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AUTHOR Tilkin, Sandi; Hyle, Adrienne E.
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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a multiple case study of building administrators in a suburban school district in Oklahoma which implemented a unitary system of inclusion of students with disabilities in age-appropriate regular classrooms. The study focused particularly on how administrators developed shared meanings during the change process. Data were collected from five public schools (two elementary, two middle, and one high school) and included direct observation, systematic interviewing, and document reviews. Analysis resulted in identification of themes in the categories of focusing, communicating, and restructuring. Specific practices identified as contributing positively to the inclusion process included modifying assignments, sharing teaching strategies, promoting active student-centered activities, cooperative grouping, peer tutoring, problem solving, and hands on instruction. A cross-site analysis of strategies used by each school was also analyzed in terms of Fullan's (1991) six components for change: (1) vision-building, (2) evolutionary planning, (3) monitoring/problem-coping, (4) initiative-taking and empowerment, (5) staff development and resource assistance, and (6) restructuring. (Contains 24 references.) (DB)

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Running Head: THE CHANGE TO INCLUSION

THE CHANGE TO INCLUSION:
FIVE CASE STUDIES IN ONE DISTRICT

Sandi Tilken, Principal
Jenks West Elementary School
Jenks, Oklahoma

Adrienne E. Hyle, Associate Professor
School of Educational Studies
Oklahoma State University

Paper presented at the 1997 Annual Meeting of the University Council
of Educational Administration, Orlando, FL.

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Abstract

In this multiple case study we examined the development of shared meaning by building level administrators as they implement the unitary system of inclusion of students with disabilities in age appropriate regular classrooms. This purpose was accomplished by: (1) Data collection from five public schools in a suburban school district using direct observation, systematic interviewing, and document reviews; (2) data presentation into focusing, communicating, and restructuring collectively; and (3) data analysis using Fullan's (1991) Change Model.

THE CHANGE TO INCLUSION:
FIVE CASE STUDIES IN ONE DISTRICT

Because of inequalities inherent within a dualistic national educational system (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987) and as a result of *Brown v. Board of Education Topeka, Kansas* (1954), the Education For All Handicapped Children Act (PL-94-142, 1975), and, more recently, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990), court decisions and legislation have mandated restructuring to an inclusive educational system. However, in practice there has been resistance to this mandate for change. In most settings, only titular consideration has been given to the fundamental change of inclusion (Skrtic, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1982; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1994).

One explanation for these conflicting realities could be the underdevelopment of shared meaning, an essential foundation of meaningful change (Fullan, 1991, 1993). Fullan (1991) posits that the building level administrator, as the primary actor in successful change efforts, develops this meaning through involvement in six strategies/activities: visioning, evolutionary planning, initiative-taking and empowering, staff development and assistance, monitoring and problem coping, and restructuring.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, then, was to examine the development of shared meaning by building level administrators as they implemented the unitary system of inclusion of students with disabilities in age appropriate, regular classrooms. This was accomplished by:

* Data collection from five public schools in a suburban school district using direct observation, systematic interviewing, and document reviews.

* Data presentation collectively into the activity categories of focusing, communicating, and restructuring.

* Data analysis using Fullan's (1991) Change Model.

Theoretical Framework

One of the most fundamental problems in education today is that people do not have a clear, coherent sense of meaning about what educational change is for, what it is, and how it proceeds. Thus, there is faddism, superficiality, confusion, failure of change programs, unwarranted and misdirected resistance, and misunderstood reform. (Fullan, 1991, p. 4).

Additionally,

We need to comprehend the dynamics of educational change as a sociopolitical process involving all kinds of individual, classroom, school, local, regional, and national factors at work in interactive ways. Solutions must come from developing a shared meaning. The interface between individual and collective meaning and action in everyday situations is where change stands or falls.

(Fullan, 1991, p. 5).

Fullan (1991) detailed three phases of change: initiation, implementation, and continuation. Initiation comprises the decision to adopt a change, implementation involves putting in place the proposed change, and continuation occurs when the change becomes established practice.

During the initiation phase, clarity of purpose, demonstrated quality, and perceived advantage of the change must be established. While many factors can

influence initiation, the notion of choice was eliminated when the innovation came from outside of the local district through such mandates as PI-94-142 and IDEA. Someone else established the clarity of purpose, the demonstrated quality and the perceived advantage. Inclusion must be adopted, implemented and continued (Fullan, 1991, 1993).

The implementation of inclusion is complex. Administrators must juggle budgets to comply with laws, provide inservice to staff, reassign personnel, modify facilities and deal with parents and the community. For classroom teachers, such a mandate is monumental. They must refocus their teaching philosophy to meet the needs of students with disabilities in regular classrooms, rather than solely relying on pullout programs and other professionals, for many this is the anthesis of their current practice.

During the implementation process, the relevance of the change must be clearly understood, the readiness of faculty and staff must be established, and the necessary resources must be provided (Fullan, 1991). This was accomplished by the building level administrator through vision-building, evolutionary planning and development, initiative-taking and empowerment, resource and assistance mobilization, and problem-coping (Louis & Miles, 1990). Building on the work of Louis and Miles (1990), Fullan (1991) identified a sixth necessary implementation activity, restructuring. For restructuring to be successful, it was critical that administrators provide ongoing inservice opportunities for the staff to understand the need for the desired change and develop shared meaning. for it to gain momentum and be successful.

Complex changes were more likely to be successful if they were implemented incrementally. Creating a pilot program for inclusion in one school would pave the way for similar change in other schools within the district. Changes included delivering essential services to students with disabilities in age appropriate classrooms, phasing in collaborative teaching between general and special education teachers, concentrating resources, and offering staff development experts.

Continuation relied on the extent to which the change was embedded in the organization's structure. Staff ability to sustain the change depended on the building level administrator's assistance and support for staff to sustain the change through ongoing inservice, materials, and resources. Once the change had been identified and its need internalized, it was necessary to be sensitive to problems that could occur and effect the change. Developing a unitary system of education to serve all students created a host of considerations, such as providing time needed to collaborate between regular and special education teachers, securing materials and equipment for adapting curriculum, and hiring additional classroom assistants to support a student and provide the teacher with needed assistance. Other concerns were changes in behaviors and beliefs, taking ownership of students, and having the pressure to become a part of the successful change. It was hoped that the school culture would ultimately change as teachers and other staff modified their beliefs and practices to sustain the change process.

This study examined the implementation phase of inclusion in one school district, focusing particularly on the ways in which administrators developed shared meanings with those who contributed to the change process.

The District

A small suburban school district of 8,500 students with a varied multicultural and socioeconomic school population served as the study site. The sample included two elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, students with and without disabilities, and their parents were interviewed to determine their perceptions about inclusion in their school. Documents related to the processes of inclusion implementation were collected and reviewed. Observations in inclusive classrooms were made at each site.

Physical Plants

While all the sites were located in the same district, their physical appearance and building configurations were very different. All of the sites had student and adult restrooms that were modified or newly built according to ADA regulations.

Osceola Elementary School, a one story building, was the first elementary school in the district and underwent an extensive remodeling approximately 12 years ago. It had the best equipped playground to serve students with disabilities.

Quanah Parker Elementary School was built approximately 15 years ago on wide grassy acreage as a one story, single classroom building with a cafeteria which was also used as a gymnasium. As the student population grew, two additional classroom buildings and a gymnasium were added. Limited playground equipment was available to students with physical disabilities. A special swing large enough to hold a wheel chair was installed on the kindergarten playground. No special equipment was available on either the primary or intermediate playgrounds.

Weatherford Middle School, a one story building, was converted approximately 15 years ago from an upper elementary building to its current middle school status. It shared gymnasium and cafeteria space with Osceola Elementary and Jim Thorpe High School, but it had a separate media center to serve only middle school students.

Wilma Victor Middle School, a two story facility with a separate cafeteria, was located on a large parcel of land several miles from the high school/middle school/elementary complex. As its population grew, a second classroom addition and separate gymnasium were added. An elevator was installed to assist students and staff with physical disabilities.

Jim Thorpe High School was comprised of two large, two story classroom buildings with a separate cafeteria and two gymnasiums to serve over 2400 students. It had a special entry door for wheelchair accessibility. A large, comprehensive media center with state of the art technology, book collections, and printed material allowed high school students to conduct research on a wide range of topics.

Student Populations

Quannah Parker Elementary had approximately 900 students making it twice the size of Osceola Elementary with 450 students. It drew its population from a combination of professional, semi-professional, and blue collar patrons, while Osceola Elementary had a predominantly homogeneous population of low to middle income patrons. Parker had 10 % of its students who required special services as compared to Osceola's 22 % of its students who were identified as students with disabilities requiring special services. Both schools had a small percentage of students from multicultural/ethnic backgrounds.

Wilma Victor Middle School had approximately 1400 students which drew from a student population that was culturally and socioeconomically diverse and offered special services to 10 % of its students. Weatherford Middle School had 700 students from a predominantly homogeneous population with 13 % of its students requiring special services. Weatherford Middle School drew its population from Osceola and Quannah Parker Elementary schools, while Wilma Victor Middle School drew its heterogeneous population from two other large elementary schools. One of the elementary schools was the pilot case study with its multicultural and socioeconomically diverse student body, while the other elementary school drew its students from a predominantly upper middle socioeconomic group of professional families.

Jim Thorpe High School drew its population from Wilma Victor and Weatherford middle schools. The high school offered special services to approximately 225 students out of a total population of 2400 students who were culturally and socioeconomically diverse.

Data Summary

The data collected were consistent with existing literature. Emerging themes resulted in the following categories: focusing, communicating, and restructuring.

Focusing. Focusing strategies involved visioning, planning, collaborating, and empowering. Some administrators carried forth the district mandate for inclusion by establishing school climates that were open and receptive to new ideas and allowed for shared decision making. Others believed students with disabilities belonged at their home site. Some administrators relied on assistant principals and special education teachers to direct the inclusion process. The change to inclusion was formally introduced to parents and other support personnel in the spring prior to

implementing inclusion in the fall at Quannah Parker Elementary. Gena Peal, the regular education teacher, noted this:

An initial inservice with an outside consultant arranged for by the district director of special education provided the impetus to begin collaboration on a small scale.... I do know that one of the best things we did for our staff was to select a full group of teachers from all grade levels-special educators, regular educators to go through a general training and those teachers became trainers of other teachers.... I found that to be very successful.

At Osceola Elementary, the administrator told the special education staff of her vision to accomplish the change to inclusion in the fall and planned with special education teachers in the previous summer. Special educator Lori Osborne described her principal's use of this focusing activity and its impact in the following:

She gave us the opportunity to plan. She gave us time to come up an idea of how we would do an inclusive study. She also gave us a lot of time for faculty input so that everyone was writing together instead of imposing a plan. I think that's why it worked.

Other administrators did not directly communicate a vision for inclusion or did not fully embrace its intent as indicated by Lois Van Asdale, the special educator at Victor Middle School:

Sometimes you run into some administrators who still really don't want to be a part of it.... They still want it to be successful, but they really may not be able to actually relate to the whole idea.

Mr. Turner, principal of Jim Thorpe High School, reported a similar perspective. He explained,

I don't know that inclusion has been a part of what I would call my vision or something that I really had a big role in effecting any type of change.... (It was more of something that has just been a natural outgrowth.

An indirect communication of vision was demonstrated by the Weatherford Middle School administrator, Adrian Warner. At her school she reorganized her grade levels into teams of four with a special education teacher, creating opportunities for collaborative planning and promoting greater student ownership by sharing common goals. This same set of strategies was recognized in the research by Giangereco, Dennis, Cloniger, Edelman, and Schattman (1993). Administrators at some of the sites modified schedules to allow for collaborative planning time for teachers defined in the literature as necessary by Rude and Anderson (1992), while this was not a priority at other sites. Collaborative teaching was handled in ways that were comfortable for general and special education teachers consistent with the research by Wong (1994). Models varied from team teaching using the General Education Model recognized by researchers Simpson and Miles (1990) with each teacher offering direct instruction to the entire classroom, having specialists teach specific groups of identified students with disabilities and low achievers, or having specialists only assist students in classrooms while the classroom teacher offered direct instruction acknowledged in the research by Thousand and Villa (1990).

Empowering teachers was a result of allowing them to give input to determine how students should be served in meeting IEP goals, to serving on policy setting committees, and to feeling they have a significant voice in the inclusion process. Osceola principal Ann Olmstead encouraged collaboration by having monthly meetings to foster brainstorming and stated,

They've been encouraging teachers to say what's working and what's not working and let's put our heads together. It's kind of like an unofficial help team.... We call it "Help."

At Weatherford Middle School, teachers were empowered by having the opportunity to speak freely, express their concerns to the administrator and special educators. They were further empowered by workshops, visits to other schools, and speakers provided teachers with the resources to help them gain the confidence to work with all kinds of students with varying abilities and learning styles. Louise West, the learning specialist, explained,

In the past they weren't empowered in any way other than told they were going to do this. There was no real incentive. Since then, administration has provided an incentive (with) pats on the back and being able to attend workshops if you're interested. We're working together more to be able to have someone else in your room for some hours.

With regard to staff development, the feeling of having adequate training for the introduction to inclusion practices and ongoing training was mixed. Not all of the general education teachers interviewed believed they had adequate training prior to inclusion or ongoing training as it was limited to just a few selected teachers. Limiting the training to just a few teachers was criticized by general education teacher Gwen Vancil from Victor Middle School:

If your school is going to be fully included I should think your whole school should be. You never know when you will have some students.

This same concern was voiced by Grace Thompson, a general education teacher at the high school:

A couple of hours of staff development were given where they pretty well told us what inclusion means. Modifications were expected for those included. There would be a special education teacher to help with students getting included. This concern was most evident at the middle and high schools rather than at the elementary sites. Research by Stainback and Stainback (1982) and Davern and Schnoor (1991) confirmed how important this training component was to making the change to inclusion.

While teachers at some sites believed the district and site administrators provided support for a district-wide philosophy for inclusion, arranged for planning time for staff to collaborate, encouraged and arranged for training on site and off site, and provided information about disabilities as discussed in the research by Van Dyke, Stallings, and Colley (1994), others did not feel they received this same support. They believed students with severe disabilities, particularly behavioral in nature, should not be served in general education classrooms. They did not have the training to deal with disruptive behaviors which affected their classroom learning environment consistent with concerns raised by Shanker (1994). Other teachers who were receptive to inclusion welcomed the support of specialists and believed all students benefitted from the experience.

Communicating. Communicating strategies varied among administrators from conducting formal meetings with staff and patrons to meeting informally in small groups. According to learning disabilities teacher Lori Potts from Quannah Parker Elementary School:

There were two or three meetings dedicated toward inclusion with panel discussions from special education, from regular teachers, giving their input

and that they felt the impact would be. I think in that respect, as far as reaching out and trying to calm some of the parents' concerns these meetings presented inclusion in a good way. As far as communication this to teacher, I can't say there was a lot of input.

In contrast, Page Van Horn, the parent of a Victor Middle School student with disabilities, reported a lack of systematic communication, formal or informal. Of the change to inclusion she noted the following: "I might have heard it from my own daughter yelling 'Mother I get to be in regular classrooms'." She continued,

There's no follow up. We always have the IEP afterwards into the semester.

Somehow, I get the feeling that as a parent, I need to initiate these things.

Informally, other administrators wrote memos, letters, or shared articles pertaining to inclusion as discussed by McCloskey and Clay (1987). IEP meetings at all sites served as a formal means of monitoring student goals with opportunities for parents and teachers to offer input and modify curriculum. At Quanah Parker Elementary School, Pam Pool, parent of student with disabilities, recognized this in the following:

When we do the IEP, you look right on there at what she has done. I don't have to see the IEP to know that. Each day I can tell the difference.

Participants in each of the case studies stated that varying amounts of communicating actually took place at their respective sites. Other communicating involved consultation with special education personnel to determine how much medication would be necessary. Specialists were writing study guides, designing alternative or parallel activities, or administering tests with changes in format and location. A high school parent of a student with disabilities, Patricia Tyne, recognized on this shift to inclusion:

The people no longer sit in their labs. They go into classrooms... they do lesson plans together and adapt it for those kids. (The kids are) out of isolation.

Support was offered in a variety of ways to teachers and students. Stephen Tieg, a student with disabilities from the high school reiterated this change:

They helped with any subject. It is really just whatever you need help on.

There's more help in the classroom. You don't have to wait as long.

Restructuring. Restructuring strategies resulted in changes in pedagogy, curriculum, teacher and student attitudes, and support services. Students were no longer isolated in self-contained classrooms, spending the majority of their time in general education classrooms. At Weatherford Middle School, learning specialist Louise West explained

We either support them by going directly into the classroom and teaching with them.. (We are) bringing expertise, modifying for students, taking students out if need be, and having classes. Whatever needs to be done.

On-site observations confirmed this.

Lab pull out was offered to students who needed a small quiet environment. The amount of time students spent in lab settings was determined by their individual needs indicated by the research of Staub and Peck (1994). Sally Winter, a special education student at Weatherford Middle school agreed of a lab teacher. "I like going to her class because they're smaller and I pay attention." Special education personnel spent more time in classrooms supporting students and team teaching than they did in lab settings, although this varied at the respective sites. A parent of a student with disabilities from Osceola Elementary School, Penny Oakley explained,

They had to look at the special ed teachers in a different way. guess instead of pulling the kids out, they're sending these teachers in for support. The teachers that were learning disability teachers are in the classroom now,... so I think they've had to restructure.

Throughout the district, teachers were feeling more comfortable with having students with disabilities in their classrooms.

Specialists were modifying class assignments, helping students with and without disabilities in a classroom, and sharing teaching strategies with classroom teachers as reported by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1994). Osceola Elementary School principal Ann Olmstead

I've seen a special ed teacher teaching the whole. I've seen it divided into groups. There are just a variety of things where they're working together. There are some situations when it's not appropriate for some of the IEP goals to be met in the classroom. Maybe the student needs a smaller, quieter, more contained environment.

General education teachers used more active, student centered approaches that included problem solving, cooperative learning, and a holistic approach to reading and language arts according to Eichinger and Wortman (1993). Osceola Elementary School student with disability Stuart Owen confirmed these activities at his school:

My teacher gives me special books and papers to make it easier. She also writes something on the board that is messed up and everybody has a chance to use the chalkboard.

Victor Middle School student with disabilities Stephanie Viles reported similar strategies. Her learning disabilities teacher “Mrs. Simons gets us paper that’s carbon copied and Mrs. White gives it to us. They write the overhead notes (for us).”

Technology tools to support learning were being used by all students and included computers with/without adaptors, word processors, and VCR's and camcorders, confirming the research of Friend and Cook (1993) and Jones, Beukelman, and Hiatt (1992). Weatherford Middle School general education teacher George Winger described the following:

Technology's out there, we simply have to use it. I wish we had more of it. One of my special ed kids had a hearing disability (and used) the auditory trainer. We used to have a lot of fun with that. I could actually see the effect of technology on that kid. Technology has a lot to offer. We're not even touching the tip of it yet.

Weatherford Middle School student with disabilities Sally Winter described the following curricular strategies: “They do experiments in science. We use books, worksheets, movies, and a computer for typing.”

Peer tutoring by students without disabilities was encouraged to develop social interaction skills, heightened self-esteem, and consistent academic gains. The student participants at the middle and high schools talked positively about peer support. Stephen Tieg, a high school with disabilities, reported

I think in any classroom someone’s going to understand it better than you are. You ask your friend. You feel kind of embarrassed, but they’ll help you. We have time in class for group work. That’s pretty helpful.

Mrs. Tyne, the parent of a different student with disabilities at the high school, believed teacher should be cautious yet supportive of peer tutoring.

Socially, it can be good and bad. You make sure it's a positive experience.

Kids need to be informed and educated about kids with disabilities. They would now a little more what to do. Sometimes kids can communicate things better to kids than adults.

Research by Thousand and Villa (1990), Murray-Seegert (1989), and Voeltz and Brennan (1983) confirmed the benefits derived from peer tutoring to both students with and without disabilities.

Students also liked having the support of another adult in the classroom to answer questions and get help quickly. This was confirmed by Sheryl Payne, a student with disabilities from Quanah Parker Elementary School when she indicated that "you get more help.. Its much easier cause you go to one of the teachers and ask a question."

Summary. Focusing, communicating, and restructuring strategies used by the administrators in this multiple case study were found to be consistent with the literature. Classroom and lab pull out practices at the various sites, which contributed positively to the inclusion process, were confirmed by research; modifying assignments, sharing teaching strategies, active student centered activities, cooperative grouping, peer tutoring, problem solving, and hands on instruction. Table 1 summarizes the similarities and differences in strategies at the various sites.

Insert Table 1 about here

Analysis

A cross site comparison of the strategies used by each of the site administrators when compared to Fullan's (1991) six components for change resulted in the following analysis.

Vision-building. In the area of vision-building, the administrators at Osceola and Quannah Parker Elementary schools supported the district inclusion policy to bring students with disabilities back to their home sites and included them in regular classrooms to serve their needs. Previously, students at the elementary levels were served at particular sites where programs were housed to serve students with severe disabilities. They remained in the program until reaching middle school age. Osceola Elementary's administrator used shared decision making strategies through her instructional council with regularly scheduled collaboration sessions. She also made time available for special education and general education teachers to collaborate. The administrator at Quannah Parker Elementary had a vision to integrate all students equally and planned with her staff prior to inclusion to accomplish this vision. Formal meetings open to all patrons allowed her to express her vision, with additional meetings for support, special, and general education personnel.

Weatherford Middle School's administrator, Adrian Warner, had a vision to foster inclusion by reorganizing the staff into grade level teams which also included a special education teacher. Yet, Allen Vail, Wilma Victor's Middle School administrator, clarified his vision to carry forth the district policy for inclusion, but chose to limit the process until success was evident. He did not formally communicate the change to inclusion with parents, but did speak to his faculty and reinforced teachers in succeeding meetings. A small group of classroom teachers and

specialists volunteered to engage in inclusion practices, while the remainder of students with disabilities continued to be served by specialists in lab settings or self-contained classrooms.

Jim Thorpe High School's administrator, Andrew Turner, was open and supportive. He sought to establish a positive climate to encourage change, communicating his policies to his staff in grade level and departmental meetings.

Evolutionary Planning. In the area of evolutionary planning, Osceola Elementary's Ann Olmstead provided time for the staff to write goals for inclusion they hoped to accomplish. Quanah Parker Elementary's administrator, Alaina Pearson, conducted several planning meetings for staff and later formed committees to involve parents of students with disabilities to help with placement and determine how to serve students legally and appropriately. Weekly TAG (teacher assisted group) meetings were set aside for each grade level to collaborate and brainstorm solutions for students with special needs. She also communicated formally with parent groups and other school personnel, such as secretaries, teacher assistants, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers.

At Weatherford Middle School, Adrian Warner worked with teachers in small groups to give them opportunities to express their beliefs openly rather than in a more formal situation such as at a building faculty meeting. Wilma Victor Middle School's administrator, Allen Vail, did not exercise preliminary planning and provided limited opportunities for collaboration between teachers. Andrew Turner at Jim Thorpe High School also did not engage in evolutionary planning, but he believed in using the committee process to create policy and establish procedures and supported their decisions.

Monitoring/ Problem-Coping. Monitoring/ problem-coping at Osceola

Elementary was accomplished at collaboration sessions to allow for teacher input to better serve student needs. IEP meetings and monthly teacher support group meetings provided an avenue for two way communication. At Quannah Parker Elementary, weekly collaboration meetings and IEP meetings monitored the services provided to identified students.

Weatherford Middle School's teams of teachers at each grade level met daily to plan and discuss problems that arose with individual students. They also met with parents in IEP meetings to discuss how goals were to be met successfully. Parents were also encouraged to communicate directly with a child's teacher or meet with the entire team if there were concerns to be addressed. Wilma Victor Middle School teachers made themselves available to parents to discuss concerns in addition to information shared at IEP meetings and sent home grade and behavior checklists. Parents were encouraged to contact a child's teacher at any time. Jim Thorpe High School teachers discussed concerns and monitored student progress at IEP meetings. Andrew Turner made himself available to discuss parent concerns and address issues as they occurred, thereby making an effort to resolve them.

Initiative-taking and Empowerment. Initiative-taking and empowerment at Osceola Elementary was accomplished by encouraging and providing staff development and offering them opportunities to make shared decisions. In addition, meetings with teachers one-on-one allowed them to express concerns and offer their opinions to Ann Olmstead. The collaboration time provided also gave teachers opportunities to give input and take ownership of services provided for students with

monthly teacher support group meetings. Quanah Parker Elementary's administrator also empowered her teachers by setting aside time to collaborate.

Weatherford Middle School's administrator also empowered her staff with opportunities to collaborate, and this was similarly provided at Osceola Elementary and Quanah Parker Elementary schools. Weatherford's administrator brought teachers from outside the district who were involved in inclusion. They explained how to provide services at their school. Weatherford's teachers were allowed to make outside visits to other schools to further empower the staff by viewing successful inclusion. Wilma Victor Middle School's administrator did not set aside specific time for collaboration, but relied on special education teachers and assistant principals to be encouraging with their support and positive attitudes. However, inservice opportunities were limited which also limited teacher empowerment and their ability to demonstrate initiative. In contrast, Jim Thorpe High School's administrator encouraged the collaborative efforts between special and general education teachers. He encouraged counselors and assistant principals to work closely with parents to place students. His receptive manner gave teachers opportunities to express themselves and offer ideas for new programs which served to empower them and encouraged risk-taking.

Staff Development and Resource Assistance. Staff development and resource assistance at Osceola Elementary was encouraged by Ann Olmstead. Teachers attended workshops on site and made visits out of the district. Quanah Parker Elementary's administrator, Alaina Pearson, arranged for workshops on site and also encouraged her special and general education staff to attend district workshops and other out of district conferences.

Similarly, Adrian Warner at Weatherford Middle School encouraged her staff to attend workshops on and off site. Allen Vail at Victor Middle School sent some of his staff to workshops if they were to engage in inclusion practices, but attendance was limited to a select few when it initially began. Jim Thorpe High School's Andrew Turner supported and encouraged teachers to receive training if they expressed a need.

Restructuring. Restructuring at Osceola Elementary involved all special education and general education teachers. Students with disabilities were no longer isolated in self contained classrooms. "You see children of all types of disabilities everywhere. There is no isolation," according to Principal Ann Olmstead. Special education teachers were reassigned to certain grade levels to maximize classroom support and were engaged in team teaching with classroom teachers. Students with disabilities were involved in all academic instruction in classrooms and in special area subjects, such as art, music, and physical education as well as extracurricular activities. Some small group lab support was also made available if it was needed.

Restructuring at Quannah Parker Elementary was similar to Osceola Elementary with all students with disabilities included in general classrooms. They were no longer isolated in self contained classrooms or in labs for large blocks of time. A difference at Quannah Parker Elementary was allowing parents to play a significant part in the inclusion process by giving input toward their child's placement. "Letting them come in and visit classrooms ahead of time to see that teacher before that child gets put in the classroom by visiting classrooms. I think they need to be part of the decision making process. They're usually happier and feel somewhat in control," stated a general education teacher. Specialists and paraprofessionals supported

students in general education classrooms and helped teachers modify assignments and help with assessment. In addition to inclusive placement in classrooms, many students also received small group help in lab settings for a portion of their day or for a few days a week, depending on the IEP goals.

Weatherford Middle School also included all students with disabilities in general education classrooms. The core team of teachers included a special education teacher who met daily to plan lessons, discuss concerns, and modify assignments. Special education teachers co-taught for a portion of the day and also worked with identified students in less distracting lab settings on weak academic areas. The teachers described how they learned techniques from one another that could be applied to all learners, not just students with disabilities. Classroom teachers took greater ownership of students with disabilities and communicated more easily with parents. A general education teacher described, "Everybody benefits, inclusion is everybody."

In contrast, inclusion at Wilma Victor Middle School was limited to some students with disabilities and certain specialists who would support them in general education classrooms. Content oriented teachers were assigned to work in teams of four with a designated group of students. The special education teacher who collaborated with them stated, "It enables the teachers to get together and work out any type of problems that they may have or concerns with students because a lot of times they juggle academics." Other specialists and students with disabilities remained in lab or self contained settings. Students were mainstreamed into general education classrooms if their skills were at a level which allowed them to be successful in a particular content area. This was counter to the definition of

inclusion in which students do not have to earn their presence in age appropriate classrooms.

Restructuring at Jim Thorpe High School was also limited. Some special education teachers did a combination of collaborative teaching with classroom teachers by directly supporting students with disabilities in their classrooms and also conducting lab pull out as needed. Several self contained classrooms remained in place to serve students with severe behavioral and/or academic disabilities. Paraprofessionals either remained in self-contained classrooms to offer further assistance to special education teachers or accompanied severely disabled students to their general education classes. Prior to the implementation of inclusion, special education teachers offered to modify and adapt lessons without direct classroom involvement. Students voluntarily sought the help of a special education teacher to study for a test or receive additional help on assignments in a lab setting. Peer tutoring was encouraged and allowed students with disabilities to communicate freely with classmates. This provided help on a level that was easily understood, increased social and emotional skills, and mutually boosted self esteem.

Summary. All six of Fullan's (1991) strategies played a significant part at Osceola Elementary, Quanah Parker Elementary, and Weatherford Middle School. However, a limited number of components were used by administrators at Victor Middle School and Jim Thorpe High School. These two administrators exercised a style of management at their sites which is common for large schools, particularly those at middle and high school levels. They were more prone to delegate responsibility to others. They also did not internalize the district's vision for inclusion

doing the minimum for compliance. Some inclusive practices occurred, but not to the extent it occurred at the elementary levels or other middle school site.

Change was more likely to occur at Quanah Parker Elementary, Osceola Elementary, and Weatherford Middle School since the administrators used strategies that incorporated Fullan's (1991) six components to effect change: vision-building, evolutionary planning, monitoring/problem-coping, staff development and resource assistance, initiative-taking and empowering, and restructuring.

However, the administrator at Jim Thorpe High School had worked through the change process which led to some inclusion opportunities for students relying on assistant principals and specialists. While they used strategies that were linked to some of Fullan's six elements (initiative-taking and empowering, staff development and resource assistance, and monitoring/problem-coping, these were not widely implemented and did not result in broad restructuring.

The staff at Wilma Victor Middle School was struggling with the change to inclusion long after the district issued its mandate for change. The administrator used only one of Fullan's components; monitoring/problem-coping. While the district's goal was to move toward achieving inclusion, he strongly believed it should be limited. Inclusion continued to remain limited to just a few specialists who worked closely with a few general education teachers to accomplish inclusion with collaborative instruction after he left. The majority of the students with disabilities were still served in self-contained programs or classrooms that were subject-oriented with a large concentration of students with disabilities.

While Osceola Elementary, Quanah Parker Elementary, and Weatherford Middle School administrators had accomplished change, a total restructuring from a

dual to a unitary educational process had not occurred. Students were still served in dual capacities of being included in general education and in lab settings. This was probably due to the district's emphasis on providing responsible, but not full inclusion. As a result, each of the sites continued to offer pull out labs and self contained programs as administrators, specialists, and classroom teachers felt they served particular students more appropriately. Collaborative planning was prevalent among staff members at each site, however team teaching was not necessarily a common occurrence.

At two of the sites, Quannah Parker Elementary and Weatherford Middle School, special and general education teachers were team teaching. One taught while the other monitored and assisted students. It was more common for the general education teacher to offer direct instruction, while the specialist assisted students in the classroom or took a small group off to a corner of the room or to another place outside of the classroom. It may have been a question of relinquishing ownership of a general educator's students to a specialist or reluctance on the specialist's part to teach a whole group.

Table 2 presents evidence of Fullan's (with Steigelbauer, 1991) strategies across the study sites.

Insert Table 2 about here

Conclusions

Fullan's (1991) six strategies foster change. To varying degrees, the six components were evident at Quannah Parker Elementary, Osceola Elementary, and Weatherford Middle Schools. Change had occurred and students with disabilities

were included in general education classrooms. Wilma Victor Middle School and Jim Thorpe High School administrators reported the use of few of the six components. And, in these buildings, many students with disabilities remained in self-contained classrooms with few opportunities for inclusion.

According to Fullan (1991), if building level administrators articulated a vision, provided for evolutionary planning, allowed teachers to take the initiative and become empowered, provided staff development and assistance, provided monitoring and problem-coping, restructuring would likely occur. The data revealed two elementary principals and one middle school principal were intimately involved in the process from the beginning. The other middle school principal attempted to carry out the district's vision, but was narrow in his approach and limited chances for restructuring. He believed in achieving some small successes before others would be encouraged to become involved in the inclusion process. The high school principal tended to rely on his assistant principal, counselors, and special education teachers to direct the process. While he was receptive and supportive of inclusion and believed it was good for students with and without disabilities, he remained in the background of the process at his site. Consequently, inclusion was also limited.

While it was no surprise that the high school administrator who was responsible for 2200 students would delegate authority to others to accomplish a goal, it was interesting to find two middle school administrators whose leadership styles were so different. Fullan's (1991) six components were used by Weatherford's administrator in her leadership practices, while Wilma Victor's administrator used only one of Fullan's (1991) suggested components and accomplished little change.

It is evident from our findings that Fullan's (1991) six strategies were not enough to cause major restructuring. Other key factors were embedded in Fullan (1991) six components for change. Vision had to be communicated. Quanah Parker's administrator formally communicated a vision for inclusion to teachers, support staff, and parents, while the remaining four administrators only communicated informally with teachers and parents. Written communication to the community followed after the initial efforts had begun. Only Quanah Parker, Osceola, and Weatherford's administrators engaged in evolutionary planning to carry forth the district mandate for inclusion prior to the beginning of school. Wilma Victor and Jim Thorpe's administrators dealt with inclusion as the school year began with no previous planning.

While staff development and initiative-taking were encouraged for all teachers by the four of the five administrators, it was the exception at Wilma Victor Middle School. Only a limited number of teachers were given staff development opportunities or became empowered through initiative-taking. Yet, there appeared to be a collaborative working environment at all of the sites with teachers working in pairs or on teams. Teachers were comfortable seeking information and sharing it with colleagues. Informant responses displayed a sense of confidence in themselves to meet student needs.

Administrators helped teachers facilitate change when teachers had the opportunity to interact with each other and had technical help according to Fullan (1991). The administrators who provided teachers with time for collaboration, brought in outside experts, met with teachers who had experienced success with inclusion, and encouraged staff development through workshops, conferences, and

outside visits to other districts would have teachers who were more likely to be positive and internalize the change through these interactions. By working with colleagues, teachers were more likely to trust and value what they did according to Fullan (1991). He believed teachers who worked with others and shared common experiences contributed to improved practices, positively affecting students with and without disabilities. There appeared to be greater opportunities at Quanah Parker Elementary, Osceola Elementary, and Weatherford Middle Schools for trust building as administrators promoted these engaging, interactive practices. These opportunities were somewhat limited at both Wilma Victor Middle School and Jim Thorpe High School.

Special educators played a significant role in assisting administrators who were actively engaged in initiating a change to inclusion. They understood how to create a classroom atmosphere that was child-oriented and conducive to meeting individual needs, used strategies to remediate weaknesses, fostered peer tutoring, collaborated with others in team settings, and monitored individual progress. The two sites that did not make significant strides toward the inclusion process did not use these resources to their maximum potential, Wilma Victor Middle School and Jim Thorpe High School.

Other variables could have affected the administrators' role in implementing the inclusion process. While the district mandate was given to each of the administrators to implement inclusion based upon a belief that inclusion was right for students with disabilities, each of the site administrators were dealing with many variables: administrator's professional priorities, teachers' comfort level regarding students with disabilities, organizational structure, physical plant, staffing patterns,

and student population. When Quannah Parker, Osceola, and Weatherford's administrators internalized the district mandate for inclusion to serve students with disabilities in general education classrooms, inclusion became a priority. They got directly involved to make change happen. Their positive practices contributed to positive change. Wilma Victor Middle School and Jim Thorpe High School administrators did not internalize inclusion or make that change a priority. Their teachers reacted accordingly. As site-based management allowed all of these administrators to direct the budget process, administrative priority directed how they would react to the increased need for materials/equipment, seeking additional special educators and paraprofessionals, or providing for staff development which would impact instruction.

Summary

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study:

1) When a school district responds to a federal mandate such as IDEA (1991), it was assumed that building level administrators would internalize the meaning of the mandate and act accordingly to initiate activities leading to the development of shared meaning which supports responsible inclusion as they believed it should be implemented.

2) Good administrative practices contribute positively to change. Building level administrators need to be mindful of what they do to develop shared meaning and mindful of what those working for them do on their behalf. Not all building level administrators implement the same district's vision or mandate and direct their staff to implement or accomplish this task in the same manner. Different, and possibly

ignorant, knowledge of inclusion practices affects their beliefs and values impacting how they direct the change process through development of shared meaning.

3) Specialists provide the needed support, in this case for students with disabilities as suggested by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1994), regardless of an administrator's vision or judgment. Specialists make good things happen according to their training and teaching philosophies.

4) Unknowingly, some administrators and some special educators engage in some or all of the strategies Fullan (1991) believes are necessary for the development of shared meaning for change: vision-building, evolutionary planning, monitoring/problem-coping, initiative-taking and empowerment, and staff development and resource assistance to facilitate change.

5) With the PL 94-142 (1975) and IDEA (1990) mandates, the federal government has not been successful in providing a system of education with services to meet individual needs appropriately, thus moving from a dual system to one that is more unitary. There is still one system for students with disabilities and another for students without disabilities.

Implications and Recommendations

Implications and recommendations are clustered into three categories: theory, research and practice.

Theory

Fullan's (1991) posited change within schools was more likely to happen if principals led the way to changing the structure and culture of a school. If the process were left to others, it could not happen. From this study we found two critical elements: Principals should have the knowledge and conception of the change

process, and principals should be familiar with the content of the change. Change was more likely to occur if principals had a vision, engaged in planning, and were effective communicators.

We also found that broad-based change from federal or state levels was more difficult to implement successfully than from local levels. According to Fullan (1991), change should occur within the organization and a shared sense of meaning needed to be created by the principal as leader of the organization. Principals who better understood the content of the change, believed in its integrity, and internalized what was necessary for its accomplishment were more successful. Those principals who got directly involved took steps to help their staff move forward in the change process. In so doing, they also exercised sound administrative practices.

Research

We documented focusing, communicating, and restructuring activities throughout at sites in this study. Visioning, planning, collaborating, and empowering strategies tied to focusing helped teachers and other staff members to move forward in the inclusion process. Preliminary and ongoing training were essential for teachers to adopt positive attitudes in working with students with disabilities placed in new situations. We found that an organization seeking change would be more likely to be successful if these focusing strategies were implemented.

Communicating, whether formal or informal, appeared to be critical in keeping those involved in knowing what was expected. Directives flowed to and between those individuals in the organization who were essential to the change process. Monitoring and problem-coping were enhanced by exchanging ideas. A breakdown in

communication would have prevented certain practices from occurring and could have negatively impacted the persons involved from reaching their expectations for students.

Restructuring strategies were a direct result of focusing and communicating. Changes in support, placement of students, pedagogy, and curriculum occurred as teachers worked closely with colleagues and administrators. Those administrators who internalized the change and made it a priority had greater success in accomplishing the change to inclusion.

Change in this multiple case study was federally mandated. Future research might examine the diversity of focusing, communication and restructuring strategies designed to foster mandated change across different contexts. It would also be interesting to examine changes in these strategies when voluntary changes were implemented. Also, three of the principals were female and used more of Fullan strategies than their male counterparts. Does this pattern exist in other contexts? And, in what ways does the fact that these women served as elementary and middle school administrators impact change? In other words, can change strategies be more easily implemented at less typically hierarchical institutions? And, in what other ways might gender play a part in fostering change?

Practice

Three of the five administrators in this case study were including students with disabilities in their classrooms throughout their schools and had internalized the six components for successful change proposed by Fullan (1991). The other two administrators had not used all six components, but had established some inclusion practices. Fullan (1991) believed principals within the same system would work with

change or avoid it. Understanding the meaning of the change process affected how it was implemented. Some principals looked for blockages, while others seek solutions. However, those principals who encouraged and supported teachers to engage in training and created the conditions to help teachers bypass obstacles, accomplished change at those sites. Teachers needed principal and collegial support which they received in planning sessions and in collaborative teaching. Such support from principals or teachers was limited at Wilma Victor Middle School or Jim Thorpe High School.

As this research focused across elementary, middle school, and high schools, future research could target each of these three school structures independently to determine if change were more easily accomplished at one level than at another. Middle and high school administrators appeared to have a different focus than the elementary, probably due to the age of their student population. Yet, the two middle school principals operated quite differently. One principal took a hands on approach and became involved in planning. She also encouraged her staff to be involved and supportive of students and each other. The other principal made assumptions that his teachers would be reluctant to make the change to inclusion. He was less involved and stepped back without directing the process. He offered little encouragement and let others took the responsibility. Future research might examine this difference in strategies?

Jim Thorpe High School's administrator took a different posture at his school. He chose to create a climate for change by being receptive to others. As high school teachers were content focused, they did not integrate curriculum into other areas with colleagues who taught other subjects. They did not emphasize hands on

learning, but relied heavily on a lecture and textbook format. Restructuring at this level to include students with disabilities might be tied to pedagogical theories of how to educate older students. As a leader of high school teachers, he might have also keyed into these practices and was not willing to risk making major shifts in attitudes as well as in practices.

Inclusive education for all students posed a need for administrators and teachers to become more knowledgeable about instructional practices that benefitted all students. Creating opportunities for ongoing training and collaboration through staff development was critical to the process. The more comfortable teachers became with instructional practices that met all students' needs, attitudes toward this mandated change to inclusion became more positive. Just as teachers need continuous staff development, so do administrators. They would be better equipped to encourage teachers to internalize change.

Commentary

Prior to this project, we were not entirely convinced that principals were the key to achieving a successful change to inclusion and restructuring the educational system from a dual to unitary focus based on Fullan's (1991) change theory. As the data began to illustrate ways in which Fullan's (1991) six components for change led to more successful inclusion at individual sites, it also became clear that principals could not achieve this change alone. They would need the support and cooperation of all school personnel. Yet, significant roadblocks had been created. As court decisions impacted school districts to educate students with disabilities, funding had not flowed adequately from the state or federal levels to local levels where the responsibility for their education rested.

Another issue related to funding was serving identified students who had difficult behaviors or were medically fragile. Students with major medical disabilities may be so severe that they could not function adequately in a general education classroom even with special equipment and require the additional support of paraprofessionals or nursing assistance. This requires hiring more personnel. While inclusion was appropriate for the majority of students with disabilities, there were students who could not benefit and needed to be served in special classrooms. That was an issue that needed to be addressed with guidelines stemming from the federal and/or state levels.

Consistent with the literature, we found there were staff members who were in favor of inclusion and reached out to maximize what could be accomplished. There were also those who questioned its effectiveness with regard to cost, a drain on staff energy, limited time to plan and collaborate, a lack of needed professional and paraprofessional support, and limited material resources as reported by Fuchs and Fuchs (1995).

According to Fullan (1991), change is multidimensional. New curricular strategies and materials, new teaching approaches, and an alteration of beliefs must occur for true change in practice. Teachers who adopted new strategies and used new teaching approaches that were implemented as a district goal for all students helped to effect change. However, an alteration of beliefs or change in attitudes was not apparent throughout the sites. Survey results which were made available to all staff members revealed inconsistencies in training, collaboration time, modification of materials, and a negative feeling with having to deal with overwhelming behavioral problems related to students with disabilities.

Monitoring/problem-coping strategies were developed to achieve a feeling of ownership by creating a district-wide task force to represent all constituencies as reported by Sailor, Anderson, Halvoren, Filler, Doering, and Getz (1989). Such a task force was created by the district special education coordinator prior to the district policy of implementing inclusion. The task force consisted of general and special education teachers, parents, and an administrator. The committee's goal was to assess the inclusion process throughout the district. Each site administrator was encouraged to serve on their site inclusion committee and lend support to its members which included special and general education teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents. This committee was responsible for creating site action plans.

Yet, in spite of some negative attitudes, inclusion in this district continued to make strides since its inception four years ago. Overall, teachers, parents, and students were positive about the inclusion process and hopeful it would continue to gain momentum. They felt much progress had been made in the last few years, but there was a need for continued effort to make everyone comfortable with the process.

Responsible inclusion with a continuum of services could lead to a sound educational system for all students to thrive and respect individual differences. To accomplish these goals, a supportive environment and strong leadership should prevail for those are responsible for initiating and implementing change. Lawmakers who set policy need to be constantly reminded of the problems that could exist when broad based mandates would be subjected to many different interpretations by individual school leaders.

Table 1

Summary of Focusing, Communicating and Restructuring Strategies

<u>Strategies</u>	Osceola Elementary School	Quanah Parker Elementary School	Weatherford Middle School	Wilma Victor Middle School	Jim Thorpe High School
<u>Focusing</u>					
Visioning	X	X	X	---	---
Collaborating	X	X	X	X	---
Planning	X	X	X	---	---
Empowering	X	X	X	---	X
<u>Communicating</u>					
Informal	X	X	X	X	X
Formal	---	X	---	---	---
<u>Restructuring</u>					
Student Placement	X	X	X	---	---
Support	X	X	X	---	X
Pedagogy	X	X	X	---	X
Curriculum	X	X	X	---	X

Table 2

Summary of Administrative Strategies

<u>Strategies</u>	Osceola Elementary School	Quanah Parker Elementary School	Weatherford Middle School	Wilma Victor Middle School	Jim Thorpe High School
<u>Vision Building</u>	X	X	X	---	---
<u>Evolutionary Planning</u>	X	X	X	---	---
<u>Monitoring/ Problem Coping</u>	X	X	X	X	X
<u>Initiative Taking/ Empowerment</u>	X	X	X	---	X
<u>Staff Development/ Resource Assistance</u>	X	X	X	---	X
<u>Restructuring</u>	X	X	X	---	---

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	Organization/Address: Oklahoma State University Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-0146	Telephone: (918) 252-7386	FAX: OSU
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