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Examining the Teacher Perceptions, Implementations, Barriers, and Benefits Associated with the Missouri Reading Initiative

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by

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Abstract

Reading is an essential skill taught during elementary academic years. The Sunny Day School District recognized the need of locating a reading program tailored to effectively meeting the instructional needs of students. A preliminary question was, "how do we increase the reading achievement of all our students?" In response to this instructional concern, the Sunny Day School District decided to implement the Missouri Reading Initiative (MRI), a state program created to assist teachers with scientifically research based reading instructional strategies. This study addressed the problem of a lack of a program evaluation for the MRI program as implemented within the elementary schools of the Sunny Day School District.

Qualitative and quantitative approaches added depth and authenticity to the data collection process and the intention was to triangulate the data in order to obtain a holistic picture of the MRI program in one school district. Design features were inclusive of the following study elements: administrative interviews, surveys, classroom observations, and MAP Scale Scores. Statistical tools used to analyze the MAP Scale Scores comprised of two z-tests for proportions calculated to find differences in opinions and an ANOVA to find any variances between MAP Scale Scores of grades 3-5 during the years of this research study.

An alignment of the research questions, observations, and surveys to the interview questions was completed then linked with the literature. Interviews and observations revealed valuable details of the implementation process of the MRI program. Emerging themes added data about the implementation processes and were reflective of

management and classroom facilitation. Survey results did suggest MRI was beneficial for assisting teachers with research based instructional strategies. Two z tests for proportions of the survey results were in the critical range causing the rejection of the null hypotheses. An ANOVA of the MAP scores did not show a significant change in any one year over the five-year period. Before deciding on implementing an extensive reading program similar to MRI, other districts carefully consider the evaluation methods of teachers. Factors not considered in this study, such as evaluative measures (cognitive coaching versus traditional methods), may yield different program implementation results.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

The ability to read proficiently is a universal skill necessary for success at all academic levels. Students who consistently read below grade level continue to struggle throughout their school years with little chance of recovery. Pretorius (2000) stated

研究 research findings in applied linguistics and reading research consistently show a strong correlation between reading proficiency and academic success at all ages, from the primary school right through to university level: students who read a lot and who understand what they read usually attain good grades. (p. 35)

In 2002, legislators developed a plan to improve student achievement called No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The legislation enforced accountability in reading proficiency of all students and required states to set guidelines for public school districts to track yearly academic progress of students. This urgency to assure reading success encouraged school districts to become proactive with faculty professional development. The type of professional development required for school improvement is that which supports ongoing, high-quality reading instruction (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2002). Implementing ongoing systematic, research-based professional development is a critical element in equipping educators to meet the needs of students (USDOE, 2002).

President Obama addressed the subject of school reform in his document "A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act" (Duncan & Martin, 2010). The focus of this reform was on public education and the need

for "rigorous and fair accountability and support at every level" (p. 8). A further address

of USDESE (2010) of America's public school administration was as follows:

> Building on these statewide standards and aligned assessments, every state
>
> will ensure that its statewide system of accountability rewards schools and
>
> districts for progress and success, requires rigorous interventions in the
>
> lowest performing schools and districts, and allows local flexibility to
>
> determine the appropriate improvement and support strategies for most
>
> schools. (p. 8)

In response to the federal guidelines for student accountability, states have begun

to develop programs designed to meet the needs of students. The Missouri Reading

Initiative (MRI) program is a Missouri state reading program designed to assist public

school districts with research-based best practices for reading instruction. The original

purpose of MRI was to assist teachers of kindergarten through third grade with strategies

to help students become grade level proficient in reading. In 1998, the MRI program

began facilitating the support of public school teachers of grades kindergarten through

third and at the time of this writing continues to support public school districts in all

grade levels (MRI, 2008, pp. 1-3).

MRI is a comprehensive reading and writing program; elements of the program

included instruction sessions, cognitive coaching, and modeling (MRI, 2008, p.1). In

addition, this comprehensive program includes reading and writing professional

development in research-based best practices. The MRI program is for school districts

that are in school improvement mode or that have low Missouri Assessment Program

(MAP) scores. When a school district is interested in the program, administrators

complete an application. A staff survey of initial commitment is required to begin the

professional development process (MRI, 2008).

At the time of this writing, the Sunny Day School District (a pseudonym) was in

District Improvement Level 3, Corrective Action (MODESE, 2011). The NCLB

Legislation required school districts to maintain a school improvement plan when their

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) scores were not met (USDOE, 2002).

NCLB requires states to establish standards, assessments, and accountability

systems to ensure that every child achieves proficiency in reading and

mathematics by the year 2014. Each state is required to test all students in grades

3–8 and once in grades 10–12 on assessments that are aligned with challenging

state standards for reading and mathematics; each state must also set standards for

making "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) toward the goal of 100 percent

proficiency. To make AYP, schools must meet proficiency targets not only for

the school as a whole but also for student subgroups, including major racial and

ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities,

and students with limited English proficiency. (USDOE, 2002, pp. 1479-1482)

MODESE defined the AYP requirements as "the annual target for all students and

student subgroups to meet in a progressive nature that would result in all students scoring

at or above the proficient level" (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary

Education [MODESE], 2011, p. 1). This condition precipitated the Sunny Day School

District's need to develop a research based professional development plan to renovate

teaching strategies.

Statement of Problem

The problem was the absence of a program evaluation for the MRI Program within the Sunny Day School District. This evaluation was necessary because of the amount of money and time spent on this initiative. MAP results for the Sunny Day School District have consistently signified urgency for change in elementary reading instruction and interventions. The percentages of students reading below proficiency were not within the state guidelines at the inception of the program. However, NCLB specified all school districts below the state guidelines for reading scores were required to maintain a School Improvement Plan (USDOE, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to evaluate the process and outcomes of the MRI Program and utilize qualitative methods to explore teacher perceptions, the implementation process, barriers to implementing the program, MRI risks, and MRI benefits. This program evaluation may be valuable to (a) school districts interested in reading programs, (b) community leaders, (c) students, (d) parents, (e) teachers, and (f) administrative personnel of prospective MRI school districts. Providing high quality reading instruction is a vital component for success as a school district. Pretorius (2000) maintained the ability to read is essential for the academic success of all students (p. 35). At the time of this study, NCLB required all public school districts to assure the reading proficiency of all students by third grade, and to develop a school improvement plan to increase reading achievement including a professional development program designed to equip teachers with the skills needed to increase students' reading success (USDOE, 2002).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Main Research Question:

How does the MRI Program prepare teachers to teach reading?

Sub Questions:

1. To what extent are MRI program elements incorporated into reading instruction at the

Sunny Day School District?

2. What elements of MRI are the most effective according to administrator interviews,

teacher observations, and surveys?

3. What are the unexpected implementation barriers of MRI as indicated by surveys,

observations, or interviews?

4. What are the costs to implementing MRI within the Sunny Day School District?

Hypotheses:

1. Teachers using MRI will exhibit confidence in their ability to teach reading, as

measured by percentage of response on a Likert Scale Perception Survey.

2. Teachers using MRI will exhibit confidence in delivery methods, as measured by

percentage of response on a Likert Scale Perception Survey.

3. A year-to-year comparison of pre/post program aggregate Communication Arts (MAP)

test scores of grades 4 and 5 will indicate one or more of the years as different from the

others.

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). "The minimum level of improvement that states,

school districts and schools must achieve each year and an individual state's

measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards"

(Bernhardt, 2004, p. 281).

Corrective Action. "The term corrective action means action, consistent with State Law,

that substantially and directly respond to the consistent academic failure of a

school that caused the local educational agency to take such action" (USDOE,

2002, p. 1483).

Formative Assessment. Assessments at regular intervals of a student's progress with

accompanying feedback in order to help the student's performance and to provide

direction for improvement of a program for individual students or for a whole

class (Bernhardt, 2004, p. 287).

Growth Model. " The purpose of the growth model pilot is to explore alternative

approaches that meet the accountability goals of NCLB and the state's

accountability model incorporating student growth must ensure that all students

are proficient by 2013-14" (USDOE, 2006, p. 4).

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). The statewide students' assessment program

developed in response to adoption of the Outstanding Schools Act (MODESE,

2011, p. 4).

Proficient. The goal of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is to have 100% of

America's public school students "proficient" by the year 2014, 12 years from the

enactment of the law. Proficiency was determined through annual state-level tests

in reading and math in each of grades 3-8, and at least once in high schoo1

(USDOE, 2002).

Safe Harbor. If a school or district/LEA does not meet AYP for each subgroup, a

provision called Safe Harbor allows another opportunity for the school or district

to make AYP. Safe Harbor does not apply to the growth calculation (MODESE,

2011, p. 14).

Scientifically Based Reading Research. Research that involves the application of

rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid

knowledge relevant to education activities and programs (Bernhardt, 2004, p.

295).

Limitations

The survey, observation, and interview data of this study were from pre-selected

facilities within the Sunny Day School District. A pre-selection of the subjects was the

researcher's effort to minimize researcher bias, since the researcher currently teaches at

School A and works collaboratively with School B. School A houses grades K-2 and

School B houses grades 3-5; teachers of both schools collaborate and attend common

meetings.

Another limitation of this study was the fact that Sunny Day School District

implemented two other school improvement programs close to the same time it

implemented MRI: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Response to

Intervention (RTI). RTI is a program developed to support teachers by helping them

collect and track student achievement data and design strategies to meet the individual

needs of students (Murray, Woodruff, & Vaughn, 2010, pp. 27-28). Equally important, a

PLC is a collaboration model designed to encourage educators to work together toward

common goals and to learn together and from each other (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, &

Karhanek, 2010, p. 181). Since all three programs are complementary to MRI, the

process and outcomes measurements of MRI may have been influenced by the coinciding implementations of PLCs and RTI. School improvement required a complex plan of action that commonly involved multiple initiatives. Unlike a science laboratory where there is time to study the effects of manipulating one variable at a time, schools are living dynamic and complex organizations that do not have the time or tolerance to do the same. Instead, school organizations require complex solutions with many variables being manipulated all at the same time. A mixed- method program evaluation approach was used to address this limitation.

Summary

This program evaluation incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data, which included interviews, observations, surveys, and MAP data. The purpose of this study was to complete a program evaluation of the MRI program as implemented within the Sunny Day School District. The USDOE (2002) legislation enforced accountability for all students. NCLB legislation caused pressure on public school districts to find appropriate professional development to help their teachers meet the needs of students. MRI is a state reading program designed to assist public school districts with research-based best practices for reading instruction. Cognitive coaching, modeling, and on-site teacher training distinguish this reading program. Also discussed were limitations to this study: the Sunny Day School District had also begun to implement two other programs PLCs and RTI at the same time as the MRI program. Chapter 2 will review the literature on reading theory, reading programs, professional development, leadership, and change management to support this study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Framing Literature

The purpose of this review was to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on these topics: theory of reading, change management, leadership, programs for reading instruction, and Missouri Reading Initiative. The theory of reading is important to the understanding of the earliest strategies of how a child learns to read and maintains meaningful reading skills throughout a lifetime. Change management and leadership are included since the reality of incorporating any new program requires organizational leaders at all levels to not only lead but also manage the change. Programs designed for teaching reading such as Reading Recovery and Reading First were included to compare and contrast them against the theory of reading. The components and implementation process of the MRI Program are consistent with current beliefs of reading practices and organizational strategies.

Theory of Reading

The theories of reading are part of the organizing structure for this literature review since the components of how children learn to read are foundational pieces for successful reading programs. Pretorius (2000) concluded, "reading is an essential skill for success in life and academics" (p. 35). Clay (1991) defined reading as a message-getting, problem-solving activity, which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced. Preparation for reading begins in the early childhood stages of development. Children come to kindergarten with prior literacy experiences gained from family, friends, preschool, or community influences (National Institute for Literacy, 2006). Kindergarten is the formal beginning of basic instruction in reading, and the phonetic principles and concepts about print (National Institute for Literacy, 2006). According to

the National Reading Panel of the National Institute of Child Health and Human

Development (2000)

these topics were researched and related to how children learn to read (a) direct

explicit instruction, (b) methods and materials of phonemic awareness and

phonics, (c) procedures for teaching comprehension skills, (d) developing fluency,

automaticity, and processing (e) vocabulary development, (f) providing reading

engagement, (g) evidence of reading proficiency, and (h) assessment. (pp. 1-2)

The researcher conducted a review of the framing literature on these topics to

provide a comprehensive picture of how children learn to read. Equally important,

included is a brief overview of teacher programs designed to improve reading abilities.

Direct explicit instruction. Rupley, Blair, and Nichols (2009) found "direct

explicit instruction is an essential feature of a reading instructional program to help

struggling students become better readers" (p. 134). Further, Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun

(2004) defined direct instruction as "a pattern of teaching that consists of the teacher's

explaining a new concept or skill to a large group of students, having them test their

understanding by practicing under direction and encouraging them to continue to practice

under teacher guidance" (p. 314). Hall (n.d.) described explicit instruction and broke it

into two categories: design components and delivery components (p. 2). The design

components include the following features: big ideas, conspicuous strategies, mediated

scaffolding, strategic integration, and judicious review (Hall, n.d., pp. 2-3). Each of these

five components described in detail by Hall (n.d.) are basic strands incorporated within

effective teaching. Also, Hall (n.d.) provided these delivery components (a) appropriate

instructional pacing, (b) adequate processing time, (c) monitor responses, (d) provide

feedback, and (e) frequent student responses (Hall, n.d., pp. 4-5). In addition, Hall, (n.d.) found "direct explicit instruction is an effective tool for struggling students and according to extensive all students benefit from well-designed and explicitly taught skills" (p. 5).

Methods, materials, phonics, and phonemic awareness.   Dorn and Soffos (2001) described early literacy approaches as supporting children to become self-regulated learners. Further, Dorn and Soffos (2001) incorporated whole group, small group, and independent reading as a method of reading development. In fact, students learn phonemic principles, parts of speech, and comprehension strategies through books called mentor texts. In addition to mentor texts, phonic lesson alphabet charts, magnetic letters, leveled books, poems, and songs reinforcing reading concepts, Dorn and Soffos (2001) suggested the following objectives for evaluating emerging readers as a guide to developmental stages. "The first two, the reader focuses on the printed word and is able to point to words with 1-1 matching" sets the tone for the early reader. Also included were reading strategies such as solving unknown words and crosschecking explained how articulation and fluency are foundational to the reading process (Dorn & Soffos, 2001, p. 35). Emergent readers typically utilize the strategies explained by Dorn and Soffos to strengthen their reading ability. Teachers who provide opportunities for children to experience literacy based on these suggestions encourage reading development (Dorn & Soffos, 2001).

Comprehension skills and procedures. Coyne et al. (2000) reported, "the ultimate purpose of reading instruction should be to improve comprehension" (p. 222). First, the student begins to read by decoding the text and learning new vocabulary. Once the student can build enough words and vocabulary to read at a smooth rate,

comprehension of the text starts to occur. Then, students learn to comprehend the text by using a variety of strategies. These include the following: (a) retelling, (b) identifying story elements, (c) making and confirming predictions, (d) making connections, (e) inferring, (f) making cause and effect relationships, and (g) identifying nonfiction text features. These comprehension strategies are implemented using a read aloud, whole class, or small group instruction. Finally, teachers need to build in time during the lessons for students to write and discuss with peers details about the texts. The use of story structure organization such diagrams or maps are valuable tools to extend comprehension skills (Coyne et al., 2000).

Clay (1991) discussed the topic of reading skills needed by the end of early childhood. Early childhood is birth through eight years of age. Clay (1991) stated the following for parameters for achieving reading success in the intermediate grades. "Students need to have been tuned into meanings of texts, eager to talk, read, and write, able to compose and write simple texts, and able to read narrative and non-narrative texts" (p. 10). Dorn and Soffos (2001) reinforced the statement by the NRC with "comprehension is the ultimate goal of the reading act" (p. 39). Dorn and Soffos (2001) expanded on strategies to use when teaching reading to aid in comprehension. The simplest level of comprehension is retelling where the reader retells the whole or part of a passage read and students can respond by either verbalizing thoughts or writing in response to the story. Before reading a text, students can predict what might happen in the story. This prediction activity will set a purpose for reading to engage the student in the reading process. Dorn and Soffos (2001) described the following checklist for assessing students' reading comprehension:

1. The student retells the story in a logical and sequential order.

2. The student discusses the main and secondary characters in the story.

3. The student describes the setting of the story.

4. The student uses language phrases, book talks, and/or special vocabulary from the story.

5. The student includes supporting details from the story.

6. The student connects the story to other texts.

7. The student responds to the story at a personal level, and describes the story ending. (Dorn & Soffos, 2001, p. 110)

Besides developing comprehension skills through retelling, Dorn and Soffos (2001) described a process of teaching reading, which includes the following components. First, the teacher models explicit book language and reading behavior. This process helps the students visualize what is expected. Second, the teacher coaches the students in small groups or individual sessions with strategies to assist with problem solving. Third, the teacher scaffolds the students' learning by presenting small pieces of information and then building upon the skills to reach the desired goals. Finally, Dorn and Soffos (2001) described the technique of "fading" when they said, "the true test of learning takes place when a student applies the knowledge, skills, and strategies gained from teacher-assisted lessons to independent work" (p. 9).

Once a reader has grasped the beginning stages of retelling, the instructor introduces a higher level of comprehension skills. Dorn and Soffos (2001) explained these higher-level comprehension strategies.

(a) construct inferences bases on prior experiences and knowledge; (b) make

logical and reasonable assumptions based on a cumulative pattern of evidence;

(c) confirm or reject predictions as further evidence is presented; (d) link clues

about cause-and-effect relationships; (e) form generalizations, such as text-to-text

and text-to-life connections; and (f) summarize events. (p. 48)

Dorn and Soffos (2001) provided a comprehensive approach to teaching higher level

thinking strategies to support comprehension.

Developing fluency, automaticity, and processing. According to Kuhn and

Stahl (2003) the big question is, at what point will a learner shift from decoding words to

reading for meaning with automaticity? Rasinski (2010) defined reading fluency as "the

ability of readers to read the words in the text effortlessly and efficiently (automaticity)

with meaningful expression that enhances the meaning of the text (prosody)" (p. 32).

Hence, prosody is "the melody of language" (p. 32). Fluency is essential for reading

achievement and once the student begins to decode the written text, it becomes the focus.

Fluency enhances the comprehension level when the teacher models it through whole or

small group instruction. The basic aspect of fluency is building rhythm and expression

when reading (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003). Kuhn and Stahl (2003) pointed to the primary

components of fluency as "(a) accuracy in decoding; (b) automaticity in word

recognition; and (c) the appropriate use of prosodic features such as stress, pitch, and

appropriate text phrasing" (p. 5). Clay (1993) supported the use of repeated reading as a

tool to strengthen reading ability within the beginning stages of instruction. Clay (1993)

suggested lowering difficulty level of the text until the student achieves independent

success (p. 52). In contrast, Rasinski (2010) debated the use of fluency as a sole measure

of reading rate. Rasinski (2010) explained how just measuring the rate of reading quickly

is not an indicator of students' reading ability. Rasinski clarified by adding "fluent

readers, on the other hand, are able to read words accurately and effortlessly" (p. 32).

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) explained "fluent readers do not get bogged down in the

details, and the reader is flexible, varying speed with the difficulty of the text" (p. 150).

This definition of a fluent reader gives a picture of what proficient reading looks like and

whom accuracy and flow contribute to comprehension of the text.

Vocabulary development. Beginning at birth, language and communication are

key components to social and emotional development, and children begin kindergarten

with various levels of background knowledge, reading ability, and vocabulary (Institute

for Child Health and Human Development [NIH], 2000). Marzano (2004) discussed how

vocabulary instruction utilizes direct or indirect strategies. The introduction of a new

word using a dictionary is only one way to increase vocabulary. When children are

encouraged to draw and write about new words, they gain a deeper understanding of the

terms (pp. 68-72). Marzano (2004) explained how "effective vocabulary instruction

involves the gradual shaping of word meanings through multiple exposures" (p. 73).

When teachers read quality fiction and nonfiction literature to students, they introduce

them to new ideas, concepts, and build vocabulary (Marzano, 2004, p. 73). Vocabulary

development is essential for a deep understanding of the text and ability to connect topics

across subject areas.

Providing reading engagement. Time allotted for independent reading is critical

for the development of literacy skills and Clay (1991) revealed "success in school is

fostered by a program that goes to where each individual child is in his or her exploration

of literacy and provides appropriate experiences for building on to that existing

knowledge" (p. 44). Rasinski (2010) provided a comprehensive approach to literacy by

enriching reading experiences with assisted reading to build motivation and confidence

(p. 27). Rasinski provided examples of assisted reading, choral reading, audio recorded

readings, and performance reading (p. 27). Rasinski elaborated on using oral reading as

part of regular classroom instruction and he described many different opportunities to use

oral reading. The following are a few examples of ways Rasinski incorporated fluency

into daily instruction. These procedures provide essential reading practice to develop

automaticity. Instructors can introduce texts and reread them for comprehension, using

texts such as poetry, songs, letters, pledges, fables, folktales, and fantasy texts to add

variety to readings (Rasinski, 2010, p. 27).

Evidence of reading proficiency. Children who read independently at their

appropriate grade level are proficient. The National Assessment of Education Progress

(USDOE, 2007) defined proficiency as "solid academic performance for each grade

assessed" (p.23). The USDOE (2007) found

> students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging
>
> subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such
>
> knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject
>
> matter. (p. 23)

NCLB noted every child should read proficiently by grade three. The NCLB legislation

holds educators responsible for assuring success in the classroom. President Obama

presented a plan for achievement in his 2010 *A Blueprint for Reform.* He began his work

with the statement "every child deserves a world class education" (Duncan & Martin,

2010, p. 5). Obama described his passion for education when he mandated all schools

accountable for the reading success of all students and this government requirement

precipitates the need for intervention programs with reading (p. 5).

A leader in the field of reading theory, Clay's 1991 work in reading interventions

added distinction to the necessary steps to maintaining reading proficiency. Clay (1991)

described independent readers as displaying certain behaviors: the reader selects and

reads difficult texts without assistance; proficiently problem solves while reading using

self -correction strategies to decode unknown words; and can comprehend the text by

anticipating further details and questions the information presented (Clay, 1991, p. 254).

Reading assessment. Assessment of reading progress is a critical component to

the diagnosis of reading instruction. Individual assessment of reading progress is an on-

going process according to Schmoker (1999)

> when educators regularly monitor students' progress and adjust the instruction,
>
> accordingly success is expected. Indeed, assessment components determine the
>
> goals and instructional plans, and combinations of formal and informal individual
>
> assessments will correctly determine student needs. For the same reason, a
>
> mixture of observations, informal and formal methods of assessments guide the
>
> planning of the instruction necessary to reach the desired goals. Therefore, an
>
> observation of reading development of individual, small group, and whole class
>
> reading instruction contributes to the assessment picture. (p. 5)

Formative and summative tools provide a basis for planning effective lesson in literacy

development and Fountas and Pinell (1996) described the process of assessment for

reading instruction. Formative and summative reading assessments for grades K-2

provided basic guidelines for instruction. Formative assessments help align the reading

instruction with individual student needs. Examples of these assessments are as follows:

an alphabet checklist of inclusive of letter recognition and the identification of the

associating sounds (phonetic principles, developmental high frequently word usage

checklists for K-2, running records (a record of a student reading of approximately 50

words), provide concrete examples of how the student has progressed (Fountas & Pinnell,

1996, pp. 149-187).

Data collection with the purpose of diagnosing the reading needs of students is

vital to providing appropriate individualized instruction. RTI is a program designed to

support the individual needs of students based on data. The type of data collected

includes both formative and summative techniques. Formative assessment is a

combination of both formal and informal tools used to create goals for instruction.

Summative assessments measure progress at the end of an instructional period. RTI is a

tiered model where tier three is for a small number of students who needs intense

interventions. Consequently, the students who fall within tier one or two receive small

group interventions and move through the intervention process according to need. The

goal of RTI is for the majority of students to fall within tier one (Missouri Department of

Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2009, p. 1). The Sunny Day School

District uses assessment tools such as Dibels Data System and Developmental Reading

Assessment (DRA) consistently throughout the school year. Dibels and DRA are data

systems for charting progress and diagnosing instruction. MRI defines Developmental

Reading Assessment (DRA) as

A method of assessment and documentation of students reading progress as it

develops over time. The purpose of the DRA is to enable teachers to

systematically observe, record, and evaluate change in student reading fluency

and comprehension and to plan for and teach what each student needs to learn

next. (MRI, 2008, p. 6)

Data collection systems given at the beginning and at end of an instruction period provide

information about students' current reading ability. USDOE (2007) reported "three

reading level descriptions: basic, proficient, and advanced" (p. 26). In addition, the role

of the USDOE (2007) was to report on trends of student reading achievement over time

and to assess any trends in reading achievement particularly with achievement gaps

(USDOE, 2007, p. 27). School district administrators have a responsibility to the

students, parents, and educators to locate and manage programs that promote literacy

development. Often an organization will experience the elements of change when new

ideas presented.

Leadership and Organizational Change Management

Vetrivel (2010) found "educational leadership is the process of enlisting the

talents and energies of teachers, pupils and parents toward achieving common

educational aims" (p. 21). MacAulay, Yue, and Thurlow (2010) described the

relationships between leadership and change within an organization: "When considering

successful organizational change strategies, the prescriptions usually include some strong

sense of leadership: a champion for the cause of change" (p. 335). In addition to strong

leadership, MacAulay et al. (2010) explained "the importance of storytelling within an

organization" (p. 342). The term storytelling is verbal sharing of professional

experiences with other members of the establishment. These stories usually are

supportive of change within the organization (p. 342). When an organization is working

to bring about change, effective leadership is vital.

A PLC is rooted in the concept of team building, collaboration, and setting

common goals and DuFour et al. (2010) explained, "to build a collaborative culture

within a school setting members were to work interdependently to achieve common goals

for which members were held mutually accountable" (p. 181). DuFour et al. (2010)

described the following important features of highly effective schools: effective team

leaders need to focus on to collaboration and clarity of purpose, and teams concentrate on

the present data of the students and are committed to making a change to improve the

results. This is a shift to working backward by examining the goals and planning with

the end in mind. However, leaders of the teams need to be positive and empower the

members to persevere and celebrate steps along the way (p. 180). Management and

leadership are the foundational pieces to successful organizations, and the rewards of

empowering leadership are achieved goals and effective schools (DuFour et al., 2010).

Evaluative tools used by administrative leaders which focus was on reflection of practice

rather than correction cause teachers to think more about how and why certain methods

are effective. Garmston and Whitaker (1993) described the difference between cognitive

coaching and evaluation.

> The primary difference between cognitive coaching and evaluation was cognitive
>
> coaching used the cycles of preconference, observation, and post conference, for
>
> the sole purpose of helping the teacher improve instructional effectiveness by
>
> becoming more reflective about teaching. (pp. 1-2)

Cognitive coaching was a unique part of MRI and contributed to the process of helping teachers become reflective thinkers of their practice and as an effective piece for leadership support for administration. Page (2010) described the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement and defined the performance need: "Schools need effective human capital development systems which can find, grow, and keep leaders who can create conditions and model practices which result in improved school, teacher, and student performance" (p. 12). Table 1 illustrates the structural environment of an organization with regards to change. Table 1 highlights the frame, barriers to change, and essential strategies for dealing with the change in organizations. Bolman and Deal (2008) created the table to explain the process of organizational change.

Table 1

Reframing Organizational Change

Frame	Barriers to Change	Essential Strategies
Structural	Loss of direction, clarity, and stability; confusion, chaos	Communication, realigning, and renegotiating formal patterns and policies
Human resource	Anxiety, uncertainty; people feel incompetent and needy	Training to develop new skills; participation and involvement; psychological support
Political	Disempowerment; conflict between winners and losers	Create arenas where issues can be renegotiated and new conditions formed
Symbolic	Loss of meaning, and purpose	Create transition rituals

Note. Bolman and Deal (2008, p. 379).

Meanwhile, Vetrivel (2010) made a contrast between management and leadership. The point made here is "management is about seeking order and stability: leadership is about seeking adaptive and constructive change" (p. 22). Vetrivel described how "change fatigue" (p. 22) can affect the performance of organizational members and how fatigue can lead to burnout and lack of production. Who are the change managers? Burnes and Oswick (2011) addressed these concerns of management "Who manages change? What is changed?" (p. 2). They explained how organizations have orchestrated change in the past. Leaders were the presenters of a new idea or development and the employees or subordinates would absorb the change (p. 2).

Conzemius and O'Neill (2002) described how educational settings have adhered to community building. Collaboration is the key component where the teachers work together to solve problems and establish goals for the good of the students. Conzemius and O'Neill found "one of the most important things a leader can do is to promote a different vision of leadership where everyone plays a role in improving the success of the school" (p. 13). In addition to collaboration, Conzemius and O'Neill offered five questions to consider when sharing responsibility within a school culture.

- Where do we want to be?

- Where are we now?

- How will we get to where we want to be?

- What are we learning?

- Where should we focus next? (p. 40)

It is essential to consider these questions when developing a school improvement plan.

These leadership approaches were critical components to managing new programs within

school districts. When administrators supported the staff with new developments and got

involved in the process, success was more probable. The adoption of new programs for

professional development required a close look at key elements to support the motivation

of new programs or initiatives within professional settings.

Programs for Reading

Dorn, French, and Jones (1998) described the components of a balanced reading

program. Balanced literacy involved planning a carefully selected variety of activities

designed to guide children through the developmental reading processes with expected

movement to higher levels of understanding (Dorn et. al., 1998, p. 29). The following is

a guide for integrating programs for reading: "successful teaching practices include (a)

reading and rereading familiar fiction and nonfiction books to students, (b) implementing

shared reading strategies using various media, and (c) utilizing guided reading principles

in small groups with students" (p. 29). Dorn et al. stated the following questions as

examples teachers used during instruction.

What can the children learn alone? What can the children do with my

help? What types of materials will support the children in applying

their current knowledge, strategies, and skills? How does each type of

literacy activity support the children in building effective reading

systems? What sort of guidance do I provide the children in each

activity? (p. 29)

The MRI program did include components of a balanced reading approach to instruction,

and began with assessment as the foundation. Also included were guided reading, small

group instruction, whole group, and independent reading as a framework. This section of the literature review will contrast other reading programs with the MRI program.

The Reading Recovery Program design begins where the student was currently performing and continues at this level until the student is able to "push the boundaries of his [or her] own knowledge" (Clay, 1993, p. 9). Clay (1993) defined this process as acceleration. For the same reason, instructors monitor this increase of knowledge outside the daily teacher-lead lessons. The teacher creates daily lessons based on each student's individual needs. Clay (1993) stated "both reading and writing in the early acquisition stage contribute to learning about print" (p. 11). Clay's program incorporates daily story writing to understanding how oral and written print work. The Reading Recovery Program is designed sequentially a typical individual tutoring lesson is designed strategically with each lesson lasting thirty minutes. The following are included: reading and rereading familiar texts, phonemic practice, writing in response to reading, and moving the student into a more difficult text (Clay, 1993, p. 14). Clay gives specific instruction for teachers of her program—each daily 30-minute tutoring session follows the same format and students move to a higher reading level upon mastery. Clay's program is a supplement for the regular daily classroom reading instruction and is for the first two years of formal school (Clay, 1993). To contrast this program with the MRI program, the main difference is with the design of the 30-minute scripted sessions tailored to follow a strict routine. However, the MRI program does have similar components to Reading Recovery for example, incorporating literature, phonics, and determining appropriate individual reading levels.

The Reading First Program is a direct response to the NCLB Act and the purpose of the program is to ensure all children can read well by third grade (USDOE, 2002 a). The Reading First Program includes the following components:

- identifying reading assessments with proven validity and reliability;

- identifying scientifically based materials and programs;

- professional development;

- implementing the essential components of reading instruction;

- sub-grant process;

- geographic diversity;

- program coordination;

- and assessment. (pp. 11-12)

This program is a comprehensive reading program based on scientific reading processes and it is inclusive of assessment, coaching, monitoring, professional development, and incorporates components of effective reading program such as " phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies" (USDOE, 2002 a, p. 3). The Reading First program is a federally funded program and the MRI program is a Missouri state run initiative. The requirements for approval and qualification for the Reading First program differ as well. Both reading programs were similar in design with the focus on assessment and planning instruction according to the individual student needs.

Missouri Reading Initiative

The MRI Program is a three-year professional development program designed to assist teachers with essential teaching skills necessary to help students learn to read. A

comprehensive literacy approach inclusive of a wide range of materials used by a

responsive teacher who moves students to higher levels of understanding was a

foundational concept within the MRI program (Dorn et al., 1998, p. 29). A

comprehensive literacy model of assessments, reading workshop, word study, and writing

workshop were the key component categories of the program. To explain this model,

each year comprised of three actions (to/with/by) defined as to the children, with the

children, and by the children; these actions represented the layout of how the

comprehensive literacy program components fit together (Dorn et al., 1998, p. 4). The

mission of MRI included the commitment to work with Missouri public schools to ensure

children can read and write proficiently (MRI, 2008, p. 1). The goals of the program

were as follows:

> (a) Provide ongoing systematic professional development to enhance the quality
>
> of literacy instruction leading to improved student achievement throughout all
>
> grade levels. (b) Examine and disseminate research in reading and writing to
>
> educators throughout the state, assisting schools with the implementation of
>
> instructional best practices in literacy through modeling lessons, coaching, and
>
> collaboration. (c) Assist schools with assessment, planning, implementation, and
>
> evaluation of school improvement efforts in literacy toward a comprehensive
>
> model. (p. 1)

This program is unique because of the cognitive coaching process included in the

program that allows each teacher to reflect on their practices and learn to incorporate

solid techniques to reading components to assure the success of students. Assessment is

the guiding principle as teachers learn to find the present performance level of each

student through assessment. Further, teachers learn after year one how to take a close

look at each student individually and custom plan lessons accordingly. Also, included in

this review is a comprehensive picture of each program year, and how to implement MRI

within a large suburban school district.

> MRI training procedures for year one for grades K-3 consisted of the following
>
> components: 22 days of training, two initial introduction sessions, 19 days of
>
> training, and one day to evaluate the year and set goals for the next school year.
>
> (p. 2)

The intermediate grades 3-6 followed a more condensed program schedule and included

the following components: MRI training procedures for year one included 15 days

training, 1 initial introduction session, 13 days of training, and one day to evaluate the

year and set goals for the next school year (p. 1).

The assessment piece was a primary concept introduced during year one and consistent

throughout the program. The following is a list of four assessment tools presented by

MRI: Anecdotal records, running records, concepts about print (CAP), and

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Each assessment tool served a unique

purpose for assessing the present reading level of students. Anecdotal records provide

the day-to- day progress of students as the teacher makes casual notes about each student.

MRI presented a variety of ways to organize this assessment tool (MRI, 2008, p. 28).

Running records was described in detail and practiced by the participants as a vital piece

to the determining the on-going reading level of students. This tool utilizes written

symbols to represent each word read of a passage consisting of approximately 50 words

and is a necessary skill to move students to increasingly difficult levels of text (MRI,

2008, p. 29). The CAP assessment was for grades K-1 as a determiner of phonetic

awareness ability. This intricate test uses a piece of children's literature and the student

identifies basic parts of a text including print and picture relationships (MRI, 2008, p.

39). Finally, the DRA assessment was the most extensive and valuable assessment tool

presented by the MRI program. The purpose of this reading test was to present the

reading levels of students according to the DRA scale designed for multiple grade levels.

Students read leveled texts and completed the comprehension section (MRI, 2008, p. 50).

Once the assessment instruction is completed, teachers learn how to group students

according to their assessment results. When grouping students the teacher asks these

questions:

- Is the child reading independently?

- On what level is the child reading?

- What kind(s) of books will be just right for this child?

- What are her/his attitudes about books? (MRI, 2008, p. 26)

 Year 1 for grades K-6 is inclusive of training in whole class reading, guided reading

instruction, and assessment tools. Year 2 of the MRI program begins with a review of

concepts learned in year one. The training/modeling/observing cycle continued into the

second year of the program along with the coaching component. In addition to using the

newly learned reading strategies presented in year 1, the teacher is also given instruction

in writing. When the educators began year 2, they were equipped with all the necessary

skills to assess and plan appropriate individual instruction for their students. Year 3 of

the MRI program is a comprehensive meshing of reading and writing strategies acquired

in year 1 and 2 of the program. The layout of the third year is as follows:

In grades kindergarten through three, there are 11 contact days, one day initial

training, and nine days training/modeling/observing during the school year, and

one day exit conference/evaluation/goal setting. In grades three through the

difference is there are 13 days training/modeling/observing during the school

year. (MRI, 2008, p. 2)

All three years did include the to/with/by cycle [to the children, with the children, and by

the children] as a model of how the program components evolved throughout the three-

year process.

Kimsey (2010) conducted a study of the relationships between the implementation

of MRI, teacher perceptions, and student achievement using MAP data within a

secondary educational setting. The use of a teacher questionnaire to reflect perceptions

of the MRI program and MAP data were essential to this study. Results of this study did

show "teachers had favorable attitudes and perceptions of the MRI program" (p. 78).

 The researcher recommended the use of the DRA assessment to measure student

communication arts achievement instead of the MAP when evaluating program

effectiveness with MRI (p. 83).

A research study by Edelman, Martin, and Haseltine (2006) emphasized the need

for "buy in" of a majority of participants before implementing the MRI program. This

study did evaluate "the relationship between participant buy-in and support to perceptions

about program worth" (p. 11). The results of this program did show teachers as being

resistant and overwhelmed in the first year of implementation of the MRI program but as

the program continued, the intensity lessened and teachers were less resistant. The data

of this study did also show a there was a relationship between teacher buy-in and success

of the program (p. 16).

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature in the following areas: (a) reading theory, (b)

leadership and organizational change management, (c) programs for reading, and (d) the

Missouri Reading Initiative (MRI). The information provided by this literature search

was essential for evaluating a program designed to prepare educators to teach reading

successfully. This review analyzed important components of reading instruction to gain

understanding of basic features necessary when considering programs to supplement

facilitator knowledge. Chapter 3 will explain the methodology of this program

evaluation.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

As further demands on educators arise, school district administration will continue to search for programs to improve student learning. Consequently, integrating several new effective structures within the school setting is essential. This chapter encompasses the following topics: (a) research questions and hypothesis; (b) program evaluation; (c) instrumentation; (d) surveys, interviews, and observations; (e) subjects and location; (f) implementation process of the Missouri Reading Initiative (MRI); and (g) the procedure followed during the course of data collection.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Main Research Question:

How does the MRI Program prepare teachers to teach reading?

Sub Questions:

1. To what extent are MRI program elements incorporated into reading instruction at the Sunny Day School District?

2. What elements of MRI are the most effective according to administrator interviews, teacher observations, and surveys?

3. What are the unexpected implementation barriers of MRI as indicated by surveys, observations, or interviews?

4. What are the costs to implementing MRI within the Sunny Day School District?

Null Hypotheses:

1. Teachers using MRI will not exhibit confidence in their ability to teach reading, as measured by percentage of response on a Likert Scale Perception Survey.

2. Teachers using MRI will not exhibit confidence in delivery methods, as measured by percentage of response on a Likert Scale Perception Survey.

3. A year-to-year comparison of pre/post program aggregate Communication Arts (MAP) test scores of grades 4 and 5 will not indicate a difference in achievement in any one year.

To triangulate the data for this program evaluation, the researcher designed the interview, survey, and observation checklists to align with the main research and sub questions. In this way, the researcher can clearly see the parallel between the basic premises of the research and the responses of the subjects involved in the study. The researcher wrote the interview questions to align with the research questions. Research Questions 1-3 aligned with the interview questions, and observations and the fourth research question results aligned with Hypothesis 3. MAP scores measured by a statistical test, analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were included. Table 2 illustrates the alignment between the research and interview questions.

Table 2

 Aligning Research Questions with Interview Questions

Main Research Question:
Does the MRI Program prepare teachers to teach reading?
_____

Research Questions:	Corresponding Interview Questions:
1. To what extent are MRI Program elements incorporated into reading at the Sunny Day School District?	A1. What are the best elements of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program?
2. What elements of MRI are the most effective according to teacher surveys, and administrator interviews?	A2. What are the worst elements of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program?
3. What are the unexpected implementation barriers?	A4. What are the barriers to implementing the Missouri Reading Initiative Program?
4. What are the costs to implementing MRI within the Sunny Day School District?	A5. Describe the costs associated with implementing the Missouri Reading Initiative Program.
	A6. Discuss the implementation process of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program.
	A3. Evaluate the following Missouri Reading Initiative processes a) coaching, and b) training procedures.

_____
Note: Interview questions are located in Appendix C.

Each interview question linked directly with the research questions and was a core data

component collected during this research study.

Alignment of the administrator interviews, survey questions, and observation

objectives to the research questions and hypotheses

In comparing the research questions to the administrator interview questions,

survey questions, and observation objectives, the following alignments occurred. This

discussion explains how data collection triangulates the research findings with the

research questions, surveys and observations. The main research question (How does

MRI prepare teachers to teach reading?) was addressed through survey Question 7, (your

perception of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program's capability to increase your

ability to use high quality methods of teaching reading), for which responses were

answered on a Likert scale with four points. Hypothesis 1 (teachers using MRI will

exhibit confidence in their ability to teach reading) was measured by a Likert scale

perception survey. Hypothesis 2 (teachers using MRI will exhibit confidence in delivery

methods, as measured by percentage of response on a Likert Scale Perception Survey)

was analyzed by a calculated z test for difference in proportion of response to questions 3

and 4 of the survey. Question 3 focused on the quality of instructional materials provided

by Missouri Reading Initiative, and Question 4 asked about the amount of time necessary

between training sessions and classroom implementation to utilize new teaching

strategies within the classroom. Hypothesis 3 (A year-to-year comparison of pre/post

program aggregate Communication Arts [MAP] test scores of grades 4 and 5, will

indicate a difference in achievement in one or more years) was addressed using a single

factor ANOVA, for the MAP scores.

Program Evaluation

This summative evaluation focused on determining if components of the program

work and if the benefits equal the costs. Concentration on short term and long-term

outcomes of the program allowed the researcher to tailor the design to get the maximum

benefits. Rossi, Freeman, and Lipsey (1999) defined program evaluation as "the use of

social research procedures for systematically investigating the effectiveness of social

intervention programs" (p. 2).

Rossi et al. (1999) created the following nine questions used to guide a program

evaluation for desirable results:

What is the nature of the problem?

What is it about the problem or its effects that justifies new; expanded, or

modified social programs?

Do interventions significantly ameliorate the problem?

What are the appropriate targets populations for intervention?

Is a particular intervention reaching its target population?

How well are the interventions implemented?

Are the services original to the intentions?

Is the intervention effective in attaining the desired goals or benefits?

How much does the program cost?

Is the program cost reasonable in relation to its effectiveness and benefits? (p. 5).

Rossi et al. (1999) divided the evaluation process into the following five domains: the

need for the program, the design of the program, the program implementation and service

delivery, program impact or outcomes, and program efficiency or cost effectiveness (p.

22). These five domains formally describe a program's concept and design.

According to Milstein and Wetterhall (1999), the following six steps are

necessary for completing a program evaluation: engage stakeholders, describe the

program, focus the evaluation, gather credible evidence, justify conclusions, and ensure

use and share lessons learned (p. 2). The researcher of this program evaluation used both

qualitative and quantitative methodologies to measure both the process and outcome to

show a complete picture. Consequently, according to Creswell (1994), triangulation of

data occurs when both qualitative and quantitative overlap. Within this research design, the qualitative results such as surveys, interviews, and observations overlap with the quantitative results, the MAP standardized test scores and survey results.

 Instrumentation

  Surveys. According to Frankel and Wallen (2006), a Likert scale "is a self reporting instrument in which an individual responds to a series of statements by indicating the extent of agreement" (p. G-4). They explained, "each choice is given a numeral value, and the total score is presumed to indicate the attitude or belief in question" (p. G-4). The researcher used the Likert Scale format for writing the survey questions located in Appendix A. Survey data were complied after the third year of implementation of the MRI program within the Sunny Day School District. Questions related directly to the design and outcomes of the MRI program and for the purpose of reflection on the ability of MRI to help teachers meet the instructional needs of students. The following were topics included in the surveys: quality of training sessions, coaching experiences, instructional materials, time factor between training sessions and implementation of new reading structures within the classroom, administrative support, and overall perception of MRI to prepare teachers to use high quality teaching methods for reading instruction. Questions 8 and 9 provided demographic information (education level and years of experience) for each participant. The survey had nine questions and each question addressed a different element of MRI.

  Interviews. The interview question design revealed the pros and cons of the reading program, to gain understanding of the implementation procedures. Each question covered different aspects of the reading program process and components. Topics

addressed in the interview questions included the following: best and worst elements of MRI, coaching processes, training procedures, barriers, costs, and a reflection question for changes necessary in the program. The researcher used the MRI program manual along with the researcher's professional experience with the program to design questions to address the needs of the district and give a complete description of the program. The purpose of the interview questions was to allow administrators to reflect on the implementation processes, costs, effectiveness of the facilitators, and overall elements of the MRI program. Each survey question directly related to the teacher and perceptions of the program design. The interviews were included in this study as qualitative data. Interview questions aligned to the research questions and a copy is located in (Appendix C). The interviews took place after the third year of MRI implementation of the Sunny Day School District.

Observations. The objectives of the observations supported evidence of MRI's implementation components within the school district and four classroom observations were completed each from a different grade level within the Sunny Day School District. Each observation was approximately two hours in length, and all were finished during a two- month period. The researcher developed a checklist for the observation relating the program reading components to the research questions. Each objective was reflective of reading components and implementation procedures of the MRI program. The following components were included on the observation checklist: small group instruction, shared reading, read aloud sessions, leveled reading materials, individualized student conferences, differentiated instruction, and independent literacy instruction. A copy of the observation checklist was included in Appendix D. During the administrative

interviews, the researcher discussed teacher selection for the observations with the

principal. Each principal selected subjects from their facility for observation. Prior to

observations, candidates received an e-mail confirming the meeting and a letter

introducing the research program and the researcher. The teacher observation candidates

were voluntary and not a requirement for the teaching position. The copy of the letter

containing the research introduction is included in Appendix B.

Communication Arts MAP Data

A review of the Communication Arts data for grades 3-5, for the three years of

implementation of the MRI program along with pre/post data provide additional

information about student achievement trends. The researcher completed an ANOVA to

determine if the MRI program had an effect on the progress of Communications Arts

within the Sunny Day School District over the period of implementation.

Procedures

The foundational qualitative research method of this program evaluation was

interviews. Three administrative interviews began a year of data collection. The first

interview was with the district's curriculum director. The second interview was with the

district communication arts coordinator along with three building administrators at their

respective elementary buildings. Administrators received a letter of introduction and a

copy of the interview questions prior to the meetings. The length of time for each

interview was approximately one to two hours. Three of the interviews were audio

recorded and transcribed; however, two of the interviews required handwritten

documentation instead of audio recording due to the sensitivity of time allotted for the

meeting and conflict with beginning the meeting as scheduled. The change from audio

interviews to hand written notes allowed the researcher to have a successful interview.

An aggregate summary connecting themes across the five interviews is located in Chapter

4.

Before the third year of implementation of MRI within the Sunny Day School

District, each building administrator received a descriptive letter and the surveys. The

surveys were professionally printed and hand delivered by the researcher to each

elementary building's secretary or principal and a copy of this survey is located in

Appendix A. The school office staff or principal distributed the surveys to each certified

teacher's building mailbox. Participants responded in written form and returned them in

a sealed envelope to the building administrator. Since teachers within the district showed

discomfort with completing Internet surveys, the researcher switched to paper surveys

that included a letter of introduction. The researcher dispersed them in each participating

elementary building, and each building administrator received a letter describing the

process for distributing and collecting the surveys within a week or two. Four elementary

buildings received approximately 30 surveys within the Sunny Day School District, and

61 surveys were completed and returned to the researcher.

At this point, the researcher began the four, one-to-two hour teacher observations

using a researcher-created form, in which each component represented a different piece

of the MRI program, and the observations encompassed different grade levels to look for

evidence of the program implementation. Observations took place in the post

implementation year and were all completed within a period of two months, and each

observation was for a different grade to see differences in implementation of MRI

between the levels.

After the initial three years of implementation, the Sunny Day School District added three additional buildings each year to the MRI process. Due to the cost of the program, the next phase of MRI implementation received a modified version of the original MRI program during which two buildings received training together with only one presenter. During the first three years of implementation, the district conducted training sessions for newly hired teachers several times a year. Training new staff became a consistent challenge with cost the underlining factor. At the same time, new staff benefited from working with seasoned teachers as anchors experienced in the MRI program. A major challenge of continuing the program was providing ongoing training for new staff.

Location

The Sunny Day School District was the location of the research. This accredited urban district had four high schools and middle schools, 15 elementary schools, and at the time of this research served approximately 18,840 residents. The number of certified staff in the district, at the time of this research, was approximately 1,410 in 24 schools (MODESE, n.d.). Four buildings were included in this research. One school accommodated grades K-2 and the neighboring building included grades 3-5 with the remaining schools inclusive of grades K-5. Of the four buildings included in this research, approximately 30-40 % of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch program. The free and reduced lunch program served students who qualified by meeting the family financial criteria set by Missouri. Two elementary schools excluded from this research were of close proximity to where the researcher works--the researcher taught at

one of the elementary buildings and had contact with the other building's staff. To

eliminate bias, the researcher chose to exclude these two facilities from the research.

Subjects

Research participants employed with the Sunny Day School District and

connected with the MRI program implementation process were included in this study.

The stakeholders of this study were district administration who authorized the use of

program, teachers who facilitated the program, students who received the program

components, and parents who supported the program. Building principals participating

with MRI selected the observation candidates of each building by sending an invitational

email to certified staff or personally asking teachers to participate. The survey

participants were all certified teachers within each building included within this research.

Demographics of the Survey Participants

Figure 1 illustrates the experience level of the participants within each elementary

building surveyed. Experience level was meaningful to the reliability of the survey

responses. This survey data was complied after the third year of implementation of the

MRI program within the Sunny Day School District.

Figure 1. **Experience Level of Survey Participants in Buildings A, B, C, & D**

Figure 1 displays three ranges of experience levels: 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and 10

plus years. This data is important to understand teaching position stability with relation

to survey responses. Knowing the experience level of the survey participants adds to the

professional outlook of each respondent. In the experience of the researcher, new

teachers who have taught 1-5 years have a much different approach to teaching and are

more open to new ideas and strategies. Consequently, their selected responses match

their experiences. The teachers in the middle of their careers, 6-10 years, usually serve as

grade level chairs, committee chairs and get more involved in the organizational aspect of

teaching. Their responses also match their current position within their profession. The

educators who have taught more than 10 years may be rigid and resistant, and this kind of

thinking may leave little room for growth. However, there are pockets of seasoned

teachers who continually push for the new and exciting structures that help meet the

needs of their current students. Knowing the experience background of the survey

participants allows the researcher to understand more clearly the responses received.

Figure 2 illustrates the level of education of each participant. This information is

beneficial to recognize the selected responses on the surveys as reliable within the contect

of the teaching profession. This data was compiled after the third year of implementation

of the MRI program within the four elementary buildings of the Sunny Day School

District.
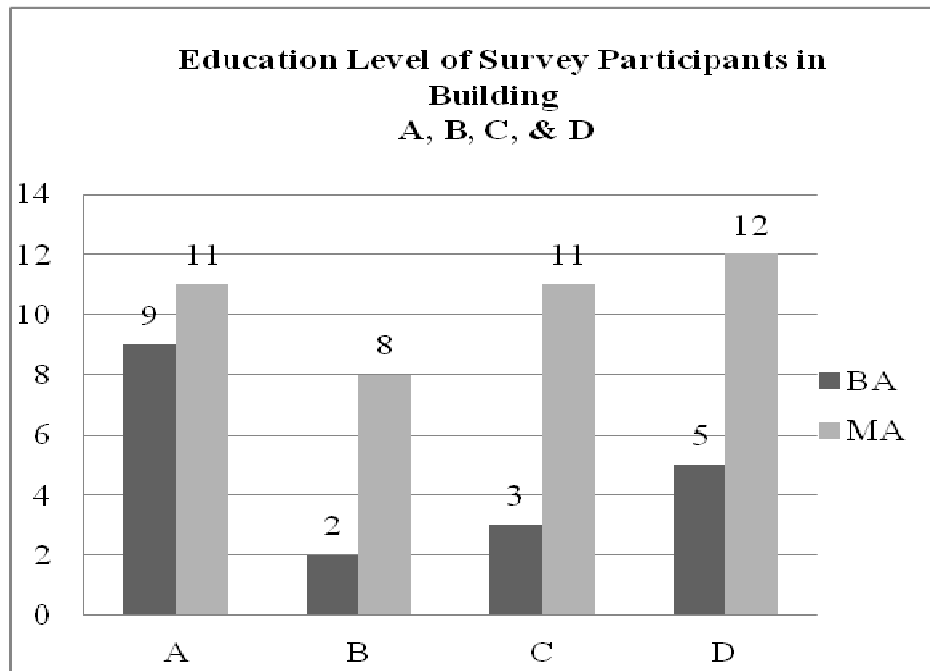
Figure 2. **Education Level of Survey Participants in Buildings A, B, C, & D**

It was essential to be familiar with the level of education of the survey

participants. The researcher categorized the graph by bachelor's degree (BA) and

master's degree (MA) for each elementary building represented in the study. A central

fact derived from the graph is more teachers within the Sunny Day School District hold a

MA degree than a BA degree, and this information adds knowledge to the picture of the current population of the research study.

One factor influencing the choice to use paper surveys over electronic versions was privacy. This was a teacher concern as Internet surveys were new and they were just beginning to make an entrance to the field of education, at the time of this writing. In order to get the maximum return with the survey population, the researcher felt it necessary to take extra precaution to assure the participants their data was confidential. Each building administrator or secretary was hand delivered a package by the researcher, containing the surveys, letter of research, and a labeled envelope. Participants were encouraged to complete the surveys and place them in the white letter size envelopes. The surveys and envelopes were anonymous. After a designated length of time, the researcher collected the surveys from each building. The response was 41% with representation from all four building surveyed, and the total number of surveys collected was 61. Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of survey participants for buildings A, B, C, and D of the research study.
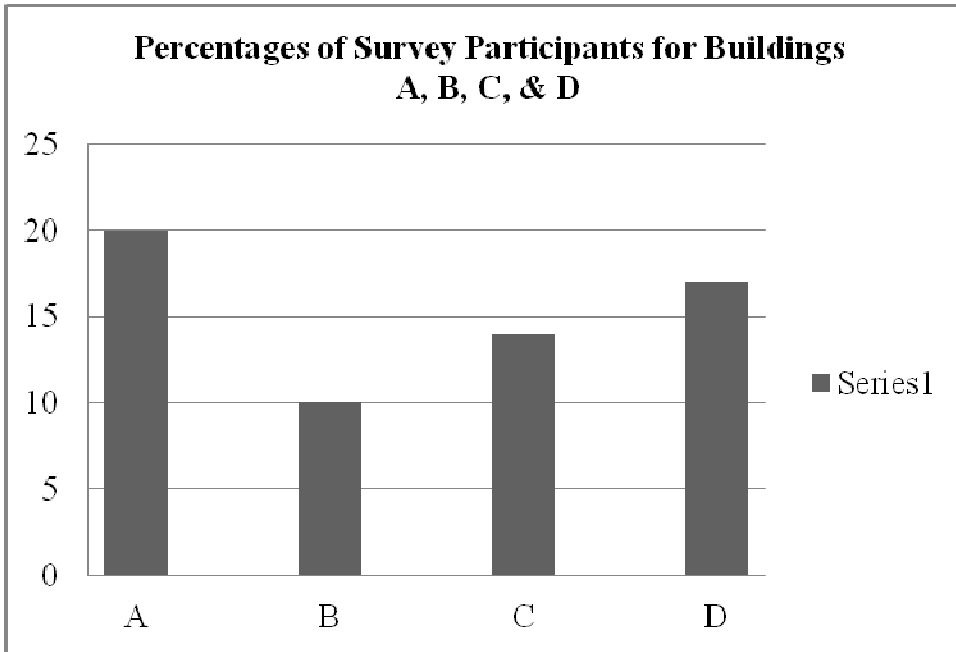
Figure 3. **Participant Percentages for Buildings A, B, C, & D**

Building A had 20 survey participants, building B had 10 participants, building C had

approximately 14 survey participants, and building D had approximately 17 survey

participants.

MRI Implementation Process

The MRI Program was a three-year professional development program designed

to assist teachers with essential teaching skills necessary to help students learn to read.

This program was unique because of the cognitive coaching included in the program.

The coaching process allowed teachers to reflect on their practices and learn to

incorporate solid techniques to components to assure the success of students. Assessment

was the guiding principle as teachers learned to find the present performance level of

each student. Dufour et al. (2010) discussed two types of assessment, formative and summative. Summative assessments are tools used to answer whether a student learned by a deadline, and formative assessments inform both the student and the teacher about the student's current level of academics (p. 28). Teachers learned in year 1 of the program how to closely examine each student individually and customize plan lessons accordingly. Appendix A contains a figure representing the basic components of the MRI program.

Year 1 of the MRI Program began with assessment. First, the teachers learned how to use formal and informal tools to find the current level of reading performance of each student. Then, teachers learned the correct use of a Diagnostic Reading Assessment, including how to take an effective running record. After the assessment instruction, teachers learned how to group students according to their assessment results. In fact, teachers observed the appropriate way to conduct whole group shared reading, interactive reading aloud, and small group lessons. The modeling sessions took place within a real classroom setting using the training teachers' classrooms, and this process allowed the teachers to visualize the strategies within a familiar setting. After the modeling sessions, the teachers had a few weeks to practice the strategies within their own classrooms. The design of the program included alternating coaching, modeling, and lecture sessions with the MRI instructor. The first year of implementation was intensive training with teachers working diligently to incorporate the newly acquired strategies within their practices.

The support of the administration was critical to the success of this program. All teams of grade level instructors worked together as collaborating units to comprehend the materials presented during the MRI sessions. The modeling sessions added real

examples the teachers could take back to their classrooms and use immediately. Teachers were encouraged to use as many strategies as possible from the MRI sessions and to build the knowledge throughout the first year of the training. Teachers were encouraged to take detailed notes from the learning sessions to assist them with the implementation process.

Year 2 of the MRI program began with a review of concepts learned in year 1. In addition to using the newly learned reading strategies presented in year 1, the teachers were given instruction in writing. Modeling, coaching, and teaching strategies were the basic components of the program. When the teachers began year 2, they were equipped with all the necessary skills to assess and plan appropriate individual instruction for their students. Hence, year 2 became the practice year for all the skills learned in year 1 in addition to the new writing instruction. Throughout the three-year hands-on program, MRI presenters used chart paper, children's literature, post-it notes, markers, and other presentation media. These working sessions were intense and required 100% participation with the facilitator available for questions regarding implementation of the MRI components.

Year 3 of implementation was a reflective review year for the reading and writing program, as the participants fully used the program strategies in their daily practice. Collaboration was encouraged as teams learned activities together to better understand the structures of the program. During year 3, the facilitator and teachers met less often than during the first two years of implementation.

MRI can be set-up as either whole day or half-day sessions--the biggest management task is scheduling. Administration was responsible for the planning and

providing of substitute teachers to allow the release of the certified staff. The half-day

sessions were unique since smaller amounts of information allowed teachers to ease into

new strategies, and practice time could begin immediately. In contrast, the whole day

sessions provided a more relaxed time for the teacher to absorb the new information and

reflect.

Year 1 encompassed several half-day sessions, and years 2 and 3 mainly involved

whole day sessions. These decisions were between the MRI facilitators and the school

district administration. The coaching process was the most difficult component for the

teachers to embrace. The style of the cognitive coaching was foreign to many teachers

and caused confusion with how to react to the process. Teachers' experiences with

evaluations varied with suggestions from administration given in a matter-of-fact style.

When utilizing cognitive coaching, teachers were encouraged to reflect upon their

teaching style and talk about what they might do differently. Although this was an

effective approach for the program, it was a difficult change for the educator.

A few complications from implementing the MRI program began with the

scheduling of the workshop sessions. The district administration was responsible for this

part, along with the accountability of the additional costs associated with the release time

for the teachers. The program required materials and supplies not included in the

program but necessary for implementation of the program. The biggest expenditure was

for the purchase of leveled reading materials and testing materials. Each building

principal was responsible for the budgeting of these resources and tools. Figure 4

illustrates the connections between MRI, certified teachers, and administration.
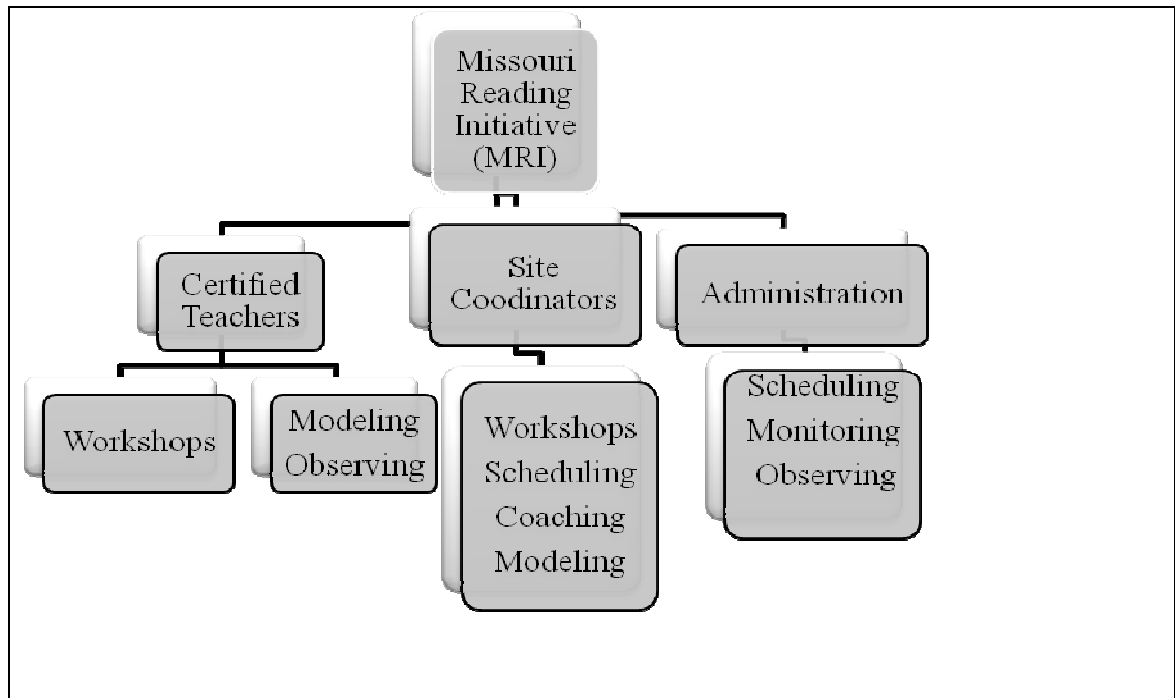
Figure 4. **MRI Implementation Process: Relationship and Roles**

All participant roles, certified teachers, site coordinators, and administration, interacted together with MRI. Each participant had unique responsibilities and contributed to form a cohesive unit.

Data Analysis

This mixed methods research design used an inductive analysis approach involving a triangulation of various types of data. The researcher analyzed the data for emerging themes or trends and connected them to make new meaning about the program. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) "a researcher starts with the data they have

collected and then develops generalizations after they look at the data" (p. 437).

According to Rossi et al. (1999) "a performance measurement is the collection, reporting,

and interpretation of performance indicators related to how well programs perform,

particularly with regard to the delivery of services (outputs) and achieved results

(outcomes)" (p. 190). The data collected answered the research questions of this program

evaluation. The open format of the interview and observation questions allowed the

participants to add personal reflections and experiences to the data. The researcher

completed two z- tests for proportions for the Likert scale survey and an ANOVA was

used to analyze MAP Scale scores of the Sunny Day School District provided

quantitative data to measure program outcomes.

Coding procedures. The researcher used a coding procedure for scanning the

data and looking for themes. For this process, the research followed the advice of Ryan

and Bernard (2012) and Creswell (1994) for developing themes from observation and

interview transcripts. Creswell (1994) stated

> In qualitative analysis, several simultaneous activities engage the attention of the
>
> researcher: collecting information from the field, sorting the information into
>
> categories, formatting the information into a story or picture, and actually writing
>
> the qualitative text. (p. 153)

The coding techniques used to evaluate the data were word repetitions, key words in

context, and searching for missing information. After reviewing each interview

transcript, the researcher used colored markers and began reading through the data

looking for repeating words or big ideas. Next, the researcher wrote the words and ideas

on index cards and sorted them into categories. These categories became the themes for

the interviews. For the observations, the coding and sorting process was the same.

Summary

      Chapter 3, presented (a) the research design of this study, (b) the design of

procedures used for data collection, and (c) the qualitative procedures including

interviews, observations, and surveys. Included were the following topics: program

evaluation, instrumentation, coding procedures, interview questions, observations,

subjects, locations, procedures, and data analysis. This study used quantitative

procedures to test the statistical treatment of the survey data. Rossi et al. (1999) defined

program evaluation as "the use of social research procedures for systematically

investigating the effectiveness of social intervention programs" (p. 2). Chapter 4 will

provide the themes of the research and the results of the statistical findings.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Data

Jick (1979) suggested the value of mixing qualitative and quantitative data to formulate research results. In this chapter, the researcher extracted data from three areas surveys, interviews, and observation and evaluated how they fit together to balance the findings of this evaluation. An ANOVA was used to analyze the MAP scores of the Sunny Day School District. "Triangulation, however, can be something other than scaling, reliability, and convergent validation. It can capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit (s) under study" (Jick, 1979, p. 603). The process of combining methods to gain a complete picture of how the MRI program affected reading instruction was a beneficial means of analyzing the data.

In this research study, four data pieces including interviews, observations, surveys, and MAP data, answered the research questions. Administrator interviews were the first phase of the data collection process and each participant provided unique information about the MRI program. The next phase was the administration of the surveys in October of the data collection year. Each survey question added teacher perception of the MRI program component elements within the Sunny Day School District. Two z- tests for difference in proportions added quantitative results along with the ANOVA applied to the MAP Scale Scores. Four elementary observations added MRI implementation details within the Sunny Day School District.

Aggregate Summary of the Interview Questions

The following data is an aggregate summary of the five administrative interviews held within the Sunny Day School District. When writing the aggregate summary, the

researcher reviewed each interview question across each interview transcript and wrote a

collective response for each of the seven questions. The researcher then coded the data

and looked for themes from the five administrative interviews.

What were the best elements of the MRI Program? The five administrators

agreed, there were many quality aspects of the MRI program, and each feature added a

unique distinction to this reading program. Each of the following aspects were described

by all five administrators as basic to the MRI program

- systematic reading instruction and one that builds concept to concept;

- collaboration between teachers about ongoing goals;

- meeting the individual needs of students with leveled materials;

- modeling and coaching with a facilitator who gets to know our teachers and culture;

- hands on experience with well trained facilitators;

- confidence of teaching reading and the accountability of students;

- instruction with DRA assessments;

- reading structures inclusive of whole group, shared reading, and individualized small group instruction.

Implementing a program that was systematic and ongoing was a common need across the

Sunny Day School District. Prior to the MRI program, professional development was a

one-time workshop without continuation. "Before MRI, the Sunny Day School District

utilized a sit-and-get style of professional development program" (Administrator 1). MRI

introduced a new idea of training with an accountability piece inclusive of evidence of

implementation. The following parts of MRI were considered by all five administrators

as the most valuable: small group instruction with leveled materials, professionally trained facilitators, hands-on experience for the teaching staff, modeling and cognitive coaching by the trainers, collaboration and the creating of common goals, building of teacher confidences with reading instruction, and the assessment pieces.

Small group instruction and placing children with books they were able to read positively influenced the teachers' ability to individualize lessons. Administrator 3 stated "The fact that the staff became confident in teaching reading and to monitor the growth of their students." The creation of customized mini lessons along with learning how to assess students' needs was a crucial advantage. The hands-on modeling experience the teachers received within their own educational setting was exceptional. Teachers were able to observe as a group the facilitator teaching a mini lesson to one of the colleague's classroom of students, the process ended with a discussion about the mini lesson. Administrator 2 stated "I really like the structure and the ongoing nature of it. . . Everything we read about professional development states that ongoing is the best format, so I think that was huge." At the beginning of each new reading structure, the teachers learned the components, and then they observed a sample lesson. The children participating with these lessons were involved and reacted positively towards the practice. Collaboration was a significant piece with the MRI program, and before MRI, teachers met monthly or bimonthly to discuss student needs. "This was a side benefit of MRI, because teachers had some time to pull out and work together as grade levels, it was their first time to collaborate with ongoing goals" (Administrator 1).

What were the worst elements of the MRI? Some of the collective responses of the worst elements of MRI were basic to change within a new program. These were (a)

scheduling; (b) frontloading or missing background knowledge of a new program; (c) shock, panic, resistance; and (d) costs of necessary materials. Each administrator confirmed that the scheduling of the workshop sessions added administrative pressure to the training procedures. Administration was responsible for coordinating with the MRI facilitator and setting up workshop and coaching sessions for each grade level. This precipitated the need for substitute teachers to cover the classroom while teachers attended workshop sessions. Teachers had to absorb the new schedule and work their daily routines around it, and this caused frustration and uneasiness with the teachers. The first year of MRI, the teachers attended half-day sessions. These workshops consisted of two different grade levels meeting on the same day, one level in the morning and another grade level in the afternoon with substitutes needed for the whole day. All of these transitions with teachers and substitutes made for a tense days in the elementary buildings.

Shock was an underlining feeling for many teachers during the first year of MRI. Reflecting on year 1, Administrator 3 stated "the panic of I've set my room up like this, I've been doing it this way for so long and you want me to do what?"   In the fall of the first year of implementation, teachers began to learn how to administer DRA assessments and this process brought about a plethora of emotions. For the new teachers right out of college, this was a smooth transition since many colleges include training for reading assessment, small group instruction, and other components of MRI within their curriculum, but for seasoned educators "it was like a ton of bricks and too late" (Administrator 3).

The supply issue was huge; teachers had to scramble to find the necessary materials to teach lessons. Administrators were responsible for being creative with the budget to provide the needed resources to implement the program. Many buildings began to combine their books and resources together in a common location within the schools rather than each teacher having his or her own library, so all teachers could have access. For example, instructional posters, big books, leveled readers, and teaching guides were commonly stored in a room where all teachers could benefit from the supplies. This was a pivotal process and supported the collaboration aspect of MRI.

The cognitive coaching piece was difficult to grasp, but the idea of having a facilitator who would work closely with the teaching staff and learn the culture of the buildings was priceless. As stated by Administrator 3, "We were prepped that it was going to be cognitive coaching, so we knew. I think most of my teachers did not want it to be cognitive coaching. They wanted to be told 'you did it wrong fix it because this is what it should look like' and this was a very big hurtle and a source of frustration on the coaching end of it". In addition, the most challenging part of the cognitive coaching experience was the evaluative style used by the facilitator. Administrator 3 added "the stress of someone coming in to watch you, that pure fidelity check that we don't typically do but we really should do this." Teachers were not prepared to handle reflective assessment and coming up with their own answers based on their knowledge of the reading structures. Many educators were not excited about this type of evaluation and since the MRI program included cognitive coaching this added more resistance to the program.

Evaluate the coaching and training procedures of the MRI program. As

stated by Administrator 2, "the coaching process for our teachers was very confusing

because they were set up historically from a perspective of an evaluative coaching."

Teachers within the Sunny Day School district were used to the traditional evaluation

practices, where administrators reviewed expectations, told teachers what they were

doing wrong, and then expected them to change accordingly. As stated by Administrator

3, "someone coming in with a different set of eyes to see what is going on and to see

what could be different and to ask that question, 'I noticed that you did this, how did you

feel about that?' You may have a great reason for it but again it is not evaluative, it is

just I like that you did that and I typically do it this way, and then there is the sharing to

even enlighten both parties." This new cognitive coaching was confusing, and the

teachers wanted more feedback about their lessons. Many teachers had misunderstood in

the beginning what was expected, and this led to resistance and a lack of buy-in of the

program.

What were the barriers to implementing the MRI program? As stated by

Administrator 3, "The cost of materials such as leveled books, assessment kits (DRA),

and miscellaneous items such as extra chart paper and reading notebooks."

Administrator 3 stated "The fact that we needed these items yesterday was a problem for

our teaching staff." As answered by Administrator 1, "when we took the teachers out of

the class during the workshop sessions and replaced them with substitute teachers."

Administrator 1 stated "as a district we stepped out of our comfort zone, we are

historically a basal text book driven district, and we are being asked to think outside that

box." Buy-in was an obstacle; with some schools, it did take time for teachers to see the

big picture and commit to adjusting their teaching strategies. "It was a change of culture

to a certain extent and this is a little bit slower process, so anyone who was looking for a

quick fix; there really is not such a thing as a quick fix" (Administrator 1).

Describe the costs associated with implementing the MRI program. The

actual funding of the MRI program was approximately $500 per building for each day the

MRI facilitator was present (Administrator 1). As previously mentioned, the following

costs reoccurred within the elementary schools facilitating the MRI program: buildings

were required to purchase supplies, leveled readers (prices vary), DRA kits

(approximately $200 each), binders, book boxes (for example plastic magazine holders or

library boxes), and miscellaneous materials necessary to fully run the program. Program

funding was an issue, and each building administrator had to find ways to absorb the

costs in coordination with the professional development director of the district. There

were several options for funding: Title 1 funds, government based Needs Improvement

funds, grants, building general funds or using district professional development funds.

Another cost associated with the program was the hiring of substitute teachers to fill in

for teachers while they attended the MRI workshops. This was an expensive piece of

implementing MRI, and it created a vacuum in the substitute availability for regular

absences, causing extra financial stress on the district.

Discuss the implementation process of the MRI Program. Many components

of the implementation process were previously stated. However, a few new ideas

emerged. After the training procedures for new teachers after the MRI program was

completed, retraining was a topic of discussion. Administrator 2 stated "one of our issues

we have come to grips with is that we have not already solved the problem of how to

provide the best services for the teachers who are new." After the completion of the first

three years of MRI within the district, additional schools began to start the program. To

solve the issue of training newly hired teachers in MRI, these teachers attended

workshops with elementary buildings starting MRI in year 1. This process worked for a

while, but a large wave of retirements increased the number of new teachers attending

meetings at these schools for training workshops made this solution complex since

substitutes were required for all of the teachers attending the workshops. Continual

retirement of seasoned and trained staff presents a question of how to embed this program

successfully within the culture of the school district.

If you could change something about the MRI program, what would you

change? The consensus among the administrators was the coaching was a beneficial

piece to the program, but it would have been nice to have one coach per building

participating within the program. "More time for the coach to interact with the teachers"

(Administrator 5). The coaching sessions were short in length and brief and more time to

discuss the presented lessons or newly learned reading structures may have been

beneficial. An alternate idea was the creation a new position of literacy coach within the

Sunny Day School district for continual training of the MRI components. "A building

MRI consultant or literary coach to help teachers with questions" (Administrator 2).

Another area prevalent with all administrators was the lack of information

provided by MRI before the program started within the Sunny Day School District.

Teachers could have benefited from a presentation from MRI about cognitive coaching to

define and explain the rationale behind this style of evaluation. "We needed more

information up front before the program began" (Administrator 3). Teachers did not

know what to expect in the first year of implementation, and for many who were already

uncomfortable with the process, this caused even more discord and resistance to the

program. "It is almost like you needed the one day of introduction of what MRI is all

about and then you needed some time for someone to be in there saying, 'you are going

to be asked to do this in September, this in October' and you got the overall picture of

MRI" (Administrator 1). There was a summer staff meeting prior to the first year of

implementing the MRI program and this was for teachers to have an introduction to the

program. There was an overall concern across the interviews about needing some kind of

frontloading. An extra meeting was necessary to explain in more detail the expectations

each month of the school year and this was a consistent concern within each building

participating with the MRI program.

Survey Statistical Results

Hypothesis 1 stated "teachers using MRI will exhibit confidence in their ability to

teach reading" and correlated with question 7, which stated "Your perception of the

Missouri Reading Initiative Program's capability to increase your ability to use high

quality methods of teaching reading." The corresponding null hypothesis 1 stated

"Teachers using MRI will not exhibit confidence in their ability to teach reading, as

measured by percentage of response on a Likert Scale Perception Survey." The results

for hypothesis 1 had a clear visual difference as zero respondents selected very

dissatisfied or dissatisfied so a z- test for difference in proportions was not calculated, and

the null hypothesis 1 was rejected. There was evidence the teachers had confidence in

their abilities to teach reading using MRI.

Hypothesis 2 stated "teachers using MRI will exhibit confidence in delivery methods." The corresponding null hypothesis 2 stated "Teachers using MRI will not exhibit confidence in delivery methods, as measured by percentage of response on a Likert Scale Perception Survey." These hypotheses statements corresponded with questions three and four on the Likert Scale Survey. The z- test value for the application of null hypothesis 2 to survey question 3 (quality of instructional materials provided by Missouri Reading Initiative) was 10.31, which was larger than the critical value of +1.96; so the null hypothesis was rejected. The z- test value for the application of null hypothesis 2 to survey question 4 (amount of time necessary between training sessions and classroom implementation to utilize new teaching strategies within the classroom) was 9.23, which was larger than the critical value of +1.96; so the null hypothesis was rejected and hypothesis 2 was accepted. There was evidence to support teacher confidence in delivery methods with regard to the MRA program.

The total surveys collected was 61, and the breakdown of completed surveys collected for each building was building A completed 20, building B completed10, building C completed 14, and building D completed 17. Table 5 shows the number of responses for each category of answer on the survey. Responses to all of the questions were generally in the satisfied and very satisfied categories. This indicates that, in general, teachers were positive about their experiences with the implementation of MRI. Table 5 shows the percentage of each of the survey questions in each category of answers on the Likert scale survey. This data shows the percentage of responses for each option category for the survey questions.

Frequency Percentages of Category of Answers On the Likert Scale			
Response Categories			
1	2	3	4
1	0	4	47	47
2	3	18	49	22
3	0	3	45	50
4	0	8	60	31
5	0	1	34	62
6	1	9	44	31
7	0	0	36	65

Note. Response categories: 1 very dissatisfied; 2 dissatisfied; 3 satisfied; and 4 very satisfied.

Figure 5. **Percentages of Category Answers**

MAP Scale Scores

The MAP scores were analyzed stastically using an ANOVA. This data applied directly to the third research hypothesis. This hypothesis stated, a year-to-year comparison of pre/post program aggregate Communication Arts (MAP) test scores of grades 4 and 5 will indicate one or more of the years as different from the others]. The third null hypothesis stated, a year-to-year comparison of pre/post program aggregate Communication Arts (MAP) test scores of grade 4 and 5 will not indicate a difference in achievement in any one year. The ANOVA shows the distribution summaries of the MAP scale scores.

ANOVA VARIATIONS

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	145.3733	4	36.34333	0.125822	0.969729	3.47805
Within Groups	2888.48	10	288.848			
Total	3033.853	14				

Figure 6. **ANOVA of Variances**

The *F*-test value of 0.125 compared to the critical value of 3.47 indicates non-rejection of the null hypothesis. There was evidence to support that there was no significant change year to year in MAP scores.
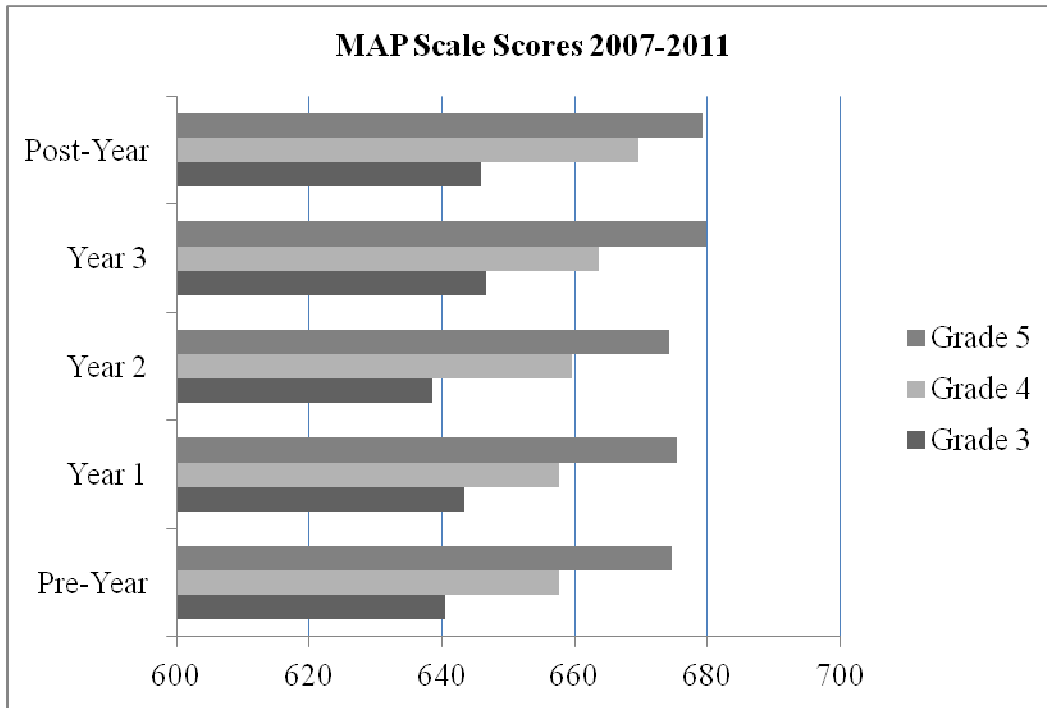
Figure 7. **MAP Scale Scores 2007-2011**

Figure 7 illustrates the MAP scores for pre, post, and the three years of implementation of MRI within the Sunny Day School District. The MAP test scores displayed were for grades 3-5 since K-2 grades are not included in the MAP test in Missouri. This figure also shows an upward trend in proficient scores over the five-year

period. The cutoff for a proficient score for Missouri is 675 (MODSE, 2011d, p. 5).

Table 7 shows the MAP scale scores for the Sunny Day School District. Scores are for

one-year prior to MRI, the three years of implementation, and one-year post MRI. This

data is for grades 3-5 of the Sunny Day School District for buildings implementing the

MRI program.

Emerging Themes

The coding process used by the researcher provided a strategy for analyzing the

interview data. Techniques used by the researcher for coding the data: using word

repetition, key words in context, compare and contrast of words, and segmenting the

results. Creswell (1994) stated, "in qualitative analysis several simultaneous activities

engage the attention of the researcher: collecting information from the field, sorting it

into categories and formatting the information into a story" (p. 153). Ryan and Bernard

(2012) explained the importance of organizing qualitative data into themes and

categories. Using these recommendations, the researcher uncovered 10 themes and each

signifies a unique part of the reading program evaluated (see Table 3).

Table 2

Emerging Themes

_____
Lack of Accountability
Evaluation and Cognitive Coaching
Reading Structures
Effective Professional Development
Organizational Change and Shock
Collaboration
Costs and Funding
Frontloading
Scheduling and Time Constraints
Achievement
_____

Emerging Theme: Lack of Accountability

When an organization adopts new strategies, the issue of accountability becomes

the core component for continual implementation of the program. This factor was

recurrent in the context of evaluation and the program authenticity. "Making sure the

program was implemented was a big part of the MRI process, and there was not always

100 percent support from some people" (Administrator 5). When educators buy-in to a

program and fully utilize each piece of the process, continuity becomes natural, and

teachers are more likely to put the MRI reading structures into daily practice. During

year 1 of the implementation process, teachers were scrambling for an understanding of

what was expected. Once the program components were outlined teachers began to

realize the program expectations were reasonable.

The support of the administration was monumental to the success of MRI within

the Sunny Day School District and on survey question four which asked about the overall

administrative support of the program, teachers responded with 62 % very satisfied, 34 %

satisfied, and 1 % dissatisfied. Another facet of dependability is within the collaboration

process and trustworthiness within grade level teams, working together on goals and

curriculum objectives. Administrator 3 stated "the fact that the staff became confident in

teaching reading and to monitor the growth and accountability of it." The assessments

were important to demonstrate to teachers the benefits of the MRI program. Once

teachers learned how to use the reading assessments and could see the outcomes from

these tools, resistance to the program did diminish slightly. Administrator 3 stated "they

have something to base good instruction on and measure student growth."

Emerging Theme: Cognitive Coaching

        The foreign nature of the process of cognitive coaching was a prevalent undertone

of all interviews. "A lot of the teachers did not want to do coaching because they did not

feel it was beneficial to do all the preparation and I think in the beginning, they were

looking for something they did not end up getting" (Administrator 3). The other problem

was the lack of understanding of this process. The subjects involved in coaching clearly

expressed discomfort with this type of procedure. Moreover, the purpose of cognitive

coaching is in reflection of practice and participants receiving this type of evaluative

method during the MRI training were not familiar with style of feedback. This kind of

evaluation includes questioning and reflection instead of giving teachers one correct

answer. Cognitive coaching caused confusion and frustration within the teachers of the

Sunny Day School District. A more familiar form of evaluation may have resulted in less

resistance to the MRI program from the participants. Survey question 2, which asked

about the quality of coaching experiences during the implementation of Missouri Reading

Initiative, resulted in 22 % of respondents selecting very satisfied, 49 % selecting

satisfied, 18 % selecting dissatisfied, and 3 % selecting very dissatisfied. Question 6 of

the survey which evaluated the ability of the Missouri Reading Initiative coach to

individually support teacher, resulted in 31% of respondents selecting very satisfied, 44%

selecting satisfied, 9% selecting dissatisfied, and none selecting very dissatisfied.

Emerging Theme: Scheduling and Time Constraints

The word schedule related to setting specific times for the MRI facilitators to

present at each building participating with the program. This intricate process required

administrators from all affected buildings to meet together and create a plan for

implementation. Then, the MRI representative would meet with each building principal

to schedule sessions for each grade level. In addition, the principals also were required to

plan substitute coverage for teachers attending the workshop sessions during the school

day. Once the teachers begin the coaching lessons, a substitute teacher was necessary to

shadow the MRI representative and take over the class to allow the teacher and the

representative to talk.

The term time constraint is in reference to teacher acquisition of newly learned

strategies. For survey question 4 (amount of time necessary between training sessions

and classroom implementation to utilize new teaching strategies within the classroom)

the results of the responses were 31% selected very satisfied, 60% selected satisfied, 8%

selected dissatisfied, and 0% selected very dissatisfied. Administrator 5 stated "teachers

needed more time after modeling to implement a structure." After a few weeks of using

the newly learned teaching strategies, educators were to prepare a lesson for the MRI

representative to observe. Even though the general idea was to use the newly learned

information under the guidance of a trainer, the balance of integrating the new lessons

was a challenge for many. Administrator 5 stated "more time was needed with the coach

for each building." Another example of time factors was learning and putting into place

new assessment strategies at the beginning of a new school year when teachers and

students are adjusting.

Emerging Theme: Organizational Change and Shock

All administrators agreed that the following topics related to change within the

Sunny Day School District: buy-in, ownership, and resistance were concerns with

implementing the MRI program. Administrator 1 stated "we had a couple of buildings

that still had some pockets that just had not really bought into the program." This term is

a critical topic involved in almost every newly learned program.

Buy-in. This term refers to acceptance of a new program and the willingness to

try with a positive approach. Administrator 1 pointed out "from what I've seen from my

perspective it's very different in every building, and we had a couple of buildings that

still had pockets that just hadn't really bought into it really." Many programs require a

certain percentage of buy-in to expect appropriate participation. Administrator 1

commented, "I thought that they are just not ever going to buy-in and then the third year

all the puzzle pieces came together." Survey question 5 (overall administrative support

of the program) resulted in 62% selected very satisfied, 34% selected satisfied, 1%

selected dissatisfied, and 0% selected very dissatisfied.

Ownership. Once attendees adhered to the new concepts or ideas, they begin to

feel a part of the system. As stated by Administrator 1, "I thought that they were just not

ever going to buy-in and then the third year all the puzzle pieces came together." Within

the Sunny Day School District, the level of teacher support for the MRI program varied depending on the school.

Resistance. When misunderstandings are not resolved and trust is lost, resistance occurs, and the program's success is limited. Teachers were often resistant to the MRI program in year 1 but after the initial shock of learning a new way to teach became familiar more teachers began to accept the changes.

Many professionals can operate outside of their comfort zone for a certain length of time and there are different variables that determine the ability to push forward when stress begins. For the first time, the Sunny Day School District learned to embrace new scientifically based research strategies for teaching. With this came resistance, some seasoned teachers were frustrated or nervous about giving up familiar teaching styles and trading them for uncomfortable new ones. If teachers could have had prior understanding about the program, it would have neutralized the shock. "Comfort zones where teachers had existed for many years diminished and this caused some real growing pains and a learning curve for everyone" (Administrator 1).

Emerging Theme: Effective Professional Development

Professional development was a reoccurring theme within the five administrative interviews. On survey question 1 (quality of training sessions during the implementation of Missouri Reading Initiative) the responses were 47% chose satisfied, 4% chose dissatisfied, and 0% chose very dissatisfied. Administrator 1 did address the need for ongoing professional development in the area of reading within the Sunny Day School District and MRI was sufficient to meeting these requirements.

Ongoing professional development. Federal and state guidelines for professional development suggest training sessions to be ongoing and to continue over a specific amount of time. The use of programs requiring a deeper understanding and practice are more equitable for the organization. Administrator 2 stated "I really like that structure, I like the ongoing nature of it, I think everything we read about professional development says that is the best format, so I think that was huge."

Research based best practices. Education professionals are encouraged to utilize scientifically based teaching strategies within their practice. Administrator 1 stated "any professional development you do under the Title 1 government funded program has to be research based scientifically based ongoing professional development."

Systematic. When a reading program designed to build from one newly taught idea to the next a pattern for retaining the skills coordinates with the developmental readiness of the students. "The best elements to me, was the fact that it was providing a systematic approach to best practices in the area of reading and that really could be carried across all the content areas" (Administrator 1). This natural progression of concepts allowed for understanding of information in a sequential way.

Training procedures. The use of tangible materials such as books, chart paper, post-its, markers, easels and other common mediums provided the hands-on experiences necessary for teachers to apply learning. Each lengthy session became a resource for fresh ideas and encouragement for success. Administrator 3 stated "if they had a little more time before it began and had prepped prior to being immersed in it." Conversations were positive and sometimes tense as well when new structures counter acted with familiar ones. "Something that gives you a little bit, distresses you a little bit because

some people would come out of these training sessions and be like 'I can't do all of this!' and you do not want to lose people in the process of trying to implement something that is really good" (Administrator 3). The organization of the three-year program allowed for relationship building and trust between the facilitator and the teachers.

Emerging Theme: Reading Structures

The following five reading structures were fundamental parts of the MRI program according to the five administrative interviews and observations.

Small group instruction. The term small group instruction refers to teaching students within a small setting with students of similar skills and this approach was unique since the materials used during the mini lessons were for the individual needs of the students. "It is totally terrific worthwhile, it changed our perceptions of reading or how we knew it, and the benefit to kids, they are so much more confident" (Administrator 3). "You have struggling readers but they did not necessarily feel like the struggling readers because when they are in their group they are reading what they can" (Administrator 3). A typical primary classroom was composed of six to seven different reading levels at one given time. Teachers presented instruction as mini lessons in a format of day 1 and day 2. During the third grade and fourth grade observations students participated with small group reading instruction, when students were called to their groups they brought reading response notebooks, and a leveled book. These sessions lasted for about 15-20 minutes and when the lesson was over students returned to their independent literacy work. The kindergarten small groups consisted of independent reading, word study, phonics, and assessments but the difference was the teacher supplied all the materials at the table and the sessions 10-15 minutes. During all of the small

group sessions, the teachers listened to a student read aloud while the other members of

the group read independently from the same text.

   Running records. This intricate data collection format was an intense process for

teachers to learn. Once teachers learned this skill, it would serve as foundation for

designing small groups and maintaining a reading base for students. Administrator 3

stated "this was not a new idea we did this in education back with literacy four blocks."

During the observations, teachers did take running records with students while other

members of the group read independently from the same text and this was a normal part

of the small group sessions. The running record was an ongoing formative assessment of

how the student was progressing.

   Diagnostic reading assessments (DRA). Teachers learned how to administer this

diagnostic reading tool. This was another tedious task to absorb during a training session.

However, the reward for endurance was knowledge for providing the correct reading

instruction for students. Administrator 4 described DRA assessments as "doing what is

good for kids and identifying their needs." The advantage of the DRA assessment was

the ability to determine the exact level a student was reading and to match the text for

instruction. Prior to the implementation of the MRI program, the Sunny Day School

District did not have access to testing tools for individual reading levels except for Title I

program testing. The ability to match the students reading level with an appropriate text

was a monumental step to meeting the needs of students.

   Whole group instruction. This structure incorporated whole group mini lessons

using high quality children's literature. During the observation of the fourth grade class,

the teacher presented a whole class read aloud and after the story, the students responded

in their reading notebooks. Shared reading mini lessons were introduced classrooms

included examples such as posters, phonics, poems, and magnetic letters. Some of the

teachers incorporated Smart Boards during the classroom observations to present the

morning message, spelling, and programs facilitated through the internet.

   Modeling. A unique element of the MRI training was modeling. The teachers

observed while the instructor taught a mini lesson to a group of students within the

school. The benefit of this process was the modeling took place within the natural setting

of the school using a preselected teacher's classroom of students. Modeling was a key

strategy used through the entire training process and served as a realistic visual piece.

Emerging Theme: Collaboration

   A consensus emerging from all five administrative interviews was that

collaboration between teachers was a positive added piece with the implementation of the

MRI program. For many teachers, this was the beginning of new professional

relationships with colleges. At first, this was rigid and cold, but as the time passed

teachers began to depend upon each other for help and understanding. Learning how to

collaborate effectively was the key to developing extensive plans for helping children

read successfully. "A side benefit because was teachers had some time to pull out of the

classroom and work together as grade levels and this was their first time to collaborate

with ongoing goals" (Administrator 1).

Emerging Theme: Frontloading

   When beginning a new program, the amount of prior information required to

accomplish goals and diminish frustrations is worth debating. There is a delicate balance

between overview and adequate preparation to meet the needs of prospective program

attendees. Many administrative agreed during interviews, that frontloading or

background information was missing. In most situations, the teachers entering the MRI

program in the first year were not ready for the challenging demands bestowed upon

them. As stated by Administrator 1, " so training procedures was such a cold turkey and

if we had already done those types of things and had teacher collaboration in place MRI

would not have been such a cold splash in the face." Teacher survey question 4 (amount

of time necessary between training sessions and classroom implementation to utilize new

teaching strategies within the classroom) had responses of 31% very satisfied, 45%

satisfied, and 3 % dissatisfied. However, the surveys were administered the after the

third year of MRI, and if they had been completed after the first year, the results may

have been different. The administrative interviews reflect MRI as implemented during

the whole process. A negative factor was apparent in all facets of the first year of

training. For example, many teachers did not have their classrooms set-up for small

groups and class libraries were not suitable for conducting successful individualized mini

lessons. The typical beginning of the year procedures were quite different, and the new

expectations cause teachers to scramble for composure.

Emerging Theme: Costs and Funding

This subject was consistent with all administration interviews, and the following

two types of costs were a concern while implementing the MRI program within each

elementary school.

Necessary supplies. Principals were required to use building budgets to provide

necessary items for implementing the MRI program. Administrator 3-stated, "the cost of

necessary materials, and they were needed yesterday!" Some items mentioned during the

interviews were; lined easel paper, properly leveled books, DRA assessments kits, class sets of composition notebooks, and binders. The first year was the most difficult for supplies and set-up.

Substitutes. This area was sensitive because of the cost of frequently taking teachers out of the classrooms. Administrator 1 stated "The cost of hiring substitutes for teachers to complete DRA assessments." State and federal requirements for preparing educators to update instructional approaches vindicated the costs and budget adjustments necessary to meet the MRI program requirements. The wave of needed substitutes was an overwhelming factor for the Sunny Day School District. Funding was critical due to the expenses involved with maintaining a program such as the MRI. Some of the buildings within the Sunny Day School District were able to use government funding set aside for school improvement to pay for the program. Administrator 2 stated "there was government funding to help provide so we were ever fortunate in that regard." Otherwise, the cost of the professional development was absorbed through other qualifying opportunities.

Emerging Theme: Student Reading Achievement

During the interview process, the focus was also on teacher abilities to adapt to new teaching structures. When the learning environment is positive for children and carefully designed for their success, the results are students who embody accomplishment. Stated by Administrator 3, "the achievement of the student was huge and the ability to present exact reading levels from DRA tests to parents was an essential piece of MRI." When the teachers learned how to assess the students with DRA materials, they were able to explain exactly the reading level of the child. Commented by

Administrator 3, "when sitting in an IEP meeting, the parents say 'what is the present academic level?' and the teacher can give the DRA level instead of giving an approximate reading rate." After year 1 of the MRI program and new techniques started to become common, there became visible a sense of "I can…" from the students. This was a priceless realization of hard work and determination of a task completed.

Observations

The purpose of the classroom observations was to verify the fidelity of the MRI program and to observe the implementation of the program. The four observations were in kindergarten through fourth grades and the time of day varied due to scheduling. Many of the ideas and strategies were components and suggestions of the MRI program and were a part of the workshops. A following is a list of the physical characteristics of the classrooms observed.

- Classrooms were designed with desks arranged in pods or groups.
- Books were present in classroom libraries and leveled according to difficulty.
- Classroom management charts displayed on the walls or bulletin boards describing the instructions of literacy the centers.
- The layout of classrooms allowed for student movement during center time and interactions with other peer team members.
- A table was designated for holding small group reading.

The teacher utilizes small group instruction. The students were encouraged to join groups of four to five when the teacher called their name, group, or book title. Most of the students were familiar with the process, moved freely about the during small group and center times, and readily took part with the mini lesson. Each class observed utilized

a management system such as literacy centers for students to practice skills while waiting

for their group session. Transitions observed in each classroom as a hand signal or a

timer and classroom had clearly defined transition routines and small group sessions

typically lasted between 15-20 minutes. Students came prepared for the lessons and

brought the appropriate leveled books and a reading response notebook for the group

session. Each group was reading a specific leveled book and all the students within the

group received a copy of the same book. Students did gather at a small table and began

reading independently until it was their turn to read. In one classroom, several chapter

books were located on the chalkboard ledge and what day the students reading each book

were to meet during the week. The lessons included comprehension strategy questions,

word study, or vocabulary, and it was obvious that the lessons were continuations from

previous days by the conversations and amount of discussion and these sessions were

inclusive of the day 1 and day 2 model. Day 1 of the small group sessions included

introduction of the story and actual reading of the text. Day 2 of the small group reading

sessions involved word study such as vocabulary or phonics and comprehension

questions.

The following were comprehension strategies noted during the mini lessons:

(a) character analysis where students examine the traits of the characters; (b) predictions

when students predict the events of a story; (c) main idea where the student looks for the

big ideas of the story; and (d) making connections when students connect the ideas of the

story to themselves, another book, or to the world. When it was time for actual reading

of the leveled books, the teachers listened individually as children read independently

from the same texts. While individual students read and the teacher listened, the rest of

the group read silently from their own copy of the text. This process of guided reading

did also include on the spot mispronunciation corrections along with comprehension

checks. Each student within a group received a copy of the same text; while the students

read individually, the teacher took notes or running records.

The teacher utilizes shared reading instruction. During this portion of the

observations, the students sat at the carpet and participated with the teacher-led activities.

Children often sat on a large carpeted area for these sessions, and some teachers sang

with children in unison while reading the words from a chart or smart board. More

examples of materials used included alphabet charts using the phonetic principles for

reading, spelling words, big books, and language practice using a smart board, nonfiction

posters, books, or electronic materials. In one instance, the class participated with

looking up words on the online dictionary and reviewed how to use the computer to find

the meaning of unknown words. During this particular mini lesson, the students sat on

the carpet and participated with the teacher in a discussion of nonfiction topic.

The teacher utilizes a read aloud in reading instruction. The term read aloud

means reading to the class children's literature as part of the lesson. The National

Institute for Literacy (2006) discussed the importance of the teacher read aloud "she

shows her enthusiasm for reading and her eagerness for the children to learn to read"

(p. 21). "As she reads she shows the parts of print such as beginning and endings of

sentences, new paragraphs, and different punctuation marks" (p. 21). Before the teacher

began reading, the teacher asked several questions about the book such as "what is the

title of the book?" or "is this book fiction or nonfiction?" Statements such as "let us read

to find out...?" helped to set a purpose for reading. Teachers also utilized the smart board

for whole class reading with fiction and nonfiction passages.

The teacher utilizes leveled reading materials when teaching small group

instruction. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) noted the importance of leveled materials for

teaching small groups and stated "when initiating guided reading, the first challenge for

the teacher is to manage the classroom to be able to work in a focused, uninterrupted way

with small cluster of students" (p. 53). The researcher observed small group lessons

where students were actively reading books and participating with discussions. Also

noted were book boxes, a location of books that children can look through in leveled

classroom libraries. Some of the class libraries displayed books by topic or by the guided

reading level. In many classes, students had a book for their small group lessons in their

desk or individual book boxes.

The teacher provides individualized conferences with reading instruction.

Teachers listened to each student read independently, helping to select appropriate books

from the class library, and assisting with reading journal entries. These conference

sessions occurred at a small table with students and the teacher setting around and were

during small group reading instruction or just as independent instruction with one

student. It was clear teachers had a routine of meeting with students because of the

smooth flow of the class during group time. Even the kindergarten classes appeared to be

familiar with the classroom routines and worked productively around the room. In many

classrooms, a teacher assistant helped with the rotation of students within the classroom

during reading conference times. Students were often independent with their literacy

activities and knew the structures they completed. The observation sample did validate

the implementation of MRI within the Sunny Day School District. The researcher's role

as observer and MRI program participant added to the depth of understanding and clarity

of the reading components and structures. In addition, the checklist objectives connected

with the research questions.

Once the summary of observation objectives was complete, the researcher began

the coding process with each observation looking for reoccurring themes and key

phrases. Table 4 illustrates the themes noted from the classroom observations.

Table 3

Observation of Emerging Themes

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Focus Areas	Observations Examples

_____

Focus Areas	Observations Examples
Teacher Read Materials	Quality Children's Literature
	Fiction and Nonfiction Literature
	Whole Group Instruction
Shared Reading	Songs
	Alphabet Charts
	Student Newspapers
	Nonfiction Text Features
	Partners
	Choral Reading
Small Group Instruction	Leveled Readers
	Reading Journals
	Reading Binders
	Classroom Leveled Libraries
	Book Previews
	Comprehension Questions
	Differentiated Instruction
Classroom Management	Independent Reading
	Individualized Management Structures/Choices
	Pocket Charts & Instructional Charts
	Visual Expectations
	Verbal Cues
	Word Making
	Individual Book selections

_____

Note. Observation focus areas and examples came from the four observations. Some terminology was from the MRI Manual (2008).

These emerging themes evolved through the same coding process used for the administrative interviews. As the researcher carefully read and highlighted each completed written observation checklist, different colors represented big ideas, repetitive words, and similar concepts found in the transcripts.

Summary

The triangulation of this program evaluation using the administrative interviews, the teacher surveys, and the classroom observations presented qualitative and quantitative data to support the research questions and hypotheses. The process of combining methods of qualitative and quantitative imparted a holistic picture of the implementation of MRI program within the Sunny Day School District. Each element was touched upon through one of the research tools. The results of the survey tests did show MRI was a positive choice for the Sunny Day School District and beneficial for helping teachers instruct children in reading. Results of the analysis using ANOVA and descriptive observation of MAP Scale test scores did not display a significant difference from year to year over the five-year period. In chapter 5 conclusions of this study, answers to the research questions, and a discussion of recommendations for future research complete the findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Pretorius (2000) concluded that the complexities associated with learning to read and the affects of the pressure of literacy skills on a student's academic and life success make it imperative all educators devise an efficient means of helping students to become proficient with reading. The problem was the lack of a program evaluation for the MRI Program within the Sunny Day School District. The purpose of this research study was to evaluate the process and outcomes of the MRI Program. As stated by Pretorius (2000) "research consistently shows a strong correlation between reading proficiency and academic success for all ages, from primary school right through to university level: students who read a lot and who understand what they read generally attain good grades" (p. 35). The following section provides a discussion of the relationship between the research questions and the hypotheses questions with the administrative interviews, observations and surveys, by way of threading-through the literature in chapter 2.

Discussion of the Main Research Question: How does the MRI program prepare teachers to teach reading?

The surveys, interview responses, and the classroom observations do suggest the MRI program has benefited the instruction of reading within the Sunny Day School District. Assessment was a critical element for the preparation of reading instruction and meeting the present level of students. Four classroom observations did reflect the extent of integration of the MRI components within the culture of the reading academics within the Sunny Day School District. The kindergarten observation began with a shared reading lesson and included the following: a phonics song, review of an alphabet chart

with the focus on sounds, a pocket chart story, and game for frequency words where students swat words with a partner using a fly swatter. Students did work independently in literacy centers while the teacher met with students for small group instruction. These phrases spoken by the teacher "whisper read, work the whole time, buddy read, and get busy right away" reminded the students of the expectations. The second grade observation began with shared reading and the students working together with word work on the smart board while seated at their desks. After the word work activity, the students began to share a children's newspaper with the focus was on nonfiction text features. Students were given time to read with a partner and discuss the paper, then big ideas were written on chart paper with the whole class participating. The MRI program had indeed become part of the literacy culture of the Sunny Day School District and the research and survey data collected during this study showed a slight link with MRI and teacher perceptions. Extraneous variables such as RTI and PLC may affect these results.

The five administrators agreed that MRI provided an ongoing systematic approach to reading instruction and one that could carry over to all content areas. The accountability piece was important with MRI, "the fact that staff became confident in teaching reading and to monitor student growth" (Administrator 3). "They had something on which to base good instruction on and to measure student progress" (Administrator 3). MRI provided a foundation and training for student assessment by teaching instructors to use DRA, checklists, running records, and observations of students before planning instruction. Administrator 3 discussed reading components and stated the following:

the idea of instruction in reading workshop and giving teachers a stronger

background in those structures, not only the organization of it but the idea of

moving to a whole mini lesson into a small group instruction based upon student

needs in terms of level of ability.

Dorn and Soffos (2001) described a process of teaching reading, which includes the

following components. First, the teacher models explicit book language and reading

behavior. This process helps the students visualize what is expected. Second, the teacher

coaches the students in small groups or individual sessions with strategies to assist with

problem solving. Third, the teacher scaffolds the students' learning by presenting small

pieces of information and then building upon the skills to reach the desired goals.

Administrator 2 discussed the benefits of MRI and stated "the organizational

structure of the initiative in terms of ongoing professional development and the way it

was set up." In the NCLB legislation, "the type of professional development required for

school improvement is that which supports ongoing high-quality reading instruction"

(NCLB, 2001, p. 115).

Discussion of the Research Question: To what extent are MRI program elements

incorporated into reading instruction within the Sunny Day School District?

According to the observations completed with the Sunny Day School District,

these components of MRI were observed by the researcher: small group instruction using

level materials with individual conferencing; whole class reading instruction including

quality literature for developing comprehension skills; and shared reading from a variety

of resources for building fluency and phonics. During classroom observations, the

teacher began reading instruction by asking questions such as "what is the title of this

book?" or "what kind of book is this?" During all small group lessons, students were actively reading books and participating with discussions. Also noted were book boxes, a location of books children can look through located in leveled classroom libraries. The teacher provided individualized conferences with reading instruction by listening to each student read independently, helping to select appropriate books from the class library, and assisting with reading journal entries. The observations completed within the four classrooms did verify teachers using small group instruction, shared reading with posters, books, and electronic materials (smart boards, computers, and personal CD players).

In addition, the administrative interviews reflected the following components were in place within the Sunny Day School District, scheduled assessments two times a year (beginning and end), and ongoing assessments (formative) such as running records of individual reading progress were noted as consistently occurring within the K-5 classrooms. At the time of the writing of this study, the Sunny Day School District had begun to implement the MRI program within the entire elementary population of the district. The progression of implementation occurred over approximately a six-year period, and each year additional elementary schools adopted the MRI program.

Discussion of the Research Question: What elements of MRI are the most effective according to administrator interviews, observations, and surveys?

The administrator interviews reflected several consistent elements as being the most effective. Identifying the needs of students using a standard measurement tool such as DRA was a valuable key component of the MRI program, and Administrator 5 explained how this was an effective tool. Another topic discussed was the fact that MRI was an ongoing professional development program; Administrator 2 pointed out "I really

like the structure and the ongoing nature of it and everything we read about professional

development supports this format." Administrator 2 stated "the idea of moving away

from whole class lessons to small group instruction based upon student need in terms of

level of ability in a way you typically do not see." Administrator 1, "the best elements to

me was the fact that it was providing a systematic approach to best practices in the area

of reading and writing that really could be carried across all the content areas."

Administrator 1stated "this was the beginning of the collaborative process for our

teachers and the first time to with ongoing goals." Administrator interviews and

observations data does support beneficial components of the MRI program. Assessment

of reading progress and providing ongoing professional development were two key

components of the MRI program.

Discussion of the Research Question: What were the unexpected implementation

barriers?

Most administrators agreed the costs of supplies and necessary materials for

implementing the program. Another barrier was the added expense of pulling teachers

out of the classrooms to participate with the program and replacing them with substitutes.

Administrator 2 addressed this question and by stating "well, I think as a district we

stepped out of our comfort zone, we were historically a basal driven (textbook) district,

and we were asked to think outside that box. It is a change of culture to a certain extent

and that is a little bit slower process.. Anyone who was looking for a quick fix, there

really isn't such a thing as a quick fix, but clearly we are moving in a really positive and

strong direction and those are things we need to do as a district." The observations did

reflect the use of MRI structures within reading instruction, the teachers were finishing

year three and were familiar with the structures. The amount of leveled books available

to the students within each classroom did vary and the organization of the classroom

libraries was not the same in every classroom. Students did appear to know the routine of

the classrooms and engaged in activities or read independently while the teacher was

instructing students in small group instruction. The furniture necessary for holding small

groups did vary between buildings and some teachers had kidney shaped tables while

others ran small groups at small tables.

Even though in the beginning of the implementation process of MRI the

administrators did report a direct connection with the coaching process and teacher

resistance, the survey results showed that by the end of the third year teacher opinions

had changed. On the teacher survey question 2 (quality of coaching experiences during

the implementation of Missouri Reading Initiative) teachers responded with 22% very

satisfied, 49% satisfied, 18% dissatisfied, and 3% very dissatisfied. On the teacher

survey question 6 (the ability of the Missouri Reading Initiative coach to individually

support teachers), teachers responded with 31% very satisfied, 44% satisfied, 9 %

dissatisfied, and 0% very dissatisfied.

Discussion of Research Question: What are the costs of implementing MRI within

the Sunny Day School District?

Administrators agreed that the largest cost was the actual funding of the program

and the hiring of substitute teachers to replace teachers attending the workshops. Other

costs were the extra supplies of leveled books, DRA kits, and additional phonics

materials. Administrator 1 discussed the cost of implementing MRI within the Sunny

Day School District and stated "It cost approximately $500.00 each time the MRI

facilitator met or held a session in a facility." There were other costs to running the

program and each building administrator was responsible for solving those issues.

During an administrative interview, Administrator 3 stated "cost is the biggest one to

make it work right." Mentioned were the costs of leveled libraries, DRA assessment kits,

and substitute teacher funding. Implementing the MRI program within the Sunny Day

School District was an expensive project and it affected the district budget and each

individual school spending plans. The initial funding required for the program was

satisfied in part with government funding for professional development as part of the

school improvement plan. The supplies required to run the program, were unplanned

expenses that each building was responsible for budgeting. Another large cost was for

substitutes need to replace teachers attending training, coaching sessions, and release

time to complete DRA assessments with students.

Discussion of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (Teachers using MRI will exhibit confidence in their ability to teach

reading, as measured by percentage of responses on a Likert Scale Perception Survey)

connects to survey question 7 (What is your perception of the Missouri Reading Initiative

program capabilities to increase your ability to use high quality methods of teaching

reading?). The response results to question 7 was 65% responded with very satisfied,

32% responded with satisfied, 0% responded with dissatisfied, and 0% responded with

very dissatisfied. The first year of MRI was a difficult transition and administrator

interviews did reflect this challenge experienced by teachers. However, throughout the

process of the three-year program as MRI structures became part of the culture of the

schools, teacher opinions began to change. Some of the change was due to the fact that

teachers could visually see how the MRI components helped with the everyday

instructional processes.

Hypothesis number 2 (Teachers using MRI will exhibit confidence in delivery

methods, as measured by percentage of response on a Likert Scale Perception Survey)

connected to survey questions 3 and four. Survey question 3 (quality of instructional

materials provided by Missouri Reading Initiative) resulted in respondents selection of

very satisfied at 50%, 45% was satisfied, and 3% selected dissatisfied. Survey question 4

(amount of time necessary between training sessions and classroom implementation to

utilize new teaching strategies within the classroom) resulted in 31% for very satisfied,

60% for satisfied, and 8% dissatisfied. By the time the survey was distributed, teachers

did have enough time to learn, implement, and see the results of the MRI teaching

strategies. After year three, teachers did not have to access their workshop notes because

the methods had become common daily parts of instruction. Statistical z- tests for

proportions for questions 3 and 4 resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis and

acceptance of hypothesis 2. The z- test did support the finding of the MRI program as

beneficial for assisting teachers with reading instruction.

Hypothesis 3 (A year-to-year comparison of pre/post program aggregate

Communication Arts [MAP] test scores of grades 4 and 5 will indicate one or more of the

years as different from the others) connected to the MAP Scale Scores and the ANOVA.

Results of the analysis using ANOVA and descriptive observation of Communication

Arts MAP test scores did not display a significant difference from year to year over the

five-year period. This slight increase is a lagging indicator for the implementation of a

new program. It does take time for new programs to take effect within an organization

and make a substantial difference.

Discussion of the Emerging Themes of the Interviews, Surveys, and the

Observations

The following is a list of the emerging themes and a discussion on how they link

to the literature review. It is important to note the emerging themes from the

administrator interviews were mainly management organizational components and the

emerging themes from the observations were reading structure elements. The following

are emerging themes: (1) accountability, (2) evaluation and cognitive coaching, (3)

teacher time constraints and administrator scheduling, (4) reading structures, (5)

professional development, (6) organizational change and shock, (7) collaboration, (8)

costs and funding, (9) lack of front-loading, and (10) achievement. Each of these themes

had a unique connection to the implementation process of the MRI program within the

Sunny Day School District and linked to the literature.

Emerging Theme: Lack of Accountability. To provide a background on

accountability in education, USDOE (2008) outlined these national milestones in

education in A Nation Accountable.

Beginning in 1983 the U. S. Department of Education report, A Nation at Risk

found that about 13 percent of our nation's 17 year olds were illiterate. In 1989,

President George H.W. Bush agreed to adopt national K-12 performance goals for

the year 2000. Bill Clinton's presidency passed the Improving Schools Act 1994,

which required state academic-content standards and tests and the Educate

America Act of 1994 provided the funds to aid states in writing those content

standards. With the new millennium, the standards and accountability movement

reached a new level. President George W. Bush called for significant reforms at

the federal level and this led to the enactment of the NCLB of 2001. (pp. 4-6)

These federal level requirements held school districts responsible for analyzing school

data and deciding on a school improvement plan to increase learning. MRI was a

Missouri Reading Program designed to help teachers increase student reading rates and

the Sunny Day School District chose MRI as part of their improvement plan.

Accountability in the form of a buy-in or teachers fully implementing the program were

topics discussed during administrative interviews. Administrator 3 described how

teachers felt about being responsible for learning new reading structures and applying

them quickly during an evaluated lesson when stated "that was a struggle ultimately, that

pure fidelity check that we do not typically do, and we really should and someone coming

in with a different set of eyes to see what is going on."

A different level of accountability introduced with the emergence of PLC and RTI

was collective accountability where teachers were responsible to a team not just one class

of students. The MRI program brought accountability for each teacher through assessing

students and attaining reading levels to providing the appropriate reading instruction. In

addition, teachers met as teams to discuss student reading data results and this was an

uncomfortable process in the first year. Teams worked together for the first time to bring

the reading scores up for the entire grade level. DuFour et al. (2010) expressed "to build

a collaborative culture within a school setting members were to work interdependently to

achieve common goals for which members were held mutually accountable" (p. 181).

MRI did help build bonds between teachers by the very nature of the workshop sessions.

Teachers were encouraged to work together during activities and consider each other's

views for decisions.

Emerging Theme: Evaluation and Cognitive Coaching. Bernhardt (2004)

defined evaluation as "making judgments about the quality of overall student

performance for the purpose of communicating student achievement" (p. 286). A unique

component of the MRI program was the evaluative structure and how this design

encouraged teachers to reflect on their instructional practices but caused frustration. If

teachers would have received, a little background for cognitive coaching the participants

may have been more positive. After the third year of MRI, teachers did adjust to the

coaching style and learned how to reflect on their practice. Administrator 2 stated "the

coaching process for our teachers was very confusing because they were set-up

historically from a perspective of an evaluative coach [a corrective approach] and part of

the problem was not having a thorough understanding of what cognitive coaching really

was." Survey question 2 (quality of coaching experiences during the implementation of

Missouri Reading Initiative) resulted in 3% responded with very dissatisfied, 18%

responded with dissatisfied, 49% of the participants responded with satisfied, and 22%

selected very satisfied. A few surveys had hand written notes describing their

disappointment with the coaching experience. Yet, at the time of the surveys, the

teachers did show approximately 70% of the teachers supported the coaching component.

Emerging Themes: Teacher Time Constraints and Administrative Schedules.

Bolman and Deal (2008) explained "life in organizations is packed with happenings that

can be interpreted in a number of ways and planning produces specific objectives and it

creates arenas for airing conflict" (p. 313). Conzemius and O'Neill (2002) identified the

following questions to alleviate the stresses of time constraints and scheduling: (1)

identify who (team members, stake holders, and sponsors) (2) identify the why (group

goals), and (3) define the how (plan work and develop a team, discussion assumptions of

the teamwork, and agree on group guidelines for behavior)" (p. 41). When implementing

a reading program within a school district, planning is the key component to handling

tight schedules and time constraints. The scheduling of workshop sessions, substitute

teachers, and coaching sessions with teachers was a big adjustment for administration.

During the implementation of MRI within the Sunny Day School District, the topics of

time constraints for teachers and scheduling dilemmas for administrators did surface.

Survey question 4 addressed teacher time constraints, (amount of time necessary between

training sessions and classroom implementation to utilize new teaching strategies within

the classroom), and 8% selected dissatisfied, 60% selected satisfied, and 31% selected

very satisfied according to the survey results. Over the three-year process teachers and

administrators did learn to manage theses hurtles and by the time the surveys were

completed after year 3, opinions had mellowed.

Emerging Theme: Reading Structures. The reading structures incorporated

with the MRI link directly with Dorn and Soffos (2001) as described early literacy

approaches as supporting children to become self-regulated learners. Further, Dorn and

Soffos (2001) incorporated whole group, small group, and independent reading as a

method of reading development. In fact, students learn phonemic principles, parts of

speech, and comprehension strategies through books called mentor texts. In addition to

mentor texts, phonics lessons alphabet charts, magnetic letters, leveled books, poems, and

songs reinforce reading concepts (Dorn & Soffos, 2001).

The four classroom observations reflect reading structures of the MRI program. Small group reading instruction composed of three to five students where the teacher listened to individual students read while the rest of the group read silently and waited their turn. These sessions incorporated leveled texts, determined by running records or DRA assessments, and held within the day one and day two MRI format. Day 1 was for introducing the text and setting a purpose for reading, and day 2 was for comprehension strategies and word study. The materials used by the teacher such as posters, charts, word cards, songs, poems, alphabet charts, and magnetic letters varied by grade level and individual teacher preference.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) described the following list of the essential components of guided reading.

(1) Teacher works with a small group.

(2) Children in the group are similar in their development of a reading process and are able to read about the same level of text.

(3) Teachers introduce the stories and assist children's reading in ways that help to develop independent reading strategies.

(4) Each child read the whole text.

(5) The goal is for children to read independently and silently.

(6) The emphasis is on reading increasingly challenging books over time.

(7) Children are grouped with a dynamic process of ongoing observation and assessment. (p. 4)

Emerging Theme: Professional Development. O'Neill and Conzemius (2006) discussed the need for effective ongoing professional development that aligns to key

learning targets of students (p. 137). Dufour et al. (2010) found the following guidelines

for developing effective professional development as

> (a) job embedded learning; (b) an expectation that learning is ongoing and occurs
>
> as part of the routine work practice; (c) team-based action research; (d) learn by
>
> doing; (e) learning collectively by working together; (f) assessing impact on the
>
> basis of evidence of improved student learning; (g) sustained commitment to
>
> limited focus initiatives. (p. 210)

The administrator interviews reflected several consistent elements as being the most

effective. Administrator 2 pointed out "I really like the structure and the ongoing nature

of it and everything we read about professional development supports this format."

On the teacher survey question 7 (your perception of the Missouri Reading Initiative

Program's capability to increase your ability to use high quality methods of teaching

reading) teachers responded with 65% very satisfied, 36% satisfied, 0% dissatisfied, and

0% very dissatisfied. As a professional development, the MRI program did have an

impact on the teacher's perception of teaching reading with high quality reading methods.

Schmoker (2001) reported the significance of selecting professional develop

tailored to student achievement

> It is time to mark the end of "sort of" staff development and before adopting any
>
> initiative; teams should evaluate it on two levels: (1) is it effective? Is there a
>
> convincing body of evidence that it indicates a high probably of success? (2) Will
>
> there be clear, organized follow-up structures? Are there means for assessing its
>
> effect on student learning on an ongoing basis? (p. 75)

The MRI program aligned closely to these seven guidelines outlined by Dufour et al.

(2010) and provided a foundation to learning how to meet the needs of students.

Emerging Theme: Organizational Change and Shock. Vetrivel (2010) found

"change is not an event, it is a process triggered by an event" (p. 23). Administrator 3

stated "year one, the panic of I have set my classroom up like this, I have been doing it

this way for so long and you want me to what?" Administrator 3 also stated "to change

everything about how you were taught to teach reading and look at it in a different way

caused considerable frustration for teachers during the first year of implementation."

The Sunny Day School District did learn how to embrace the change process during the

implementation of the MRI program. Collaboration with teachers of the same grade level

discussing the needs of students and strategies used to help reading development. Within

the Sunny Day School District, teachers did adjust to the rigors of gathering assessment,

analyzing the data, and planning the reading instruction. Problem solving teams

consisting of an administrator, grade level teacher, special area teachers (speech,

language, and reading specialists) were formed to discuss individual student's needs. As

suggested by Page (2010) "three core systems of work that leaders operating in these

roles needed to establish and maintain to support the instructional core and operations of

schools" (p. 12). Page (2010) also added the following three core systems need to be in

place to have success with change: (a) talent management, (b) balanced performance

improvement, and (c) team-based improvement (p. 12). The Professional Learning

Community approach did help draw teachers together as a team and bond together to

endure the changes required by the implementation of the MRI program within the Sunny

Day School District. Bolman and Deal (2008) described barriers to change "structure

(loss of direction, confusion, and chaos), human resources (anxiety, incompetent and needy), political (disempowerment and conflict), and symbolic (clinging to the past)" (p. 379).

Emerging Theme: Collaboration. Conzemius and O'Neill (2002) linked to the emerging theme collaboration when they commented on "how educational settings have adhered to community building." During the administrative interviews, Administrator 1 commented "this was the beginning of the collaborative process for our teachers and the first time to with ongoing goals." MRI brought change to how teachers related to one another and accountability for students collectively as a whole grade level. Prior to the MRI program, grade level teams met once or twice a month and by the end of the third year of implementation, grade level teams met at least once a week and sometimes more depending on building level meetings. Collaboration is the key component where the teachers work together to solve problems and establish goals for the good of the students. Further, Conzemius and O'Neill (2002) found "one of the most important things a leader can do is to promote a different vision of leadership where everyone plays a role in improving the success of the school" (p. 13). Within the Sunny Day School District, collaboration held the teachers together during intense times of adjustment to new teaching strategies and approaches.

Emerging Theme: Costs and Funding. Administrative interviews did reflect concern of the how the costs and funding needed to implement the MRI program within the Sunny Day School District. To offset the expenses of a quality professional development plan to support school improvement, government funding was available under specific guidelines to schools qualifying for grants.

A Blueprint for Reform (Duncan et. al., 2010) stated states will receive formula

grants to develop and implement high quality assessments aligned with college

and career ready standards in English language arts and mathematics that

accurately measure student achievement and growth, provide feedback to support

and improve teaching, and measure school success and progress (Duncan et. al.

2010, p. 11).

Within public schools, financial support for reading programs was available or subsidized

by government programs and eligibility is determined according to requirement criteria.

The Sunny Day School District was able to utilize some government and state funding for

the implementation of MRI. Each day the MRI facilitator was present in an elementary

school the cost was approximately $500.00. The everyday running costs for supplies,

assessment kits, and substitute teachers were absorbed through building funds or Title I

Reading funding. Administrator 3 commented about the cost of substitutes "the cost was

about $200.00 every time a teacher walked out of a classroom."

Emerging Theme: Lack of Front-loading. The process of implementing a new

program within an organization requires an adequate amount of prior understanding to be

successful and Vetrivel (2010) stated it well "change is not an event, it is a process

triggered by an event" (p. 23). The lack of front loading was a prevalent situation with

the implementation of the MRI program within the Sunny Day School District. Before

the beginning of the first year, the teaching staff did need more information about what to

expect within the first few months. Administrators did agree the problem of needing the

appropriate supplies such as testing materials, leveled classroom libraries, book boxes,

building leveled book rooms, chart paper, markers, and the furniture to hold small

groups, intensified the need for some kind of prior warning within the Sunny Day School

District. In addition, Vetrivel (2010) found "change has varying degrees of complexity

and that the more complex the change the more difficult it will be to implement" (p. 23).

DuFour et al. (2010) discussed the need to develop a school culture that nurtures an open

mindset and how this helps educators through the process of releasing familiar teaching

patterns and accepting current approaches (p. 210).

Emerging Theme: Achievement. Although assessment did help guide

instruction within the Sunny Day School District, the ANOVA of the MAP Scale scores

did show only a small growth and a positive trend. Clear data provided a starting place

and the school instructional planning began (DuFour et al., 2010, pp. 179-180). The MRI

program put quality assessment tools and instruction how to use the assessments to plan

instruction. Through MRI, the administrators and teachers had a current level of student

performance to begin planning appropriate instruction. In addition, teachers utilized

research based strategies for reading instruction. Duncan et. al, (2010) suggested the link

between achievement and assessment and reported "our proposal will maintain support

for state efforts to improve the quality of their systems and to develop and implement the

upgraded standards and assessments required by the College and Career Ready Students

program" (p. 11). Schmoker (1999) discussed how effective teaching strengthened

student achievement and how this helped bridge the barrier of social economic conditions

(p. 73). The Sunny Day School district did utilize MRI strategies and structures for

effective reading instruction and data collection techniques and statistically the ANOVA

results showed no significant change on year- to- year MAP scores over the five- year

period.

Emerging Themes from Classroom Observations

      The researcher coded the data from the classroom observations the same way as the interviews. Four themes emerged from this process, teacher reading materials, shared reading, small group instruction, and classroom management. In the review of literature within the theory of reading, these four areas were mentions as vital elements for student success. Dorn and Soffos (2001) described the importance of utilizing whole group, small group, and independent reading as a basis for literacy development. Clay (1991) discussed the importance of independent literacy development. The classroom management piece of teaching reading is important and assuring students can read often from a book appropriate for their level. Instilling within students the understanding of the need of reading, and how to process the information is a key principle for success.

      Many basic MRI structures of reading observed during the classroom observations related to the basic premises stated in the theory of reading. The four classroom observations did reflect the use of small group instruction, whole class instruction, and shared reading. These reading structures included individualized lessons customized by reading levels, phonics, word study, assessments inclusive of running records and DRA assessments. Administrator 2 stated "the idea of moving away from whole class lessons to small group instruction based upon student need in terms of level of ability in a way you typically do not see." Administrator 1, "the best elements to me was the fact that it was providing a systematic approach to best practices in the area of reading and writing that really could be carried across all the content areas." Administrator 1added "this was the beginning of the collaborative process for our teachers and the first time to with ongoing goals."

Implications

The current state of education with the emergence of the Common Core State Standards requires administration to provide scientifically research-based instruction in all academic areas. Selecting the best professional development programs to expand the knowledge of educators is a consistent challenge. The current federal pressure of school districts to maintain students who are proficient in all academics areas suggests the necessity for effective programs. The Sunny Day School District needed effective strategies and structures for teaching reading. Also moving away from whole class instruction to small group individualized instruction was a valuable component derived from the MRI program. The MAP assessment scores for the period of implementation of the MRI program within the Sunny Day School District did not have a significant increase from year to year. This lack of increase may have reflected a lagging indicator of a newly implemented program within a large school district. Maintaining the key elements of MRI as a school culture for teaching reading is essential as the district forges ahead with meeting student needs. This program evaluation contributed valuable insight to the implementation process, costs, barriers, and the beneficial elements of the MRI program for prospective school districts. For school districts without a solid plan for how to teach reading, the MRI program is an effective way of receiving the training necessary to bring the level of reading instruction up to current research based standards.

Collecting the observation data was the most rewarding experience of the data collection, since it was exciting to see the program working in various levels of learning. Once the process was fully absorbed, teachers became accustomed to it. The educators began to feel ownership with the MRI teaching strategies after three years and the

personal stories of the teachers changed from negative due to stress to positive results

observed within their classrooms. As a result, teachers no longer questioned why they

could not revert to their old styles of teaching and they began to plan together ways to

incorporate the new strategies. The focus shifted from frustration to celebration of the

successes.

Engage the Stakeholders

Rossi et al. (1999) stated the definition of stakeholders as "individuals, groups, or

organizations having a significant interest in how well a program functions, for instance,

those with decision-making authority over it, funders and sponsors, administrators and

personnel, and clients or intended beneficiaries" (p. 36). The stakeholders of the MRI

program within the Sunny Day School District were the school district administrators,

teachers, students, and parents. How well the program functioned was valuable

information for the district administration since they authorized the funding. Teachers

were concerned with the ability of the MRI program to help them teach reading with high

quality reading methods and the students were the recipients of the MRI reading

structures. The parents were involved with the program effectiveness to help with

reading success through participation of building school improvement meeting required

by the NCLB legislation.

Current Status of the Program

MRI has become the literacy culture of the Sunny Day School District for the past

five years and has broadened to include all of the elementary schools within the Sunny

Day School District. The district wide current MAP scores for grade 3-5 of the Sunny

Day School District do visually show a slight increase over the scores collected for the

post year of MRI implementation. The researcher volunteered to present an overview of

the MRI program to four prospective elementary school teachers within the Sunny Day

School District. These buildings did incorporate the meeting as part of the faculty

meetings and as an additional professional development piece. The researcher designed

and planned the presentation using the MRI manual. Presentations lasted approximately

one and a half hours, and the purpose was to give the teachers a snapshot view of the

program. Included in the presentation was a Power Point along with other visual aids,

such as children's literature, organizational ideas, and recording samples. At the time of

this writing, the Sunny Day School District had implemented the MRI program within the

last three buildings of the district. The goal of the Sunny Day School District is for MRI

to become part of the school culture with all its elementary schools facilitating the

program.

After the large retirement group of directors, administrators, and teachers exited

the district, the challenge of maintaining a vision for the MRI program was difficult. The

issue of quickly training new staff with the components of a program that took three

years to learn is still looming. Another factor is the prospect that information becomes

obsolete even before it is fully absorbed and within the educational arena. Progress,

change, and new ideas continue to adjust beliefs about best approaches for teaching. The

emergence of a new federal mandates and the Common Core State Standards again shifts

the thinking of the correct approaches to teaching content area subjects.

Recommendations for MRI/the Sunny Day School District

According to the teacher survey results of question 7 (your perception of the

Missouri Reading Initiative Program's capability to increase your ability to use high

quality methods of teaching reading), 65% of teachers responded with very satisfied and 32% responded with satisfied. The MAP data did not show a significant change in any one year over the five years (including pre and post years), but this data reflected the beginning stages of a new professional development program implemented with a large suburban school district. The researcher does recommend continued use of MRI within the Sunny Day School District since 97% of the teachers felt the program helped them use high quality methods for teaching reading.

Administrative interviews did reflect a need for implementing a new prior planning or frontloading so participants understand what is expected and get a vision for what is expected. The natural progression of August being the beginning of the year and May as the ending, provoked questions of when to frontload information to assure a smooth transition into the MRI program. The demands were heavy at the front of the academic year, and trying to learn a new program along with keeping track of assessment deadlines can discourage even the most enthusiastic teachers.

The cognitive coaching component utilized within the MRI program was valuable but caused anxiety and resistance the moment it began, but if MRI includes a preparation component prior to beginning of implementing the program, teachers may feel more at ease with this type of evaluation. As stated by all five administrators, the coaching evaluative approach was difficult for many buildings, and some kind of explanation of the process would have been beneficial.

Recommendations for Future Research

Surveys, interviews, observations, and MAP scores reflected MRI had a positive influence on the Sunny Day School District. This program evaluation did reveal some

difficulties of implementation. Further study of how to tailor introductory components to

meet the individual needs of school districts is essential. The lack of frontloading of

information before the MRI program began was a prevalent topic throughout the surveys

and interviews conducted. Another feature consistently present was continuation of the

program over time with the factor of retirements and newly hired staff. Using

assessments like DRA in addition to the MAP data to show multiple indicators of

achievement. As the alignment of district curriculum to Common Core State Standards

becomes the future task, attaining the most effecting reading structures is necessary to

meet the growing demands of academic challenges.

Conclusions

Reading proficiently has long been a focus in academics and the requirements of

the NCLB and the new Common Core State Standards have compelled school districts to

research effective strategies for literacy instruction to maximize student achievement. In

this study, the researcher evaluated MRI by using a triangulation of data to maintain a

complete picture of the implementation process and relate these results to present

literature findings. The researcher completed an extensive review of the literature to

review the reading theories, learning theories, reading programs, organizational change

management, and leading founders of key teaching strategies. The results of the surveys,

observations, and administrator interviews did show a benefit of implementing the MRI

program within the Sunny School District. MRI did instruct teachers on how to use

research based reading structures and how to assess students and plan instruction. In

addition, the MRI program did lead to the collaboration of teachers along with the PLC

program.

Survey results did reflect an increase in teacher's perceptions of reading instruction. On teacher survey question 7 (your perception of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program's capability to increase your ability to use high quality methods of teaching reading) teachers responded with 65% very satisfied, 36% satisfied, 0% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Survey results did suggest MRI was beneficial for assisting teachers with research based instructional strategies. Two z- tests for proportions of the survey results were in the critical range causing the rejection of the null hypotheses. An ANOVA of the MAP scores did not show a significant change in any one year over the five-year period. Before deciding on implementing an extensive reading program similar to MRI, carefully consider the evaluation methods of teachers. Factors not considered in this study, such as evaluative measures (cognitive coaching versus traditional methods), may yield different program implantation results. This program evaluation linked interviews, classroom observations, MAP scale scores, and survey results to evaluate the MRI program effectiveness and implementation process.

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Appendix A

Implementation of Missouri Reading Initiative Program Satisfaction Survey

Directions: Please circle the most appropriate response

1. Quality of training sessions during the implementation of Missouri Reading Initiative

1	2	3	4
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

2. Quality of coaching experiences during the implementation of Missouri Reading

  Initiative

1	2	3	4
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

3. Quality of instructional materials provided by Missouri Reading Initiative

1	2	3	4
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

4. Amount of time necessary between training sessions and classroom implementation to utilize new teaching strategies within the classroom

1	2	3	4
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

5. Overall administrative support of the program

1	2	3	4
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

6. Ability of the Missouri Reading Initiative coach to individually support teachers

1	2	3	4
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

7. Your perception of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program's capability to increase your ability to use high quality methods of teaching reading.

1	2	3	4
Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

8. Highest degree attained

○   Bachelors

○   Masters

○   Specialists

○   Ed. D.

9. Years of teaching experience

○ 1-5 years

○ 6-10 years

○ 10 or more

Appendix B

Letter of Permission to Participate in Research

Dear Research Participant,

Thank you for your consideration of participation in my research study for my dissertation in the Ed. D. Program at Lindenwood University.   I am interviewing and observing Fort Zumwalt personnel including administrators, directors, coordinators, and teachers. My purpose is to discover if there is a relationship between the Missouri Reading Initiative Program and teacher perceived confidence levels for teaching reading. I will include the most effective elements of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program. I will also look for the unexpected barriers of implementation, and the cost effectiveness of the program.

Attached are the questions that I will be asking you. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may stop this interview or leave the room at any time. All data from face –to-face contacts will be presented in collective summative form. If I want to include a direct quote or information that may identify you as the source, I will request written permission
prior to submission.

Best Regards,

Paula S. Roberts

I understand that participation in this research is completely voluntary, and I agree to participate.

_____   _____
Interviewee   Date

_____   _____
Interviewer   Date

Appendix C

Questions for Individual Interviews with Administrators, Directors, and

Coordinators

What were the best elements of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program?

What were the worst elements of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program?

Evaluate the following Missouri Reading Initiative Program processes

      a) Coaching processes

      b) Training procedures

What were the barriers to implementing the Missouri Reading Initiative Program?

Describe the costs associated with implementing the Missouri Reading Initiative

Program?

Discuss the implementations of the Missouri Reading Initiative Program.

If you could change something about the Missouri Reading Initiative Program what would you change?

Appendix D

Classroom Observation Check-List

Date_____   Time_____

Location_____

_____teacher utilizes small group instruction

Notes:

_____teacher utilizes shared reading instruction

Notes:

_____teacher utilizes read alouds in reading instruction

Notes:

_____teacher utilizes leveled reading materials when teaching small group instruction

Notes;

_____teacher provides individualized conferences with reading instruction

Notes:

_____materials used during small group instruction reflect differentiated instruction

Notes:

_____classroom management reflects independent literacy instruction

Notes:

Vitae

Paula S. Roberts currently teaches second grade and serves on the Instructional Advisory Committee for elementary and curriculum writing in math in the Fort Zumwalt School District, in O'Fallon, Missouri. Teaching experiences have included 1-2 regular education, and early childhood special education for a private school. Specific areas of interest are curriculum and assessment, instruction, teaching college level courses, and leadership.

Educational studies have resulted in a Master of Education Degree from Lindenwood University and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Lindenwood University. Missouri teacher certification areas are in early childhood special education, and general education for grades K-6.