Understanding Teachers' Concerns about Implementing Response to Intervention (RTI): Practical Implications for Educational Leaders

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Author Note

Perri Murdica is a doctoral student in the University of Hartford, Department of Educational Leadership's Doctoral Program. Under Dr. LaRocco's direct guidance, Perri assisted with the study design and data collection. It must be noted that Perri is employed at the Connecticut State Department of Education. She was not involved in any way in providing technical assistance to either of the schools in this investigation or in evaluating teachers or the grant. She had no authority over or responsibilities associated with the schools or participants in this study.

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Abstract

The *Concerns-Based Adoption Model* (Hall & Hord, 2006) is one tool educational leaders can use to understand the process of change and teachers' stage-related concerns when implementing innovations. This paper presents select findings from a comparative case study of two urban elementary schools in which changes in teachers' reports of their level of concern regarding implementation of response to intervention were examined over time. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2008) was administered to study participants twice: at the beginning and at the end of the school year.

Background and Rationale

Public policies that aim to improve the quality of education in our schools often bring change and the need to implement innovations not only at the organizational level but also at the individual teacher level. Observers of the change process (Fullan, 1985; Hall & Hord, 2006; Hord, Rutherford, Huling, & Hall, 2006) have long contended that educational leaders must understand that the adoption and successful implementation of any innovation begins at the individual level. The response to intervention (RTI) provision of the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA; 2004) is such a policy and innovation.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; 2002) codified the importance of using scientifically-based research as the foundation for education programs and for classroom instruction so that all children and youth might achieve academically. It underlined a national sense of urgency to change the status quo in education and ensure that classroom teachers use instructional practices and strategies that research has proven to be effective in meeting the needs of the country's diverse student population. The reauthorization of IDEA (2004) incorporated the use of scientifically research-based interventions (SRBI) and brought RTI to the forefront as an alternative to the traditional approach of identifying students with learning disabilities. In addition to using aptitude-achievement discrepancy formulas, states and school districts may now use methods that determine whether a child responds to SRBI (i.e., responds to intervention) as part of the evaluation procedure.

RTI is a multi-tiered assessment and intervention process that brings together the resources of general and special education to afford SRBI to all students, while incorporating prevention measures for students who might otherwise require increasingly more intensive interventions. Although there is no single best RTI model, the practice ordinarily involves

teachers' providing students with high quality instruction or interventions (i.e., scientific, research-based) matched to students' needs. Teachers monitor students' learning rates over time and levels of performance to make important decisions about instruction (Griffiths, Parson, Burns, VanDerHeyden, & Tilly, 2007).

No matter the RTI model adopted, individual teachers, notably general educators, have primary responsibility for intervening in tiers one and two. To do so with success, teachers must embrace RTI, examine whether they are using research-based practices, and likely modify their teaching. The need to change current thinking and practice, as is necessary in implementing RTI, will likely elicit concerns, anxiety, and uncertainty. To support and promote fidelity of implementation of RTI, educational leaders would do well to assess and examine teachers' concerns to identify appropriate actions or interventions to assist them. Many authors have provided guidance concerning how educational leaders should support teachers when implementing change (Fullan, 2008; Hall & Hord, 2006; Wagner et al., 2006). Yet, there seems to be little, if any research, specifically examining teachers' concerns about implementing RTI.

In this paper, we present select findings from two urban elementary schools in which changes in teachers' reports of their level of concern regarding implementation of RTI in their classrooms were examined. The data were collected as part of a larger study that aimed to understand the relationship between teachers' reports of their level of concern and their reports of the schools as professional learning communities. Teachers in each school completed the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoC-Q; George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2008) twice, early fall 2008 and late spring 2009. Specifically, we will present and discuss the results of the Soc-Q and conclude with implications for education leaders.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this aspect of the larger investigation was Hall and Hord's (2006) *Concerns-Based Adoption Model* (CBAM). The CBAM is a practical, evidence-based (Anderson, 1997) model focused on describing, measuring, and explaining the process of change experienced by both individuals and groups of educators attempting to implement an innovation.

The model, as described by Hord et al. (2006), places particular emphasis on the diverse and unique meanings that individuals assign to change and acknowledges that implementing any innovation is a highly personal experience. At the same time, it is understood generally that most individuals go through predictable stages, each of which is characterized by questions and concerns about the innovation as it unfolds. An innovation is something that is new to the individual and can comprise beliefs, understandings, behaviors, materials, instructional strategies, a curriculum, or a program. Concerns, according to Hall and Hord (2006), are not necessarily fears, anxieties, or worries, but rather "the composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought, and consideration given to a particular issue or task" (p. 138).

The CBAM (Hall & Hord 2006) encompasses several elements that serve to interact dynamically as change unfolds. They are the external environment (e.g., federal, state, and local policies), the culture of the organization, the resource system, the change facilitator, the consistent use of probes (i.e., ongoing diagnosis), and the systematic implementation of tailored interventions. The model also includes three diagnostic dimensions: (a) Stages of Concern (SoC), Levels of Use (LoU), and Innovation Configurations (IC). SoC comprises seven developmental stages of concern that cluster into three areas, self, task, and impact (Hord et al. 2006). LoU covers six characterizations of distinctly different observable, patterns of individual

behavior related to using the innovation. Finally, IC, or IC Maps depict a continuum of ways in which individuals might operationalize the components and dimensions of an innovation.

The change facilitator is the individual who has responsibility for overseeing the innovation, building a supportive context, and helping individuals (Hall & Hord, 2006). While this is quite often the principal, Hall and Hord (2006) suggest that the "optimal arrangement for an organization is to have a leadership team" (p. 269). In the CBAM, the team would use both informal and formal tools to gather diagnostic information about how they might use resources and intervene to support individuals as they implement the innovation. More specifically, diagnosis would include: administering the SoC Questionnaire (George et al., 2008) to understand individual concerns related to the change process, developing LoU (Hall, Dirksen, & George, 2008) profiles to determine what individuals or groups are doing related to the innovation, and constructing and using IC maps to document and assess fidelity of implementation (Hord, Stiegelbauer, Hall, & George, 2008). The focus of this paper is urban elementary school teachers' concerns about scaling-up RTI and the SoC dimension of the CBAM (Hall & Hord, 2006) served to define the variables. Table 1 depicts the stages and typical expressions of concern related to an innovation.

Table 1

Stages of Concern: Typical Expressions of Concern about the Innovation

	Stages of Concern	Expressions of Concern
IMPACT	6 Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5 Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other instructors are doing.
	4 Consequences	How is my use affecting kids?
TASK	3 Management	I seem to spending all of my time getting materials ready.
SELF	2 Personal	How will using it affect me?
	1 Informational	I would like to know more about it.
	0 Awareness	I am not concerned about it (the innovation).

Note: From *Taking Charge of Change*, by S. M. Hord, W. L., Rutherford, L., Huling, and G. E. Hall, 2006, p. 31. Copyright 2006 by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Used with permission.

Method

Context for the Study

Educational leaders in Connecticut have embraced the principles of RTI and developed an SRBI framework, with the aim of improving education for all students and addressing the disparities in student achievement (Connecticut State Department of Education [CSDE], 2008). In collaboration, the Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE) and the State Education Resource Center (SERC) provided a small competitive grant to several schools to develop a school specific RTI framework and scale-up SRBI implementation (hereinafter referred to as

RTI grant). Each school that applied was required to demonstrate their readiness to address the challenges of implementing RTI, within SRBI. To be eligible, a school had to be currently involved in some aspect of the foundational work known to be important in such a framework (e.g., early intervention, positive behavior supports, data-driven decision making). The final criterion was a validation site visit to confirm or disconfirm the evidence cited in the school's application. The selection process included a school walkthrough, classroom observations, and staff interviews. Six schools received monies from the CSDE, and technical assistance (TA) from SERC in the form of consultants who were to work with staff to develop an implementation plan for SRBI.

We determined that the RTI grant initiative presented an opportunity to address the gap in the literature and investigate teacher concerns about scaling-up RTI. We contacted two principals of urban elementary schools (i.e., School A and School B) that had received the RTI grants and they granted access to their schools. Other than administering surveys to school personnel and providing principals with summary reports of the data collected, we have had no other involvement with the school personnel or implementation of the grants. Hereinafter we will use the terms school personnel, teachers, and professional staff interchangeably.

Instrument

The SoC-Q (George et al., 2008) is a 39-item self-administered, questionnaire that was designed to measure concerns associated with educational innovations. We requested and received permission to use the instrument. The first 35 items are in the form of statements that describe concerns that a respondent might have about their involvement in the listed innovation (e.g., implementing RTI). Respondents are asked to read each statement and consider the degree

to which the statement reflects their level of concern regarding the listed innovation. Then, they are to circle the number on a seven-point Likert-scale that best represents their concern. The response scale has four statements: 0 = "*This statement is irrelevant to me*", 1 or 2 = "*This statement is not true of me now*", 3 or 4 = "*This statement is somewhat true of me now*", and 5, 6, or 7 = "*This statement is very true of me at this time*". The SoC-Q also has four items that ask respondents to indicate: (a) how long they have been involved with the innovation; (b) whether they consider themselves to be a *non-user, novice, intermediate old hand,* or *past user*; (c) if they have received training concerning the innovation; and (d) if they are in the first or second year of the innovation. According to Hall and Hord (2006), the SoC-Q has "strong reliability estimates (test/retest reliabilities range from .65 to .86) and internal consistency (alpha-coefficients range from .64 to.83)" (p. 147).

Survey Administration

We received approval from the University's Human Subject Committee to conduct the investigation. By design, and to protect participant confidentiality, we coded the questionnaires with unique numerical identifiers so we could pair individual responses from the fall and spring administrations during data analysis. No personally identifiable information was collected. For each administration of the survey, teachers received packets (i.e., envelopes) labeled with their names and a unique numerical identifier. Packets contained personalized study materials—the informed consent form and copies of questionnaires labeled with a unique numerical identifier. During each administration, we explained the purpose of the study, that questionnaires had been coded so we could match responses for the sole purpose of data analysis, and that participation was voluntary. Teachers were asked not to place their names or the names of their school on the

survey. We requested that teachers review the study materials and return the questionnaires, whether or not they chose to complete the questionnaires, and place them in a box at the front of the room.

In the early fall of 2008, we administered the SoC-Q (George et al., 2008) to all teachers present at a faculty meeting at each of the schools and collected some basic information about the characteristics of the teachers. At School A, 17 teachers completed and returned the questionnaire. One did not provide demographic information. At School B, 21 teachers returned completed questionnaires; all of them provided demographic information.

In the late spring of 2009, the second author administered the Soc-Q to all teachers present at a faculty meeting at each of the schools. Seventeen teachers from School A and 25 teachers from School B returned completed questionnaires. In the case of School B, we are only reporting the data for a matched sample of 21 teachers (i.e., teachers who completed surveys in the fall and the spring). We must report that, oddly, during the spring 2009 administration at School A seven of the teachers peeled the coded labels off the questionnaires. We have no real insights into why they might have done so. What we do know, because we had placed teachers' names on the envelopes, is they were the 17 teachers who had participated in the fall administration.

Sample Description

School A and School B are located in the same urban district. Similar to other urban elementary schools in the state, each is comprised of Kindergarten through fifth grade. In the fall of 2008, School A had 18 professional staff (e.g., teachers, counselors, psychologists) and 294 students, of whom 72.4 % received free and reduced-price lunch. School B had 30 professional staff and 374 students, of whom 70.9% received free and reduced-price lunch.

Table 2 contains information about teachers in School A (who provided demographic information) and the matched sample of 21 teachers from School B. Nearly all of the participants at each school held at least a masters degree as the highest education level attained. Likewise, about two thirds of the participants at each school were general education teachers. In School A, participants' teaching experience ranged from 2 to 32 years (M = 11.69, SD = 7.80), with 68.8% having taught there for six or more years. In School B, participants' teaching experience ranged from 1-month to 34 years (M = 14.95, SD = 9.63), with 60.0% having taught there for five or fewer years.

Table 2

Teacher Characteristics

Characteristic	School A		School B	
	n	%	*n*	%
Highest Level of Education	(*n* = 16)		(*n* = 21)	
Bachelor's Degree			2	9.5
Master's Degree	7	43.8	12	57.1
Sixth Year Certificate	8	50.0	3	14.3
Doctoral Degree			1	4.8
Other	1	6.3		
Position	(*n* = 16)		(*n* = 21)	
General Education	11	68.8	14	66.7
Special Education	3	18.8	3	14.3
Other	2	12.5	4	19.0
Years of Teaching Experience	(*n* = 16)		(*n* = 20)	
5 or fewer years	1	6.3	4	20.0
6 - 20 years	11	68.8	11	55.5
21 or more years	4	25.0	5	25.0
Years at the School	(*n* = 16)		(*n* = 20)	
5 or fewer years	5	31.3	12	60.0
6 - 20 years	8	50.0	8	40.0
21 or more years	3	18.8		

Data Analysis

The second author entered the data into SPSS® 16.0 for Windows®. The first author employed two methods to analyze the data. The SoC-Q (George et al., 2008) is packaged with its own Microsoft Excel ® scoring program. For each school and each administration, data were imported into Microsoft Excel ® and cleaned. For individuals and each school (i.e., group) raw total scores for each of the seven stages, percentiles, and charts were produced. SPSS® was used to obtain descriptive and inferential statistics for each school and to make within and across school comparisons.

Presentation and Discussion of Results

George et al. (2008) suggested that examination of SoC-Q data be done with the aim of establishing a holistic picture and definitions of the stages at hand. With that in mind, we present select results and discuss them in chronological order, fall then spring. We begin the presentation of results for each administration with a cross-school comparison of the SoC-Q profiles. We chose this approach because the school profiles were relatively similar; and each school was in the beginning stages of implementing RTI. Then, within the presentation of results from each administration, we briefly present data for each school. We make comparisons to each school's respective fall data as we present the spring results.

Fall Administration

Comparison of Schools A and B. Figure 1 contains a depiction of the relative intensity of concern in percentiles, arrayed by stage of concern for all participants in the fall administration of the SoC-Q (George et al., 2008) for both schools. George et al. (2008) stated that percentiles for nonuser's concerns are ordinarily "highest at Stages 0, 1, and 2 and lowest on Stages 4, 5, and 6" (p. 37). The authors also suggested that scores that are within one or two points of each other are essentially tied.

As might be expected, data analysis from the fall administrations revealed profiles for each school that were typical and suggestive of a nonuser profile for an innovation that has been introduced recently, as was the case with RTI. The patterns of the profiles for each school are somewhat similar, and a *t*-test for independent samples revealed no significant between group differences in mean scores for any of the stages of concern. Both school profiles evidence the highest stage of concern as Stage 0, Unconcerned and the lowest as Stage 4, Consequences. The

higher Stage 0 percentiles are suggestive of individuals who have other tasks, activities, or initiatives that are of concern. The lower Stage 4 percentiles indicate relatively little concern about the effects of RTI, at the time. Anecdotal information gathered from each principal provided confirmation that teachers at both schools were involved in implementing several relatively new initiatives (e.g., data teams, professional learning communities).

School A. The analysis of fall data for School A participants (N = 17) indicates the highest stage of concern was Stage 0, Unconcerned, at the 91st percentile. The second highest stage of concern was Stage 2, Personal, at the 85th percentile, followed by Stage 1, Informational, at the 84th percentile. The lowest relative intensity of respondents' stage of concern was Consequences, at the 27th percentile. The tailing up of Stage 6, according to George et al. (2008), might suggest that individuals have ideas "about how to do things differently. These ideas may be positive, but are more likely to be negative toward the innovation" (p. 54).

Fourteen of the School A participants reported that had never been involved in RTI, not counting that first year. Nearly all of them reported they considered themselves either a non-user (n = 4, 23.5%) or a novice (n = 12, 70.6%) in their use of RTI. Finally, nine (60.0%) of the School A participants reported that they had never had training about RTI.

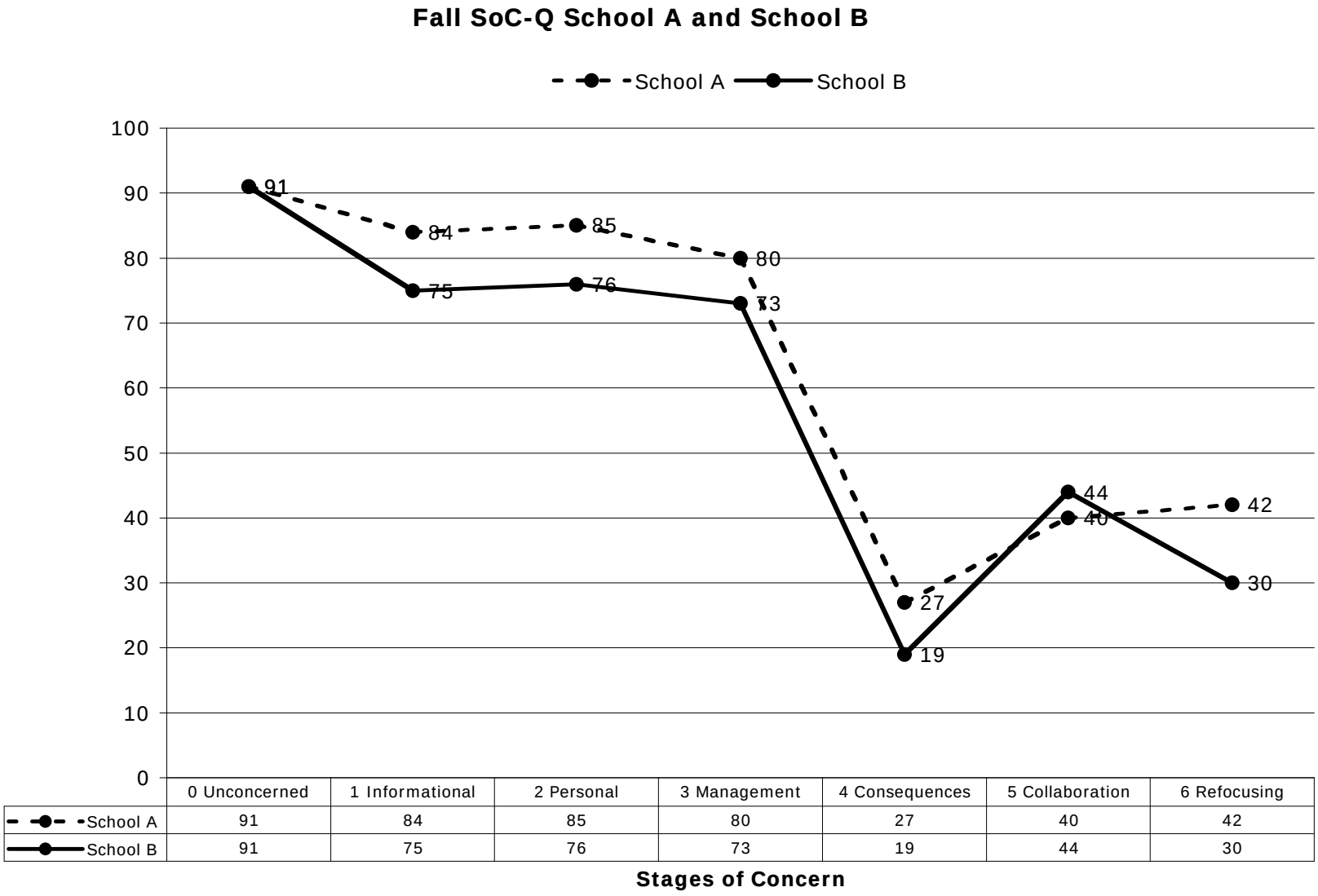

Figure 1. Relative intensity of group percentiles for School A and School B arrayed by stage of concern for fall administration.

School B. The analysis of the fall data from School B participants ($N = 21$) indicates the highest stage of concern was Stage 0, Unconcerned, at the 91st percentile. The second highest stage of concern was Stage 1, Personal, at the 76th percentile, essentially tied with Stage 2, Informational, at the 75th percentile. The lowest relative intensity of respondents' stage of concern was Consequences, at the 19th percentile. The peak at Stage 5 along with the relatively high Stage 1 percentile suggests that individuals at School B were interested in learning from and working with their colleagues in coordinating the use of RTI (George et al., 2008, p. 54).

Fourteen of the School B participants reported that had never been involved in RTI, not counting that first year. Slightly more than 70% of them reported they considered themselves either a non-user ($n = 10$, 47.6%) or a novice ($n = 5$, 23.8%) in their use of RTI. Finally, 13 (61.9%) of the School B participants reported that they had never had training about RTI.

Spring Administration and the Relationship to the Fall Results

Comparison of Schools A and B. Figure 2 contains a depiction of the relative intensity of concern in percentiles, arrayed by stage of concern for all participants in the spring administration of the SoC-Q (George et al., 2008) for both schools. For the most part, the spring data analysis revealed profiles for each school that George et al. (2008) characterized as "a '*negative* one-two split', [which] occurs when the Stage 2 score is higher than the Stage 1 score" (p. 40), as can be seen in Figure 2.

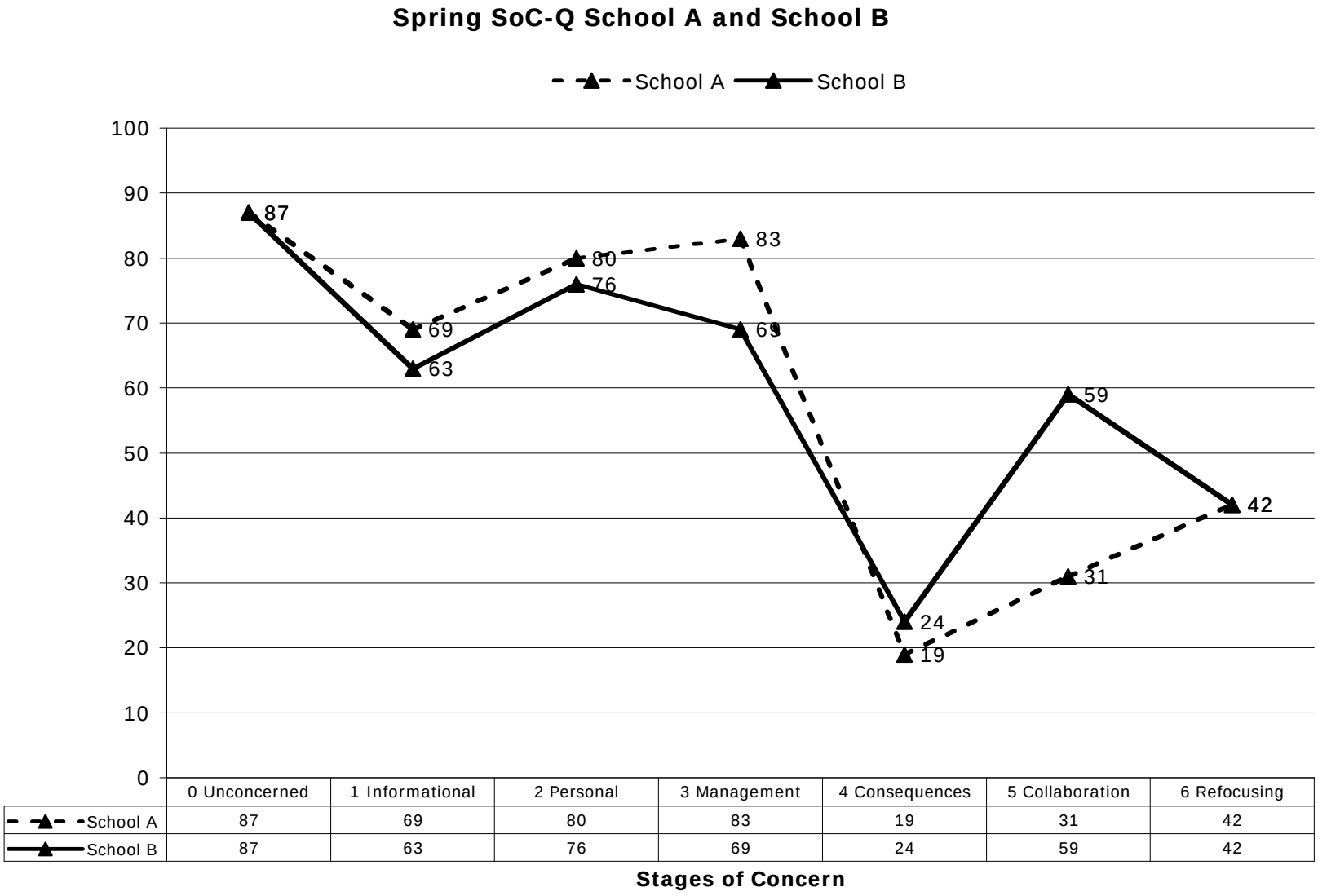

Figure 2. Relative intensity of group percentiles for School A and School B arrayed by stage of concern for spring administration.

This type of profile suggests individuals at both schools were likely more concerned about how the use of RTI might affect them personally (e.g., their professional job responsibilities) than wanting to learn more about RTI. While this represents a shift from the fall patterns, in the case of both schools Stage 0, Unconcerned, remains the highest stage of concern and Stage 4, Consequences the lowest. The between school patterns of the spring SoC-Q profiles continue to be somewhat similar and, once again, a *t*-test for independent samples revealed no significant between group differences in mean scores for any of the stages of concern.

School A. As in the fall, the analysis of the spring data for School A participants (N = 17) indicates the highest stage of concern was Stage 0, Unconcerned, at the 87th percentile. The second highest stage of concern was Stage 2, Management, at the 83rd percentile, followed by Stage 2, Personal, at the 80th percentile. The lowest relative intensity of respondents' stage of concern was Consequences, at the 19th percentile. Similar to the fall, there was a tailing up of Stage 6 suggesting that individuals continued to believe that they knew of approaches that might be more effective than RTI. Of interest is the fact that Stage 1 dropped from the 84th percentile in the fall to the 69th percentile in the spring. Although there is some shifting in the relative intensity of each concern, a *t*-test for independent samples revealed no significant differences in mean scores from the fall and the spring for any of the stages of concern.

Again, the vast majority of the School A participants reported they considered themselves either a non-user (n = 2, 12.5%) or a novice (n = 11, 68.8%) in their use of RTI. Three individuals indicated that they considered themselves intermediate users, an increase of two from the fall. There was no significant difference between fall and spring for this item. The principal of School A informed us that teachers had participated in training and had received some

technical assistance related to RTI over the school year. Data were not available on the quality or intensity of these experiences. The RTI training was reported to be in addition to training related to other school and district initiatives. Nine (80%) of the teachers who responded (*n* = 15) to that item about training related to RTI indicated that they had participated.

School B. The analysis of the spring data from School B participants (*N* = 21) indicates the highest stage of concern continued to be Stage 0, Unconcerned, at the 87th percentile. The second highest stage of concern was Stage 2, Personal, which remained at the 76th percentile, followed by Stage 3, Management, at the 73rd percentile. The lowest relative intensity of respondents' stage of concern was once again Stage 4, Consequences, rising slightly to the 24th percentile. Similar to the fall, an even more distinct peak at Stage 5 emerged, suggesting that individuals at School B continued to want to learn about RTI from their colleagues.

A statistical analysis of the School B data from fall and spring administrations was conducted using the *t*-test for dependent samples. The results revealed the teachers showed a mean decrease in their reports of their concerns related to Stage1, producing a mean difference between the administrations of -5.29 (with *t*-test value equal to -2.864 for 20 *df*, $p = .010$). There were no other within group differences in mean scores for any of the stages of concern from administration to administration.

Approximately 62% of the School B participants reported they considered themselves either a non-user (*n* = 3, 14.3%) or a novice (*n* = 10, 47.6%) in their use of RTI, down from 70% in the fall. Eight (38.1%) teachers indicated that they considered themselves intermediate users, an increase of four from the fall. There was no significant difference between fall and spring for this item. Similar to School A, the principal of School B informed us that teachers had received training and technical assistance in various aspects of RTI over the school year, in addition to

training related to other school and district initiatives. Nine (80%) of the teachers who responded (n = 15) to that item indicated that they had participated in training about RTI.

Conclusion and Implications for Educational Leaders

The CBAM (Hall & Hord, 2006) provides a framework within which educational leaders can begin to explore the challenges inherent in implementing an innovation like RTI, a multi-tiered assessment and intervention process that brings together the resources of general and special education to improve educational outcomes for all students. The stages of concern element of CBAM reflect typical, developmental movement for individuals experiencing innovations. Individuals may feel a certain stage of concern rather intensely and then as that concern subsides, another type of concern may emerge. School and district leaders facilitate implementation of the innovation by building a supportive context and systematically intervening in ways that effectively meet individual needs.

The SoC-Q (George et al., 2008) data presented here provide a snapshot in time of two urban elementary schools in which teachers are trying to change their practice and implement RTI in their classrooms. As Hall and Hord (2006) have noted, "it takes three to five years to implement new practices to a high level" (p. 9). It should come as no surprise then that over one school year teachers' concerns related to using RTI primarily remain focused on the personal side of change (i.e., self and task). Furthermore, the data from School A and School B confirm what others have found related to implementation of innovations. Change is a process, it occurs at the individual level, it requires learning, learning takes time, and learning naturally produces anxiety. Quite simply, educational leaders must come to "appreciate the early difficulties of trying something new" (Fullan, 2001, p. 5).

To begin, educational leaders would do well to have a basic understanding of facilitating change as it relates to learning and all the associated thoughts and feelings. In the early stages of implementing an innovation such as RTI, it is easy to imagine that most individuals "don't know what they don't know" and, likely, they cannot identify the knowledge, skills, or dispositions they might need to acquire. Likewise, it is easy to summon the dual nature of feelings, dread and exhilaration, which often accompany new learning. Highlighting the challenges that leaders face as they try to manage change, Schein (1993) pointed out:

> . . . there are at least three distinctly different kinds of learning that require different time horizons and that may apply to different stages of an organizational change process: (1) knowledge acquisition and insight, (2) habit and learning, and (3) emotional conditioning and learned anxiety. (p. 86)

Acquisition of knowledge is difficult to achieve when individuals become anxious and frustrated because they are either reluctant or challenged to learn something new (Schein, 1993). In a similar way, acquisition of new behaviors or skills is easier said than done because individuals must be willing to look incompetent for a time. Changes in habits are also heavily dependent upon cultural shifts in organizational norms and rules. Finally, it is very difficult to "talk people out of their anxieties" (Schein, 1993, p. 88) and what they have been conditioned to fear because of various organizational punishment and reward systems. With this in mind, educational leaders might best begin implementation of RTI by assessing teacher concerns through administration of the SoC-Q (George et al., 2008), as we did here. Gauging the status of teachers' feelings and thoughts can provide leadership teams with a starting point for their interventions.

While the SoC-Q can provide some baseline information related to the kinds of learning related anxieties described by Schein (1993), diagnosis alone is insufficient. Simply talking about the change, presenting the vision for what could be, and assessing the present state is seldom enough to move people forward in their learning. A school or district leadership team would do well to complete a self-assessment to determine their status relative to fidelity and integrity of implementation of their RTI model (Mercier Smith, Fien, Basaraba, & Travers, 2009; Walker, Cheney, & Stage, 2009; Wright, 2007). Such an inventory can further pinpoint needed interventions, which can range from systematic professional development to brief hallway discussions about a teachers' involvement in RTI or what Hall and Hord (2006) characterized as the one-legged interview. By tailoring interventions, leaders can better influence individual learning and systematically move people forward.

Leadership team interventions should also include the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student outcome data, which in turn can provide teachers with confirming or disconfirming information about whether their own instruction or interventions are working. Along with student outcome data, data related to fidelity of implementation should be collected and examined against student outcome data. In this way, teachers would have a better sense of the efficacy of their instruction and interventions. Importantly, findings from studies suggest that even staff who are skillful data-users want and benefit from targeted professional development (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008) and performance feedback (Burns, Peters, & Noell, 2008). Leadership teams can support implementation of RTI by meeting teachers' professional development needs related to all aspects of data analysis and interpretation.

Finally, our intent was not to intervene directly as teachers in these schools implemented RTI in their classrooms. We did provide the principals with data from the fall administration of the SoC-Q (George et al., 2008) and are in the process of providing them with the results of the spring administration. Our hope is that the information will help shape future interventions and facilitate implementation of RTI at these schools.

Limitations

In every research study, limitations must be acknowledged. The findings are limited by the sample and method of data collection. The sample is constrained to elementary teachers in two urban schools in one state, who volunteered to participate in the study. A single method was used to examine their level of concern related to implementing RTI in their classrooms. Future research should incorporate interview strategies and administration of the LoU (Hall et al., 2008). While we have very basic information about the training and technical assistance teachers received, we did not gather data about its quality or intensity. Future research should explore the ways in which various forms of professional development affect teacher concerns.

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