the ten respondents were curriculum leaders but each leader had a unique role in the curriculum development setting.

A conceptualization of the curriculum development process illuminated the findings and accounted for the improvement of teacher practices in one school. Their practices were improved in part because the staff members had developed a school-wide focus on curriculum improvement which in turn produced a sense of achievement and efficacy. Specific characteristics of the curriculum development setting promoted this school-wide focus. The curriculum innovation,

which generated problem-solving and decision-making, and the teachers' professional attitude toward self-improvement were important characteristics. The principal's style of leadership was that of an initiator who believed in instructional improvement and who valued teacher participation in curriculum decision-making. A curriculum leader appointed by the district staff worked closely with the teachers as a mentor and role model who provided inspiration and practical strategies for improving their classroom practices. In addition, an experienced teacher within the school setting was a curriculum leader who strongly influenced the teachers on staff and was a link between the district coordinator and the teachers who were developing the curriculum innovation.

An understanding of the formal structures and the individual relationships within a school which contributed to improved teacher practice has resulted from this study.

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Chapter I

Introduction

## Statement of the Problem

Elementary school teachers are experiencing an increase in the number of new ideas, teaching strategies, curriculum materials and organizational patterns which are introduced into their schools by educators and politicians. In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education has mandated five major curriculum revisions for the elementary grades in the past ten years. In addition, school districts have initiated local curriculum development projects, such as computer literacy, problem-solving in mathematics, daily physical education and conversational French. The responsibility to implement these curriculum innovations belongs to the teacher in the classroom.

Teachers, however, do not easily change their classroom practices. The reports of curriculum innovations in the literature (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Kritek, 1977) indicate that while the number of curriculum innovations introduced to the schools has steadily increased, the incidence of their successful use in the classroom is low. Fullan (1982) records the outright rejection of innovations by teachers, while Berman and McLaughlin (1976) write of a process of mutual adaptation which both the teacher and innovation undergo. It seems that teachers rarely use prescribed innovations as their advocates intended them to be used.

For teachers to change their professional practice involves more than using new materials or trying new strategies. Among other things, it involves an understanding of the principles which underlie the new activities or materials and the application of these principles to the learning activities; it depends on a sharing of the values or meanings which one makes of a new idea or belief; and above all, it involves taking a risk to try something new which may not work well at first. Any implementation plan must embrace these dimensions of change if teachers are to improve their classroom practice (Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel, 1976; Fullan, 1982; Leithwood, 1981; Werner, 1980).

These dimensions of change will be addressed if teachers participate in decisions which pertain to the curriculum innovation. According to Fullan (1982) "the identification and solution of implementation problems require teacher decision-making" (p. 67). The difficulty arises in promoting teacher involvement and participation because, in a typical school, teachers interact with each other infrequently, their work is carried out largely in isolation from other adults, and they lack a common technical culture (Flanders, 1980; Goodlad & Klein, 1970; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1971, 1982).

In the setting in which this study was conducted, teacher practices have improved. Furthermore, improvement is attributed to the teachers' participation in developing a curriculum innovation. Teachers in this elementary school successfully planned for and put

into practice new ideas about writing.

One method of selecting this school might have employed a survey of principals and district administrators to obtain a subjective rating of the success of their own school and others in developing a writing curriculum. Instead, the district curriculum coordinator, whose responsibility over a four year period has been the implementation of the writing process in elementary schools, was considered to have the experience and knowledge to make an informed choice. She was asked to nominate a school which she judged to be successful. She identified this school as one of the top five writing schools in the district. Her definition of a writing school is one in which there is the active involvement of parents, teachers and students in developing the writing process, and there is improvement in student writing evident in every classroom.

The district curriculum coordinator's criteria for judging active involvement were the participation by the school in a district Art and Writing display; the preparation of a school writing display and presentation of the writing process to parents; and the professional development activities of the teachers. Because the school's curriculum goal for two years was the improvement of writing, the topic of most of their professional development activities was the writing process. The coordinator's criteria for judging the improvement of student writing were her own observations as she consulted with teachers and students, and the reports of the teachers

that an increased amount of classroom time is given to writing and that their students have shown not only an increase in the quantity but also in the quality of their writing.

The process approach to writing is premised on the realization that every piece of writing involves similar stages. In the prewriting stage some starting point or experience prompts the writer to begin. Next, the writer drafts a first version, then revises or edits it. The edited version is then proofread, and finally the writing is presented in some form to an audience. At each stage of the process, teacher and student work together to produce a piece of writing.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the way in which these teachers participated in developing the curriculum innovation. The investigation will be guided by three research questions:

1. Why did these teachers participate in developing the curriculum innovation?

2. What are the characteristics of the setting which promoted the teachers' curriculum development practices?

3. More specifically, what did curriculum leaders do to promote teacher participation in curriculum decision-making?

## The Importance of the Study

The importance of this study has two dimensions. First, the question of why teachers are motivated to participate in school-based curriculum development will be addressed. This case study of successful participation presents an opportunity to analyse the motivations which the teachers considered to be important. Educational leaders who wish to promote participation in curriculum decision-making could benefit from knowing these motivations.

Second, the question of leadership in school-based curriculum development is addressed. In the school district in which this study takes place, there are teachers in each elementary school with the specific task of curriculum leadership over and above their teaching assignment. These individuals, called school-based curriculum coordinators have been appointed because they are effective teachers with an ability to work not only with their students, but also with their fellow teachers to bring about improvements in the learning environment. The presence of school-based leaders has implications for other leaders within the school as well as for central office staff. This study analyses the various leadership roles within the school as they relate to promoting teacher participation in school-based curriculum development.

## Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study is the lack of generalizability of the data because of the small sample. The decision to study only one school is intentional so that an in-depth exploration of the setting can be undertaken. Another limitation is the reliance of the researcher on the recollections and the reflections of the respondents. There will be no opportunity for direct observation of activities or events within the classrooms.

Because the questions are limited to an examination of the characteristics within the school, there will be external factors which will not be explored. A school is not a closed system and that which is outside the school buildings in the wider social context will affect the school setting. These socio-cultural forces and contexts are considered only to the extent that they are perceived by the teachers as they develop the curriculum innovation.

## Overview of the Report

Chapter I introduces the case study of a curriculum development setting in which teacher practices have improved. The research questions focus on the characteristics of the setting which promoted teacher participation in developing the curriculum innovation.

Chapter II discusses teacher involvement in curriculum development at the school level as one means of promoting the improvement of educational practices. Reviewed is recent research on

the critical behaviours of the principal and other curricular leaders
in facilitating changes in classroom practices.

Chapter III details the curriculum innovation and introduces the
school district organization, with special regard given to the
processes of curriculum coordination. The case study methodology with
the semi-structured interview as a means of data collection is
presented, as well as the procedures for analyzing the data.

Chapter IV describes and analyses the curriculum development
process, with specific focus on the characteristics of the school
which the participants perceived had contributed to the success of the
innovation.

Chapter V relates the conceptualization of the curriculum
development process to the findings of the study in order to conclude
that the development of a school-wide focus on improvement in one
curriculum area produced a strong sense of achievement with students
and of professional growth for the teachers. This school orientation
came about in part because of the professional attitudes of the
teachers and in part because curricular leaders both inside and
outside the school planned and carried out specific strategies to
increase teacher interactions and participation in curriculum
decision-making.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

If educational leaders are to effect improved teaching practices, they must identify those characteristics of the setting which will enable teachers to improve their practice. This review of the literature investigates first, the characteristics and actions of teachers who take part in curriculum development, and second, the characteristics and actions of leaders who promote curriculum development.

## Teachers in the Curriculum Development Setting

Sarason (1972) writes at length about the creation of settings. A setting is created when two or more people come together in a new relationship over a sustained period of time to achieve certain goals. A new setting is future-oriented, that is concerned with the attainment of goals which represent a change from the existing setting. New settings must share resources such as time, people and money with the existing setting. A new setting requires choices and decisions about the available resources on the part of the leader and the group members.

In developing curriculum, teachers appraise curricular ideas in relation to the existing goals and ideas of their own classroom. Their planning is a practical activity which deals with situationally-

specific practical problems. Teachers are more responsive to immediate student reaction than to long-term goal accomplishment. Teachers prefer to begin with practical activities before they discuss the underlying principles of the curriculum (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Fullan, 1982).

Teachers develop curriculum because they want to improve what they do in the classroom. The sense of achievement or success with their students keeps them involved even though it is a difficult and time-consuming task (Flanders, 1980; Lortie, 1977; Sarason, 1971). Fullan (1982) calls this a "teacher sense of efficacy" and he indicates that those schools with a school-wide emphasis on curriculum improvement have a higher proportion of staff with this sense of efficacy. This feeling of being part of a team may help teachers to take the risks which are necessary when trying something new. It is encouraging to have the support of others when something does not work as planned or when something is successful. Working with an experienced colleague to discuss practical questions, to share practical ideas, and to plan for actual teaching is a valued activity (Flanders, 1980). Teachers experience a sense of personal and professional growth when they develop curriculum with other teachers (Young, 1983).

In one of his most recent writings about the creation of a curriculum development group, Schwab (1983) stresses the need for a reflective and deliberative approach on the part of teachers to

solving curriculum questions. By contrasting this deliberative approach with debate, he describes deliberation as a means of pooling ideas and perceptions rather than of selecting one alternative and taking sides in support of or against the chosen alternative. For example, in deliberation, when a school-based committee is trying to decide on possible topics for an in-service program for the next six months, many alternatives are available. If one staff member speaks strongly in favour of one alternative, it is necessary for the group leader to draw out alternative topics rather than to let the next speakers refer only to the pros and cons of the one topic. In this way, all members have an opportunity to present an alternative or to explore the consequences of more than one alternative before a decision is reached.

The deliberative approach fosters the generation of alternatives that will take into account classroom variables, and that will draw upon the practical knowledge of the classroom teacher. Connelly and Ben-Peretz (1980) confirm that a teacher's practical knowledge is necessary if classroom practices are to be improved. More particularly, they believe that improvement in the quality of educational practices is dependent upon an open, investigative and exploratory attitude on the part of teachers. They also believe that, through regular discussions of research findings or scholarly articles, teachers can apply theoretical knowledge to their practical problems.

Of the characteristics of the curriculum development group, Schwab (1983) writes that there must be representatives with different points of view about curricular and instructional questions. The group should consist of those teachers who are the curricular specialists for the subject in question; teachers who are the creative problem-solvers on staff; teachers whose specialty is in another curriculum area; the principal who represents the view of the administration and who has a knowledge of the school and its community. If possible, representatives of the students, parents and professional community should be members of the curriculum group at certain times.

The Study of the Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (DESSI) carried out by Crandall and his associates (1983) reveals a number of factors which contribute to teachers' success in improving their classroom practice. One factor is an innovation of high quality which allows teachers to see results with their students. The innovation must "fit" with the world view of the teachers or there must be considerable outside assistance to promote a better fit between the world view of the program and that of the teachers (Parish & Aquila, 1983). Another factor is what Crandall calls the process of "emulation and replication" which teachers go through in changing their practice. Teachers often emulate one another on an informal basis, adapting or adopting the successful practices of peers they judge to be effective. The DESSI study found that the expert is more

often another teacher whose classroom practice has been judged exemplary and effective. When teachers emulate and replicate the success of another teacher, thereby seeing results with their own students, they are rewarded with a sense of achievement and are willing to try other changes.


## Leaders in the Curriculum Development Setting

Schwab (1983) argued that the leader in a curriculum development group must be skilled in the deliberative mode of discussion. This includes listening to and encouraging contributions from all members of the group, and facilitating communication within the group, regardless of the status of some members. For example, teachers might feel uncomfortable in the presence of the principal or a teacher with much curriculum expertise. Therefore, it would be necessary for the leader to be skilled at developing a climate of trust and at making people feel comfortable. This may be achieved by giving credibility to the teacher's experience with a certain group of students and encouraging him or her to share this practical knowledge.

The leader of the curriculum development group must therefore be knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers and students within the school setting in order to promote effectively each member with the other group members. If, for example, the main goal for teachers of the primary grades is that their students learn to read and write, their curriculum decisions will be affected by this

goal. Or, for example again, if an intermediate teacher has strengths in teaching physical education, but little training in the teaching of language arts, the curriculum development group leader must know this. If the school has many second language students, the language arts program may need to be adjusted. The leader's knowledge of the school setting, including parental expectations, will help him or her to promote a collaborative effort, that is one which builds on the collective resources of the staff. The leader will be concerned with helping others to achieve success rather than with being in the limelight.

The principal. The principal is often cited as the instructional leader in the school. This role is seen as that of intermediary between the district staff, the teaching staff and the students. Thus the principal becomes the source of information about the curriculum and must know it as well or better than do the teachers (Doll, 1978; Lipham, 1974).

This view of the principal's role has been challenged by recent research in which it is argued that the principal does not have the instructional expertise and therefore does not take an active role as the instructional leader (Fullan, 1981; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1981). The important aspect of the principal's role is the support functions associated with instructional effectiveness which must be performed if teachers are to plan for and use an innovation. Gersten, Carnine and

Green (1982) state that these functions or critical behaviours may or may not be carried out entirely by the principal, but they are necessary for improving classroom teaching. Leithwood and Montgomery point out that principals in effective schools often delegate their decision-making authority and encourage its use in such matters as curricular decisions.

Duke (1982) states that no skill or set of skills is appropriate for all schools or all situations. Thus, principals can and must learn a repertoire of skills to be used in the appropriate situations. He identifies the six key factors of instructional effectiveness which principals must address: competence of teachers, time for direct instruction, orderly learning environment, adequate instructional resources, communication of high expectations, and continuous monitoring of progress.

The leadership functions associated with improving classroom practice are the acquisition and allocation of necessary material resources, including release time for teacher in-service. Involvement in in-service sessions is an important way for principals to gain an understanding of the innovation and thereby be in the position of providing support for teachers' concerns. Regular planning meetings which establish concrete objectives and specify time limits, on-going evaluation of the program and of pupil growth, and a system of communication with parents, students, and teachers are important support functions. Little (1980) sums up her study of work practices

in six urban schools by saying that school improvement is most thoroughly achieved when teachers and administrators plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together (in Fullan, 1982). From the DESSI study, Huberman (1983) and Miles (1983) stress that administrators who are successful in improving practices in their school provide clear and continuous direction to teachers. Cox (1983) reports that principals who gave help to teachers on a new practice contributed to teacher or classroom outcomes, while principals who achieved school-level outcomes focused on establishing school-wide procedures for planning, problem-solving and decision-making, which resulted in organizational changes.

In studying the specific kinds of behaviours that principals in their role of change facilitator can and should exhibit, Rutherford and Hall (1983) identify three change facilitator styles which principals appeared to use. These are the Initiator style, the Responder style, and the Manager style. After refining their data, they represented each style in the following ways:

> Responders place heavy emphasis on allowing teachers and others the opportunity to take the lead. They believe their primary role is to maintain a smooth running school by focusing on traditional administrative tasks, keeping teachers content and treating students well. Teachers are viewed as strong professionals who are able to carry out their instructional role with little guidance. Responders emphasize the personal side of their relationships with teachers and others. Before they make decisions they often give everyone an opportunity to have input so as to outweigh their feelings or to allow others to make

the decision.  A related characteristic is the tendency
toward making decisions in terms of immediate circum-
stances rather than in terms of longer range
instructional or school goals.  This seems to be due in
part to their desire to please others and in part to
their limited vision of how their school and staff
should change in the future.

Managers represent a broader range of behaviours.  They
demonstrate both responsive behaviours in answer to
situations or people and they also initiate actions in
support of the change effort.  The variations in their
behaviour seem to be linked to their rapport with
teachers and central office staff as well as how well
they understand and buy into a particular change
effort.  Managers work without fanfare to provide basic
support to facilitate teachers' use of the innovation.
They keep teachers informed about decisions and are
sensitive to teacher needs.  They will defend their
teachers from what are perceived as excessive demands.
When they learn that the central office wants something
to happen in their school they then become very
involved with their teachers in making it happen.  Yet,
they do not typically initiate attempts to move beyond
the basics of what is imposed.

Initiators have clear, decisive, long-range policies
and goals that transcend but include implementation of
the current innovation.  They tend to have very strong
beliefs about what good schools and teaching should be
like and work intensely to attain this vision.
Decisions are made in relation to their goals for the
school and in terms of what they believe to be best for
students which is based on current knowledge of
classroom practice.  Initiators have strong
expectations for students, teachers and themselves.
They convey and monitor these expectations through
frequent contacts with teachers and clear explication
of how the school is to operate and how teachers are to
teach.  When they feel that it is in the best interest
of their school, particularly the students, Initiators
will seek changes in district programs or policies or
they will reinterpret them to suit the needs of the
school.  Initiators will be adamant but not unkind,
they solicit input from the staff and then decisions
are made in terms of the goal of the school even if
some are ruffled by their directness and high
expectations. (p. 84)

To summarize simply: Initiators make it happen; Managers help it happen; Responders let it happen. It must be noted that this research focused on principals who were currently involved in improvement projects in their schools and thus these descriptions exclude those principals who do not take part in improvement projects.

Teacher leaders. While analyzing the data on principal-teacher interactions, Hord, Hall and Stiegelbauer (1983) identified a person in each of the nine research settings who was nearly as active, or in some cases, more active than the principal in the school's improvement efforts. They term this person the consigliere, or second change facilitator. In each setting investigated, the consigliere role was taken by persons at different levels and different organizational positions. Assistant principals, classroom teachers, resource teachers, and/or district level specialists variously filled the role. Hord and her associates summarized that the important factor may be what these people do more than who they are.

Hord's analysis indicated that the principal was more active in developing support and organizational arrangements while the consigliere was more active in training and in consulting/reinforcing functions. The principal's interventions with teachers were often brief, direct and one-way whereas the consigliere, in responding to teachers' innovation-related concerns, had many complex and involved interactions with the teachers. It appears from their study that the

most intensive yet complementary intervening occurred when the principal used the Initiator style. When the principal used the Manager style, the consigliere did less, and with the Responder, the consigliere was in the position of doing some things which the principal should do.

An additional finding of Hord's study was a third person who was significantly involved with facilitating the innovation. In most cases this person was a teacher who had prior experience with the innovation or who was competent and well-respected by other teachers and appointed by the principal to aid facilitation. This third person was a school-based resource person for teachers, district personnel and the principal and was seen as part of the planning team. He or she had two roles, one as peer interpreter or disseminator of information about the innovation and the other as tutor or model for teachers working with the innovation.

The DESSI study corroborates the findings of Hord and her associates. In complementary articles, Cox (1983), Crandall (1983), and Loucks (1983) describe a support system that calls for a variety of people to help at school sites; that promotes teacher networks through teaming, demonstrating, and coaching; and that provides time for teachers to work things out. They propose that "the central office staff may well be the linchpins of school improvement efforts, linking together the external assisters and the building level administrators and teachers" (Cox, 1983).

External assisters' activities were usually those which promoted organizational change and institutionalization at the school level by providing resources, facilities and a receptive environment. Central office staff were called local facilitators because they gave teachers direct assistance with the content of the innovation. Their help contributed to more implementation outcomes than any other group of assisters because they had an impact on individual teacher's instructional practices. They usually were experienced teachers with curricular expertise who could provide encouragement and support as well as be a source of new ideas, resources and practices. By working with teachers in the classroom, they were able to demonstrate and to coach the new practices. They acted as cheerleader, linker and trouble-shooter, or they saw to it that others performed these necessary functions.

## Professional Development

The impact of modeling as one way for teachers to acquire new skills and strategies is recorded by Joyce and Showers (1980) in their review of the teacher training research. They outline the five components necessary to effect changes in practice:

1. presentation of theory which serves to raise the awareness of the teachers to a new strategy;

2. modeling or demonstration involving the students which

is an important component in the mastery of theory and
in the transfer of skills;

3.  practice under simulated conditions, such as with
    adults or small groups of children, which is an
    effective way to develop competence in a wide variety
    of classroom techniques;

4.  structured feedback accompanied by modeling and
    practice which can be very powerful in achieving skill
    development and transfer; and

5.  coaching for application by helping teachers to analyze
    the content to be taught and the approach to be taken,
    and by making very specific plans to help the teacher
    adapt to the new teaching approach which is highly
    effective especially when combined with the other four
    components.

When an in-service program incorporates these five components
over time there appears to be a much better chance to overcome a
fundamental problem, that is, the transfer of knowledge and training
from an in-service session to the classroom.

In summarizing the results of the cases of successful
professional development, Fullan (1982) stresses that peer-based
interaction and feedback among teachers was a common element. His
guidelines for effective professional development are:

1.  Professional development should focus on job- or
    program-related tasks faced by teachers.

2.  Professional development programs should include the
    general components found by Joyce and Showers (1980):
    theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and appli-
    cation with coaching.

3.  Follow-through is crucial.  A series of several
    sessions, with intervals in between in which people
    have the chance to try things (with some access to help
    or to other resources), is much more powerful than even
    the most stimulating one-shot workshop.

4.  A variety of formal and informal elements should be
    coordinated: training workshops and sharing workshops,
    teacher-teacher interaction, one-to-one assistance,
    meetings.  Note that both teachers and others
    (principals, consultants, etc.) are significant
    resources at both the informal sharing or one-to-one
    level and the formal level of workshops or courses.

5.  It is essential to recognize the relationship between
    professional development and implementation of change.
    It is in this recognition that the continuous nature of
    professional development can be understood and change
    in practice (and all things that interfere with that
    link) can be most readily identified and addressed.
    (p. 286)

The findings of the DESSI study suggest that, if change in
practice is to be successful, support for the professional growth of
teachers in their classrooms is necessary but must be matched with a
second type of support.  Such support promotes the continuation and
institutionalization of the innovation by providing budgetary support,
on-going training, and plans for future staffing that will extend and
increase the mastery of teachers so that the innovation is widely
used.

Fullan's call for establishing effective programs to improve the quality of life in the schools for both teachers and students is echoed in these words by Eisner (1983):

> We need schools that will give teachers opportunities to sit together to discuss what shall be taught, how what is taught can be related to each other and to the world outside of the school. We need to provide the time and fiscal resources for teachers to develop materials and methods that can be used to enhance what they teach. In short, we need to break away from the traditional assumptions that teachers must spend all of their professional lives within a classroom and that progress within the profession requires nothing more or less than racking up years of teaching. The school must be a place for the growth and recognition of the teacher if it is to be a place that provides for the growth and recognition of the student. (p. 55)

## Summary

This literature review reports some recent findings about teachers' reasons for taking part in developing a curricular innovation. Teachers are willing to take part when they experience a sense of achievement with their students, or a sense of professional growth from interacting with their peers. If there is leadership during the curriculum development process, teachers, through "emulation and replication", can change their practice.

The specific characteristics and actions of leaders who promote curriculum development with teachers then were reviewed. The critical leader behaviours necessary for instructional improvement were discussed. Although the principal may be the instructional leader in

the school, it is also possible that another person within the school may perform critical leader functions. This school-based resource person is an important link with the central office staff who provide curricular expertise and who demonstrate and coach the new practices.

Finally, the research on effective professional development activities was summarized. In-service which provides for on-going peer interaction and feedback is part of the organizational support which teachers must experience if they are to develop a curricular innovation.

Chapter III

Research Methodology

This is a case study of one elementary school in which the teachers participated in developing a curricular innovation. The reasons for their participation in developing a writing program, and the specific characteristics of the setting which contributed to the success of the innovation are analysed.

Background to the Study

The curriculum innovation. The innovation focuses on the writing component of the Language Arts curriculum. The basis of the innovation is recent research into the ways that talking, writing and thinking can be developed in young students. The new research stresses the importance of a process approach to the teaching of writing, and of combining this approach with opportunities for writing in all areas of the curriculum. The process can be defined in stages which are not discrete, and which may not be completed each time, or in this precise order:

- the prewriting stage in which ideas, images, words are generated from experiences. Sources of ideas include personal involvement, observation, literature, films,

records, music, pictures, and displays. The purpose
for writing is established.

- the first draft in which ideas are communicated as
  clearly as possible. Independent writing with the aid
  of reference books, is stressed.

- the editing stage in which skill development pertaining
  to the writer's craft is stressed. Oral composing to
  aid in sequencing, good beginnings, sentence variety,
  effective vocabulary and imagery are worked on to
  improve the piece of work. This is the critical stage
  of the process for growth in writing.

- the proofreading stage in which students develop a
  personal responsibility for the quality of their work
  by improving spelling, punctuation, grammar and
  handwriting.

- the publishing stage in which the written work is
  shared by the intended audience in some way; for
  example, it is displayed, typed or reproduced, read
  orally, sent to someone, or kept for later review.

An effective writing program is supported by the belief that writing is important. The teacher must see students as writers, and must believe that they can write. The teacher makes the difference. Belief in the vision that all students can write must not discount that practical strategies are needed to meet the vision. Attainable sub-goals are a vital part of the program.

There is a logical order to the learning outcomes for writing. This order does not suggest a teaching sequence, however. These outcomes are:

- to develop student interest in writing

- to expand the student's writing vocabulary

- to enable the student to develop the technical skills of writing

- to enable the student to apply the skills of written expression to communicate ideas, information and feelings

- to provide opportunities to experience different forms of writing for different audiences.

A hierarchy of forms of writing, in order of difficulty, is also assumed in this innovation: the expressive mode, such as for journals or letters; the literary mode for poems, stories or plays; and the public mode for letters, articles and reports, which is the most

difficult. An implicit belief is that the tools or mechanics of writing are separated from the content of writing. When editing, a teacher responds to the content of the student's work. When proofreading, the technical aspects of the work are considered.

Beliefs such as these about writing prescribe certain pedagogical changes. Time is a necessary factor in the process: students need time every day to write and teachers need time to work with individual students especially during the editing stage. Students need assistance with learning to respond to the writing of others. The classroom climate must allow for risk-taking. Students must feel comfortable about opening themselves to others through the written word. It must be acknowledged that writing is hard work and it takes perseverance and discipline. Sharing ideas and writing together ease the process. Integrating writing with the other language arts will require different teaching strategies, new ways of evaluating progress, and new ways of keeping a record of those evaluations. Changes in a pedagogical approach affect both the teacher and the students in unexpected ways. Increased autonomy may result in lack of direction for some students and a feeling of losing control for the teacher. Parents also may be concerned with certain aspects of the process, especially the amount of time it takes.

If benefits to the students are perceived by the teacher, then the process is worth all the energy and hard work. Improvement in writing skills and in the ability to communicate is one indication of

success. Improvement in the self-image, the assurance, the thinking ability of individual students is another indication. A third indication may be the improved ability of students to visualize, to solve problems, and to put themselves in the place of others. The risks which the teacher may have taken to change her teaching style will be worth it if the teacher is rewarded by such student achievements. Her beliefs about the writing process will be strengthened.

The school district. In June, 1981, the Mountainview School District comprised nearly 18,000 students in thirty-six elementary schools, six junior high schools, and three senior high schools. The schools serve a diverse community which ranges from average socio-economic areas to relatively affluent areas. A number of nationalities are represented in the growing population. The community might be classified as typical of middle-class Canada, with a cross-section of business and professional people, skilled and semi-skilled workers. A portion of Mountainview remains rural but the suburban sprawl is quickly eating into the farmland. There is a mix of industrial and commercial, residential, and agricultural property.

The Mountainview School Board consists of seven members, each of whom is elected for two year terms. Their district administrative staff in 1981 numbered 13 in the Board Office with another 12 district coordinators placed in the schools. The Superintendent of Schools had

three Assistant Superintendents: Special Programmes, Professional and Curriculum, and Personnel. Eight supervisors were responsible for Instruction(2), Special Services, Music, Language Development, Administration, Physical Education, and Art. There was a Coordinating Principal for French Immersion.

Thirty of the elementary schools had a principal in the school; each of the remaining six schools was annexed to a larger school and there was a head teacher for the annex. Schools with an enrolment of 350 students warranted a vice-principal while those with less than 350 students were allowed an assistant to the principal. A typical school has 360 students, 13 classroom teachers with 27 students in each class, a principal and vice-principal and additional support staff such as a learning assistance teacher and a librarian.

Sixteen of the thirty elementary schools had an administrative team consisting of a principal and vice-principal. The latter had a partial teaching load in most cases. In addition, each school had at least one school curriculum coordinator, a position which was viewed by some as another form of administration and, in fact, the job description allowed for some overlap in the responsibilities of the curriculum coordinator and the vice-principal.

School curriculum coordinator. At a meeting of the Board of School Trustees in June, 1981, the seven members adopted policy 2222 which created school curriculum coordinators. The general terms of

reference for school curriculum coordinators stated:

1. A School Curriculum Co-ordinator is a teacher appointed annually to a position of special responsibility in order to promote excellence of instruction and service within the specific subject area.
2. The School Curriculum Co-ordinator is under the direction of the Principal.

At the same meeting seven items in Regulation 2222 outlined the specific duties and responsibilities:

1. To assist the Principal in matters pertaining to the specific subject area(s), such as:

   a. Development and/or selection of educational objectives
   b. Development of effective teaching/learning situations
   c. Implementation and evaluation of curriculum
   d. Co-ordination and evaluation of current practices
   e. Development of staff commitment and expertise
   f. Ability to advise students and teachers about developments in the subject area outside the curriculum parameters
   g. Organization and allocation of workload
   h. Assistance to new teachers
   i. Ordering of supplies and resources
   j. Ordering, maintenance and control of equipment

2. To co-ordinate work in the subject area and assume an influential role in directing the development of effective teaching/learning situations through consultation and meetings as required.

3. To be aware of workshops, courses or conferences that might benefit teachers in their areas and to notify and facilitate attendance of teachers at these functions.

4. To serve as a channel of information by circulating copies of references to periodicals, materials or books that might benefit teachers.

5. To be aware of particular needs in the subject area so that District Co-ordinators can be made aware of these needs.

6. To encourage teachers to exchange expertise, materials or information for the improvement of instruction.

7. To assume other duties as assigned by the Principal.

Policy 2222 was drafted by district staff members and presented to the board for approval. Since the policy represented a change for elementary schools, the remainder of this study deals only with the elementary school curriculum role.

The guidelines for appointing school curriculum coordinators allowed elementary schools with 200 students or less, one coordinator; 200 to 499 students, two coordinators; 500 or more students, three coordinators. Each coordinator at the elementary school was designated a minor coordinator and received an allowance per annum calculated at 3% of the maximum salary on the P.A. (Masters) scale. In 1981-82, the dollar amount of this allowance was $1250. The appointment of the school curriculum coordinator was at the principal's discretion, but the staff member's name and subject area of responsibility were to be submitted to the Board Office by September of each year.

The creation of the position seemed to arise out of the district's trend toward a decentralization of curriculum implementation and professional development. School-based staff development was recognized through the provision of funds in the school-based

professional development account.  A two-year evaluation of the
learning program (H.E.L.P.) had been conducted by each elementary
school prior to this time.  The result was the recognition that many
schools had individual needs which could not be met by an all-
encompassing district program of curriculum and staff development.
Principal in-service had promoted the identification of K.R.A.'s (Key
Responsibility Areas) which addressed both district priorities and
school-based needs.  The school-based funds and the new position of
school curriculum coordinator were seen as a way of addressing the
K.R.A.'s.

    <u>District curriculum coordinator</u>.  One of the district priorities
for the 1981-82 school year was the continued implementation of the
elementary language arts curriculum, with particular emphasis on the
writing process.  A district curriculum coordinator had been appointed
the previous year to facilitate the implementation in the schools.
The District Curriculum Coordinator role is outlined in Mountainview
School Board Policy 2220.3:

<div align="center">

DISTRICT CURRICULUM CO-ORDINATORS

General Terms of Reference

</div>

1.  The District Curriculum Co-ordinators shall offer
    positive assistance toward the improvement of
    instruction throughout the District.

2.  The District Curriculum Co-ordinators shall work in
    co-operation with the District Principals,

Co-ordinators, Supervisors and teachers and be responsible to the District Superintendent of Schools through the Director of Programmes.

3. The District Curriculum Co-ordinators shall carry out such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the District Superintendent of Schools and/or the Director of Programmes.


The coordinators' specific duties and responsibilities are listed in Regulation 2220.3:

### DISTRICT CURRICULUM CO-ORDINATORS

#### Specific Duties and Responsibilities

1. To assist the Director of Instruction (Professional and Curriculum Development) by providing leadership:

   a. in the organization and development of the curriculum
   b. in the implementation of new courses
   c. in the assessment and selection of texts, equipment and supplies
   d. in the organization of the In-service Programme.

2. To work in concert with the classroom teacher and the principal to fulfill the objectives of the educational programme through support activities such as assisting in classrooms, suggesting supplementary teaching materials and assisting in the development of school based In-Service Programmes.

3. To attend meetings, as required, in order to develop and maintain close liaison with educational community in areas of curriculum concern.

4. To be on duty:

   a. as a teacher on the staff of a school carrying approximately a 50% teaching assignment (to accommodate timetabling limitations), or

   b. as a Curriculum Co-ordinator on a full-time basis as required by special circumstances.

5. To carry out such other duties as are deemed necessary
   in reference to the General Terms of Reference listed
   in Board Policy.

The district priorities for elementary language arts published in

September, 1981, stated:

1. Discuss with individual teachers specific and common
   concerns about the teaching of writing

2. Plan with school staffs methods of developing K-7
   writing programs for students and parents.

3. Provide print and videotape materials to assist with
   school-based inservice

4. Provide workshops and demonstrations for interested
   teachers and school staffs on request

5. Continue to link Mountainview teachers with each other
   and with teachers from other districts to share
   effective teaching strategies for language and thinking
   development.
                    (Curriculum Update 1981-82, p. 15)

As a consequence of this district direction, many elementary

schools chose a language arts school curriculum coordinator. One of

the immediate tasks was to work with the district staff person at the

school level. The definition of the specific duties and

responsibilities of the school curriculum coordinator was very much at

the discretion of the principal and the teacher involved. In some

schools, relief time for teachers was provided; in other schools it

was not.

## Methodology

A case study serves to describe a unique school context in all its complexity and individuality. It is a record of what has happened to the system under study over a discrete period of time. Because it it unique, one case cannot be a prescription for action. But it can provide the richness of detail and a developmental perspective which extends the reader's own experiences and provokes critical reflection of his own context.

The specific case under study is of Kurelek Elementary School which has a principal, an assistant to the principal and eight teachers, one of whom is the school curriculum coordinator. In selecting this particular school, it was recognized that it is smaller than a typical elementary school in the school district. However, its administrative team is similar to that of a school of twice its size, as is the pupil-teacher ratio and per pupil cost. It was judged by district staff to be successful in improving the writing practices of the students throughout the school. And finally, the researcher has established a feeling of trust between herself and the participants over the past two years, while maintaining a degree of detachment from the setting. A sense of trust is necessary if participants are to feel comfortable in giving complete and honest answers during the interview while the researcher's knowledge of the setting should help in drawing out rich data.

## Data Collection

The problem of validity in a case study can be addressed by the use of more than one form of data collection. The semi-structured interview with individual staff members of the school was the predominant method of data collection in this study, with observations of curriculum meetings, staff room interactions, and document analysis playing a smaller role. The interviewer had identified topics of discussion with specific questions to encourage response, but the responses were open-ended or unstructured. The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to elicit personal opinions, knowledge, understandings and attitudes, and enables her to probe for the underlying values and beliefs which the participants hold.

The interview consisted of three parts. The first part sought to establish data on the training and professional development of the teachers. The second part attempted to determine the teacher's degree of participation in the curriculum development process, and part three was aimed at identifying the characteristics of the setting which promote improved professional practices. In particular, this last part addressed the critical behaviours of the curriculum development leaders.

An initial interview was conducted with a teacher who had previously taught at the school and had been part of the curriculum development process for two years. The purpose of this interview was to provide the interviewer with an opportunity to evaluate her

interview techniques and to check for irrelevant and unclear questions before presenting the interview to the participants in the study. The data from this interview were not used in the case study.

The interviews were scheduled ahead of time and were held in a location selected by the participant. All interviews were completed during a three-week period in March. They were audiotaped and lasted about 90 minutes each. The interview schedule was flexible, in that the responses made by the participant to the first question in part three determined the sequence of questions in this section.

The respondents were the district curriculum coordinator for language arts, the school principal, and the eight teachers who were currently teaching at the school. Each respondent received a letter which explained the purpose of the study and which gave an outline of the main topics so that he or she was prepared for the interview. The same questions were asked of all the respondents, but the flow of each interview varied depending on the responses. The interview schedule was used to prepare for the interview and to check that all the topics had been covered by the end of the interview. In the event that responses were not forthcoming, a directed question was used to open a topic.

Observations at specific events such as planning meetings, school-based in-service meetings, and during staff room interactions focused on the topics raised, who directed the discussions, who spoke, the positions taken and the decisions made. Confirmation of the kind

of interactions and resulting decisions were made by analysing staff notices and minutes and minutes of planning meetings. Such observations took place over a six-month period between November and May.

## Analysis of the Data

The interviewer used the interview questions to establish specific response categories for data analysis. The pertinent section of each audiotape was analysed for the participant's response to the interview question. Responses were not reported in strict adherence to the order of the interview schedule because, in many cases, unsolicited comments were made by the respondents before the corresponding question appeared in the interview schedule. Once the data from the interviews had been sorted into response categories based on the interview questions, each category was examined for common responses. These common responses were reported numerically and specific comments from individual respondents which supported the analysis and provided rich descriptions were transcribed by hand. Each series of comments comprises no more than one comment from each participant and, in some cases, not all respondents were quoted, either to prevent redundancy or because comments were not available. These comments from the interviews have been included so that the readers are able to make informed judgments about the degree of

similarity between the characteristics of the teachers and the curriculum development setting of this case study and their own case, and thus of the applicability of the findings to their case.

Documents were examined to confirm or clarity details about the school-based in-service program over the three-year period. Observation data were used to corroborate interview data, specifically about staff interactions during in-service sessions and curriculum meetings.

During the formal interviews and in informal conversations, clarification and elaboration of facts and interpretations were carried out by the interviewer. After the initial analysis of the results were completed, all participants were given the opportunity to read the analysis and to report any genuine discrepancies between their interpretations and those of the interviewer.

Chapter IV

Results

This chapter describes and analyses the curriculum development process in the school under study. The descriptions and analyses are derived largely from the interview data of the ten participants, with support from written records and observation in the school.

The semi-structured interview was analysed in three parts. The first part presents a professional profile of the staff. The second part reports the degree of teacher participation in developing the curriculum innovation and the third part relates the success of the innovation to specific characteristics of the school. As much as possible, analyzed data is supported by the actual comments of the participants to provide a richness of detail.

Professional Profile of the School

In the first section of the interview, teachers were asked about their professional qualifications and the subjects they preferred to teach. They were asked for indicators of their own professional growth and for possible changes in their teaching style since beginning to teach. The individual responses of all nine staff members, including the principal, were analysed and grouped to form a professional profile of the staff. The responses of the district curriculum coordinator were not included in this part of the analysis.

The years of teaching experience for this staff covered a twenty-year period as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Teaching Experience of Staff

| No. of Years | Staff |
|---|---|
| 0 - 5 | 0 |
| 6 - 10 | 4 |
| 11 - 15 | 3 |
| 16 - 20 | 2 |

Of the nine staff members, seven had received training as an elementary teacher and two had been trained in secondary school teaching methods. The number of years of training was evenly spread from three to six years as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Professional Training of Staff

| No. of Years | Staff |
|---|---|
| 3 | 2 |
| 4 (Bachelors) | 2 |
| 5 | 3 |
| 6 (Masters) | 2 |

All staff members other than the two who had achieved a masters degree were working toward the next level of accreditation by taking evening or summer courses at university.  All seven were able to state their future plans for specific coursework.  Three participants named science or computer science courses; the others individually mentioned administration, curriculum development, English as a second language or multiculturalism, and learning assistance or library.  Other than the two participants who proposed course work in administration and curriculum development, the courses which the remaining five staff members planned to take coincided with one of their preferred subjects to teach.

In responding to the question about their teaching style, the teachers commented either about their way of dealing with curriculum and instruction, or their relationships with students.  The following excerpts summarize the teachers' perceptions of the style of teaching in the school.

> I've always loved kids and acted in their best interest.  I want them to leave my classroom being better people.  But [my teaching] is now based on research and fact and I do things with a purpose.  I do things, not catch-as-catch can and not at the last minute, what can I do now, but with lots of thinking and planning and thoroughness of thought.
>
> I'm more flexible.  I'm past needing a manual, I do everything on my own.
>
> I liked to be well organized, structured, knowing where I'm going from day to day.

I teach a program which combines skill development with
long-term activities -- activities which go on more
than one lesson.

I like to integrate reading with writing. I'm
structured in that I focus on skills but not on one
basal reading program.

I'm told I have a formal style but I've learned to be
more expressive in the ways I communicate with kids
because they don't pick up the subtleties as well.

I have to teach in a quiet environment, I like to have
things organized, I like the children to know exactly
what I want them to do. I give them directions orally
and it's written on the board. I often have them
working on individual assignments, or in pairs or small
groups. It's a lot teacher-directed. I don't leave
too much to just messing around to see what they'll
come up with. I am a lot quieter now. I've developed
management techniques...a lot less teacher talk. I try
to cover all bases [children who learn visually or
auditorily] so that I reach out to more children than I
have in the past.

I push myself hard, I have high expectations, I like
things to look nice and I like things to be organized,
well-thought through. I like things to be exciting for
me as well as the kids. I don't think that part of me
has changed. That's what characterizes my work. But
in terms of the quality and my teaching strategies,
honing down those skills, I would say they are changing
all the time.

All respondents were able to cite influences on their

professional growth over the years. Five participants stated that

university courses had helped to develop their professional skills, or

their way of thinking about teaching. Three recalled experiences in

other schools, where they had worked closely with teachers who had had

an effect on their teaching. In one case, the respondents had had a

particular role model for innovative practices; in the other two cases

the experience was one of trying such things as learning centres, open

area, team teaching and planning with other teachers in the school.

The following excerpts convey the respondents' reactions to these

influences.

> I became involved with [the district curriculum
> coordinator] when she first started teaching in this
> district....We did some buddy work and cross-grouping
> ... She was very encouraging and supportive...She
> guided my career. I've been able to work with her and
> along with groups of people that she's initiated.

> I was working at [a specific school] when we had open
> daybook, centres approach, and open area, and every
> year we seemed to be doing something different. And
> after you've done all those things, then you start to
> put back the best of those things. I think that was a
> good thing about [a specific school]. At the time it
> drove me crazy. I went to [another school] and I
> needed a change....but you put all those things
> together. I've got bits of everything....It was a
> stressful situation with a lot of arguing and yet
> everyone weathered it, and I think it made people
> friendlier than if we had all just worked together for
> five years without all that....And so many have gone on
> to district positions.

> I've been to a lot of schools and worked with a lot of
> people. I started as a relief teacher and then taught
> in large schools where there were three or four classes
> of the same grade so I built up a lot of background
> that way.

Two respondents referred to presenters whom they had heard at

conferences as making a difference. They mentioned in particular two

individuals who promote a method of teaching reading and of

integrating it with the language arts. Reading recent educational

research, experience on a university faculty, and membership on a

district curriculum committee were mentioned as an influence by
individual teachers.

> I learned a tremendous amount. That was a really
> important and significant turning point for me, you
> know, the in-service of that whole experience, of being
> on that committee.

Two staff members responded that their experiences at this
school, specifically with the school's professional development
program, had promoted further growth.

> I'm getting to be more professional. Since I've been
> at [this school], I think I've made a big jump from
> what I was doing before. When I was at [another
> school] I thought that I had reached a plateau where I
> was doing everything O.K.; I knew what I was doing.
> Then when I came here, with the writing program being
> pushed, I think I've made a big jump to another
> plateau.

In addition, the teacher who held the position of school
curriculum coordinator attributed her professional growth in part to
her experience in this role.

> It has opened up a whole new field, a whole new area of
> interest. It has opened up the magic window shades on
> a whole other aspect of teaching. It's deepened my
> philosophy of teaching and broadened my view. It's
> been a wonderful turn of events in my life...The reason
> for all of my change over the last five years if [the
> district curriculum coordinator]...because she has
> single-handedly, single-handedly changed my ideas of
> how to be an effective teacher.

In summary, the data present a profile of a staff which has developed and will continue to develop in ways which they perceive will improve their work with students. Individually, teachers plan to increase their academic qualifications through formal coursework at university and they value such experiences as planning and teaching with other teachers in the school or serving on district or provincial curriculum committees. They present themselves as a group of experienced teachers who prefer structure in their program, good organization in their classrooms, and long-range planning with a sense of purpose to their work with students. There is an awareness of their accountability for teaching certain skills which is balanced by an understanding of the individual differences of their students. Throughout the school, there are people with an interest or an expertise in a number of curricular areas, although Language Arts was a stated first or second choice of most of the members.

## Participation in Developing the Writing Program

The staff at Kurelek Elementary School became acquainted with the writing process at different times over the last five years. Two members heard about it less than two years ago when they came to Kurelek. Six members have known of the writing process for three to four years and one member has known of it for at least five years. Four of the nine staff members first learned of the process while they were teaching at another school in the district. Of the four, one was

actively using the process with students, and two had started to develop a school-based writing program but left the school after the first year.

When asked from whom they had heard of the writing process, staff members each indicated one or two influences. The district curriculum coordinator was responsible for introducing seven of the nine people in this school to the innovation, while the school curriculum coordinator introduced three people. Two staff members were influenced by other teachers at Kurelek and two members were influenced by the ability of their students who had already experienced the writing process with other teachers. The school's professional days were cited by one teacher as helping to introduce the process. The following comments convey how the teachers felt when they first heard about the writing process.

> We decided as a staff that it was something that we wanted to work on, and it's a subject that interests me.

> It was because of [the district curriculum coordinator]. She was constantly on the scene. We were one of the first schools to be paying attention to the writing process... and she spent a fair amount of time here. And also I think because I was intrigued with the idea of having a process to teach writing. I could see how it could work. It was very complex and I like something that's complex because the more you work at it, the better it'll get. So I really wanted to pursue it.

> I thought it was important to have an in-service program developed and...everybody felt that the writing process was the area they wanted to move into because

it was a big thing in the district at the time... In a way we went with something that was more a reflection of teacher needs than student needs.

Seeing what other people could get the kids to do and trying some things and then talking about it [helped me to start using the writing process]. I was watching and taking a look at what [the school curriculum coordinator] had done, through her daybook, or even what the kids had put up.

I remember my absolute amazement here when I got the class last year. I really felt that a lot of the basic skills were quite low and I was really concerned about trying some of these new ideas which I'd heard mainly from [the school curriculum coordinator]. And I was amazed, just amazed at what they could do. Their writing was better than any of their other work and they loved it. So I became convinced very, very quickly... Also, the amount of enthusiasm of the staff members at the school... Our first in-service, we had the [district curriculum coordinator] come over and she certainly can enthuse anybody. She showed me some very simple ways to get started.

Because everyone was doing it and it seemed like a good idea at the time... It didn't seem to be as important to parse sentences as actually writing.

It was the focus of the school when I came here and [the district curriculum coordinator] helped me become more involved in it and made me realize that it wasn't really something totally different from what I was doing... I didn't want to feel like I was getting anyone down, when the whole school was focusing on it.

It became a focus in our school... Through many, many workshops, professional days, a lot of encouragement and lot of support from district staff, our own staff and the district curriculum coordinator, I started to incorporate it... If this was throughout the school, I wasn't going to be the break in the link.

Through the influence of [the district curriculum coordinator] and when that committee was being formed in the district and all I knew was that I wanted to learn it. It was something new and I certainly was excited about what I had been exposed to. I don't

think I was aware of process so much as, "This is neat; this is something I really want to learn to do well with children, because I love what happens." So I asked to be on the committee.

The district curriculum coordinator recalled her early involvement with introducing the writing process to this district.

I had gone out to [the university] and heard Michael Fullan talk about how implementation essentially was impossible. That made me mad. I decided that, based on my knowledge of teachers, if you started small and built success, that other teachers, either through word-of-mouth or good news advertising, would want to get involved. So I started with [four smaller schools] that weren't famous and didn't have the reputation as being the star schools.

Nine of the respondents recalled the difficulties which they faced when first beginning to develop a writing curriculum. For three teachers, it was difficult to modify their belief in a traditional phonics or grammar approach to the belief that writing is part of a process of developing language ability, and that such development proceeds at a individual rate for each student.

We spent the first six months (81-82) deciding whether it was a viable process. There were a number of meetings with [the district curriculum coordinator] to respond to questions and concerns... It's a very ambiguous area; it's a very complex area. There's no question at the beginning that we had some difficult times. Some people were reluctant to go with it. You've got to accept that there will be stages of disorientation and stages when things aren't going to go well.

I was pretty skeptical. Why get away from doing verbs and finding what nouns are? But by the time I came here most of the skepticism was gone... I would feel more comfortable if I started at the beginning of the year with a certain skill, but most people seem to advocate taking the kid where they are and I find that difficult to manage.

It was a long process. I wasn't comfortable with it and now I really am quite comfortable with it... I was never taught that way... I enjoy the written expression but every so often I feel I have to teach [grammar]... How time-consuming it really is and how much really has to go on before you get a really decent piece of writing, that's what I still find amazing, sometimes wondering if all the time we're spending is justifying the end... I had serious doubts and now I feel quite comfortable with the writing process and I actually enjoy it... That barrier that I had set up, it's down considerably. There are still some things I question... but I think we're on the right rack... There are growing pains and frustrations, questions and doubts. I'm speaking from personal experience.

I've seen [the teachers] go through real anguish... I can remember the level of concern [about "Are we a writing school?"] That took about two weeks and then there was a kind of breakthrough. People don't go through that kind of agony and self-scrutiny unless they are changing. I'm sure I could fill several pages with the doubts and insecurities as people tried to put new practices into their repertoire... It takes going through that tough stage. If you are a teacher with extremely high structure needs and you're looking at something that seems to call on a different part of your brain, then you are not going to learn that easily. I think it's a sign of their professional commitment.

With other staff members there were concerns about the amount of time the process takes, about the changes required in the classroom management techniques, and about the development of new skills for both the teacher and students.

I felt a little bit behind every one else and concerned that I wouldn't know what I was doing. I felt that everybody was doing wonderful things and that the things I did weren't as great.

I was unsure of the terminology. I felt threatened until I realized that I was already doing it in my classroom... I was doing all the kinds of things that fell under each category but when all of a sudden you're faced with these words and you're thinking, "What am I going to do in this?" and then you stop and break it down, you realize that you're doing those things. You're just not putting those words to it. I do a lot of writing and all I could think is, "Oh, no, I have to find time for more!".

You're experimenting with the mechanics of teaching the writing process. You struggle with, "Where are they going to make all these lists; where are they going to put that piece of paper?" It was a long time before I discovered a way that worked for me... I spent a lot of time worrying about the mechanics of the process, the organizing of it, and how to spend the time... I've shed the concern over the process and now I'm thinking on a broader scale of things I can fit into the process. It took me a long time before I knew what order they [the stages] were to be in. I felt that you had to do them all in order, and that you had to do them all, and they had to be done beautifully and thoroughly.

It didn't really all come together until this time last year... I'm still working out a lot of the aspects of it. It's not that easy... because its structured and yet it's open-ended and the range [of students] in the room is phenomenal.

It's a matter of... developing a tool kit, a repertoire of teaching skills and strategies... that's what I'm working on still... really having to think through... what's involved in the process and how can you best implement that with kids.... It's one thing to hear it or see it and it's one thing to do it, to make it work. It takes a long time. I don't feel that I've reached my goal for myself as a teacher.

There was agreement among nine of the ten respondents about the terms which they used to describe the writing process. All nine named the six stages and gave a brief description for each: prewriting or generating ideas; drafting or getting the ideas on paper; editing or improving the quality of the ideas; proofreading or making technical corrections; publishing or getting a final product to share with others; and presenting or sharing the writing orally.

One respondent did not specify the terms but gave a general description of the process, and later referred to proofreading and editing as probably the most difficult to teach. From our discussions at the interview, this teacher did not appear to use the process when working with students.

All other nine respondents confirmed that the teachers began with the prewriting and drafting stages of the process when they first tried it with their students. In the first few months of developing the writing process, teachers and students spent time on brainstorming activities, building word banks, using pattern books, and writing descriptive sentences. They focused on personal writing, such as journals; and literary writing, such as stories and poems.

The teachers who were at the school during the 1982-83 year confirmed that they were most involved with learning the process and trying new ideas during that year. Although all respondents agreed that editing, which was the focus for their learning now, was the most difficult part of the process for them to teach or for their students

to learn, they all stated that their involvement as learners had lessened and that they were feeling more comfortable with teaching writing. The principal identified the 1981-82 year as being one of greater involvement for him because of the extensive planning and discussion time with the school curriculum coordinator and the district curriculum coordinator to set up the program. The district curriculum coordinator did not identify any period of greater or lesser involvement, but there was a different emphasis over the three-year period: planning, in-service for prewriting and drafting, and now in-service for editing and presenting.

Editing was identified as a difficult process because it called for new behaviours on the part of students and teachers had questions about how to manage this aspect of writing with them.

> It is difficult to teach children to improve what they want to say and teach teachers to let go.
>
> Students do not want to change anything.
>
> You need to identify very specific criteria for editing, for example, improve just one sentence.
>
> Editing involves students in a higher level thinking process. It demands confidence on the part of the editor. It demands strong rapport between the people who are involved with the process. I think it's something you build toward. It's a fairly sophisticated level of communication.
>
> I have many questions about editing. Should I lead the kids or deal with them where they are? I find that difficult to manage [dealing with them where they are].
>
> Editing was a worry because I didn't like to change what students wrote.

> It's a little less-structured; it's totally creative
> and thoughtful.  It involves thought processes that a
> lot of kids aren't used to using.  It's so individual;
> it's really decision-making which is hard to define.
> It's abstract.

> Because it's a very cognitively-complex stage... it
> takes more time... I think there is a very simplistic
> level... the most interested teachers are wanting to go
> beyond that and do it powerfully.  I think to do it
> powerfully, it's very complex.

In responding to questions about changes in their teaching of

writing and in their thinking about writing, seven of the eight

teachers revealed a strong commitment to the writing process.  To

indicate their commitment, teachers variously gave writing a high

priority in their classroom teaching time, were willing to persevere

in their own learning of the process, were extending the writing

process to other subject areas, or expressed a preference for

continuing the process in another school.

> I don't regret having gone through the process myself.
> I feel that if I went to another school that wasn't a
> writing school I wouldn't change, I'd still write, I'd
> still do it.  I've been exposed to it for the past two
> years and because I have seen the results, if anything,
> I'd encourage the people there to start to use it...
> Children have no qualms about sitting down and writing.

> My teaching of writing is much more structured and much
> more successful.  If you think back to the mid-70's
> when you would tell children to write a story about
> what they felt like and that was the end of it, they
> might read it to you but nothing else was done about
> it, and then you look now at what the kids at that
> grade level can do, and you see that it's more success-
> ful... I used to think that written expression was a
> time filler, and now I think it is a learning thing.

Writing is taking over.  In every other subject that
I'm looking at, it's becoming so natural to include
some writing activity and the children are spending
more and more and more of their day working somewhere
in the writing process.

There's so far to go, there's so much to it... I think
it's something that once you start and you believe in
it, there's always something more you want to do...
tackling a new idea, integrating writing with Social
Studies or Math... It's part of the whole day and
there's not a day that goes by that we're not doing
some kind of writing.

I emphasize the generating of ideas more and we just
write more.  I've gotten away from grammar
worksheets... I didn't really think much about writing
before -- most of it's been developing since we started
all this.  I think writing before was mainly reports.
What I've come to see is that, if you can write good
sentences in any form, that it carries over... Even
writing one sentence is valuable... If I went to
another school that was in the middle of the program, I
think I could fit in somewhere.  I would definitely
continue to use the process.

There's no end to [the further development of a writing
program] because there are so many different styles of
writing that you can never get to them all in a year...
I put more faith in the kids; I've started to challenge
them more; I've started not to worry about it so much
and I've started to spend more time on [writing] in
blocks and not be guilty about doing that... I look at
a lot of things from a writing potential... I
understand that [grammar] tightens the kids' minds but
I think there are some things that my kids are
missing... I'm coming to grips with that.  I'm going to
have to find [a solution].

A significantly greater percentage of time, in my
estimation, is spent on the teaching of writing, as
opposed to the assigning of writing... There's been a
much greater awareness of the need to do personal
writing and literary writing and factual, public kinds
of writing.

All respondents judged the writing program in this school to be successful. The quantity of student work was reported by nine individuals as one indicator of success. The quantity was assessed in five different ways: the number of pieces of writing produced by each student (three responses), displayed work in the hall (three responses), length of each student's piece of writing (one response), published pieces in the newspaper (one response), and contributions to district writing displays (one response).

The school-wide presenting assemblies, which were started in 1983-84 school year to enable students from every grade to present a finished piece of writing, were named by five individuals as a measure of the program's success. A newsletter to the parents with the presented work from the assembly also was cited as a visual record of improvement. Five respondents identified the quality of student work, both in skill development and content, as being a measure of success. Four respondents mentioned particularly the standard set by the quality of the grade seven students' work.

The practice of collecting first draft writing samples from each student in September, January and June provided four respondents with an indicator of the success of the program.

It was reported by four teachers that students enjoyed writing and usually had something to write about. Two individuals noted that students now wrote on their own without being assigned the writing. Other indicators such as the year-end anthology, parent comments,

observable student editing behaviours, and the extension of writing to other subjects were cited by one respondent for each indicator.

When participants reflected on the success of the program, all the indicators they cited related to student outcomes. When reporting on the advantages of taking part in developing a writing program, five participants again perceived the advantages in relation to student outcomes, with two of the five giving only student outcomes as an advantage. The sense of achievement they felt is demonstrated by these excerpts.

> The satisfaction I've gotten from working with children has been that you have a result that is a tangible commodity, that you can see and work with... You have a product. With [younger] children that product is verbal, and it can't be captured on paper in the same way... But the gems are there.

> I like to see the changes, the development of the skills in the students... The writing program has reconfirmed for me how important it is for working with the E.S.L. children -- what the children can do with this kind of program.

> I'm finding that the children are expressing themselves a lot more. It's a more honest expression of how they feel and they tend to use their vocabulary as opposed to really stilted, five-word sentences. It's a lot more enjoyable reading some of their writing... The advantages are to see just how much the children's writing has changed... it's some really incredible work.... If they find something they really like, a lot more of them pick it up and share it which is something we didn't do before.

> I never thought a student could write an interesting report that you'd want to sit down and read, that was all original. And that's just thrilling to me... I don't want to forget the creative work, the poetry, so

we've been working on... trying to integrate the factual writing with the literary. And that's exciting, we're starting to transfer...

Not only do [the children] write better, they develop a sense of confidence and also a sense of enjoyment. I think the teachers get immense satisfaction not only from the teaching process, but they get great satisfaction out of the results, too.

Responses from seven participants indicated that they saw the advantage of taking part in developing a writing program as the sharing of ideas, strategies and knowledge. This sharing was seen as a way of promoting their own professional growth.

Since so much of our pro-d work has been professional dialogue in nature, I have my memory of their personal statements, things like, "This has changed my way of looking at my teaching."

[The district curriculum coordinator] was able to come in and spend a whole morning, modelling and team-teaching with me and that was probably one of the most significant experiences of my career... I worked very closely with [another teacher]. We partnered our children up and over a whole year went through the writing process... It was exciting to watch her grow because she did marvellous things with those kids... It's tremendously stimulating... I think the support system and the camaraderie of being able to try something and to get the feedback [is an advantage].

Exchange of ideas leads to something more than what you can do on your own. Someone triggers a thought that you didn't know you had and you can go with it... You know exactly what's going on with everyone else and where your students are coming from the year before.

It's great to be in a school where everybody else is doing it and you get that support, lots of ideas coming and lots of comments on the students' work.

It's like a shot in the arm. You start thinking, "I've
got to do more." You see how a program should be
developed and how there is always some improvement to
be made, some ideas to try... It's nice to have the
teachers working on one common goal... if we started
another subject area, it would be easier [to develop
it]. We'd know what stumbling blocks there'd be, what
problems might come up.

It's been very helpful finding out from other people
what level their kids are working on and what they are
trying to achieve. It makes all of us more aware of
what needs to be done and how we can pull together to
do it. I found it very helpful having the whole staff
sitting down and planning together... I know now that
the staff has common goals... I wasn't really sure what
emphasis other people were putting on various aspects
of writing and now we've discussed our goals in common
and I know that I'm not completely off-base if I
emphasize some aspect of writing, because I know that
other people are doing it, too, and then I can
reinforce what other people are doing.

Total personal growth as far as teaching is concerned.
It's just wonderful, it reinstates your faith in the
teaching profession. There is so much to know about
quality teaching and what can be taught and how kids
can benefit.

Responses from two participants indicated an advantage to the

school as a whole.

The children also feel that the same kinds of things
are going on in other classrooms and that the same
kinds of ideas are valued.

It's a wonderful way of demonstrating to parents how
their children are advancing. I think all in all it's
just pulled the school together.

Four of the ten respondents could not give any disadvantages to

taking part in developing a writing program for the school. Although

all respondents rated the advantages highly over any disadvantages, six of them indicated such concerns as the high demand of time, effort and energy, and the necessity of neglecting the improvement of other subjects while concentrating on writing. Also, during the period when there was a high level of concern over the new program, some teachers felt distressed and doubtful. Three respondents still struggled with the question of whether to teach some formal grammar lessons for recurring errors in usage or spelling.

When asked to comment on the future of the writing program at the school, all participants quickly responded that it would continue. Then, different factors were presented for consideration by each participant. Although all respondents agreed that they would continue to use the writing process wherever they taught, six individuals were uncertain as to its continuing at this school if two or three key people were to leave, or if the administration were to change dramatically. It seemed that most respondents did not feel that they were finished with their learning of the writing process and if the school's curriculum focus were to be changed now, it might put their mastery of the process in jeopardy. In this statement, there seemed to be an equation of the writing program with the school focus and only two respondents projected to a time when the process would be mastered and a new focus would be chosen.

The students were considered by two respondents as factors in maintaining the program because their writing skills have been

developed considerably, but another individual reported that the graduation of the grade seven students from the school would result in a loss of writing leaders. One respondent believed that the parents would exert some pressure to maintain the program.

## Characteristics of the Curriculum Development Setting

Participants responded in various ways to the request to identify specific events or activities which they perceived had helped to improve their writing program. All participants were able to provide without prompting at least one factor while one respondent named five factors without prompting by the interviewer.

Significant events in the school. Four respondents first identified the school's presenting assemblies as a significant event in the school which had helped to improve the writing program. Two respondents later referred to the presenting assemblies as a significant event. The presenting assemblies had been started in the spring of 1983. They provided an opportunity for four or five students from every class to present a piece of writing to the staff and students of the entire school. Each presented piece was also published in the school's newsletter which went home to parents, and parents were encouraged to attend the assembly itself. It should be noted that these assemblies were held for the sole purpose of sharing writing and no other business took place at them.

Two respondents first identified the writing presentation for the parents in the school as a significant factor in improving the school's program. Four individuals later identified this evening presentation as important. The teachers and students all worked to put up a writing display in the school in the spring of 1983. The parents were invited to a presentation in which they were introduced to the writing process by actually drafting a piece of writing themselves under the direction of the school curriculum coordinator. Each teacher was then available to speak with the parents about the writing program in his/her own classroom while the parents looked at the display. The teachers reported that having to present their own teaching of writing helped to deepen their belief in and commitment to the program, although one teacher was not convinced that the teachers had gained much parental support from the evening.

Visits to the school by four recognized authors over a two year period were reported by four individuals as having helped to motivate both teachers and students. Finally, one participant reported that the informal talking around the staffroom table about ideas for writing was an important factor in promoting the program: "There's a lot of teachers teaching teachers, just informally."

School-based in-service program. Three participants first named the school-based in-service program as an important factor in helping to improve the writing program, and all participants were positive

about the benefits of school-based in-service. The program was set up jointly in the fall of 1981 by the principal and the school curriculum coordinator, and was endorsed by the staff. It was agreed then by the staff that a focus on written expression would be in effect for a minimum two year period.

In the first year, the entire plan allowed for the use of three and one-half non-instructional days and approximately five hundred dollars from a district-sponsored school-based professional development fund for substitute days to provide planning time. Two days were allocated to the development of written expression; that is, four half-days in each of October, January, March and June. In addition, two half-day planning sessions, in September and November, were devoted to written expression. The remaining days were taken up by the topics of daily physical education, reporting to parents and multiculturalism.

In the second year of the plan, 1982-83, the government-mandated non-instructional days were withdrawn. However, the principal designed an in-service program which would require three half-day substitute teachers bimonthly so that teachers could be released in groups to work together for part of a morning. The funding was partially covered by a professional development fund which the teachers agreed to allocated to the school-based in-service program. The remaining three hundred and sixty dollars was acquired through a special district fund from which the principal was able to draw a

grant. In addition, the staff agreed to monthly meetings after school which were to be used for discussing curriculum matters only. In this year, the staff decided to limit the focus of their in-service program to written expression and math problem solving.

In October 1983, the staff agreed to continue with a focus on written expression for a third year in order to refine their students' publishing and presenting skills. Writing in the content areas and the use of the word processor (computer) in the writing program were specific goals of the 1983-84 school year. The school- based professional development funding was discontinued after December 1983, although the three and one-half non-instructional days were reinstated. Monthly after school staff meetings were held, but administrative as well as curricular information was presented.

The teachers' comments on the advantages of school-based in-service picked up the theme of the sharing of knowledge which they had identified as a key component in making their writing program successful. The in-service program allowed for and encouraged teacher interactions over many sessions, which had a cumulative effect on their learning.

> We set up our goals for the year [specific objectives for each month] and I found that really valuable.
>
> We talked about our expectations at each grade level... and it really bonded the intermediate teachers and the early primary teachers... it was a real trade of ideas.

> We depended a lot on [the district·curriculum coordinator] at first and now we are becoming more independent.

> Each occasion has been an important milestone in our development.... You have full control over the activity, it's a formative process, it's an on-going process that can be evaluated as you go along and adjustments can be made... No one is imposing anything on you; you are seeking your own direction. I think it's a true professional experience.

> I think it makes a world of difference to have a repertoire demonstrated in your own school, preferably in your own classroom. There's a real difference in tone if you are in the every day working environment than if you are somewhere else.

The monthly curriculum (planning) meetings in the 1982-83 year were seen by teachers as a valuable way of discussing plans, sharing information, and setting and evaluating goals. Although teachers did not have release time, the function of these meetings was similar to that of the in-service sessions and the advantages stated by teachers reflect again the theme of sharing knowledge which contributes to their professionalism. Four respondents commented that they were disappointed not to have the curriculum meetings this year.

> You can see as a teacher what's happening in each grade level... It gives me a sense of what other classes are doing and for [my students] what kinds of things I should be preparing them for [the next grade]. There's some sense of continuation.

> We had a curriculum meeting every month and I found that really valuable [because it helped us to keep to our goals]. It adds to a more professional feeling. You need to discuss the curriculum because it's important... The curriculum meetings keep us on the program.

Last year we had one a month.  This year it hasn't
worked as well being in with staff meetings.  I miss
them.  You get to see where everyone else is which is
difficult in a small school because everyone is so busy
with duty and house games.

[The writing program] would not have gone as far as
it's gone without them because it gives you time to
communicate and share ideas and express concerns.

Six people indicated some disadvantages of school-based

in-service: inattention to other subject areas; lack of commitment

from all staff members (not evident in this school but is possible in

a larger school); a kind of insularity which makes it difficult to see

beyond the school; or the difficulty of meeting the professional needs

of individual staff members.

It's a lot more difficult and a lot more sophisticated
a process than people who write about it seem to
suggest, because you have teachers at different
cognitive levels and different developmental levels and
different professional levels.  And in a school-based
in-service session, to meet the needs of all of those
groups without insulting those who are most
professionally-developed and still meeting the high
structure needs of those people who are at a different
level, it's tricky.

It would be interesting to hear from someone else [as
well as the school curriculum coordinator]... and maybe
someone who's not keep on [the writing process], what
are some of the flaws in it.

Sometimes we get bogged down in a certain area... it
can be time-consuming... but it's valid for the
person... to talk it out... I think there are a lot
more advantages than disadvantages.

The district curriculum coordinator. The district curriculum

coordinator was a person with great expertise both in the curriculum

which she was promoting, and the coaching of teachers for each other.

> I tried to get curriculum coordinators both to model
> and to make conscious, strategies for working with
> [different] kinds of people.  And, hopefully, for
> making curriculum coordinators more a developer-type of
> leader... I would consider that work every bit as
> important as the writing process itself because I want
> curriculum coordinators to be more potent purveyors of
> their good teaching ideas.  There are some conscious
> strategies that make you better at doing that... You
> have to value where everyone is if you are going to get
> them to grow.

A major implementation goal was that school staffs would be able

to develop a strong writing program in a way that would make them

better equipped to take on any other curriculum improvement project.

She consciously worked to fit the writing process into other subject

areas such as Art, Science, Math, Computer Literacy and Social Studies

so that teachers felt more professional in a number of aspects of

their teaching.

Her curriculum improvement plan included holding district-wide

meetings on a regular basis for a language arts representative from

each school.  Since these meetings had started before the creation of

the school curriculum coordinator position, there was an initial

concern on her part that this new position would be a barrier to her

plan for improving written expression.  In many cases, however, the

language arts representative became the school curriculum coordinator

as was the case in the school under study.

The district meetings were designed to model leadership behaviours for the teachers to practice in their own schools; they were designed to impart information and strategies specific to the writing process; they were designed to celebrate failures as a way of encouraging risk-taking and problem solving; and they were designed to help teachers share ideas and build a network of contacts in other schools throughout the district.

> She had frequent rep meetings, once a month or every five to six weeks. The first year [three years ago] every meeting was devoted to a different stage and we tore them apart. Those [meetings] were wonderful and we had sacks of handouts and lots of ideas and every time we went to one of the meetings she had a new book we could read, and a new publication from the States, and a new research article... Lots of discussion with people from your same grade level.

Her curriculum improvement plan also included the organizing of visits by recognized authors to the schools, the promoting of evening presentations to explain the writing process to parents, and the planning of a district-wide Art and Writing display in the spring of each year.

The district curriculum coordinator distinguished between school-based in-service and school-focused in-service.

> If I have [one or two staff members] at some kind of in-service session, I am always focusing in my own mind on their school and trying to lead that in-service in such a way that they will be able to apply it. I think

> there's a time to gather people of similar conceptual
> levels and work with them. I think there's a false
> distinction between school-based and district-based.
> All of the in-service I've done with the writing
> process has been what I would call school-focused... I
> never forget their context and neither do they.

In addition, the district curriculum coordinator broadly defined school-based in-service as any interaction which took place at the school, whether it was a planned session or consultation with an individual teacher about his or her own program.

Six participants stated, without prompting, that the district curriculum coordinator had helped to improve the writing program at this school. All participants reported the advantages of having the district curriculum coordinator come to their school. Those strategies which made an impression on the teachers were the planned in-service sessions, the sharing of ideas, and the modelling of appropriate behaviours in the classroom.

The district curriculum coordinator took part in planned in-service sessions with the entire staff of the school three times each year for three years. She spent some of her sessions in the spring of 1983 in helping to prepare the teachers, including the school curriculum coordinator for their part in the evening presentation to parents. There were many additional interactions with the principal and the school curriculum coordinator, as well as with individual teachers who invited her to their classrooms or who called on her for help with a specific problem they were encountering. Five

teachers had had her come at least once to their classroom to model
specific prewriting or editing behaviours, and all spoke highly of her
abilities as a role model for them.

The personal qualities of the district curriculum coordinator on
which the participants reported indicate her ability to develop a
rapport with many individuals.  Her knowledge of her work (expertise)
and her willingness to share ideas were reported by six participants.
Being supportive and positive and enthusiastic were qualities stated
by four participants.  She was approachable, had a sense of humour,
was a good listener, and has a realistic outlook.

> I'd like to watch her teach more... follow her for two
> or three lessons... Her human qualities make it much
> easier for me to relate honestly without feeling that
> [she] holds you in contempt.

> By being available and coming to our little school so
> often and helping all of us.

> She does a discussion type of workshop and I think
> that's really effective.  Everyone throws out ideas.

> I've never worked with [the district curriculum
> coordinator] just on my own... Now I would [like to
> work with her].  Last year I wouldn't have because I
> was so far behind where she was coming from that I
> didn't want her to know that I didn't know that much...
> I'm also at that stage where I need her to come in to
> get me to the next stage.

> She puts great store in the intelligence of the
> individual teachers.  She shows you nothing but
> encouragement, respect, trust and faith... you don't
> dare disappoint her... She challenges you... She's an
> extremely gifted diagnostician of peoples' talents...
> She's a constant linker with other gifted people... She
> constantly mentions your name in conversations and when

she's giving workshops she constantly mentions your
name... She buoys you up.

She's absolutely wonderful. She speaks at many
different levels at once... she can be talking to us
all at once and we all get something different.

She's been the person who's encouraged [the school
curriculum coordinator] more than anybody else to
extend her professional capacity and abilities... She's
seen someone who is ready to do that and she's provided
her with those opportunities [to give workshops in the
writing process].

The interactions and the learning which the district curriculum

coordinator encouraged were beneficial not only to the teachers in the

school but also for the district curriculum coordinator.

The things that stand out in my mind are the learnings
that I made at Kurelek. Kurelek's been like a lab
school for me in the sense that [what I've observed in
classrooms and in the staffroom] ... have helped to
deepen the thinking about the writing process and to
improve the writing program... [The school curriculum
coordinator] has often inspired me.

The school curriculum coordinator. The school curriculum

coordinator was the language arts representative at the district-wide

meetings. She returned to the school with new resources, ideas and

strategies to try in her classroom and to share with others. She

developed the school-based in-service plan with the principal, and

presented it to the teachers. She conducted the curriculum meetings

held after school and she organized specific school-based in-service

sessions. She was responsible for organizing the parent evening in

the spring of 1983 and each of the four presenting assemblies held since the fall of 1983. Above all, she was developing an expertise in the teaching of writing along with the other teachers.

Five participants stated, without prompting, that the school curriculum coordinator had helped to improve the school's writing program. All participants reported on the advantages of having a curriculum coordinator in the school. Most respondents found it difficult to separate the qualities of the person in the position from the role itself, but her active involvement with the principal in planning and carrying out the school-based in-service program was reported by all participants. Specific strategies such as providing resources, one-on-one help, organizing speakers and specific school events, and keeping teachers on task in working toward their monthly curricular goals were reported. Her enthusiasm and ability to draw ideas out from others, her great energy, her use of positive reinforcement and the modeling of good written work by her students were qualities which other staff members reported as helping them to improve their program. The only disadvantage given by three participants was that her enthusiasm was sometimes overwhelming or a little overpowering for those with a different style of learning and teaching.

The considerable professional growth which the school curriculum coordinator earlier attributed in part to her experience in this role was confirmed by comments from two participants.

It's hard to separate [the school curriculum
coordinator] from her role... she really models the
pleasures and pains of learning... she talks out loud
about the frustrations and the joys... of putting
something to work with her own students... Her own
visible, tangible enthusiasm for what she's learned and
what her kids are able to do is really infectious.
She's extremely hard-working... writing up minutes of
curriculum meetings, designing management systems,
posters, publications... She's made a professional
commitment above and beyond her role as a classroom
teacher.

[The school curriculum coordinator] is excellent for
bringing in charts and pinning them up and xeroxing
little bits of information... a wealth of information
and handouts and ideas and, as a resource person, if
you're stuck, you get immediate results. She either
digs around or goes to [the district curriculum
coordinator] and you're served with three thousand and
one different ideas... I'd like to see some other
teachers teach, and [she] is one of them. I know she
gets fantastic work but I don't know how she does it.

It's so nice because she's always there. Whenever I
get stuck or I'm having trouble with something along
the way, she's always around and she really knows what
she's doing... It's a matter of her personality.

Even though she was ahead [in her knowledge of the
writing process], she still went back and we all
started over together... I think she's really good at
that job. She's so effusive about things that you
can't say, "I don't want to do that", and by the time
she's finished, you usually want to do it anyway.

I think it's been very important that someone who
hasn't any position of power, someone who is one of the
rest of the staff is taking a leadership role, so it's
not seen to be top-down, laid-on type of thing. The
informal interaction network is very important...
having someone who is at all times, focusing on the
professional development program of the school. It's
never allowed to slide.

The principal. The principal of the school had recently graduated with a masters degree in educational administration and had focused on curriculum development. His challenge was to take the theoretical base he had and to develop it at a practical level in the school. He did not see himself as having expertise in teaching the writing process, but he had had experience with developing a school-based in-service plan to promote written expression in the elementary school in which he had been vice-principal. When he first came to Kurelek as principal, he was concerned about establishing a yearly in-service plan. He worked with both the district curriculum coordinator and the school curriculum coordinator to develop a plan which would meet the curricular needs that the staff had identified; that is, to improve written expression.

The principal reported that his involvement with establishing the school-based in-service program was very high in the 1981-82 year and in particular he worked to develop the leadership skills of the school curriculum coordinator by increasingly delegating curricular responsibility to her. In the third year, the school curriculum coordinator was able to carry much of the planning herself so his involvement had decreased. He now saw himself as a mediator who could help teachers solve their curricular problem by enlisting the help of others.

The principal clearly indicated a knowledge of the writing process and confirmed that he attended all school-based in-service

sessions. He also met with teachers individually each month to discuss their preview of the curricular goals for their students. In the 1983-84 school year, a second school with four teachers was annexed to Kurelek. Although the schools remained separate for school-based in-service, the principal found that his time with the Kurelek staff was much reduced.

When questioned about the factors which had helped to improve their writing program, no respondent indicated the principal. When prompted, however, all participants confirmed that his organizational ability and support had been advantageous to the program. Three respondents stated that he believed in the program and that he was an educator who promoted thinking about educational issues. Two respondents reported that his positive comments to students and his obvious support of the presenting assemblies had helped to improve the program. Two respondents expressed a wish that the principal could spend more time teaching in classrooms, but they also understood the constraints under which he operated, especially in the 1983-84 year. The principal, too, expressed the wish to have more time for teaching.

> By helping to organize and coordinate and structure everything has been the basis of the program. If he hadn't set it all up, I don't think we would have such a well-rounded in-service program or school writing program. By structuring the non-instructional days so that nothing was left to chance... very few minutes of the non-instructional days were wasted... He's made one of the biggest changes in my teaching because of his teacher supervision.

He had the idea in the first place. He has the time to write the letters to get the funding and he has the time to make the plans for the workshops, for the sessions that we've had... With his easy way of persuading you to do something you didn't know you were going to do, he had us decide that we were going to focus on the writing process. He made the decision initially, I think, although we voted for it... He got money for substitute time within a few weeks.

He's as convinced as everyone else is that it's a good thing. He has encouraged us to continue focusing on the writing process for our curriculum development for a period of three years now and that is unusual in school... He's a thoughtful man and he's got lots of ideas but he's certainly not a person who pushes his ideas or shapes the school very strongly around his ideas.

He definitely felt the rumblings of discontent and doubts. We had a few talks at the beginning because I had my doubts as to teaching it... he was very supportive about offering help... He wasn't very pushy about it.

I don't see him that much except when he goes over the previews. I see the principal as someone you discuss your previews with or problems. I don't really see him in the role of curriculum development.

He's tremendously supportive... You couldn't find a more curriculum development knowledgeable kind of person... He's open to discussion, and open to ideas and really aware of what people are trying to do and how people are growing. He makes a point of trying to communicate with everybody... of providing support. He tries very hard to communicate with you about [your preview] and ... he has a tremendous commitment to quality professional teaching and experiences for students.

The participants' responses to questions about the principal's leadership style were very consistent with his own description of his style. They reported unanimously that he had a clear idea of the

educational goals which would meet the needs of the students in the school. Although he provided direction in the setting of school goals, he did not impose his ideals on the teachers. He presented his recommendations to the staff for modification and final approval, and respondents indicated that they were guided but not overpowered in their decision-making.

The principal consistently signalled to the teachers that be believed they were professionals who wanted to do a good job. He had clear expectations with regard to the monthly curricular preview, to discipline, to reporting to parents and to the quality of work from students. In his supervision of teachers, he stressed time on task, positive reinforcement and good questioning. He was aware of each teacher's curriculum plans and saw himself as a mediator who could best meet the teacher's professional needs by bringing help from another expert. He was acknowledged to have an ability to see a person's hidden talents and to promote those talents. His standards were clearly signalled to the students calmly, almost unobstrusively, yet with strength. His own decision-making was focused on the impact that a decision would have on instructional practices. Above all, he was a good listener who reflected critically and appreciatively on teachers' and students' efforts.

All respondents agreed that the principal was most definitely the administrative leader in the school, but he was seen to share the responsibility for curriculum matters with the school curriculum

coordinator and the responsibility for the operation of the school with the assistant to the principal. He did not relinquish his responsibilities in these areas but maintained an on-going dialogue with these individuals concerning the task he had delegated. He had a knowledge of district policy, and knew how to draw funds from other sources when they were needed for the in-service program or for specific resources which the teachers could justify.

All participants confirmed that the principal used a democratic leadership style for most decision-making, although three teachers recognized that he made the decisions himself on those questions which were of little concern to the staff. He seemed to have an ability to know which decisions he should make, and which he should bring to the teachers.

It was clear from the interviews that the teachers in this school had a view of their principal's role which coincided with his own view of the role. They were professionals with a voice in the decisions of the school and they saw the principal as a definite leader who was true to his ideals and yet fair-minded and willing to listen to other points of view. He was sure of his own role and although he shared or delegated some tasks, he recognized that he had ultimate responsibility for the operation of the school.

Other characteristics. Seven respondents considered that the smaller size of the school had a positive effect on the success of the

curriculum development process here. Although they could envision similar progress in a larger school, the respondents indicated that it would take longer to achieve and much of the time would need to be spent on developing the open communication and willingness to share ideas which was a valued characteristic of this school. It was stated as an advantage to have a school where all the students were known by all the teachers and by each other.

Six respondents reported that the quality of the staff in the school was a factor. They were described variously as hard-working, conscientious, full of ideas, committed to quality work from themselves and their students, and willing to assume extra responsibilities. Each individual was seen to have specific strengths which had helped most members to take a leadership role in some way. The respondents were consistent in their identification of the ways in which individual members provided leadership in the school.

In the beginning of the interview three participants referred to the impact that this curriculum development project had had on their own professional development. At the conclusion of the interview, five other participants reported either that they had experienced professional growth, or that they could see such growth in others, from their experiences with the school-based in-service program which had focused on the writing process. When two of the five respondents were asked if similar professional growth would be possible if another curriculum area were the focus, they affirmed that it would.

Similarly three teachers affirmed that they would continue to use the writing process here and if they moved to another school. The principal confirmed his commitment to a curriculum improvement plan such as the one at this school, and one teacher, who had decided to transfer, hoped to move to another school where there was a plan for developing some area of the curriculum.

In summary, participants in this study reported that the interview was worthwhile. As each interview progressed, the respondents appeared more relaxed and their answers became longer, richer in detail and reflective. Voices were animated and words and phrases were emphasized. Three participants returned after the interview to add further comments, and four individuals commented that the interview had helped to clarify and consolidate their thinking about the curriculum. All participants confirmed that the reporting of the data fairly represented them, and, as a result of reading the report, the monthly curriculum meetings were reinstated by the principal and the school curriculum coordinator.

## Chapter V

### Conclusions

In the past two decades, studies of teaching have highlighted how difficult it is for teachers to engage in curriculum development activities, even though participation in curriculum decision-making is a powerful way for teachers to improve their professional practices. School organization is not conducive to teachers working together and receiving leadership in developing curriculum. The physical and social structures of the typical elementary school have contributed to teachers being isolated as professionals, and generally have prevented teachers from establishing collaborative, collegial relationships with proper curriculum leadership.

Described in this case study is one school in which this was not the case. Rather, a setting was examined in which teachers, working in a collegial model and under the leadership of curriculum coordinators, were able to enhance their professional practices in the classroom because of their participation in curriculum development activities. In the elementary school in which this study took place, classroom practices associated with written expression had shown improvement over a three year period. This study investigated why the teachers participated in developing the written expression of their students, what are the characteristics of the school setting which promoted curriculum development, and what did leaders do to promote

teacher participation in curriculum decision making. This chapter examines the results reported in Chapter IV in relation to the conceptualization of the curriculum development process proposed in Chapter II.

## Research Question 1

The reasons why the teachers participated in developing the curriculum are not discrete but somewhat overlapping and complementary. Initially, teachers participated because of peer pressure, and because of the innovation's potential to improve their practice. Teachers valued the intended reform of classroom practice which were attributed to successful use of the innovation. They continued to participate because the worth of the innovation was confirmed as the teachers experienced a sense of achievement with their students. In addition, they valued the opportunities for collegial interactions experienced as a result of their participation in developing curriculum. The sense of achievement, the collegial interactions and the sense of professional growth combined to produce a strong sense of efficacy for these teachers.

Peer pressure. Five teachers reported a feeling of pressure from their peers to participate when the school's writing program was first introduced to them. Different teachers reported feeling this pressure at the beginning of each of the three years under study, when they

first joined the staff. A related kind of pressure also was
transmitted from the district staff through the school curriculum
coordinator who was attending district meetings. This pressure to
conform to district curriculum priorities and to work on the writing
process throughout the school initially contributed to the development
of collegial interactions during the school-based in-service events
and the monthly curriculum meetings. In the second and third year
when a core of committed teachers had been established, the pressure
to take part in developing the curricular innovation grew out of these
opportunities for collegial interaction. The significance of this
peer pressure will be referred to again during the discussion of the
role of the curriculum leaders in this setting. However, such
pressure is expected in a normative change process in which values and
beliefs are being shared and questioned and, indeed, is a powerful way
in which to alter group norms.

Innovation potential. The curricular innovation, that is, the
writing process, has both a simplicity and a complexity which allows
teachers with varying conceptual ability to understand it. On one
level it is a six-stage process which can be defined clearly and
simply. At this level participants could try some activities with
their students without being committed fully to the innovation, and
could see results almost immediately. Thus, they were attracted to
the innovation. Furthermore, the innovation allows for flexibility on
the part of the teachers to incorporate their teaching styles yet it

provides a structure and a process which is straightforward and easily understood. It is complex enough to stimulate the improvement of teacher practices yet it can be divided into manageable stages or processes with specific components that can be clearly defined. Finally, these teachers perceived that the innovation could meet an identified need, that is, it could improve the writing ability of their students.

However, full commitment to the process was difficult for some teachers to make because the assumptions about writing and about how children learn to write conflicted sharply with their commitment to the teaching of traditional grammar and spelling. It was necessary at first for these teachers to discuss and to work through some of their concerns and doubts. Once they were convinced to try the process, they began to modify their beliefs about teaching writing and were willing to continue developing the program. It was then that they discovered the complexity of the process, particularly at the editing stage, which demands difficult thinking processes for students and raises professional questions for the teachers. For example, teachers questioned whether they should continue to teach specific grammar lessons to the whole class and they worried about how much to help students during the editing stage. As they worked together to refine their teaching and considered important professional and educational issues, the participants deepened their own thinking.

It can be confirmed from these findings that a successful

innovation meets the needs of the students, is clearly described, has a practical application, and is complex (Fullan, 1982). However, it seems that these aspects of the innovation are important at different points in the development process. Initially, teachers respond to a clearly defined idea which they can see themselves putting into practice in their classroom. If they experience some success and see that the innovation is meeting the needs of their students, teachers are willing to work through some of the difficulties which they have encountered. The innovation must continue to meet the developing needs of the students and thus continue to provide a sense of achievement for the teacher. That is, the potential of the curricular innovation must be realized and further potential perceived to promote commitment.

Teachers respond to an innovation which is clearly defined yet is flexible enough to allow for decisions related to the practical application. This innovation was valued because it teaches a process which enables teachers and students to develop at their own rates and levels of understanding. As the complexity of the innovation became apparent, the participants recognized that it is worth their efforts. It is significant that the commitment which they made lasted for a three year period.

Sense of efficacy. It can be inferred from the findings of this study that teachers participate in developing curriculum because they

experience a sense of achievement with their students. The innovation was chosen by these teachers because of a perceived need to improve the writing ability of their students. All participants related the success of the program in part to improved student outcomes. Two teachers cited only student outcomes as an advantage. It was apparent that the teachers had a sense of efficacy within their classrooms.

It is significant, however, that in reporting events or activities which had helped to improve their writing program, teachers more often made reference to school wide events than to classroom activities. These school-wide events such as the parent evening and the presenting assemblies, caused teachers to work together to achieve common goals and helped to build teacher commitment to the curriculum innovation. In the same way, the school-based in-service program promoted professional growth both individually and collectively as the staff shared common experiences. The teachers' remarks indicate that being part of a team and achieving common goals is equally as important as the sense of achievement with students in the classroom. Similarly, Fullan states that schools with a school-wide emphasis on curriculum improvement have a high proportion of staff with a sense of efficacy.

Collegiality. A theme running through the findings is the value which these teachers placed on collegiality. They value having opportunities to share practical ideas, successes and failures, doubts

and new learnings. They value working together towards a common goal
of improving their students' writing ability. This collegial spirit
was less evidence at the beginning of the curriculum development
process and there is still evidence that two staff members do not have
the same commitment to the goals of the school as do the other seven.

Initially, the feeling of peer pressure was more predominant than
were feelings of collegiality. Even the willingness to commit a
minimum of two years to develop the curriculum innovation was related
to a feeling of not wanting to let down the others on staff. It was
only in the second year when the teachers faced the question of
whether or not they were a "writing school", that they seemed to go
beyond the orientation to their own classroom and to begin to develop
a school focus. This commitment to each other and to school events
produced the cohesiveness which is a predominant characteristic of the
school.

Sense of professional growth. It is significant that eight of
the ten respondents reported that they had experienced professional
growth, or they could identify such growth in others, as a result of
the school's emphasis on the curriculum innovation. Moreover, it is
clear that the participants valued the sense of professional
achievement because they indicated a wish to continue with developing
either this curriculum or a new one. The results of this study
confirm what Fullan (1982) and Eisner (1983) have identified as a

necessity if schools are to improve: the school must be a place for the growth and recognition of the teacher if it is to be a place that provides for the growth and recognition of the student. The everyday work of a teacher in a classroom with students does not promote the sense of professional growth which these teachers reported. It was their collegial interactions as they developed the writing curriculum which provided this sense of professional growth.

## Research Question 2

There are specific reasons why this school staff was able to develop and maintain their participation in the improvement of the writing curriculum. The characteristics of the setting which promote the curriculum development practices of the teachers are now considered. One characteristic is the existence of a professional staff. A second characteristic is the staff interactions which were focused on developing the curriculum and a third characteristic is the mutually-shared goals and objectives. The fourth characteristic is the effective leadership in this school.

Professional staff. The professional attitudes of the staff toward self-improvement and improvement in their classrooms were exhibited by all respondents, throughout the interviews. There was evidence to suggest that teachers were assessing their own needs and that they had plans for furthering their professional qualifications.

Six of the eight teachers were identified as leaders in some aspect of the school program and their leadership was accepted by others in the group. The willingness of the members of this staff to assess and improve their practice contributed to the success of the monthly curriculum meetings. These meetings provided an opportunity for establishing yearly goals and specific objectives for meeting those goals. They provided an opportunity for evaluating progress toward attaining the objectives. They provided an opportunity for sharing, for reflection, and for deliberation over alternative solutions to the curriculum problems which faced one or more of the participants at different times in the three-year period. There was a feeling of support and collaboration which permeated the interactions of the teachers both formally and informally when curriculum matters were discussed. LaRocque (1983) and Haller (1969) have labelled teachers with these characteristics as being "school-oriented" rather than "classroom-oriented". Teachers with a school orientation believed in improvement through collegial interactions, they had a strong sense of efficacy, they valued cooperative problem-solving and they were willing to take risks.

Staff interactions. Fullan (1982) states that implementation is a process of resocialization and that the foundation of resocialization is interaction. Successful implementation must combine the components of concrete, teacher-specific training activities and

regular meetings with peers and others. It is evident that the staff
at this school had the opportunity for both these aspects of
successful implementation as they worked to develop the writing
program. The participants recalled that it was in the second year
that they had been the most involved with developing the curriculum.
It was also in the second year that they had monthly curriculum
meetings after school as well as school-based in-service sessions with
the district curriculum coordinator. The opportunities to share ideas
and to problem-solve as a group helped to increase the self-confidence
of individual teachers, and the demonstration of processes as well as
student products helped other teachers to take the risk to try
something for the first time. Most of all, as the doubts and concerns
and the questions were shared, the norms of professional practice were
established. During each of the whole group interactions, a
curricular leader, either the school curriculum coordinator or the
district curriculum coordinator (or both) were present to help clarify
and reflect, to provide expertise and support. The staff had
specifically structured time in which to interact for the purpose of
developing the innovation.

Mutually-shared goals and objectives. The staff at this school
agreed upon specific curriculum goals at the beginning of the year.
In the first year under study, three areas were identified: written
expression, daily physical education, and multiculturalism. In the

second year, the focus was narrowed to two discrete subjects: written

expression and math problem-solving. By the third year, the staff had

recognized the difficulties associated with trying to achieve more

than one goal each year so that they identified only written

expression as the year's goal. This refinement in the curriculum

development plan over a three-year period came about in part because

of the teachers' orientation to school improvement and their

willingness for collegial problem-solving. Another characteristic of

this staff's problem-solving was the setting of very specific monthly

or bimonthly objectives which could realistically be accomplished by

each teacher. For example, in the beginning, the objective was for

each student to have a writing portfolio where examples of published

work could be placed at least three times a year. In the spring of

the second year, an objective which all staff members agreed to and

worked toward was an evening presentation to the parents, and the

presenting assemblies in the third year were one way of meeting the

yearly goal of improving the students' publishing and presenting

skills. These school-wide events were named by the participants as a

major characteristic of the setting which had helped to develop their

sense of achievement or efficacy with their students. The results of

this study confirm that agreement by the staff to work to achieve one

goal for a minimum of two years is an important characteristic of a

setting in which teacher practices have improved. One goal gives a

focus to staff interactions both informally and formally. One goal

gives a focus to on-going staff development which includes trying out new strategies and discussing the success or failure of the ideas with peers and experts.

Curriculum leadership. The existence of a professionally-oriented staff, peer interaction and specific curriculum goals is directly related to the leadership in this school. The curriculum team organized by the principal comprised himself and the school curriculum coordinator. The district curriculum coordinator was included during the initial planning stage as well as for most of the school-based in-service sessions. Each member of the team served a specific function which the participants were able to clearly identify. The effectiveness of the curriculum development leaders, as determined by successful implementation, is discussed below.

Research Question 3

Curriculum leaders in this setting promoted teacher participation in curriculum decision-making in various ways. The specific behaviours of the principal, the school curriculum coordinator and the district coordinator are considered.

The principal. The principal was seen as the organizational leader responsible for acquiring funds and other resources, for communicating the school goals to parents, students and teachers, for

enlisting staff decision-making in matters which affected them, and for providing emotional support to those teachers who required it. He initiated the curriculum plan which included the use of non-instructional days for school-based in-service and he clearly shared curriculum leadership with the school curriculum coordinator. He was not described by any of the teachers as an instructional leader in specific curriculum areas, although he did take part in each of the in-service sessions and was cognizant of all aspects of the writing process. He monitored teacher and student progress through their monthly previews and meetings, and he promoted time on task and the improvement of direct instruction techniques when he supervised specific teachers. Above all, it was recognized by a number of respondents that the principal had had considerable control over the staffing of the school during the three-year period, and that he purposely had hired competent, professional teachers.

The principal in this study seems to conform to the description given by Rutherford and Hall (1983) of the initiator principal style. He was committed to the curricular innovation and put pressure on the staff to maintain their goal for at least two years. He advocated working towards only one goal at a time and was successful in achieving staff agreement for this in the third year. The description of the principal's sections in this study is compatible with the finding of the DESSI study (1983) in which administrator commitment, pressure and support were necessary in enlisting teacher commitment to

the innovation. A further example of administrative support was the commitment by the district administration to school-based funding for in-service, to the district curriculum coordinator position, and to the school curriculum coordinator position. The signal sent to the schools was that school-based in-service and curriculum improvement were important and that improving written expression was a priority.

The school curriculum coordinator. The school curriculum coordinator provided curriculum leadership in ways which complemented the principal's leadership and which gave the teachers a different kind of curriculum support. She was an experienced teacher who had the respect of other staff members but it is significant that she was developing the writing process within her own classroom at the same time as the others. She grew into the role of "expert" during the first two years and, as she became known outside the school for her work with written expression, she also was viewed as an expert by her peers on staff. The teachers could still identify with her as one had learned with them although she was an acknowledged role model for a number of them. She had the confidence of the teachers and was able to help the principal make wise planning decisions because of this. Most teachers came to her for curricular advice, for new ideas and for emotional support when something was not going well. However, one teacher did not feel comfortable working in this way with the school curriculum coordinator because her personal style was somewhat

overpowering for this individual. Conversely, it was her strong personal support for the innovation which helped to create the peer pressure some staff members experienced. This pressure was the reason why some teachers first agreed to try the new ideas in their classrooms. As with administrative pressure, it seems from this study that it is a human relations skill to know when to apply pressure and when to ease off. One of the characteristics of this staff was their willingness to discuss their concerns and doubts, thus providing the curriculum leaders with insights into the pressures being felt by the leaders.

Although this position was created by district staff, the selection of the school curriculum coordinator was made by the school staff. The job description was one that provided scope without giving much direction. In this school, the principal helped initially to define the job and to establish the credibility of the school curriculum coordinator as a curricular leader by allocating time for planning meetings, by having her chair the curriculum meetings and by having her carry out tasks associated with the school-based in-service sessions. As the school curriculum coordinator gained experience, the principal provided less direction but continued to monitor the curriculum plans by having regular meetings with her. His willingness to share leadership and to delegate tasks while still providing direction is an important characteristic of this school setting which contributed to the success of the innovation.

The presence of a curricular leader within the school other than the principal is consistent with the findings of Hord, Hall and Stiegelbauer (1983) and Crandall (1983), Cox (1983) and Loucks (1983) in whose studies school-based resource people were also identified. These resource people were able to work with teachers to provide what Crandall terms "craft support", that is, the kind of support which helps teachers make sense of the new program. The school-based resource people were part of the planning team and acted in a liaison role for the central office staff, the building administrator and the teachers. In this study the school curriculum coordinator was a school-based resource person who provided "craft support" for the teachers.

The district curriculum coordinator. Cox (1983) states that "central office staff may well be the linchpins of school improvement efforts" (p. 10), and the findings of this study support that assertion. In this case, the district curriculum coordinator was the individual who was most knowledgeable about the innovation and she was able to help teachers make sense of it by offering very practical, successful ideas and strategies. She developed a climate of trust with the staff of this school and respondents spoke highly of her professional integrity, of her humour and compassion, and of the inspiration which she offered them. Moreover, she had a clear conceptualization of the relationship between professional development

and the change process, and she was developing very practical implementation strategies through her work with the schools. Her training and ability in clinical supervision methods helped her successfully to model and to coach in others the behaviours which she believed are critical to the success of the innovation. She provided opportunities for the teachers to emulate her when she came to their classrooms to work with their students, and all participants but one indicated how powerful it was to learn from her in this way. She specifically mentored the school curriculum coordinator to develop her leadership skills both within the school and as a workshop leader for other districts.

The district curriculum coordinator was part of the school-based planning team especially in the first year. She attended and usually lead the school-based in-service sessions at least three times for each of the three years. An in-service session typically provided an opportunity for teachers to share concerns or successes; an opportunity for practicing a skill, such as editing, with each other; and an opportunity to collaborate on the development of an idea or a strategy as, for example, when the teachers developed a list of behaviours to be used when presenting work, which they could teach their students. In addition, the district curriculum coordinator visited individual classrooms when a teacher requested it and there were many opportunities for informal interactions in the staffroom or at district meetings.

The role of the district curriculum coordinator in this study matches the description of the consigliere role which Hord, Hall and Stiegelbauer (1983) identified as being the most intensive when the principal used an initiator style, as did this principal. In Hord's study, the consigliere was active in training and in consulting/ reinforcing functions while the principal developed the support and organizational arrangements. In this study, leadership by the district person and the principal was complementary although it would not have been possible for the district curriculum coordinator to be actively involved without the sanction of the principal. Because of the principal's self-confidence in his own authority and his willingness to share the leadership with a competent professional outside the school, this school benefited from the coordinator's expertise not only in the innovation, but also in effective implementation strategies.

The essential components for successful implementation which Fullan (1982) has identified were met in this setting, not haphazardly but because of very specific planning by the coordinators and the principal, and because of the cooperation of the teachers. Their school-based professional development was program-related and it included some theory, demonstration, practice, feedback and application with coaching by the district curriculum coordinator. The follow-up sessions came at the monthly curriculum meetings as well as occurring at the next in-service event. There were formal and

informal elements which combined to promote teacher interaction and working towards the attainment of their goal to improve written expression.

Although the district curriculum coordinator had modelled and coached in individual classrooms, one unexpected finding was that the teachers themselves had not yet modelled or demonstrated their teaching in each others' classroom. Even the school curriculum coordinator had not had the teachers observing her, although teachers from other schools had visited her classroom. There were few occasions when two teachers teamed up to plan or to teach together. the classrooms were primarily self-contained even though the teachers shared ideas and strategies during group discussions. Although the school curriculum coordinator had been observed to practice coaching in the staff room, there was seldom an opportunity for her to see a lesson nor was time provided for feedback and reflection with the teacher. One reason for the absence of in-classroom coaching seems to be the powerful, but very personal teaching style which the school curriculum coordinator had. Staff members emulated the product of her work but did not teach in the same way and therefore did not wish to have her observe their teaching. Thus, there were no demands made on the administration to provide the necessary release time. There was an indication that some teachers now were ready for team teaching or buddy work between students of different ages, and two teachers in particular would have liked to have the school curriculum coordinator

work with them in their classroom.

It is difficult to make a conclusion of causal relationships from a case study of this nature. Improved teacher practice may have been the result of the increased time allocated to the curricular task, or it may have been the result of the attention which was focused on the writing process. Nevertheless, participants in this study did consistently identify some significant features of the school which may have contributed to the improvement they perceived. In particular, the practice of identifying one curriculum goal which all members of the staff agreed to work towards over a three year period, and the consequent organization of an in-service plan to help teachers accomplish that goal, seem to be important characteristics. Also, the gradual development of collegial interactions which focused on curriculum questions, and the presence of a team of curriculum leaders comprising the principal, a district curriculum expert and an in-school teacher leader are other features of this case which seem to have been significant in the improvement of teacher practice.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study depended primarily on the interview to gather information about classroom practices. Since the interviewer did not observe in classrooms it was not possible to establish the relationship between successful classroom practice and specific leader behaviours. A study which used systematic classroom observation, as

well as interviews, during the curriculum development process could add to the knowledge of how and why certain leadership functions improve teacher practice.

One finding of this study was that the techniques of peer modelling and demonstration were not used by this staff to improve teacher practice. Further research might consider under what conditions peer modelling could work.

# APPENDIX A

## Interview Schedule

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Please give your name and the grade you teach.

I will ask you first some questions about your professional

qualifications. If my wording is unclear, please don't hesitate to

ask me for clarification.

## Section 1:  Professional Qualifications

1. How many years have you taught?

2. What are your academic and professional qualifications?

3. Has all your experience been in teaching at the elementary school? If not, please give details of your work experience.

4. How many years have been spent in this school?

5. As an elementary school teacher, you are usually expected to teach all subjects. Do you have certain subjects which you prefer to teach or which you feel better equipped to teach? Please explain or discuss.

6. Have you taken specific courses to further your professional development? What are they? How or why did you choose that course? Are there any other Pro-D events which you have taken part in?

7. Do you have any plans for further professional development?

8. Have any of these pro-d activities made a difference in the way you teach? Please explain how or why. [Listen for: strategies or topics]: Could you tell me more about that strategy? Are there any other activities which have made a difference?

9. How would you describe your teaching style?  Has your style changed significantly since beginning to teach?

## Section II:  Participation in Developing a Writing Curriculum

I would like to talk more specifically about your participation in developing a writing curriculum at Kurelek.

### Teachers:

1. When did you first hear about the writing process?

2. How would you define the writing process to someone not familiar with it?

3. How did you become involved with using the writing process yourself?

4. Why did you choose to take part in developing a writing program at Kurelek?  Were there other reasons?

5. What part of the writing process did you start with when you began to use it with your students?  What activities did you focus on when you first began?  Were there others?

6. Do you have a different emphasis in your writing program now?  Is there a stage that you focus on now?

7. At this point, which part of the writing process would you say is the most difficult for students to learn or for you to teach?  Why is it the most difficult?

8. What are your plans for further development of the writing program?

9. Are there ways in which your teaching of writing has changed?  Are there any other ways?

10. Are there ways in which your thinking about writing has changed?  Are there other ways?

11. Can you identify a time when you were very involved with developing your writing program?  When was that and why was your involvement so high?

12. Has your involvement changed?  Why do you think that is?

13. What are the advantages of taking part in the developing of a writing program?  Are there any others?

14. What are the disadvantages of participating in the developing of a program?  Are there any others?

15. How would you weigh the advantages against the disadvantages?

16. Has the writing process in Kurelek School improved? What are you using as a measure of the improvement? Are there any other indicators?

17. Do you have plans for evaluating the writing program in any other way?

## Principal

1. When did you first hear about the writing process?

2. How would you define the writing process to someone not familiar with it?

3. How did you become involved with using the writing process yourself?

4. Why did you choose to take part in developing a writing program at Kurelek?  Were there any other reasons?

5. What part of the writing process did the teachers start with when they first began using it with their students?

6. Do they have a different focus now?  What is that focus and why did the teachers choose to focus on it now?

7. Which stage seems to be the most difficult for students to learn or for teachers to teach?

8. What are your plans for further development of the writing process?

9. Are there ways in which the teaching of writing has changed?

[continue with numbers 10 to 18 above]

## District Curriculum Coordinator

1. Briefly, what are your professional qualifications and experience? How long have you been a Language Arts District Coordinator?

2. Can you tell me more about those experiences which relate specifically to your involvement with the writing process?

3. How would you define the writing process to someone not familiar with it?

4. When and how did you first begin to work with the teachers at Kurelek to improve the school's writing program?

5. Why did you decide to take part in developing a writing program at this school?

6. What part of the writing process did you focus on when you first began? What seems to be the focus now at Kurelek? Why is that a focus now?

7. Which stage seems to be the most difficult for teachers to teach?

8. Can you identify a period of time when you were very involved with developing a writing program here? When was that and why was your involvement so high?

9. Has your involvement changed? Why is that?

10. Has the writing program at Kurelek School improved? What are you using as a measure of the improvement?

11. Are there ways in which the teaching of writing has changed? Are there ways in which the thinking about writing has changed at Kurelek since your involvement?

12. Do you have plans to evaluate the writing program in any other way?

13. Do you think the writing process will continue at Kurelek? Why do you think this?


Section III: Characteristics of the Curriculum Development Setting

Now, I will ask you some things about the characteristics of the school.


1. Can you identify specific events or activities which stand out in your mind as helping you to improve your writing program? [your school's writing program] [Kurelek School's writing program] Listen for/ I'd like to talk about


A. Specific professional development events (outside the school)


1. How did this event affect you or help you to improve your writing program?

2. Why was this event helpful?

3. Are there any other professional development events which stand out as helpful to your program? How and why were they helpful?

4. Are there any other events or activities which stand out in your mind as helping you to improve your writing program?


B. School-based in-service


1. How has school-based in-service helped you to improve your writing?

2. How often are in-service sessions held at Kurelek?

3. How often do you take part in school-based in-service?

4. Who organizes the in-service activities?

5.  Is there one event which stands out as more useful than others?  Why is this so?  How was it helpful?.

6.  How are topics for in-service agreed upon?  ["planning meetings" - Can you tell me more about these meetings?]

7.  What are the advantages of school-based in-service? Are there any others?

8.  What are the disadvantages?  Are there any others?

9.  Are there any other events or activities which stand out in your mind as helping you to improve your writing program?


C.   School-based planning meetings

1.  How has school-based planning helped to improve your writing program?  Are there any other ways?

2.  How often do you meet for school-based planning?

3.  Can you describe a typical planning meeting?

4.  What is your role in these meetings?

5.  Who takes the leadership role during the planning meetings?

6.  What are the advantages of school-based planning?  Are there any others?

7.  What are the disadvantages?  Are there any others?

8.  Are there any other events or activities which stand out in your mind as helping you to improve your writing program?


D.   The school curriculum coordinator

1.  How has the school curriculum coordinator helped to improve the program at Kurelek?

2. Are there specific strategies or ways in which she worked that were particularly helpful? Why were they helpful? Are there any other ways?

3. Are there strategies which you would like to have seen used by the school coordinator?

4. In what ways have you worked with the school curriculum coordinator? Are there any other ways?

5. Are there ways you would prefer to work with her? Are there other ways?

6. Are there particular qualities about the school curriculum coordinator which helped you to improve or which hindered your improvement?

7. Are there any other events or activities which stand out as helping you to improve your writing program?

E. The district curriculum coordinator

1. How has the district curriculum coordinator helped to improve the writing program at Kurelek?

2. Are there specific strategies or ways in which she worked that were particularly helpful? Why were they helpful? Are there any others?

3. Are there strategies which you would like to have seen her use? Are there any others?

4. Were there specific ways that she worked with you? Are there any others?

5. Are there ways you would prefer to work with her? Are there any other ways?

6. Are there particular qualities about the district curriculum coordinator which helped you to improve your program, or which hindered your improvement?

7. Are there any other events or activities which stand out as helping you to improve your writing program?

F.   The principal

  1.  How has the principal helped to improve the writing
      program at Kurelek?

  2.  Are there specific strategies he used or actions he
      took which were particularly helpful?  Are there any
      others?

  3.  Are there actions which you would have liked to see him
      take which would have been helpful to you?  Are there
      any others?

  4.  In what ways do you work with the principal?

  5.  Are there ways you would prefer to work with him?

  6.  Are there particular qualities about the principal
      which helped you to improve your writing program, or
      which hindered your improvement?

  7.  Are there any other events or activities which stand
      out as helping you to improve your writing program?

G.   Significant events in the classroom or school

  1.  How did this event help you to improve your writing
      program?

  2.  What happened as a result of this classroom event?

  3.  Why do you think this event was helpful?

  4.  Are there any other classroom or school events which
      stand out in your mind as helping to improve your
      program?

  5.  Are there any other events or activities which stand
      out in your mind as helping to improve your writing
      program?

H.   District support

1.   How had district support helped you to improve the
     writing program?

2.   Why is this support helpful?

3.   Are there any other ways in which the district
     administration has been supportive?

4.   Are there any other events or activities which stand
     out in your mind as helping you to improve your writing
     program?

2.   a.   As a classroom teacher, do you have specific
          strategies for solving the difficulties which you
          encounter in teaching writing, or in planning for
          further teaching?  Why are these solutions helpful?
          Are there any others?
     b.   Are there strategies or solutions you would like to
          try?
     c.   Do you work with teachers outside the school?  Has
          this helped to improve your own program?  In what
          ways?
     d.   Why has working with other teachers been helpful?

3.   a.   As the school curriculum coordinator, are there
          special strategies that you have used to help
          teachers improve their writing program?  Why have
          they been helpful?  Are there any others?
     b.   Are there strategies you would like to try?  Are
          there any others?

4.   a.   As the district curriculum coordinator, are there
          specific strategies which you have used to improve
          a school's or a teacher's writing program?  Why
          have they been helpful?  Are there any others?
     b.   Are there strategies you would like to try?  Are
          there any others?

5.   a.   As the principal, are there strategies which you
          have used to help the teachers improve their
          writing program?  Why have they been helpful?  Are
          there any others?
     b.   Are there strategies you would like to try?

6. Who would you say provides the leadership in this school? In what areas does _____ provide the leadership? Is there anyone else?

7. How would you describe the principal's leadership style with respect to the following:
   a. the setting of school goals
   b. the operation of the school
   c. involvement with changes in curriculum or instruction
   d. the sharing of responsibility
   e. any strategies for decision-making within the school
   f. guidance or support
   g. his view of his role as principal

8. Is there anyone else who has an impact in any of these areas? Please explain.

9. Do you have any final comments to make about the characteristics of this school which have contributed to the development of a writing program?

10. Do you have any further thoughts or comments to make about your experiences in being involved with developing a writing program at Kurelek?

11. Any predictions for future directions for yourself, the school or the district?

Thank you for your time and cooperation. If there is anything further which comes to mind, please let me know.

APPENDIX B

Introductory Letter

Mailed to Participants

Dear

     As part of my graduate work in education at Simon Fraser University, I am investigating the development of a writing program at Kurelek Elementary School. The major method of collecting data is an in-depth interview to be conducted between February 27, 1984 and March 16, 1984. Each person on the staff at Kurelek, and the district language arts curriculum coordinator, will be interviewed once, at a time and place mutually agreed upon by the participant and the interviewer. The interview will be audio-taped and should last approximately one hour.

     In a study such as this, it is important to gather as many details and examples as you can provide. The interview questions focus on the following topics:

1.  professional development activities which have made a difference in your teaching.

2.  your participation in developing a writing program at your school

3.  the writing program in your class

4.  ways that you have been helped to improve your writing program

5.  characteristics of the school which have contributed to the development of a writing program.

     A second method of data collection in this study is observation at curriculum meetings and professional development events between January and April, 1984. It may be necessary to clarify points arising from the interviews and the observations at informal meetings.

     Your participation is voluntary and may be withdrawn partially or fully at any time. The confidentiality of personal information will be protected, both during the study and after its completion.

     I shall contact you in the following week to arrange an interview time.

<div align="center">Yours truly,</div>

<div align="center">Sheila Borman</div>

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