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**A CROSS-CASE STUDY OF TEACHER PERCEPTIONS
OF PROGRAM DESIGN AND TEACHING EFFICACY: THE SEAVIEW READING
SUPPORT PROGRAM**

A dissertation submitted

by

SUSAN L. BOWERS SMITH

to

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

**in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the
degree of**

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
in
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM AND PERSONAL TEACHING EFFICACY: THE SEAVIEW READING SUPPORT PROGRAM

Teachers at Seaview Elementary School developed an innovative reading support program delivered by classroom teachers to increase the achievement of children who struggled to read literature in the district's core curriculum. Although studies of the program's impact on student achievement indicated that many of the children who received services in the classroom were able to fluently read grade level materials and improve their scores on standardized tests, issues created by the additional burden of this instruction on some teachers prevented the integration of the program into other grade levels and schools in the Seaview School District and Seaview Elementary School.

A cross-case analysis of the teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program was conducted in order to (1) describe the level of achievement of students participating in the program, (2) examine how Seaview teachers perceived the effects of the program on student achievement, (3) identify program elements that teachers felt facilitated or detracted from positive changes in student reading, and (4) examine relationships between teachers' perceptions of the program, level of teacher involvement, and teachers' sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading.

A combination of semi-structured interviews, a scale measuring general and personal efficacy in teaching reading, and student assessment data was collected to

address the research questions on student achievement and teacher perceptions. Most teachers felt the reading support program increased student reading fluency and confidence in reading. Teachers perceived the Reading Mastery program and its continuity through the grade levels to support student achievement. Teachers perceived several factors to hinder positive student achievement in reading, including lack of collaboration between staff members, lack of training and support, and lack of leadership within the program.

The results of this study added to the literature on critical elements of reading intervention. Many studies of early reading focused only on instructional materials and methodologies, with little consideration of program factors that made effective instruction possible. This study supported previous research identifying the critical elements of reading intervention programs and provided additional evidence of the importance of staff development and leadership in sustaining these programs.

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Susan L. Smith

2000

Dedicated to my beautiful daughter Amber,

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my wonderful family-Thank you for your love and support during this process.

Special thanks to my husband Derek for his strong belief in my ability to get this done, to my mother, Rosemarie, who has always been my biggest cheerleader, and to my late father William Bowers who would have never guessed that his writing genes would be passed on.

To my committee-Thank you for your patience and support.

To the staff at Seaview Elementary- You made this possible. Thank you for your time and insight on reading support and your willingness to advocate for a better program for every child.

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Introduction

In 1984, the authors of Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Acott & Wilkinson, 1984) described the importance of reading to both the individual and the nation. Not only was reading critical to a child's success in the early grades and beyond, it was essential for success in our society. Children who did not learn to read well before third grade ran the risk of falling further and further behind each year as reading tasks became increasingly complex (Francis, Shaywitz, Stuebing, Shaywitz & Fletcher, 1996). Good readers read more words than poor readers and were exposed more often to rich vocabulary and academic language (Stanovich, 1986). By fifth grade it was estimated that average children read ten times more words than poor readers and voracious readers read fifty times as many words as poor readers (Nagy & Anderson, 1984). In contrast, poor readers suffered to the point that reading and writing became unrewarding, which led to avoidance and lack of involvement (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991, 1997; Stanovich, 1986, 1992). Stanovich (1986) described this phenomenon as the Matthew Effect, in which the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. Proficient readers read progressively more words each year as their reading skills improved. In contrast, poor readers read fewer and fewer words, as reading became more difficult. As jobs became

increasingly technical and required more training and skills to obtain, literacy became a priority in the United States.

In addition to the difficulty some children had when reading authentic classroom materials, high percentages of children had trouble reading standardized testing material. In April of 1996, the report of The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) announced the latest reading scores for children across the country. Overall, less than a third of the students in fourth grade were able to read grade level text proficiently (NAEP 1994 Report Card for the nation and the States, 1996). The report indicated that there was a widening gap between the reading achievement of white students and African American and Hispanic students. More than twice as many African American (69%) and Hispanic (64%) children in fourth grade scored below the basic level on the NAEP as white children (31%).

Literacy was of particular concern in California, where high numbers of English language learners and sharp contrasts in socio-economy had produced below average standardized test scores for many years. The report of the California Reading Task Force, formed to address this deficit in student reading skills began:

There is a crisis in California that demands our immediate attention. National and state reports indicate that a majority of California's children cannot read at basic levels. This reading failure begins in the early grades and has a harmful effect for a lifetime. Only a call to action at the highest levels, one that can marshal both human and fiscal resources and bring this story to the public, can be expected to address this crisis (Every Child a Reader, 1995, p.1).

At the time of this study, reading scores on the Stanford 9 achievement test, the state measure of proficiency, had increased in San Diego County over the past two years. The mean scores for English speaking children in second through fourth grade in San Diego were slightly higher than average when compared with children in the entire state of California, however less than half of the children in the county scored at or above the 50th percentile in the area of reading in 1998 (San Diego Office of Education, 1999). At the time this study took place, children attending school in California must have scored at or above the 50th percentile on the total reading section of the Stanford 9 test to be considered proficient readers. Large numbers of children who were English language learners (ELL) performed poorly on this norm-referenced test, resulting in mean scores much lower than the scores of children who spoke and read English proficiently.

Best Practice in Reading Intervention: The Debate

The question of how to best provide reading intervention for struggling readers in the early grades had been the subject of great debate, particularly in California, where policy makers had embraced the teaching of explicit alphabetic skills, rather than focusing on all pieces of the reading process. The performance of children on measures of reading proficiency such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Stanford 9 generated sufficient concern in California and Texas to result in state-level reading initiatives to enhance children's reading skills. Long-term studies of children with reading difficulties revealed that children who struggled to read in the early

grades continued to have trouble in later grades (Francis et al., 1996; Juel, 1988, Torgeson, Wagner & Rashotte, 1994).

The primary goals of reading intervention studies had been to identify the conditions, processes, and abilities necessary for children to decode efficiently, develop reading comprehension skills, and to identify which instructional factors and components were most beneficial for different kinds of children at different stages of reading development (Lyon & Moats, 1997). More research was necessary, including long-term follow-up, to determine whether children who participated in reading intervention programs maintained their gains in reading. The issue of transfer of learning from the skills learned in the support program to reading ability independent of training was clearly important and required additional research. Skilled reading was more than efficient decoding; it required children to understand written material (Fletcher & Lyon, 1996).

The Role of Explicit Instruction

Increasing student achievement in reading was the subject of intense research in a series of intervention studies funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (Felton, 1993; Foorman, Francis, Beeler, Winikates, and Fletcher, 1997; Scanlon and Vellutino, 1996; Torgeson, 1997; Wise and Olsen, 1995; Vellutino, Scanlon, Sipay, Small, Pratt, Chen & Denckla, 1996). Much of the recent research on early reading intervention funded by the NICHD suggested an important role of explicit instruction in word recognition skills in improving children's reading skills. This

approach to teaching reading gave rise to many arguments by some reading professionals over whether children should be taught using phonics methods or meaning-based approaches (Adams & Bruck, 1995; Chall, 1983). The research on reading intervention funded by the NICHD did not lead to strong positions on either side of this debate. Most of the recent intervention programs described in chapter 2, the review of literature, included elements from meaning-based programs as well as explicit instruction in the alphabetic code. No NICHD data supported a single approach to teaching reading, however the studies did support a role for instruction in the alphabetic principle, including phonemic awareness and phonics, as a necessary, but not sufficient, part of reading instruction (Fletcher & Lyon, 1996).

Defining Literacy

Adams and Bruck (1995) and Pressley and Rankin (1994) emphasized the idea that whole-language (meaning-based) programs prevailed in regular classroom instruction for good reason. Whole-language practices helped children, who might not otherwise see a reason to read, learn to enjoy reading and writing. The whole-language movement increased the quality and availability of literature in schools and shifted the goal of reading instruction toward meaningfulness and enjoyment.

Although elements of both whole-language and phonics-based programs were essential to classroom reading programs, there continued to be disagreement among some reading professionals on the inclusion of phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition skills in a whole-language program. Goodman (1986) argued that

segmenting words in learning to read was unnatural and hindered learning. On the other side of the reading spectrum, researchers such as Stanovich (1994) maintained that direct instruction in the alphabetic code facilitates early reading instruction and argued that the notion that learning to read is like learning to speak is accepted by no responsible linguists, psychologists or cognitive scientists. Researchers with such extreme views of reading instruction had different definitions of proficient reading. Researchers of direct code instruction often assessed reading by using lists of words, rather than authentic connected text (Foorman, Francis, Schatsneider & Mehta, 1998). In these studies, children who increased the number of words read in isolation improved their reading skills. Proponents of whole language questioned the relevance of simple word reading to authentic reading tasks (Taylor, 1998). Researchers in whole language used leveled books to document reading progress.

Classroom Reading Instruction

Researchers identified a strong relationship between student reading and classroom reading practice (Moats, 1995). Most reading intervention was based on studies of processes that were part of the early development of reading skills, because the early grades were where most poor readers failed. Adams (1990) proposed a balance between literature-based (meaning oriented or whole language) and explicit instruction in phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition skills (code-based instruction) in a classroom reading program. No single reading program or instructional methodology was found to be equally beneficial for all children. Successful teachers incorporated both

code-based instruction and meaning-oriented context to help children develop skills for successful reading (Pikulski, 1998).

Teacher Perceptions of Efficacy

At the time of this study, reports had raised concerns about how prepared teachers were to teach reading, particularly beginning reading (Lyon & Moats, 1996). Many teachers regarded their preparation to teach reading as inadequate. Teacher perceptions of their own efficacy had been linked to the performance and achievement of their students. A 1976 study by Armor et al. reported that teachers' sense of efficacy in a reading program used in Los Angeles schools was strongly related to the increase in reading achievement experienced by their students. In an evaluation of teacher use of innovation, Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly and Zellman (1977) found a strong positive relationship between the teachers' sense of efficacy and the percent of project goals achieved, improved student performance, teachers' maintenance of innovations and the extent of teacher change.

Staff Development

Researchers have emphasized the importance of staff development in the support of innovative programs and school improvement (Hopkins & West, 1994; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Pikulski, 1994; Shmocker, 1996). Patterns of staff participation in training directly influence the level of program implementation in schools (Joyce &

Showers, 1995). Programs with no peer structure for follow up resulted in only 5 to 10% implementation compared to 90 to 100% in programs with participation by whole school faculties organized into peer-coaching teams for follow-up. Pikulski (1994) listed ongoing staff development as a critical element in effective reading programs.

Background of the Seaview Reading Support Program

Seaview Elementary School was one of five schools serving children in grades kindergarten through sixth grade in the Seaview School District in Southern California. Seaview was a unique community, quite different from other districts in the county. The residents in Seaview were primarily well-educated, successful professionals able to afford the high cost of coastal living. Most Seaview families were very involved in educating their children. The parents and business community were generous, making sure the schools had the equipment and materials needed to provide an excellent primary education for the children in Seaview. The demographics of the Seaview community at the time of this study are described more fully in chapter 4.

Most of the children in the Seaview community were fluent readers by the middle of first grade. They easily met and exceeded the content standards for language arts as specified by the state of California. The children scored high on the Stanford 9 achievement test, with over 90% of all students scoring at or above the 50th percentile in total reading at the end of the 1998-99 school year.

There was a small population of students in the Seaview district, approximately 10% of its students that did not read fluently by the middle of first grade. These children

did not score well in total reading on the Stanford 9 achievement test, nor did they easily meet or exceed California's rigorous language arts content standards. The children in this group had difficulty reading literature designated by the district as grade level core curriculum. Some of these children were retained in kindergarten or first grade, had been tested for special education without qualifying for services, or were designated as English language learners. The district's overall high scores on the Stanford 9 achievement test made programs for serving these struggling readers a low priority. Before the spring of 1998, no reading support program was in place for children who did not qualify for special education services anywhere in the Seaview district.

In the spring of 1998, teachers developed a program to serve struggling readers in grades first through third at Seaview Elementary School. One teacher at each grade level was identified as a service provider for all of the struggling readers in that grade. That teacher combined a commercial direct instruction reading program, Reading Mastery, described later in this study, with materials from the core curriculum to facilitate the transfer of new skills to the reading of authentic materials. The program was fully implemented during the 1999-2000 school year. As a result the scores on the Stanford 9, given at the end of the school year, and the rate of words read correctly per minute increased for some struggling readers.

Importance of the Study

Reading failure had been the primary reason that children were assigned to special education, were retained at their grade level, or ultimately dropped out of school

(Learning First Alliance, 1998). One of the most important tasks for educators was to teach children how to read. Because teacher perceptions of efficacy were found to have a strong positive relationship to student achievement (Armor, et. al., 1976), it was important that these perceptions be examined in relation to reading intervention. Few of the research studies that supported effective reading intervention mentioned teacher perception of program strengths and weaknesses, perceived program effectiveness, and whether or not teachers felt they could make a difference in student reading achievement. The study of the perceptions of the teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program added to the literature on reading intervention and teacher perception of efficacy in teaching reading. It also provided practical information to members of the Seaview community on how different groups of teachers perceived the program's effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

The Seaview School District had not solved the problem of serving children who had difficulty reading. Although Stanford 9 scores indicated that many children in the Seaview Reading Support Program increased their percentile ranking in total reading after participating in the program, the mean of the children's reading fluency in words per minute remained below the mean of their same age classmates. Teachers also differed in their perspectives on classroom delivery of reading support. Informal conversations revealed that some teachers believed that the burden of serving all the struggling readers in a grade level deserved an increase in support from the school and district.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the Seaview Reading Support Program at Seaview Elementary School in order to: (1) describe the achievement of students participating in the program over the 1999-2000 school year, (2) determine how Seaview teachers perceive the effects of the Seaview Reading Support Program on student achievement, (3) identify program elements that teachers felt facilitated or detracted from positive changes in student reading, and (4) examine relationships between teacher perceptions of the program and teachers' sense of general and personal efficacy in teaching reading. The information gathered during the study was submitted to the curriculum leaders in the Seaview District for the purpose of improving the reading support program, and will be used to develop recommendations for the implementation of similar programs for children struggling to read grade level literature.

Research Questions

These research questions reflected many of the issues facing the staff members at Seaview Elementary as they continued to explore and identify new ways to help children read more effectively.

- 1) What were the effects of participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program on student achievement?
- 2) How did Seaview teachers perceive the effects of participation in the Reading Support Program on student achievement?
- 3) Which program elements did teachers perceive as most helpful in affecting positive change in student achievement, and which elements hindered this change?
- 4) Was there a relationship between teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program and teachers' sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading?
- 5) Was there a relationship between teachers' sense of general and personal efficacy in teaching reading and their level of involvement in the program? If so, what was the nature of this relationship?

Assumptions

An assumption in this study was that the modified scale designed to measure teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching reading continued to be valid and reliable after the modifications. The study also assumed that the information obtained from the small population of teachers and students at Seaview was representative of a larger population and that individual teachers would provide truthful answers to the interview questions.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, reading was defined as simple reading, (Gough, Juel and Griffith, 1992) which was the product of decoding and comprehension.

Decoding was defined as the ability to decipher the words represented by print, yet was not considered to be the whole of reading. Comprehension was defined as the ability to use background knowledge and linguistics to make sense of the written word. Both of these domains were quite distinguishable in reading, although this simple view did not take into account all of the different factors involved in literacy.

Reading Intervention was defined as a rigorous program designed to accelerate students' reading skills to the minimum level perceived as proficient for children of similar ages and grades. Reading intervention differed from the support offered by the Seaview Reading Support Program in that intervention is delivered over a limited time period while reading support is ongoing for as long as a child struggles to read at grade level. An effective reading support program was defined as one that provided the skills, strategies and scaffolding to enable children to successfully read and comprehend grade level literature or to accelerate growth toward that goal. Struggling readers were defined in this study as children not able to read the literature identified by the Seaview district as core curriculum.

The materials used by the Seaview Reading Support Program were from two sources. The first, Reading Mastery, was a program based on direct instruction, an explicit method of teaching sounds and letter symbols and how to blend these sounds to

decode words. A lesson in first and second grade began with a review of letters and sounds from past lessons. A new sound based on one or more letters was introduced in almost every lesson. Children were given time to think about each sound as they recited the sounds in unison. Familiar sounds were used to decode words in isolation as part of each lesson. Sight words, or words that were not decodable were addressed in Reading Mastery by allowing students to attempt to decode them and acknowledging that some words could not be sounded out. Sight words were repeated many times over the course of the Reading Mastery lessons. These words were then used in a story composed of words the children already knew or were able to decode easily. The stories provided by Reading Mastery were easy to read, but were very different from trade books written for children to enjoy. Although questions to check for comprehension were included in each story, the purpose of the decodable stories in Reading Mastery in first and second grade was for students to practice decoding connected text or many words at a time. In third and fourth grade, Reading Mastery lessons focused less on sound-symbol relationships and more on reading strategies similar to the reciprocal teaching strategies (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) described in chapter 2.

The core curriculum included in the Seaview Reading Support Program consisted of literature identified by the district as essential for children to read at each grade level. The Seaview Reading Support Program incorporated as much of that literature as possible into its lessons with struggling readers so that children had a chance to apply newly learned skills and strategies to real books. Fluent decoding of text, although it was the basis of the extra reading instruction offered to struggling readers at Seaview, was not the goal of the support program. The goal for students in the program was the

comprehension and enjoyment of real books. As children were served in the Seaview Reading Support Program, they were frequently reminded that the fluency they developed during their extra lessons was meant to help them read books that interested them. Literature, real books, or trade books in the context of this program referred to books written for the purpose of student learning and enjoyment, rather than those written to provide practice decoding. The purpose for including authentic literature and comprehension strategies is discussed in chapter 2 in the section on transfer of learning.

Efficacy as described by Bandura (1997) was a person's perception of competence in a given situation. A teacher's sense of efficacy referred to the expectation that he or she could help children learn (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Teacher perceptions of efficacy were described in this study as general teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy. The sense of general teaching efficacy referred to teachers' expectations that teaching could influence student learning. Teachers with a low sense of general teaching efficacy believed that some children could not learn in school despite their teacher's efforts. Teachers with a high sense of general teaching efficacy believed that all children could learn if provided with the appropriate conditions for learning. The sense of personal teaching efficacy referred to an individual's assessment of his or her personal teaching competence. Teachers with a high sense of personal teaching efficacy believed in their own ability to teach so children could learn. Teachers with a low sense of personal teaching efficacy doubted their ability to teach every child. These perceptions of ability influenced teachers' choice of classroom management and instructional strategies.

Summary

Because literacy played a central role in the life of every child, much more research was needed to refine intervention and support programs for struggling readers. While preliminary studies of the Seaview Reading Support Program indicated that children benefited from the additional instruction provided by classroom teachers, the perceptions of the teachers themselves were critical to the success of the program. This study examined the factors that teachers felt facilitated the delivery of reading support services and those factors that hindered the efficiency of the program. This information was useful, not only to policy makers in the Seaview District, but for teachers and researchers interested in helping children improve their reading skills. Studies had also indicated that perceived efficacy was an important factor in how much teachers did to facilitate learning for children in their classrooms. The results of this study shed light on the relationship between teacher perceptions of reading support and personal teaching efficacy.

Chapter two included a review of the literature supporting the design of a program delivered by classroom teachers to children in their grade level. The chapter was divided into four main sections. The first reviewed the literature supporting socio-cognitive theory and its relationship to student achievement. The second reviewed the literature supporting successful reading intervention programs and successful reading intervention programs throughout the country. Section three explored transfer of learning theory in the area of reading. The fourth section summarized the literature on leadership as it related to the Seaview Reading Support Program.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The purpose of this literature review was to explore the research and theoretical frameworks that supported the design of the Seaview Reading Support Program and the rationale for this study. The chapter was divided into 4 main sections. The first section included a review of socio-cognitive theory, which provided the theoretical framework for how teachers perceived their efficacy. A body of research on teacher perceptions of efficacy was presented and linked to student achievement. The second section of the chapter offered a brief history of the evolution of current programs that addressed reading difficulties. Allington and Walmsley's (1995) principles for reforming current programs were outlined to provide the reader with background information on the evolution of reading support programs. Five programs with documented success in teaching children to read, with an emphasis on those delivered by classroom teachers and the common elements that supported student success were examined and compared. Foorman, Francis, Schatschneider and Mehta's 1998 study on direct code emphasis as an effective instructional methodology was outlined, along with criticisms of that study. The third section presented a summary of transfer of learning theory and its connection to the design of effective classroom programs. The final section contained a review of the literature on leadership as it related to the Seaview Reading Support Program.

Theoretical Framework: Socio-Cognitive Theory

Socio-cognitive theory had been widely described by Bandura (1982,1986, 1989, 1997) as a “model of emergent, interactive agency (1986, p.1175).” Agency referred to intentional actions, rather than accidental occurrences of behavior. People exercised a considerable amount of influence over their own actions in different situations. Individuals contributed to their own motivation and action within a system of triadic causation. Triadic referred to three determinants, behavior, personal factors, and environmental events, which interacted to determine human action and behavior. The determinants influenced one another, yet were not of equal strength and varied for different activities and circumstances.

Perceived Self-efficacy

“People’s level of motivation, affective states and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true” (Bandura, 1997, p.3). It was a person’s belief in his or her own capabilities to organize and execute a course of action to a given degree that influenced perceptions of self-efficacy. People who felt efficacious were quick to take advantage of opportunity structures and to circumvent constraints within their work. Individuals who doubted their capabilities in certain domains of activities shied away from tasks in these domains. Those who felt less efficacious found it hard to motivate themselves to take on activities from difficult domains and gave up easily in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1997).

Socio-cognitive theorists believed that a person’s efficacy beliefs provided a basis for predicting the occurrence, generality, and persistence of that person’s behavior in given contexts.

Efficacy beliefs were based on experience and reflective thought, rather than a fragmented collection of highly specific self-beliefs. The efficacy beliefs of an individual varied according to the situation in which performance took place and were measured and defined independently of performance. A person's perceptions of efficacy were developed and altered by four principal sources: direct mastery experiences which served as indicators of capability; vicarious experiences that altered efficacy beliefs through comparison with the accomplishments of others; social influences such as verbal persuasion; and changes in an individual's physiological and affective states used to judge capabilities, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura, 1997).

Teacher Perceptions of Efficacy

“The task of creating learning environments conducive to development of cognitive competencies rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers” (Bandura, 1997, p. 240). A teacher's sense of efficacy referred to the expectation that he or she could help children learn (Ashton & Webb, 1986). This sense of self-efficacy influenced the decisions teachers made in choosing learning activities for students and the amount of effort expended in their work. Teachers with a low sense of efficacy avoided activities they believed were beyond their capabilities (Bandura, 1982).

Ashton and Webb (1986) described two dimensions of teacher efficacy: sense of teaching efficacy and sense of personal teaching efficacy. The sense of teaching efficacy referred to teachers' expectations that teaching could influence student learning and was referred to in this study as general teaching efficacy. Teachers with a low sense of general teaching efficacy

believed that some children cannot learn in school despite their teacher's efforts. Teachers with a high sense of general teaching efficacy believed that all children could learn if provided with the appropriate conditions for learning.

The sense of personal teaching efficacy referred to an individual's assessment of his or her personal teaching competence. These perceptions of ability influenced teachers' choices of classroom management and instructional strategies. Teachers who held doubts about their personal teaching efficacy were more likely to allow children to use avoidance behaviors such as remaining off task during instruction (Ashton and Webb, 1986).

Perceptions of Efficacy and Student Achievement

Ashton and Webb (1986) documented the impact of divergent levels of teachers' perceived efficacy in their study of seasoned teachers of students with severe academic deficiencies. Teacher beliefs about their general efficacy predicted the level of their students' academic achievements in language and math over the course of a year. Students learned significantly more from teachers with a strong sense of efficacy than from those who had doubts about their instructional efficacy.

Children's beliefs about their intellectual efficacy were largely a social construction based on appraisals of their performance in academic subjects, comparisons of their achievement with same age classmates, and their interpretation of the academic expectations and evaluations provided by their teachers. A teacher's sense of efficacy was particularly influential on young children because their beliefs were relatively unformed. Anderson, Green, and Loewen (1988)

reported that a teacher's belief in his or her own instructional self-efficacy was a much stronger predictor of the achievement of younger children than of older students.

Gibson and Dembo (1984) measured teachers' beliefs in their ability to motivate and educate students who were difficult to teach and to overcome adverse home and community influences on students' academic development. Teachers with a strong sense of instructional self-efficacy, referred to here as personal efficacy, believed that difficult students could be taught effectively through extra effort and appropriate instructional methodology. These teachers believed that family supports could be obtained and negative community influences could be overcome through effective teaching. In contrast, teachers with a low sense of general efficacy believed that little could be done about unmotivated students. Gibson and Dembo also found that teachers with a high sense of personal efficacy devoted more classroom time to academic activities, provided difficult students with the guidance needed for success, and praised students' academic accomplishments. Teachers with a low sense of personal efficacy spent more time on nonacademic activities, gave up more easily on students if results were not immediate, and criticized students for their failures.

Teachers' perceptions of efficacy were related to how long an individual was likely to remain in the classroom. Coladarci (1992) found that teachers' sense of general and personal teaching efficacy were strong predictors of their commitment to the teaching profession. Teachers with a low sense of instructional efficacy were more likely to leave the profession (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982).

Efficacy and Effective Schools

“Effective schooling involves reciprocal causation. Teachers’ sense of instructional efficacy partly determines how much their students learn (Bandura, 1997, p. 248).” Teachers operated within a social system, rather than in isolation. Many of the conditions within schools that affected teachers’ sense of instructional efficacy reflected the broader social and economic issues of a community. Large numbers of disadvantaged students who had difficulty learning eroded this sense of efficacy. Factors in the school environment affected teachers’ beliefs in their ability to produce students with high levels of achievement. Many factors affecting teachers’ sense of personal teaching efficacy such as heavy workloads, lack of opportunity to participate in educational decision-making, variable quality of instructional leadership, insufficient resources, lack of advancement opportunities, problematic students, insufficient pay, low occupational status, and inadequate recognition of accomplishments were not easily controlled (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Highly efficacious schools had effective administrators or instructional leaders who strove to improve education. They figured out how to circumvent policies and regulations that impeded academic innovations. In schools with low student achievement, the principal acted primarily as a disciplinarian and manager. Principals who created a positive school climate with a strong academic emphasis and advocated on behalf of teachers’ instructional efforts enhanced teacher beliefs in instructional efficacy (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). High standards and expectations were the norm in effective schools. Effective schools backed up their expectations with mastery aids for students who struggled to meet these standards. Teachers in these schools believed their students were capable of high academic achievement and accepted a fair amount

of responsibility for their students' achievement. Poor student performance was not excused by adverse family backgrounds or low inherent ability (Bandura, 1997).

When students fell behind in effective schools, sub-group instruction was designed to accelerate student learning and make up deficits so that students could become part of the regular school program. In contrast, low-efficacy schools often tracked children by perceived ability, expecting less of certain children academically. These students remained permanently segregated and continued to fall further behind (Bandura, 1997).

In effective schools, children's behavior was successfully managed. This management was achieved through the recognition and praise of productive behavior, rather than by punishing inappropriate behavior. Effective classroom management created a safe and productive learning environment (Bandura, 1977).

Efficacy and Parent Involvement

Teachers' sense of general and personal teaching efficacy partially determined the level of parental participation in their children's schools. Teachers who perceived themselves as capable were most likely to invite parents into the classroom and support their educational efforts. The stronger a teacher's perceived sense of efficacy, the more often parents contacted them, assisted in the classroom, provided home instruction based on teacher feedback, helped with children's homework, and supported the teacher's efforts (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992).

Collective Instructional Efficacy

Bandura (1997) studied teachers' beliefs about the efficacy of their schools to promote different levels of academic gains in a large school district. Teachers' beliefs in their schools' ability to promote academic achievement were measured in the beginning of the school year, before teachers were familiar with the academic abilities of their students. Standardized tests assessed the level of student achievement in reading and mathematics at the beginning and end of the year. The teachers' sense of efficacy varied across grade levels and subjects. Teachers felt more efficacious in teaching language skills than math skills. Teachers expressed a low sense of efficacy to promote learning in the early grades. In the middle grades, when students were familiar with school routines and academic demands were not too rigorous, teachers expressed a stronger belief that they could affect the learning of students. In later grades, teachers viewed their schools as declining in instructional efficacy.

Summary

Research indicated teacher perceptions of efficacy effect the achievement of the children they teach (Anderson, Green, and Loewen, 1988). For this reason it was important to explore relationships between the perceptions of efficacy of the teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program, their level of involvement in the program, and their perceptions of the program's efficacy.

Literature Review: Reading Intervention

The following section of this chapter described the theoretical frameworks that supported the design of the Seaview Reading Support Program and the rationale for this study.

Historical Background of Reading Intervention

Effective reading intervention had been recently described (California Reading Task Force, 1995) as programs that delivered services early in the child's education, provided intensive and extensive amounts of practice in reading and writing, and used personnel highly trained in the reading process. However, it had also been noted that intervention was a safety net for a strong classroom program. "No intervention strategy can replace the comprehensive and balanced reading program which must be in place in all classrooms" (California Reading Task Force, 1995, p. 6).

Allington and Walmsley (1995) offered a brief history of the development of instructional support services in No Quick Fix. It wasn't uncommon, or even noteworthy for individuals to fail to learn to read before education became compulsory in the 20th century United States. As the issue of reading difficulties emerged between 1920 and 1950, the most common explanation for these difficulties was the concept of the slow learner. Most of the textbooks during this time recommended the slowing down of the pace of instruction, increasing the number of repetitions and amount of practice, and advancing in small steps. In the 1950s children who failed to learn to read were considered intellectually impaired and classes for slow learners expanded. Soon the concepts of cultural deprivation and educational disadvantagedness

emerged as alternative explanations for the high frequencies of reading difficulties in poor and minority populations.

In the sixties the studies of reading difficulties shifted in focus to studies of learning disabilities, reflecting the increasing separation of remedial and special education from regular classroom programs. During this time Title I programs for economically disadvantaged children were heavily funded, but these programs dwindled over the next twenty years as more and more children became identified as learning disabled. Federal support for the preparation of reading teachers was eventually eliminated, while support for special education teachers increased substantially.

Central to this shift in funding was the passage of the Education of Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which included children with learning disabilities as part of the handicapped population. The learning disabled population in the United States more than doubled in size between 1975 and 1986. By 1992, the learning disabled population represented the largest population of children receiving special education services. At the time of this study, children who failed to learn to read were served by two separate instructional support programs: remedial or intervention programs and special education. These programs were funded separately, administered by different staff, delivered by teachers with different credentialing requirements and professional organizations, and had little overlap in program participation.

There was little evidence that the reading intervention strategies of remedial Title I programs and special education programs differed substantially; however, it was documented that children in special education spent less time reading than children receiving remedial services. Allington and McGill-Franzen (1989) studied the amount of time mildly handicapped students spent receiving reading instruction and found it to be significantly less than that of

children in remedial education. Other studies (Haynes & Jenkins, 1986) provided evidence that both remedial and special education students received less reading instruction than better readers did.

In summary there were two broad program types that routinely separated low-achieving students into two strands of services. There was little evidence that the programs delivered a higher quality of instruction than that provided in the classroom (Allington and Walmsley, 1995).

At the time of this study, the design of instructional support programs for children that had not found learning to read easy was more likely to reflect minimal compliance with federal and state program regulations than to reflect the best evidence on how best to accelerate reading and writing development (Birman et. al., 1987; Fraatz, 1987; Hyde & Moore, 1988; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1990, 1993; Mehan, Hartweck, & Meihls, 1986). It was widely believed that early intervention was more often successful than later intervention, yet most participants in either remedial or special education were not referred until they had experienced several years of unsatisfactory school progress and often after they had been retained. In fact, retention (or transition room placement) seemed to be the most common school response to early difficulty, even though evidence of the negative effects of this practice on children was overwhelming (Shepard & Smith, 1989, 1990).

Reforming Support Programs

Allington, and Walmsley (1995) offered six principles for the design of an effective

support program that restructured services commonly available to struggling readers. Five of those six principles directly applied to this study and will be reviewed in this chapter. The first principle stated that all staff is responsible for the education of all students. With the increase in teacher specialization over the past 15 years, came the notion that certain groups of teachers address only the needs of certain groups of students. Reading specialists worked with struggling readers, teachers who provided English Language Learner support services taught children acquiring English, and Chapter 1 teachers or aides worked with children who were economically disadvantaged. Even with the changes in Public Law 132, which spelled out who is eligible for special education and what kind of services were required, to allow greater flexibility in serving children with and without identified learning disabilities, resource specialists worked primarily with children who had learning disabilities. Students had a wide range of reading abilities, which made it difficult for classroom teachers to design effective reading instruction for every student. Because this range in reading abilities between very able readers and struggling readers made the classroom difficult for teachers to manage, it seemed reasonable and convenient that alternative programs should serve students at the low end of the spectrum. Allington and Walmsley proposed a shift in responsibility for the education of these children who struggled with reading. If a shift in attitude and responsibility could be made for an entire school staff, children could receive assistance from any faculty member, especially their classroom teachers.

The authors' second principle was that all children were entitled to the same literacy experiences, materials, and expectations. This principle was especially important in California, where all children were required to meet the same standards for literacy, regardless of language or ability. Traditionally the remedial curriculum was based on the results of reading tests administered to at-risk students or on what the reading specialist serving the child felt was

important. This reduced the curriculum to a few isolated reading skills with different philosophical assumptions, different skills and strategies, and different content than that of the regular classroom reading program. Instructional tasks were also different for struggling readers than for children who had little difficulty learning to read. Poor readers were often assigned low-level worksheets rather than reading authentic texts, focused on word recognition rather than comprehension, and fragmented in their instructional activities.

Allington and Walmsley's third guiding principle for reforming instructional support programs maintained that children should be educated with their same age classmates. As the numbers of special reading teachers and special programs increased, struggling readers spent more time out of the regular classroom for instructional support. As public schools were held more accountable for the achievement of students, there was an increase in retention and in the identification of children as handicapped (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1993). This trend toward segregation of struggling students, even in newly innovative reading intervention programs, separated children from their same age classmates and undermined the responsibility of regular educators to educate all children. This segregation also fostered curricular fragmentation and hindered children's access to the rich core curriculum. Allington and Walmsley did acknowledge that short-term pull out programs lasting only three to 12 weeks, which were personalized and focused to rapidly accelerate student achievement seemed justified. Effective pull out programs were reviewed later in this chapter.

The need for high quality instruction, particularly for struggling readers, was the basis for Allington and Walmsely's fifth principle (the fourth principle will be discussed later in this chapter). High quality instruction was defined as that offered by expert teachers who were knowledgeable about how literacy develops and what factors impede its progress. Expert

teachers used their knowledge of literacy development to design instructional programs independent of the commercial materials provided by the school. Classroom teachers, reading specialists, remedial teachers, and special educators received different professional education programs that focused on different kinds of assessment and instruction. Staff development opportunities for these groups of specialists were often discipline-specific, and focused on generic skill acquisition, rather than on teaching specific reading and writing strategies useful in authentic classroom activities. Specialists needed more opportunities to work with children in the classroom setting with the materials used to ultimately determine their proficiency.

Finally Allington and Walmsely called for an organizational infrastructure that supported the teaching of literacy. They believed that in the long-term, instructional support programs should be organized as a single entity, rather than a variety of separate programs, each with its own funding sources, local and state bureaucracies, teacher specialist education programs, and distinct teaching methods. A single unified support program would provide children with access to high-quality classroom instruction. Specialists could focus their services on at-risk students in the classroom, providing strategies for children to participate in the same rich core curriculum as their same age classmates. In order for a single, unified instructional support program to succeed, teachers and specialists would have to renegotiate their roles and responsibilities to focus on enhancing the quality of instruction.

Defining Literacy for Struggling Readers

In their fourth principle of effective instructional support programs, Allington and

Walmsley called for the identification of a literacy curriculum for all children, rather than fragmented pieces of a whole curriculum for struggling readers. The differences between the kind of literacy experiences provided to children with reading difficulties and to children in regular classrooms were significant. For most children with difficulty learning to read, the literacy curriculum was limited to a narrow sampling of the broad range of materials and instructional activities that belonged to a rich and balanced core curriculum. It was common for remedial and special education programs to emphasize isolated reading tasks such as word attack, vocabulary, and study skills rather than providing access to interesting full-length materials.

The definition of literacy for all children went beyond materials and instructional methodology. An effective instructional support program for children must clearly define literacy and how it is measured. Several state level programs in Texas and California meant to reform early reading instruction were based on studies that required little or no actual reading of classroom materials in the assessment of the reading skills of its participants (Foorman, Francis, Schatschneider and Mehta, 1998). Words in isolation were often used as an assessment of reading skills to measure the effectiveness of programs, which also required little or no reading of authentic materials. In California, children were required to score above the 50th percentile on the Stanford 9 to be considered proficient readers. The Stanford 9 was a norm-referenced test composed of many sub-tests that measured reading at the single word level and on questions about several passages. The kinds of activities performed by children on the Stanford 9 test bore very little resemblance to actual activities that children encountered in school or any other environment that required them to read and write.

Critical Elements of Early Intervention Programs

Pikulski (1994) reviewed the following early intervention programs in order to identify common features related to preventing reading problems: (a) Success for All; (b) The Winston-Salem Project; (c) Early Intervention in Reading (EIR); (d) The Boulder Project; and (e) Reading Recovery. In a comparison of the programs in areas such as relationship to classroom instruction, organization for early intervention, amount of instructional time, length of intervention, types of texts and materials used, text and word level strategies, writing components, assessment procedures, home connections, and teacher education, he summarized their critical elements:

1. For maximum impact early intervention should ensure students are receiving excellent and coordinated instruction in their classrooms and their intervention programs.
2. Children with reading difficulties should spend more time receiving quality reading instruction than children who do not experience difficulty reading.
3. Individual or small-group instruction is essential in teaching at-risk children to read.
4. Special reading instruction should be focused on at-risk children in first grade, although some will continue to need support in later grades.
5. Texts for early intervention programs should be at the child's instructional level so that children will be successful reading them. Predictable texts, interesting literature with natural language patterns and texts constructed to encourage word recognition are all beneficial.

6. Repeated reading of texts is a very effective approach to helping at-risk students develop reading fluency (also documented by Samuels, Scherer & Reinking, 1992). Instructional procedures should ensure that children use reading to construct meaning.
7. At-risk children need instruction that focuses attention on words and letters. Phoneme awareness, phonics, and word study should be included in early intervention programs.
8. Students should write daily in order to attend to the details of words, which support word recognition skills.
9. Ongoing assessment that monitors student progress is necessary in any early intervention program. The assessment of oral fluency is an easy and effective assessment procedure.
10. Communication between home and school is essential in early intervention programs. Students should be provided with materials for daily reading at home.
11. Professional development is the foundation of successful early intervention programs. Initial teacher education should be provided so that effective instruction is delivered consistently. Continuous professional support should be available at least through a teacher's first year of implementation.

The Seaview reading support program was designed to incorporate many of these critical elements of reading intervention. Children were identified as early as kindergarten to receive additional support in reading. The support program offered additional time for students to receive quality reading services that were delivered by classroom teachers, familiar with the core materials all children in the grade level were expected to read. Children read different types of texts a number of times to ensure fluency and comprehension of the material. New learning

was presented daily through direct instruction in letters, sounds, and their patterns when appropriate. Learning was assessed frequently and the results were used to adjust the reading program for each child. Teachers who provided additional reading services to children tried to communicate frequently with their parents and teachers and provide at-home practice materials.

Teachers participating in the Seaview Reading Support Program received limited staff development in direct instruction in reading and its importance in building an effective classroom program. The teachers met formally three times during the year and were able to attend several conferences on strategic reading and serving struggling readers. Time for teacher planning, collaboration, and communication was not factored in to the reading support program.

Successful Early Intervention Programs

Five successful early literacy intervention programs were documented over the last ten years: Reading Recovery (Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk & Seltzer, 1994) and Success for All (Slavin, Madden, Dolan & Wasik, 1996), both of which have been studied by many researchers; Hiebert, Colt, Catto, and Gury's 1992 study of a restructured Chapter 1 program; Leslie and Allen's (1999) study of a yearlong tutoring program using preservice teachers to support struggling readers; and Taylor, Short, Shearer & Frye's (1992) study of Early Intervention in Reading (EIR), a program delivered by classroom teachers.

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery (RR), a highly structured, individualized program developed for first graders by Marie Clay in 1976, was based on the premise that the child is a problem solver who discovers that the use of multiple cueing systems is the key to successful reading. During a RR session the child rereads familiar books, composes a sentence that he or she writes and reads, and reads a new book. The teacher analyzes the child's performance on these tasks each day. The books used in RR are very short and leveled for difficulty. Emphasis is placed on the orchestration of skills in reading, rather than the development of skills in isolation (Shanahan and Barr, 1995, p. 963).

Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk & Seltzer (1994) examined which features of RR were critical to children's success in reading. Children were randomly placed in one of four experimental groups: (a) a traditional yearlong program in RR in which teachers received intensive education over a year and children were tutored individually; (b) Reading Success, based on the RR instructional framework, but with a different teacher education model; (c) Direct Instructional Skills Plan, an individual skills-based tutoring program unrelated to RR; and (d) Reading and Writing Group, in which traditionally trained RR teachers taught small groups of students. While initial comparisons indicated that RR-like groups showed significantly greater achievement on measures of text-level reading, only children who received individual tutoring and who had graduated from the RR program maintained these differences by the end of the year. The results supported one-to-one instruction, intensive teacher education, lesson format, and content based on Clay's 1985 research as critical elements of RR. One confounding

factor in the study was that students in the RR group received more instructional time than children in the other treatment conditions.

Shanahan and Barr (1995) conducted an independent evaluation of RR as an early instructional intervention for at-risk learners. The analysis was based on all available evaluations and reports on the RR program and considered whether learning gains of children in the RR program could be maintained once the program was discontinued, and whether the program led to other instructional changes in schools. Although the authors found that RR led to learning, it was noted that it did not lead to systemic changes in classroom instruction, which made it difficult for children to maintain gains in learning. The professional development available to Reading Recovery teachers is not extended to classroom teachers who support new learning throughout the school day. For this reason RR in its current form could not replace a comprehensive school or district plan for serving the needs of struggling readers or as a program for professional development.

Success for All

Success for All was a total school program for children in grades K-3 implemented in schools that served students from very low socioeconomic communities. Success for All focused on regular classroom instruction and tutoring support. Children in grades first through third were heterogeneously grouped for most of the day, except for a 90 minute period in which they were grouped by reading level across all 3 grade levels. During these 90 minutes students received whole group direct instruction. For students who fell behind, individual tutoring sessions of 20

minutes supplemented the skills and strategies as classroom reading activities. The classroom teacher acted as the child's reading tutor whenever possible.

The outcomes of the Success for All programs have been documented in 23 evaluations in nine districts in eight states (Slavin, Madden, Dolan & Wasik, 1996). In each district the authors reported that Success for All students learned significantly more than matched control groups in schools as measured on the Gray Oral Reading Test, the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty, and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, however no data was available on the ability of the students to read grade-level literature.

The program's strengths included heterogeneous classroom grouping, individual tutoring for children who fell behind provided by the classroom teacher, and the involvement of the entire school staff in fostering student literacy. Success for All also provided extensive professional development in reading instruction to every teacher in the school. Program weaknesses included a lack of assessment of children's ability to read and understand real books.

Re-structured Chapter 1

Hiebert, Colt, Catto and Gury (1992) restructured a first grade Chapter 1 reading program to include systematic word study and practice of reading in easy books. Of the children who participated in the restructured program, 77% could read at the primer level at the end of the year compared with only 18% of the children in the traditional Chapter 1 program. First graders in the restructured program performed comparably with their same age classmates on end-of-year reading and writing assessments. The strengths of the program included the use of authentic

reading materials in both instruction and assessment. A program weakness was the lack of involvement of the children's teacher in the delivery of the program.

Preservice Teacher Tutoring

Leslie and Allen (1999) studied the effectiveness of an early literacy project for children in grades first through fourth. Children who were reading at one or more years below grade level on an informal reading inventory received small-group literacy instruction after school from preservice teachers for ten weeks each semester. The parents of children in the program were involved in their education by attending literacy events and by reading at home with their child. Approximately 70% of the children in the project reached grade level reading by the end of a year of tutoring. Of the children in this sample, 74% performed above the standard on the Wisconsin Third Grade Reading Test, compared with only 31% of the comparison group. However, the lowest group of readers, which had made the least progress during the first semester of the project, received tutoring services all year, but did not make greater yearlong gains than the comparison group. The program's strengths included strong parent involvement and education. Program weakness included the lack of involvement of the classroom teachers and no direct linkage of new learning to the classroom reading program.

Programs Based in the Classroom

In a comparison of five effective early intervention programs, Pikulski (1994) examined the relationship of the program to regular classroom instruction. He reported that of the five,

only two addressed the need for instructional changes at several grade levels. Success for All implemented a clearly defined approach to teaching reading. All of the teaching staff provided classroom reading instruction to reduce reading group size. The Winston-Salem Project also focused on schoolwide change. Classroom reading instruction was organized into instructional blocks for all students. An additional 45 minutes of instruction was provided for every child at the school, which served a high percentage of high-risk learners (Pikulski, 1994).

Early Intervention in Reading

Taylor, Short, Shearer & Frye (1992) investigated whether first grade teachers could provide effective early reading intervention to their lowest-achieving students. The study described the Early Intervention in Reading (EIR), a program in which teachers provided an additional 15-20 instructional minutes each day to their lowest readers for six months. The extra instruction was focused on the repetitive reading of and writing about stories, with an emphasis on phoneme awareness and word recognition strategies within the context of the stories. At the end of the first year of EIR, 73% of the 15 children participating in the study were reading on an end-of-first-grade level or better on an informal reading inventory in contrast with only 20% of the children who did not participate in the EIR program. These results were not as dramatic as those reported by larger programs such as Reading Recovery and Success for All, however the EIR provided instruction in small groups, rather than individual tutoring, and used authentic books for assessment. Teachers reported that it was worth the effort to provide an extra 15-20 minutes of instruction because of the increase in student success.

The Role of Instructional Methodology in Preventing Reading Failure in At-Risk Children

In this section a study of first and second graders with an instructional methodology similar to that used in the Seaview program is examined. This is one of the few studies that measured teacher perceptions of the program design in addition to student achievement.

In a 1998 study by Foorman, Francis, Schatschneider and Mehta, 285 first and second graders received one of three kinds of classroom reading programs: direct instruction in letter-sound correspondences practiced in decodable text (also called direct code instruction); a program in which children received less direct instruction in systematic sound-spelling patterns embedded in connected text; and a program in which implicit instruction in the alphabetic code was provided while reading connected text. Children receiving direct code instruction improved more quickly in word reading and had higher word-recognition skills than those receiving implicit code instruction. The results of the study demonstrated the advantages of reading programs that emphasized explicit instruction in the alphabetic principle for at-risk children.

During the 90 minutes of daily language arts instruction, the children were instructed in one of three classroom reading methods: direct code, embedded code, or implicit code, all of which took place in a literature-rich environment. The direct code group received an emphasis on phoneme awareness, blending as a key element of phonics, and literature activities using Open Court's (1995) Collections for Young Scholars. As decodable texts were introduced, a strand of Big Book reading occurred to develop oral language comprehension skills and a love of

story. Writing workshop activities and anthologies of fiction, non-fiction and poetry were introduced by the middle of first grade.

The embedded code program was based on Hiebert, Cole, Catto and Gary's (1992) program and emphasized phoneme awareness and spelling patterns in predictable books. Whole class shared reading and writing activities, choral and echo reading, and guided reading provided the context for embedded code instruction. Comprehension was also emphasized, as well as working with phonograms to make new words from word endings. Children practiced making and breaking words in small groups, writing down their newly constructed words, and reading them back to the teacher.

The implicit code program was one that already existed in the elementary schools. The emphasis was on building a print-rich environment with the following characteristics: teacher as facilitator of learning, construction of meaning was central to children's learning, integration of spelling, reading, and writing into literary activities, phonics in context, response to literature, and learning centers. Assessment was based on portfolios, rather than norm-referenced testing.

Although the children in the direct code group exhibited greater growth in word reading than the other two groups, this study has been widely criticized by Taylor (1999) for equating the word reading portion of the Woodcock-Johnson with authentic reading. Taylor (1999) was also critical of the study by Foorman et al. (1998) based on their interpretation of the data collected and of the use of this data to support instructional reform in Texas and California. However, Foorman and her colleagues acknowledged that the positive effects of direct code instruction did not generalize to all academic areas. The three instructional groups did not differ in spelling achievement, nor were the average spelling scores impressive. The word-reading skills were not shown to significantly transfer to the text reading.

An important link of the Foorman et al. (1998) study to the case study of the Seaview Reading Support Program was the measure of teacher compliance and attitudes used for program monitoring. During the summer professional development before the Foorman et al. (1998) study took place, the teachers and research staff developed a list of instructional components for bimonthly monitoring of instruction. The monitoring took place during the 30 minutes devoted to the reading lesson. Lesson plans were kept, copied, and reviewed. At the end of the year, teachers responded to five questions about their instructional program, using a rating scale of 1 (definitely yes) to 5 (definitely no). The first four questions asked whether they would recommend the continued use of this instructional approach. The fifth question asked about the match between the teachers beliefs about teaching reading and the instructional approach used in the program they delivered with response options ranging from exact match to not similar at all. Teacher compliance with the program to which they were assigned was high, with a median of 80%. The teachers also had positive attitudes toward their instructional methodology. Pairwise contrasts indicated that teachers of direct code programs were more likely than teachers of the embedded code programs to recommend their instructional approach to the district and more likely than both teachers of embedded code and implicit code programs to recommend their instructional methods to a colleague. Teachers in all three instructional groups did not differ in their attitudes toward recommending their approaches for all children or specifically for children with special needs or in the degree to which the instruction they delivered matched their own beliefs about teaching children to read.

The Role of Decoding and Fluency in Learning to Read

One of the goals of the Seaview Reading Support Program was to help children build their reading fluency so they could read literature from the core curriculum easily and focus on understanding what they read. Fluency for the purpose of this study was defined as the ease with which a child decodes the words in connected text. Decoding was the process by which letters of a printed word were converted to speech (Samuels, Schermer & Reinking, 1992). To help the children in the Seaview program become more fluent readers, teachers provided instruction using the direct instruction Reading Mastery program. At the time of this study, the role of fluency in learning to read had been argued among reading researchers. Some felt that decoding, the process which helps children read fluently, was not truly reading (Taylor, 1999). The following section describes research on decoding and fluency in beginning reading.

Decoding was only one component of learning to read, however its degree of importance was often the subject of debate. Most researchers agreed that fluent reading was necessary for children to comprehend written material; however, the role of decoding in developing fluency was often argued. Samuels, Schermer and Reinking (1992) maintained that fluency was developed using three components of the reading process: decoding, comprehension, and attention. Samuels and his colleagues believed that decoding was an essential part of the reading process, but emphasized that decoding did not include understanding meaning. As children learned to decode more quickly, they began to focus on comprehension.

Juel (1988) studied 54 children in as they progressed from first through fourth grade. She found that of the 24 children who were poor readers at the end of first grade, 21 remained poor

readers in fourth grade. The children who remained poor readers lacked phoneme awareness (awareness that words are composed of sounds) in first grade and could not decode accurately. Juel believed that the primary factor that kept the poor readers from improving was their poor decoding skills. By the end of first grade, the skilled readers had seen an average of 18,681 words in their basal readers compared with the 9,975 seen by the poor readers.

Research on reading disabilities produced evidence that the fundamental reading problem for poor readers involved difficulty acquiring accurate and fluent word identification skills (Stanovich, 1988). Poor readers were often unable to fully attain phonological reading skills. This limited their early independence in reading and may have interfered with the development of word reading strategies (decoding) that were the basis for fluent reading. Based on this research, Torgeson, Wagner and Rashotte (1997) recommended that research in the prevention and remediation of reading disabilities be based on children with phonologically based reading disabilities. In addressing the needs of children with reading disabilities, Torgeson and his colleagues (1997) maintained that reading instruction must lead to the development of accurate and fluent text-based word reading skills. This fluency was fostered through the early growth of alphabetic reading skills and phonological awareness. Torgeson's et al. (1997) research funded by the NICHD was the culmination of a five year project to determine what type of instructional program has the largest immediate impact on word level reading skills and long-term impact on fluency and comprehension skills.

In summary, decoding and the resulting reading fluency it fosters were found to play an important role in learning to read. Although decoding and fluency were only components of what defined a skilled reader, they worked together to help children read effortlessly enough so that comprehension was possible. None of the research described in this section used authentic

literature to assess how children applied these skills to reading real books. For this reason programs such as the Seaview Reading Support Program were important to inform researchers how well training in decoding and reading fluency transfer to authentic literature.

Reading Mastery

This section reviewed research supporting the use of Reading Mastery, a direct instruction program formerly called DISTAR, in the support of struggling readers. Reading Mastery was a component of the Seaview program in grades first through fourth.

Direct instruction was an early elementary program originally designed to extend early childhood curriculum into the primary grades as part of a federal program called Follow Through (Slavin & Fashola, 1998). Teachers who used this kind of instruction followed specific instructions in teaching children how to read. Direct instruction was often used as a basal reading approach or as curriculum for special education programs. The most comprehensive evaluation (Abt Associates, 1977, cited in Slavin & Fashola, 1998) of direct instruction (DI) compared the results of nine Follow Through programs to control groups not implementing DI. The authors of the study evaluated the effects of the program on academic achievement, cognitive achievement, and self-esteem on norm-referenced tests. The DI model showed substantial effects in all three areas when compared to other programs. Adams and Engelmann (1996) have also shown strong positive effects of DI in reading, particularly in special education where the program is often used.

Meyer (1984) investigated the long-term effects of DISTAR on children who were involved in the program for three and four years. Students in the Follow-Through project in

New York were compared to matched control groups as high school seniors on graduation rate, application to college, acceptance to college, placement in special education, and school attendance for the previous year. More than 63% of the DI students graduated from college, compared to only 38% of the control group. Fewer students receiving DI dropped out of school (28%) as opposed to 46% of the control group. More of the DI students applied to college (34% vs. 28% of the control group) and were accepted (34%) than those in the control group (17%).

Reading Mastery and other programs that taught explicit phonics skills emphasized the relationship between letters and sounds in the alphabetic system. Letters and letter combinations were presented daily and children were drilled on their associated sounds. After children became familiar with two letters and sounds, they practiced blending the sounds into words. Lists of words were presented each day and children practiced sounding them out and then saying them fast. In the Reading Mastery program children began to read connected text in a book format during lesson 91, where decodable words were put together to make a story. Children read each story three times before answering questions about the story content. The content of the stories was secondary to the emphasis on decoding fluency. The goal of the program was develop automatic recognition of words so that children could read quickly enough to understand written material.

Transfer of Learning Theory

This section on transfer of learning provided a portion of the theoretical framework for the design of the Seaview Reading Support Program. The daily reading intervention was conducted in the classroom by a grade level classroom teacher, using as many core curriculum

materials as possible to encourage the transfer of the reading skills gained in the Reading Mastery program.

The transfer of newly learned skills to help children read appropriate grade level books was the goal of reading intervention. Because many support programs for struggling readers were delivered outside the regular classroom using different materials and instructional methodologies, it was unlikely that children easily transferred new learning to reading the core curriculum materials in which they were ultimately evaluated with respect to their same age classmates. It was not clear from many reading intervention studies whether gains in skills developed in tightly controlled conditions transferred to less controlled classroom settings (Lyon, 1996) or were maintained over time. The benefits of intervention treatments typically decreased over time, particularly when they were measured in settings different from those of the original intervention (Shanahan & Barr, 1995). Some of this decline may have been due to differences in how skills were introduced and reinforced in the classroom versus the tutorial settings (Lyon & Moats, 1997).

It is naive to expect that children with reading difficulties that eventually master phonological and phonics concepts will automatically transfer these concepts when attempting to read connected text. Instead, systematic instruction that links reading skills to foster the development of componential skills and their relationship to one another, and the development of fluency, should increase the probability that a youngster with reading difficulties will construct meaning from text (Lyon & Moats, 1997, p.164).

Marini and Genereux (1995) broadly defined transfer of learning as prior learning affecting new learning or performance. The basic elements involved in transfer were the learner, the instructional task, the instructional context, the transfer task, and the transfer

context. A challenge for educators teaching for transfer was to design instructional contexts and tasks so that learners had the necessary resources to succeed on transfer tasks.

Marini and Genereux (1995) discussed five crucial issues in the study of transfer of learning. The first issue addressed whether the researcher should focus on tasks, learners, or contexts in teaching for transfer. Educational theorists emphasized the importance of each specific element. Because each component played a key role in the transfer process, each must be taken into account when designing instruction.

The second issue questioned what degree of transfer a researcher could reasonably expect to achieve. Could students transfer learning to different classroom tasks in different contexts or was transfer limited to relatively similar tasks and contexts? Beriter (1995, p. 26) stated “Most research on transfer has been bad news for educators. It gives the impression that transfer usually doesn’t happen, and that when it does it is limited to tasks and situations quite similar to those in which the learning occurred.” Some skills, such as decoding, were found to be highly transferable. Good readers, in contrast to those with reading disabilities, recognized and decoded words automatically. But whether or not readers understood what they read depended on a number of factors such as how much was already known about the text and its meaning. Transfer was problematic in the higher level skill of reading comprehension.

Researchers considered both the task and context variables when determining the extent that transfer of learning had occurred. The distance or difference between the training and the transfer tasks and contexts was a variable in measuring to what degree transfer of learning had occurred. The generality of transfer was a measure of the number of different tasks or contexts to which original learning was applied. A clear description of the extent of transfer must specify

the amount of cross-task and cross-context transfer in terms of the distance and generality of the transfer.

The third and fourth issues addressed what should be taught and how it should be taught in order to enhance transfer. Many researchers believed that strategies (Pressley, 1985; Palincsar & Brown, 1984) should be emphasized when teaching for transfer. If general strategies that applied to a broad range of tasks and contexts could be identified and taught, then the general transfer of learning could presumably occur. The methodology used to teach new learning was also an issue in the transfer of that learning. Explicit teaching with vast amounts of practice and automaticity in training contrasted with the explicit teaching of deep understanding of training tasks over time. These issues will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Transfer in Classroom Settings

Campione, Shapiro and Brown (1995) acknowledged the difficulties of measuring transfer in classroom settings. In naturalistic environments, transfer often occurred unpredictably, in a variety of ways. These authors described the transfer of learning in the classroom as students understanding and explaining the resources they had acquired and using this new learning flexibly, across many tasks and environments. Classrooms could be organized to facilitate this transfer of learning by structuring student activities so that they consistently used what they were learning as a bridge to new knowledge. Reading and writing were tools for learning and communicating, rather than an end in themselves. In designing a program to enhance transfer, Campione, Shapiro and Brown (1995) outlined the kind of transfer they hoped would occur in student learning:

1. Students would learn to read and write for the purpose of guiding learning across other areas. Reading would be used to answer questions and do research; writing would become a tool for evaluating understanding. Students would, over time, improve their ability to find and coordinate the main ideas of a variety of texts.
2. Students would understand the big pictures in subjects like biology and environmental science, rather than memorizing isolated facts. The concepts that students worked with would be intended to form a basis for future learning.
3. Students would use reasoning strategies to generate coherent arguments on the basis of incomplete information using analogy and explanation to support their theories.
4. Discussion formats would provide many chances for students to practice and refine their oral presentation skills. Much of what students understood and did not understand would be revealed through these discussions.

The classroom culture must be established early in settings that facilitated the transfer of learning. Classrooms with an atmosphere of individual responsibility and communal sharing would help students and teachers maintain ownership of certain expertise that could be shared with others to maximize learning. Students, staff and members of the extended community would treat others respectfully and treat questions seriously. An important element of this respect would be the ability to listen to others. A learning community would be established early in which meaning is negotiated and renegotiated through questioning and discussion. Finally, the classroom would be organized into structured and predictable frameworks where students could immediately identify their roles so they could easily transition between activities. To promote transfer, central aspects of the learning environment would include: (a) metacognitive

factors in which students were made aware that new information is meant to be transferred and made useful in across many settings; (b) an emphasis on discourse; (c) students given multiple opportunities to explain their learning to others; (d) the content of lessons supporting extended analysis; and (e) all learning activities practiced in the context of their intended use.

Frameworks for Transfer

Two forms of collaborative learning served as repetitive frameworks in classrooms that Campione, Shapiro and Brown (1995) designed to promote the transfer of learning: reciprocal teaching (Palincsar and Brown, 1984) and the jigsaw method (Aronson, 1978).

Reciprocal teaching was a method used by students to enhance reading comprehension. In a typical lesson a teacher and a group of students took turns leading a discussion, beginning with a question and ending with a summarization of what had been read. The leader periodically asked for predictions about future content and helped to clarify any comprehension problems that occurred. The four activities included in reciprocal teaching, questioning, clarifying, summarizing and predicting, were comprehension monitoring devices which enabled students with varying amounts of skill to participate meaningfully in group reading and discussion. Reciprocal teaching could be used with a variety of authentic texts, eliminating the need for remedial materials.

The jigsaw method of cooperative learning involved students learning part of a classroom topic and teaching that portion to others, using reciprocal teaching. The students did research in groups of experts, then reassembled into learning groups in order to present and

receive information. The learning groups assembled the information into a whole class book on a single theme related to the big picture under study.

The children participating in classrooms which Campione, Shapiro and Brown (1995) designed to promote the transfer of new learning consistently showed greater performance and improvement on transfer measures than control classrooms that were not structured to do so. The Seaview reading support program included few of the central aspects of the learning environment that promoted the transfer of reading skills to the core curriculum. Teachers familiar with what all students at their grade level needed to know and do in order to be considered proficient readers delivered support services. The alternative direct instruction materials were used with the expectation that new learning would be practiced immediately in real books in authentic reading activities. Children receiving reading support services had multiple opportunities to discuss their learning and apply it to many different learning activities, however the learning community described by Campione, Shapiro and Brown (1995) would require significant change in the structuring of the entire instructional program at Seaview.

Implications for Leadership

Leadership was an integral part of the success experienced by students and teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program. Research in education demonstrated that leadership was essential to substantive, enduring progress. The kind of sustained improvement needed in schools would not occur in isolation. Schmoker (1996) wrote that schools improve when purpose and effort unite. This concept could be applied at the program level. Programs improved when a clear purpose was identified and effort in the form of resources and support

was applied toward achieving that purpose. In order for the Seaview Reading Support Program to be successful, its purpose must be clarified and shared by each teacher involved. A collaborative effort was necessary to maintain the positive change in student achievement described in chapter 5.

In schools the term leadership was commonly equated with one person in a position of authority. This definition limited the potential for broad-based participation by members of a community. The concept of school leadership must be expanded to include all members of a school community. Lambert (1998) proposed a reconceptualization of leadership to consider the connections among individuals in a learning community. The key notion in Lambert's definition was learning together and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively. Lambert described leading as a shared endeavor that every member of the school community could learn. The shared responsibility in leading change required the redistribution of power and authority so that shared purpose and action could be achieved.

Leadership was the basis for the conception and implementation of the reading support program. Rost (1993), after an extensive review of literature supporting leadership, defined leadership as an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real change. Rost (1995) later changed the term followers to collaborators to reflect the flexible nature of leadership. There were four essential elements that provided the foundation for this definition of leadership. The first was the influence relationship. The influence relationship was multi-directional; meaning that anyone could be a leader. Leaders and followers could, and often did, change roles during the influence relationship. In the case of Seaview, several teachers acted as leaders in the design and implementation of the reading support program. The principal of Seaview, demonstrated leadership by providing the staff with time and support for collaboration

in designing and implementing the program. Teachers that provided reading support were leaders in their work with children to create positive change in their reading achievement. In order for a relationship to be driven by influence, the relationship must be non-coercive. The reading support program was the product of teacher collaboration and limited shared vision, rather than a directive. The principal encouraged all teachers to participate, but there were no negative consequences for teachers who declined to participate or support the reading program. The multi-directional, non-coercive influence relationship was apparent in the Seaview Reading Support Program.

The second critical element of leadership according to Rost (1993) was that the followers, or collaborators, in the influence relationship were active participants in achieving significant change. The teachers at Seaview Elementary in grades kindergarten through fourth participated initially at some level in the program during the 1999-2000 school year. The kindergarten teachers each provided support for another grade level during the fall of 1999 and the teachers in first through fourth grade either provided direct reading support services to students or sent their students out for reading support. Each teacher was active at some level in the Seaview Reading Support Program.

Real, intended change was the third element of Rost's (1993) definition of leadership. The word intended meant that leaders and collaborators purposefully desired change. Action and communication on the part of leaders and collaborators must demonstrate this intention. Intended change is not always achieved in a leadership situation, however the people involved must mean for the change to take place. The word real meant that the change was substantive and transforming. Unfortunately change that was substantive and transforming was defined differently by diverse populations. The teachers at Seaview Elementary intended for substantive

change in the reading achievement of struggling readers. The perceptions of how much change took place varied from teacher to teacher. The teachers that participated in this study agreed that change took place to a degree, however many teachers perceived that further program improvement must take place for the change to become transformational.

The fourth element essential to Rost's (1993) concept of leadership was that leaders and collaborators develop mutual purposes. The intended change must reflect the wants and needs of both parties. Rost (1993) indicated that these purposes were broader and more closely related to vision than goals. Teachers designed the Seaview program with a single vision: improving reading instruction for children to boost their reading achievement. Conflicts between the design and delivery of the program and what teachers perceived to be necessary to deliver exemplary reading instruction were not considered in the implementation of the program.

Heifetz (1994) viewed leadership as the mobilization of people to tackle tough problems. A certain kind of learning he called adaptive work must take place in order to successfully address conflicts in the values people held or to diminish the gap between the values people stood for and the reality they faced. In order to reach a compromise between the carefully designed Seaview reading support program and the factors teachers felt were necessary to deliver effective reading support, adaptive work must be done to identify conflicts between the values teachers hold and the reality they face in teaching reading. In the case of the Seaview Support Program, the shared vision was the improvement of student reading skills, the population mobilized was the teachers and administrators involved in the program, and the significant change agent was the reading support program itself. This study began the adaptive work of examining the perceptions of each teacher involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program in order to identify the unanticipated problems in its implementation.

The leadership involved in the implementation of the Seaview Reading Support Program was also related to the perceived efficacy of the teachers in teaching children to read. Berliner (in Ashton & Webb, 1986, p. xii) stated that “ Self-efficacy begins by making people feel that they have the power to change their own world. The kind of leadership needed in the teaching profession today is leadership that hands over power to teachers to solve their own problems.” The Seaview program was designed by teachers to maximize the impact of reading support. It was a fine example of teachers solving a problem. The program now deserves deeper study of its effects on how teachers perceived student achievement, the relationship of their perceptions to their level of involvement in the program, and their perceived efficacy in teaching reading.

Summary

In summarizing this review of literature, it was apparent that more research was necessary in the design and implementation of reading support programs that combined the authentic materials that children must learn to read in order to grow intellectually with instructional methods that facilitated the process of learning to read for students with reading difficulties. Although many of the reading intervention programs reviewed in this chapter helped children to read more successfully, few (Only Success for All and Taylor’s EIR) of them were delivered in the classroom by classroom teachers using core curriculum materials for instruction and assessment. It was convenient for researchers to measure reading improvement using word lists, achievement tests and leveled passages, however it was difficult for teachers who provided the bulk of daily instruction to relate the results of these tests to the design of daily lessons and activities.

The role of the teacher and his or her perceptions of efficacy were strongly linked to student achievement and the success of innovative programs. It was essential that more research be conducted on the relationship between teacher perception of reading support programs so that critical elements of teacher delivery of reading intervention could be identified and implemented.

The perceptions of teachers had enormous implications for leadership, both in the Seaview program and in the design of other reading support programs in small schools and districts. The identification of the elements of reading support that teachers perceived to enhance or inhibit their service of struggling readers was essential in determining the next steps for supporting children and teachers at Seaview Elementary.

In the third chapter, the research design and methodology used to collect and analyze the data in the study were presented. Both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies were described, in addition to the multiple measures used to increase the validity of the study. The NUD*IST program used to manage the data collection was reviewed, as well as studies supporting its use in qualitative studies. The modification of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) Teacher Scale of Efficacy was discussed and validated. The limitations of the study were also presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to present the methodologies necessary to describe the multiple realities of the teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program. Because this study was based on student achievement, how teachers perceived the achievement of students in the reading support program, the structure of the program itself and each teacher's perceptions of efficacy in providing reading instruction, qualitative and quantitative methodology was essential to capture the context of their perceptions.

Each teacher brought a different frame of reference to his or her perceptions of the program and each individual was unique in his or her definitions of student literacy and impressions of the effect of the program on that literacy. Data from multiple sources were collected from teachers to construct individual teaching profiles. The data from each teacher were cross-referenced to identify themes in teacher perceptions of the effects of the Seaview Reading Support Program on student achievement, perceptions of the program design, and perceptions of teaching efficacy in the area of reading using the qualitative data management program NUD*IST.

A multiple case design (Merriam, 1998) assisted in the identification of themes among different groups of teachers, depending on the level of their

involvement in the program, their grade level, and their perceptions of teaching efficacy and program efficacy. The analysis of data was ongoing, synthesizing the results of interviews, member checking, and information collected using the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (modified from Gibson & Dembo, 1984). As the interviews were conducted, transcribed and analyzed for common themes, a profile of each teacher was compiled using data from the interviews and the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (modified from Gibson & Dembo, 1984). This profile captured the essence of the teacher's experience, level of involvement in the program, and perceived impact on teaching difficult or unmotivated students to read. These profiles are presented in chapter 4 to add depth to the data summarized in chapter 5. Teachers had the opportunity to respond to the profiles during the process of member checking.

The quantitative aspect of the study involved the synthesis of data from the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (modified from Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and the results of reading fluency measures and standardized test percentile rankings of students in grades one through four. The instrument used to measure teacher perceptions of efficacy was composed of a Likert scale in which teachers agreed or disagreed with 16 statements indicating personal perceptions of efficacy and general teaching efficacy in the area of reading (see Appendix B for Gibson & Dembo's 1984 instrument). The scores were calculated, ranked, and matched with data taken during the interview process. The Mann Whitney U, a non-parametric test, was used to rank each teacher's score so that the perceptions of efficacy between different groups of teachers could be compared and linked to program perceptions

and levels of program involvement. The Mann Whitney U test and the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (modified from Gibson & Dembo, 1984) were further described in the instrumentation and data analysis sections of this chapter.

This chapter summarized the multiple case study methodology used to assess teacher perceptions, the non-parametric testing used to rank and compare the perceived efficacy in teaching reading of different groups of teachers, and the methods used to summarize and describe student achievement.

Research Methodology

Merriam (1998) described qualitative research as an umbrella concept covering forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with little disruption of the natural setting. Qualitative researchers were interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed to make sense of their world. The researcher was the primary instrument in data collection, usually in the setting in which the investigated phenomenon occurs. Qualitative research also employed an inductive research strategy in order to build hypotheses and theories.

The information sought from teachers at Seaview Elementary was highly contextual and was best studied at Seaview Elementary, in the setting where teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program developed. Because of the personal nature of teachers' perceptions of reading instruction, the Seaview program, and efficacy in the teaching of reading, each teacher was what Stake (1994) called a bounded system, or a complex, specific, functioning thing within the Seaview

Reading Support Program. This individuality was best explored using a multiple case study (Merriam, 1998) in which each of the 14 teachers participating in the Seaview program was considered as a single case. The data from the interviews and efficacy scale were examined across the cases to identify common themes.

Quantitative methodology was often included in case studies to add perspective to the meaning constructed by individual participants in the study. In order to give the reader a frame of reference for the perceptions of student achievement by Seaview teachers, actual student data were described in the study using the means of norm-referenced and curriculum-based measures for different groups of students. Quantitative methodology was also used in the ranking and interpretation of teacher scores on the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (modified from Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

Research Design

Multiple or comparative case studies involved data collection from several sources. Each case was treated as a case study in and of itself. Once the analysis of each case was complete, cross-case analysis began (Merriam, 1998). The researcher built an explanation that will fit each individual case, although each varied in details. In the case of the Seaview Reading Support Program, each teacher was a complex case worth study both for information about an innovative program that boosted the reading achievement of children in the early grades and for the insight gained from the perceptions of teachers involved in the program.

Miles and Huberman (1994) warned that cross-case analysis was complex. In order to identify variables that transcended individual cases, one must understand the local dynamics and the configuration of processes in each case. In order to address the need for increased validity in this cross-case study, data from different sources were used in the final analysis of data in a process called data triangulation (Denzin, 1978). The data sources included: (a) the data from the direct interviews with the teachers and staff involved with the Seaview Reading Support Program, (b) early data submitted to each participant for member checking, (c) a Likert scale instrument modified from a construct designed by Gibson and Dembo (1984) to measure teacher perceptions of personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy and (d) student achievement data published by the district. With multiple approaches within the study, extraneous influences were likely to be nullified (Stake, 1995).

Figure 1: Triangulation of the data collected from teachers

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews were necessary to collect information on the Seaview teachers' feelings, behaviors, and interpretations of the reading support program. In order to honor each teacher's unique perspectives on the reading support program, a semi-structured format was chosen. During the semi-structured interview phase of the study, teachers were questioned about their role in the support program, their perceptions of the program's structure, and its effects on student achievement. Teachers were asked to identify what factors facilitated and detracted from the teaching of reading and elaborate on their personal and general sense of teaching efficacy. The interview concluded with an open-ended question on teacher perceptions of an ideal reading support program (Appendix A). As data were transcribed and coded, profiles of each teacher (Seidman, 1998) were constructed and submitted for member checking. Before the interview, teachers filled out Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading, a modified form of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) Teacher Efficacy Scale, designed to reflect perceptions of general and personal teaching efficacy in the area of reading (Appendix C).

The profiles of each teacher presented in chapter 4 were based on information collected during the interview and included information important to the reader's interpretation of each teacher's perceived efficacy in the area of teaching reading.

Instrumentation

The following instrumentation was employed to address the 5 research questions in this study:

Student Achievement

1. What were the effects of participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program on student achievement as measured by the following instruments?

Grade Level	Curriculum-based Assessment	Norm-referenced Instrument
1	Running record on <u>I Went Walking</u> (Barchas, 1979)	Selected sections of Clay's (1983) <u>An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement</u> . These sections included hearing and recording sounds in words, writing vocabulary, and reading high-frequency words. Student data were compared to the scores from population of students used by Clay to norm the survey for teacher use.
2	Reading Fluency in words read per minute on a portion of a benchmark book selected from the district core curriculum.	National Percentile Ranking of total reading scores on the Stanford 9 achievement test.
3	Reading Fluency in words read per minute on a selected portion of a benchmark book selected from the district core curriculum.	National Percentile Ranking on total reading scores on the Stanford 9 achievement test. Changes in scores from the 1999 to the 2000 school year were also examined
4	Reading Fluency in words read per minute on a selected portion of a benchmark book selected from the district core curriculum.	National Percentile Ranking on total reading scores on the Stanford 9 achievement test. Changes in scores from the 1999 to the 2000 school year were also examined

Figure 2: Instruments used to measure student data.

Information on student achievement was obtained for this report through public documents on test scores (California STAR School Summary Report, 2000) and teacher generated summaries comparing the achievement of struggling readers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program to their same age classmates. Classroom data were collected and summarized by reading support teachers.

Student data were collected from two groups of children at grade levels one through four: those who participated in the Seaview Reading Support Program and those who did not. At the end of the school year each child in grades two through four took the Stanford 9 achievement test. The mean of the total reading score for each group of students was calculated and compared. The mean of the growth in percentile rankings from the 1999 school year to the 2000 school year was compared for the two groups of students in grades two through four. Children in grades two through four were also tested by their classroom teacher to determine how many words they could read correctly per minute in an authentic piece of grade level text. The means of the words read correctly per minute were calculated for the two groups of students and compared for growth in words read per minute from the beginning of the school year. At the end of the school year first graders were given three sub-tests of Clay's (1993) An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement. The mean of each sub-test was calculated for each group of students. The first grade teachers also took a running record of a first grade benchmark book to calculate the mean of the words read correctly by children in both groups. The student data are presented in chapter 5, figures four through nine. It was important to note that these means describing the achievement of both groups of students were not statistically sound,

due to the limited numbers of children receiving support, compared to the entire grade level of children. The means were included in the study to illustrate student growth, rather than the formal comparison of the two groups of students.

Teacher Perceptions of the Program

This section described the instruments used to answer the following research questions:

2. How did Seaview teachers perceive the effects of participation in the Reading Support Program on student achievement?
3. Which program elements did teachers perceive as most helpful in affecting positive change in student achievement, and which elements hindered this change?

The semi-structured interview questions for the 14 teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program were summarized in Appendix A. The questions were based on the issues in the Seaview Reading Support Program from which the research questions were derived and included questions probing each teacher's perceived teaching efficacy in reading to support the data collected in the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (Appendix C).

Data Management

One of the challenges in a multiple case study was the management of data (Merriam, 1998). The data obtained during the interviews were entered into a computer-based qualitative data analysis program called NUD*IST. NUD*IST

assisted qualitative researchers by indexing, searching, and classifying data. The index system allowed the creation and exploration of categories by coding, merging, and shifting in a free collection of category structure. Interview documents were edited by inserting or removing text without affecting the interview coding. As themes across teachers emerged, a node was established within the NUD*IST program in which data was stored. As information that supported the themes was identified in teacher interviews, the text could be inserted into the corresponding data node. Margerum-Leys, Kupperman and Boyle-Heimann (1999) studied the use of NUD*IST in the context of 3 qualitative studies that differed in theoretical frames, area of interests and scope. The use of qualitative data analysis software enabled the researchers in all 3 studies to give concrete structure to large data sets, code at multiple levels, and pursue iterative analysis methods.

Concerns about the use of computers in the analysis of qualitative research were common (Merriam, 1998). Introducing computer analysis interjected a different medium for data analysis and created a different relationship with the data. Some of the richness of the data may be lost if technical language and quantification was substituted for description. Data may be distorted by the computer and may go undetected by the researcher. Finally, the use of a computer program may result in over-simplification of the results of the study. The possibility that computer analysis impacted the quality of the data collected in this study was small. For the purposes of this study, NUD*IST was used only to sort data, rather than to search for key words in order to support themes. Each theme was identified by scrolling through the actual interview text and sorting supporting data into nodes within each theme. The

advantages gained by using NUD*IST in this study out-weighed the disadvantages due to the overwhelming amount of interview data generated within a short period of time. The use of NUD*IST in this cross-case study made it possible to quickly analyze data across the case studies of each teacher involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program without negative impact on the quality of the resulting description and interpretation. The program assisted in the storage and retrieval of the data in the study, rather than the actual data analysis.

Member Checking

Member checking is submitting data and researcher interpretations of that data back to the participants from which they were derived. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested that this checking be conducted throughout the study. Teachers played a major role in the descriptive nature of this study. Although they were the subjects of the proposed study, they provided critical observations and interpretations of the data collected (Stake, 1995). As interviews were transcribed and profiles of each teacher were constructed, the information was submitted to the teachers in the study with a letter inviting them to respond and add to the interpretation of their interview transcriptions (Appendix D). Member checking provided further insight on their original responses. In this study these checks were a safeguard against possible researcher bias.

Teacher Perceptions of Efficacy

This section described the quantitative instrumentation used to address the following

research questions:

4. Was there a relationship between teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program and teachers' sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading?
5. Was there a relationship between teachers' sense of general and personal efficacy in teaching reading and their level of involvement in the program? If so, what was the nature of this relationship?

In order to sample each Seaview teacher's perceptions of personal and general teaching efficacy, an existing efficacy construct was modified to reflect efficacy in teaching reading. An explanation of the modified instrument follows.

Modification of Gibson and Dembo's 1984 Scale

The Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading was developed to add specificity in reading to the context of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) scale. The seminal Rand study (Berman et al., 1977) of teacher perceptions of efficacy used only two questions on a longer questionnaire to assess the perceptions of efficacy of teachers who had participated in an innovative change process. When the two items were used as independent variables, Berman and his colleagues found that the teachers' sense of efficacy was positively related to the percentage of project goals

met and the degree of teacher change that took place over the course of the study. In another Rand study, Armor and his colleagues (1976) found that the more efficacious teachers felt the more their students' reading improved. Gibson and Dembo (1984) used these questions and other research to develop a 30 question instrument in the Likert format (see Appendix B for the original scale), that measured teacher efficacy. A six-point scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree to 6, strongly agree was used for participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed with a given statement. Gibson and Dembo's (1984) study provided construct validation support for the variable of teacher efficacy and examined the relationship between teacher efficacy and observable teacher behaviors. Factor analysis of elementary teacher responses to the questions yielded two substantial factors corresponding to Bandura's (1977) two-factor model of self-efficacy: (a) an efficacy expectation, the belief that one could successfully perform a behavior to produce the desired outcome, referred to here as personal teaching efficacy, and (b) an outcome expectation, which was a person's belief that a given behavior would lead to a certain outcome, referred to here as general teaching efficacy. Gibson and Dembo (1984) labeled factor one Personal Teaching Efficacy and factor two Teaching Efficacy. Nine of the 30 questions in the original instrument loaded on factor one, and 7 loaded on factor two. Gibson and Dembo acknowledged that further research and refinement of the Teacher efficacy scale was needed across different populations and settings and with a revised scale based on 16-20 items.

Bandura (1997) suggested that a person's beliefs of efficacy vary in different contexts. Scales that measured a general sense of teaching efficacy failed to

recognize perceptions of efficacy in different areas. People may have considered themselves efficacious only in certain domains of functioning that were not clearly defined by the scale. The item content of self-efficacy scales must represent beliefs about a person's abilities to produce a certain level of performance in order to truly measure his or her perceptions of efficacy. The scales should be supplemented with interviews, open-ended surveys, and structured questionnaires to determine the levels of challenge and impediment to successful performance in certain activities to provide a broader context for an individual's sense of efficacy.

Research on teacher efficacy typically employed the two items from Berman and McLaughlin's (1977) study or some combination of the 30-item scale developed by Gibson and Dembo (1984). Both sets of measures related to Bandura's distinction between outcome and efficacy expectations. For this reason the scale was slightly modified for this study to reflect teacher perceptions of personal and general teaching efficacy in teaching reading. The wording of each question was changed minimally to indicate reading as the area of desired performance. For example, question seven was modified from: "I have enough training to deal with any learning problem", to read "I have enough training to deal with any reading problem."

The questions on the modified scale included only questions that loaded on one of the two factors, personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy on the original scale. Questions six and seven were retained, although they did not show a loading on either factor because they were directly related to some of the present issues in the Seaview Reading Support Program. The questions were presented in the same order as Gibson and Dembo's original scale, with the exclusion of questions that

dealt only with classroom discipline and parent conferences. In order to increase the validity of the untested, modified construct, some of the interview questions probed teacher sense of efficacy in order to give teachers a chance to explain their perceptions of efficacy in teaching reading.

Validity and Reliability of the Modified Scale

In the factor analysis of their original 30 questions, Gibson and Dembo found sufficient reliability ($\alpha = .79$) that 16 loaded on the two factors they described as factor one, personal teaching efficacy and factor two, teaching efficacy. Nine of the 30 questions loaded on factor one and seven loaded on factor two. For this reason, all 16 of those questions were retained in the design of the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading. The combination of these construct questions with the semi-structured interview question asking each teacher how much of a difference he or she can make in teaching difficult or unmotivated children to read added validity to the modified construct.

Research on teacher efficacy typically included either the two items from the seminal Rand study or some combination of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) 30 question Scale of Teacher Efficacy. Both measures were related to Bandura's outcome and efficacy expectations and were used to delineate personal and general teaching efficacy. Gibson and Dembo's (1984) scale had been modified successfully and reliably by a number of researchers (Coladarci, 1992; Podell & Soodak, 1993).

Coladarci (1992) assessed teacher efficacy with the Gibson and Dembo scale, with slightly modified wording and with the substitution of the two Rand items. A principal-axis factor resulted in a factor structure consistent with the general/personal efficacy distinction reported by Gibson and Dembo (1984). Twenty six percent of the total item variance in Coladarci's study was accounted for by the two orthogonal factors, Personal Efficacy, 17%; Teaching Efficacy, 9%, a finding congruent with prior factor analyses of this instrument.

Podell and Soodak (1993) used a shortened version of Gibson and Dembo's scale with changed wording in their study of teacher efficacy and bias in special education referrals. Based on the responses of their sample, an alpha coefficient of 0.75 was found for the modified scale.

It was unlikely that the modification of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) Scale of Teacher Efficacy to specify efficacy in the area of teaching reading for the purposes of this study impacted the original reliability of the scale. In fact, the combination of the modified scale with data from the semi-structured interview added to the validity of the construct by identifying the kinds of factors, considerations, and standards teachers used to respond to the 16 item scale.

Data Analysis of the Scale

In order to compare the efficacy scores from the modified scale, a Mann Whitney U test was used to rank the scores of different teachers, both in the areas of personal efficacy and general efficacy in teaching reading in order to compare scores

collected from different groups of teachers. The Mann Whitney U was a non-parametric test used to compare ranked data from sources such as the Likert scale used in this study. Test procedures dealing with ranks involved fewer assumptions than test procedures developed for use with interval or ratio-level data. The sample sizes involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program were small: fourteen teachers were involved overall, with only 7 teachers providing support services to children, and a total of four teachers at each grade level (except for grade four with only three teachers). F-tests and t-tests were most robust when the samples being compared are randomly selected and from larger populations. For this reason the Mann Whitney U test was more appropriate to compare teacher perceptions of efficacy across grade levels and among teachers with varying levels of involvement in the program. Raw scores can appear misleadingly precise and it was improper to treat these scores as if they indicated the absolute distance that separated any two subjects having different scores, when those scores indicated only which subject had relatively more of a measured characteristic than the other (Huck & Cormier, 1996).

The Mann Whitney U test allowed two independent samples, such as the efficacy of teachers in different grade levels or with different levels of involvement in a program to be compared. The Mann Whitney U test was less likely than other non-parametric tests to produce a Type II error in which the hypothesis of a study is not rejected when the null hypothesis is false. When using the Mann Whitney U test, researchers examined scores based on the variable of interest. In this study the variables were personal efficacy in teaching reading and general teaching efficacy in teaching reading. The subjects under study were ranked twice, once for each

variable: personal teaching efficacy in reading and general teaching efficacy in the area of reading, according to their scores on the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading. For the purposes of this study, the efficacy scores of teachers who directly provided support services to struggling readers were compared to teachers who did not provide additional services. The ranks were examined to see if the two groups had significantly different scores in either personal teaching efficacy in reading or general teaching efficacy in the area of reading. The occurrence of multiple tied ranks among the subjects brought the validity of the Mann Whitney into question. The Mann Whitney U test is further described in the Data Analysis section of this chapter.

In summary the combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies facilitated examination of the relationships between teacher perceptions of general and personal teaching efficacy in reading, and the level of teacher involvement in the Seaview Reading Support Program, teacher perceptions of the program, and its design. The qualitative multiple case study methodology allowed for the exploration and rich description of these relationships. Coladarci (1992) stated "From a measurement perspective, the teacher efficacy literature also would be enriched by more qualitative studies, such as those employing a think aloud methodology, in which teachers' thoughts are probed as they respond to teacher efficacy items (p. 335)." The combination of the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading with the semi-structured interview gave teachers in this study a chance to think aloud, adding depth to the individual perception of efficacy scores.

Data Collection and Recording

In this study much of the data were collected in an interactive, face to face interview process. The researcher's interpretations of data were submitted to interview subjects during member checking so that they could respond, censor sensitive material, or illuminate the researcher's interpretation of the information given during the interviews.

Teachers were contacted first to provide informed consent for participation in the study and to set up interview appointments. Interviews lasted from 30 to 90 minutes for each participant in the study. Before the initial interview, teachers individually filled out the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (modified from Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Each participant was provided with an envelope in which to return the scale to the researcher. The scales and the interviews were coded according to the teacher's grade level and level of participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program by letters and numbers so that the scale was anonymous to any person other than the researcher.

Entry to the Population

As one of the teachers involved in the development of the Seaview Reading Support Program, the researcher had access to the program and was assured of the district administrators' support of the research. The student achievement scores described in the study were public information and were available upon request. Both

the school principal during the 1999-2000 school year, the principal during the 2000-2001 school year, and the Seaview staff, supported the in-depth study of the Seaview Reading Support Program both as its own phenomenon and as a tool for learning more about innovative programs for serving struggling readers. During the time that this study took place, the researcher left the Seaview District to work for the County Office of Education, reducing the probability that teachers at Seaview would be uncomfortable talking about the reading support program's strengths and weaknesses. Although the researcher continued to assist Seaview in the collection of student data, she had no formal authority at the site and minimal informal authority. There was no question among the Seaview staff that the reading support program had both flaws which needed to be identified in order to help every child and every teacher benefit from its support, and exemplary elements which should be emphasized and continued. Critique had been an integral part of the Seaview program with no teacher being censored in any way by the school administration because of negative feedback about the program.

Selection of the Site and Subjects

At the time of this study, Seaview Elementary was the only site in the Seaview district with an organized program for serving struggling readers. The subjects were teachers of children in grades first through fourth during the 1999-2000 school year. Although only one or two teachers at each grade level provided the actual support services, the program in some way impacted each teacher of children

in grades first through fourth. The teachers involved at every level in the Seaview Reading Support Program were important informants on how the program's efficacy was perceived and their own sense of personal and general teaching efficacy.

Data Recording

With the permission of each informant, the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher. The interviews took place in a Seaview classroom after school or during the school day and transcribed over the course of the study. Before the semi-structured interview took place, each teacher filled out and returned the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading. Each subject was assigned a pseudonym and any information given in the interview that identified the individual was masked.

Protection of Human Subjects

Because the subjects of this study were human beings, extreme care was taken to do them no harm (Fontana & Frey, 1994). This study followed the guidelines set forth by the University of San Diego's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Seaview is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the school and district in which this study takes place. Each teacher and administrator was also assigned a pseudonym to protect his or her confidentiality. District personnel had previously collected all student data described in the study. No students were directly

involved in the study and no students were identified in the data supplied by the district. Each teacher was informed of his or her right not to participate in the study or to drop out at any time without repercussions from the researcher, school, or district. Teachers also had the right to review data at any time and were asked to respond to a draft of data analysis during member checking.

Data Storage and Disposal

The data collected remained confidential, coded only by letters and numbers. Names were changed in the presentation of data and those features that identified subjects were masked in the transcription and coding of interview data. One copy of a list correlating the numbers and letters used to identify each subject with his or her name were kept in a safety deposit box for 7 years then destroyed. All transcribed interview data, NUD*IST files, and teacher profiles were kept on a floppy disk and stored in a safe deposit box.

Data Processing and Analysis

The goal of data analysis was to construct and communicate understanding of the case (Merriam, 1998). One of the challenges in this study was managing both quantitative and qualitative data in a manner that facilitated analysis and interpretation in order to communicate results to the reader. Each teacher was treated as a single case during the study and, as the semi-structured interviews and efficacy scale revealed broad themes, cross-case analysis began.

Semi-structured Interviews

The search for meaning in this study was often facilitated by a search for patterns and consistencies (Stake, 1995). The questions used to guide the semi-structured interview were carefully formulated, based on the ongoing observations of teachers at Seaview and issues which stemmed from the reading support program. The transcribed data were coded and organized into themes using the NUD*IST program to create nodes for data storage within each theme. The NUD*IST program facilitated the coding of data and the formation of categories, or data nodes, into which cross-case themes devised from the interviews were sorted. The information in these nodes simplified the process of supporting inferences about the teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program. The data were used to create a profile of each teacher, which was submitted to the interview subjects for member checking.

The Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading

Before the interview phase of the study, each teacher completed the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (modified from Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The 16 questions on the scale were linked to Bandura's (1977) two-factor model of self-efficacy: (a) an efficacy expectation, or the belief that one could successfully perform a behavior to produce the desired outcome, referred to here as personal teaching efficacy and (b) an outcome expectation, which was a person's belief that a given

behavior would lead to a certain outcome, referred to here as general teaching efficacy.

Questions 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, were used to determine individual teacher scores related to personal teaching efficacy. A high score on this section of the scale indicated a high perception of personal teaching efficacy. Questions 2, 3, 9, 12, 14, 16 were used to determine individual teacher scores related to general teaching efficacy. A low score on this section of the scale indicated a high perception of general teaching efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The scores from the 14 teachers were ranked for both personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. The Mann Whitney U test was used to determine whether different groups of teachers, such as those who were more involved in the program or who taught at different grade levels, had different perceptions of personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy. This ranking also helped determine where each teacher fell on the continuum of efficacy compared to other teachers involved in the program and assisted in creating a profile of each teacher in the area of teaching reading.

As the information from the interviews and the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading were compiled and analyzed for themes, profiles of each teacher were created and submitted to each individual for member checking. Information gained through this checking was combined with data from the interviews and efficacy scales. This ongoing data analysis helped to develop reasonable conclusions and generalizations about the teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program based on the data collected.

Methodological Limitations

Qualitative case studies are limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator, who acts as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). Both the authors of case studies and their readers must be aware of biases that can affect the final product. The very nature of the case study is holistic, naturalistic, and descriptive, rather than a structured collection of data to support a given theory. The informants in this case were human and each offered his or her perspective on the program under study. The researcher was also human and reported her own interpretations of the data collected.

Researcher Involvement

Before designing this study, the researcher was involved in the design and implementation of the Seaview Reading Support Program. In 1998, she was one of the teachers who worked to bring the inequity in reading skills and instruction for different groups of students to the attention of the Seaview staff. During this time she collaborated with three other teachers to identify the characteristics of the struggling readers and develop a program to supplement the core curriculum and build reading fluency. During the 1998-2000 school years, she provided coaching in direct instruction to teachers, delivered reading support to first grade children and collected data for program evaluation. At the end of the 1999-2000 school year the researcher served as site administrator at Seaview Elementary. Although she is no longer a

district administrator with formal authority, her past tenure as an administrator could potentially have influenced teachers' responses during the interview section of this study. To address this problem she left the district to work as a curriculum coordinator for the County Office of Education.

This history of researcher involvement also created a problem with possible researcher bias in the interpretation of the results of the study. This limitation was addressed through triangulation of data in which different types of data sources and analysis were used to increase the validity of the study (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1988; Creswell, 1998). The use of member checking allowed research participants to preview the interpretations of the data. The use of NUD*IST as a data analysis tool also reduced researcher bias when identifying cross-cutting themes in the interview data by supporting those themes with interview text.

Summary

The combination of a qualitative cross-case study and quantitative, non-parametric analysis was the best frame for the exploration of the multiple realities experienced by different teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, with member checking of early data by informants to assist in the interpretation of teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program and the achievement of the children involved. The data were supported with student achievement data and information provided by each teacher on his or her perceptions of general and personal efficacy in the area of

teaching reading. The methodologies used in this study added to a growing base of research on the delivery of reading intervention in the classroom by the regular classroom teacher and what factors are necessary to support this intervention.

Chapter four provides insight into the context of the Seaview Reading Support Program. The demographics of the school and community are described, as well as the structure and components of the reading support program. It is here that the teachers involved in the reading support program are profiled, providing depth and insight into the common themes that emerged from the interview data.

CHAPTER 4

A NARRATIVE OF THE SEAVIEW READING SUPPORT PROGRAM

Introduction

This chapter provided the background information and perspectives critical to an effective case study. The chapter offered a brief history of the program and its origins, as well as the setting in which the program was implemented during the 1999-2000 school year. Each teacher involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program participated in a semi-structured interview in order to add depth to the information presented in this study. Profiles of the different teachers who provided input to the program design and who had children participate in the program during the 1999-2000 school year are included to add insight to the data presented in chapter 5 and to further inform the reader's perception of the Seaview Reading Support Program. It is important to note that each person named in this study was randomly assigned a pseudonym to protect his or her privacy. The names of the schools and the community named in this study were also changed.

One purpose of this study was to examine how teachers at Seaview Elementary perceived the reading achievement of the children involved in the program and the critical elements of the program itself. In order to understand both the views of teachers who delivered direct instruction lessons to children in a grade level and teachers who sent their students to another teacher for direct skill instruction, it was necessary to understand the reading support program, how it came to be, its intended structure and purpose, the program design, and the history of reading

intervention in the Seaview District. The information from these interviews was used in chapter 5 to answer the following research questions:

2. How did Seaview teachers perceive the effects of participation in the Reading Support Program on student achievement?
3. Which program elements did teachers perceive as most helpful in affecting positive change in student achievement, and which elements hindered this change?

School and Community

The Seaview district was located in and around a small coastal town in Southern California. The residents of Seaview were affluent, with an average family income of \$85,673 in 1999, when compared to the residents of other communities in the area. At the time of this study many of the students came from two parent homes in which the mother was able to stay home with her children. As a result there were many parent volunteers at all of the schools in the Seaview community and most families had at least one parent actively involved with the school in some capacity.

Seaview Elementary School was located in the midst of a quickly growing suburban community, just across the freeway from the affluent community of Seaview. The neighborhood was primarily composed of single family homes, although there was a mixture of town homes, duplexes and apartments within its boundaries. At the time of this study the average home near Seaview elementary sold for \$503,372; however, the newer homes in the area began at \$650,000. The Seaview neighborhood was populated by upper-middle class families with one or more

children. The community across the freeway, in the more affluent Seaview, had fewer children and more expensive estate and beachfront homes.

Seaview Elementary opened with great fanfare in the fall of 1992. The children who lived in the new development around the school had been bused over the freeway to the two schools in the community of Seaview for several years. The new school was headed by Frank Zimmerman, a popular principal from another district school. He was joined by veteran teachers from the two existing schools in the district, as well as many new teachers. Frank was an extremely kind and caring man who had once been a teacher in the district. He was well known for his concern for student well-being and his willingness to work with parents and teachers to ensure the best education for every child.

The residents of Seaview proper were less enthusiastic about opening a new school outside of their city boundaries. Some parents were concerned that Seaview Elementary would drain resources, in the form of money and teachers, away from the two schools in the city of Seaview. The district boundaries encompassed an area far beyond the city boundaries; however, much of the land lay undeveloped and was populated by farms, stables, and open land. The 1980s began a development boom, in which much of the open land was turned into expensive single family neighborhoods. In the year 2000, the district opened its third school in the area outside Seaview proper, bringing the total number of district schools to five. The changing population, though the the new students were primarily white, native English speakers, was less affluent than that of Seaview proper. The new neighborhood included a low income housing project which was bitterly contested by the residents of Seaview. As a result of rapid growth, the students in the Seaview district were more diverse in 1999 than in the early 1980s. The 1999 demographics of student enrollment by ethnic group was 85.8% White, 3.4% Hispanic, 1.5%

African American and 9% Asian. Only 1.1% of the children were English Language Learners and 0.5% of students were on the free lunch program.

Throughout the rapid growth in student population, students in the Seaview schools consistently scored in the top tenth percentile on the Stanford 9, a state mandated norm-referenced test. The children at Seaview Elementary were no exception; their scores were located in the top tenth percentile for total reading. In 1998, the California Department of Education used scores from the Stanford 9 test to compile an academic performance index (API) for every school in the state. The API ranked schools by their test scores on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being high. The API also allowed schools' test scores to be compared to other schools with similar student populations, using the same scale. The Seaview reading scores were high for the state of California, however when the test scores of children were compared to the scores of children in schools with similar student populations, Seaview ranked only a 3 out of a possible 10. The parent population was concerned that, although reading scores were high in comparison to other districts, the children weren't reaching their full potential in reading. The year after the implementation of the Seaview Reading Support Program the school's academic performance grew by 30 points, compared to growth of 14 points by the school showing the next highest amount of growth, and the school ranked 10 out of 10 compared to similar schools in the state, up from 3 out of 10 during the 1998-99 school year.

The architecture of Seaview Elementary School was unusual for schools in the area. It was built of stone and shaped like a small castle, complete with flags and turrets. The office and learning labs were centered around a sunken library, in which students could be observed during all hours of the school day. The outer buildings were arranged by grade level and each classroom was connected to the four classrooms on either side, making collaboration easier for

teachers. The classrooms were large, with vaulted ceilings and skylights. Each room had ample storage and a glassed in room for quiet, small-group instruction. The grounds were shared with a city park, so the playground equipment and grassy fields were well groomed and maintained. Many of the children in the neighborhood walked to school on greenbelt sidewalks which led directly to the school. The school enrollment in 1999 was 547 children, with an average class size of 19 students in grades kindergarten through third grade and 23 students in grades fourth through sixth.

Many of the teachers in the study had taught at Seaview since its opening in 1992; some for many years. The classroom environments and the curriculum in each grade level were very stable. Not much changed from year to year and parents knew what to expect from each teacher in the school. The staff development in the district was limited to large presentations one or two times a year on a broad topic that was chosen by district office personnel. Smaller workshops in technology were offered throughout the year and some work was done in the area of writing during 1996-97. The district adopted state standards in 1997, but before that there was no real guidance for teachers on what and how to teach. The norm-referenced test scores were high, the children appeared to be doing well, and the parents were happy. Thus, significant change in any curricular area was viewed with suspicion by many district teachers.

The Seaview Reading Support Program

The following section described the demographics of the Seaview District, its student population, its setting, and its teachers. This information provided the context in which the study took place.

The Students

Although many students in the Seaview read fluently, had good reading comprehension and did well on standardized tests, there existed a small group of children, less than 10% of the total students in the district, who struggled to read grade level materials. These children did not score well in total reading on the Stanford 9 achievement test, nor did they easily meet or exceed California's rigorous language arts content standards. The children in this group had difficulty reading literature designated by the district leaders as grade level core curriculum. Some of these children were retained in kindergarten or first grade, were tested for special education without qualifying for services, or were designated as English language learners. The Seaview students' high scores on the Stanford 9 achievement test made programs for serving these struggling readers a low priority. Before the spring of 1999, no reading support program was in place anywhere in the Seaview district for children who did not qualify for special education services.

Program Development

The teachers at Seaview Elementary were highly aware of this group of struggling readers. Although most students were doing well, it seemed unjust that such a small group of children go without specialized instruction. The principal agreed that there was a problem and vowed to address this discrepancy during the 1998-99 school year. He devoted several staff meetings to identifying the needs of struggling readers and provided the staff with time to

determine what kind of a program might work to enable all children to read materials in the core curriculum. As a model for the new program, the primary teachers used a small program provided to struggling readers by the resource specialist during the 1995-96 school year.

Students in the program received a combination of direct instruction in Reading Mastery, a code-based program, and strategy instruction for reading materials in the core curriculum. A teacher at each grade level kindergarten through third was assigned to an early literacy committee. The principal felt strongly that additional instruction should be designed, delivered, and monitored by classroom teachers familiar with the successful reading behaviors of children in their grade level. With the program designed this way, there was little chance that the expectations of the classroom teacher would differ from the expectations of the teacher who delivered additional reading instruction.

The members of the early literacy committee decided that one teacher per grade level would continue to use a combination of Reading Mastery to provide basic skill instruction and core curriculum materials to facilitate the student transfer of newly learned skills to reading real books. The teacher identified to deliver this instruction would meet with a small group of students identified by the team of teachers at each grade level for 30 minutes, 4 to 5 days a week.

The teachers who provided extra reading services to children planned to communicate their progress at the weekly team meetings. These teachers received five days of release time for assessment and collaboration over the course of the year, however they received no coaching, planning time, or materials other than the Reading Mastery materials. In order to provide this additional small group instruction during the school day, the reading support teachers needed adult assistance so they could focus their attention on the struggling readers, rather than the rest

of the class. The teachers decided to devote the aid time given each teacher on a weekly basis to supporting the program.

Preliminary Study

The program was implemented on a small scale in grades first through third in February of 1999. From February through May, the three grade level teachers identified as reading support providers delivered 30 minutes of extra instruction daily to five children in their grade level. The instructional sessions were a blend of Reading Mastery lessons and core curriculum materials (see review of literature for research supporting the use of Reading Mastery and transfer of learning). At the end of May, the children's reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension were measured in benchmark books identified by district personnel to represent proficiency in core curriculum reading materials. Of the 15 children in the early literacy program, 12 could accurately read the core curriculum materials. Two children not able to read the materials accurately on the first pass were able to read the benchmark book once they were familiarized with the vocabulary and pattern of the story. One child, an English language learner, failed to read the book, but made tremendous gains in reading fluency. The teachers investigated the total reading scores of each child on California's standardized reading test, the Stanford 9, and compared them to the 50th percentile, a ranking which children must meet or exceed in order to be considered by the state to be proficient in the area of reading. Most of the children involved in the early literacy program scored below the 50th percentile, however 3 of the second and third graders had nearly doubled their total reading scores compared to the year before and almost every child showed gains in percentile ranking in total reading from the 1997-

98 school year. Both the regular classroom teachers and the reading support teachers spoke highly of the increased reading fluency and comprehension of children in the program.

Different groups of teachers had different interpretations of the impact the program had on the culture of the school. The classroom aids, who had previously supported each teacher in the first and second grade level equally, now provided increased support for the teachers who provided extra reading support to students. The increase in time spent in one classroom reduced the aid time available for teachers who did not directly support the struggling readers. The teachers who did not serve their own struggling readers continued to support the program, but resented their loss of classroom aid time. Unfortunately at the same time the program was implemented, the aid time to grades kindergarten through second was further reduced, leaving little time for classroom aids to assist other teachers. Although teachers understood that the reduced aid time wasn't a direct result of the Reading Support Program, it may have affected their perception of the program in general.

Full Implementation

The impact of the Seaview Reading Support Program on student reading during its short pilot period was encouraging. The reading support teachers felt that with a few changes, the program could benefit students without depriving grade level teachers of their aid time. The principal asked the kindergarten teachers to donate 30 minutes of their daily 90 minutes of planning time to supporting the reading program. The kindergarten teachers would work with the reading support teacher to plan a meaningful lesson for the children in the class not receiving additional reading services. Three of the kindergarten teachers unenthusiastically agreed to

support the program, while one kindergarten teacher whole-heartedly volunteered to do whatever she could to help. The plan was similar to the spring 1999 program, except that services were provided only in the afternoon for grades second through fourth, while first grade teachers used student teachers to provide morning supervision during the delivery of reading support services.

The resource teacher, the science teacher and her aid released every teacher in grades first through third at the beginning of the school year so that each student could be tested for reading fluency and comprehension using the Johns Basic Reading Inventory (1997) and benchmark books in the core curriculum. Teachers used the results of curriculum-based assessments, the highest reading level attained on the Johns Basic Reading Inventory (1997), and the total reading scores on the Stanford 9 from the 1998-99 school year to determine which students would benefit from additional reading instruction.

The reading support groups began meeting in early October of 1999. Initially the kindergarten teachers provided support for grades second through fourth, three to four days a week. The principal also taught physical education classes in grades two and four one day a week so that the reading support teacher could meet with the struggling readers for an extra day. So many second grade students needed additional instruction that a group of five students began to see the resource specialist aid for reading support services. At the end of January the reading support teachers met to discuss the mid-year assessment and to move students in and out of the groups. The teachers agreed that each child had made significant progress. The teachers in grades three and four decided that the Reading Mastery program was too limiting for their readers and decided to use fluency building strategies such as repeated reading, comprehension programs such as reciprocal teaching, and study skill instruction.

During the mid-year meeting the kindergarten representative informed the group that the kindergarten teachers felt that the additional time they spent supporting the reading support program negatively impacted their kindergarten program by robbing them of the time normally spent preparing for the next day. Only one kindergarten teacher was willing to continue to service second grade. The support programs in grades three and four would have to be restructured if they were to continue. This announcement was deeply resented by many Seaview staff members who felt that the 90 minutes that the kindergarten teachers had for daily preparation was an unfair discrepancy between kindergarten and the rest of the school, who had only one afternoon a week for planning and preparation. This resentment continued at Seaview Elementary and at other schools in the Seaview district, resulting in a task force of teachers to investigate a better use of the kindergarten teachers' extra time in the afternoons.

Restructuring

In February of 2000, the third and fourth grade reading support providers were able to use student teachers to provide the supervision necessary to adjust their support schedules. Many of the children in the third grade group graduated from reading support and were replaced by other children who needed to work on their reading fluency. One kindergarten teacher provided supervision for second grade so that the reading support teacher could serve all nine of the struggling readers in that grade level. The second graders had improved to the point where all nine could participate in one group, rather than being split into 2 groups, one of whom visited the resource specialist aid for services. Of the 7 children originally in the first grade group, only

5 continued to need reading support services. The achievement of the children receiving reading support is summarized and compared to that of their same age classmates in chapter 5.

In summary the reading support program was designed and implemented over the course of 2 school years. Although teachers agreed that struggling readers needed additional services, many problems with scheduling and support surfaced during the program's implementation. Only the commitment and flexibility of a core group of teachers and the principal at Seaview Elementary kept the program going during the spring of 2000.

Teacher Profiles

The profiles of the teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program are described in this chapter to provide insight into their past experiences, philosophies, and backgrounds. Each profile briefly summarizes the essence of the teacher's interview and her response to the level of impact she felt she had on the reading of children who were unmotivated or difficult to teach. The profiles offer a glimpse into the perceptions of each teacher regarding the reading support program and her sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading. Names and other personal information that appear in the profiles that might compromise the privacy of study participants have been masked. In chapter 5 themes that emerged across teachers from the interviews will be discussed in relationship to the reading support program.

The teacher profiles are divided into two groups: teachers who directly provided support for struggling readers and those who sent their struggling readers to another teacher for additional reading support. A total of 14 teachers provided data in the form of interviews and

efficacy rating scales. All of the subjects were white females. The ages of the teachers ranged from late twenties to early fifties. The number of years spent teaching ranged from 4 to 30 years.

Reading Support Teachers

The 7 teachers in this group provided reading support at their grade level during the 1999-2000 school year. The resource specialist, who was teaching second grade at the time of this interview, was also included here because she directly supervised the delivery of the same program by a trained special education aid to an auxillary group of second graders during the fall of 1999.

Candace

I just feel the challenges of teaching reading are very exciting to me. I'm a reader myself. I value reading, I'm good at reading and I value that part of teaching reading.

Candace has been teaching first grade off and on since 1976, for a total of 7 years. Her youngest son was a struggling reader in an elementary school in the Seaview District. Her son's difficulties with reading made her involvement in the reading support program highly personal.

He could read but he couldn't comprehend. So, there wasn't much done to test that really. Well, if he could read aloud and if he got his work done. I don't know if it wasn't picked up or they kind of just let it slide. But it wasn't until he was in fourth grade, which I think is entirely too late to tell you that your child has really poor reading skills.

So, um, I do think that there is a lot more done now (to determine whether or not a child is a proficient reader).

Candace began supporting struggling readers in the spring of 1999. She wasn't initially identified as a reading support teacher, however she felt strongly that she had many students that would benefit from the direct instruction program. She went to the principal and requested materials. He agreed that many of her students were needy and agreed to buy the materials and include her in the program. Candace has seen incredible progress in her students who have been involved in the reading support program.

Well, I get so passionate about this program because of the fact that I've had personal experience with a child who really couldn't read very well and certainly didn't have any interest in reading whatsoever. Um, I think if he had been caught earlier on and if modifications had been made so that [her son] could learn strategies for comprehension, I think he could have been a better reader and thus done better all the way through school. I think that our early literacy program at our school is catching children who can't read, but not only children who can't read, but children who just aren't making any sense of their reading and that in kindergarten and first grade usually means kids who aren't decoding or reading, but not always. It's a little bit of both.

Sarah

Sarah is in her sixteenth year of teaching, her eighth since coming to Seaview Elementary. She provided reading support to children in her grade level for two years before moving to a school in a nearby county. Sarah had extensive professional development in using direct instruction in the classroom, attending a program at the University of Oregon for two

summers before moving to the Seaview District. She used direct instruction in every area in her classroom, rather than just the struggling readers and found it had a positive impact on every child.

The whole direct instruction really molded the way I did my classroom management for the class at large. The active participation they talked to us about, I found it was critical to engage as many students at one time and keep students on task with whatever we're doing, so a lot of the choral response and the active group participation thing, that I still use throughout the entire day. I think one of the beauties of it was in order to have mastery and to be able to move on, they had to be with you, so the number of responses you would have from teacher to student, it was just like rapid gunfire going back and forth and back and forth.

Sarah felt that her impact on teaching struggling readers was huge. She described how the small group reading support affected their confidence as well as their motivation.

I think that's kind of why we're here, to try to propel them forward, give them the confidence and everything else. Kids that were in the group, they, in several situations I could see how their confidence level was surpassing the other children who weren't as low as they were in reading, but those other children [receiving reading support] came back and seemed to be functioning on a more confident, higher level.

Kara

Kara had taught for five years, three of them in the Seaview District. Her past

experience was with children in a low socio-economic community, many of whom were English language learners. She noticed in her first year at Seaview that, despite the affluence of the population, many students needed additional help to read at grade level and did not receive any support. She was one of the original teachers who helped to inspire and design the reading support program and directly observed its impact on children.

It is amazing. Last year I did it with [intermediate] graders and I could hardly believe the success of these kids. These kids were coming in not reading, well they would read, but they were not fluent, more stagnant readers and really had a hard time with comprehension. We just worked on fluency and on comprehension and they just made leaps and bounds. I think it's such an important program because it's hard in a place like [Seaview] because so many of the kids come into the grade level and they're proficient and doing O.K. Sometimes it is hard for teachers to realize these few kids who are struggling; they need an extra boost and guided reading. Once a day isn't enough.

After providing services to intermediate children for two years, Kara felt that the program was in need of increased support by other adults in the school. Kara described the biggest drawback to the program during the 1999-2000 school year as struggling to get the support she needed from the teachers who were assigned to release her while she provided reading support services.

I strongly feel that no matter what kid is in the school K through 6, as a teacher at that school, that kid belongs to you and you should do anything to help that child. Why wouldn't you? Why wouldn't you support another teacher who wants to work with that kid in a group? If you had time in the afternoon, go in and teach the class so you can try to get these kids to where they need to be. I mean reading is a lifelong skill. You have to

know how to read to succeed in life. I mean that! No ifs, ands, or buts. It was really hard for me to see teachers that were so against it and it was invading on their time in supporting the program when these kids were barely reading and getting farther behind and they needed extra help and we were trying to do it; so that was really frustrating to me. We're helping kids. How could you not say yes to supporting a program when it is benefiting kids and teaching them a skill they need in life?

Kara felt that her impact on unmotivated or difficult to teach students was significant.

I felt like the things I did with kids, it really did increase their motivation and so we saw more success because they saw they could succeed and they tried harder, like they never did before, which was very rewarding.

Jackie

Jackie was the resource specialist during the 1999-2000 school year. So many second graders were in need of reading support, she provided pull out services to four of the nine children in that group. As her caseload became larger, she shifted responsibility for that group to an aid trained in direct instruction. Jackie had a strong background in teaching reading using direct instruction programs. Her primary school experience ranged from teaching children in the regular education classroom to serving children with both physical and learning disabilities in a resource specialist capacity. Her concept of an effective reading support program involved collaboration between specialists and classroom teachers to provide instruction at each child's reading level for a short time each morning. She described her collaborative experience in another school as beneficial for students and teachers.

We would go in to first and second grade and it was myself as the resource specialist, the aid that worked with me, our computer person, our speech pathologist. Our reading specialist would actually take half the third graders at that time, and what we'd do was come in as a team and we would go into each first grade class for half an hour and we had the kids grouped and there would be like three to four adults in the classroom at that time and every single child was engaged in reading for half an hour at their instructional level on leveled books.

Jackie felt very effective in her impact on teaching unmotivated, difficult to teach children to read because of her background in special education.

I feel totally effective with that because that's my job and that's what I do, provide effective instruction. I know with effective instruction provided, the rate of growth will be there according to their ability, their innate ability with what you're doing....I feel pretty prepared. Had I not gone into special education, I don't know that I'd feel that way.

Stephanie

Stephanie was a relatively new teacher in the district. Seaview Elementary was her first teaching assignment and she had been at the same grade level four years. Her background was in special education, so it seemed natural that she would become the reading support provider when Sarah left the district. She served five students in a small group each morning. Her grade level team pooled their aid time so that Stephanie had adult support in her classroom each time she delivered services. She noticed that each child in her support group benefited from the additional reading instruction.

Well, I've noticed [participation] benefited just about everyone in my group. One student, who's probably the hardest worker and pays the most attention was absent for a couple of weeks and you could tell when he came back there were some problems with it. One student...when I gave him a reading rate he was reading six words per minute at the beginning of the year and then I just gave it yesterday and he's like 53 to 56 (words per minute). It's amazing. It was what everyone else was using too (reading grade level material).

Stephanie felt the program would benefit from increased leadership and support so that student achievement could be tracked more effectively from year to year and patterns of need could be identified at each grade level.

I think there would be a lot more consistency and there would be more focus on keeping all the records of [student reading] and could communicate with teachers better and they would go throughout each grade level and so, like first grade, they would have that group the first half hour, move on to the second grade, move on to third and fourth and then they could see if there are patterns in what they're lacking at each grade level. I think a reading specialist would be really up on the latest reading rate levels of all the levels, not just the grade level [she teaches].

Stephanie felt she made a big difference in teaching difficult, unmotivated children to read.

I think that without even opening the book that I am pretty successful with these students, at least in getting them interested and I think that's half the battle. Um, apart from that I think that just consistency with the reading groups and phonemic awareness and things like that I think helps tremendously. So I think I make a big difference in motivating

students and make a big difference in a student that doesn't read a lot at home. Does it [reading at home] help? Absolutely! I think that we still have a huge impact.

Darla

Darla had been teaching 14 years, seven of them in her current grade level. She had experience teaching special education and many struggling readers were placed in her classroom because of her strong beliefs that teachers are responsible for teaching all children, regardless of the ability of the child. Although she did not provide direct services during the 1999-2000 school year, Darla was identified as the reading support teacher at her grade level at the time of this interview. She felt that the Seaview Reading Support Program worked for most children for two main reasons:

I think it was two-fold. One, having the time to be able to have someone specifically to say, "This is the time of day when we're going to remediate these children." And the second part of that was having a strict program to follow, so like the Reading Mastery is very scripted. It's very sequential and everyone's getting the same, so I think the two. setting aside the time to do it and then having a teacher [deliver the lesson].

Darla felt that district should commit more time and resources to serving struggling readers.

We need to look at what our priorities are. We've got some pretty low performers, so rather than having a mythology unit for our gifted children, let's plug in time for the kids who are struggling and can't read the grade level text. Like if we had a school-wide time where everyone was doing silent reading, because then a teacher could group within their

class or their grade level to work with the children who needed the help while everyone else was doing reading.

Darla felt she best impacted struggling readers when she got them interested in something and they wanted to keep reading. Her frustration with the positive impact she saw on children in her class was based on the traditional methods used by district personnel to measure achievement.

It's frustrating to me because a lot of times I don't see the growth in their STAR scores. They struggle when you put them in a testing situation too. and they don't always do what you think they can. But sitting with them one on one or in a small group, that's where you see the benefit.

Danielle

Danielle taught grade levels ranging from first through eighth in several districts before moving to Seaview seven years ago. During her years at Seaview Elementary she earned a master's degree and a credential in school counseling. She related well with children who were not initially motivated to read or had a hard time learning new material, consequently she had the opportunity to work with these students on a regular basis. One of Danielle's projects at Seaview was the newcomer's club, where students new to the school were paired with another student to ease the transition to new surroundings. She also ran a friendship club for students in third and fourth grade which focused on social skills that helped children make and keep friends, and learn how to act in difficult situations. She was well-known by students and parents in the school and provided services to struggling readers during the 1999-2000 school year.

Danielle felt that readers in the upper grades needed strategies to apply to the heavy reading load they received in their classroom, both in language arts and the content areas. She also felt that teachers needed more guidance in teaching those strategies.

I would try and use more of Anita Archer's strategies. I would like to see more training in that and I think I benefited a lot from that. If we did it together I'd like to see more guided learning and the training of the people who were actually [providing reading support services], so maybe like a practice situation or model learning just like we do for the kids so you see what it's supposed to look like.

Danielle felt that she related well to students who were not motivated to read or had difficulty learning.

I think I personally work well with kids like that. I think I can usually get the most resistant kids to come around. [It's motivating] when you treat kids with respect and they can tell that you want to do this to help them. And when you are encouraging they start to come around, but you have to develop that relationship.

Teachers Not Providing Direct Support

The following profiles describe teachers who did not provide direct reading support services to the struggling readers in their classrooms, but supported the program by releasing their students to reading support teachers for up to 30 minutes daily. Anna, a first grade teacher whose profile is included, never had a child in need of additional support during the 1999-2000 school year, but was an advocate for the program and was active in acquiring additional reading materials for children at Seaview Elementary.

Belinda

Belinda was a veteran teacher of children in the primary grades. While her own children were young, she ran a preschool from her home. Teaching came naturally to her because her brother was developmentally disabled and Belinda worked hard to help him learn to communicate.

My brother was what they called aphasic years and years ago, which turns out that he was autistic, but they didn't have the term autistic at that time. So my sister and I, I'm three years older than he was and my sister is two years older, so she and I took it upon ourselves when he was about four or five to start teaching him how to say words because he wasn't talking and, by the time he was about 12, he had a pretty good vocabulary and he would only talk with us, so I was close with my brother and felt real successful with him.

Belinda felt that teachers needed more specialist support to build an effective reading support program. Her experience with a reading specialist in another district was in a teaming situation, which benefited both the children receiving services and the classroom teacher.

I have worked in a successful program where the reading specialist was a teammate of mine, so we worked well together anyway and they, she, would see what we were working on in the classroom, whether it be a story in the basal or a book or whatever and then she would enhance that, working with the child on a one-to-one basis on what we

were doing in the classroom, working ahead so the child would have more confidence, reading on level, but still working on the deficit areas too.

Belinda felt that children were rarely unmotivated or difficult to teach they just needed to be matched with the right materials.

I think children who are hesitant to even read in our little W.E.B. [wonderful, exciting books] program, it's just that they don't have the right materials. So we search for the materials that are interesting and are on their level and then they're motivated. They love it. A little girl who is a high reader, but her mom says, "I can't get her to read," so I have a collection of Patricia Reilly gift books and they're all about second graders and so I pulled out the books and said, "Maybe there's something in here you'd like?" Well, today she just turned in number 11 for number 12; she's read that many. So I think just finding the right material and they're motivated.

Teresa

Teresa had taught children at the primary level for ten years. She began teaching in a district that served children from low-income families, many who spoke a language other than English at home. Although she felt the support her students received during the 1999-2000 school year was inconsistent, she felt her students this year were making excellent progress. She described the sudden increase in achievement for one student involved in the program for the past two years as exciting.

He went from 20 to 50 words [read correctly] per minute! He more than doubled his speed and I know he's not getting support at home. His mom does his homework for him,

so anything that he's doing, he got from [the current reading support teacher] and the small reading group.

Teresa felt that the level of support she received in teaching reading to struggling readers in her former district was far more comprehensive than she currently receives at Seaview. She noted the inconsistency of the materials, reading strategies, and methodologies used in the early grades at Seaview and the impact it had on each child's readiness to read in the later grades.

What we did in [her old district] was we all used [the same materials], we were trained in the guided reading, so we were all doing the same thing, so your kids from last year came with the same strategies that you were going to be getting this year and I think that was helpful in the follow through. Here you'll have kids who had the phonics game, who've done phonics worksheets, or who've never done a phonics sheet and have done other activities, so you have such a mix that when they come to you, it's like starting all over again. And there's no consistency in teaching them the techniques and strategies.... You get so many things coming in, so I see that as a problem as I'm moving up in the grade levels.

Teresa believed her impact on teaching unmotivated children to read depended on the drive of the child and somewhat on family support.

I just take those two [children in the program], similar sort of in family or in what happens when they go home. When I look at those two kids, I think of one student, B, who is very motivated to read because the friends that he hangs around with are high achievers and he wants to be a part of that and where I look at G and he's still on his own time frame, you know, he beats to his own drum, he's on his own schedule and he gets overwhelmed by

things and B takes it all in, and so I do see that personality and I don't know if it's motivation or not, or where the motivation is.

Christine

Christine began teaching many years ago, but took a 16 year break to raise her family. She returned to the late primary classroom four years ago. All three of her children attended school in the Seaview District. Christine feels an urgency for children to receive continuous reading instruction and support beyond the primary grades.

Sometimes the light goes on pretty quickly in third grade because its just that they're just a little delayed from their same age classmates, not that there's anything wrong. I think most of these children have nothing wrong, they just need more time and in our educational system they are not going to get more time; they're going to be expected to read in fourth grade. If they can't, I don't know how kids do it. I guess call me idealistic. Reading needs to be continually taught to children who haven't mastered it. There are a lot of children who still need reading instruction in junior high and high school, especially second language learners....Why don't we have reading support even here in our upper grades?

Christine felt she made quite a bit of difference in teaching difficult, unmotivated children to read by grouping them homogeneously at times. She connected their success with improved behavior in the classroom.

I think we make quite a bit of difference. I have groups for reading so I'm able to reach children at different levels and those reading groups are frequently homogeneous so they

can gain confidence from being with other children at their level, rather than being threatened by someone who already knows how to read. This year I've usually had three reading groups, but I have four because I have a few students who need to be in a smaller group and for both behavior and educational purposes that has served them better. It seems to have not only helped them read better, it's helped them, their behavior also. Sometimes behavior comes from a lack of really getting it. I feel that we have a lot of impact on a child in [this] grade and it's important that we continue reading instruction in [later] grades.

Catrina

Catrina was in her twelvth year of teaching an intermediate grade; her ninth at Seaview Elementary. She felt that for teachers to really address the needs of struggling readers, there must be a reduction in class size in the upper grades.

The teacher to child ratio, 28 to 1, you can't manage it. You do all you can do to do the best you can as far as keeping on top of the paperwork. And I have all these stacks to cover for the children and I have the parent volunteers work with them to correct their work and in small reading groups, but they're not consistent because it's not the same parent working with them all the time. So we really need lower class size or at least bring in a full time aid or a graduate student, you know, someone who wants to go into teaching to help us so it's not hit and miss.

Caterina valued the study skills taught to her students in the reading support

program; however, she would appreciate the opportunity to work with them personally because she felt she had the skills to provide services, but not the support.

Ideally? I love working with small groups; that would be ideal. I would say have two teachers, like maybe a brand new teacher or a student teacher and they're working with the kids who have the concept, that can pretty much work independently or need little instruction. [And as] the teacher you have all these tricks that you never get to use on how to teach, so ideally I would have someone work with my class and I would work with the small group myself.

Caterina felt that she made a big impact on student learning if she could discover a child's interests in order to match them with great books and turn them on to reading.

If I can sit down with a child and talk to them about the story, it makes [him or her] want to keep reading. If I can find out what interests them I feel very successful and I feel like I make a difference.

Anna

Anna had been teaching a primary grade for six years at Seaview Elementary. She had never had a child pulled out for additional reading support, but was convinced that the program works.

I feel it works because we saw the data. A lot of us here from the very beginning saw for years and years and years children struggling and we knew we had to come up with some kind of solution. So we got the kids together and we put them in that program and

worked with them every day and we saw the data, pretests, posttests, saw all the progress by the end of the year.

She felt like the keys to student success in first grade were the combination of the materials, both Reading Mastery and core curriculum books, and the consistency with which the program was delivered in that grade level.

You have to give them prompts if they're going to do [it] and that style of text [Reading Mastery] helps them build a strong [foundation]. Phonics and sight words and so forth, the only thing is caution about transition into regular text. And I think if you're doing a combination of both, if you bring in some regular text into it in conjunction with [Reading Mastery], we've seen a smooth transition. So it works. I think they have to be serviced every day and you have to be consistent.

Anna felt that first grade teachers always make a huge impact on children's reading skills, whether or not it was immediately apparent.

To me, I have always felt in teaching in general as a first grade teacher you play a huge role in a child's life. And whether it might be showing right at that point in time, I think it always sticks with them. I think as a teacher you have a huge impact. You play a big, big part. In 6 years I don't think they've always really tried. I think if you're firm and consistent and stay on them I think its going to make a difference.

Mary

Mary has had extensive experience in teaching reading in both the primary and

intermediate grades. Before coming to Seaview Elementary, she taught first, fourth, and sixth grade in such diverse settings as Baltimore, Arizona, and Ohio. Her true love is teaching children in kindergarten and first grade. Mary felt like children would benefit from a teacher who had skills in both direct instruction programs and more holistic reading intervention programs such as Reading Recovery. She was impressed by the immediate progress of a child in her class using the Reading Mastery program; however, she has always been curious about Reading Recovery.

I like [Reading Mastery], or whatever they're calling it now. I like their program because it helped me teach because you go one step at a time and teach them how to go left to right and teach them all the sounds and I like the structure of that. I've also been intrigued with Reading Recovery because it is one on one and it deals with writing and the leveled books I've always been interested in trying Reading Recovery.

Mary felt that the impact she made on struggling readers was directly related to the amount of support the child received at home from his or her parents and the amount of energy the child was willing to expend on learning.

I feel like learning is a group project. You need to have the parents, you need to have the child, and you need to have the teacher. And if somebody is not pulling their share, it gets really difficult. It really needs to be all three people.

Marlene

Marlene was an experienced intermediate grade teacher in her third year of teaching in the Seaview District. Her past involvement in reading support was vastly different from the

program at Seaview Elementary. Marlene spent many years teaching on the east coast in a collaborative intermediate setting. The struggling readers in her past school were clustered in one classroom and the class was team taught by a grade level teacher and the resource specialist.

I think it would make an incredible difference if we grouped identified children with children who don't qualify for services and for the regular ed. kids too, because suddenly you've got two committed, caring people with different, even as much as Laurie [the resource specialist] and I were alike, we still had different styles. Laurie did a much better job of teaching writing. I could get the big picture and set the scene, but when it came right down to taking ideas and putting them down on paper, Laurie always taught the whole class. We essentially had one LD [learning disabilities] teacher for two grade levels, and that wasn't counting our speech specialist. One of the concerns around here that I've heard a lot is they don't want to do clustering because they, and I don't know who they is, but they have a fear that if you cluster the special needs kids, then you're going to dummy down the curriculum to meet their needs and then you're going to have a classroom that is not as good as everybody else's. If anything it was the reverse. There were people who were coming in and asking to have their GT [gifted and talented] kids in my homeroom because they knew what it was like with Laurie. People would want their kids with really great techers who worked together.

Marlene felt that teachers in Seaview did not receive enough support to work effectively with the struggling readers at the intermediate level.

It's my favorite soapbox and I think everyone around here is sick of hearing it. I think that what they need to do is realize that even in this district there [are] a lot of special needs kids and that the expression that I've heard from several frustrated parents is that, "I

moved to this district [and] paid for this big house because we're supposed to have such a good school system here and the great school system we have here is wonderful if you have a round little kid to go in a round little hole, but if you have a square little kid or, lord forbid, an octagonal kid, it just doesn't work." And I think that's a great way of putting it.

Marlene would like to have more of an impact on teaching difficult or unmotivated children to read, but felt that she didn't have the support to individualize for each child.

I guess the answer [to the amount of impact] is not as much as I wish. But part of it is there's just not enough of me. You look around at all the needs our kids have. And every now and then I look around and I've made a difference and then there are other times that I think I wish I had been able to do more. I don't feel I make as much of a difference here as I felt like I made before. There's just not as much you can do when there's one of you as [when there is] two.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided the background and experiences important in shaping the teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program. The interview process was critical in collecting these perceptions, which provided the foundation for this multiple case study. The insight each teacher had to offer in her interview added depth to the information provided by her answers to the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading. The story of the program, how it was conceived, and the history of Seaview in providing reading support also added important information to the study.

Despite their different backgrounds, experiences, and levels of involvement in the Seaview Reading Support Program, each teacher provided important insight into answering two of the research questions on which this study is based:

2. How did Seaview teachers perceive the effects of participation in the Reading Support Program on student achievement?
3. Which program elements did teachers perceive as most helpful in affecting positive change in student achievement, and which elements hindered this change?

The profiles in this chapter provided the reader with a snapshot of the Seaview District, the community represented at Seaview Elementary, its teachers, their perceptions of the reading support program, and their own teaching efficacy. The recurring themes in teacher perceptions of student achievement and elements helping or hindering change from the interviews are discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 5 presented the results and analysis of the data collection. The data were organized by student achievement and teacher perceptions and used to answer each research question. In this chapter the emerging themes from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed, summarized, and examined for patterns. The results of the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading (modified from Gibson & Dembo, 1984) were also summarized and examined for patterns.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Introduction

The questions guiding this study were:

1. What were the effects of participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program on student achievement?
2. How did Seaview teachers perceive the effects of participation in the Reading Support program on student achievement?
3. Which program elements did teachers perceive as most helpful in affecting positive change in student achievement, and which elements hindered this change?
4. Was there a relationship between teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program and teachers' sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading?
5. Was there a relationship between teachers' sense of general and personal efficacy in teaching reading and their level of involvement in the program? If so, what was the nature of this relationship?

The purpose of this chapter was to answer the research questions that drove the study by presenting the results of the different instruments used to assess changes in student achievement, teacher perceptions of the program, and teacher perceptions of efficacy in teaching reading.

These results included: assessments designed to measure student achievement in reading during

the 1999-2000 school year, recurring themes in the data from the interviews of the 14 teachers participating in the Seaview Reading Support Program, data from the Mann-Whitney U test used to rank the efficacy scores from the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading, and patterns in the interview data indicating a relationship between level of teacher involvement in the program, perceptions of personal teaching efficacy in the area of reading, and perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program.

Question 1: What Were the Effects of Participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program on Student Achievement in Reading?

This section describes the data collected from children in grade levels one through four to determine the effects of the program on student achievement. The quantitative nature of this information adds an additional dimension to the interview data exploring the teacher perceptions of student achievement. The student data include the results of standardized testing and curriculum-based assessment. Students who received reading support were assessed with the same instruments as their same age classmates who did not receive reading support. The student data included in this study are public information and are available at the Seaview district office. No individual students or student scores are included in this study.

Background

In the fall of 1999, the Seaview Reading Support Program was fully implemented in grades one through four. Children were identified to participate in the program based on three

factors: their total reading scores on the 1999 Stanford 9 achievement test, their fluency and comprehension on an appropriately leveled passage from the Johns Basic Reading Inventory, and teacher perception of need in the area of reading. The children received extra instruction designed to build reading fluency, using the Reading Mastery program to provide direct code instruction and practice reading connected text. Teachers also incorporated literature from the core curriculum so children could apply their newly learned skills to real books. Thirty-two children participated in the program with the following results:

First Grade

First graders in two classrooms at Seaview Elementary were assessed at the end of the year, using portions of Clay's (1993) An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement and a running record of the benchmark book I Was Walking Down the Road (Barchas, 1975).

Sub-test	Mean score of children served in reading support program (stanine)	Mean score of same age classmates (stanine)
Hearing and Recording Sounds	35.86 (9)	36.48 (9)
Writing Vocabulary	39.14 (8)	48.93 (9)
Word Test	14.14 (9)	14.78 (9)

Figure 3: Mean scores and stanines of the two groups on sub-tests of Clay's (1993) An Observation Survey

Students receiving additional reading support services performed nearly as well as their same age classmates on each of the sub-tests of the Observation Survey. Both groups performed at the high end of the testing range, scoring in the ninth stanine on two of the three sub-tests. The only exception was on the writing vocabulary sub-test, where the mean score for children

receiving reading support services was one stanine below that of their same age classmates. At the end of the 1999-2000 school year, all nine of the children receiving support services were able to read the benchmark book from the core curriculum with better than 95% accuracy, with fluency similar to that of their same age classmates.

Figure 4: Comparison of sub-test scores on Clay's (1985) An Observation Survey between struggling readers and proficient readers in first grade.

Student Achievement in Grades Two through Four

The data used to describe achievement for struggling readers and their same age classmates in grades two through four included a measure of reading fluency in a benchmark passage from the core curriculum, growth in fluency over the course of the school year, national percentile ranking in total reading on the Stanford 9 achievement test, and mean growth in total reading rank on the Stanford 9. The student data was summarized in figure 5 and reported by grade level.

Grade Level	2 Students Receiving Support	2 Same age classmates not Receiving Support	3 Students Receiving Support	3 Peers not Receiving Support	4 Students Receiving Support	4 Same age classmates not Receiving Support
Mean Reading Fluency (words read correctly per minute)	77.44 wcpm	117.44 wcpm	77.11 wcpm	115.30 wcpm	133.5/87.2 wcpm	138.75 wcpm
Growth in Mean Reading Fluency (words read correctly per minute)	27.89 wcpm	23.46 wcpm	15.38 words	23.92 words	NA	NA
Percentage of students ranking at or above 50 on Stanford 9 Achievement Test	55.5%	88%	66.7%	91%	40%	89%
Growth in mean number of National Percentile Rankings on Stanford 9 Achievement Test	11.40	No data	16.25	10.60	24.66 (not SPED)	9.46

Figure 5: Reading fluency and growth in words read correctly per minute in grades 2 through 4.

Figure 6: Comparison of reading fluency in words per minute between struggling readers and proficient readers in grades 2 through 4

Second Grade

Nine second graders participated in the Seaview Reading Support Program and were tested using a measure of fluency on a piece of literature taken from the regular second grade curriculum as shown in figure 6. Although the children receiving support services remained less fluent than their same age classmates, the mean number of words they read correctly per minute over the course of the year grew 27.89 words compared with 23.46 words by their same age classmates (see figure 7). On the 2000 Stanford 9 test, slightly more than half the children receiving support services scored above the 50th percentile in total reading compared with 88% of their same age classmates (see figure 8), however five of the nine children increased their percentile ranking in total reading a mean of 11.40 percentile ranks. No data were available on the increase in the percentile rankings of their same age classmates.

Figure 7: Growth in reading fluency in words read per minute on a piece of literature from the core curriculum

Third Grade

Every third grader, including the nine children participating in the support program, was tested using a measure of fluency taken from the regular third grade curriculum. The mean words read correctly per minute (wcpm) by children receiving support services was 77.11 wcpm, compared with 115.30 wcpm by their same age classmates (see figure 6). The children receiving support services remained less fluent than their same age classmates and the mean number of

words read correctly per minute over the course of the year by struggling readers grew only 15.38 words compared with a growth 23.92 words read correctly per minute by their same age classmates (figure 7). On the 2000 Stanford 9 test, 66.7% of children receiving support services scored above the 50th percentile in total reading, with two other children close to the 50th percentile, compared with a 91% of their third same age classmates (see figure 8). Four of seven children (Stanford 9 scores from 1999 were not available for two of the children receiving services) increased their percentile ranking in total reading a mean of 16.25 percentile ranks compared with an mean increase of 10.60 percentile ranks for their same age classmates (see figure 9).

Fourth Grade

Of the five children receiving reading support services in fourth grade, two were identified as learning disabled over the course of the 1999-2000 school year. The mean words correctly read per minute by children receiving support services was 87.2 wcpm, compared with 138.75 wcpm for their same age classmates (see figure 6). Although the children receiving support services remained less fluent than their same age classmates, the mean number of words read per minute by children receiving support, but not labeled learning disabled was 133.5 wcpm. No information was available on the growth in reading fluency of fourth graders. On the 2000 Stanford 9 test, 40% of children receiving support services scored above the 50th percentile in total reading compared with 89% of their same age classmates (see figure 8). Stanford 9 scores from 1999 were not available for two of the children receiving services. The three remaining children increased or maintained their percentile ranking (one stayed the same) in total

reading a mean of 24.66 percentile ranks compared with an increase of 9.46 percentile ranks for their same age classmates (see figure 9).

Figure 8: Comparison of percentages of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile in total reading on the Stanford 9 achievement test.

Figure 9: Comparison of growth in percentile ranking between struggling readers and proficient readers in grades 3 and 4 from the 1999 school year to the 2000 school year.

In summary, children who participated in the program during their first grade year were able to hear sounds, identify high frequency words, and read with accuracy similar to their same age classmates. First graders receiving reading support wrote fewer words correctly than their same age classmates who did not receive support; however, the mean number of words written by children receiving reading support was in the 8th stanine compared to a norming group of first graders. Every first grader was able to read the benchmark book for grade 1 with fluency and accuracy.

While the fluency of children receiving reading support in grades two through four remained below that of their same age classmates, many of the children participating in the program made significant gains in fluency and on standardized test scores. Second graders receiving reading support gained a greater mean of words read correctly per minute than their same age classmates over the course of the school year. Third graders receiving reading support increased the mean of their total reading on the Stanford 9 a total of six percentile ranks more than their same age classmates. Fourth graders receiving reading support, but not identified as learning disabled, increased the mean of their total reading on the Stanford 9 three times the number of percentile ranks increased by their same age classmates. The numbers presented in this section should be interpreted with caution. The size of the group of children receiving reading support was much smaller than that of children not receiving support, so the increase in scores cannot be linked directly to the benefits of the reading support program. The increase in reading fluency and standardized test scores is, however, encouraging and suggests that participation in the reading support program may have had a positive impact on the quality of student reading.

Question Two: How Did Seaview Teachers Perceive the Effects of Participation in the Reading Support Program on Student Achievement?

The Seaview teachers perceived participation in the reading support program to have positive effects on student achievement. Both teachers who delivered reading support services and those who did not reported varying degrees of student achievement and improvement. Figure 10 provides a graphic representation of the organization of the data presented in this

section. The interview data supporting teacher perceptions of student achievement are presented in two categories: teachers who delivered reading support services and those who did not.

Figure 10: Themes of teacher perceptions of increased student achievement

Perceptions of Teachers Who Delivered Reading Support Services

The teachers who delivered services had more detailed perceptions about the achievement of the children in the support group than the teachers who did not directly deliver support services. Their impressions of the effect of the program on student achievement ranged from:

For some of them yes [it worked]. One of the little boys that it worked with best moved out of the district. A couple of the other children kind of um, gave light into maybe there was something else going on. (Darla).

to:

It is amazing. Last year I did it with [intermediate] graders and I could hardly believe the successes of these kids. The kids were coming in not reading, well they would read, but they were not fluent, more stagnant readers and really had a difficult time with comprehension and we just worked a lot on fluency and on comprehension and they just made leaps and bounds. (Kara).

Candace also felt that the reading support program improved student reading achievement and made them more successful in the regular classroom curriculum.

I think our program is catching children at an early age and it is reinforcing and remediating the problems that they are having with reading. It's a very strong phonics program which we're adding a lot of components to, and I think kids are getting one to one help and it really is beginning to make some sense to them. They really are beginning to read. I only know that from my own experience from having some children in the program last year and seeing the progress that they made and seeing they were making sense of the alphabet and the structure of sounds and, you know, they were able to transfer it then to the resources that we had in our reading program, phonics books and the regular reading stories.

Teachers in this group noticed an increase in the children's reading fluency or the number of words read correctly per minute.

We were seeing the progress these kids were making and in the classroom [the grade level teachers] were seeing the effects of what I was doing with the kids in that small group. They were seeing it in the guided reading, I mean just with their fluency they would go, ‘Oh, wow! So and so is just reading so much more fluently now.’ (Kara)

I’ve noticed both of my students benefit. When I gave [one of the students] a reading rate he was reading six words per minute at the beginning of the year and then I just gave it yesterday and he’s like 53 to 56. (Stephanie)

“I mean having a child that couldn’t read be reading, you know, with a reading rate of 75 words per minute at the end of the year. That was all the reward you could ask for (Candace).”

Teachers who provided reading support also noticed that children were able to transfer their newly acquired reading skills to materials in the core curriculum.

“He was able to read those books and transferring it every chance he got, so he was very eager to be on the same level with the other children in the class and eventually you know he got there.” (Candace)

[I knew it transferred by]...comparing their assessments to the rest of the third grade.

Each grade level had assessments that were the same for every child in that grade level, so third grade tests every third grader, struggling or not, so as we went along and you see a child in the early literacy group that went, ‘Wow!’ all of a sudden surpassing some of the other kids in your class. (Kara)

Perceptions of Teachers that Did Not Deliver Reading Support Services

The teachers who sent the struggling readers in their classroom to another teacher for reading support also perceived an increase in reading achievement for these students. Teachers in this group noticed increases in reading fluency in students involved in the program.

Teresa felt the students in the program made considerably more progress during the current school year than in 1999-2000.

When Darla was doing it I had two [students] in there and the progress they made was tremendous, especially where [one child] came from as such a struggling reader, 20 words a minute at the beginning of the year, 50 by December. So last year I think the kids, they made some progress. I think they would have doubled their progress had it been a consistent schedule. (Teresa)

Belinda noticed that the increase in fluency had a positive impact on children's comprehension.

"Their reading rates went up, their confidence in reading went up and comprehension, just because they were able to read better and concentrate more on meaning, rather than trying to sound out every single thing that they were doing." (Belinda)

Mary felt that an increase in fluency resulting from participation in the reading support program was a contributing factor in one child becoming a grade level reader.

I did see a spike, you know how in first grade you sometimes see that spike in reading, and she experienced that spike and she became competent at first grade reading....I felt like I was being thrown a lifesaver and she was glad she was being thrown extra help."
(Mary)

Although Anna had never had a child participate in the program, she felt that the program worked based on the data presented to the staff.

“Well I feel it works because we saw data...pretests, posttests, saw all the progress by the end of the year.” (Anna)

Even Marlene, who felt that there really wasn't a program that met the needs of struggling readers, noticed improvement in the children that attended the reading support group.

The thing we saw with K was that she just needed to slow down. So it was just she would literally skip whole lines. She'd be reading out loud to you and she would skip whole lines and then you'd say, “K what was that about?” and then she would be not even disturbed by it and I did see improvement by the end of the year. I didn't know exactly what [the support teacher] was doing, but what she was doing made a big difference for K, I think. (Marlene)

The answer to the question, how did teachers perceive the achievement of children who received reading support, was that regardless of whether or not teachers delivered direct reading support services to the children in their classrooms, teachers in both groups felt that participation in the reading support group had a positive effect on student reading achievement, particularly reading fluency. Many teachers who delivered support services noticed their students transferred their newly learned reading skills to improve their fluency in the core curriculum materials at their grade levels.

Question Three: Which Program Elements Did Teachers Perceive as Most Helpful in Affecting Positive Change in Student Achievement, and Which Elements Hindered this Change?

The purpose of this question was to explore which program elements teachers perceived to be helpful in affecting positive change in student achievement and which elements hindered this change. Although teachers who provided reading support had different areas of need compared to teachers who did not directly provide reading support, the two groups of participants had very similar answers. The answer to this question was provided in two sections: program elements perceived by teachers as affecting positive change in student reading achievement and elements hindering positive change in student achievement.

Program Elements That Affected Positive Change in Student Reading Achievement

Teachers identified positive elements of the program during the semi-structured interview. Most teachers identified the research-based Reading Mastery program, and some identified the continuity and consistency of the program as elements that led to an increase in student reading achievement (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Elements teachers perceived to affect positive change in student reading achievement.

Reading Mastery

The teacher perceptions of Reading Mastery were overwhelmingly positive, particularly for a structured direct instruction program. Only one teacher in the group of 14 had formal professional development in the delivery of Reading Mastery, however 3 others had worked extensively with direct instruction programs. All three teachers with a background in using direct instruction to teach reading delivered reading support services at some time before the interviews were conducted. Although several teachers were not sure what went on in the reading support group, they were familiar with the structure of Reading Mastery and its contribution to increasing the reading fluency of students in the reading support program.

Some of the teachers felt that Reading Mastery was a critical element in the program because of its impact on student reading and its ease of use.

In first grade it's an essential part in my opinion. [It] strongly builds a phonetic code for children. That is the strongest impact I think that I see. The children know each and every sound that a letter makes, they learn their blends, they learn patterns and I think the repetition of it every day [is helpful]. (Candace)

“I think [Reading Mastery] was critical for consistency. I particularly like that program, I know it’s dry, but it’s effective.” (Jackie)

I think it’s essential and, maybe I shouldn’t say this, but it’s so well planned out for me that it’s not that I have to prepare for this big thing and it’s so much easier for me to go in, and it’s familiar and it’s repetitive. Not only do the kids know how to go through it, but I do too and I can do it successfully and I know what’s coming and I know how to work it, so I think it’s a piece. And I think it works systematically and in a progression that, I think, makes the children successful. (Stephanie)

Teachers valued the systematic approach of Reading Mastery and felt it was one of the few materials that struggling readers could read at their level.

I still felt that Reading Mastery was much more keyed in to where [the struggling readers] were and what their next spot was. I think one of the things that was interesting about the group of kids that I worked with last year was they had holes all over the place and they weren’t the same holes in their ability to read and comprehend. And one thing that Reading Mastery did was it helped fill the holes along the way because it touches on all those areas in such a cyclical pattern. (Sarah).

Teachers in the intermediate grades felt that, although Reading Mastery was a good beginning for upper grade readers, more authentic materials were needed.

Third grade, in the beginning, I did use the Reading Mastery system, but then I kind of switched over. One of the needs of our third graders, one of the things they needed was to build their fluency and comprehension and while Reading Mastery was, you know, they read a couple of sentences and answer a question. The one thing that was lacking with that was that it wasn't helping to build their fluency. (Kara)

I don't know if other materials would work better, but we definitely could have used other materials. I mean SRA and [Reading Mastery] have been around for years; it's been proven to work. I think as teachers we tend to reinvent the wheel, so it was a package we could quickly implement and see results for, but I think that having our literacy room, all those different books and having leveled readers is as effective as well. (Darla)

We were fortunate to have Reading Mastery, which was a good foundation and I certainly feel it was a good investment for this program. After the children had been in the program for awhile, Reading Mastery was a little dry for them and we chose other reading materials that they could have more inference in, that they could draw a little higher levels, a little more interesting material. (Christine)

Finally, some teachers felt that Reading Mastery was an option if it was an addition to a program based on rich literature.

Just the repetition and the re-reading and watching [the support teacher] do it. She's a pro at that, she's good at it, you know, the way she would always have the kids on task,

interested in what was going on, making the points was interesting for them and so I think if you have a literature-based classroom, where they're working in a small reading group with you, getting a lot of the literacy and working with a partner on something else, then they are being exposed to literature. [Reading Mastery] was a good, solid piece for them. (Teresa)

"Reading Recovery is kind of limited in the numbers they can reach; Reading Mastery is a great program where you can reach more kids. And I think that if a teacher were competent in both programs, that would only benefit the children." (Mary)

Consistency and Continuity

Several of the teachers who provided reading support services felt the consistency and continuity of the program from year to year was an important element in the positive change in student reading achievement.

I think, um, the most important part of the program is that it does continue. They are getting the same program in second grade and the same program in third grade and now the same program from kindergarten up through third grade, though that by the time they are in fourth grade they should be able to read and know strategies for being able to comprehend what they are reading. (Candace)

“I think the seriousness worked, I think the consistency of the teachers doing it worked.”

(Jackie)

One teacher attributed the consistency of the program to the format and content of the Reading Mastery Program.

And the second part of that [program elements that worked for children] was having a strict program to follow, so like the [Reading Mastery] is very scripted. It's very sequential and everyone's getting the same, so I think the two, setting aside the time to do it and then having a teacher [deliver the services]. (Darla)

Other teachers found that the predictability of Reading Mastery between grade levels was an asset to the consistency of the program.

I feel like it goes really smoothly and the kids are into a routine, which they know what is coming next, they understand and are familiar with the general text, it's a familiar thing that they can do. So I think that the small group works and I think the consistency in how we're teaching works. (Stephanie)

[Reading Mastery] just creates consistency because people weren't guessing and putting pieces together and it's something that's created, you can open it up and use it right where you left off. It has comprehension questions and all of these are built in and it's progressive and that's how I think it takes away a lot of room for error; that's just nice to fully support that program. (Jackie).”

Part of the answer to question 3, what elements of the reading support program did teachers feel supported positive change in student reading achievement was the highly structured Reading Mastery program. Teachers who delivered reading support services also felt that a program strength was the consistency with which the program was delivered and the continuity from year to year between the grade levels.

Program Elements Which Hindered Positive Change in Student Reading Achievement

The elements that teachers identified as hindering positive changes in student reading achievement fell into 3 categories (see figure 12), each of which had several components: lack of collaboration, lack of support, and lack of leadership. The third category, lack of leadership, was also identified as a theme across teachers with efficacy scores between 40 and 50 and is revisited in question 5.

Figure 12: Elements perceived by teachers to hinder positive change in student reading achievement.

Lack of Collaboration

Three themes emerged during the teacher interviews that were components of collaboration. Many teachers felt that collaboration between teachers and among grade levels was missing from the Seaview Reading Support Program and hindered positive change in student reading achievement. The participants also felt that teachers involved in the program failed to work together as a team, placing the burden of reading support on one teacher in each

grade level. Teachers identified lack of communication about what was happening in the program and its impact on individual student achievement as a hindrance to increases in student reading achievement.

Group Ownership

The majority of the teachers felt a sense of group ownership was missing from the program and that the students in the program suffered from this lack of consistent collaboration. Some of the teachers in the program felt teachers who did not provide reading support services, particularly the kindergarten teachers who originally had agreed to provide release time for reading support teachers, did not do their share in supporting the program. Typical comments from a reading support teacher was as follows:

When the program first started, we have half-day kindergarten in [this district], so we had kindergarten teachers [as] our support person. I had a kindergarten teacher assigned to me and there was someone who was taking my class. That only lasted a few months because the kindergarten teachers had a hard time with doing that. They had their afternoon and it was a half-hour out of their afternoon prep time so to speak, but they had time in the morning (for preparation) just like every other teacher did and they only had kids half the day, but it's just that it was cutting into their time and they were not very supportive, weren't happy: you could very well tell that they did not like coming and that's hard too, because here you are, sending off your class with this person who doesn't want to be there, so what kind of instruction are they getting with this person? (teacher name withheld)

“They came and they just seemed resentful about it. Like they were waiting by the door and if I got back like a second too late, you know, they were perturbed about it.” (teacher name withheld).”

Team Work

Another theme that emerged within the larger theme of collaboration was the failure of the teachers to work together to provide reading support within the grade level.

It’s one more thing to plan, a little pressure, it’s one more thing to pull in, one more thing for you to be responsible for, plus then you’ve got to plan an independent type of activity for the other 15 while you deliver service to the other five. So you know you have to deal with other teachers that you’re scheduling, other teachers in your grade level as time goes by for you in your class. (Anna).

And when the program was first delineated for teachers and when we first talked about it and as a staff we sort of got the program together and we got the framework of the program and decided how it was going to be done, part of the program was we would have [an aid or teacher] in our classroom to help facilitate the program and to help run the classroom while the teacher had her full attention on the group and that has just not continued to happen in any of the grade levels, I believe, except for second. (Candace).

Several teachers, who had been part of a collaborative team in other districts, were disappointed that the struggling readers could not be clustered and receive services from a team of teachers, rather than just one.

I even went to [the principal] about it, [the idea] is to cluster all the identified kids, maybe throw into that classroom some low kids who don't qualify for services and team teach with a really good, dedicated special education teacher. I think it would make an incredible difference in a year if we grouped identified children with children who don't qualify for services and for the regular ed. kids too, because suddenly you've got two committed, caring people. (Marlene)

That was great and [reading support] was without exception daily and it was guaranteed and teachers, whatever they did, would be on top of it and so on, it was occurring every single day and it came from the administration and with the reading specialist and the special ed. teacher working together on a schedule and making sure that happened very collaboratively. (Jackie)

Communication

Teachers identified the lack of communication in the program in several ways. Some teachers lamented the lack of communication regarding individual student progress in the small reading support group. Others expressed disappointment that the reading support teachers did not have time to collaborate to share teaching ideas and communicate the progress or lack of progress of students in their groups.

Comments from teachers who felt that communication regarding individual student progress included:

For the most part there was good communication about whether [students] were in the group or not, but I think there should be some consistency on whether they're in it and where they go next....I think there would be a lot more consistency [if there were a reading specialist] and there would be more focus on keeping all the records of that and [he or she] could communicate with the teachers better. (Stephanie)

"We didn't use the [informal reading inventory] this year, so I felt like I was a bit sketchy on the problems of these children." (Belinda)

You have to have communication in order for the other teachers to see. Again, it's a time factor. Teachers value their time so much, even to get together to sit down, we have to have a meeting and [you say] 'I'll tell you about your kids, but wait, I have to do this and I've got this meeting' and so, there's not really time scheduled for that stuff, so unless you have good communication between your team mates where you just kind of go in and say, 'Hey, I need to tell you about someone, I want to share the successes, I want to share this is what I'm seeing, could you keep an eye on it too in guided reading and tell me if you're seeing the same thing?' I did a lot of that. (Kara)

Teachers who provided reading support expressed an interest in more frequent meetings in which they could share ideas and discuss the progress of their groups and individual children.

I would value a little group of teachers that would get together and talk about the children that were in the early literacy program because I could get ideas from sharing ideas with different teachers and other teachers who were teaching Reading Mastery or early reading intervention and get ideas from them as to what sort of path I should be on, where to start. Here's where this child is, where do I start? (Candace)

The teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program, regardless of whether or not they provided reading support services felt that the teachers and students in the program would benefit from a collaborative effort that was missing during the 1999-2000 school year. Themes within collaboration included increasing ownership of the program by all teachers at Seaview to ensure their participation and support, teamwork in supporting struggling readers, and their teachers, and improving communication between teachers, both within the grade level teams regarding individual student progress and between teachers to promote sharing of knowledge and ideas.

Lack of Support

The second major theme that emerged in this area from the teacher interviews was a lack of support for teachers in 3 areas: professional development, time for planning, and instructional coaching. Teachers felt that they were expected to provide a high level of support for students with little professional development, little time to plan an effective program, and very little coaching support. All of the teachers who provided reading support to students were also regular classroom teachers or had a full caseload of resource students. No qualified personnel were

available to visit teachers on a regular basis and offer suggestions on improving their reading instruction. The Reading Mastery materials were purchased without professional development and it was only by luck that some of the teachers involved in the program were familiar with direct instruction.

Staff Development

Only the teachers with previous professional development in direct instruction felt comfortable with the amount of support provided by the reading support program. Teachers agreed that the Reading Mastery program was easy to use, but the school or district offered no formal support for staff development in the area of reading. The reading support teachers attended several workshops on helping struggling readers, but none specifically addressed the materials used in the program. Teachers who did not provide reading support services also felt they needed staff development in the area of reading.

Some teachers felt that professional development in direct instruction needed to take place to ensure consistency among teachers in providing direct instruction support.

I think it worked so successfully because we had a teacher from just about every grade level that was familiar with [Reading Mastery], had used it other places and felt very comfortable jumping right in with it. I think training is number one. I think every person needs to be trained appropriately and accurately with the [Reading Mastery] so that we're all using it the same way, so we're consistent. (Anna)

Well...the materials, sometimes [the support teacher at that grade level] didn't know what she was going to do with [the students], so she needed some direction. I know there were times when [this teacher] was uncertain about 'What are we going to do?'

(Caterina)

Other teachers felt like they needed more professional development to provide effective reading support for their students.

"I need training, more strategies. I think that is going to be an ever present need. I think you can always integrate things that you see done by other teachers successfully into your own lessons." (Candace)

I would like to see more inservices from the district throughout the year. [Seaview] is a really small district, so it's hard to get funding and things, but you know, literacy is important, so have a reading mentor come and teach first grade teachers, 'OK, these are some great ways to teach reading to first graders, or fifth grade, here are some great reading strategies for fifth graders.' (Kara)

I just think it would be nice to have someone on staff who you could go to and say, 'What do you do? Where are the materials for this? What materials can we devise?'" I think it would be money well spent. We're putting a lot of money into remediating when we could keep a lot of it from happening. And I also think all teachers deserve support too because you are on the front lines and if you really care and don't get support, maybe you care a little less and do we want that to happen? I don't think so. (Christine)

Planning Time

During the 1999-2000 school year, reading support teachers received no additional planning time to prepare for their sessions with struggling readers, to communicate with other teachers, or to interpret student assessments. The team of reading support teachers was provided with a total of five release days in order to discuss student progress, however teachers were expected to administer additional student assessments during this time. Both reading support teachers and teachers who did not provide support identified a lack of planning time as a program element which hindered the positive change in student reading achievement.

“At the onset it would take me a couple of hours...I need a chunk of time in the beginning to get it planned [and then] ongoing time, maybe fifteen minutes a day to get the materials ready.” (Candace)

“So it’s one more thing on our shoulders, so to speak, as a classroom teacher we’re winging it and we’re doing OK, but it could be a lot better.” (Anna)

“[We need] Just time, time to do it, working with the kids, so much is one to one. You have these kids and there isn’t time to help them.” (Caterina)

Some teachers felt that the amount of time it took to plan for serving the struggling readers had a negative impact on the regular classroom program.

“[A drawback] For me it was fitting in an extra group. It kind of took time away from the total picture of the kids I was supposed to be serving.” (Jackie)

I personally probably focused too much on it. I was there more for that group than for the rest of my reading groups. I put more energy into preparing for that group and energy into teaching that group. It just took more time to prepare for. I thought maybe I could have, in retrospect, now and still I could be preparing with a little more enthusiasm for my other reading groups, but there’s just not the time (Candace)

Time for planning and time to deliver reading support effectively was an ongoing theme with teachers involved in the program at every level.

Coaching

Teachers identified the lack of a coaching system within the reading support program as a drawback for teachers that inhibited positive changes in student reading achievement. Every teacher with the skills to coach others in reading instruction was preoccupied with supporting struggling readers, leaving no support personnel for teachers involved in the program. Teachers, whether or not they were reading support providers, felt they would have benefited from coaching support.

“I guess I’m the kind of teacher who is always looking for somebody who can do it better than I can.” (Candace)

Teachers with experience using direct instruction reading programs felt that an experienced coach could provide guidance for new teachers in improving reading instruction in the regular classroom.

As a teacher you need support and guidance from more experienced teachers that have taught a program and been successful with it. I know in my experience as a first year teacher, that was vital for me...I knew nothing when I started and so having somebody who will come in and model lessons for new teachers I think is really important so they can see how guided reading works. (Kara)

Teachers felt they needed a specialist to offer teachers support and to provide information for parents as well.

We need that person in our schools who's a specialist. Who can train us to help students and can also help students themselves...I wish there was someone in the school who could offer suggestions to teachers and parents. She would say, "Gee, that sounds like...try this" because unfortunately we're just dibbing and dabbing at it, but it's not step by step. (Christine)

Teachers also felt that a coach could observe a teacher working with students in order to offer feedback on reading instruction in the regular classroom.

I think it would be beneficial (for a coach) to work with teachers as well...she could come and observe kids who were struggling and give me feedback as far as what to do, but she'd spend a lot time with kids (Darla)

Instructional support by a coach or reading specialist was an area identified by many teachers as missing component of the Seaview Reading Support Program. Coaching was a

proposed solution for inconsistency across grade levels and between teachers, and for supporting teachers in their delivery of reading instruction.

Lack of Leadership

The third major theme teachers identified as a factor that hindered positive change in student reading achievement was a lack of leadership in the program. No formal program had been described, linked to classroom practices, or was supported by intensive staff development. The principal, encouraged teachers to participate in the program, initially enlisted the kindergarten teachers to support the reading support teachers by providing release time for 30 minutes, four days a week. He also taught physical education to second and fourth graders one day a week so that the reading support teacher could meet with her group on the fourth day that kindergarten teachers couldn't cover. Most of the communication and planning was conducted by memo and assessment results were not collected and reviewed by district administrators until the end of the school year. A common theme among teachers was the need for leadership in the program, not only in program management, but also in the support of students and teachers. Many of these teachers expressed their desires for a formal program with teacher accountability, predictable scheduling, and staffing. This theme is also revisited in question 4, Is there a relationship between teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Program and teachers' sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading?, in which the need for a reading specialist is a theme identified among many of the teachers whose personal teaching efficacy scores fell between 40 and 50.

“It’s huge, leadership and accountability...asking did you test this month? How are they doing? It’s the whole follow-up issue and it’s just, its falling off a little bit which is sad.” (Anna)

“I also feel that I’m not sure that the school where I am is committed to maintaining this reading intervention program.” (Candace)

Some teachers felt that administrative support should be increased to encourage the participation of the entire school staff in order to support a time in which teachers could work with struggling readers.

I also think that one vital part of the (reading support) program is you need to have the support. The teachers teaching in it need to have support from the administrator and the rest of the staff and they need to set aside a chunk of time to work with those kids and have another teacher working with her class, so the other teacher is not stressing about,

“What am I going to do with them?” I think that is vital. (Kara)

“I feel like this program should be supported by someone paid that comes into that teacher’s class after lunch, which is the perfect time to double dose a child.” (Christine)

Other teachers felt that the district failed to provide direction in how and when struggling readers should receive support at every school site in Seaview.

“The big, big curricular area from up above, there hasn’t been direction yet and we are waiting for direction.” (Teresa)

This theme may have been prominent because these interviews were conducted six months after Frank Zimmerman, the lead teacher in the program, and two of the reading support teachers left to open a new school in the district. One other reading support teacher changed grade levels, although she continued to provide reading support. Only one of the original reading support teachers remained at her grade level during the 2000-2001 school year. The new principal seemed to embrace the program; however, some teachers worried about administrative support for the program, both at the school and district level.

In summary teachers involved in the Reading Support Program at Seaview Elementary felt that the quality of the Reading Mastery program was the element which best facilitated positive changes in student reading achievement. Teachers who directly delivered reading support also identified the consistency and continuity of the program through the grades. Teachers identified three major themes which hindered positive changes in reading achievement: lack of collaboration, including group ownership, teamwork, and communication; lack of support, including professional development, time for planning, and coaching; and lack of leadership in a formalized program supported by school and district administrators.

Question Four: Was There a Relationship Between Teacher Perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program and Teachers' Sense of Personal Efficacy in Teaching Reading?

Bandura (1997) stated that data from efficacy scales is best supported by interview data or other format that supports the exploration of the thoughts behind the responses on the scale. For this reason the scores from the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading were matched to interview transcripts that detailed the impact that each teacher felt she had on teaching

difficult, unmotivated children to read. The responses of each teacher were mined for information supporting her perceived efficacy scores in teaching children to read. The 14 teachers were ranked into three categories: teachers with personal efficacy scores above 50, teachers with personal efficacy scores between 40 and 50, and teachers with personal efficacy scores below 40. Patterns between perceived efficacy in teaching reading and teacher perceptions of the program efficacy were identified for each group of teachers and are discussed in this section.

Teachers with Personal Efficacy Scores Above 50

Four of the fourteen teachers scored above 50 on the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading. Two of the four teachers provided reading support to children during the 1999-2000 school year. Those teachers who provided reading support also had specialized education in teaching reading or in school psychology. All four of these teachers had taught in other districts with higher populations of struggling readers than they currently serve in Seaview. The supporting interviews revealed that each of the teachers had also collaborated with other school staff and specialists to provide a comprehensive program for struggling readers at another time. Supporting statements from teachers included:

“We were all doing the same thing, so your kids from last year came in with the same strategies that you were going to be [using] this year and I think that was helpful in the follow through.” (Teresa)

I have worked in a successful program where the reading specialist had been a teammate of mine, so we worked well together anyway and they, she, would see what we were working on in the classroom, whether it be a story in the basal or a book or whatever and then she would enhance that. (Belinda)

We would go in to first and second grade and it was myself as the resource specialist, the aid that worked with me, our computer person, our speech pathologist. Our reading specialist would actually take half the third graders at that time, and what we'd do was come in as a team. (Jackie)

The four teachers with the highest personal efficacy scores relative to the scores of other teachers in the group perceived the Seaview Reading Support Program to be effective for increasing student achievement in reading, however each teacher was able to describe an alternative program which she felt would enhance the current program.

Each of the teachers with relatively high efficacy scores described her positive impact on student achievement.

I feel totally effective with that because that's my job and that's what I do, provide effective instruction. I know with effective instruction provided, the rate of growth will be there according to their ability, their innate ability with what you're doing....I feel pretty prepared. Had I not gone into special education, I don't know that I'd feel that way. (Jackie)

"I think just finding the right material and they're motivated." (Belinda)

“This year I see tremendous progress in my students.” (Teresa)

“I think it helped because they got the one on one and the focus. In [the intermediate] grades they knew they needed help with reading, so they were more motivated in one sense.”
(Danielle)

The teachers with the highest efficacy scores felt the reading support program had a positive effect on student achievement. Each of these teachers had students participating in the program during the 1999-2000 and felt that they made progress. One teacher who felt that the program was delivered inconsistently in her grade level during the 1999-2000 school year felt that, now that services were delivered regularly, her students had made tremendous progress. The perceptions of the Seaview Reading Program by teachers with high perceptions of personal efficacy in teaching reading may have been influenced by experience with other successful programs. Each teacher in this group had positive perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program on student reading achievement; however, each was able to describe a program that might have equal or greater impact on student reading.

Teachers with Personal Efficacy Scores Between 40 and 50

Nine of the teachers in the Seaview Reading Support Program had scores that fell between 40 and 50. Five of the 9 teachers provided reading support to students in their grade level. Three of the 5 reading support teachers had previous professional development in teaching

reading. All of the teachers felt that participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program had a positive impact on student reading. Many of these teachers had spent most of their teaching careers at Seaview Elementary and had little experience with other reading support programs.

A common theme among this group of teachers was the perception of a need for leadership in the program, not only in program management, but also in the support of students and teachers. Many of these teachers expressed their desires for a formal program with teacher accountability, predictable scheduling, and staffing. Although this theme was previously explored in question 2, it was revisited for this group of teachers. The statements supporting the need for leadership in the program were arranged by 1999-2000 grade level for the ease of interpretation by the reader.

I wish they had a reading specialist. I wish they had a more formal program. They give us lots of hints and they give us lots of courses and seminars, but I feel like we need a more formal, structured program, instead of just a little help here and a little help there. We need some guidance, someone who comes in with both feet and takes over and takes responsibility for some of these kids. Especially in the early years because in the early years they're so malleable that you can prevent them from having problems later on down the line, so I would like to see more resources specifically for reading. (Mary)

And then I think support in the classroom, somebody coming in and helping the 15 others. I think its effective for the classroom teacher to deliver the service to the children, I think you know your students best. Or for that grade level even, pulling other teacher's children in. (Anna)

I think each school site should have a reading specialist...I just firmly believe that not having a reading specialist is a really bad situation. The reading specialist should be working in addition to the classroom teacher in a program that is similar like this, you know, do what we are doing. (Candace)

I would have a reading specialist at each school, so each grade level could have half an hour a day. There would be more focus on keeping all the records of that and could communicate with the teachers better and then I think a reading specialist would be up on the latest reading rate levels of all the levels, not just the grade level [she teaches]. (Stephanie)

I would like to see a teacher that supported reading that maybe cycled. I guess if I could do it ideally, I'd have her cycle through the classroom levels in the morning, the primary levels, and pull those children who need extra support...I just think it would be nice to have someone on the staff who you could go to and say, 'What do you do?' (Christine)

[We'd need] a reading specialist who was just here for early literacy or a specialist and the kids who needed it would get a double dose...it could go both ways as far as the person could come into your class and one of you could be doing reading groups. (Darla)

I think if one person was designated and this was their job to work in the real world to work with those kids, and they were only doing reading all day and they were the

instructional leader for all the grade levels and helping look at instructional levels...that's going to be the best success ever. (Kara)

Confidence and Self-Esteem

A group of teachers of children in grades two and three identified the effects of the program on student confidence and self-esteem, and the importance of close involvement of the classroom teacher. Kara and Christine connected this increase to an observable boost in student motivation based on their newly found success in reading.

Older kids, you know, third grade and up, they're struggling and they know it, so I think it's really important to try and teach them and show them that they are improving because its helping to build their self-confidence and it's going to motivate them. I felt like the things I did with kids, it really did increase their motivation and so we saw more success because they saw they could succeed and they tried harder, like they never did before, which was very rewarding. (Kara)

"It improved their reading, it improved their reading rate, it improved, possibly most importantly, their confidence in themselves." (Christine)

Sarah attributed the increase in student confidence to the systematic approach of Reading Mastery.

I think the fact that they mastered things along the way, they could see their success. Not only with the reading, but they could feel it. They could remember what kind of reader

they were at the beginning when they first started and they used words like shaky or unsure, but toward the end they were reading to me as confidently as anybody else. Often times they were still below the others, but still they could recognize their own progress and feel confident with that.

Importance of Classroom Teacher Involvement

Many of the teachers in this group identified the close involvement of the classroom teacher as a critical element of the program. These teachers felt that reading support had, in the past, been delegated to personnel with limited education in the area of reading or to specialists with little concept of what proficiency looked like at each grade level.

It was really important to us that the low readers be serviced by a teacher rather than someone else because we felt that not only were we more highly trained, but we also had more ownership in the program ...unfortunately our lowest students always got our least trained people to attend to them and we really felt that anybody, not anybody but most people, can read aloud to children, can watch them while they're reading silently, can monitor 20 minutes of reading while the teacher is doing something for those low children. (Christine)

Teachers with personal efficacy scores that fell between 40 and 50 felt the need for additional support and leadership by a reading specialist. Intermediate teachers also had a common theme of increased student confidence and self-esteem, and several felt that teacher involvement was a critical element of the program.

Teachers with Personal Efficacy Scores Below 40

One teacher in the Seaview Reading Support Program had a personal efficacy score that fell below 40. She did not deliver reading support to children in her grade level, however 2 of the students in her class participated in the program during the 1999-2000 school year. Marlene had recently begun teaching at Seaview Elementary, but had extensive experience with another successful reading support program in another state, similar to those in which the teachers with high personal efficacy scores were involved. That program was more collaborative and had a greater variety of materials than the program at Seaview. She had a difficult time adjusting to the large class size and the isolation of teaching every subject all day. Her frustration lay in the model of service delivery that limited the number of children served by the reading support program.

Marlene felt that teachers in Seaview did not receive enough support to work effectively with the struggling readers at the intermediate level.

It's my favorite soapbox and I think everyone around here is sick of hearing it. I think that what they need to do is realize that even in this district there [are] a lot of special needs kids and that the expression that I've heard from several frustrated parents is that, "I moved to this district [and] paid for this big house because we're supposed to have such a good school system here and the great school system we have here is wonderful if you have a round little kid to go in a round little hole, but if you have a square little kid or, lord forbid, an octagonal kid. it just doesn't work." And I think that's a great way of putting it.

Marlene would have liked to have more of an impact on teaching difficult or

unmotivated children to read, but felt that she didn't have the support to individualize for each child.

I guess the answer [to the amount of impact] is not as much as I wish. But part of it is there's just not enough of me. You look around at all the needs our kids have. And every now and then [I] look around and I've made a difference and then there are other times that I think I wish I had been able to do more. I don't feel I make as much of a difference here as I felt like I made before...There's just not as much you can do when there's one of you as [when there is] two.

In summary, Marlene's past experience with a successful reading support program did not appear to impact her perceived efficacy in teaching reading. The support program she describes as ideal is similar to those described by teachers with a high efficacy score. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is the amount of time she had been at Seaview. She had been in the district for only one year and may not have adjusted to the different student population. The culture at Seaview was also very different from that at her past school site, which may have influenced her perceptions of teaching efficacy.

The data presented in this section suggest that there was a relationship between the Seaview teachers' sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading and their perceptions of the program. Teachers with relatively high efficacy scores (over 50) had experience with other successful reading support programs and had positive perceptions of student achievement in the Seaview Reading Support Program. However, these teachers also had definite ideas for restructuring the program to be more effective. Teachers with personal efficacy scores between 40 and 50 felt that the program would benefit from the additional leadership and support of a reading specialist. Intermediate teachers in this range also identified increased student

confidence and self-esteem in their students that received reading support and considered the involvement of the classroom teacher critical to the program.

Question Five: Was There a Relationship Between Teachers' Sense of General and Personal Efficacy in Teaching Reading and Their Level of Involvement in the Program? If So, What was the Nature of this Relationship?

In order to compare the perceived efficacy of the two groups of teachers, those who delivered reading support services to children in their grade level and those who sent their students to another teacher for support, each teacher's score on the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading was ranked in relationship to the scores of their same age classmates. The teachers fell naturally into two equal groups. Seven of the teachers provided services during the 1999-2001 school year, the 2000-2001 school year, or both years. The other seven teachers sent their students to another teacher in the grade level for two years. The data from the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading were grouped into two categories: responses indicating perceptions of personal teaching efficacy and responses indicating perceptions of general teaching efficacy. Teacher scores from each category were ranked, then inserted into a Mann-Whitney U test with the following results:

Results

The scores from the 14 teachers on the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading were divided into categories, personal and general teaching efficacy and ranked with those of their same age classmates. The sum of the ranks was inserted into the Mann Whitney U formula using adjustments for tied ranks. Many of the teachers had the same score on the personal

teaching efficacy portion of the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading. In order to address ties in ranks, the ranks were averaged and the average score was used for each of the tied ranks (Levin, 1981). Ties occurred in 4 cases in the ranking of personal teaching efficacy scores and in 3 cases in the rankings of general teaching efficacy scores. The occurrence of tied ranks brings the validity of the Mann Whitney U test into question. The implications of these tied ranks will be discussed in the analysis section of this chapter.

Scores of Teachers ing Reading Support es	Rank	Scores of Teachers roviding Reading rt Services	Rank
56	1	51	3.5
53	2	51	3.5
47	6	49	9
47	6	49	9
47	6	49	9
45	12.5	46	11
45	12.5	39	14
n=7	R1= 46	n=7	R2= 59

Figure 13: Scores of perceived personal teaching efficacy for the 2 groups of teachers.

Personal Teaching Efficacy

The teacher scores from this section of the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading ranged from 39 to 56. A high score on this section of the scale indicates a high sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading.

Teachers Providing Reading Support

The teachers that provided reading support services ranked 1, 2, 6, 6, 6, 12.5, 12.5 of the 14 sets of scores (See figure 13). Three teachers had tied rankings for the fourth and fifth highest scores. Two teachers had tied rankings for the third highest score. The sum of the rankings was 46. When the sum of the rankings was inserted into the Mann Whitney U formula, the resulting U value was 31.

Teachers Not Providing Reading Support

The teachers that did not provide reading support services ranked 3.5, 3.5, 8, 8, 8, 11, 14 of the 14 sets of scores (See figure 13). The sum of the rankings was 59. Three teachers had tied rankings for the eighth highest scores and 2 had tied rankings for the third highest scores. When the sum of the rankings was inserted into the Mann Whitney U formula, the resulting U value was 18.

Data Analysis of Personal Teaching Efficacy

To determine whether or not the scores from the two groups of teachers were from populations of individuals with significantly different perceptions of efficacy, the lowest value U, which was 18, was compared to the critical value of a two-tailed test, $p = .05$. The U value of 18 exceeded the critical value of 12 (Hinkle, Wiersman, Jurs, 1998), thus the null hypothesis:

There is no difference in the way the teachers in the two groups perceive their personal teaching efficacy was accepted.

General Teaching Efficacy

The teacher scores from this section of the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading ranged from 15 to 27. A low score on this section of the scale indicated a high sense of general efficacy in teaching reading.

Scores of Teachers ing Reading Support es	Rank	Scores of Teachers roviding Reading rt Services	Rank
15	2	16	4
15	2	17	5
15	2	18	6.5
18	6.5	19	8.5
19	8.5	25	12
20	10	26	13
23	11	27	14
n=7	R1= 42	n=7	R2= 63

Figure 14: Scores of general teaching efficacy scores for the 2 groups of teachers

Teachers Providing Reading Support

The teachers that provided reading support services ranked 2, 2, 2, 6.5, 8.5, 10, 11 of the 14 sets of scores (See figure 14). Three teachers had tied rankings for the lowest score. Two teachers had tied ranking for the fourth and fifth lowest scores. The sum of the rankings was 63. When the sum of the rankings was inserted into the Mann Whitney U formula, the resulting U value was 14.

Teachers Not Providing Reading Support

The teachers that did not provide reading support services ranked 4, 5, 6.5, 8.5, 12, 13, 14 of the 14 sets of scores (See figure 14). The sum of the rankings was 63. Two teachers had tied rankings for the fourth and fifth lowest scores. When the sum of the rankings was inserted into the Mann Whitney U formula, the resulting U value was 14.

Data Analysis of General Teaching Efficacy

To determine whether or not the scores from the two groups of teachers were from populations of individuals with significantly different perceptions of efficacy, the lowest value U, which was 14, was compared to the critical value of a two-tailed test, $p = .05$. The U value of 14 slightly exceeded the critical value of 12 (Hinkle, Wiersman, Jurs, 1998), thus the null

hypothesis: There was no difference in the way the teachers in the two groups perceive general teaching efficacy in the area of reading was accepted.

Because the sum of the ranks of the two groups of teachers were different in each of the categories, personal and general teaching efficacy, the populations from which the teachers were drawn had some differences. However, the teachers in these two populations did not differ significantly in their perceptions of efficacy in teaching reading, either personal or general. The interpretation of this lack of difference is difficult for two reasons: The instrument The Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading did not consider the vastly different teaching backgrounds and experiences of the teachers involved in the study; and the occurrence of multiple instances of tied ranks in the data.

Many times during a Mann Whitney U test, researchers discarded tied scores if they fall at the high or low end of the continuum of scores (Huck & Cormier, 1996). In this study the score from each teacher was important to the results, therefore no scores were discarded. The occurrence of multiple tied ranks casts doubt on the use of the Mann Whitney U test as an instrument in this study. The efficacy scale was supported by the interview data in order to add depth to the score rankings by attaching teacher insight to their responses to the statements indicating the level of perceived efficacy.

Summary

This chapter presented data to answer the 5 research questions posed by this study. Achievement and growth in reading were compared for struggling readers and their non-struggling same age classmates, teacher perceptions of student achievement and of elements

which helped and hindered positive change in reading achievement were examined, and relationships between teacher perceptions of efficacy, program perceptions, and the level of teacher involvement in the reading support program were probed. Based on the results described in this chapter, students involved in the reading support program demonstrated growth in different areas of reading. By the end of the school year, first grade struggling readers read at or near the reading level of their same age classmates. Second graders involved in the program grew more than their same age classmates did in words read per minute, although their fluency remained below that of their same age classmates. Third and fourth graders involved in the program grew more ranks in total reading on the Stanford 9 standardized achievement than their same age classmates did.

The teachers involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program felt that student participation in the reading support program increased student reading fluency. Teachers who provided support services also felt that reading skills were transferred to materials in the core curriculum. The teachers identified 3 major themes which hindered positive changes in reading achievement: lack of collaboration, including group ownership, teamwork, and communication; lack of support, including professional development, time for planning, and coaching; and lack of leadership in a formalized program supported by school and district administrators.

No relationship between level of program involvement and teacher perceptions of personal teaching efficacy was identified by the use of the Mann Whitney U test. Teachers who had a relatively high efficacy score, above 50, had been involved in successful reading support programs before becoming involved with the Seaview Reading Support Program. Teachers with efficacy scores between 40 and 50 felt the need for specialist support in the area of reading.

Intermediate teachers also identified an increase in student confidence and self-esteem related to program participation and considered teacher delivery of support services vital to the program.

In chapter 6 these results are interpreted, discussed, and linked to research. The implications for leadership based on these results and recommendations for change are also considered for the Seaview Reading Support Program.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Study

This chapter included an overview of the previous chapters of the study before a discussion of its conclusions based on the five questions that drove the study and the research that supports these results. The chapter concluded with the implications of this study for the Seaview Reading Support Program and the researcher's recommendations for program modification.

This multiple case study investigation identified the effects of participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program on the reading achievement of struggling readers, teacher perceptions of that achievement, factors that teachers felt facilitated or hindered positive change in student reading achievement, and the relationships between teacher sense of personal teaching efficacy in reading, program perceptions, and level of involvement in the reading support program.

The problem that influenced this study was a population of struggling readers in the affluent Seaview district. These students received no formal reading intervention or support. As teachers addressed this problem by designing a reading support program, many issues including lack of time for planning, lack of collaboration, and lack of professional development opportunities made the program difficult to sustain. The importance of reading and its relationship to the children in

the Seaview Reading Support Program were examined in order to describe the purpose of the study and the problems that shaped the research questions on which the study was based. The study provided information to answer the questions:

1. What were the effects of participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program on student achievement?
2. How did Seaview teachers perceive the effects of participation in the Reading Support Program on student achievement?
3. Which program elements did teachers perceive as most helpful in affecting positive change in student achievement, and which elements hindered this change?
4. Was there a relationship between teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program and teachers' sense of personal efficacy in teaching reading?
5. Was there a relationship between teachers' sense of general and personal efficacy in teaching reading and their level of involvement in the program? If so, what was the nature of this relationship?

In chapter 1 the importance of reading in order for children to benefit from educational opportunities and fully participate in society as adults was summarized. Although researchers continued to disagree about the most effective method for teaching every child to read, most agreed that early intervention in some form is necessary to remediate reading difficulties. Some of this disagreement about best practice in reading instruction was based on differing definitions of literacy. Some researchers believed that developing reading fluency as the key to proficient reading (Fletcher & Lyon, 1996). Other researchers believed that comprehension was the

foundation for reading and that understanding must be fostered for children to read proficiently (Goodman, 1986; Taylor, 1998).

Although an abundance of research had focused on the effects of different instructional methodologies on student reading achievement, teacher perceptions of their own efficacy had also been linked to the performance and achievement of their students. Teachers with a higher sense of personal teaching efficacy achieved a higher percentage of goals, improved student performance, and maintained a high rate of innovation in their classrooms (Armor, et al, 1976; Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly & Zellman).

To investigate the problem of serving struggling readers at Seaview Elementary, chapter 2 provided a summary of research focused in the four areas identified in chapter 1 as program elements critical to support reading success. The first summarized research on socio-cognitive theory in shaping the personal and general efficacy of teachers. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy were more resilient, spent more time on academic activities, and had a greater positive impact on student learning than teachers with a low sense of personal and general teaching efficacy (Armor, et al, 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly & Zellman). Although no relationship between teacher sense of personal teaching efficacy, perceptions of the reading support program, and level of program involvement was identified in this study, teachers who had successfully collaborated to deliver reading intervention in the past were found to have a higher sense of efficacy than teachers who had not.

The second section of the chapter offered a brief history of the evolution of current programs to address reading difficulties. Allington and Walmsley's (1995) principles for reforming current programs were outlined to provide the reader with background information on the evolution of reading support programs. Five programs with documented success in teaching children to read were examined and compared, with an emphasis on those delivered by classroom teachers. Both Pikulski's (1993) summary of the effective elements of successful reading intervention programs and the study by Foorman, Francis, Schatschneider and Mehta (1998) on direct code emphasis as an effective instructional methodology had a direct impact on the design of the Seaview Reading Support Program.

The third section of the literature review emphasized the importance of students transferring newly learned skills to reading real books. Past attempts by Seaview to use only direct instruction programs delivered by staff outside of the regular classroom to improve the reading skills of struggling readers had resulted in children who could decode controlled text, but not read and understand core curriculum reading materials. By using grade level classroom teachers to deliver reading support and incorporating materials from the core curriculum into the reading support program, teachers involved in the reading support program design hoped that there would be a greater transfer of new learning to grade level materials.

The fourth and final section of the literature review focused on leadership and its role in the Seaview Reading Support Program. Many elements of leadership were identified in the program, such as intended real change, the collaborators' mutual purposes, and an influence relationship between those involved in the program

implementation (Rost, 1993), however the fragmented nature of this leadership did not support and sustain the program. Not enough staff members were willing to mobilize to do the adaptive work (Heifetz, 1994) required for significant change to be maintained. The administrative support required for change of this magnitude to take place extended beyond the school site to the district office because of its implications for district funding, use of time, and current staff development programs.

Recommendations for strengthening the leadership necessary to maintain and improve the reading support program are throughout this chapter.

Chapter 3 outlined the methodology used for data collection and analysis in the study. Two types of data, qualitative and quantitative, were used to describe student achievement, teacher perceptions, and teacher perceptions of efficacy in teaching reading. The results of student assessment, including classroom measures of reading fluency and norm-referenced test scores, were summarized to describe the achievement of struggling readers and their peers, and to compare their growth over the 1999-2000 school year. Many struggling readers improved their reading fluency and norm-referenced test scores at a greater rate than their peers. Data from a semi-structured interview, and The Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading, a modified efficacy scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1994), were combined in a multiple case study design in order to collect and analyze information with which to answer the research questions. A computerized data management program, NUD*IST, was used to manage the interview data and sort it into recurring themes across individual teachers and groups of teachers involved in the program at different levels.

Chapter 4 provided the expanded background and context for the study. The demographics of the Seaview District, Seaview Elementary, and its community members were described to add depth to the information gathered from students and teachers. Profiles of each teacher who participated in the study were included in this chapter to summarize the essence of the individual teacher interviews.

The data collected during the study were presented in chapter 5 and used to answer the five research questions about student achievement and teacher perceptions. The data were organized according to the research question for which it provided information.

In this chapter the results of the data analysis are used to support conclusions, discussed in relationship to current research, and used to recommend changes in the Seaview Reading Support Program. The implications of the study for leadership in this and other reading support programs are explored, providing recommendations for future research.

Summary of Results and Conclusions

The results of this multiple case study have implications in a number of areas, many of which go beyond the Seaview setting. The implications are organized in this chapter as a series of conclusions, applicable at several levels in Seaview and with wider ramifications for education in general. Generalizations are made and discussed in this chapter both in relationship to the literature reviewed in chapter 2 and research which supports the conclusions that emerged from the results of the measures of

student achievement, the semi-structured interviews, and the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading. The conclusions resulting from the study include the value of reading support provided by the classroom teacher, the increase in student decoding skills resulting from the use of Reading Mastery, the need for a staff development program that supports teacher collaboration by providing time for training and reflection, the role of teacher perceptions of efficacy in providing effective reading support, and the elements of leadership critical to sustaining innovative programs. The implications of this study for leadership are present throughout discussion and will be woven into each section of the chapter. The chapter ends with recommendations for the Seaview Reading Support Program, reading support programs in general, and for further research

Discussion

The conclusions drawn from the results of the study are discussed in this section and supported by research and literature reviewed as a result of the themes arising from teacher perceptions of the Seaview Reading Support Program, the results of student assessments, and teacher perceptions of their efficacy in teaching reading.

Conclusion: Classroom Teachers are a Valuable Resource in Providing Reading Support

Struggling readers were typically served outside the classroom by reading specialists, resource teachers, or paraprofessionals. Although the teachers in Seaview described the difficulty of providing small group reading support to children within the grade level using direct instruction materials, the results of student assessment indicated that struggling readers benefited from this support. Each grade level group of students that participated in the reading support program maintained higher gains on norm-referenced test scores; however, children receiving reading support lagged behind their same age classmates who did not receive support in the area of reading fluency.

Discussion of Student Achievement Results

Children in first grade who received support from two of the four grade level teachers on a daily basis made greater gains than children in grades two and three. The scores on the sub-tests of the Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement (Clay, 1995) indicated that first graders who struggled to read at the beginning of the year were able to hear and write sounds in words, spell words correctly, and recognize high-frequency sight words nearly as well as their same age classmates. Perhaps most importantly, these children who were perceived to struggle were able to read the grade level benchmark book with the same accuracy as their peers. Several

of these first graders continued to receive support in second grade, while some of them were able to proficiently read second grade material without additional reading support, bringing them up to grade level in reading.

Children in second grade who received reading support services remained behind their peers in the area of reading fluency, although the mean growth of their reading fluency in words read correctly per minute exceeded that of their peers by 4.43 words during the 1999-2000 school year. The mean fluency of 77.44 words read correctly per minute for children who received reading support was between the 25th and 50th percentiles of the curriculum-based norms in oral reading fluency identified by Hasbrouk and Tindal (1992), while their peers achieved a mean of 117 words read correctly per minute, which fell between the 50th and 75th percentiles. The second grade teachers perceived the achievement of the children to increase over the course of the year as a result of the extra support provided in the program based on their answers to questions about student achievement in the semi-structured interview.

Initial data obtained from longitudinal studies support the effects of early direct instruction in phoneme awareness and phonics within a complete reading program on the reading achievement of first and second graders at-risk of reading failure (Lyon & Moats, 1997). It is much more difficult for children in grades 3 through 5 to significantly increase their reading skills. This research link supports the importance of reading support in the early grades.

Third graders receiving reading support remained far behind their same age classmates in reading fluency, reading a mean rate of only 77.11 words correctly per

minute, which falls below the 25th percentile of Hasbrouk and Tindal's (1992) oral reading fluency norms. Their peers not receiving reading support read a mean of 115.3 words correctly per minute, which was only slightly above the 50th percentile. Readers that received support grew a mean of 15.38 words compared with a growth of 23.92 words by their peers. Third graders that received support did increase more percentile rankings on the total reading section of the Stanford 9 achievement test than their peers. Four of the seven children increased their percentile ranking in total reading a mean of 16.25 percentile ranks compared with an increase of 10.60 percentile ranks in their peers.

It was difficult to measure the achievement of fourth grade students who received reading support services. Of the five children receiving services in fourth grade, two were identified as learning disabled over the course of the 1999-2000 school year. Both students received resource specialist services after their identification, which disrupted their participation in the reading support program. At the end of the school year the mean number of words correctly read per minute by children receiving support services was 87.2 wpm, which was below the 25th percentile, compared with 138.75, close to the 75th percentile for their peers. It may be significant that the students who did not have their reading support services disrupted by special education pull-outs read with a mean of 133.5 words correct per minute. The children who were identified as learning disabled could have been disfluent readers because of their learning disabilities, but it is possible that the disruption of reading support services compounded this lack of growth. On the 2000

Stanford 9 test, two of the five children receiving support services scored above the 50th percentile in total reading (see figure 8).

Students who received reading support in second, third and fourth grade remained less fluent readers than their peers who did not receive reading support services. Surprisingly, teacher perceptions of student achievement were based primarily on increased reading fluency for students in the program. The grade level benchmarks used for assessment were very similar to the materials used in the classroom reading program. Perhaps increases in everyday student reading fluency were observed in the classroom after text had been read several times or during reading sessions that were scaffolded to support the needs of the struggling readers. It was also possible that the confidence and self-esteem gained from participation in the support program had an impact on student willingness to read with the classroom teacher and to try out reading strategies on new material. It was reasonable to conclude, based on the supporting comments of teachers, that participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program increased the quality of student reading in core curriculum materials in addition to their reading fluency. The direct code aspect of the program increased the mean growth in reading fluency for second grade struggling readers, compared to their peers who did not struggle to read. Teachers observed that the reading fluency of students receiving reading support increased in grade level literature, although most of the struggling readers remained below the 50th percentile of words read correctly per minute (Hasbrouk & Tindal, 1992). Foorman, Francis, Schatschneider and Mehta (1998) found that children involved in a direct code program, similar to the Reading Mastery program used in this study, increased

improvement in word reading and word recognition skills. However, Foorman et al. (1998) did not find that students were able to transfer their increased word recognition skills to text reading, while most of the Seaview students were able to transfer those skills to read grade level literature. It is important to recognize that in all of the research supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Development Center to date, improvements in decoding and word-reading accuracy had been far easier to obtain than improvements in reading fluency and automaticity (Lyon & Moats, 1997).

The growth in norm-referenced reading test scores for many of the children who participated in the program indicate that some aspect of the support they received had a positive affect on their performance on standardized tests. Many of the tasks on the Stanford 9 are based on hearing sounds in words; however, some reading is required on the section that tests reading comprehension. Factors contributing to this boost in total reading scores include a combination of the additional time spent with a credentialed teacher on reading, the decoding skills reinforced by the Reading Mastery materials, the small group instructional format, the inclusion of core curriculum materials to facilitate the transfer of learning, and the increased confidence and self-esteem gained through improved reading skills. Seaview saw a dramatic increase in its Academic Performance Index (API); a rating scale used by the state of California to combine test scores and school and student demographics in order to rank schools according to their achievement. Each school in California received a raw score, a ranking compared to other schools in the state (on a scale of 1 to 10, ten is the highest possible score), and another ranking

indicating how a school's test scores compared to those of schools with similar demographics (on a scale of 1 to 10, ten is the highest possible score). In 1998 Seaview had an API score of 873, which compared to other schools in California fell into the top tenth of state schools with the highest ranking of 10. Compared to other schools with similar demographics, however, Seaview ranked only a 3 on a scale of 1 to 10. After the full implementation of the reading support program, the API for 1999 increased by 30 points to 903 and Seaview Elementary's percentile ranking compared to other schools with similar demographics jumped from 3 to 10 on a scale of 1 to 10, reflecting a growth of 7 ranks. Other schools in the Seaview district that did not have a reading intervention plan for struggling readers increased their API scores a mean of 3.67 points (with a range of -5 to 14 points). Seaview Elementary grew more than twice as many API points than any other school in the district. Although teachers do not often use standardized test scores to inform their day to day instruction, these scores are used as a measure of school success and quality education at the state level and by parents and community members.

In summary, teachers perceived the reading fluency of children in grades two through four to increase in core curriculum materials. Students who participated in the reading support program in second grade had a higher mean of growth in fluency, 16% more words read per minute, over the school year, even though the number of words read by these students per minute remained behind that of their same age classmates. Greater gains were observed on students' total reading scores on the Stanford 9 achievement test, with struggling readers at the third grade gaining 53% more percentile ranks than their peers, and fourth grade struggling readers gaining

168% more percentile ranks in total reading from the 1998 to the 1999 school year. The Academic Performance Index for Seaview Elementary also increased 30 points from the 1998 to the 1999-2000 school year after the reading support program was implemented.

Implications of Directly Involving Teachers in Providing Reading Support

The shift proposed by Allington and Walmsley (1995) in responsibility for educating struggling readers so that children could receive assistance from any staff member, particularly from their own classroom teacher, benefited the children receiving reading support in various ways. The students receiving reading support continued to participate in the regular classroom curriculum. First graders were able to build their decoding skills while transferring their new learning to real books. The achievement of these first graders was even more encouraging than those studied by Taylor, Short, Shearer, and Frye (1992), in which 73% of the students who received additional support could read at grade level at the end of the year. Teachers of children in second and third grade also noted an increase in the confidence of struggling readers who received support during the study.

Issues with the Transfer of Learning

The goal of the Seaview Reading Support Program was for struggling readers to develop skills and strategies to help them better read and understand grade level

literature. It wasn't until the results of student assessments were summarized that it became apparent how difficult it was to measure transfer of reading comprehension in the classroom setting, across different tasks and environments. The kind of learning community described by Campione, Shapiro and Brown (1995) in which students understand big pictures, rather than memorizing facts, read and write for the purpose of guiding learning in other areas, use reasoning strategies to generate coherent arguments, and practice and refine their writing skills was not supported by the Seaview Reading Support Program model. The delivery of reading support by a classroom teacher familiar with the standards and expectations for reading at their own grade level and the limited use of core literature materials were the only elements included in the reading support program to facilitate the transfer of new reading skills to authentic literature. Although the children had many opportunities to discuss and apply their learning, no formal measure of transfer was included in the program other than measures of fluency in grade level materials. Because many of the struggling readers were perceived by their teachers to read more fluently, transfer of decoding skills may have occurred. Actual student scores at grade levels two through four only weakly supported the concept of transfer.

Based on the increased reading achievement for students involved in the study, it was concluded that involving classroom teachers in supporting struggling readers had a positive effect on student achievement. Teachers at Seaview Elementary perceived students to benefit from participation in the program and the first grade student gains on the subtests of Clay's (1995) An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, gains in reading fluency at the second and fourth grade

level, and norm-referenced test scores at grades two through four support their perceptions.

Conclusion: The Use of the Reading Mastery Program Increases the Decoding Skills
of Struggling Readers

Many Seaview teachers commented on the increase in reading fluency for children in the reading support program. Although the increase in fluency was not significant in every grade level, it was observed by teachers at the classroom level in the reading of grade level materials that had been taught well by teachers and had been read by students several times.

The direct code aspect of the Reading Mastery Program increased the mean growth in reading fluency for second grade struggling readers, compared to their peers who did not struggle to read. Teachers observed that the reading fluency of students receiving reading support increased in grade level literature, although most of the struggling readers remained below the 50th percentile of words read correctly per minute (Hasbrouk & Tindal, 1992). Foorman, Francis, Schatschneider and Mehta (1998) found that children involved in a direct code program, similar to the Reading Mastery program used in this study, increased improvement in word reading and word recognition skills. However, Foorman et al. did not find that students were able to transfer their increased word recognition skills to text reading, while most of the Seaview students were able to transfer those skills to read grade level literature.

Research Synthesis: Program Elements Affecting Student Achievement

This section outlines elements that teachers perceived to facilitate increases in student reading achievement and the research that supports these perceptions.

Reading Mastery

Teachers at grade levels one through three identified the Reading Mastery program as helpful in affecting positive change in student achievement. The program is grounded in research, easy for teachers to deliver, and provides a basis for explicit, systematic phonics instruction. There is compelling evidence that systematic, explicit phonics is an essential part of reading instruction for students at-risk for reading failure (Adams, 1990; Chall, 1996; Meyer, 1984). Reading Mastery provides a basis for carefully organized, explicit instruction in which frequently used sounds and spellings are introduced systematically and sequentially. These sounds are taught in isolation and blended into whole words. Practice in the classroom also includes practice in spelling, word building, word sorting, and reading in decodable texts. In Seaview Reading Mastery provided reading support teachers with decodable text that could be used on a daily basis to reinforce previously introduced letter/sound correspondences and high-frequency sight words. Decodable texts also gave struggling readers a chance to apply their newly acquired skills to reading materials.

Teachers of older children felt that their students needed materials more geared toward the curriculum and skills that would transfer easily to the large amount of content area reading required in the upper grades. Students above the third grade level needed comprehension strategies in order to navigate the core curriculum. According to research, effective comprehension-strategy instruction and intervention in the upper grades were explicit and scaffolded. Strategies were conscious plans that readers applied and adapted to comprehend text effectively. The best interventions and support programs used routines, repeated procedures, organizers and visual aids to teach strategies. Instruction should have provided many opportunities for guided practice in strategy use (Honig, Diamond & Gutlohn, 2000).

Research has shown that proficient readers automatically used comprehension strategies during reading. Teachers improved the reading of less proficient readers by explicitly teaching these effective strategies and when they should be used (Kern, 1989). Students were able to transfer their comprehension strategies to their independent reading if they had been carefully instructed (Griffin, Malone & Kameenui, 1996; Pressley, Symons, Snyder, and Cariglia-Bull, 1989).

Reading Fluency

Fluency was defined for the purpose of this study as the rate a child reads accurately in words per minute in a grade level story or passage. An additional dimension of fluency was prosody, the rhythm and tone of the reading. Much of the meaning of text came from the way it sounded as students read it. Students who read

with expression segmented text into meaningful chunks, with appropriate pacing, changes in pitch, and word emphasis (Dowhower, 1991).

Studies indicated that a primary factor that caused readers to struggle was a lack of skill in decoding (Juel, 1988; Samuels, Scermer & Reinking, 1992). Children who did not decode well had difficulty developing reading fluency. Reading practice to increase fluency was useful for every child and was been linked to improved comprehension (Dowhower, 1987; O'Shea, Sindelar & O'Shea, 1985). Allington, (1983) described fluency as the "neglected goal" of reading instruction. His review of research led him to conclude that fluency should be regarded as a necessary feature of good reading. Readers increased their fluency through training, and fluency training improved overall reading ability.

Children became fluent readers by reading text. Struggling readers often were reluctant to spend time reading, so their poor fluency became a self-perpetuating problem with an ever-widening gap between struggling readers and their same age classmates (Honig, Diamond & Gutlohn, 2000). Teachers in the Seaview Reading Support Program addressed the problem of reading fluency by providing students with many opportunities to practice reading manageable text with a high rate of success. These texts, along with less manageable texts included in the core curriculum, were read several times, enhancing fluency. Research indicated that repeated readings of text built confidence and motivation in students, especially when they charted their own progress, as the third graders in the reading support program did on a daily basis (Koskinen & Blum 1984; Topping, 1987; Trachtenburg & Ferrugia, 1989).

By including repeated readings of texts in the classroom program and expanding opportunities for students to read manageable text in the reading support group in addition to Reading Mastery, teachers noticed that the skills learned in the small group setting transferred to increased student reading fluency in core curriculum materials. Gillet and Temple (1994) explain that this happened because rereading helped students acquire more sight words and read aloud fluently and confidently.

In summary, teachers perceived that children in the Seaview Reading Support Program increased their reading fluency in core curriculum materials due to the increases in decoding skills developed by Reading Mastery. Struggling readers often had difficulty reading fluently enough to comprehend grade level materials. Students involved in the Reading Mastery program were able to increase their reading fluency and, as a result, increase their confidence in reading grade level materials and motivation to fully participate in the classroom reading program.

Conclusion: Professional Development is Essential to Maintain Effective Programs

Teachers were concerned with the lack of time for service delivery and planning, missing elements of coaching and education in the planning and delivery of reading support programs, and lack of collaboration within the program. Communication between teachers providing service to children the program was minimal and nearly non-existent between these teachers and the rest of the Seaview

staff. Most of the elements that teachers felt were missing from the program are components of effective professional development programs.

Time

Many teachers identified lack of time for planning and collaboration as a weakness in the Seaview Reading Support Program. Teachers were given no extra time for regular planning of the support lessons and minimal time to collaborate and communicate with other teachers. Purnell and Hill (1992) estimated that it takes as much as 50 hours for teachers to learn a new teaching strategy. In addition to exposure to new material, this learning includes opportunities for practice, reflection, and collaboration with colleagues. The reading support program had an abundance of new learning required of teachers, yet failed to provide the time and support for this learning to take place.

Education and Support

Although the Reading Mastery program was scripted, telling the teacher exactly how to present a lesson and what to say, direct instruction was a skill that required hours of education, practice, and coaching. Some of the teachers involved in the program had studied direct instruction in other districts; however, several of the teachers that provided reading support services had not received any professional development supporting their use of the program. Combined with a lack of time and

structure for collaboration and communication, this lack of support increased the burden of some reading support teachers considerably more than others.

Pikulski (1994) listed training, or teacher education, as a critical element of effective intervention programs. He stated that initial education should be provided so that effective instruction is delivered consistently. He also maintained that continuous coaching and educational support should be available at least through a teacher's first year of implementation. A process must be in place to decide what the content of the educational program would be, who would provide it, and when and where it would take place.

Research on professional development provided some insight into the efficacy of various training components. When the theory behind a skill was combined with demonstration and practice, teachers were much more likely to use new skills effectively than by learning by theory alone (Joyce & Showers, 1995). Teachers providing reading support in the Seaview program had few opportunities to study, observe, and practice new skills.

Coaching

Coaching, reflection, and feedback on new practices were essential components of a professional development program (Joyce & Showers, 1995). Teacher education was expected to result in sufficient skill proficiency so that new practices could be sustained in the classroom and transferred to other situations. Teachers in the Seaview Reading Support Program had few opportunities to visit

other teachers practicing reading support. As a result, the strengths that some teachers had in delivering direct instruction programs and transferring decoding skills to core curriculum materials were not shared among the staff and used to improve instruction. Teachers did not have the chance to learn from one another and received no feedback on their own teaching.

Peer coaching enhanced staff development efforts and offered support for teachers implementing new strategies (Joyce & Showers, 1996). In the 1970's, evaluations of staff development that focused on teaching strategies and curriculum revealed that only 10% of teachers implemented new learning and transferred it to new situations. As professional development models changed, teachers were involved in weekly seminars that gave teachers the opportunity to practice and implement their new skills. As a result of these peer-coaching teams, implementation of new learning by teachers rose dramatically. Teachers on the peer coaching study teams developed skills in collaboration and had structured time in which to share this new learning.

Collaboration

A common problem with educational change is the fact that there was not enough opportunity or encouragement for teachers to work together, learn from each other, and improve their expertise as a community (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). Both teachers who provided reading support to struggling readers and teachers who did not provide support mentioned the lack of collaboration between the Seaview

staff to support the reading program. The lack of collaboration between teachers was due to lack of a shared vision of the program's purpose and importance, and lack of time to communicate and work together.

Some teachers who provided reading support worked in isolation, with little support from other teachers in the program. Fullan (1990) describes this isolation as a difficulty endemic to establishing and maintaining a collaborative work culture. Teachers had a hard time collaborating even when they wanted to work together. The organization of the school workplace was often not conducive to maintaining collaboration in the long run.

Schmoker (1996) stated that regardless of the tradition of teacher isolation, schools performed better when teachers work in teams. Benefits of collaboration included: (Little, in Schmoker, 1996)

- Remarkable gains in student achievement
- Higher-quality solutions to prevent problems
- Increased confidence among all school community members
- Teacher's ability to support one another's strengths and to accommodate weaknesses
- The ability to examine and test new ideas, methods, and materials
- More systematic assistance to beginning teachers
- An expanded pool of ideas, materials, and methods

There was an abundance of evidence that teachers could do more by working in teams than by working in isolation. According to Schmoker (1996) even reasonable attempts to increase teamwork could promote better student achievement.

The ability of teachers to identify teamwork as lacking lent promise to the possibility of making teamwork a priority for the staff at Seaview Elementary. Many of the following themes are closely linked to teamwork and collaboration and might be addressed through teachers working together to boost student achievement.

Communication

Lambert (1998) identified communication as an element typically missing in reform efforts, even in the best schools. A communication system should keep all members of a community informed and involved in a program. If a school was considering a major change, such as the implementation of a reading support program, staff members needed to engage in numerous conversations about what was expected from each member of the school community and what each individual must contribute to make the program work. This system of communication was missing in the Seaview Reading Support Program. Support teachers had no procedure for regularly communicating the growth of struggling readers to classroom teachers, nor did they have frequent opportunities to communicate with one another.

Based on the research that supported teacher perceptions of program elements that hindered student achievement, it was apparent that numerous changes must take place to support staff development at Seaview Elementary if teachers were to successfully support struggling readers. In order to provide time and materials for training, funding needed to be utilized to support teachers in their attempts to improve instruction for all children. If teachers were to have the opportunities to meet, discuss

and solve problems, and do research, the school day must be restructured to provide time for these activities (Purnell & Hill, 1992).

Effective Staff Development Increases Teachers' Sense of Personal Efficacy in Teaching Reading

Bandura (1997) indicated that an individual's level of motivation, affective states, and actions were based more on his or her beliefs, than on what was objectively true. Individuals who believed in their capabilities in an area were more likely to take advantage of opportunities in that domain. Individuals who doubted their capabilities shied away from tasks in that domain. Based on this theory, Seaview teachers who felt confident about their skills in the area of teaching reading would seek out and identify resources and support related to reading. Teachers who doubted their skill in teaching struggling readers would probably not spend as much time attempting to support these students as teachers who felt confident about teaching reading. This theory was demonstrated in the responses of teachers in the Seaview Reading Support Program to questions on the Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading.

Teachers who had relatively high efficacy scores, above 50, had been involved in successful reading support programs before becoming involved with the Seaview Reading Support Program. All of these teachers had previous training that enhanced their skills in teaching struggling readers, resulting in an increased sense of

personal efficacy. Each of these teachers received the bulk of their training in reading support outside the Seaview district.

Teachers with efficacy scores between 40 and 50 felt the need for specialist support in the area of reading. Most of these teachers had spent the bulk of their time in the Seaview district and had received minimal training in supporting struggling readers. Several of the teachers had special education training in their university programs, but had not applied these skills in the classroom before this time. The lack of professional development, collaboration, and leadership in the Seaview Reading Support Program may have contributed to a lower sense of personal teaching efficacy in some teachers who had spent most of their teaching careers at Seaview Elementary.

One teacher, with a personal efficacy score below 40, felt that the children in her class benefited from the program, but not enough support was provided for struggling readers in general. She also had experience in a successful reading support program in another district; however, she had been unable to re-create that model at Seaview. She felt that there were too many children who needed help for one teacher to effectively serve. It is likely that the lack of time for communication and collaboration in the reading support program was a factor in her low sense of personal efficacy in the area of teaching reading.

Research Synthesis: Teacher Perceptions of Efficacy

A teacher's sense of efficacy was related to the expectation that he or she could help children learn. This self-efficacy influenced decisions teachers made in

choosing learning activities for students and in how much energy they used in teaching these students (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Seaview teachers with personal efficacy scores above 50 received training in supporting struggling readers in another setting, leading to a higher sense of teaching efficacy. These teachers confidently approached the task of working with struggling readers, whether or not the teacher personally delivered reading support services. People who feel efficacious are quick to take advantage of opportunities for growth and to circumvent policies and activities which constrain their work (Bandura, 1997).

Teachers with slightly lower efficacy scores had spent most of their time at Seaview Elementary, with little staff development or support. Efficacy beliefs were based on experience and vary according to the situation (Bandura, 1997). These teachers had a variety of experiences working with struggling readers, some more positive than others. Teachers that lacked training were less confident in their ability to address the needs of struggling readers in the classroom and needed the additional support of a reading specialist.

One teacher with an efficacy score below 40 had experience in a successful program outside of Seaview, but had been unable to re-create that program model. Her sense of isolation and lack of support probably contributed to her low efficacy score. People who did not feel efficacious in a situation tended to shy away from tasks in this domain and gave up easily in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1997).

Moore (1990) measured the perceived self-efficacy of science teachers involved in an intensive staff development program. She found that these teachers perceived themselves to be significantly more efficacious in teaching science than

teachers in the two control groups. In addition, teachers who received intensive staff development taught more science, used different methods than teachers in the other two groups, and were more likely to share curriculum information with their colleagues.

Many factors affected teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy, such as heavy workloads, lack of opportunity to participate in school decision-making, variable quality of instructional leadership, insufficient resources, problematic students, insufficient pay, low occupational status, and inadequate recognition of accomplishments (Ashton & Webb, 1986). One inference that was made based on the scores of these teachers is that those with a higher sense of efficacy had been previously involved in a successful reading support program that provided high-quality support and teacher education. These teachers needed little personal assistance to provide that support to children in the Seaview Reading Support Program. It was possible to conclude, based on the results of this study and those of Moore (1990), that effective professional development programs lead to an increased sense of personal efficacy.

Conclusion: Innovative School Programs Require Leadership and Support

Teachers identified lack of leadership and administrative support in the reading program as a barrier to positive change in reading achievement. Many teachers felt that the program had little direction, accountability, and support from district and school administrators. Support from district and school administration

was critical to the success of program innovations. Pink (1989) reviewed four programs that attempted significant change and innovation. Among the 12 barriers to innovation identified between these programs was lack of sustained central office support and follow through, an inadequate theory of implementation, including too little time for teachers to plan for and learn new skills and practices, and under-funding the project by training to do too much without enough support.

Principals of highly efficacious schools had administrators that strived to improve education. They figured out how to circumvent policies and regulations that impeded academic innovations. Principals who created a positive school climate with a strong academic emphasis and advocated on behalf of teachers' instructional efforts enhanced teacher beliefs in instructional efficacy (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

Teachers guided their own learning in many ways, but administrators and other leaders had a responsibility to reinforce individual and collective efforts (Schmoker, 1996). Highly successful schools were found to have effective administrators or instructional leaders who strived to improve education. They helped teachers circumvent policies and procedures that impeded their instructional programs (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Administrators helped by facilitating the establishment of common goals for struggling readers that directed all staff members in a mutually reinforcing effort. Establishing goals was a manifestation of leadership, but the continued consultation of data and regular praise, recognition, and celebration of success was essential to keep the change effort focused. Administrators at the site and district level must unite to define the goals of the reading support program and how they will be measured; provide teachers with the time, resources, and structure

for education, coaching, and collaboration in the area of teaching reading; and recognize the efforts of teachers who provide leadership in the program.

When students fell behind in effective schools, support was provided to accelerate student learning and reduce learning deficits so that students could transition back to the regular school program (Bandura, 1997). In order for teachers to effectively serve each child, professional development and coaching must become part of the instructional program. Funding for a reading specialist to provide training and support for classroom teachers would ultimately have to be found by school and district administration in Seaview, in addition to the time provided each week for training, practice and reflection.

In summary, the elements identified by teachers as hindering the positive change in student reading achievement were essential parts of an effective professional development program. The implementation of such a program would require support from individual teachers in sharing the vision of a reading support program for all children; support from the site administrator in funding the program, providing professional development, and scheduling time for collaboration and communication; and support from administrators at the district office in providing funding, parent education, and scheduling time for collaboration and professional development.

Recommendations for Program Improvement

Based upon the conclusions drawn from the results of the study, the following recommendations were made. Support for the Seaview Reading Support Program must occur at each level of the district. Teachers must be willing to assist in developing a vision for the program, participate in the learning that must occur to effectively teach every child to read, and collaborate with their peers in improving reading instruction. Teachers must also spend some time reviewing what is already working in the program so positive elements that are in place are not discarded in program reform.

The site administrators must advocate for the program by funding ongoing teacher education, providing personnel for program management and support, and most importantly providing time for teachers to communicate and collaborate during the school day. Site administrators must also recognize and appreciate the efforts of teachers in their work to improve reading instruction and support for every child.

The staff at needed the assistance of district administrators to find funding for intensive staff development and identify resources that will facilitate teacher learning. District administrators must provide parent education in supporting children at home and in evaluating the quality of their child's reading instruction. Time for teacher learning must be honored, funded, and supported by the district level administrators. Finally, district administration should pay close attention to the student outcomes in order to guide other district schools in improving reading instruction for children in the district who struggle to read, yet are not receiving reading support. The increase

in the academic performance index at Seaview Elementary indicated that there was room for improvement for other schools in the district.

The limited success of the Seaview Reading Support Program did not rest on any one factor in the program or the shortcomings of any individual or group of individuals. While the program advanced the reading achievements of the struggling readers at Seaview as a whole in certain areas, the fragmented nature of the program did not allow teachers and children to benefit from its full potential. The program was based on many of the critical elements of effective reading intervention programs described by Pikulski (1994); however, the missing factor of strong, ongoing professional development and support was enough to weaken its structure and results. Leadership from teachers and administrators is required to provide the missing elements of professional development needed to strengthen the program while undergoing reform. The necessary program changes depend on the leadership provided at the individual, site, and district level.

The essential elements of the leadership process necessary to foster the desired changes in the Seaview Reading Support Program were the development of a shared vision, the implementation of a staff development program to motivate and harness the energy of the teachers, the formalization of a defined support program and embedding it in the school routine, and protecting and honoring the time for collaboration and communication as a value inherent in the program (Cuban, 1988).

The review of literature in chapter 2 indicated that many elements of leadership were present in the Seaview Reading Support Program. Some of the teachers involved in the program had a shared vision and intended real change (Rost,

1993). Teachers had some opportunities to actively participate in the reading support program to achieve the mutual purpose of increased achievement in student reading. Some teachers had also mobilized in response to an identified gap between their values in student reading achievement and the reality of actual student achievement (Heifetz, 1994).

Although some elements of leadership could be observed in the Seaview Reading Support Program, they were not well defined for every teacher. The program did not include every member of the staff; therefore, it was not widely supported by those not directly involved. Leadership is a key element in determining school effectiveness. In order for teachers in the Seaview Reading Support Program to move forward in their work in supporting struggling readers, certain elements of the leadership process must be addressed at three levels of the Seaview Organization (teacher, site, district). These levels are developed next, in light of the essential elements of leadership: shared vision, harnessed energy in the form of professional development, embedded management routines, and protected values in the form of honored time for planning and collaboration. The three levels of leadership, the populations they most impact, the setting in which they operate, and the desired outcomes of change are summarized in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Leadership Implications at Different Organizational Levels

Energize and Motivate

Improving the conditions that support teacher learning should impact the learning conditions for students. It was important that leaders at Seaview Elementary develop and implement policies for professional development in order to energize and motivate teachers. Appropriate training was one program element that can foster change by activating teacher interest in educational programs. The district had a strategic plan for staff development that had not been implemented to provide teacher support. Pikulski (1994) listed ongoing education as a critical element of effective intervention programs. He stated that initial education should be provided so that effective instruction is delivered consistently. He also maintained that continuous staff support should be available at least through a teacher's first year of implementation. A process must be in place to decide what the content of the training will be, who will provide it, and when and where the training will take place. Training should enable people at all levels to generate positive change for themselves and the students involved in the program. The program described in recommendation four should re-energize teachers by providing time for training and collaboration.

Develop a Shared Vision for the Reading Support Program

Senge (2000) stated that if any one idea about leadership has inspired organizations for years, it is the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future they seek to create. It is difficult for an organization to sustain any measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values, and missions that become deeply important to an

organization. In the case of Seaview Elementary, teachers, administrators, and parents must first establish a clear vision or set of purposes for the reading support program. At the time this study took place, only the teachers whose students participated in the program had a clear sense of what the program was all about. Staff members must work together to form a picture of the future that will foster genuine commitment to the program, rather than compliance in its delivery.

The shared vision of the entire staff was missing from the Seaview Reading Support Program. Therefore some teachers did not support the program at the level necessary for other teachers to provide reading services. Teachers did not have the time to truly collaborate in addressing the needs of struggling readers. Collaboration, as defined by Chrislip (1994) went beyond mere communication, cooperation, and coordination. It means people working together at a level that exceeds sharing knowledge and helping another party achieve a goal. The purpose of collaboration was to create a shared vision and strategies that went beyond the purview of any individual involved in the relationship.

The staff at Seaview Elementary had input in designing the reading support program, but the additional responsibilities of program delivery placed strain on certain teachers because not every member realized the importance of their role in sustaining that change. Reading support teachers were responsible for additional planning, lesson delivery, and assessment for each struggling reader in that grade level. Only some of the reading support teachers had the support of another adult during the small group meeting time. Not all members of the program shared the

vision of real change in the support system for struggling readers at Seaview Elementary.

Achieving meaningful change in education was often a frustrating endeavor. Chrislip (1994) declared that complexity was part of the problem. So many aspects of education were changing that, taken as a whole, change had overwhelmed the system. Resistance to change could halt even the most laudable goals for program improvement. Implementation of change was rarely successful unless teachers, principals, parents, community members, institutions of higher learning and students were involved in creating the changes.

Embed Change in Routine

Vision and beliefs were not enough to sustain change in a complex organizations like schools (Schlechy, 2000). Actions were needed to change vision into reality. School leaders must think for the long-term while planning for the short-term implementation of change. Staff members must develop a plan for reading support: who would be served, when, using what materials, and, most importantly, how the results of this support would be measured and by whom. Each group of grade level teachers must identify a time for communication and collaboration during the school day so that time could be honored and supported by the school administration. A structure for planning student services should be in place before the program was implemented at the beginning of the school year. Teachers and administrators must identify program resources in the form of materials, training and

personnel. A staff member with specific training in reading intervention, peer coaching, and program evaluation should monitor the program. A detailed plan for the program should be included in the site plan and re-evaluated as needed. If the staff and administration follow a clear plan for program implementation, teachers would know what to do and when to do it and it would become an organizational improvement that was embedded in the school routine, rather than an imposition on teacher time and resources.

Creating a Results-Oriented System

The achievement of children receiving reading support will determine whether or not the reading support program is working. Norm-referenced test scores were just a small piece of the results needed to determine student achievement. Performance measures that assessed student learning with respect to content standards should drive the instruction provided in reading support. The staff at Seaview Elementary needed the time and education to develop measures that focused attention on the elements of instruction that really mattered in student learning. These elements were unique to the needs of the students in the program and must be identified by the teachers at Seaview.

Protecting Values: Honored Time for Communication and Collaboration

Collaborative planning for program improvement must include every staff member to build commitment to the reading support program. Through this collective planning, goals will emerge, differences could be resolved, and a basis for action would be created (Hopkins & West, 1994). Communication was essential for effective collaboration. In order for staff members at Seaview Elementary to communicate and plan, time must be provided during the school day and protected as a value inherent in the program.

Desired Outcomes

The desired outcome of leadership at the school and district level was improved student achievement in reading. In addition to supporting children who struggled to read, there was a good possibility that reading instruction would be improved for every child. Teachers would have the training and the time to address the needs of each student and would feel more efficacious in teaching reading. Teachers that felt efficacious would try harder to teach reading and would be more resilient when faced with adversity. Parents would notice that teachers were doing a better job of teaching reading and community relations would improve. Administrators would spend less time dealing with parents angry about their child's lack of progress and spend more time in classrooms observing effective teaching practices. Norm-referenced test scores would rise, along with scores on district performance assessments, further improving community relations and increasing the

likelihood of increased funding for teacher training. Other schools would study the Seaview model and implement similar programs, thus improving reading instruction for other children in the district, county, and state.

Summary

The results of the study led to the following conclusions:

- Involving classroom teachers in the support of struggling readers had a positive effect on student achievement
- The Reading Mastery Program helped increase the decoding skills of struggling readers
- Professional development was an essential part of effective school programs
- Professional development had a positive effect on teacher perceptions of personal efficacy in teaching reading
- Innovative programs require leadership to sustain change

Leadership was necessary in order to implement the recommendations of this study based on the data analyzed in chapters four and five. While some teachers and administrators in the Seaview learning community worked collaboratively toward a mutual purpose (Rost, 1983), increased achievement for struggling readers, not enough of the staff at Seaview Elementary and at the Seaview District Office provided the support needed to sustain the change. Seaview teachers had little time or opportunity to work together to improve the quality of programs for struggling readers (Lambert, 1998). Research presented in this chapter indicates that the

problems encountered in sustaining change in the Seaview program exist in many other schools, regardless of the theme of the change or innovation. The elements of leadership, shared vision, teacher training, embedded program planning and management, and honored time for study and collaboration described in this chapter must be present before effective change can take place at the classroom, school, and district level to assist teachers in acquiring and sustaining the skills necessary for improving instruction for all children.

Recommendations for Future Research

The next steps in research on this program and others like it include:

- Examine the effects of teacher delivery of classroom reading support on student achievement on a larger scale, such as an entire district.
- Repeat measures of student achievement, teacher interviews, and efficacy measures three years after a new model of staff development is implemented as part of the program evaluation
- Collect data on struggling readers from similar schools with no reading support program to provide a control group for a more meaningful study of student achievement
- Include measures of reading comprehension and impact of teacher training on instructional change in future studies
- Complete a longitudinal study to determine if achievement gains are sustained by the students over time.

Researcher Reflections on the Study

As a former teacher in the Seaview Reading Support Program, it took several years for me to “get on the balcony” (Heifetz, 1994) in order to take an objective look at whether or not the program benefited children without taking an inordinate toll on teacher time and energy. It is gratifying that many of the teachers at Seaview had strong beliefs in the program’s impact on student achievement and continued to advocate for struggling readers after I left the program in 2000. The results of the study reinforce what teachers have known for many years: innovative programs need support from all members of the school community. Administrators must find funding and build time for teacher learning within the school day. Teachers need time for training, practice, and reflection. Teachers who are given the time, training, and support to use an innovative reading support program feel good about their ability to teach all children to read. Challenges for the teachers still involved in the Seaview Reading Support Program include the use of the information and recommendations generated in this study. I hope teachers and administrators will take the time to consider the information and recommendations made here, incorporate them into a school-wide plan for improving staff development and student achievement, and evaluate the plan by carefully tracking student reading improvement in every classroom. Every child deserves a teacher who is well trained, receives regular

support in learning new skills, and feels that he or she can make a positive difference in student achievement.

Conclusions

Although this study took place in only one school in one small district, its results had wider implications for the implementation and support of reading intervention programs. The study added to the literature in a number of areas: literacy, reading methodology, professional development, teacher efficacy, and leadership.

In the area of literacy, this study indicated that teachers perceived that the use of direct instruction materials in reading support programs helped struggling readers gain confidence and reading fluency in core curriculum materials. This growth in fluency was quantitatively documented at the second grade level through assessment of reading fluency in materials in the second grade curriculum. Second grade students receiving reading support grew 16% more words read correctly per minute than their same age classmates. Growth in reading fluency at grades three and four was observed by classroom teachers, whether or not that teacher provided reading support. Teachers also observed that reading confidence increased for children involved in the reading support program. The authentic reading materials and the high expectations of the reading support teachers assisted students in transferring new learning to improve their reading of core curriculum materials. The results of the

study also indicated that more work must be done in this area to determine the effects of classroom reading support on reading comprehension and higher level reading skills that were more genuine measures of literacy than reading fluency.

In the area of reading methodology, this study supported research indicating that the Reading Mastery helped children increase their decoding skills and suggested that an increased ability to decode increased norm-referenced test scores. Students receiving reading support in grades two, three, and four were observed by their teachers to improve their reading fluency in grade level, core curriculum materials. These students also demonstrated greater gains in percentile ranking in total reading on the Stanford 9, gaining from 53 to 168% more ranks than their same age classmates in grades three and four. This increase was also documented by an increase in Seaview Elementary's Academic Performance Index: 30 points and 7 percentile ranks.

The analysis of the Seaview teachers' perceptions of the reading support program revealed a lack of shared vision, training, collaboration, and support to sustain the energy and motivation necessary for change; program management necessary to embed the change in the school routine; and the protection of values inherent in the change, such as time for collaboration and funding for training. These elements of staff development were essential to support any school program that is undergoing extensive change in curriculum or methodology.

In the area of teacher efficacy, this study suggested that opportunities for training and collaboration were more closely linked to increased personal efficacy in teaching reading than the level of teacher participation in reading support programs.

Teachers with high personal efficacy scores were previously involved in successful reading intervention programs that were highly collaborative and provided a high level of training or specialist support. This past experience helped them differentiate instruction in the classroom whether or not they provided direct reading support. The teacher with the lowest personal efficacy score was unable to recreate the model of collaboration she supported, and received little guidance or support from other teachers or administrators. The analysis of data in this study suggested that teacher training, support, and opportunities for collaboration had a positive relationship with teacher perceptions of efficacy in teaching reading.

In the area of leadership, this study supported the importance of shared vision, energy, motivation, embedded change, and protected values. Weaknesses in each of these areas undermined the intended change in reading support at Seaview and made an innovative program difficult to sustain. These areas of leadership are universal and were significant for achieving and maintaining substantive change.

The results of this study revealed program strengths and weakness that could be identified in many reading programs, regardless of the socioeconomic level or size of the school. The recommendations for program improvement based on the perceptions of teachers and the results of student data could be used by educators at any level to develop effective programs for populations of students with needs not easily met in a traditional school program.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

1. How did participation in the Seaview Reading Support Program affect the reading achievement of the children involved?
2. What are the factors necessary for you to teach children to read most effectively?
Which of these factors are already present in the support program and which are missing?
3. What impact does Reading Mastery have on student reading?
4. Were there rewards or drawbacks to your participation in the Reading Support Program (probe if needed)?
5. Describe how much a difference you make in teaching difficult or unmotivated children to read.
8. Did any of your reading support students graduate from the program during the year?
If so, describe what specific improvements in student learning made you decide to discontinue services. If children did not, graduate, did the program seem to make a significant difference in the achievement of any child?
9. Describe your picture of the perfect reading support program in terms of materials, support, structure, and personnel.

APPENDIX B
TEACHER EFFICACY SCALE

Teacher Efficacy Scale

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Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement below by circling the appropriate numeral to the right of each statement (the original scale was formatted so that the scale appeared above each number).

--	--	--	--	--	--

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

1. When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. The hours in my class have little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. If parents comment to me that their child behaves much better at school than he/she does at home, it would probably be because I have some specific techniques of managing his/her behavior which they may lack.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. The amount that a student can learn is primarily related to family background.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5. If a teacher has adequate skills and motivation, she/he can get through to the most difficult students.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6. If students aren't disciplined at home, they aren't likely to accept my discipline.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7. I have enough training to deal with almost any learning problem.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8. My teacher training program and/or experience has given me the	1 2 3 4 5 6

necessary skills to be an effective teacher.

9. Many teachers are stymied in their attempts to help students by lack of support from the community.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Some students need to be placed in slower groups so they are not subjected to unrealistic expectations.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Individual differences among teachers account for the wide variations in student achievement.	1 2 3 4 5 6
12. When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it to his/her level.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13. If one of my new students cannot remain on task for a particular assignment, there is little that I could do to increase his/her attention until he/she is ready.	1 2 3 4 5 6
1 2 3 4 5 6
14. When a student gets a better grade than he usually gets, it is usually because I found better ways if teaching that student.	1 2 3 4 5 6
15. When I really try, I can get through to the most difficult students.	1 2 3 4 5 6
16. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement.	1 2 3 4 5 6
17. Teachers are not a very powerful influence on student achievement.	1 2 3 4 5 6
18. If students are particularly disruptive one day, I ask myself what I have been doing differently.	1 2 3 4 5 6
19. When the grades of my students improve it is usually because I found more effective teaching techniques.	1 2 3 4 5 6
20. If my principal suggested that I change some of my class curriculum, I would feel confident that I have the necessary skills to implement the unfamiliar curriculum.	1 2 3 4 5 6
21. If a student masters a new math concept quickly, this might be because I knew the necessary steps in teaching that concept.	1 2 3 4 5 6
22. Parent conferences can help a teacher judge how much to expect from a student by giving the teacher an idea of the parents' values toward education, discipline, etc.	1 2 3 4 5 6
23. If parents would do more with their children, I could do more.	1 2 3 4 5 6

24. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson. 1 2 3 4 5 6
25. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him quickly. 1 2 3 4 5 6
26. School rules and policies hinder my doing the job I was hired to do. 1 2 3 4 5 6
27. The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching. 1 2 3 4 5 6
28. When a child progresses after being placed in a slower group, it is usually because the teacher has had a chance to give him/her extra attention. 1 2 3 4 5 6
29. If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty. 1 2 3 4 5 6
30. Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students. 1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX C
TEACHER SCALE OF EFFICACY IN TEACHING READING

The Teacher Scale of Efficacy in Teaching Reading

Modified from Gibson and Dembo (1984)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement below using the following scale using your teaching assignment and experience during the 2000-2001 school year as a reference.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Strongly
disagree	Moderately
disagree	Disagree
slightly	Agree
slightly	Moderately
agree	Strongly
agree
_____ 1.	When one of my students does better than usual in reading, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort.					
_____ 2.	The hours children spend in my classroom have little influence on their reading compared to their home environment.					
_____ 3.	The level to which a child can learn to read is primarily related to family background.					
_____ 4.	I have enough training to deal with almost any reading problem.					
_____ 5.	My teacher training program and/or experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective reading teacher.					
_____ 6.	When a student is having difficulty with a reading assignment, I am usually able to adjust it to that child's level.					
_____ 7.	When a student gets a better grade in reading than usual, it is usually because I found better ways of teaching that student.					
_____ 8.	When I really try, I can teach the most difficult students to read.					
_____ 9.	A teacher is very limited in what he or she can achieve in teaching reading because the home environment is such a strong influence on student reading.					
_____ 10.	When the reading achievement of my students improve it is usually because I found more effective teaching approaches.					
_____ 11.	If a student masters a new reading concept quickly, this might be because I know the necessary steps in teaching that concept.					

- _____ 12. If parents would read more with their children, then I could do more.
- _____ 13. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous reading lesson, I would know how to increase that child's retention in the next reading lesson.
- _____ 14. The influences of a student's home experience can be overcome by good teaching.
- _____ 15. If one of my students couldn't do a reading assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether or not the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.
- _____ 16. Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students in the area of reading.

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

I, _____ hereby consent to participate in the
research project

A CROSS-CASE STUDY OF TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRAM DESIGN AND TEACHING EFFICACY: THE SEAVIEW READING SUPPORT PROGRAM

Susan L. Smith, Researcher, Student

Department of Educational Leadership, University of San Diego

- This study will gather information from teachers participating in the Seaview Reading Support Program during the 1999-2000 school year. Results of this study will provide information that will help districts and schools design reading support programs that honor teacher perceptions of program efficacy.
- You will be asked to answer a number of open-ended questions in an interview that will last approximately 90 minutes. Your responses will be tape recorded in order to aid in transcription. You will also be asked to fill out a questionnaire related to your thoughts and opinions on teaching reading.
- Your responses will be considered strictly confidential. All data collected will be coded with a pseudonym and submitted for your review before publication.
- You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation at any time, without prejudice or consequences.
- Questions related to the study may be directed to Dr. Mary Williams,
maryw@acUSD.edu

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E
MEMBER CHECKING

February 27, 2001

Dear Study Participant,

Attached you will find a transcript of the interview completed as one portion of the study titled Teacher Perceptions of Program Design and Teaching Efficacy: The Seaview Reading Support Program. At the end of the packet you will also find a short profile that attempts to capture the essence of your interview without addressing any of the themes identified between the teachers participating in the program during the 1999-2001 school year. Your name has been changed, but you will find the information in the profile familiar.

An important part of qualitative research is a process called member checking. This process allows you to respond to the data summarized by the researcher. If you agree with the information I have compiled, you need not respond. If you'd like to make changes in your profile or add to the information in your interview, please indicate those changes and return the data sheets to me by March 31, 2001 by truck mail addressed to Susie Smith, SDCOE, 321 N. This is the only existing hard copy of your profile and your interview and it is coded so that only you and I can identify the interviewee. If you have no changes, the data is yours to keep or destroy as you see fit.

Thank you for sharing your time and insight on reading support programs. It is my hope that children and teachers can benefit from your perceptions and experiences.

Sincerely,

Susie Smith