A Design for Action: Analyzing Problems of Implementation

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Organizations, particularly school systems, seem like stable places where change rarely happens, however the very connectedness of everything guarantees that change will occur (Fullan, 1997). Administrators talk with one another, teachers attend conference sessions, a principal hears about a great new literacy program that helped a neighbor’s child learn to read, a district coordinator reads a piece on the Internet and shares it with all the teachers in the district; perhaps now more than anytime in our history we can say that “Everything and everybody is connected” (Land & Jarman, 1992, cited in Fullan, p. 98).

Another reason for change has to do with staff turnover. People come and go in educational settings: a new superintendent is hired, a principal moves to another school, a Reading Recovery teacher is reassigned. These changes occur with regularity and with them new ideas are brought in to the system (Fullan, 1997). Indeed, the environment in which the innovation is situated is constantly changing (Clay, 1994).

Even as forces of change are acting on school systems, a competing force is also in operation: the force to stay the same. This force is driven by the conservative nature of school systems which are continually working to maintain the status quo (Fullan, 1997). As a result of these two competing forces, inevitable change versus the desire to stay the same, change in education is chaotic and uneven (Fullan). Wilson and Daviss (1994) even go so far as to say that the process of school reform is “random and chaotic, operating more by chance than by method” (p. 135).

Clay recognized the challenges associated with initiating and maintaining an educational innovation in an educational system. Helping struggling readers achieve the seemingly impossible task of reaching average levels of reading and writing is relatively easy, she said, compared to the continuing challenges associated with making an innovation live in an education system (Clay, 1994).

It’s not that change is not a good thing. Change is inevitable. The challenge is that in educational settings change may occur without careful thought or planning. As Clay noted:

The art in the change process is that the changes made should not distort or diminish its payoff and any changes made should be explicitly referred to theories of what is occurring. Compromise or unthinking adaptations can readily change the impact of the innovation and reduce its capacity to deliver effective results.
(Clay, 1994, p. 136)

Our goal in this article is to describe a design for managing thoughtful change that evolved as we were working together with teacher leaders and teachers to problem solve issues of implementation. We called this a Design for Action. The design describes the actions that we took as we worked through problems of implementation in thoughtful ways and implemented changes that were supported by data. The design is a problem-solving process that emerged and was refined over 2 years as we worked together in two school districts. We will describe the Design for Action and share an example of one district to demonstrate how we examined and problem solved issues of implementation in Reading Recovery.

Design for Action

The Design for Action is informed by a data analysis process associated with the case study method. The case study method is typically used in educational research when the goal is to understand and describe what happened, how something happened, or why it happened (Yin, 2006). The process for analyzing case study data gave us an organized approach to problem solving implementation issues.

The design process is comprised of six actions including hypothesizing about the problem, collecting and analyzing data to test the hypothesis and then carrying out a plan to tackle the problem. Once the plan is underway, its effects are observed to evaluate whether the plan had the desired effect and whether something else happened as a result of the change. The six components of our
Design for Action are described in Table 1.

The actions in this design are non-linear and iterative. For example, even though hypothesizing appears to come first in the cycle, a hypothesis is usually based on some data already collected, whether formally or informally. The initial hypothesis may also need to be revised once data are collected and analyzed. Often implementing the plan will lead to the realization that more information is needed and will have to be collected. As well, it is most likely that data will be analyzed while they are being collected because these processes of analysis and collection often go hand-in-hand. Each action is an important ingredient in the problem-solving process of the design.

Although this article describes a partnership with considerable resources including university faculty, teacher leaders, and teachers, our contention is that problems of implementation occur on various levels. These levels range from day-to-day teaching to school and districtwide issues. Therefore, teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators can use the design to analyze and problem solve issues.

### Design for Action in Use

We implemented the Design for Action in one school district, Meadowville. We deliberately chose this particular example to show that cycles of problem solving can be of varying lengths, depending on the issue. The first cycle of problem solving is around implementation; the second example is a more lengthy cycle as we problem solved issues around instruction.

Although Reading Recovery had been implemented in the Meadowville district 20 years, results were stagnant or slipping to lower and lower levels. We start with a description of the context and then describe how we problem solved issues and worked to systematically change the implementation of Reading Recovery.

#### The context: Meadowville School District

Meadowville is a small midwestern school district with seven elementary schools. The city of Meadowville has a population of about 15,000 and is an exurb to a very large nearby city. Meadowville has a thriving manufac-

<table>
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<th>Table 1. Design for Action</th>
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<td><strong>Actions</strong></td>
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<td>Hypothesizing</td>
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</table>
| Collecting Data | Collecting information that will help inform the hypothesis. The information should be related to the question. | • Daily running records from RR and classrooms  
• Daily RR lesson records, particularly the comments section  
• NDEC-generated reports—site, district, school  
• Class artifacts—student writing samples, running records, portfolios |
| Analyzing Data | Reviewing data, comparing data, looking for confirmatory evidence and being open to rival explanations. | Conferencing between participants:  
• RR teacher and classroom teacher  
• RR teachers and teacher leader  
• RR teachers and building administrators  
• Teacher leader and building/district administrators |
| Observing | Observing that will help inform the hypothesis. The focus of the observations should be related to the question. | • Notes from systematic observation of teaching (videotape or ask a colleague to observe)  
• In-class observations by RR teachers and vice versa |
| Implementing a Plan | Identifying specific steps to take with a timeframe in mind. | Usually involves making changes—could be changes to teaching, changes to implementation |
| Considering Results | Collecting more data to see the effect of the change. | Observing teaching with a focus on the change |
turing base and, supported by good levels of school funding, has been rated as an exemplary district by the state’s department of education.

Meadowville district was one of many districts affiliated with a medium-sized Reading Recovery training site which had an experienced and effective teacher leader. Five Meadowville schools had implemented both Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative. Almost all of the students are white and from middle-income homes, although three of the five schools qualified for Title I funding. Three schools had had Reading Recovery for 22 years, one for 10 years, and one for 6 years. There were six Reading Recovery teachers.

First example of a problem-solving cycle
Results for the third-grade population on the state achievement test were very positive — most third-grade students in the district were performing at average or above levels in literacy, and this had the effect of masking a Reading Recovery implementation problem. Even so, the results for Reading Recovery for the district were amongst the lowest in the state.

Hypothesizing. Our first hypothesis was that low levels of coverage were affecting outcomes. By low levels of coverage, we mean there are not enough Reading Recovery teachers to teach those children who are having difficulty learning to read and write. Even though there were only five elementary schools in the district, the schools were fairly large and there were only six Reading Recovery teachers.

Collecting and analyzing data. To test our hypothesis we collected data about the number of first-grade students at each school and the number of children taught in Reading Recovery. We used a benchmark of 20% of the first-grade population to estimate the number of Reading Recovery slots that would be needed to meet the needs of all the students, a figure recommended by Clay (2005). We found that the level of coverage in the five schools ranged from just 7% to 14% meaning no school had enough Reading Recovery resources assigned to teach all the children estimated to be struggling with reading and writing.

Implementing a plan. We knew that to improve coverage we would need to activate the support of other important Reading Recovery stakeholders. For this reason the teacher leader convened a meeting with the district’s superintendent, the Title I director, the district coordinator for literacy, all five of the elementary school principals, trainers from the university training center, and the authors of this paper. At this meeting the teacher leader shared the data, explained our partnership, discussed the need for improved coverage, and asked the administrators whether we should go forward to work on the problem. The superintendent said, “It’s obvious we have a problem; these people are offering help. We would be foolish not to accept.”

We worked together with the administrators to problem solve the issue of low coverage. The goal was to increase the level of coverage as much as possible with the existing number of Reading Recovery teachers.

The district staff activated support by revising teaching assignments even after the beginning of the school year. For example, at Apple Elementary, three first-grade classrooms were reconstituted into two classrooms in the afternoon. This action freed up a teacher; essentially creating a new teacher without making a new hire. At Begonia Elementary a teacher was reassigned to six daily teaching slots. Another teacher was reassigned from Begonia Elementary to Carnation Elementary because Carnation had more students.

A different strategy to create full coverage was needed for Dogwood Elementary and Elm Elementary. At these schools, students were selected from three of the five classrooms, not all five classrooms. This decision created a full-coverage-like context. The three classrooms to receive Reading Recovery were selected randomly. The two classrooms that did not were provided with another intervention, and Reading Recovery teachers could select students from those classrooms once they had taught all the students who needed Reading Recovery from the three classrooms. This strategy to create full coverage was somewhat more drastic than the other strategies, but the administrators and teachers were willing to trial it in order to measure the effective-
ness of Reading Recovery with full coverage (see Table 2).

This reorganization is important for two reasons: First, change can be made without additional cost. Second, although in this case no additional costs were incurred we continued to work with the district in an ongoing way through coordinators and the teacher leader to remind the district that they indeed had money, and that how they allocated funds is something they could examine in an ongoing way to see if they could achieve full implementation in all schools.

Observing results. The results of changing implementation in order to improve levels of coverage were fully evaluated at the end of the year, 2006–2007 and are summarized in Table 3.

Sixty-three percent of all children who had an opportunity to receive a full lesson series of 20 weeks successfully reached average levels of reading and writing, compared to 36% in 2006. The results were impressive.

Second example of a problem-solving cycle
Improving the level of coverage was just one step in changing implementation at Meadowville. We started the next cycle of problem solving almost immediately.

Hypothesizing. The teacher leader noted that there was a high number of incomplete programs at year end, meaning that there were many children still in Reading Recovery at the end of the school year who did not have access to a complete series of lessons because time had run out and the school year was over. It seemed that children who were selected first in the school year were staying in lessons for the maximum duration of 20 weeks. This reduces the amount of time that children who were selected later in the school year had in Reading Recovery lessons. This can be a problem, especially if any of these children coming in later need more time. We wondered about the pace of teaching and learning for children coming into Reading Recovery first in the school year and why those children were spending so long in Reading Recovery lessons.

We hypothesized that the high number of incomplete lesson series later in the school year might be related to teaching early in the year. It seemed likely that the children selected first were being kept at reading levels that were too low for too long. We wondered whether teachers were teaching for accuracy instead of teaching to support literacy processing.

Collecting and analyzing data. The teacher leader collected the following data (Figure 1). Of the 18 students selected first for Reading Recovery in the fall of 2005, only two children reached average levels of reading and writing. The teacher leader noted that the students were spending many sessions reading at the same low levels.

The data indeed supported our hypothesis that the students selected first for Reading Recovery were remaining at too-low reading levels for too long. We decided we needed a plan that would target teaching early in the year with the children selected first.

Observing and implementing a plan.
We designed a new format for the teaching session in order to give us more time to guide and support the teachers’ analyses of new book introductions and first readings and to

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Table 2. Plan to Improve Coverage at Meadowville Elementary Schools (ES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple ES</td>
<td>Three first-grade classes become two in the afternoon, freeing a teacher to teach Reading Recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begonia ES</td>
<td>Reassigned a Reading Recovery teacher to teach six daily slots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnation S</td>
<td>Reassigned a teacher from school B to C because C had more students than B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogwood ES</td>
<td>Students selected from three randomly selected classrooms instead of all five.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elm ES</td>
<td>Students selected from three randomly selected classrooms instead of all five.</td>
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Table 3. End-of-Year Progress in Meadowville

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Full Series</th>
<th>Discontinuing Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005–06</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36% (n = 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–07</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>63% (n = 24)</td>
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give us an opportunity to help teachers to learn to work for immediate shifts in teaching and learning.

Instead of two behind-the-glass lessons, we had one. We began the teaching session with a guided analysis of the student’s strengths, based on the teacher’s description of what the student was doing in reading and writing and a discussion of related data from the student’s Observation Survey (Clay, 2002) scores. This analysis was followed by the teaching session: Mary Fried, working in the role of a teacher leader, guided the teachers’ observations and inquiry during the teaching. Following the teaching session, the teachers, guided by Mary, discussed what else they had learned about the student’s literacy processing. They also identified together key shifts that they thought were needed right away in the student’s processing of text (See Rodgers & Rodgers, 2005). Next in the process, Mary taught the same student behind the glass, working to get the key shifts in processing that had been identified by the teachers (See Rodgers and Rodgers, 2007). The steps can be summarized this way:

1. Discussion before teaching: Gathering information and analyzing student progress. What can the student do well? What are possible problem areas?

2. First teaching of student: While viewing the lesson, the teachers analyze strengths and identify key shifts in student processing needed immediately.

3. Discussion: The teachers construct a plan to activate teaching to support the specific shifts needed now.

4. Second teaching of same student: Someone teaches the same student again, this time with a focus on trialing some of the teaching plans identified in the discussion.

5. Discussion: Debriefing the second teaching.

6. Teachers summarize their learning and relate the learning to their own teaching of a focus student.

Next, the plan for support included a cluster school visit blitz to occur within 2 weeks of the first behind-the-glass teaching sessions (see alternative groupings in Rodgers and Rodgers, 2007). A blitz meant that over a 2-day period, every teacher participated in a cluster school visit. To do this, teachers were grouped so that one teacher taught while at least two others observed along with a teacher leader or trainer. Then, in 2 weeks time, we followed up the cluster school visits with another behind-the-glass teaching session.

As a result, within a 1-month period the teachers were involved in three intensive professional development sessions that temporarily provided a high level of support: a teaching session, a cluster school visit, and a second teaching session. In carrying out this plan, we also changed the design for the teaching session in order to provide a higher level of support for teaching. It is appropriate to note at this point that any changes to professional development that involve working differently from the standards and guidelines for Reading Recovery require discussion with trainers and a waiver from the university training center.

The professional development plan also included completing a case study. Reading Recovery teachers were asked to collect and analyze specific information about the students in both settings: the classroom and Reading Recovery lessons. The case study project took place over several months and each assignment, as it was due, was debriefed at whole-group sessions. The key elements of the case study included:

- meeting with the classroom teacher to discuss the student, entry data, and expectations for progress;
- observing the Reading Recovery student in class during guided reading and writing;
- having the classroom teacher observe a Reading Recovery lesson;
- observing and collecting student classroom writing samples and Reading Recovery writing samples for the same time period;
- observing and collecting running records from the classroom and from Reading Recovery lessons, for the same time period;
- with the classroom teacher, analyzing and comparing running records and writing samples; and
- with the classroom teacher, making recommendations to support the student’s literacy processing in both settings.

The final element of our plan included a tool called the Plan of Action for Teaching (see Figure 2) designed by Mary.

This tool consisted of a blank, three-column template. The three columns
were titled strengths, problem areas, and plan of action for teaching your own student. At each professional development session, Reading Recovery teachers updated their plan for teaching the case study student and then implemented these ideas following the session.

Observing the results. Mary hypothesized that the teachers might be keeping the students who were selected first for Reading Recovery at too-low reading levels for too long. Most students who were selected first in the year remained in the lessons series for the 20-week maximum time possible. This meant that students selected next might not be getting time in Reading Recovery, resulting in a high number of incomplete lesson series at year end. Our plan for action focused on teaching for accelerated shifts in reading. We wanted to support teachers to teach for faster progress in text reading.

Observation of results occurred with every interaction we had with teachers. We listened to the teachers’ analyses and contributions to discussions after the teaching sessions and checked our hypothesis about how the teaching was going. The cluster school visits, particularly the timing of them, allowed us to check how teachers were doing with taking on the changes in instruction that we were discussing in our whole-group teaching sessions.

Evaluation data confirmed the shifts in teaching and improvement in students’ results which are displayed in Table 4.

Not only were more lesson series successfully discontinued, but teachers were able to support students in making faster gains in text levels, thereby shortening the lesson series and providing the second cohort more time to complete their series of lessons.

Discussion: Important Features for Success

Our goal is to provide a design for tackling problems of implementation in thoughtful ways so change is not chaotic. Many stakeholders can use the design. Teachers might ask, “How are the students doing?” An administrator or teacher leader might ask, “How is the district doing?” If the answers are not aligned with expectations, the design can be used to begin to address implementation problems.

It is important to understand that a teacher or teacher leader, working alone, cannot implement the entire design we have discussed for this reason, the design is intended to be utilized in a systemic way at multiple levels from the top-down and the

<table>
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<th>Table 4.</th>
<th>Duration of Intervention for Discontinued Lesson Series</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2005–06</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–07</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
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* Full series denotes those children who had an opportunity for a full intervention, whether successful or not.
bottom-up. In the interpretation we offer here, two key components of the design are (a) the activation of consensus among top-level administrators and stakeholders and (b) the development of the desire to change amongst ground level participants such as teachers. By consensus we do not mean everyone is in total agreement, but rather that most agree on the thrust of what needs to be done, are willing to support it, and that there are no serious objections to the thrust and supports from other administrative-level stakeholders.

In the sections that follow, we identify key features of the design both for top-level and ground-level stakeholders and discuss what makes the features useful. Although Fullan (2005) continues to refine his thinking, we were drawn to the arguments he built over 15 years ago (Fullan, 1993). For this reason we included the sources he drew on so that we can better demonstrate his arguments as we attempt to provide a context for this design.

**Building consensus at top-down levels**

Fullan (1993, pp. 34–36) explains that there is power in combining the forces of collective action with individual initiative. On the one hand, “Isolation is a problem because it imposes a ceiling affect on inquiry and learning. Solutions are limited to the experiences of the individual.” On the other hand, “The capacity to think and work independently is essential to educational reform. The freshest ideas often come from diversity and those marginal to the group…. We come full circle — isolation is bad, group dominance is worse. Honouring opposites simultaneously—individualism and collegiality—is the critical message.”

For these reasons we think it is essential when employing the Design for Action that participants have both the opportunity to collectively develop consensus, and the individuality to implement the consensus view in a way that makes sense for them. A good example of this occurred when the teacher leader at Meadowville schools shared her initial concerns regarding key Reading Recovery performance indicators with our research team. Since we knew that she could not make changes by her-self we worked very hard to build consensus within the district. In just one 2-hour meeting at Meadowville schools we were collectively able to address the problem of low coverage at five different schools. As a group we understood the need for more coverage, but each principal either individually or working with a partner principal devised how they would make that happen in their building. Admittedly we did not boost coverage as high as we would have liked, but we did make a start.

There is more to the consensus-building process than obtaining it. Using data to formulate consensus, understanding the challenge in building consensus, maintaining and renewing consensus, and understanding the threats to consensus are also important. Since the Meadowville administrators needed information to inform their decision making, we provided 2 years of selected, analyzed National Data Evaluation Center (NDEC) district data to illustrate trends. In the consensus-formation process data needs to be used not to point fingers regarding poor performance, but to share the strengths and spread the ownership of problems. Using these data, administrators worked together to offer supports including release time, teacher assignment, and other commitments to support change.

Fullan (1993, p. 37), citing Senge (1990), explains that “…learning organizations invest in improving the quality of thinking, the capacity for reflection and team learning, and the ability to develop shared visions and shared understandings….” Consensus makes this possible and identifies the kinds of supports that are needed. Indeed, we would like to build on Fullan’s thinking that an important outcome of the consensus building process is this identification of supports needed by the organization and its members. A part of these supports was our willingness to vary the traditional format and pilot an alternative format for ongoing professional development of teachers.

Fortunately, Reading Recovery standards are supportive of such innovation because the use of waivers means that alternative plans for continuing professional development can be instituted on an as-needed basis. Although both the Reading Recovery standards and the design that we illustrated here support innovation,
we have found that educators interested in analyzing problems will need to think carefully regarding how they proceed. We recommend using the focused approach of a design for action to identify and tackle chronic problems particularly at long-established sites and especially if the results are slipping or becoming stagnant. By rejecting a single, isolated change in favor of a multifaceted problem-solving approach, more attention can be focused on systemic change.

Although using data can be powerful in building consensus, it is still not easy to do, especially at the top level. One difficulty is that the “administration” is not one group who view things in the same way. Administrators include superintendents or their assistants, curriculum directors, Title I directors, principals, and in some cases other teacher leaders. There are differences of opinion both between and within these groups. As Fullan explains, this is a good thing, since a diverse group has the power to act together while also having the power of individual problem solving. To support the development of consensus we met with the Meadowville administrators so they could receive information at the same time and in the same way.

Another part of our approach was to avoid language like ‘they’ when speaking about students or teachers, and ‘your’ when speaking about administrators or the district because this language suggests individuals own problems. Instead, we worked to use language like ‘we’ to suggest students, teachers, building level administrators, district level administrators, and Reading Recovery personnel outside the district could work together. Having presented the problems, the teacher leaders we worked with asked, “Should we go forward?” This question is calculated to invite proactive problem-solving approaches that will use a consensus approach. While it may be unnerving to share lackluster data with a high-performing school district, especially one like Meadowville, it is important that administrators be active stakeholders.

Once established, maintaining and renewing consensus for change in visible ways is important. In our case, Meadowville administrators at the district level attended teacher professional development sessions. The decision at one Meadowville school to collapse three classrooms in one grade into two classrooms for half the school day was another visible sign of consensus at work. Since our work only covers 1 year with this district, we did not have the opportunity to explore how consensus built in 1 year may carry over into a consensus-building effort for subsequent years, but we do think that this is an important and necessary effort. In Meadowville schools, for example, subsequent work for future years could include

- examining and analyzing data,
- identifying issues,
- building consensus about next steps,
- revisiting coverage and renewing efforts to increase it to the needed level, and
- assessing whether goals were accomplished.

To do this work of renewal the role of the teacher leader is critical, but this is not new. Clay (1994, p.127) wrote that coaches redirect systems because they “teach children, train teachers, educate the local educators, negotiate the implementation of the program, act as advocates for whatever cannot be compromised in the interests of effective results, and talk to the public and media, correcting misconceptions.” The need for renewal is an increasingly important task that will need to be initiated by the teacher leader.

Although using data can be powerful in building consensus, it is still not easy to do, especially at the top level. One difficulty is that the “administration” is not one group who view things in the same way.

We found that one of the reasons it is hard to build and maintain consensus is that many factors threaten both the consensus-building process and the conclusions that are reached by the group. As Fullan (1993, p.39) explains, “There are far more ideas ‘out there’ than ‘in here’… . Successful organizations have many antennae to tap into and to contribute to the demands of change which are constantly churning in the environment.” Of course, a key point in negotiating multiple ideas is to determine which ones are helpful and which ones are less helpful. It is important that as new ideas are infused into the school system their usefulness is interpreted through a
data-driven lens. Teacher leaders can gather, analyze and interpret data at the student, teacher, school, and district level. It is important to use this information to maintain consensus, not only to maintain Reading Recovery in the district, but also to ensure that short-lived change becomes long-term change.

**Change within the bottom**

A second key component of the design is the development of a desire to change among participants such as teachers at the ground level. As Fullan (1993, p. 37) explains, “both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary.” This is because “change is too important to leave to the experts….” Put differently, each and every teacher has the responsibility to help create an organization capable of individual and collective inquiry and continuous renewal, or it will not happen” (p. 39). Fullan (2001, p. 64) adds “…professional development or training of individuals or even of small teams will not be sufficient. For this reason schools must also focus on creating schoolwide professional learning communities.”

We have attempted to build on Fullan who suggests change is essential. In our describing the Design for Action we provided examples of how we worked, not on teachers, but with teachers, to change the way they worked with students. This is because we think it is not enough that teachers want to change teaching practices, but rather that they feel it is essential to change now. Fullan (1993, p. 31) explains, “Productive change is very much a process of mobilization and positive contagion.” Thus, the support for change through consensus discussed above might be viewed as the mobilization. The urgency for people at the ground level of reform to work both individually and collectively to change now might be viewed as the contagion. This is based on the belief that to initiate a profound change, the efforts of every teacher must be directed toward changing practice. Therefore it is essential to have every teacher as an important part of the change process. We could tell teachers that, but in deep levels of reform it is not enough that teachers merely be informed of the need to make change. Instead, we felt the task was to support teachers in building a robust desire of what needs to be done and how each teacher could do it. As Fullan explains teachers who are assessment literate have the capacity to examine student performance data and results, and to make critical sense of them… the capacity to act on this understanding by developing classroom and school improvement plans in order to make the kinds of changes needed to increase performance… [and] the capacity of teachers to be effective players in the accountability arena….

(2007, p. 142)

Understanding the need to change comes both from within the individual and also in consultation with others who work at the ground level. For example, at Meadowville one teacher taught a student at Level 2 for many lessons but never sought the support of her teacher leader. We think by identifying and naming this as an issue, teachers felt more motivated to activate supports such as teacher leader consultation. We also found that Reading Recovery teachers were required to attend promotion meetings, IEP meetings, and referral meetings at the expense of instructional time. By identifying this as an issue, we supported Reading Recovery teachers in protecting instructional time. We were especially interested in how Reading Recovery and classroom teachers partner together to change practice.

Although the input of Reading Recovery teachers at promotion and IEP meetings is important and welcomed, distractions from teaching can have a negative effect. For this reason, promise might come from “substantial interventions like comprehensive restaffing, continuous training, [and] redesigning programs…” (Louis & Miles, 1990, in Fullan, 1993, p. 31). Reading Recovery teachers may want to consider (a) sharing their knowledge by returning to the classroom at points in their career, (b) ongoing renewal through professional development, and (c) new roles of leadership as a part of redesigned professional development.

**Conclusion**

Since a growing number of schools and universities have implemented Reading Recovery for a long time, researchers and practitioners need to address the unique issues of vintage sites from the perspective of continuous school improvement. Also, the longer Reading Recovery is around, the more likely the administrators will change and will need information about the intervention and support to improve results.

The benefit of a Design for Action is that it is flexible enough to analyze problems at different levels of implementation. Through systematic data collection, analysis, and hypothesis-
ing, teachers can analyze teaching, teacher leaders can examine schools, districts, or sites, and trainers can consider a range of systemic challenges. By addressing different layers of implementation—teaching children, working within districts, working across sites, and working with different teachers, teacher leaders, or administrators—a variety of educators working in different contexts such as schools, district offices, state education agencies, or universities all have the opportunity to be agents in the analysis process. The Design for Action is meant to provide support for Reading Recovery teacher leaders, teachers, and administrators to take on those chronic issues and problem solve the issues in a thoughtful, informed, and energetic way.

References

About the Authors
Adrian Rodgers taught public school in Labrador, Canada, for 8 years and is currently an assistant professor at The Ohio State University in Newark, Ohio. His research interests include initial and ongoing teacher preparation and literacy education. He recently coauthored *The Effective Literacy Coach* published by Teachers College Press.

Mary Fried is a Reading Recovery trainer at The Ohio State University. A former classroom teacher, reading teacher, and coordinator for the reading department of the Columbus, Ohio, public schools, Mary trained as part of the original 1984–85 pilot study of Reading Recovery in the U.S. She has remained active in teaching, writing, and making presentations on Reading Recovery and early literacy at the state, national, and international levels. Currently she also serves as the editor and frequent author for the Ohio State KEEP BOOKS project.

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