

**LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE: INSIGHTS GLEANED FROM ONE DISTRICT'S  
IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION**

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## Introduction

Schlechty (2001) likens the reactionary nature of school systems to a seismic shift, acknowledging that educational leaders make decisions based upon assumptions about the environments in which they exist. This responsive and evolving nature of education has often been described as a swinging pendulum. Each swing of the pendulum creates an environment in which schools serve as hotbeds for educational innovation. Stemming from a variety of sources, the changes are numerous, as educators and lawmakers attempt to respond to the needs of students and the ever growing demand for teacher accountability. In many instances, just as the pendulum indicative of one innovation reaches its summit, those who are left in its umbra are left to ponder what comes next. Yet, as various educational innovations are introduced, administrators encourage strict fidelity to the model while teachers scramble to figure out how best to implement the latest change within their individual classroom. At the same time, administrators must be concerned with ushering in the innovation while simultaneously managing those responsible for its planning, instruction, and implementation and establishing or maintaining accountability. Principals often serve as the intermediary between external decision-making bodies and the school's internal staff who must execute the changes.

This paper describes one such pendulum swing that took place as Stark Elementary School (all names are pseudonyms) attempted to implement a two-way immersion (TWI) program: a unique form of bilingual education. With ultimate goals of fostering bilingualism, biliteracy, cross-cultural competence, and high academic achievement in students, TWI programs integrate native English speakers and speakers of another (target) language for content area instruction that is delivered in both languages (Howard & Sugarman, 2001). The current

discussion centers on the case of Stark and the social changes that occurred during implementation efforts.

The research presented here is derived from a larger case study, the purpose of which was to observe the first year of implementation of a TWI program. Particularly, the research focused on gaining an understanding of the challenges that surfaced during implementation and describing them as experienced by parents, teachers, community members, and administrators (further referenced collectively as “stakeholders”). Within the purview of this discussion, Stark Elementary is viewed as a social system with a complex social network of stakeholders both within and outside of the organization. Though this discussion is centered on a particular type of program, it is important to note that the insights gained are beneficial when implementing any number of educational innovations.

The introduction of the TWI program at Stark created a situation in which it was vital for people within the social network to rethink their roles. In doing so, both the structure, and function of the social system was altered. We wanted to understand and describe how these changes in the structure and function of Stark’s social system impacted those involved within that system. With that goal in mind, it was important to observe the day- to- day functioning of the TWI program and how implementation efforts were supported by stakeholders. It should be noted that previous efforts to broach a TWI program within the district were met with some level of ambivalence and even resistance. The desire to provide an accurate description of the implementation process required discussions and further interviews with stakeholders as well as analysis of documents related to the program.

The literature is replete with references to the critical role of administration in change efforts (Fullan, 2009). While Stark’s TWI program is used as the backdrop for the current

discussion the perspective taken here is to examine the actions (and lack of action in some instances) of Stark's administrators and describe how those actions impacted other stakeholders and led to challenges during the implementation process. Therefore, it should be noted that the emphasis is not on TWI specifically, but rather on the changes in structure and function of the social system that occurred to and within the social system and the insights gleaned. The insights offered here may be relevant prior to or during the implementation of other innovations as well.

### **Review of Literature**

Within the following section, we lay the groundwork for the current study by examining various conceptions of change. We looked to the literature for a general definition of change as well as to provide specifics for how change is viewed within educational settings and its impact on stakeholders/key players. As with the implementation of any innovation, leadership plays a vital role. Therefore, we also discuss leadership as it relates to guiding change in educational settings and, more particularly, the requisite qualities need for leaders of TWI programs. We are certain that upon further review, one might uncover other articles that specifically address leadership for other educational innovations.

#### **The Meaning of Change in Schools**

As long as there are people and schools, there will be educational innovations. An educational innovation is viewed as any significant alteration in the status quo which is intended to benefit people by making their situation better in some way (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995). How a particular innovation unfolds in a given setting can vary greatly depending, in large part, on the context in which it must be enacted and the players involved in its presentation and delivery. The introduction of an innovation within a school or district signals a change to the social system that impacts various players both within and outside of the system. Social change

is defined as “the relearning on the part of an individual or group in response to newly perceived requirements of a given situation requiring action and which results in a change in the structure and/or functioning of social systems” (Zaltman & Duncan, 1977, p. 10). Such a description of change, which views change at the individual as well as the system level, is pertinent in today’s educational climate as it offers an opportunity to examine the processes of change from multiple perspectives.

Educational change is complex and the scope of such change is multi-dimensional. Proposed changes and innovations within an educational setting have the potential to impact the classroom, and can result in changes to teaching approach, teacher beliefs, and/or materials (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Conversely, the extent to which modifications occur within any of the three areas has a direct bearing on the implementation of the proposed change/innovation. Change can be unsettling and, those who are faced with proposed changes can exhibit any number of oppositional tactics or behaviors. “Most of the time, most people do not want change; they want to keep things the way they are even when the need for some sort of change is obvious to outsiders” (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995, p. 9). What often results is a distinct tension in an educational setting involving the obstinate insistence to maintain the status quo in the face of appeals to usher in changes (Walker & Quong, 1998). The root of the tension may stem from administrators’ hesitation to implement change, ambivalence from other stakeholders, or any combination of the two. Any acquiescence by administrators to demands to maintain “business as usual”, negatively affects the ability of the school/organization to respond adequately to change (Walker & Quong, 1998).

Though, often time uninvited and unwelcomed, change is inevitable, and the outcome, the success or failure of said changes, is contingent upon how stakeholders conceptualize and

implement those changes. Havelock & Zlotolow (1995) assert that stakeholders, who they refer to as change agents, work to coax those who are complacent so that issues may be managed. Change endeavors are only successful and enduring to the extent that all stakeholders who will be affected by the change, either directly or indirectly, are identified and meaningfully involved in the process (Berman & McLaughlin, 1973; Ellsworth, 1997). Therefore, if one is to view change within schools, the lens should be widened to examine the range of perspectives held by multiple stakeholders. Stakeholders' sense of competence, occupational identity, and self-concept effects their conceptualization of change (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

### **Leadership in a TWI Program**

As TWI programs account for a specialized type of bilingual education, it is imperative to briefly attend to the specific leadership needs of TWI programs before engaging in a discussion surrounding leadership in general. Because of the particularity of TWI programs, knowledgeable leaders who advocate on behalf of the program are essential to the stability and ultimate survival of such programs. Valverde & Armendáriz (1999) found that teachers expressed the need for knowledgeable administrators who act as the cornerstone of support. When an administrator is unknowledgeable about a given innovation for which they are responsible for overseeing, it is impossible for them to communicate effectively with stakeholders and others about the innovation. In addition, there is also potential for the administrators' credibility to be undermined. The administrator's knowledge base should include a clear vision for the program and, in the case of TWI, it should be comprised of a solid philosophy of bilingual programs and a statement of criteria for the program.

Teachers expressed their belief that administrators must remain current on relevant research and possess the ability to communicate about the research to gain support throughout the community (Valverde & Armendáriz, 1999). With the immigration debate reaching a fever

pitch in recent years, administrators of TWI programs that emphasize a targeted language may find it necessary to defend the program or may have to work hard to gain support from the community. Feinberg's (1999) study of principals overseeing schools with TWI programs revealed that "articulating and gaining the commitment of all stakeholders to a common vision appropriate to the mission of the school" (p. 61), was crucial to the program's success. It goes without saying that any administrator who is knowledgeable regarding the specificities of TWI programs and is steeped in current, relevant research, is more likely to be able to gather allies within their school, district, and community.

### **Leadership for Change**

Earlier we highlighted how the tension to maintain status quo impacts change efforts. Whether or not the changes occur, are effective, and maintained, requires buy-in at all levels. We would be naïve to assume that all resistance toward change comes from people other than administrators. There are certainly instances in which a mandate comes down the pipeline and an administrator half-heartedly ushers in the innovation kicking and screaming along the way. An effective tool against maintaining status quo is developing a solid base of knowledge about the innovation. However, Elmore (2004) advised that "the development of systematic knowledge about, and related to, large-scale instructional improvement requires a change in the prevailing culture of administration and teaching in schools" (p. 11). It appears then, that an administrator's earnest attempts to learn about an innovation can be indicative of a subtle rebuffing of business as usual. Administrators do much to counter the status quo when they recognize, value, and use diversity and differences as a stimulus and resource for learning. Administrators who examine and confront their own assumptions as well as those entrenched within the culture of the school are well positioned to set the stage for change.

The link between the principal's actions, stakeholders' responses, and sustainability of an innovation has long been evidenced. As early as 1977, Berman & McLaughlin noted that "projects having the active support of the principal were most likely to fare well" (p.124). More recent work contends that the principal's actions act to support teachers, influences whether an innovation should be taken seriously, and impacts the degree of implementation (Hall, Hord, & Griffin, 1980). Administrators are responsible for setting the tone as teachers, parents, and staff often takes cues from them as to how to respond to an innovation.

## **Methods**

### **Research Site**

The work shared here was taken from a larger case study (Shelby-Caffey, 2008) the purpose of which was to explore the challenges and barriers to implementation experienced during the first year of the TWI program at Stark Elementary. The study was undertaken with a full understanding of and appreciation for the tenets of TWI. Stark Elementary is one of four attendance centers in its district and houses grades pre-kindergarten through first. The TWI program was implemented as a strand within a kindergarten and a first grade classroom with students at both grade levels receiving instruction in Spanish for several periods each day and in English the remainder of the time. Stark is one of only 16 schools in the state offering a TWI program at the elementary level and has the only program of its kind within a 245-mile radius. Stark Elementary school was selected for this study because of its introduction of a TWI program beginning in the 2006-2007 academic year. This study was guided by the desire to portray a more holistic description, of stakeholders' representations of their experiences related to the challenges and barriers to implementing the TWI program.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection took place with the first author collecting data over the course of one academic school year and included participant observation, conversational and semi-structured

interviews, as well as document analysis. Observations took place at least three times per week during Spanish instruction and during TWI related events, meetings, and activities. Often times as observations were in progress, there was a need to seek clarification about ongoing events. These “on the spot” discussions served as one way of triangulating while other means of corroborating evidence included semi-structured interviews and document analysis. You will note that we use the term “conversational interviews” to describe impromptu conversations with stakeholders based upon questions that arose from observation, whereas, the semi-structured interviews were guided by a pre-determined set of questions with allowances having been made to explore additional topics based upon stakeholders’ responses. The use of multiple sources of data collection established the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2007). Though the TWI program was implemented at both the kindergarten and first grade, the majority of observational data was obtained in Mrs. Ramirez’s and Mrs. Hayden’s kindergarten classroom as this arrangement allowed for richer data collection and interactions with students and teachers. Mrs. Ramirez was responsible for content area instruction in Spanish each morning while Mrs. Hayden delivered content area instruction in English each afternoon.

“The challenge [was] to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the setting as an insider while describing it to and for outsiders” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 112). The researcher’s role during observations spanned the continuum from a completely immersed observer to being a fully involved participant observer. Patton (2002) discussed the importance of getting close to people, hearing them talk and observing their everyday existence as a means for understanding how people view their own world and how they form definitions of that world. Participant observation afforded the following advantages: (a) the ability to understand and capture the setting, allowing the observer to utilize inductive processes,

(b) the ability to be [or become] keenly aware of things that participants take for granted, (c) ability to discover things that the participants were not aware of, (d) the opportunity to learn things that people may not share in an interview, and (e) the ability to employ personal knowledge to analyze data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). For instance, the researcher's involvement in TWI teacher meetings along with attendance at the TWI parent advisory committee meetings provided an unparalleled opportunity to gain information. In addition, the researcher's extended presence at the site provided access to administrators, teachers, and parents in which information was shared or gathered that may not have been obtained through just an interview. Concomitantly, the various activities associated with participant observation were realized as the researcher engaged in observing within the TWI classroom and related activities, noted the actions of participants in various settings/activities, assisted with TWI related activities and planning, and interacted with participants in various capacities. This range of participation granted the researcher latitude in which on-site conversational interviews (Wolcott, 1999) proved to be valuable resources. Accordingly, the use of conversational interviews allowed for a focus on gaining clarification and explanation of events witnessed during observation. In turn, information gathered through conversational interviews was use to develop semi-structured interview questions for later follow up. A record of observations and interviews was maintained via field notes, which were later analyzed for patterns. Audio recordings of semi-structured interviews with stakeholders were later transcribed. In addition, school and/or district produced artifacts and documents were analyzed. The artifacts and documents included reports about the student population, memos informing parents about events and requesting information, letters to the parents from the classroom teachers, as well as teacher produced documents that were submitted to administrators regarding concerns about the program.

**Participants**

Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to select interview participants for this study. Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan (2000) maintained that the success of enriched programs such as TWI hinges on the inclusion of the following people: (a) groups to spearhead the effort, (b) a higher educational organization, (c) other school(s) with a successful program, (d) local administrators (both school and district level), (e) parents and other community members, (f) school board members, (g) overseer of district level foreign language education, and (h) the coordinator of bilingual programs. Initial observations revealed either a complete absence of or a lack of access to certain stakeholders identified in this listing. Therefore, participants for this study were purposefully selected from the stakeholders recognized by Cloud, et al. (2000) along with others who appeared, through observations, to be stakeholders in the program. This led to the inclusion of the following stakeholders as participants in this study: (a) parents with children in the TWI program, (b) the TWI English teachers and Spanish teacher in the 50/50 program, (c) the ESL teachers within the school/district, (d) school and district administrators, (e) other teachers and staff within the school and district, and (f) persons involved with spearheading the local effort to initiate a TWI program. Particularly, these stakeholders were selected because their experiences provided rich evidence of the challenges faced during the program's implementation. Sampling began with the selection of the teachers involved in the TWI program and broadened to include other teachers, administrators, and parents, others involved with the program. There were a total of 17 participants included in this study; the three teachers directly involved with implementing the TWI program, four of their colleagues within the building, two additional teachers from within the district, five parents, and three administrators from Wyatt County School District (a pseudonym).

**Data Analysis**

Data collection and analysis took place concurrently and was a recursive. As data were collected during observations or by way of documents that were shared, it was immediately coded using broad categories. The preliminary themes emerged only after some time was spent observing, interacting with participants, and viewing various documents. An early analysis was requisite for coding data based on the preliminary themes. The multiple sources of data contributed to the formulation of these initial themes: teacher support, program structure, parental involvement, and communication. The researcher's presence at the research site allowed for continued analysis and cross checking of emerging themes between the various data sources. Once data collection culminated, subsequent analysis included the physical segmenting of the transcribed interviews into categories or themes labeled using *in vivo* terms (Creswell, 2003), a term based in the actual language of the adult stakeholders who participated in the study.

Previously coded data were either combined with or collapsed into the *in vivo* categories that emerged during the second round of coding. This process yielded themes similar to the first round of coding. Those themes were: (a) communication, (b) program infrastructure, (c) parent involvement, (d) support and resources and, (e) unexpected findings. Leadership was not selected as a distinct theme as it is a thread that runs throughout the themes identified. Instead, factors related to the leadership, were noted as central in contributing to the challenges encountered within each of the areas listed above. Though Stark's TWI program is used to illustrate the impact that leaders' actions may have during implementation of an innovation, it is imperative that particular attention is given to the universal nature of such actions. That is to say that though Stark's TWI program is highlighted, the analysis lead to the parsing of specific challenges related to leadership that are germane to leadership in a multitude of contexts. Our

contention is that what leaders choose to communicate, how and when that communication is delivered, and with whom they choose to engage in dialogue has implications for the success or failure of any proposed changes. Primarily, the focus here is on communication and how leaders engaged in this process with other stakeholders. Next, we present findings that illustrate how the ways in which school and district level administrators communicated with other stakeholders presented challenges during the first year of implementation of the TWI program at Stark Elementary.

### **Findings**

The administration and staff at Stark Elementary experienced multiple challenges during the first year of implementing the TWI program. Many of the challenges were a result of the leadership styles at both the district and building levels, and directly impacted the ability of teachers to serve as leaders who actively educated others, and advocated on behalf of the TWI program. Specifically, it seemed that the leadership approach taken by administrators at the school and district level hindered their ability to knowledgably advocate for the program, develop true teacher leaders and, in some ways, negatively impacted the program during the first year. Our view is that the ability of administrators to communicate effectively is closely related to successful leadership and has the potential to impact the success or failure of a program. Consequently, we present the findings in a manner that highlights the ways that administrative communications contributed to the challenges experienced during the initial stages of implementing the TWI program at Stark elementary.

### **Stakeholders' Communication**

During the initial stages of the Stark's TWI program, there was a breakdown in communication. The crisis in communication was evident in interactions at every level. The

ways in which administrators communicated or chose not to communicate in many instances had implications for all stakeholders and for the implementation of the program. In many instances, it appeared that the administration's ability to communicate was directly impacted by their lack of knowledge about TWI. In turn, this had an impact on the program's infrastructure, parent and community involvement, and the support and resources that were provided to the TWI teachers.

It is difficult at best for teachers to serve as information resources in a situation in which they themselves are not always given proper or timely information. This point is illustrated in the manner in which the teachers learned of their new roles: one of the English-speaking teachers learned that her class had been selected to participate in the program over the summer while the other teacher found out at the beginning of August, literally just days before school began. Here, one of the teachers describes the manner in which she learned about the TWI program.

I was told about it at Curves. (laughs) [An administrator] happened to be there and said that there was going to be the dual language program and [another] teacher and myself were going to be involved in it and she had already told the curriculum director that we would do it since we both already had previously been one of the classrooms designated for the English as a Second Language classrooms.

The second teacher did not have the benefit of direct communication with an administrator. Instead, she spoke of how the "rumor mill" churned out details of the program that would directly affect her and her interactions with students. Without direct communication about the program or her involvement with the program, this teacher took it upon herself to locate information to better prepare for this teaching assignment with which she was completely unfamiliar. She scoured the Internet to learn more about TWI. While proving to be somewhat

educational, this self-directed, information gathering mission further contributed to her confusion and feelings of angst.

The experiences of Stark's teachers highlight the importance of the need for clear, direct communication from the very beginning. It is unreasonable to expect that teachers can function as information resources or leaders if they have been given little information or miscommunication about an innovation. Administrators must strive to provide accurate information in a timely and appropriate manner.

### **Parent Involvement**

It is important that administrators and educators alike examine the ways they engage in communications with parents and the community about matters related to schools. Sending messages home with children no longer suffices when a majority in the community are nonparents (Schlechty, 2001). Parent involvement was impacted by an apparent absence of information. In many instances, parents whose children were in the program felt left out of the loop entirely as they learned about the program rather indirectly as one parent explained, "They didn't tell us anything. It wasn't presented to us!" Another parent took a more reticent tone while expressing similar sentiments that, "It just wasn't presented to us the right way". In either case, what seemed evident was that information hadn't been shared with parents and the community in a way that would notify them about the introduction of the TWI program while simultaneously educating them about TWI, and garnering community support for the program.

The program's success hinged upon the need for "good information, solid, true information" to be relayed about the program as explained by one teacher:

I felt it was important from the beginning to give out good information, solid, true

information and that wasn't always there...something like that can really undermine a program very quickly...teachers weren't necessarily given the right information so they were giving out wrong information...not everybody had the right information.

This response encapsulates the teachers' desire to receive accurate information so that they were better positioned to respond to questions from parents and the community about the TWI program. Opportunities for parent and community involvement were limited by the lack of information sharing. Parent involvement and support are vital to the success of TWI programs.

### **Program Infrastructure**

From the very beginning, implementation seemed to be impacted by the administrators' lack of knowledge about the tenets of TWI and their inability to communicate with others about the program. Several of the stakeholders of Stark Elementary questioned the ability of administrators to communicate knowledgeably regarding the TWI program, "... if they really had to explain it, I worry whether they really know what is going on...they have to be more familiar with the program and how it operates." The perceived lack of knowledge and inability of administrators' to communicate about the TWI model and how Stark's TWI program should function seemed to affect implementation in the following ways: a) it severely limited the flow of information, b) made it impossible for accurate information to be available and dispensed at all times, c) placed administrators in a position in which they were unable to provide a vision and leadership during a crucial stage of the development of the TWI program, and d) left participating teachers struggling to work out details regarding the program's structure. A certain level of knowledge was needed for administrators as well as teachers to communicate effectively with one another and with other stakeholders. An administration that is unknowledgeable about

a given program or innovation is unprepared to educate others, advocate on behalf of the program, or to position teachers to lead or support them in leadership roles.

### **Support and Resources**

The program at Stark was undermined during the first year because many teachers did not buy into the concept of TWI. There appeared to be minimal active shows of support for the TWI program as well as for the teachers involved. Administrators failed to take the steps necessary to gain a solid commitment from stakeholders. It is important that administrators take care in sharing their vision as to how any innovation will play out within the school; the ultimate goal being to form a unified vision with teachers as well as other stakeholders. Administrators are responsible for setting the tone for what a given innovation should look and feel like within their organization as doing so provides a clear focus and has a bearing on how implementation is carried out.

### **Buying into the Vision**

Stakeholders at Stark believed that a vision for the program was needed. As one stakeholder maintained, "...there are a lot of challenges. But, I think they are symptoms of a lack of education...with education, I hope will come vision". If administrators are to gain commitment from all stakeholders, two things are necessary; dissemination of sufficient information that is both accurate and timely, and the ability to articulate the goals and vision of the program. Stakeholders were not given the information needed to secure their support for the program. Administrators believed that by providing too much information would negatively affect the program.

"What we have tried not to do is to overwhelm people with a lot of information but to give it in small doses throughout the year and say this is what we are doing."

However, the flow of information was restricted in such a way that, ultimately, it prevented other stakeholders from "buying into" the program. One stakeholder speaks about how the trickling down of information affected teachers directly involved in the program as well as other teachers in the building:

With other people in the building, there really hasn't been any formal kind of explanation of the program... teachers probably don't still have a good grasp of how the program actually works. They kind of figured it out but it was never presented by the people who wrote the grant to in-service the teachers into the program.

The inability of administrators to articulate a vision for the program was evident throughout numerous observations and interviews. When asked direct questions about their vision for the program, it was duly noted throughout the responses from administrators that, "[administrators] did not have the recommended time for long term planning and were just trying to get through the year". However, this sentiment ran counter to numerous other points of data suggesting that efforts to implement the TWI program were obligatory and without true buy-in at upper levels of administration. When an organizational or programmatic vision is well articulated, it can be used as a tool to gather support for any change that is proposed. Likewise, failure to do so leaves such an innovation vulnerable to detractors. By providing accurate, timely information and articulating a specific vision, administrators create a positive environment with well-informed stakeholders. The creation of an informed citizenry ensures that there will be some stakeholders who "buy into" the concept. Once teachers and other stakeholders buy into the vision, they are primed for leadership roles. However, before one can assume a leadership role, knowledge about the innovation is required.

**Support from Teachers**

As one might imagine, it can be quite difficult to commit to any innovation of which you lack a basic understanding. With regard to Starks TWI program, it was evident that administrators did not provide the support and resources needed for teachers to fully commit to the program. A teacher in the TWI program at Stark aptly suggested, “we are sorely in need of education...and it wouldn’t take a lot...the key component would be very basic education...” This statement is also reflective of teachers’ desire to be more knowledgeable about the program. Arguably, the teachers’ level of knowledge also related to how much they were willing to commit to the program. The teacher with the most knowledge about TWI seemed to be the most committed to carrying out the program and as others learned more, at least one of them committed more fully to the program.

**Commitment of Administration**

In addition to not gaining support for the program, the information throttling made it appear that administrators were not truly supportive and committed to implementing the TWI program. Other stakeholders expressed uncertainty regarding the administrators’ convictions about seeing the program through given the leadership approach taken during implementation:

Commitment, I am not sure of. You know they say they are committed and we want to believe that, but... [the teachers] have been asking for another room...It seems every time [they] have addressed that, they have no room. However, they are able to move people around so that now one of the social workers is going to have her own room...there are ways that they can do that. It is a complicated program. It is a complicated way of doing things. It doesn’t always have the best word of mouth. It needs a lot of convincing...you can’t just get it in sound bites...you have to study it and you have to buy into it.

One parent's concerns about the school district's commitment to the program were evident when they made the following comment:

“It just seems that this program was set up to fail...it doesn't seem like the district is committed to it...it seems like they are not willing to put both feet in...they are maybe 60% in...there are key players who are not sold on the program.”

The experiences of Stark's teachers highlight the importance of the need for clear, direct communication from the very beginning. An administration that is unknowledgeable about a given program or innovation is unprepared to educate others, advocate on behalf of the program, or to position teachers to lead or support them in leadership roles. A certain level of knowledge was needed for administrators as well as teachers to communicate effectively with one another and with other stakeholders. It is unreasonable to expect that teachers can function as information resources or leaders if they have been given little information or miscommunication about an innovation. Administrators who work to design an environment that is supportive of the development of teacher leaders must provide accurate information in a timely and appropriate manner while also encouraging opportunities for training and development. Though it is not necessary for the education and training regarding an innovation to start at the top and filter downward, it is imperative that administrators and teachers alike are involved in the process.

### **Teachers as Leaders**

Administrators affiliated with Stark Elementary relied heavily on the district's bilingual teaching staff for information on the program design and implementation. They looked to these teachers to figure out how to best integrate the program into the existing school structure and took pride in this fact. It was wonderful for the district to be able to accept the information and

guidance given to them by resident experts. However, it appeared that the district and administrators failed to take the next step. These teachers were in a unique position in which they could have served as ambassadors of the TWI program. They were the resident experts and yet, their expertise was left virtually untapped after the program was implemented. The skills and experience of the bilingual teachers should have been used to educate other teachers, parents, and community members about Stark's TWI program. Teachers are the intermediaries between parents, students, and administration. They are the face of the school and any administration would do well to capitalize on their agency and abilities to secure the support of others, to train others, to be a knowledgeable voice for the school.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Invariably, the pendulum will continue on its path; as one innovation reaches its pinnacle and wanes, another will latch on and be ushered in. The product of any proposed change hinges on how stakeholders conceptualize and embark upon those changes. Efforts at change are only successful and lasting to the extent that all stakeholders who will be affected by the change either directly or indirectly are identified and meaningfully involved in the process (Ellsworth, 2000). Therefore, if one is to view change within schools or any organization, it is imperative that the lens be widened to incorporate the various leadership roles involved in the process; this includes how teachers and other employees assume these roles and the ways in which they are supported in such positions.

Though the implementation of Stark's TWI program is used to position the discussion here, it is salient to again reiterate that the focus is not on the particularities of two-way immersion, but rather to emphasize the commonality between the issues of leadership encountered and those that may arise during the implementation of any educational innovation.

The findings from this research lead us to make the following three recommendations for those embarking upon organizational change:

- (1) Leaders should have and be able to articulate their sound vision for implementing any proposed changes (innovation) as well as how they envision the innovation playing out in their setting. Being able to do so early and often shows a commitment to seeing the innovation past the initial stage of development. In addition, it sets the stage for others to formulate their personal vision of how they might contribute to the larger mission.
- (2) There should be consistent, knowledgeable dialogue between all stakeholders throughout the implementation process. Limiting information on the part of any stakeholder (but especially from leaders) tends to put others in a situation where they cannot be a strong ally or advocate for the innovation.
- (3) It is important for leaders to develop the people underneath them. In many instances, the people who are in the trenches working to implement an innovation have the most current information about how it is faring in that setting. Principals and other administrators cannot be everywhere and lead everything. Therefore, it is important to have other competent people to do so. Those who are working to carry out the innovation are often most equipped to fill ancillary leadership roles.

Schools, businesses, and industries alike will continue to introduce changes “that affect the structure and/or functioning of the social system” (Zaltman & Duncan, 1977, p. 10). In educational settings, these changes impact the people materials, teaching approaches, and beliefs as described by Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991). If changes are to be lasting and effective,

leaders must carefully plan implementation and examine their role in that process. Within this paper, we have discussed several key areas as points for considering how leaders' communications can affect the implementation of an innovation. Particularly we emphasize the importance of having leaders who are: a) knowledgeable enough about an innovation that are able to provide timely, accurate information to stakeholders, b) able to fervently relay information while rallying stakeholders' support, and c) capable of developing their staff and positioning them to provide ancillary leadership. We realize that this list is not exhaustive. However, the insights provided are critical for those interested in developing the type of leadership needed to foster organizational change.

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