

Re-conceptualizing a Change Model: Implementation of the Early Literacy Research Project

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Abstract

The Early Literacy Research Project (ELRP) involved teachers in a process of significant reform, re-conceptualizing both curriculum content and classroom organization for teaching and learning as they worked to implement a program to maximize the literacy achievements of “at-risk” students in the early years of schooling. Using the Triple I Model (Miles, 1987) this study aimed to evaluate this model and to assess its relevance as a means of interpreting and monitoring change in schools. An examination of the change factors and their impact on school teams as they implemented improved teaching and learning strategies, was undertaken. Results from the study provided information in relation to the significance of particular factors as schools worked to reform their literacy practice. The study suggested that specific factors and others in combination were critical to the implementation of change in ELRP schools, with results leading to the development of a revised Triple I Model. It is suggested that this revised model provides a conceptual frame that may be used to assist schools in planning, monitoring, and explaining authentic school reform projects.

Change is now synonymous with the concept of education. Curriculum and school organization reform currently infiltrate every aspect of school life, with teachers in many instances expected to take on myriad initiatives and school improvement proposals.

The intention of this study was to monitor the process of change in schools as significant reforms were implemented and to identify factors that supported teachers as they worked to introduce changes for improving early literacy teaching programs. In order to examine the process of change systematically, an existing change model, The Triple I Model (Miles, 1987), was used. The study was designed to provide insight that clarified the complexity of curriculum reform while capturing individual definitions, descriptions, and meaning of events throughout the process of change. From the insights gained, the aim was to evaluate the Triple I Model and assess its relevance as a means of interpreting and monitoring change in schools.

The Early Literacy Research Project

The Early Literacy Research Project (ELRP) was a collaborative project of the Department of Education, Victoria, Australia and The University of Melbourne conducted over a three-year period (1996–1998). Initiated to ensure all Victorian students had access to a program to maximize the literacy achievements of students in the early years of schooling, the ELRP aimed to develop and evaluate the design, delivery, and funding of effective early literacy programs.

The focus of the ELRP in 1996 was to implement a program comprising the same elements as those in the “Success for All” program (Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Wasik, Ross, & Smith, 1994) in a sample of 27 schools in which significant numbers of students had special learning needs. The project aimed to replicate the work of Robert Slavin and the literacy gains achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated approach to literacy with an emphasis on prevention and intensive intervention. The project ensured that each of the 27 trial schools had the following elements in place:

Early Intervention — all trial schools were to provide Reading Recovery, an intensive intervention program for students experiencing difficulty in literacy acquisition in Year One.

Structured Teaching Programs — work was undertaken to assist teachers in developing high quality, structured teaching programs designed to address individual student’s learning needs.

Regular Monitoring and Assessment — all students were subject to regular monitoring of their progress with student assessment data used to inform the development of teaching and learning programs.

Home/School Programs — trial schools were encouraged to develop strategies and programs to maximize the home school partnership.

Pre-school Programs — it was proposed to study the pre-school experiences of students in trial schools with the intention of establishing more effective literacy programs in these settings and closer liaisons between pre-schools and primary schools.

Professional Development — teachers from trial schools were involved in an intensive professional development program with an emphasis on developing effective teaching programs and classroom organization and management to support focused teaching. Throughout this program teachers considered the importance of building effective “learning teams” in their schools and the benefits and practices associated with collegiate support and collaboration as changes to literacy teaching were introduced.

School-Based Coordinators — early literacy coordinators were appointed in each of the trial schools. The coordinator was to support the implementation of the Project at the school level in conjunction with the school’s leadership team, to provide assistance and professional development for classroom teachers, and to coordinate data collection for the Project.

While many of the elements described existed to varying degrees within the trial schools, the Project was designed to ensure “that all elements are present, working effectively and in alignment with one another.” (Crévola & Hill, 1997, p. 5).

The ELRP involved teachers in a process of significant reform, re-conceptualizing both curriculum content and classroom organization for teaching and learning as they worked to implement a program to maximize the literacy achievements of “at-risk” students in the early years of schooling.

The Triple I Model

To examine the process of change in ELRP schools systematically, the Triple I Model developed by Matthew Miles (1987) was used. This model, outlined in Table 1, maps and guides the process of change through the identification of key stages and factors associated with successful implementation, providing a framework for analyzing and understanding the flow and nature of change. It describes a system of variables associated with successful reform initiatives.

The study also aimed to evaluate the Triple I Model and assess its relevance as a means of interpreting and monitoring change in schools. An examination of the change factors and their impact on school teams as they implemented improved teaching and learning strategies, was undertaken. Central to the study was the focus question:

How useful are the stages and factors identified by the Triple I Model in explaining the change process in ELRP schools and what variations to the model are suggested to accurately reflect the process of change?

Table 1. The Triple I Model

Triple I Model
Initiation Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to High Profile Need • Clear Model • Strong Advocacy • Active Initiation
Implementation Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orchestration • Shared Control • Pressure and Support • Technical Assistance • Rewards
Institutionalization Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding • Links to Instruction • Widespread Use • Removal of Competing Priorities • Continuing Assistance

Note. From Practical Guidelines from School Administrators: How to Get There by M. Miles, 1987.

Method

The research project was completed as a case study, describing and interpreting the process of change undertaken by 23 of the 27 schools involved in the ELRP during the first 12 months of the project. Five sites were selected from the original sample of 23 schools for the collection of additional data in order to gain further insight into how schools worked to implement change. It was intended that these focus schools further illustrate and expand on trends within the larger population, as suggested by Burns (1994):

The case study is the preferred strategy when “how,” “why,” or “what” questions are being asked... or when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context. In brief, the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic, meaningful characteristics of real life events. (p. 313)

Details of the process of change in schools were acquired through the use of observations, discussions, document analysis, interviews, and questionnaires that were collected and analyzed at ten-week intervals. The data collection methods were selected to ensure that the “teacher voice” was heard throughout the process of change and provided an effective means of obtaining information in relation to the tasks performed by coordinators and school teams as changes were introduced. Coordinators and teachers provided vivid descriptions, nested in context, to provide an authentic account of the process of change undertaken by teachers and schools involved in the ELRP.

To use the Triple I Model to monitor closely the process of change, the factors from the change model were defined and contextualized to relate specifically to the ELRP (see appendix). Data collected were then categorized using these descriptions with charts compiled to present evidence of the range of activities attended to by school teams as they worked to introduce the required changes. Analysis of the data at ten-week intervals, coinciding with school terms, facilitated in determining the impact of tasks undertaken in supporting the introduction of improved teaching and learning strategies in ELRP schools throughout the school year.

Results: Change Factors Significant to ELRP Schools

The data collected from schools indicated the significance of particular factors as schools worked to reform their classroom literacy practice. Information from the study suggested that specific factors, and others in combination, were critical to the implementation of change in ELRP schools. In presenting the results of the study it is our intention to discuss, in first instance, change factors significant to ELRP schools and then to consider data that suggest variation to the change model to reflect accurately the process of change undertaken in these schools.

Change factors that were found to be particularly relevant as school teams worked to improve their literacy practices were: *Clear Model, Orchestration, Pressure and Support, Technical Assistance, Shared Control/Rewards, and Removal of Competing Priorities.*

The following definitions of these change factors and data charts illustrate how the factors identified by the change model contributed to the process of change. Explanations and examples from the data collected follow each definition.

Clear Model

<i>Clear Model</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
The learning team members understand the content of the teaching and learning program to be implemented, and the processes involved with a learning teams model of professional development adopted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELRP information sessions • ELRP professional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinator training - School team sessions • Project Coordinator school visits • School learning teams established

During the initiation stage of the ELRP, school teams were presented with a design that indicated the elements to be introduced to schools as a means of improving the literacy learning outcomes of their students. Of particular interest to this study were the aspects of the design that established support structures for teachers and the process that would be employed as teachers made changes to their classroom programs.

The ELRP required that schools appoint non-teaching coordinators to support the Project and to assist the change process at an individual school level. The study indicated that coordinators played a vital role in relation to school-based leadership and in the provision of learning opportunities and support for their teams.

Prior to commencing the Project, teachers were introduced to the notion of “learning teams.” School teams were to work and learn together as they introduced the changes required. The difficulties and frustrations associated with the introduction of changes of this magnitude were discussed with collective learning and collaboration proposed as important means of successfully implementing curriculum reform. The data collected in this study indicated a strong connection between schools that were able to successfully use this collaborative model and those that effectively implemented changes to their early years literacy programs. The following quote from a school coordinator is indicative of the importance given to collective action and collegiate learning and support.

“I believe the team is functioning extremely well. We work together, we share resources and we pitch in whenever someone else is down. Our weekly meetings provide plenty of opportunity for concerns to be discussed and thoughts and ideas to be shared. The team finds this a useful avenue to learn from others and reflect on their own teaching.”

Orchestration

<i>Orchestration</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
School teams develop strategic plans for the Project’s introduction while ensuring the provision of texts, classroom materials, and time as required to implement fully the testing and classroom program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing testing materials • Testing • Organizing time release for testing • Collating data • Filing • Text ordering, levelling, Organizing, preparing guided reading activities, organizing learning centre activities, preparing task management boards • Team meeting agendas • Timetable organization • Training parent helpers • Organizing teacher aides • Budget and expenditure records

To facilitate the Project’s implementation at the school level, coordinators planned for the introduction of changes to teachers’ classroom programs. Coordinators were responsible for ensuring that the

rate of change was manageable and that teaching approaches introduced could be sustained.

“All teachers seem to be moving into guided reading sessions... building a firm foundation by establishing the task, setting up expectations, and explaining what works and doesn’t in terms of activities and general organization seems to be the major objective at present.”

“I encouraged teachers not to rush into implementing guided reading sessions but rather ensure routines are established within classrooms and all children know where all equipment is stored and how to use it so that the children are independent workers.”

The importance of resource provision was highlighted by the experiences of ELRP schools. Material and human/time resource needs frequently change as curriculum reforms are implemented. This factor could not be overlooked or underestimated in relation to its importance in this instance. To facilitate small group teaching, schools now needed multiple copies of graded texts as well a range of activities students could complete independently. The role of the coordinator in relation to the orchestration of the Project ensured that many of the resources required by classroom teachers were provided. This form of support was acknowledged by coordinators and valued and appreciated by teachers who recognized its importance. This is illustrated by the following quotes:

“In my role as change agent I must make it as easy as possible for teachers to change their teaching style comfortably. One way of doing this is to provide teachers with materials to support the program’s implementation in their rooms.”

“The coordinator has been supportive. She has endeavored to provide us with all the relevant materials and shared outcomes from her PD days. She has ensured that our reading materials have been levelled, organized visits to other schools and assisted in the preparation of activities.”

Coordinators were also able to support their learning teams through the provision of additional release time. This time was used in a variety of ways, such as: (a) for adequate preparation of new teaching materials; (b) for assistance with data collection and ongoing monitoring of students’ performance; (c) to afford opportunities for teachers to work together during class time; (d) to allow time for professional reading; and (e) for teachers to undertake classroom organization and planning. Because of the many demands of the Project, the support provided through time release was regarded by many as essential and seen as practical assistance both for and by the teachers involved.

Pressure and Support

<i>Pressure and Support</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
<p>The teams respond to the Project demands, while taking collective responsibility for the implementation of the Project, using a range of collaborative learning opportunities as appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Test results • Workload issues • Teachers feeling threatened, ineffective • Constant demands of the Project • Support for testing program

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class release time - testing • Team working bees • Team planning • Team sharing - ideas, resources • Team discussions, problem solving • Supporting each other • Visits to other classrooms • Peer modeling • Coordinator support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assisting in classrooms - Testing for text levels - Providing teacher release time
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There were many occasions throughout the implementation of the Project when teachers were feeling both overwhelmed and frustrated.

“The negative ‘can’t do’ feelings keep reappearing.”

“Some resent new work imposed and are finding it really difficult to deal with. Self-image, risk-taking and willingness to change are real concerns for some.”

“Many negatives regarding the expectations of the program need to be dealt with.”

The Project placed many teachers under a great deal of pressure. The uncertainties of the Project, the challenges it presented, and the enormity of the task were, under “normal” circumstances, conditions that may have lead to teachers withdrawing from the Project or paying “lip service” to it without working through the changes to transform their literacy programs effectively and significantly. Acknowledging that people need pressure to change, the expectations and structure of this Project left teachers with little option but to continue.

By agreeing to participate in the ELRP, schools had entered into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Education (Victoria) and The University of Melbourne, and with this came a degree of commitment and accountability to the Project’s implementation. There was a high level of funding for the ELRP from a system level, especially in relation to the provision of salaries and grants for professional development with schools making a three-year commitment to the Project. Linked to this was the high profile of the ELRP and the widespread attention it received. As ambassadors for the Project, there was pressure on school teams to demonstrate the preferred approaches to literacy teaching and learning.

There was also pressure from the Project Coordinator and the school-level coordinator to introduce changes to teaching programs. Student data collected on a regular basis both monitored students’ performance and reflected the degree to which teachers were effectively using approaches described.

While there was external pressure placed on teachers to persist with the ELRP, in many schools the low standard of students’ pre-test results forced teachers to reassess their literacy teaching practices and explore the program alternatives presented by the Project Coordinator. Teacher concern regarding students’ low literacy levels are typified by this coordinator’s comment:

“Team members are concerned by the low results of many children. Those who taught in the area last year feel disappointed.”

The degree of discomfort created by the feedback of students’ results challenged teachers to confront the problems of students’ literacy levels actively and contributed to sustaining teachers’ efforts throughout the change process.

At the school level there was also the pressure placed on individual teachers from others within the teaching teams. While the nature and function of ELRP teams was primarily supportive, they also at times provided a degree of peer pressure that contributed to team members working to implement the changes described.

“It might not sound so good, but we have a couple of teachers who like to brag about what they are doing — this motivates other staff members to get their act together.”

These pressures were, however, balanced by the support structures developed to help teachers as they continued with the Project. Support in the context of the ELRP was multifaceted, the culmination of a range of factors from within the change process, each contributing to assist teachers.

The intention of the ELRP Project Coordinator was to utilize the synergy of teaching teams as changes were implemented; however, in some schools time and effort were required before the team worked together as a collective unit. It would be misleading and an oversimplification of the complexity of interpersonal relationships to suggest that effective team processes were readily established in all ELRP schools. The following quotes from coordinators’ journals describe the difficulties associated with establishing effective learning teams.

“Have to work hard to keep the team together, all are very experienced teachers and want to do it their way.”

“Other teams seem to have developed a real cohesiveness and we don’t, I wonder why?”

“We really need to focus on how we can best work together and how all individual needs are best met by doing this. It’s more than just lip service though, and may need personal giving beyond our comfort zone.”

Time was required for new teams to develop professional working relationships. When introducing collaborative work practices, teachers needed time to develop the necessary trust and professional respect to seek support and to feel confident that the sharing of materials, activities, and ideas would be reciprocated. For some, there was also the need to break down an existing culture of teacher individualism and isolation and to establish collaborative working relationships. Teachers needed to move to the point where they recognized that changes of the magnitude associated with the ELRP required collective effort.

Teams that were most successful in implementing change to their classroom programs appeared to recognize intrinsically the importance of working together. Peer support and learning were achieved as teams talked through implementation issues, discussed ideas, solved problems together, developed and shared resources, and collaboratively planned teaching programs.

“The team is committed to making this work and are sharing well to support one another.”

“Team meeting very good, talked through problems and possible solutions which are workable in classroom situation. Found they assisted each other with problem solving.”

“There was a lot involved in getting the program organized, so the team needed to do as much sharing as they possibly could to actually lessen the workload. The team placed an emphasis on sharing themselves, sharing what they have and what they have done.”

The ELRP experience emphasized the critical balance between pressure and support as changes were implemented. The Project highlighted the importance of both accountability and commitment throughout the change process and the need for ongoing support in a range of forms. In this way the ELRP was effective in creating for participants a degree of “personal productive challenge” (Baird, 1992). The Project combined “cognitive demand” and “affective interest” components, with early literacy issues confronting teachers and their interest in the Project motivating and supporting them as they responded to the challenge of improving student literacy levels in their schools.

Analysis of the data collected from ELRP schools indicated that peer and coordinator support in a range of forms effectively combined to assist teachers as they transformed their literacy teaching practices. The change factor *Technical Assistance* was also characterized as providing practical support and guidance for teachers as they altered their classroom programs to meet the demands of the Project.

Technical Assistance

<i>Technical Assistance</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
<p>The coordinator and learning team members develop effective ways of working and learning together and use the knowledge and skills developed in the externally provided professional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELRP professional development sessions • Project Coordinator school visits • Coordinator sessions with team • Distribution of professional readings • Assistance for team members with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Testing procedures - Running record analysis - Guided reading - Text selection - Students grouping - Learning centre activities • Visiting classrooms • Providing feedback for teachers • Modeling teaching approaches • Having informal discussions • Releasing teachers to observe each other • Providing organization for school visits • Training, assisting replacement teachers

As changes to classroom programs were introduced, teachers also needed to enhance their skill levels. Much of this was achieved as teachers worked and learned together, however both the Project Coordinator and school coordinators were charged with responsibility for increasing the competencies of teachers to enable them to implement the program effectively and confidently. The data collected indicated that *Technical Assistance* was seen as a critical support factor. In essence, this factor related to the professional learning opportunities provided by the Project Coordinator and school coordinators as they worked with learning teams to further develop teachers' skills.

School coordinators and teams found the ELRP outsider-provided professional development sessions extremely valuable. It was at these sessions that teachers were introduced to the approaches to be adopted, and provided with opportunities to clarify their ideas, share and discuss their concerns, and confirm their understandings.

The professional learning that occurred when the Project Coordinator was able to visit individual school sites and work with the teaching teams was considered to be extremely valuable. These visits were in many cases a catalyst for continued change, as teams were led to assess their current practices critically and to set achievable goals for ongoing improvement.

“Being able to work with (Project Coordinator) in our own school setting has given us insights, new directions, assistance with individual concerns and affirmation of many aspects of our program.”

“The team commented on how much they had been able to get out of the day... They all felt the afternoon session was of great benefit as everything related to (school name).”

Schools that successfully introduced changes to their classroom programs were those where the coordinator actively supported the learning of the team and fully embraced the role of “lead learner.” Coordinators at these schools acknowledged their own learning needs and created opportunities to support the learning of their teams on a day-to-day basis. Discussions were used productively, prompting teachers to think about their programs and further teacher learning. The coordinators often modeled teaching approaches and acted as coach and mentor to support teachers as new ways of working with students were introduced. The following quotes are illustrative of how coordinators were able to support the learning of their teaching teams:

“My coordinator’s role is keeping me in daily contact with all junior school teachers... with these exchanges the teams are becoming more reflective of their practice.”

“I have found going into classrooms a great opportunity to speak to individual teachers about their program. This enables me to ‘tune in’ to those who may need additional assistance.”

Shared Control/Rewards

<i>Shared Control</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Teachers use the Project to achieve improved student learning outcomes and to make decisions, negotiating together within the “givens” of the Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team working to achieve common goals • Teachers making decisions regarding implementation of the Project • Positive feelings for the Project • Planning and organizing for next year

<i>Rewards</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
There is acknowledgment of the positive impact of the Project on student learning outcomes, the school profile, and school improvement efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student results • Enhanced teacher skills • Teachers' efforts acknowledged by principal • Parents' positive comments, enthusiasm • Improved school reputation

During the early stages of the ELRP, as schools collected their initial student data and began to make changes to classroom programs, many teams adopted the approaches described as a means of fulfilling their obligations and meeting the expectations of the Project. They had little control over the process and worked to meet set deadlines and requirements. This coincided with a time when many teachers were encountering difficulties and pressures related to the Project's implementation. In many instances the changes were seen as being imposed. It was not until there was clear evidence of students' improved literacy skills that a number of school teams accepted responsibility for the Project and its implementation. At this time teachers began to fully recognize the value of the program and its benefits for students, acknowledging their own role in the improvement efforts.

"Team is encouraged by results, tentative but quietly confident of program."

"Class teachers are seeing improvement in individual children and in their own teaching."

"Teachers are starting to get enormous feedback from children's success."

Teachers' commitment to the Project developed as they became increasingly aware of the difference they were making in student learning. The notion of change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes following changes to teachers' classroom practice and student learning outcomes has been explored by Thomas Guskey (1986) and relates to his Model of the Process of Teacher Change:

According to the model, when teachers see that a new program or innovation enhances the learning outcomes of students in their classes; when for example they see their students attaining higher levels of achievement, becoming more involved in instruction, or expressing greater confidence in themselves or their ability to learn, then, and perhaps only then, is significant change in their beliefs and attitudes likely to occur. (p. 7)

The experience of teachers involved in the ELRP has also further demonstrated the significance of Glasser's Control Theory (1987) and the importance of needs-satisfying work in motivating and encouraging teachers to develop quality teaching programs. The Project was seen as effectively meeting teachers' needs in relation to "achievement, influence, and affiliation" (Johnson, 1990, p. 3). While early test results challenged teachers to improve their literacy teaching and learning programs, participation in the ELRP enabled teachers to experience success as enhanced literacy learning outcomes were achieved. The Project also empowered teachers to make explicit their teaching purposes and enabled them to

articulate their teaching decisions clearly and, hence, exert greater control over their professional working lives.

The processes established by the ELRP created opportunities for teachers to work together and establish supportive relationships, often resulting in increased personal and professional caring amongst school teams. Huberman and Miles (as cited in Fullan, 1991) have also acknowledged the importance of teachers experiencing success and personal mastery: “When changes involve a sense of mastery, excitement and accomplishment the incentives for trying new practices are powerful” (p. 129).

As learning teams became more familiar and confident with the classroom teaching program and acknowledged its benefits in relation to student learning outcomes, they were then able to use and adapt the strategies to meet students’ specific needs. They identified particular areas of strength and need and commenced to tailor the Project to meet the requirements of specific school contexts. This became evident when towards the end of the first year, teams commenced to plan actively for the next year. School teams clearly recognized the potential of the program and began to explore ways this could be best implemented in their own settings. ELRP teams began to move from a “fidelity” model of implementation to a “mutual adaptation” model (Fullan and Pomfret, 1977), the consequence of this being greater control and ownership of the Project’s implementation. This was reflected in comments from coordinators’ journals as teachers planned for the second year of the Project:

“Lots of forward looking positive discussion... excited by plans for next year, what they would like to try, what’s going to be negotiable/non-negotiable... Team discussions in the car coming home really useful in helping me see that those present have a real ELRP commitment and can see the possibilities.”

“As tired as they are, teachers are already planning for next year — oral language, improved learning centres, etc.”

Removal of Competing Priorities

<i>Removal of Competing Priorities</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
There was an allocation of a daily two-hour teaching block for literacy teaching, with an emphasis being given to literacy and numeracy in early years classrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganization of timetables • Increase in literacy teaching time • Working with specialist teaching staff to overcome issues associated with the “overcrowded curriculum”

The importance of creating space within the curriculum and time within teachers’ programs to explore and experiment with the new approaches to be introduced was critical to the successful implementation of the Project. While it is acknowledged that the *Removal of Competing Priorities* is the means of creating opportunities for teachers to focus on changing classroom practice, it has also been interpreted as the process whereby teachers themselves eliminate competing approaches and demands from their classroom programs.

For the ELRP to have an impact on students’ learning outcomes, schools had first to allocate priority learning time to literacy. Teachers were aware that literacy acquisition was to be emphasized in their early years classrooms while other school and system curriculum initiatives were seen as having a lower priority.

At an individual classroom level, teachers were encouraged and supported to adapt or shed many of their existing literacy teaching practices and to adopt the approaches advocated by the Project Coordinator.

When endeavoring to introduce changes of the extent and scope of those described in this study, it was found that the demands on teachers needed to be prioritized, both in relation to face-to-face teaching time and teacher preparation time. If other initiatives are not removed, their importance and emphasis needs to be reconsidered or linked into the major reform agenda. The ELRP enabled schools to use a singular initiative to achieve a range of outcomes. Schools' used the ELRP as a vehicle to address local curriculum priorities, teacher professional development planning, and performance review procedures. Student data collected were used to report against state curriculum standards, while also informing school and student reports with links to systemic school reviews.

Schools are frequently confronted with an overload of reform agendas, each vying for the attention of classroom teachers and often resulting in no reforms being implemented effectively to the stage where they begin to have a clear and positive impact on student learning. The ELRP experience highlighted the importance of prioritizing reform agendas for teachers and empowering them to focus their attention as they worked on a singular yet multi-dimensional and significant initiative.

Re-conceptualization of the Change Model

The Triple I Model accurately identified factors critical to the process of change in ELRP schools, with these being used to identify, clarify, and monitor the actions of learning teams throughout the change process. However, this study challenged the Triple I Model's temporal representation of the change process. Factors and stages within the change process were seen as overlapping and recursive as the Project was initiated, implemented, and institutionalized. In the context of this study, a number of the factors from different stages within the change model occurred at stages not indicated by the model and continued throughout the period of the study. Data from this study suggest that a more useful way of representing the process of change in schools may be to consider each of the stages as overlapping, with the change factors interacting across stages. In this way the dynamic nature of change in schools can be diagrammatically represented as in Figure 1.

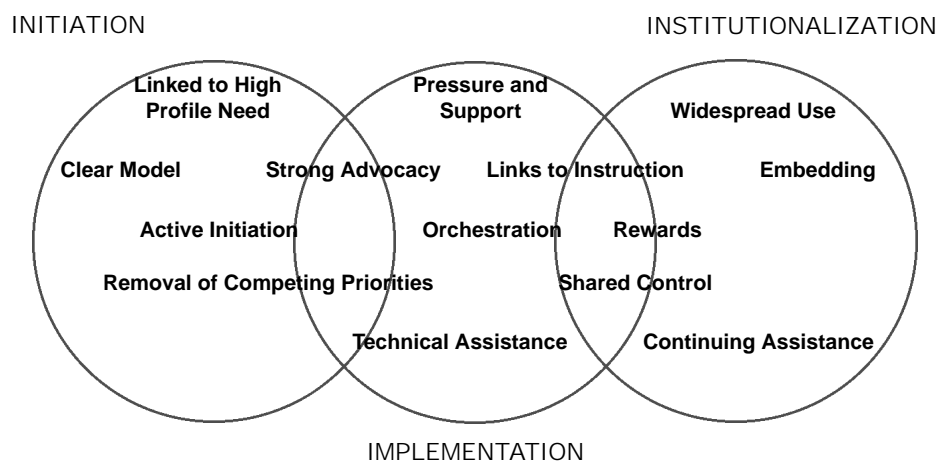


Figure 1. The Triple I Model (Revised)

The revised model reflects the impact of a number of the change factors at particular stages within the process of change. Factors associated with the initiation stage of the change process continued into the implementation phase and beyond, while factors described as supporting the institutionalization of the change process were seen as impacting on schools as changes were introduced. In particular, the data collected challenge the placement of the change factors *Removal of Competing Priorities*, *Strong Advocacy*, and *Links to Instruction*. The influence of these factors on the change process in ELRP schools, as well as the time of their impact are outlined below.

Removal of Competing Priorities

As discussed, *Removal of Competing Priorities* was a factor significant to ELRP schools, and within the context of this Project was seen as critical in supporting the initiation and implementation of new approaches to literacy teaching and learning. The creation of time and space within the curriculum enabled teachers to focus their energy and work towards the implementation of significant reform to their daily literacy teaching practice.

It is clear from this study that the practice of continually adding to teachers workloads needs to be addressed. Effective reform requires realistic expectations for teachers involved in the process of change. The conscious removal of competing priorities, both for teachers and by teachers themselves, needs to occur earlier rather than later within the change process.

Strong Advocacy

<i>Strong Advocacy</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
<p>There is strong support for the Project from the school’s leadership team, with the coordinator taking a leading role in supporting and promoting the Project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff reports • Meetings with school leadership team • School council reports • School displays • Parent information sessions • Newsletter articles • Local press reports • Regional/district presentations • School visits

In many instances, coordinators promoted the Project within their schools and were often personally responsible for the school’s initial interest in the ELRP. Data collected from ELRP schools emphasized the importance of *Strong Advocacy*, notably during the initiation stage, but also continuing throughout the implementation stage of the change process and beyond.

The Project was actively promoted at a system and Project team level, with participating schools gaining a reputation as exemplary schools providing quality early literacy programs. School coordinators also played a major role in advocating the program at the school level, highlighting the importance of the Project as a means of providing a focus for the schools’ ongoing improvement efforts.

Coordinators were able to ensure that the ELRP remained high on the agenda in their own schools, with the efforts of their learning teams acknowledged and applauded in a range of forums.

“A great deal of my time is spent discussing, reporting... and promoting the ELRP with parents. The overall profile of the school has been greatly enhanced.”

The active promotion of the program and the profile it gained contributed to teachers’ persistence throughout the implementation stage of the change process, strengthening their commitment to ongoing reform.

Links to Instruction

<i>Links to Instruction</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
The degree to which the elements of the structured literacy program were seen as integral to the classroom teaching and learning program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students matched to text • Two to three guided reading sessions a day • Reorganisation of classroom furniture • Establishing learning centres • Use of task management boards

In this study, *Links to Instruction* was defined as representing the observable changes to classroom programs. Data collected throughout the study indicate this is a critical factor not only in the institution-ization stage but also during the implementation stage of the change process, providing tangible evidence of changes to teaching programs. Changes to classroom programs, the *Links to Instruction*, were not seen as the end product of the change process, but rather reflected the changes being adopted by teachers. From the time teachers began to use the new approaches on a regular basis, the changes were seen as being linked to the instructional program of the classroom. This is consistent with notions of change in schools being an ongoing, gradual process with teachers changing their practice and adjusting their programs over time. Changes to teachers’ classroom practice were reported throughout the implementation stage of the change process:

“All five teachers have noted the reading of children resulting from matching children to text, regularly listening to them read and ensuring children have books introduced to them before reading.”

“With all the uncertainties I still feel excited about the Project and it is terrific to see the classroom organization in terms of guided reading, etc., running more smoothly. The teachers seem to be enjoying the new organization and their enhanced understanding of the reading process.”

Successful Change Processes and Student Learning Outcomes

Effective change processes in schools are a means to an end. The success of school improvement efforts can only be measured in relation to their impact on student learning. While data collected from ELRP schools for this study indicate that schools were able to implement changes to their early years classroom literacy programs effectively, it should be noted that ELRP researchers have evidence that “clearly indicates that the classroom program has impacted dramatically upon student learning” (Crévola & Hill, 1997, p. 22).

Conclusion

This study of change in schools has informed a re-conceptualization of Miles' Triple I Model. This revised model is seen as a frame that may contribute to explaining the process of change in schools and may assist in the planning of effective change projects. It also challenges schools to rethink the conditions of work for key people responsible for the implementation of change projects, empowering them to lead change and teacher learning in schools effectively.

As schools prepare students to live and work in an increasingly dynamic society, they become involved in an ongoing process of change and continuous school improvement. Those with a genuine interest in initiating reform agendas to support student learning could do well to acknowledge the experience of ELRP schools. The results of this project serve to urge schools to consider the introduction of authentic improvement projects, to set priorities, and to resource reform efforts effectively, further challenging school leadership teams to think strategically as they plan and monitor the process of change in their schools.

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Biographical Information

Janet Scull trained as a Reading Recovery Trainer during 1998 in Auckland, New Zealand. She currently works with Reading Recovery Tutors, Tutors in training and teachers to support the implementation of Reading Recovery in Victoria, Australia. As a member of the Early and Middle Years of Schooling Branch since 1995, Janet has been involved in the development of the Victorian Early Years Literacy Program, contributing to Teaching Readers, Teaching Writers and Teaching Speakers and Listeners. She now plays a significant role in the professional development of Early Years Trainers in Victoria.

Neville Johnson is a senior fellow in the Department of Learning and Educational Development, Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne and is the director of Connections Educational Consultancy. He entered teacher education after many years experience as a teacher and later as an educational researcher.

Dr. Johnson has lectured in teacher education institutions in Australia, Great Britain, the United States, and Canada in areas such as: curriculum leadership, development and evaluation; teacher professional development; and teaching and learning strategies. In addition, he has worked extensively as a researcher and consultant throughout Australia, and as a visiting scholar in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. He is the author of several books and many articles and chapters in educational publications, more recently writing about strategies to support teacher and school change, schools as learning communities, professional approaches to staff appraisal, and effective staff professional development

His current research includes long-term studies of schools as learning communities and investigation of staff teams in school settings. The concept of staff teams as professional action-learning teams has resulted.

Appendix 1

Triple I Model Factors: Contextualised to Relate to ELRP

Initiation Factors	Low	Medium	High	Very High
<p>Linked to High Profile Need Involves the extent to which early literacy is considered a priority by the school, with students' low literacy levels being acknowledged. Includes evidence of school documentation and activities to improve student literacy outcomes.</p>	<p>Literacy not considered a school priority.</p>	<p>Literacy identified as a school priority.</p>	<p>Literacy is School Charter priority and supported throughout school with additional resources.</p>	<p>Literacy is a Charter Priority with staff working to achieve established goals and to improve student literacy outcomes in the early years of schooling. There are programs fully supported by professional development and a high level of resourcing.</p>
<p>Clear Model Involves the extent to which the learning team understands the CONTENT of the learning and teaching program to be implemented, and the PROCESSES involved with a 'learning team' model of professional development.</p>	<p>Individual teachers have a basic understanding of the content, and there is little team work during implementation</p>	<p>Each teacher works with learning team coordinators to increase their understanding of the content and implement changes.</p>	<p>Coordinator and team members work collectively to understand the changes described during professional development sessions, and use some collaborative processes to implement the Project.</p>	<p>The total learning team support each other so that each team member attains a high level of understanding of the content and systematically uses collaborative processes to implement the Project.</p>
<p>Strong Advocacy Involves the extent to which the school leadership team and coordinator take a leading role in supporting and promoting the Project.</p>	<p>Limited support for Project.</p>	<p>Coordinator informing staff and school community of ELRP.</p>	<p>Coordinator and school leadership team actively promoting Project in school community.</p>	<p>Broad based support for the ELRP with coordinator and school leadership team active in promoting both the school and the Project.</p>
<p>Active Initiation Involves the extent to which the ELRP expression of interest was supported by all members of the school community. And commitment to the Project was demonstrated, especially from those actively involved in its implementation.</p>	<p>School community not consulted regarding ELRP involvement.</p>	<p>School community informed of Project with implications discussed after the application was accepted.</p>	<p>School community discuss details of the Project and support the school's involvement in the program.</p>	<p>School community agree to participate in program, with the school active in preparing for the introduction of the Project.</p>

Implementation Factors	Low	Medium	High	Very High
<p>Orchestration Involves the extent to which the learning teams develop strategic plans for the Project's introduction, while ensuring the provision of texts, classroom materials and time as required to fully implement the testing and classroom program.</p>	Coordinator involved in testing program and data collection as required by Project.	Coordinator manages the Project and oversees classroom resources.	Coordinator plans for the implementation of the classroom program and provides resources, materials, and time as required by teachers.	School team and coordinator plan for program implementation and work towards resourcing the program to a high level, anticipating needs and ensuring all materials are available.
<p>Shared Control Involves the extent to which the team USE the Project for improved student literacy learning, and make decisions/negotiate within the "givens" of the Project.</p>	Project is imposed and the team are unwilling recipients of change. The tendency is to "do" the Project.	Teachers see themselves as responsible for meeting program requirements at the classroom level. The tendency is to "do" the Project, but there is a degree of team ownership.	The learning team sees the Project as assisting them in meeting learning needs of students and school goals. The tendency is to "use" the Project. It becomes the team's Project, and there is some negotiation within the "givens" of the Project.	The team accept collective responsibility for shaping and "using" the Project as they redefine and reinvent programs to meet school goals, and to suit the school context. Each team member is valued for his or her contribution, with all members working together to ensure success for the Project.
<p>Pressure and Support Involves the extent to which the team responds to the Project's demands, takes collective responsibility for implementation of the Project, and uses a range of collaborative learning opportunities as appropriate.</p>	Teachers work alone in implementing classroom programs and responding to Project demands.	Coordinator supports individual teachers in meeting Project expectations, with ELRP team meetings seen as a forum for discussion and sharing.	Team discusses expectations/issues in a range of forums, sharing materials and encouraging and supporting each other as the program is implemented by each teacher.	Team works closely together to meet Project demands and they support and challenge each other as they plan learning activities, share materials, and problem-solve. The team takes collective responsibility for classroom implementation.
<p>Technical Assistance Involves the extent to which the coordinator and learning team members develop effective ways of working together, and use the knowledge and skills developed in the externally provided professional development.</p>	Coordinator makes the minimal organizational arrangements to support team members. Externally provided and work-based learning support are mostly seen as separate.	Coordinator discusses concerns with teachers as problems arise, and supports team members when requested. Externally provided and work-based learning support are mostly seen as related.	Coordinators work with teachers to further develop knowledge and skills addressed in the externally provided professional development. Coordinator assumes a mentoring role. Externally provided and work-based learning support are often seen as integrated.	Coordinator seen as a lead learner and peer coach, modelling strategies and providing opportunities for team members to observe each other and learn together. Externally provided and work-based learning support are effectively integrated and combined.
<p>Rewards Involves the extent to which the Project's positive impact on student learning outcomes and ongoing school improvement efforts are acknowledged.</p>	Teachers see limited advantage in the Project.	Teachers see success of the Project as reflected in students' results.	Teachers see the Project as impacting positively on student learning outcomes and enhancing teacher collaboration.	School community appreciates team's efforts and commitment and openly acknowledge and affirm teachers. They see program benefits as impacting positively upon students' learning, enhancing culture of collaboration and ongoing learning, and raising school profile.

Institutionalization Factors	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Embedding Involves the extent to which school organization, documentation, and resourcing are designed to sustain the changes introduced with the Project linked to other facets of school organization.	Changes are restricted to classroom experimentation.	Classroom program implementation is supported by school organizational structures.	Classroom program is supported by school organization, with details of program currently being documented for further development and reference.	School organization is fully supportive of the Project, with the ELRP reflected in school policy and programs and the Project being linked to other school improvement/Department of Education initiatives.
Links to Instruction Involves the extent to which elements of the structured literacy program were seen as integral to the classroom teaching and learning program.	Strategies are not used as part of classroom literacy program.	Strategies are used as part of classroom literacy program.	Strategies are used regularly and seen as contributing components of classroom literacy program.	Classroom program is fully implemented, with students involved in strategies on a daily basis. Strategies are seen as central to classroom literacy program.
Widespread Use Involves the extent to which the ELRP impacted on the whole school literacy teaching program, with adaptations of the teaching strategies introduced across the school.	Program strategies remain with Project team.	Other members of school community are interested in program developments and implications for their own teaching practice.	Strategies and team processes are used by other members of school community to support students' literacy learning.	There is whole school commitment to literacy strategies and team processes as modelled by ELRP teachers.
Removal of Competing Priorities Involves the extent to which priority is given to literacy teaching and learning with the allocation of a daily two-hour literacy teaching block.	ELRP is seen as an addition to existing classroom program.	Classroom program is seen as meeting student learning needs in relation to English with other Key Learning Areas continuing to be emphasized.	Two-hour literacy block is established, with teachers being encouraged to adopt ELRP classroom program strategies.	Priority teaching and learning time given to literacy in early years classrooms, with emphasis on approaches and strategies as defined by the Project.