2001

Differential Modes of External Change Agent Support in Diffusion of Innovation.

Janet Gibson Stevens

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/365

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
DIFFERENTIAL MODES OF EXTERNAL CHANGE AGENT SUPPORT IN DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Counseling

by

Janet G. Stevens
B.S., Louisiana State University, 1974
M.Ed., Louisiana State University, 1976
Ed.S., Louisiana State University, 1980
August 2001
DEDICATION

This page is dedicated to my very loving friends and family:

To my Mom and Dad, you taught me that education is valuable;
To my children, Kristen and Kyle, who are my valuables;
To my husband, Charles, for your love and help during this very trying time;
To my brother and sister, Bruce and Joy, who celebrate our triumphs from afar;
To Grandmother, who never stopped working, learning, and loving (in memory 6/30/20);
And to the many other friends and family who have supported my dream – especially
Jenni, Tom and Suzanne.

I thank and love each one of you.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have provided assistance and support to me throughout the course of study and dissertation process. I have been fortunate to work with so many excellent educators.

I first wish to acknowledge my major professor, Dr. Charles Teddlie. I am thankful for the knowledge you have shared and your efforts to get me through this process in a most timely manner. It has been a pleasure to work with you in a professional sense, but also, it has been wonderful to renew an old friendship with you. My thanks are extended to Susan Kochan Teddlie for her “behind the scene” support.

I am especially indebted to my doctoral committee for their guidance and patience throughout the years. To Dr. Dianne Taylor, I began and ended my course of studies with you. You have been an excellent teacher and an inspiration. Most of all, I appreciate your friendship throughout the years – I always felt that I could come to you for anything.

I am thankful to Dr. Kim MacGregor and Dr. Terry Geske for agreeing to join my doctoral committee. You have both shared excellent thoughts and given me guidance, which has made this dissertation a better product.

I extend my special and warmest thanks to Dr. Robin Jarvis, my professional teacher and inspiration each and everyday. I look forward to a long, exciting relationship with you.

My committee must be one of the most outstanding at LSU. Thanks to you all.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**DEDICATION** .................................................................................................................... iii

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ................................................................................................ iv

**LIST OF TABLES** .............................................................................................................. ix

**LIST OF FIGURES** ........................................................................................................... xi

**ABSTRACT** ..................................................................................................................... xiii

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION** .................................................................................. 1
   Overview ..................................................................................................................... 1
   The Call for Educational Change ......................................................................... 2
   External Change Agents ....................................................................................... 3
   Study Context: Education in Louisiana ............................................................ 5
      Building Louisiana's Capacity ................................................................. 5
      Louisiana's School and District Accountability Program ..................... 7
      Problematic Concerns for Louisiana ..................................................... 11
   New Role of the Central Office ......................................................................... 12
   Conceptual Framework ..................................................................................... 14
   Purpose of the Study ......................................................................................... 17
   Importance of the Study .................................................................................. 19
   Research Questions and Hypotheses ............................................................. 22
      Research Questions (RQ) ........................................................................... 23
      Research Hypotheses (RH) ......................................................................... 25
   Definitions of Terms/Variables ...................................................................... 26
      External Agents of Change ................................................................. 27
      Extrinsic Capacity ..................................................................................... 29
      Diffusion of Innovation ............................................................................ 31
      Internal Change Agents ............................................................................. 32
      Local Capacity .......................................................................................... 32
      School Effectiveness Processes .............................................................. 33
      Fullan's School Improvement Processes ............................................... 36
   Limitations of the Study ................................................................................... 38
   Overview of the Study ....................................................................................... 38

**CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH** ...... 40
   Introduction ............................................................................................................ 40
   Review of Literature on Educational Change .................................................. 41
      Models of Change ......................................................................................... 41
      Dynamics of Change ...................................................................................... 43
      Principles of Change Facilitation ............................................................... 43
   Review of Literature on Diffusion of Innovation ............................................. 44
      Early Studies and Models of Diffusion of Innovation ................................ 44
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External Change Agents</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of School Effectiveness Research</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe and Orderly Environment: Discipline</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating a Positive School Culture: Teacher Collaboration</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Expectations of Achievement and Behavior</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Instruction</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Fullan’s School Improvement Processes Research</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Importance of External Change Agents</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals Taking Responsibility for Change</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Moral Belief in the Process</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Initiation and Participation</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change is Planned and Managed</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Reform Literature</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Context: Education in Louisiana</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Preparation and Assessment</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frameworks and Standards</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the Plan</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Comments Regarding the Selection of School Sites</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with External Change Agents</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions and Hypotheses</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions (RQ)</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Hypotheses (RH)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic Nature of Student Achievement</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling Procedure</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Schools</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching Characteristics</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of Sampling</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation/Measures: Qualitative Instruments</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Description of Types of Instruments Used</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal and Teacher Interview Protocol</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Support Team-Leader Interview Protocol</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished Educator Interview Protocol</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Assistance Team Notebook Document</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation/Measures: Quantitative Instruments</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Observation Summary Form</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management Component</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Instruction Component</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychometric Properties of LaCET</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observer Characteristics</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1
School Performance Score Designations ......................................................... 8

Table 2.1
Three Generations of Approaches to Change ................................................. 42

Table 2.2
Diffusion of Innovation Models ........................................................................ 46

Table 3.1
Matched Pairs of Sample Schools .................................................................... 91

Table 3.2
Interview Participants at Each School .............................................................. 93

Table 3.3
Instrument Type, Confidentiality Issues and Limitations ............................... 104

Table 4.1
A Comparison of Activities of District Assistance Teams and School Site Teams 112

Table 4.2
Matched Pairs of Case Studies and External Change Agent Support ................ 113

Table 4.3
Matched Pair #1 of Case Studies ..................................................................... 118

Table 4.4
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair #1 .................................................... 132

Table 4.5
Matched Pair #2 of Case Studies ..................................................................... 136

Table 4.6
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair #2 .................................................... 153

Table 4.7
Matched Pair #3 of Case Studies ..................................................................... 156

Table 4.8
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair #3 .................................................... 169
Table 4.9  
Matched Pair #4 of Case Studies .................................................................171

Table 4.10  
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair #4 ..................................................181

Table 4.11  
Matched Pair #5 of Case Studies .................................................................183

Table 4.12  
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair #5 ..................................................195

Table 4.13  
Cross-Case Comparison of the Ten Case Studies .............................................197

Table 5.1  
Observations Conducted by Group Per Grade Level .........................................208

Table 5.2  
Observations Conducted by Group Per Core Subject Area ..................................209

Table 5.3  
Comparison of Means and Standard Deviations for Matched Pairs on the LaCET 212

Table 5.4  
Means for DE + DST Schools and DST only Schools on LaCET Components ..........214

Table 5.5  
Differences in Strategies Observed by DE + DST Group vs DST only Group ..........215

Table 5.6  
Differences in Strategies Observed by DE + DST Group vs DST only Group ..........216

Table 5.7  
Significant Univariate ANOVA and Means for Two Instructional LaCET Components .........................................................................................................................217

Table 6.1  
Cross-Case Comparison of the Ten Case Studies .............................................245
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1
Extrinsic Capacity Components of DAT .................................................................15

Figure 1.2
Relationship of Independent and Dependent Variables ...........................................16

Figure 4.1
DE Means Distinguished Educator; DST is a generic name for District Support Team;
DAT means District Assistance Team; SST means School Site Team ...................111
ABSTRACT

The main goal of this multiple-case exploratory study was to examine and describe the processes, perceptions and changes that occurred at the school level in ten south Louisiana middle schools, as the result of external change agent assistance given through the Louisiana School and District Accountability Program. Within this primary goal, the perception of external change agent influence on (1) school effectiveness processes (i.e., discipline, teacher collaboration, expectations and quality of instruction) and (2) Fullan’s school improvement processes were examined.

This multiple case study involved five middle schools in Louisiana with two types of external change agents [i.e., the Distinguished Educator (DE) and District Support Team (DST)] matched with five middle schools with only a DST. These two groups of schools (DE + DST and DST only) were examined through classroom observations (i.e., 107 observations using the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching), document analysis, school site visits, and interviews.

The perception of the external change agent’s influence on school effectiveness processes and school improvement processes were examined qualitatively and quantitatively. DEs were perceived as having high influence on teacher collaboration, expectations of teachers/students, and the quality of instruction. DSTs in schools without a DE were not perceived to have any influence on these school effectiveness processes. In three of the five DE schools, the DSTs were considered high or moderately effective. The higher efficacy of the DSTs in DE + DST schools was due to a greater level of involvement by the teams on the school’s site, a high level of district leadership serving
on the teams, and resources provided by the team. Overall, seven of the ten teams were not perceived as having influence on school improvement activities.

MANOVA and ANOVA results relating to differences on effective teaching behaviors between the two groups (DE + DST and DST only) revealed a significant multivariate effect for two instructional components and four measures of teaching effectiveness. The DE + DST schools had significantly higher rates of effective teaching than did the DST only schools. The presence of the DE appears to have a positive effect in attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive areas.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Overview

In the past decade, the problem of persistently failing schools has garnered increasing attention from educators, the public and policy makers. Some of these schools, even after extensive multiple reform efforts, remain at the bottom on measures of student performance. In response to these persistently failing schools, twenty-two (22) states and several major school districts had instituted policies, by 1997, requiring school-level accountability for student performance and sanctions for schools that fail to improve (O'Day & Gross, 1999).

Many of these states/districts modeled their programs after the 1994 Federal Education Initiative, a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (U.S. Congress, HR6, 1994). The federal government raised the bar by demanding that the states hold their Title I schools and districts accountable for their students’ progress. In order to continue to receive federal funds, the states are expected to meet the standards applicable for all students, document adequate yearly progress and provide corrective actions for non-improving schools (U. S. Department of Education, 1995).

As is the case with some educational reform trends in the United States, the move from initial policy talk to full-scale policy systems occurred at warp speed. Some states, like Louisiana and Kentucky, expanded this strategy to include the triumvirate of school and district accountability, content standards, and high-stakes assessment. Orchestrating such legislated statewide initiatives simultaneously can be overwhelming – especially to the individual schools, teachers, and students. With sanctions on the line for schools
threatened by reconstitution and students involved in high stakes testing, rapid (and, perhaps, unrealistic) changes are demanded and expected.

The Call for Educational Change

The words educational change have permeated state legislative rhetoric, school board policy, school goals, classroom objectives and, of course, the professional literature for many years. Recently, the literature on educational change has delineated specific strategies and coping skills that can stimulate school-centered change efforts (e.g., Fullan, 1993, 1999; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Newmann and Wehlage, 1995; Schmoker, 1996). Regardless of the specific strategies utilized by stakeholders, the major processes of change (i.e., initiation, implementation, institutionalization) are impacted by internal and external influences.

School systems need to find ways to balance external accountability with school autonomy in order to craft strategies that respond to each school’s unique social context. For these school level reforms to be effective, others (e.g., administrators outside the school, educators from the state government level) in the larger organizational extrinsic capacity must offer support and guidance throughout the change process (e.g., Passow, 1989; Peters, 1987; Quimby, 1985; Senge, 1990). Internal and external influences on schools can provide critical financial, technical, political, and emotional support to schools during the change processes.

Hord (1992) reported that what emerged from a review of both successful and unsuccessful change efforts is the presence or absence respectively of person(s) who assist others in the adoption and implementation of plans for change. Educational change agents who link innovations and users and provide implementation assistance have been
identified in the change literature (e.g., Emrick & Peterson, 1978; Havelock, 1971; Hord, 1992; Lieberman, Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992; Louis, Rosenblum, & Molitor, 1981). The identification of these change agents is important in light of the competing demands and shifts in leadership and policy that can pull schools in different directions, making it difficult for them to continue to implement educational changes.

Concern for building capacity has entered reform discussions (e.g., Corcoran & Goertz, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1993; David, 1994; McDonnell & Elmore, 1987; O'Day, Goertz, & Floden, 1995) with varying degrees of specificity. The International Labour Organization (1994, p.23) simply generalizes capacity as follows: “I understand it” + “I can do it” + “I care about it”. Both local districts and teachers must have the capacity to develop rich curricular and instructional approaches to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviors that policy makers have identified.

Capacity-building in support of these demanding school reform initiatives must go beyond the traditional teacher preparation and professional development activities pursued in the past. Everyone in the education system (e.g., students, teachers, principals, district offices, state departments) must be prepared to change his or her roles and relationships.

External Change Agents

The study described in this document examines a specific actor/actress in school change efforts: the external change agent. Specifically, this study asks: How can change agents develop and support local capacity for change?

A change agent is someone who has formally been given primary responsibility for helping to manage and coordinate change in an organization (Hutton, 1994). Fullan
(1991) supports the use of external change agents to insure thoughtful progression of school improvement. He contends that external agents:

- Introduce school personnel to new pedagogy,
- Assist in training,
- Help to ensure human and monetary resources are acquired, and
- Help initiate, implement and sustain effective school change.

Additionally, external change agents provide teachers with the opportunity to acquire a broader knowledge base and a better sense of where to go for information, which is important in giving teachers more control over their professional lives (Maeroff, 1988).

Although teachers are the most important change agents involved in the processes of improving educational outcomes, they need help. David (1993, p. 2) argues "systematic reform asks everyone in the education system to change their roles and relationships, not just teachers and students". Local capacity (i.e., different levels of support, within and outside the school) is necessary to collectively develop and implement school improvement strategies and sustain the change.

Specific to this study, it has been demonstrated that external agents play important roles in the design and implementation of certain elements of school improvement (e.g., Berman, McLeod, Nelson, McLaughlin, Minicucci, & Woodworth, 1995; Bol, Nunnery, Lowther, Dietrich, Pace, Anderson, Bassoppo-Moyo, & Phillipsen, 1998; Lofton, Ellett, Hill & Chauvin, 1998; O'Donoghue & Ragland, 1998; Wehlage, Osthoff, & Porter, 1996). They bring new ideas into the school, help faculty to identify and solve problems, and provide important support for faculty efforts to improve teaching and learning. A study of linguistically diverse students conducted by the Institute for Policy Analysis and
Research (Berman et al., 1995, chapter 6), concluded, “while all relationships between external partners and staff at the exemplary schools were collaborative, dynamic and interactive, the relationships varied in intensity and character”. It is this variation in intensity and character that impacts local capacity for change and is examined in this study.

Study Context: Education in Louisiana

Building Louisiana's Capacity

Louisiana has consistently ranked at or near the bottom of states in: percent of children living in poverty (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1999), percent of students scoring at proficient on NAEP reading and math exams, percent of annual education expenditure spent on instruction, high school dropout rates (U.S. DOE, 1997, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c) and teacher salaries (American Federation of Teachers, 1999).

Louisiana’s long-range plan to improve education began with the 1988 enactment of the Children First Act (La. RS 17:3871). One of this plan’s first priorities was to collect, analyze, and report educational data. This legislative act, along with the following changes within the state educational system (i.e., politics, funding, frameworks and standards, teaching preparation and assessment, technology) laid the foundation for building the state’s capacity for educational change. (The following will be further developed in Chapter Two.)

- Politics: The change from an elected state superintendent to an appointed position of the state board (SBESE) in 1987 helped to provide a more collaborative relationship within the state’s educational system.
Funding: New educational funding came from a settlement of the state’s share of off-shore mineral revenue as the result of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act of 1978 (i.e., U. S. Legislative Code: Section 1337(g) of Title 43). This money was set up in a trust providing Louisiana a permanent fund called the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund (La. RS 17:3801, 1985), better known as “8g”.

Grants from the National Science Foundation in 1991 initiated the Louisiana Systematic Initiative Program (LaSIP). LaSIP’s mission focused on areas that impact effective teaching in mathematics and science.

Frameworks and Standards: Beginning in 1979 with the Louisiana Competency-Based Education Program, state curriculum guides were developed in core subjects that listed minimum skills and competencies, instructional activities and materials, and minimum instructional time. A large federal grant in 1993 provided more funds for further development of frameworks for core subjects.

Teacher Preparation and Assessment: The National Science Foundation awarded Louisiana a five-year $4 million grant in 1993 to establish the Louisiana Collaborative for Excellence in the Preparation of Teachers (LaCEPT).

Since 1994, based on a revision of the Children First Act of 1988, beginning teachers have been evaluated by the state through the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program (Finley, 1999). This plan provides new teachers mentoring and professional development in addition to his or her assessment on the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (LaCET).

Technology: The Louisiana Technology Initiative began in 1991. Since it’s inception, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) has provided a
technology center for teachers to access assistance with state standards, lesson plans, website links, etc. The LDE has improved the multimedia computer ratio from one for every 88 students in 1996 to one for every 8 student in 2000 (LDE, 2001b).

**Louisiana School and District Accountability Program**

These changes strengthened the state’s capacity to initiate a comprehensive reform plan. In 1997, the Louisiana legislature passed an act (La. RS 17:10.1) establishing a School and District Accountability Commission and charged it with the responsibility of recommending a statewide system of accountability for public education. This system is called the Louisiana School and District Accountability Program (LSDAP). The system measures student performance and holds students, schools, and districts accountable for the performance of students.

Louisiana is the first state to retain elementary and middle school students based on high-stakes tests (Robelen, 2000). In addition to the high school Graduate Exit Exam, students in grades 4 and 8 must meet state standards (i.e., pass the state’s criterion reference test LEAP 21) in order to be promoted. Approximately, 25% of students taking the LEAP 21 test SY 1999-2000 did not pass (LDE, 2000b).

The index used by the LDE to assess school accountability is called a School Performance Score (SPS). This score is a calculation of weighted composite indices derived from various measures (i.e., criterion and norm-referenced tests, student attendance, dropout rates) (LDE, 1999). These School Performance Scores range from 0 to 150. Table 1.1 contains a summary of SPS designations (or labels) for schools.

The following are the SPS indicators and their relative weights in the formula.
LEAP 21 Tests: 60%
>
The Iowa Tests: 30%
>
Student Attendance: 10% (K-6), 5% (7-12)
>
Dropout Rate: 5% (7-12)

Table 1.1
School Performance Score Designations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>SPS Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academically Unacceptable School</td>
<td>30 or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academically Below the State Average</td>
<td>Between 30.1 and the state average*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academically Above the State Average</td>
<td>Between the state average* and 99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Academic Achievement</td>
<td>Between 100 and 124.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Academic Distinction</td>
<td>Between 125 and 149.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Academic Excellence</td>
<td>150 or above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * The state average is recalculated every two years.

A school with a School Performance Score of 30 or below is identified as an Academically Unacceptable School. This school immediately enters a series of corrective actions (Corrective Action will be used throughout this document to refer to the assistance given to the specific group of schools labeled as such by the LSDAP). Schools that do not make sufficient improvement receive active assistance from the district and state. The plan provides graduated levels of assistance to low performing schools. Ultimately, the state has the authority to require the reconstitution of a school,

---

1 Some parts of this basic formula has subsequently changed since this study was conducted. High Schools are entering the accountability cycles. There has been a phase-in for core components of the CRT and grade extrinsic capacity classification (e.g., K-8, K-12, 3-5 schools) has changed the index for some schools.
or to withdraw state approval and funds for that school if it fails to improve according to state guidelines (LDE, 1999).

Corrective Actions are intended to provide schools with additional tools and resources to help them improve student achievement. There is an expectation that extensive efforts will be made by students, parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and the school board to improve student achievement at the school. There are three levels of Corrective Actions. "The intensity of each level increases if a school fails to show adequate growth." (LDE, 1999).

The three levels of Corrective Actions are:

- **Corrective Action – Level 1:** Working with District Assistance Teams\(^2\), schools will use a state diagnostic process to identify needs, redevelop school improvement plans, and examine the use of school resources.

- **Corrective Action – Level II:** The state will assign a highly trained Distinguished Educator (DE) to the schools. He or she will work in an advisory capacity to help the school improve student achievement and make a public report to the school board on his or her recommendations for school improvement. The district must then publicly respond to these recommendations. Failure to respond to these recommendations will result in the school receiving unapproved status and therefore ineligible to receive federal subgrantee assistance funds until a response has been received. Once a

---

\(^2\) District Assistance Teams are support teams provided by the district and trained by the state to work in Corrective Action schools. When the study was undertaken, it was discovered that some of the teams in the sample had characteristics different from those prescribed for DATs by the LDE. A decision was made to use the more generic term District Support Team (DST) used described later in this chapter.
school is labeled Academically Unacceptable, parents may transfer their child to a higher performing public school.

Corrective Action – Level III: The DE will continue to serve in an advisory capacity. The district must develop a reconstitution plan by spring of the first year in this level and submit the plan to the state board of education for approval. If a Level III school does not show sufficient growth in student achievement at the end of the first year, it will be reconstituted at the beginning of the next year provided the state board has approved the reconstitution plan. The state board of education approves and monitors the implementation of any reconstitution plan. A school whose reconstitution plan is not approved by the state board of education will lose state approval and state funding. (LDE, 2001)

If, after two years, a school fails to show adequate growth in student achievement, it moves to the next level of Corrective Action.

The schools are currently (SY 2000-2001) at the end of their two-year target goals for improvement. In this second year of high stakes testing, the schools will use the data from the four indicators to gauge their progress toward the state’s accountability goals. Concurrently, the LDE is ending the two-year pilot of the Distinguished Educators and District Assistance Teams program in schools that were identified as possibly needing assistance. In 1999, thirteen (13) DEs were assigned to schools scoring lowest in those districts that agreed to participate in a pilot study of their participation in the program. This meant that some DEs were assigned to schools that were not in the lowest performance category because the participating volunteer districts had no schools labeled
Academically Unacceptable. These thirteen DEs served as the sampling pool for the Distinguished Educators in this study.

**Problematic Concerns for Louisiana**

A LaSIP evaluation report states “lack of capacity appears to be Louisiana’s most significant barrier to reform” (Breckenridge & Goldstein, 1998, p. 32). Whether or not teachers and administrators have the experiences necessary to cope with all of the new expectations and responsibilities, they will have to adapt to a number of significant changes in a short time (Finley, 1999). Additionally, the teachers are being held accountable for their students’ achievement on new and more stringent tests.

These demands are being placed on some of the poorest paid teachers in the country. Other recent events have tended to overshadow, or at least obscure, the new school improvement program.

- Sagging revenues in the state sent voters to the polls in November 2000 to decide on a new tax plan to generate funds for education. This plan was rejected.
- A federal lawsuit filed by parents in New Orleans demanded a halt in administration of the high-stakes testing program. The lawsuit has since been dismissed, but is on appeal.
- Test cheating scandals.
- Administration problems with the promotion or retention of students involved in the high stakes testing due to the lateness of scores from summer retakes. This
actually resulted in students having to change schools after the school year had begun.

- Questions arose concerning the retention policy of eighth grader students involved in the high stakes testing that interfered with pupil progression plans. In midsummer of 2000, all fourth grade students were given release from retention based on the high stakes tests and in the fall of that same year, eighth graders who had previously failed could not be retained because of these tests.

These problematic concerns are typical of most accountability initiatives.

**New Role of the District Central Office**

Louisiana's School and District Accountability Program not only holds individual schools accountable for improving student achievement, but goes one step further to hold districts accountable as well. Beginning in SY 2002, the districts will be given a performance score based on the average School Performance Scores of all of the schools in the district. In addition to the District Performance Score, a Responsibility Index Score will reflect the districts efforts to:

- Increase the number of certified teachers in the district and in low performing schools,
- Provide effective summer school programs for students failing the state's criterion reference test - Leap 21, and
- Successfully improve student achievement as indicated by CRT and NRT exams (LDE, 2000c).
For each Corrective Action school, the LDE requires that the district form a District Assistance Team (DAT) comprised of district personnel who have participated in five days of training provided by the LDE. Some of the DATs’ responsibilities include:

- Conducting an in-depth school analysis to identify school need;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of School Improvement Plans;
- Examining the use of school resources and participating in school analysis,
- Assisting in the evaluation of the implementation of the School Improvement Plan (LDE, 2000c).

The choice of individuals to serve on a school's DAT may make the difference between a team that is “working on” a school rather than “working with” one (Tafel & Bertani, 1992). A study by Pajak and Payne (1991), which explored principals’ perceptions of the central office, indicated that principals want “district office administrators and supervisors to become more actively supportive of school-based change efforts” (p.1). Instead of the traditional monitoring function that centered on enforcing existing policy, principals preferred an orientation that facilitated creativity and risk taking. Principals also favored shared responsibility with the district office for most supervisory functions, rather than complete autonomy. The data in this study suggest, “changes in attitudes and values may be as important to success of restructuring as changes in organizational extrinsic capacity” (p.1). Many central office administrators need to learn the skills necessary to be helpers and facilitators. It takes a high degree of skill to provide schools with a blend of pressure and support – pressure to encourage schools to do their best and support for experimentation and risk-taking (Sparks, 1991).
District-level administrators, once accustomed to operating from positions of power and authority, now have to rethink their place in a rapidly changing school environment (Hord, 1992). Traditionally, the primary role of the central office staff has been to distribute school board policy and monitor its implementation. The LDE includes these roles as two of the state’s directives, but now the DAT must also distribute and monitor the state’s new accountability policies. These District Assistance Teams can work in the traditional manner, as sole authority figures that distribute directives and monitor compliance, or can become active resources for, and facilitators of, school-level efforts for change (Hord, 1992). Building individual capacities both within the school and within the central office are goals necessary to initiate, implement and sustain school improvement strategies.

Conceptual Framework

The primary focus of this study is to examine the influence of external change agents in the diffusion of strategies for the school’s adoption of school improvement innovation. Innovation is usually defined as the program or process being implemented (e.g., a new reading program) (Hall & Hord, 1987). However, the innovation becomes more complex when it involves multiple processes associated with school accountability programs like the current case in Louisiana. The diffusion of innovation study presented in this document explores the role of external change agents (i.e., DEs and DATs) as contributors to the school’s capacity to implement school improvement processes that impact the quality of instruction.

A District Assistance Team, or other school support team, must be effective in organizing the human, technical, and social resources of a school into a proficient
collective enterprise capable of initiating, implementing and sustaining school improvement strategies. This ability describes extrinsic capacity. For this study, the operational definition given by the International Labour Organization (1994, p.23), “capacity” = “I understand it” + “I care about it” + “I can do it,” translates into the three components (expertise, commitment, and resources/authority) of extrinsic capacity (See Figure 1.1). The “I understand it” relates to expertise and “I can do it” to the resources/authority available to the team to make changes at the school. “I care about it” to commitment. Supportive conditions for diffusion of innovation determine ‘when’, ‘where’ and ‘how’ the internal (i.e., school faculty) and external change agents (i.e., DATs, DEs) come together as a unit to do the learning, decision making, problem solving, and creative work essential for producing effective school processes.

Figure 1.1
Extrinsic Capacity Components of DAT
External change agent support alone offers no assurance that a school faculty (internal change agents) will develop the capacity to change. However, the quality of the external support may enhance a school’s internal capacity and commitment.

The emphasis of this study was on the independent variables of expertise, commitment, and resources/authority (i.e., extrinsic capacity) of external change agents (i.e., DATs and DEs) and their relationship to local capacity. (See: Figure 1.2).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1.2**  
Relationship of Independent and Dependent Variables  
(The terms used in figure 1.2 are further defined later in this chapter.)
Local capacity for diffusion of innovation, as shown in Chapter Two, is developed through the utilization of school effectiveness processes and school improvement approaches to change. This capacity can be boosted by outside support like external change agents. Districts are potentially a key force in building the capacity of teachers and schools in their jurisdiction (Goertz, Floden, & O'Day, 1996).

Purpose of the Study

Current attention to school-based accountability and high stakes testing measures for low-performing schools must include the study of the support given to schools to meet and exceed expectations. Districts in Louisiana are mandated to organize a support team, the DAT, for schools in Corrective Actions (i.e., school with a score less than 30 on the state’s school performance index). The underlying assumption is that the LDE (or other entities at the state level) will hold districts responsible for providing the extrinsic capacities that build a school’s capability to improve teaching and learning. The state offers additional support to specific schools-in-need (i.e., schools in Corrective Action - Level II & III) by assigning a Distinguished Educator. This study seeks to examine the processes of these two types of external change agents in the first two years of school improvement planning (SY 1999-2001) in ten (10) low performing middle schools in Louisiana.

The critical feature of this study is the examination of the degree to which the human, technical, and social resources of a school system are organized into effective collective endeavors. According to Huberman and Miles (1982) high assistance, involving both external and local facilitators, sustained through subsequent implementation had the following outcomes:
- stabilization of practice,
- increasing cohesiveness/trust,
- reduction of isolation,
- building an implementation team, and
- building an assistance infrastructure with coordination and collaboration.

Three questions are:

1) What variations in extrinsic capacity and intensity of effort are found in District Assistance Teams and Distinguished Educators?

2) What is the nature of the relationship between (a) the external change agents and (b) school personnel?

3) To what extent does the level of support given to schools by external change agents (a comparison of DE + DAT schools with schools that have a DAT only) impact a school’s capacity for implementation of school improvement activities, specifically activities associated with the quality of instruction?

The main goal of this multiple-case exploratory study was to examine and describe school improvement efforts at ten Louisiana middle schools. Within this main goal, there are two secondary purposes:

1. To examine the impact of external change agents on school effectiveness processes (i.e., discipline, teacher collaboration, student/teacher expectations, and the quality of instruction).
2. To identify patterns of school improvement approaches to change\(^3\) (Fullan, 1999) involved in the extrinsic capacity and linkage of external change agents with school personnel (i.e., utilizing external change agents, individuals taking responsibility, having a moral belief in the process, understanding that change is planned and managed, and actively initiating and participating in school improvement activities) as perceived by the school faculties.

**Importance of the Study**

The study is important in three areas:

1. Identifying patterns of change processes that positively impact a school’s capacity to improve.
2. Exploring the role of district office staff in school improvement activities.
3. Examining both school effectiveness processes and Fullan’s school improvement processes, which builds a school’s local capacity to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

A school accountability system alone is unlikely to improve quality teaching and learning. In an evaluation of the RAND Change Agent Study, McLaughlin reported that “policy can’t mandate what matters. What matters most to policy outcomes are local capacity and will” (1989, p.9). Her study found that outside political pressure must be combined with a high level of organizational capacity. Understanding of the processes

---

\(^3\) School improvement approaches to change will be referred to Fullan’s school improvement processes throughout the remainder of this document to distinguish these constructs from other school improvement processes cited in literature.
and phenomenon of change as it applies to school improvement helps build organizational capacity (McLaughlin, 1989).

One intent of this study is to identify patterns of effective change processes that positively impact a school's capacity to improve. Schools must be responsive and adaptive to the ever changing political, social, economic and technological environments thrust on them (Lensch, 1999). Goldring and Rallis (1987) describe such schools as dynamic. Dynamic schools are those that have learned how to respond proactively to the innumerable and discontinuous forces that are having an impact on them as they seek to improve. These are schools that take charge rather than simply reacting defensively or ignoring these forces.

The information gathered in this study will assist policy-makers and school leaders in becoming more knowledgeable about these processes that enhance the reform manipulations imposed by the state. This study should also provide district and state leaders with additional insights that could be useful in determining whether their organization is contributing sufficiently to the school improvement process in order to increase student productivity.

Another significant aspect of this study is the examination of the relationship between district personnel (i.e., DAT), a state provided external change agent (i.e., the Distinguished Educator) and the school faculty. The literature is replete with studies and recommendations that district involvement is crucial for sustaining success in school improvement initiatives (e.g., Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; Hill, Wise, & Shapiro, 1989; Jacobson, 1986; Muller, 1989; Murphy, Hallinger, & Peterson, 1985; Paulu, 1988).
However, nationally, the recent trend in accountability legislation is to provide assistance to poor performing schools through assistance teams that do not always include district personnel. Most often these teams are comprised of teachers, administrators, and sometimes, district personnel selected and trained by the state departments of education (e.g., North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia). In Louisiana, assistance teams (DATs) are selected by the local district office and most often are entirely comprised of district staff members.

It is this unique assignment of district personnel by the LDE that allows for the exploration of a new role for central office staff in implementation of school improvement activities. These District Assistance Teams can work in the traditional manner, as authority figures by distributing directives and monitoring compliance, or can become active resources for, and facilitators of, school-level efforts for change (Hord, 1992).

A third important aspect of this study is the examination of both school effectiveness and school improvement research to analyze the effectiveness of external change agents in Louisiana’s accountability program. There have been numerous calls for the integration of school effectiveness and school improvement research efforts (e.g., Brown, Riddell, & Duffield, 1996; Fitz-Gibbon, 1996; Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan, 2000; Kochan, Teddlie & Franklin, 1997; Reynolds, Hopkins & Stoll, 1993; Willms, 1992). Nevertheless, the combination of these two knowledge bases is relatively new. Historically, school improvement scholars such as Fullan, Hall and Miles rarely based their school improvement strategies upon the work of school effectiveness researchers. Before the mid-1980s, there were very few writers working in school improvement who
included sources located within the paradigm of school effectiveness (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). The current wave of research on school reform attempts to bring these two paradigms together.

In the current study, school effectiveness processes (i.e., discipline, teacher collaboration, student/teacher expectations and the quality of instruction) were examined as variables in building local capacity. Fullan’s school improvement processes (i.e., utilizing external change agents, individuals taking responsibility, having a moral belief in the process, understanding that change is planned and managed, and actively initiating and participating in school improvement activities) were examined as variables related to the extrinsic capacity and character of external change agents and their linkage to the school.

The timing of this study is also important. In Louisiana, the pilot DE program will be replaced in the Fall of 2001 with the mandated program for poor performing schools in Corrective Actions – Level II. The information gathered in this study could add to the knowledge base for policymakers and educators at a time when both are seeking more information in assisting schools that have not made adequate progress, as reflected by the LSDAP indicators.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The main goal of this multiple-case exploratory study is to examine and describe the events, processes, perceptions and changes that occurred at the school level in ten south Louisiana middle schools, as the result of assistance (external change agents) given through the Louisiana School and District Accountability Program and/or other district support teams.
Within this main goal, two secondary purposes are identified:

1. To examine the impact of external change agents on school effectiveness processes (i.e., discipline, teacher collaboration, student/teacher expectations, and the quality of instruction).

2. To identify patterns of Fullan’s school improvement processes involved in the extrinsic capacity and linkage of external change agents with school personnel (i.e., utilizing external change agents, individuals taking responsibility, having a moral belief in the process, understanding that change is planned and managed, and actively initiating and participating in school improvement activities) as perceived by the school faculties.

The following research questions and hypotheses utilized the term District Support Team (DST) rather than the term District Assistance Team (DAT) that has been used thus far in this document. When the study was undertaken, it was discovered that some of the teams in the sample had characteristics different from those prescribed for DATs by the LDE. A decision was made to use the more inclusive term (DST) to describe all of the teams in the study. When it is important to distinguish between DATs or the other type of DST [School Site Teams (SSTs)], the differentiation will be made. Much more detail about these different types of assistance teams and their characteristics are given in Chapter Three.

Research Questions (RQ)

RQ I. What is the extrinsic capacity of the DSTs?

A. Expertise
1. Who composed the teams?

2. What areas of specialization did team members have?

3. Where the team members adequately trained?

B. Commitment

1. What initial support was extended (SY 1999-2000)?

2. What on-going support was given by the DST (SY 2000-2001)?

3. What is the overall commitment to the accountability program in the school?

C. Resources/Authority

1. What resources were available to the team for school improvement support to the target school?

2. What type of authority does team have to make school improvement changes?

D. Processes of the DST and Faculty.

1. What school improvement processes involved both the DST and faculty?

2. How often did the DST and faculty work together?

RQ II. What resources or support provided by the DSTs & DEs influenced:

A. Effective School Processes (i.e., discipline, teacher collaboration, student/teacher expectations, and the quality of instruction)?

B. Fullan’s School Improvement Processes (i.e., utilizing external change agents, individuals taking responsibility, having a moral belief in the process,
understanding that change is planned and managed, and actively initiating and participating in school improvement activities)?

RQ III. What are the effective strategies and barriers to success experienced by external change agents?

A. What resources/strategies provided (i.e., staff development, parental involvement, funding) by the DSTs and DEs are perceived to be effective?

B. What are the barriers to success faced by the DSTs and DEs?

RQ IV. What is the nature of the relationship between DEs and DSTs?

RQ V. Was the quality of instruction affected by both

a) the extrinsic capacity of the external change agents, and

b) the internal change agents' perception of the influence exerted by external change agents on the school effectiveness processes and school improvement processes?

Research Hypotheses (RH)

The overall hypothesis to be tested in this study is that mean scores on the quality of teaching (as measured by Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching) will be higher at the DE + DST schools than at the DST only schools. The unit of analysis is the teacher.

This overall prediction is made because the DE + DST manipulation should be stronger than the DST only manipulation. The DE should be able to expend more energy working with and improving individual teachers.

RH I. Mean scores on the Classroom Management Component (i.e., the teacher
maintains an environment conducive to learning), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH II. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component A (i.e., the teacher delivers instruction effectively), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH III. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component B (i.e., the teacher presents appropriate content), as measured by the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (LaCET) will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH IV. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component C (i.e., the teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH V. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component D (i.e., the teacher assesses student progress), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

Definition of Terms/Variables

External and internal change agents, independent variables (i.e., extrinsic capacity, perceptions of external change agent influence on Fullan’s school improvement processes and school effectiveness processes) and the dependent variable (quality of
instruction) will be defined here. The sequence of definitions follows the concepts and their relationships shown in Figure 1.2. The literature review in Chapter 2 will further explore these constructs.

External Change Agents

A change agent is someone who has formally been given primary responsibility for helping to manage and orchestrate change in an organization (Hutton, 1994). Louis (1980) identifies the external agent as an individual or group outside the client system (e.g., those not a part of the school district staff) whose objective is to help the clients enhance their own functions. According to Mortimore (1991), schools are more likely to improve if an external agent is involved.

Support for district rather than state assistance was argued in a Rand Corporation study of seed money programs (Greenwood, Mann, & McLaughlin, 1975), which suggested strongly that school improvement activities that were imported from outside of the district (e.g., state, national) were less likely to be implemented than those that were generated from within the district. The Louisiana accountability program provides support for Corrective Action schools by providing training for district support teams and a Distinguished Educator. The premise is that these change agents will facilitate the change process.

Distinguished Educators usually are selected from school staff who demonstrate exemplary knowledge of and performance with school improvement strategies. Thirteen such persons were selected and trained as Louisiana’s first Distinguished Educators (LDE, 1999). These educators are to offer intensive and sustained consultation to schools that are farthest from meeting performance standards: the Corrective Action schools. The
Louisiana DEs are expected to use their extensive training and expertise to advise and initiate changes specific to each school’s need as targeted by the school’s School Improvement Team and the DAT’s needs analysis⁴.

District Assistance Teams are school support teams selected by the districts. These teams must consist of three to four members selected from district personnel, retired educators, university personnel, and/or other educational personnel. The responsibilities of the DATs are to assist and support schools in Corrective Actions and those with federal grants or federal funds. They must conduct an in-depth school analysis to identify schools’ needs, evaluate the effectiveness of School Improvement Plans (SIP), redevelop School Improvement Plans, examine the use of school resources, and collaborate with the faculty members that make up the School Improvement Teams (SITs). In order to accomplish this the Louisiana State Department of Education (1999) strongly suggests that the DATs:

- Participate in a school needs analysis;
- Assist in interpreting that data;
- Participate in school visits to report results to principal and faculty;
- Participate in monthly visits to assigned schools;
- Seek/suggest resources to implement SIP;
- Assist in evaluating implementation of SIP; and
- Support no more than four schools (LDE, 2000c).

Districts without Corrective Action schools are not mandated to participate in the state assistance program.

---

⁴ In this study, the DATs were the only DSTs to conduct the schools’ needs analysis.
The external change agents noted in this study are the Distinguished Educators and District Support Teams. These two types of change agents were most influential in the school improvement processes described in this document.

**Extrinsic Capacity**

Boyd and Hord (1994) suggested four overarching functions that help build a context conducive to change and improvement: reducing staff isolation, increasing staff capacity, providing a caring and productive environment, and improving the quality of the school's programs for students. The external change agent's purpose is to help build such an environment. Several factors may affect the agent's impact on school improvement, among them: the agent's personal characteristics, expertise, scope of activity, similarity of status with the client, initiative and intensity of outreach (Louis, 1980). For this study, *extrinsic capacity* is defined as the power and ability of the DST to provide these kinds of supports.

Components of extrinsic capacity examined in this study include: expertise, commitment, and the resources/authority. If optimal, these components and the perception of the external change agents' influence on school improvement activities can provide the human qualities and capacities of the DST to help build an environment conducive to change. Goertz, Floden & O'Day, (1996) posit that schools need external assistance to move significantly beyond current practice. They state that an individual (i.e., DE) or group of individuals (i.e., DST) can serve as a conduit for reform ideas, bringing these ideas into the system and linking them to a specific context. However, this kind of support must be on going, systematic, and focused on improving student achievement.
Four dimensions of capacity (Goertz et al., 1996) parallel components for this study:

- vision and leadership,
- collective commitment,
- knowledge or access to knowledge (i.e., expertise),
- extrinsic capacity and management, and resources (i.e., resources/authority).

Using the definition Capacity = "I know it" + "I care about it" + " I can do it" (International Labour Organization, 1994, p. 23) the independent variable of extrinsic capacity are further defined.

Within the component expertise (I know it.), the DSTs’ areas of specialization and quality of training can be examined. Knowledge (e.g., that which is assessed through the DSTs’ expertise) is used in itself to improve the system’s capacity for generating information. Louis (1980) suggests that “with more information it (the school) becomes more able to function autonomously and to solve its own problems without depending on an external source”. Capacity building involves changing the ability of the external change agent team itself to search for and to process information. The expertise of the external change agents and the dissemination of that expertise is an important component for building the school’s capacity to improve.

The team’s shared commitment (I care about it.) to the school improvement process and their administrative roles can also be explored. The resources/authority (I can do it.) include resource availability and the team’s perception of authority to provide the support necessary for school improvement.
Newmann and King (1997) found that there is no clear relationship between school accountability and organizational capacity. It is, therefore, assumed that in order for capacity to be developed, the DSTs must bring/build extrinsic capacity from within their own resources.

**Diffusion of Innovation**

Diffusion is the spreading or dissemination (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989) of innovation (i.e., introduction of something new). Diffusion studies, more thoroughly examined in Chapter Two, were most frequently conducted in 1970s and 1980s. The current study’s examination of the impact of external change agents in Louisiana can be optimally described using the typology and methodology used in these earlier studies. Through the diffusion of school improvement strategies, implementation of school effectiveness processes may be actualized. It is the implementation of these strategies which are examined in this study to impact the quality of instruction.

Hall and Hord (1987) defined differences in the innovation’s implementation as follows: how the new program was introduced to teachers and other intended users in terms of clarity of description of the program, how complex the program was to be incorporated into classroom practice, whether expectations for use of the program were established, and whether assistance was provided to potential users in their implementation efforts. It is the nature of this assistance (i.e., extrinsic capacity, character, linkage) that was explored in this current study.
Internal Change Agents

Teachers, administrators, and school staff constitute the internal change agents of a school for this study. The Distinguished Educator, although usually housed at the target school, is not considered to be an internal agent, but rather an external one.

Local Capacity

Capacity refers to the power, ability, or faculty for doing some particular thing (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989). Within the context of school improvement reforms, capacity is the ability of the education system to help all students meet more challenging standards (Goertz et al., 1996). As Fullan (1982, p. 22) suggests, "reforms . . . may fail to make a difference . . . because the plans and resources necessary to accomplish implementation are not adequate to the task."

If we are to achieve the goal of helping all students meet more challenging standards, the capacity of individuals and organizations within the system to improve instruction and student learning must be increased. Building the capacity to change teaching and learning means creating the opportunity for administrators, and educators to learn new ways of doing their jobs. Resources are an important aspect of capacity. Interdependence of organizational and individual capacity implies that reform strategies should seek to build organization capacity of school and other organizations. (Goertz et al., 1996)

As shown in Chapter Two, school effectiveness processes and Fullan's school improvement processes contribute to a school's capacity to change. To the extent that these factors reach high levels within a school, one would expect an increase in that
school's capacity to deliver high-quality instruction, which, in turn, ought to produce increased student achievement.

**School Effectiveness Processes**

A vast amount of evidence over the past twenty years has consistently demonstrated correlations between student achievement and a stable set of school organization and process characteristics — commonly called correlates or processes. Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) listed nine process variables that have been shown in research to increase student outcomes: effective leadership, teacher and teaching effectiveness, focusing on learning, generating a positive school culture, high expectations of achievement and behavior, emphasizing student responsibilities and rights, monitoring progress at all levels, staff development, and parental involvement.

These nine processes of effective schools work together to foster both the organizational dynamics and the content of shared values which promotes a school climate and/or culture conducive to quality teaching and learning (Taylor, 1990). This study examined three school effectiveness processes: two aspects of school climate, three aspects of school culture and the quality of teaching. It was proposed that these school effectiveness processes can be positively influenced by the quality of support from external change agents.

**School Climate: Safe and Orderly Environment.** In relation to school improvement, the concept of climate has been defined in many different ways. Several studies define school learning climate as the attitudinal and behavioral patterns that impact the level of student achievement (i.e., Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Mortimore *et al.*, 1988; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993; Venezky &...
Winfield, 1979). This includes such factors as: teachers’ expectations, focus on learning, and creating a shared vision.

Hoy and Miskel (1991) distinguish the school climate and school culture constructs. They posit organizational culture has an anthropological basis that emphasizes “shared orientations that hold the unit together and give it a distinct identity (p. 212). Organizational climate, according to Hoy and Miskel, has roots in psychology. The climate sets the organization apart from other organizations because it is “experienced by participants, affects their behavior, and is based on their collective perceptions of behaviour in the school(s)” (p. 221).

For this study, climate specifically refers to one aspect of school climate: orderly environment. This construct is assessed through interviews. Without order, discipline and social control at the school level it would be very difficult for staff to attain high levels of student attention and engagement within the classroom (Edmonds, 1979a, Lezotte, 1989). The perception of the teachers’ and students’ safety and fair discipline policies were assessed in interviews. For simplicity, safety and the orderness of the environment will both be described as discipline throughout the study since both processes impact the overall discipline in the school.

School Culture: Student and Teacher Expectations and Teacher Collaboration. The term culture has also been defined in various ways by many authors. The culture of a school is usually viewed as the attitudes and beliefs of persons both inside and outside the school’s environment and the relationships between persons in the school (Boyd, 1992). For this study, the two factors of culture that are assessed with interviews are: collaborative relationships and student/teacher expectations.
It is the assumption of the LSDAP that external change agents provide two additional contributions to a school’s culture: a focus on learning and a widely shared vision. A goal of the LDE is to “merge School Support Teams and District Assistance Teams” to develop a widely shared vision that results in a “School Improvement Plan focused on student achievement” (LDE, 2000g, p1).

Numerous studies have found that sharing a common vision increases the likelihood that school improvement efforts will succeed (e.g., Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990; Carlson, 1987; Deal, 1985; Miles & Louis, 1990; Schlechty & Cole, 1991). Although McLaughlin (1989, p.9) reported that “policy can’t mandate what matters”, Louisiana has provided specific guidelines in an attempt to positively contribute to a school’s culture. Each Corrective Action school is required to show proof (i.e., signatures of team members) that “it worked with a District Assistance Team to develop its School Improvement Plan” (LDE, 2000e, p. 9) which includes a mission statement and goals developed by stakeholders.

Focusing on the importance of academic goals and processes has been shown to be a “core correlate of effective schools” (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000 p. 147). To provide support for an on-going focus on learning, the Louisiana accountability program is “intended to drive fundamental changes in classroom teaching by helping schools and communities focus on improved student achievement” (LDE, 2000b, p.1). The required involvement of the DATs in low performing schools would help fulfill this goal to provide an on-going focus of learning.

The attitudes and beliefs of persons in the school shape that school’s culture. Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) found that high expectations of students has been one of the
most consistent correlates of effectiveness in the literature. For this study, this part of the school’s culture was examined. Perceptions of teachers’ expectations of students and students’ expectations to succeed were collected in interviews in the current study.

Collaborative relationships among educators (school staff, DSTs, and DEs) may determine the successfulness of implementation of school improvement activities. The relationship between school personnel and the two types of external change agent (i.e., DSTs, DEs) were examined qualitatively through interviews.

Quality of Instruction. The processes of effective teaching (e.g., maximizing classtime, successful grouping and organization, exhibiting best teaching processes, and adapting practice to the particulars of the classroom) were assessed by classroom observations. These observations followed the guidelines used by the LDE to assess the quality of teaching (i.e., Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching). These guidelines are considered by the LDE to be “effective practices that will produce student learning” (LDE, 2000c, p. SAM 36). The LCET is used as the basis for the Louisiana Teacher Observation Instrument that was the recording tool used in this study.

Fullan’s School Improvement Processes

Prior to Fullan’s work on approaches to change, school improvement was a generic term that was used interchangeably to mean school reform, school restructuring or other buzzwords for school change. In one sense, school reform generally refers to efforts to make schools better places in which students learn.

Recent studies have given a more technical meaning to school improvement by reporting that special strategies can bring about enhanced student outcomes. Some recent studies have defined school improvement as an approach to educational change (e.g., van...
These studies suggest a number of assumptions that are inherent in any approach to change. They include:

- School improvement is a carefully planned and managed process,
- A key focus for change is in the internal conditions of schools,
- Goals must be effectively accomplished,
- Schools are the center of change,
- Pressure and support systems are involved,
- Integrated implementation strategies must be utilized, and
- There must be a drive towards institutionalization for sustained improvement.

School improvement changes require teachers not only to learn new content and skills, but also to unlearn previous, less effective ones. Prior research has documented how difficult and protracted this change process is (e.g., Fullan, 1993; Cohen, 1990, Goertz et al., 1996). In addition to changes teachers make, learning new skills and strategies will also be expected of the district teams. Fullan’s school improvement processes examined in this study include:

- Utilizing external change agents,
- Individuals taking responsibility,
- Having a moral belief in the process,
- Understanding change is planned and managed, and
- Actively initiating and participating in school improvement activities.
Limitations of the Study

There are at least three limitations to the current study.

1.) The initial intent of the study was to examine the influence of two types of external change agent support (i.e., DAT and DE), as provided by the Louisiana School and District Accountability Program, on school improvement processes. Some schools participating in the two-year Distinguished Educator pilot were not in Corrective Action. Therefore, the amount of effort provided by the districts and faculties may not have been as great as that of the Corrective Action schools, which may be more motivated to improve.

2.) The generalizability of the results of this study is limited by the type of institution (middle school) and the characteristics of the faculties, central office administration and students. The sample represents a segment of low-performing schools in Louisiana. This limited sample precludes comparisons between these schools and other middle schools, as well as elementary or high schools.

3.) Responses elicited from the external change agents, teachers, and students were voluntary. As such, those who did respond might be viewed as more conscientious or interested in the study than those who did not.

Overview of the Study

This dissertation has been organized according to the outline below:

Chapter 1, Introduction: provides an overview of the study, study context, definition of terms, purpose and significance of the study, limitations, and the research questions and hypotheses.
Chapter 2, Review of Literature: reports the most relevant research in the areas of educational change, diffusion of innovation, school effectiveness research, school improvement, and educational reform. The review also includes a section on the Louisiana educational context.

Chapter 3, Methodology: describes the research methodology and procedures of this study. The design for this study includes both qualitative and quantitative procedures. The populations and samples that produced the data are identified.

Chapter 4, Qualitative Results from the study: reports the themes and patterns that emerged from the data. Cross-case comparisons are made.

Chapter 5, Quantitative Results from the study includes statistical tests of hypotheses.

Chapter 6, Discussion and Conclusions: discusses the findings as they relate to the literature and the research questions and hypotheses, summarizes the research findings and gives implications for future research.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature includes summaries of the research in five major areas pertinent to this study: educational change, diffusion of innovation, school effectiveness processes, Fullan's school improvement processes, and educational reform. This chapter begins with a review of the literature related to educational change models, the dynamics of change, and principles of change facilitation. The second section presents the facilitative nature of several types of diffusion of innovation models and external change agents. The third section presents a historical perspective on school effectiveness research, and then addresses research in this area specifically related to building school capacity to improve (e.g., discipline, teacher collaboration, high expectations and the quality of instruction). The fourth section begins with Fullan's school improvement processes and the research associated with it that is pertinent to this study. Also, the relationship of school effectiveness processes to school improvement strategies are explored. The fifth section presents a review of the literature of educational reform. This chapter concludes with a description of the study context: building Louisiana's capacity for school reform.

Literature relevant to this study was identified through a variety of research strategies such as computer and manual searches of numerous sources, including journals containing information pertinent to the research area, and bibliographies of selected texts, papers, articles, and studies. Computer searches were conducted of Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), state departments of education, university research libraries.
and websites, professional associations and several on-line professional journals in order to identify applicable papers, articles, studies and dissertations.

Review of Literature on Educational Change

Models of Change

The attention to change theories has been unprecedented in education. Around 1970, several studies described processes and types of change adopters. For example, Rodgers (1971) provided a series of descriptions of people who adopt change early, not so early, and late. Prominent in the history of change process models are Chin and Benne (1969), House (1981), and Sashkin and Egermeier (1992). There appears to be a blending of some aspects of each model discussed in recent educational change literature.

AS shown below, some of the models had a primary focus on innovation and organization, while others centered on the individuals who achieve the goals. Perhaps the first to distinguish between nomothetic elements (organizational expectations to reach goals) and idiographic elements (individual drive to achieve goals) were Getzels and Guba (1957). Their approach was one of the first to identify the individual as a factor to be considered in change models (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Table 2.1 presents Hord’s (1992) summary of the approaches to change from the late sixties through the 1990s.

The basic assumption underlying the empirical-rational model is that individuals are rational and will follow their self-interest. If it is perceived as a good change, people will adopt the change. The primary strategy of this model is the dissemination of knowledge gained from research (Hord, 1992). House’s perspective which addresses knowledge utilization and innovation processes, views change as a mechanistic process.
Table 2.1
Three Generations of Approaches to Change
Hord (1992, chapter 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Empirical-rational</td>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>Fix the parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Power-coercive</td>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Fix the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and Individual</td>
<td>Normative-re-educative</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Fix the school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

utilizing products and tasks to be done. Sashkin and Egermeier’s fix-the-parts approach involves the adoption of proven innovations of various types (e.g., reading programs).

The power-coercive approach relies on influencing individuals and systems to change through legislation and external leverage (Hord, 1992). Sashkin and Egermeier’s fix-the-people approach to change focuses on training and development of people through top-down directives from the state or district.

In the normative-re-educative approach, the individual is seen as actively in search of satisfying needs and interest to advance his or her goals. Also, the changes are not just rational responses to new information but occur at the more personal level of values and habits. Guided by social and institutional norms, the individual must take part in his or her own change, or re-education, if it is to occur. The model includes direct intervention by change agents, who work collaboratively with the clients to identify and solve their problems (Hord, 1992). Sashkin and Egermeier’s fix-the-school approach develops the capacity of school organizations to solve their own problems.

Sashkin and Egermeier (1992) note that successful change has not yet been wholly achieved by any of the first three methods. They propose a fourth approach, fix-
the-system or restructuring. An addition of “interpersonal contact between the agent and the users” (p.3) would increase the limited success of the first three approaches. They conclude that “personal support and expert assistance from a friendly outsider increases the effectiveness of knowledge dissemination” (p.8) and sustainability of the strategies/processes initiated by this support and assistance.

Dynamics of Change

The dynamics of the change process have been well documented (e.g., Fullan, 1991, 1999; Goodlad, 1975; Hall, Wallace & Dossett, 1973; McKibbin, 1981). Some examples of some dynamic influences on change processes include: knowledge utilization, effects from past experiences, approaches taken toward change, and the use of outsiders. Lieberman (1977) describes influential conditions (i.e., history of the school/district, nature and scope of the linkage, availability of resources) that affect a school’s social system when initiating an innovation. Also, one of the earliest theories to explore the dynamics of innovation and teacher stages of concern came from the pioneering research of Frances Fuller and her colleagues at The University of Texas (1969).

Principles of Change Facilitation

Several studies of change espouse the axiom that change is a process (e.g., Fullan, 1991; Hord, 1992; Hall et al., 1973). This focus led other studies to examine the processes that facilitate change (e.g., Boyd, 1992; Hall & Hord, 1987; Havelock, 1971; Mendez-Morse, 1992). In a review of literature on change, Hord (1992) delineates six principles of change facilitation.

1. Understanding that change is a process, not an event;
2. Change is accomplished by individuals first, then by institutions;
3. Change is a highly personal experience, individuals change at different rates and in different ways;
4. Change entails growth in both feeling about and skills in using new programs;
5. Interventions can be designed to support the individual’s implementation of the innovation using a change facilitator;
6. The change facilitator must consider the systemic nature of the organization when making intervention, since activities targeted for one area of the system may well have unanticipated effects in another (Hord, 1992, Chapter 2).

Review of Literature on Diffusion of Innovation

Early Studies and Models of Diffusion of Innovation

Early studies of diffusion of innovation in the 1960s and 1970s lead to more comprehensive studies of the three major stages: innovation, linkage, and adoption, which may lead to implementation and eventually, institutionalization. Following the emphasis of the current study, research on the linkage stage will be examined. Within these early works, the characteristics of linkers were described. More recently, the term linkers has been replaced with local facilitators and external change agents. This section’s review of literature will focus on these two segments of research: diffusion of innovation and external change agents.

Many diffusion of innovation models of varying degrees of comprehensiveness have infused literature (e.g., Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Clark & Guba, 1965;
Havelock, 1971; Paul, 1975; Wolf, 1975). Three models contributed significantly to more recent studies: the Research, Development, Dissemination, and Adoption Model (RDDA) (Clark & Guba, 1965), the Configuration Model (Clark & Guba, 1974), and the Innovative Process Model (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977, better known as the RAND Change Agent Study).

The RDDA Model has been dominant in conceptualizations of educational innovation diffusion, specifically in guiding federal funding of diffusion efforts. This model posits a linear functional linkage between separate institutions devoted to education research, development of educational program, dissemination of programs, and adoption of programs (Hall & Alford, 1976). Several years later Clark and Guba criticized their own model as too linear and developed the Configuration model, which describes educational knowledge production and utilization institution as relating to each other in a community sense rather than an organizational sense (Clark & Guba, 1974).

The third model, the Innovation Process Model, focuses almost exclusively on the local education agency. This model hypothesizes three major phases of the innovation process: initiation, implementation, and incorporation. The most important factors affecting implementation success are the characteristics of the district institutional setting (i.e., organizational climate, motivation of participants and the local implementation strategy).

All three models contain elements describing many stages of the diffusion process. Havelock (1971) complements these perspectives with his three model orientations: the research, development, and diffusion perspective; the social interaction perspective; and the problem solving perspective. He attempted to "simplify the
knowledge diffusion and utilization process by the use of the communication formula: who says what to whom by what channel to what effect for what purpose" (Wolf, 1975, p. 7).

The three approaches to diffusion of innovation (i.e., RDDA, Configuration, Innovation Process) and Havelock's models' relate to the three major stages of innovation: innovation, linkage, and adoption (Hall & Alford, 1976) (See Table 2).

Table 2.2: Diffusion of Innovation Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation Model</th>
<th>Linkage Model</th>
<th>Adoption Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research, development, and</td>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>Problem-solving (Havelock, 1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diffusion model (Havelock, 1971)</td>
<td>(Havelock, 1971)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDDA (Clark &amp; Guba, 1965)</td>
<td>Configuration Model (Clark &amp; Guba, 1974)</td>
<td>Innovation Process Model (Berman &amp; McLaughlin, 1977)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an evaluation of the National Diffusion Network, Hall and Alford (1976) noted two shifts within these models. Federal activity supporting the diffusion of innovation shifted from simply making funds available to adopters of developed innovations to providing links between programs and potential users. The second shift was making the local education agency (district) the “locus of innovation and sustained problem solving” (p. 23). This local link is one of the two levels of support that the current study examines.
External Change Agents

In 1970, some individuals in the federal government recognized that knowledge utilization which involved implementation of projects based on research information, was unlikely to take place for many educators without some form of assistance (Louis, 1980). Research has given arguments for and against the need for reliance on external roles. In 1975, a Rand Corporation's study of federal seed money programs (Greenwood, et al., 1975) suggested strongly that school improvement activities that were imported from outside of the district were less likely to be implemented than those that were internally generated. Another Rand Study (Berman and McLaughlin, 1977) concluded that the use of external consultants was not related to achievement of project goals in federally supported change efforts, and that external consultants were superficially, or poorly used.

Arguments for the use of external agents outnumber those against. Glaser (1965), in an early field experiment, showed that organizations could be made more receptive to research results through the use of external consultants. In the 1970s, several studies (e.g., Keys, Martell, Peltz, Bartunek, & Szaflarski, 1975; Miles, Fullan, & Taylor, 1978; Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, & Arends, 1977) showed that externally induced programs involving strong consultive roles for third-party trainers or experts could have significant impact on school improvement programs. In evaluating the R & D Utilization project, Louis et al., 1981) found that external linkers associated with the projects were seen by schools as valuable in identifying needs, selecting solutions, and facilitating the implementation of R & D projects.

Huberman and Miles (1982) concluded (after an exhaustive review of internal and external assistance implementing large-scale innovations) that high assistance, involving
both internal and external sources had the following outcomes: stabilization of practice, increasing cohesiveness or trust, reduction of isolation, building an implementation “team and building an assistance infrastructure, coordination, and collaboration” (p. 152). The Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (DESSI) large-scale study found that local facilitators spent more time on teacher support and implementation activities when external facilitators were involved than when they worked without external help.

Additionally, the DESSI study found that external agents were especially helpful in making educators aware of new practices, helping them choose among a range of alternatives that matched local needs, working with local administrators to arrange for and conduct training, ensuring that resources and facilities were available, and helping to plan implementation and continuation support (Cox 1983a, 1983b). Neumann, King and Rigdon (1997) stated that districts and states can offer leadership by providing external agents that can make “important substantive contributions by offering concrete examples of high standards for student performance in specific curriculum areas, approaches to assessment that demand high performance, and reliable way of evaluating student performance on the assessments” (p. 63). They based their conclusions on a five-year case study of school restructuring efforts.

Most studies that describe four types of change agents:

- Change agents within the school (e.g., administrators, teachers),
- External change agents associated with federal programs (e.g., Title 1 facilitators),
- External change agents that provide schools with assistance in initiating a for-profit school-wide initiative (e.g., Success For All, Direct Instruction), and
External change agents directed and trained by the district or state to provide school improvement assistance to a target school (e.g., Highly Skilled Educators, Distinguished Educators (DEs), District Assistance Teams (DATs), School Support Teams).

The focus of this literature review (and the current study) is on this last group of external change agents.

During the last few decades, most studies of successful school change featured the principal as the leader who supplied the impetus for change. Some researchers, however, have studied other facilitative leaders (e.g., teachers, assistant administrators, state facilitators) including a facilitative team made up of persons from a variety of positions and levels (e.g., Cox, 1983a; Hall & Hord, 1986; Kell & Louis, 1980; McLaughlin, 1989; Pajak & Glickman, 1989). The idea of a facilitative change agent team at the school level was reinforced by the school improvement process designs of this era, which included a leadership or school improvement team focusing on change strategies (Hord, 1992).

Researchers who have reported on the effectiveness of district-level leadership in bringing about change and improvement include: Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; Fullan, 1991; Hill, Wise, & Shapiro, 1989; Jacobson, 1986; Muller, 1989; Murphy, Hallinger, & Peterson, 1985; Paulu, 1988. Referring to the crucial role that district personnel play, Loucks & Cox (1982) state “it is heartening to find an impact made on school improvement that comes from a source that can be influenced”. However, in a ten (10) year study of effective school processes, Stringfield and Teddlie (1993) found that
"central office behavior toward school improvement was either benign neglect or interference" (p. 223).

The primary function of these local education agencies must be to assure that individual schools have what they need to be successful (Carlson, 1987). The central office must become a service provider and a support center rather than a judge or regulator. In Louisiana, the current LSDAP Performance Labels are generated at the state level – leaving no judgment calls to the district. The LEA external change agents (e.g., DATs) maintain responsibility for establishing the overall direction for each school and for measuring the success of each school’s programs and progress.

In the past, District Support Teams or District Assistance Teams have been utilized by school systems to meet the specific needs of that era. The concept of ‘school support teams’ became better defined in 1995 when the United States Congress initiated a transformation of how educators and the public think about children in high-poverty schools (e.g., Title I schools). The focus shifted from problems of low student achievement through pull-out remedial programs to elimination of dual standards by requiring that the standards for all children in schools eligible for Title I assistance be the same challenging standards that states develop for every student in every school (U. S. Department of Education, 2000). This legislation portrayed ‘school support teams’ as a major entity for success. These external change agents would not only serve as resource providers but as coaches, mentors, and facilitators. The underlying theory is that these external change agents would provide structures that build a school’s capacity to improve teaching and learning (Ginsberg, et al., 1997).
Ginsberg, Johnson and Moffett (1997) suggest that all schools have the potential for
dramatic improvement because these ‘school support teams’ can help “unleash this
potential in a manner that leads to informed planning and inspired implementation.”
They list the following five reasons.

➢ These teams are made up of educators from different educational venues that
work together to support change by providing a rich array of perspectives that can
far exceed the impact of a single outside change agent.

➢ The team members are not simply ‘outside experts’ but are educators, many of
whom work in schools daily, with practical experiences and a range of resources
on many topics.

➢ Ideally, these teams affect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the schools they
serve.

➢ Team members are volunteers. Their generosity stems from a motivation of a
genuine commitment to educational success for all students, an opportunity to
share their successes, and to learn from others.

➢ The members of these teams develop personal relationships within a school
community. They are able to understand the complex needs and issues of a
school in a reasonably efficient manner.

School Support Teams have been utilized in Texas and Kentucky for a number of
years. With the advent of the new Title I legislation, all states will form such teams. The
effectiveness of these teams has yet to be determined on a large scale.

District personnel can support school-based reform by serving as initial stimuli,
assembling resources, and offering a broad professional forum (Quellimalz et al., 1995).
Two types of studies dominate research that examines factors of external change agents that impact school improvement: external change agent processes and their characteristics.

The characteristics of external change agents include: expertise, motivation, management style, intensity and type of interaction, personal characteristics, credibility, and level of assistance (e.g., Hord, 1992; Kell & Louis, 1980; Loucks & Cox, 1982; Louis, 1980; McKibbon et al., 1981; McLaughlin, 1989). McLaughlin states that local choices of implementation strategies are determined by these characteristics.

Very few studies involve external changes agents that are specifically supplied by the state to work within a school in coordinating efforts to increase student achievement in poorly performing schools. The only known external change agents that have similar responsibilities to Louisiana’s DEs are Kentucky’s Highly Skilled Educators (formerly known as Distinguished Educators). The research on this group is quite scant. Davis & McDonald (1997) found that over 80% of the teachers, principals, and superintendents in Kentucky rated their DE program as either highly effective or effective in developing and implementing school improvement plans. This study revealed the following general contributions of an effective external change agent:

1. Development of a collaborative climate for change that fosters professional dialogue and interaction;
2. Articulation and implementation of goals in a clear and measurable manner;
3. Development of strategies for balancing time in the facilitation of reform efforts; and
4. Development of a process for initiating and sustaining continuous transformation through empowerment (Davis & McDonald, 1997).

This study also listed two areas in which the DEs needed improvement: spending more time in the schools and allocating more time to developing a relationship with parents and community.

**Review of School Effectiveness Research**

The three major strands in School Effectiveness Research (SER), according to Teddlie and Reynolds (2000), are:

- Studies of school effects that attempt to relate school inputs to school outcomes using increasingly sophisticated mathematical models
- Effective schools studies that describe the processes of differentially effective schools using the outlier and case study approaches
- School improvement studies that document implementation and school change efforts.

The current study will examine school improvement through both: the effective schools and the school improvement knowledge bases.

Teddlie and Reynolds maintain there are four overlapping stages of SER in the USA beginning with the basic ‘input-output’ education production function studies and in culminating in sophisticated school improvement studies. From the mid-1960s and until the early 1970s, the basic ‘input-output’ economic studies of schools focused upon the potential impact of school, human and physical resources upon school outcomes. The school input variables (e.g. per pupil expenditure) and student background characteristics (SES) were used to predict student achievement on standardized tests (outputs).
results of the most prominent studies (e.g., Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld & York, 1966; Jencks, Smith, Bane, Cohen, Ginter, Heyns, & Michelson, 1972) indicated that differences in achievement were more strongly associated with SES than with school effects.

Several problems with these large-scale cross-sectional surveys used in education production function studies have been noted (e.g., Cohen, 1982; Mayeske, Wisler, Beaton, Weinfield, Cohen, Okada, Proshek, & Taber, 1972; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979; Stringfield, 1994). The problems include:

- failure to account for within school differences;
- methodological flaws;
- narrow range of school variables;
- the use of general ability measures of attainment; and
- the under specification of the school effects model.

A wide range of school processes was added to these input-output models in the 1970s. These studies also analyzed a wider range of school outcomes. Most of the research was conducted to dispute the results of the Coleman and Jencks studies. In reaction to their conclusions, school effectiveness researchers conducted studies using schools that were highly effective in very low-SES environments. The inputs changed from variables like teacher salary expenditures to measures of school climate and culture. This was possible due to methodological advances such as the development of social psychological scales to measure school processes (e.g. strong leadership, high expectations) (Weber, 1971).
In the third stage, from the late 1970s through the mid-1980s, the focus in SER shifted to equity issues. Ron Edmonds (1979a, 1979b) wanted to use effective school correlates to create (emphasis included in Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000) effective schools, especially for the urban poor. Edmonds identified these correlates as the “most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools”:

1. They have strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor kept together;

2. Schools that are instructionally effective for poor children have a climate of expectation in which no children are permitted to fall below minimum, but efficacious levels of achievement;

3. The school’s atmosphere is orderly without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand;

4. Effective schools get that way partly by making it clear that pupil acquisition of basic school skills takes precedence over all other school activities;

5. When necessary, school energy and resources can be diverted from other business in furtherance of the fundamental objectives; and

6. There must be some means by which pupil progress can be frequently monitored (Edmonds, 1979a).

Cohen (1982) notes that Edmonds’ list of correlates failed to provide adequate information on how the characteristics are interrelated and do not include knowledge
gained from studies of other educational processes (e.g., classroom management, instructional practices). Edmonds’ list was a starting place for future more comprehensive descriptions of effective schools processes.

Noted effective schools researchers during this time included: Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds (1979 a, 1979b); Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; Rutter, et al., 1979; Weber, 1971. It was also during this time that the first school improvement study designs began to emerge.

School effectiveness research through the mid-1980s was criticized for faulty methods:

The use of skewed samples and flawed measures, the instability of test results, the lack of longitudinal studies, and the frequent ignoring of socioeconomic status were a mere sample of the charges contained in the withering criticism researchers unleashed on what was basically a small body of work (Cuban, 1993, p. ix)

In response to criticisms of earlier research, the focus of school effectiveness research shifted from equity to efficiency (Wimpelberg, Teddlie, & Stringfield, 1989). From the 1980s until now, SER explores the differences in school effects that occur across different school contexts, instead of focusing upon one particular context.

The most noted U.S. researchers who examined context differences in school effectiveness research were: Hallinger & Murphy (1986); Teddlie, Stringfield, and their colleagues (1985, 1989, 1993); and Chrispelds (1992). These studies explored the factors that were producing greater effectiveness across several different contexts: SES of the student body (low, middle), community type (urban, suburban, rural), grade level
configuration (elementary, middle, high) (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). Contextually sensitive studies of school effectiveness have become more and more commonplace where policy makers have mandated school improvement and accountability.

Based on recent research studies, Teddlie & Reynolds (2000) posit nine processes of effective schools:

1. The processes of effective leadership;
2. The processes of effective teaching;
3. Developing and maintaining a pervasive focus on learning;
4. Producing a positive school culture;
5. Creating high and appropriate expectations for all;
6. Emphasizing student responsibilities and rights;
7. Monitoring progress at all levels;
8. Developing staff skills at the school site; and
9. Involving parents in productive and appropriate ways (p. 144).

Several of these processes are examined in the current study. They are discussed in the remainder of this section.

Safe and Orderly Environment: Discipline

Order within the school is important in the creation of a positive school climate (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). Without order, discipline and social control at the school level, it would be very difficult for school staff to attain high levels of student attention and engagement within classrooms (Edmonds, 1979a, Lezotte, 1989).
Generating a Positive School Culture: Teacher Collaboration

Research shows that a positive, professional learning environment is important for success in effective teaching and learning. Senge (1990) states that effective organizations are comprised of people who see themselves as connected to each other and where people are continually learning how to learn together. Processes found to generate a positive school culture are:

1) Possessing a shared mission or vision;
2) Sharing a sense of community and cooperation;
3) Having a purposeful collaboration and collegiality;
4) Having active participation in decision-making process;
5) Creating a positive climate (e.g., Fullan, 1991; Hopkins, Ainscow, & West, 1994; Reynolds and Sullivan, 1979; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000).

In a study of Kentucky Distinguished Educators, Davis and associates (1997) found that the DE contributed to a collaborative climate of change through activities that promoted: opening lines of communication throughout the organization, building trust and rapport among all staff members, developing tools designed to facilitate meetings, negotiating difficult issues, providing reflection, and fostering evaluation.

High Expectations of Achievement and Behavior

Communicating high expectations for students is one of the most consistent correlates of effective schooling found in the literature (e.g., Brookover et al. 1979; Brophy & Good, 1974; Edmonds, 1979a, 1979b; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; Venezky & Winfield, 1979; Weber, 1971). In addition, high expectations for staff have been cited as an effective school characteristic (Teddlie et al., 1989).
Quality of Instruction

The learning level of the classroom is more important in determining the quality of school outcomes than the level of the school itself (Creemer, 1994). This is self-evident since the teacher is the most contiguous to the students. In a five-year study, McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) found that teachers who developed sustained and challenging learning opportunities were part of a network of professionals that addressed problems and found solutions together. They collaboratively discussed new teaching materials and strategies and supported the risk taking that is involved in transforming practice.

The components identified with effective teaching are:

1) An effective classroom organization (e.g., efficient management of time, prepared lesson plans, routines and rules understood);

2) Effective teaching practices (e.g., questioning, limited focus in lessons, task orientation, active engagement, rapid lesson pace, project/team-based activities, relevance to learner, and adaptation to particular characteristics of the learners);

3) Warm accepting climate; and

4) Effective monitoring procedures (e.g., Brophy & Good, 1986; Rutter et al., 1979).

Kell and Louis (1980) posit that for external change agents to have an impact on the behavior of individual teachers, they have to collaboratively work through the processes of the practice with teachers (e.g., coaching). External change agent intervention in the classroom can change teaching behavior. Loucks & Cox (1982)
found that the more assistance teachers received from external change agents, the more teachers changed their classroom behaviors to approximate those required by the practice. Additionally, Huberman & Miles (1982) found that high levels of assistance from external agents had the following outcomes: stabilization of practice, increasing cohesiveness, reduction of isolation, and building a team assistance infrastructure.

This study examined four of the school effectiveness processes discussed above: discipline (the safety and orderliness of the environment), teacher collaboration, high student/teacher expectations, and quality of instruction. The examination of the combination of these processes with Fullan’s school improvement processes will contribute to the knowledge base of processes which positively impact implementation of school improvement strategies.

Review of Fullan’s School Improvement Processes Research

(S)chool effectiveness differs from school improvement in that it is concerned to celebrate the ‘end state’ of describing what it is that schools, which are effective, are actually ‘like’, whereas school improvement has been more concerned to discover what it is that has been done to bring schools to that state (Reynolds, Teddie, Hopkins & Stringfield, 2000, p.216).

School improvement approaches to educational change have a long-term goal of generating an ideal type of self-renewing school (Teddie & Reynolds, 2000). Overwhelming educational research (e.g., Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1996; Sizer, 1992) supports the importance of collaboration among school personnel and change agents. At the core of effective collaboration are people believing in what they are doing,
recognizing its value and importance, and finding relevance and purpose for their work (Fullan, 1991).

According to Reynolds et al. (2000), the first phase of school improvement, the curriculum reform movement, dated from the mid 1960s through the 1970s and focused on the adoption of curriculum material. High quality curriculum packages were made available by teams of academics and psychologists, but they failed to have an appreciable impact on teaching. The second phase, during the 1970s, was dominated by research that documented the failure of the ‘curriculum reform movement’. The more successful third phase of school improvement (from the late 1970s to the 1990s) was characterized by some large-scale school improvement studies that gave rise to the knowledge base of the dynamics of change (e.g., Crandall et al., 1982, 1986; Hargreaves, 1984; Huberman and Miles, 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Case studies and syntheses of the work during this third period (e.g., Fullan, 1985; Joyce, Hersh, & McKibbin, 1983) generated specific knowledge about the change process and the factors influencing effective schooling. The current and fourth phase, *Managing Change* (italics added by Reynolds et al., 2000 for emphasis) presents the difficult task for researchers and practitioners to “relate their strategies and their research knowledge to the realities of schools in a pragmatic, systematic and sensitive way” (p. 209). This includes actually studying change and engaging resources to bring it about.

Five dimensions of Fullan’s change theory will be used to organize the remainder of this section of the literature review. These following five dimensions of Fullan’s ‘change theory’ will be examined in the context of the current study through interviews:

- The importance of external change agents;
➤ A moral belief in the process;
➤ Active initiation and participation;
➤ A combination of pressure and Support; and
➤ A shared commitment to the process.

The Importance of External Change Agents

Fullan (1991, p. 54) posits that the initiation of change never occurs without an advocate. He states that the most powerful advocates are district administrators, because they have been shown to be an extremely important source for the advocacy, support, and initiation of new programs. Fullan asserts that the “greatest problem faced by school districts and schools is not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation, overload, and incoherence resulting from the uncritical and uncoordinated acceptance of too many different innovations” (p. 187). The district’s role is to help schools sort out and implement the right choices.

Individuals Taking Responsibility for Change

Wolf (1975) speculates that the amount of individual effort or involvement invested in the change process is related to the adoption of that strategy by the target audience. Fullan (1991) posits each person is an agent for change and must take the responsibility to change or initiate change.

A Moral Belief in the Process

Fullan (1991) infers that the basis for change include: people believing in what they are doing, recognizing its value and importance, and finding relevance and purpose in their work. He refers to this approach to change as a moral belief in the process.
In the RAND Change Agent Study (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977), active and early commitment of district leadership was essential to project success and long-run stability. Loucks and Cox (1982) found that local facilitators' sense of ownership of the innovation influenced school improvement efforts. Examining ten innovative teaching and programming strategies in twenty-five (25) schools with high proportions of at-risk students, Stringfield, Millsap and Herman (1997) found that districts and schools must engender faculty support for a program in order to ensure its success. Finally, in a review of literature on district administrator and central district staff advocacy for innovations, Fullan (1991) found that several studies have shown that this support is extremely important in initiating new programs (e.g., LaRocque & Coleman, 1989; Huberman & Miles, 1984).

These researchers and educators have noted that one of the most important ways to achieve the benefits of an innovation is to make sure that those who will be most affected - the teachers and other staff - are committed to the program before it is implemented. However, the value of early commitment to change was re-evaluated by McLaughlin (1989). In a reassessment of the findings from the original RAND Change Agent Study, McLaughlin found that the earlier emphasis on the importance of initial motivation and commitment was overemphasized. "(W)e did not see or did not recognize instances in which belief follows practice" (p. 12). She maintains that individuals who are required to change and take up new practices can become believers.

Active Initiation and Participation

Purkey and Smith (1985) observed that "efforts to change schools have been productive and most enduring when directed toward influencing the entire school culture
via a strategy involving collaborative planning, shared decision making, and collegial work in an atmosphere friendly to experimentation and evaluation" (p. 357). They advocate that change itself must be conducted with a “top down policy and bottom-up planning and implementation” (p. 364). Fullan (1991) and Huberman & Miles (1984) maintain that leaders at all levels must provide both pressure and support through interactive coordination to negotiate change.

If educational change involves learning how to do something new, then the single, most crucial factor to change is participation in professional development (Fullan, 1991). “Continuous development of all teachers is the cornerstone for meaning, improvement and reform” (p. 315). McLaughlin (1989) maintains that without the active support of district central office staff, individuals responsible for implementation typically did not put forth the effort necessary to successfully effectuate school improvement strategies. It is this combination of school and district participation that proves successful.

Change is Planned and Managed

Fullan (1993) posits a shared vision is the beginning of planned and managed change. Planning for change can reduce the effects of overload and fragmentation that serve as a barrier to the change process.

Educational Reform Literature

School systems have responded to the many pressures from the political arena to improve. In the 1960s, emphasis was placed on innovations that would enhance instruction and learning. The 1970s brought the educational production function into the spotlight, since public accountability of the dollars spent on education was the main focus.
Restructuring was a key word in the 1980s that emphasized changing the organizational structures so as to ensure quality education (Peterson, McCarthy, & Elmore, 1996). In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* led to demands for raising course work standards for high school graduation, implementing and/or expanding their assessment programs, and raising standards for prospective teachers. A counter movement of bottom-up reform emerged later in the decade that refuted the top-down mandates as inappropriate (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1995).

Cuban (1998) has categorized educational reforms as first-order changes that are superficial and do not affect the basic organizational processes, but may improve efficiency and second-order changes that alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together, including roles, structures and goals. The recent reform movements strive for second-order changes to improve student achievement.

In the 1990s, a more systemic approach included:

- the promotion of ambitious student outcomes for all students,
- the alignment of policy approaches and the action of various policy institutions to promote such outcomes, and
- the restructuring of the public education governance system to support improved achievement.

Demands on school districts have shifted from change initiated within the organization focusing on individual schools to externally imposed change often coming from state departments of education (Firestone, Fuhrman, & Kirst, 1989; Odden, 1986). In addition, the U.S. Department of Education has increased funding for state educational reforms that embrace many of the approaches cited above. For the first time, in 1997,
schools with student poverty rates as low as fifty percent (50%) could use Title I funds to improve the entire school. Congress authorized an additional $135 million per year to help low-performing schools raise student achievement by adopting research-based, school-wide approaches (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2000).

Accountability can be defined as the “process by which school districts and states (or other constituents such as parents) attempt to ensure that schools and school systems meet their goals” (Rothman, 1995, p. 189). It is assumed that teachers will try harder and become more effective in meeting goals for student performance when there are real incentives or sanctions to meet the goals. According to Newmann, King, and Rigdon (1997), a complete school accountability system should include at least four parts:

1. Information about the organization’s performance (e.g., test scores).
2. Standards for judging the quality or degree of success or organizational performance (e.g., a mean achievement score higher than other schools with comparable demographic characteristics).
3. Significant consequences for the organization (i.e., rewards and sanctions such as bonuses to teachers in the school) with regard to its success or failure in meeting specified standards.
4. An agent or constituency that receives information on organizational performance, judges the extent to which standards have been met, and distributes rewards and sanctions (e.g., the state department of instruction) (p.43).

There is widespread agreement that schools should be held more accountable to standards for their student performance (Johnson & Immerwahr, 1994; Johnson, Arkas,
Friedman, Immerwahr, & Bers, 1995). However, controversy persists regarding how to implement such standards and what the specific standards should be (Newmann, King & Rigdon, 1997).

Maeroff (1988) argues that financial rewards to schools for accountability is not as powerful an incentive for teachers to perform at higher levels as are high-quality professional working conditions (e.g., more time to plan, to work with mentors, and to participate in professional development). He maintains that these types of incentives are essential to success in school improvement and should be available to all schools involved in the process.

Newmann et al. (1997) found that “strong external accountability is difficult to implement, and even when it is implemented, it can present serious obstacles to or undermine a school’s organizational capacity” (p. 62). They showed that when highly prescriptive standards are connected to high-stakes consequences (that are mandated by external policy makers), this type of policy could deny school staff the ownership, commitment and/or the authority to work collaboratively to achieve a clear focus on student learning.

Many educators and researchers believe that the processes involved with change are very complex. One program or set of processes that are effective in one school may not be effective in another. For instance, some schools experience a naturally occurring adjustment which occurs between a given environment and a plan to produce change in that environment that results in a program outcome that differs from that originally intended. Perhaps this complexity has been the inducement for Louisiana to use support
systems within or very near the school needing the most support (i.e., the District Assistance Team and Distinguished Educators).

Study Context: Education in Louisiana

The current long-range plan in Louisiana to improve education began with the 1988 enactment of the Children First Act (La. RS 17:3871). This school improvement plan had as one of its first priorities to collect, analyze, and report educational data in annual Progress Profiles reports. According to LDE (1996) sources, the first major phase of a multi-phase plan to implement educational accountability began with the implementation of these Progress Profiles Program in 1990.

The second phase, the School Effectiveness and Assistance Project (SEAP) was conducted as a pilot program during SY 1996-98 as an initial step towards “the creation of the accountability system by helping the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) build its internal capacity to

- identify schools in need,
- analyze the schools’ needs, and
- provide improvement assistance” (LDE, 1999, p.6).

Starting in 1999, Louisiana entered the third and current phase – the statewide school accountability program that encompasses school and district accountability, high-stakes testing, and curriculum content standards.

These sequential steps have laid the foundation for building the state’s capacity for change by addressing such issues as: educational politics, funding, frameworks and standards, teaching preparation and assessment, and technology. Altogether, these efforts make the link of accountability and assessment to school improvement. The following is
a compendium of changes made in Louisiana over the past two decades that has given impetus to the current reform initiatives in the state.

Politics.

Power struggles between the governor, legislature, elected state superintendent and teacher unions have always been commonplace in Louisiana. In 1987, some of this strife was alleviated when the state voted to make the state superintendent an appointed position of the state board (SBESE), rather than an elected official whose political positions were often at odds with those SBESE members (Finley, 1999). Lawton (1998) lists three factors, which have recently reduced the political tension in the state:

- Governor’s approach to educational issues;
- Three Governor-appointed members added to the state board (SBESE); and
- The appointment of a former senator and chairman of the Senate Education Committee to State Superintendent.

Funding.

The history of inadequate funding for public education can be attributed to several factors:

- The high rate of private and parochial school attendance among the state’s affluent and nonminority students;
- Traditional reliance on an unstable oil market; and
- A large rural population that appears to have a “limited interest in pursuing educational change” (Finley, 1999, chapter 1).

Since 1986 Louisiana has secured funding from several sources for reform projects, frameworks and standards, teacher training and preparation, teaching practice, and
technology. This funding has contributed to the foundation needed for the current reform program.

In 1978, an amendment to the federal Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act [numbered 8(g)] provided coastal states a fair and equitable share of mineral revenue derived from a federal three-mile submerged strip adjacent to a state's coastal boundary. In 1985 the Louisiana legislature approved a constitutional amendment to dedicate the interest earnings to improve the quality of education. The Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund (LQESF, or better known as 8g) is appropriated from a permanent trust fund now totaling over $832 million (LDE, 2000a). The SBSE and State Board of Regents split the allocation of interest from these funds each fiscal year.

Additionally, federal initiatives have made new monies available for school improvement. Louisiana was one of ten states awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant during its initial phase in 1991 (NSF, 2000). The Louisiana Systematic Initiatives Program (LaSIP) emerged from this 5-year funding allocation. The program is a statewide effort to reform mathematics and science learning consistent with the rapidly changing needs of the age of technology. LaSIP's initial five-year (then extended for an additional 5 years in 1996) mission was to focus on eight areas that impact effective teaching: educational technology, curriculum development, teacher certification, business partnerships, in-service training, pre-service training, information dissemination, and assessment and evaluation. Louisiana received $10 million from NSF for the first five-year effort in 1991 and matched those funds with state dollars. In addition, in 1993, the Louisiana State Department of Education applied for and received a three-year $900,000
federal grant to develop mathematics and science curriculum frameworks to be used within the LaSIP project (Finley, 1999; NSF, 2000).

**Teacher Preparation and Assessment.**

The National Science Foundation awarded Louisiana a five-year $4 million grant in 1993 to establish the Louisiana Collaborative for Excellence in the Preparation of Teachers (LaCEPT). LaCEPT also received $500,000 from LaSIP and LQESF to reform teacher training programs in math and science to reflect national standards. (Finley, 1999)

The Children First Act of 1988 included a teacher evaluation plan that required all teachers to be evaluated and recertified every three years by the state. The evaluation called for teachers to demonstrate competency on ninety-one (91) indicators and was linked to certification (Diegmueller, 1991). Teachers and teacher unions voicing concerns that the plan was punitive and unfair helped suspend the plan in 1991. Since 1994, under a revised plan, beginning teachers are evaluated by the state through the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program. This plan provides new teachers mentoring and professional development in addition to his/her assessment on the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching. Local districts evaluate licensed teachers.

**Frameworks and Standards.**

In 1979, the legislature passed Act 750, the Louisiana Competency-Based Education Program to develop state curriculum guides in the core subjects that listed minimum skills and competencies, instructional activities and materials, and minimum instructional time. The legislature also required that assessment be linked with these competencies (Breckenridge & Goldstein, 1998). This work, along with national
standard movements (e.g., NSF) served as the basis for development of the current state standards.

In 1993, the LDE received a three-year $900,000 federal grant to develop mathematics and science curriculum frameworks. With the help of LaSIP, the frameworks for math and science were completed in 1996. The LDE then focused on developing standards in the other core subjects. (Finley, 1999) The LDE then directed the local districts to develop curricula that reflect these state standards and include the priorities of the district.

Technology.

The Louisiana Technology Initiative began in 1991 when LaSIP funds were used to support technology infrastructures for classrooms to reform the teaching practices of mathematics and science teachers in the state. With combined monies and the efforts of LaSIP, Goals 2000 (later renamed LEARN), and the National Science Foundation, the Louisiana Networking in Education (LANIE) project was implemented. In 1995 and 1996, the state was awarded a $4.3 and a $5.3 million Technology Innovative Challenge Grants respectively by the U.S. Department of Education. Also, in 1996, the state provided another $38.2 million for the integration of technology into all Louisiana classrooms.

A comprehensive plan, the State Technology Plan, was developed and established the Louisiana Center for Educational Technology (LCET) in the State Department of Education (Cage, Bienvenu, Hoover, & Thomas, 1998). The State Department improved its multimedia computer ratio from one for every 88 students in 1996 to one for every 8 students in 2000 (LDE, 2001b). Specific to the needs of the current accountability
program, Making Connections grew from LCET in collaboration with the LDE’s Division of Student Standards and Assessment.

Making Connections is a standards-based technology rich curriculum project that provides the standards on the Web. Also, the program developed a comprehensive program for providing lesson plans, website links, software previews, and statewide assessment (test) items that reflect those standards (LDE, 2000b). This technology gives teachers a site where they can access the content standards and find supporting resources. The site had 30,000 hits the first month it was online (LDE, 2000d).

Developing a Plan.

Three major pieces of federal legislation became law in 1994 (i.e., the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965) to form the centerpiece of President Clinton’s educational agenda and redirected federal education policy (Marshall, 1999). All three contributed to Louisiana’s accountability program, but Goals 2000 initially gave the greatest impetus for the development of a state education plan. In August 1994, Louisiana received a $2 million Goals 2000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The Goals 2000 Act provides money to states in exchange for their compliance of requirements listed for specific purposes. For example, state and local agencies may develop reform plans based on fundamental principles that underlie effective school change:

- All students can learn;
- Lasting improvements depend on school-based leadership;
Simultaneous top-down and bottom-up reform is necessary;

Strategies must be locally developed, comprehensive, and coordinated;

and

The whole community must be involved in developing strategies for system-wide improvement (Marshall, 1999).

The 1995, the 54-member Louisiana Goals 2000 Commission received an additional $8 million to continue their efforts because of the substantial progress made on the state plan. In 1996, members of Governor Foster's Transition Team, Louisiana Goals 2000 Commission (renamed Louisiana LEARN Commission), Louisiana Department of Education and the State Technology Steering Committee met to begin developing a consolidated state plan taking into consideration all previous work to date (Louisiana LEARN Commission, 1996). The commission developed by LEARN for the 21st Century (Louisiana Education Achievement and Results Now) currently collaborates and directs the state's goal: "that all students who exit schools in Louisiana will be knowledgeable, self-reliant, and productive citizens in the 21st century") LEARN Commission, 1996, p. 9)

In 1997, the Louisiana legislature passed an act (La. RS 17: 10.1) establishing the School and District Accountability Commission and charged it with the responsibility of recommending a statewide system of accountability for public education. The system measures student performance, and holds students, schools, and districts accountable for the performance of students. In addition to the high school Graduate Exit Exam, students in grades 4 and 8 must meet state standards (i.e., pass the state's criterion reference test LEAP 21) in order to be promoted. Schools will be required to make improvements until
their students meet the standards. Schools that do not make sufficient improvement will receive active assistance from the district and state. The plan provides graduated levels of assistance to low-performing schools. Ultimately, the state has the authority to require the reconstitution of, or to withdraw state approval and funds form as school that fails to improve according to state guidelines (LDE, 1999).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a review of literature in the areas of educational change, diffusion of innovation, school effectiveness, school improvement, and educational reform. This review concluded with a description of the study context: building Louisiana’s capacity for school reform.

This review of literature began with an introduction of the literature related to educational change models, the dynamics of change, and principles of change facilitation. The evolution of approaches to change models demonstrates various focuses, including the current attention to the individuals and organizations involved in such changes.

The second section presented the facilitative nature of several types of diffusion of innovation models, external change agents and their linkage to the school. The third section presented a historical perspective on school effectiveness research, and then addressed research in this area specifically focused on building school capacity to improve. The fourth section begins with school improvement approaches to change and the research associated with it that is pertinent to this study. Within this section, the relationship of school effectiveness processes to school improvement strategies were explored. The fifth section presented a review of the literature related to the history of
educational reform. This review of literature provides a supporting foundation for the proposed study of external change agents involved in the diffusion of innovation.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology of the study. It includes:

a) preliminary comments regarding the selection of school sites with external change agents;

b) the research hypotheses and questions;

c) the problematic nature of student achievement;

d) research design;

e) sampling;

f) instrumentation;

g) data collection;

h) qualitative data analysis; and

i) quantitative data analysis.

Preliminary Comments Regarding the Selection of School Sites with External Change Agents

There is no single solution to help schools develop the capacity to improve. Fullan (1993) posits that support from within and outside the school is a necessity. This study will examine one specific type of support – the external change agent. The following section provides some preliminary information on how these external agents were selected for this study. This section is necessary due to the complexity of the selection process: it provides an explanation of the issues involved in that process.

In Louisiana, a new accountability program has mandated external support for low performing schools. The index used by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) to assess school performance is called a School Performance Score (SPS). As
explained in Chapter One, this score is a calculation of weighted composite indices derived from various measures (i.e., criterion and norm-referenced tests, student attendance, dropout rates) (LDE, 2000). Based on this index, any school in Corrective Action must have a District Assistance Team (one type of external change agent) to help the school analyze needs, develop and implement a plan, and evaluate for continuation.

The LDE, in SYs 1999-2001, provided another external change agent (i.e., a Distinguished Educator) to schools participating in a pilot program to help those District Assistance Teams. In SY 2001-2002, these Distinguished Educators will be assigned to the very lowest performing schools in the state. Any school moving into the more intensive level of Corrective Actions II when "adequate growth is not demonstrated during each 2-year cycle" (LDE, 1999, p. 14) will receive a Distinguished Educator. However, this two-year cycle predicates that no school could enter Corrective Actions II until the summer of 2001.

The purpose of this multiple-case study is to examine and describe the events, processes, perceptions and changes that have occurred at the school level in ten Louisiana middle schools, as the result of external change agent support, during the pilot of the Louisiana Distinguished Educator Program. During the LSDAP, numerous districts participated in state provided training for District Assistance Teams (DATs) on a volunteer basis, even if they had no schools in Corrective Action. The LDE also trained and employed Distinguished Educators (DEs) for the pilot program, and these DEs also worked in volunteer schools.
Initially, the study was designed to examine five middle schools\(^1\) with a Distinguished Educator (DE) and a District Assistance Team (DAT) and five middle schools with only a District Assistance Team. Therefore, ten middle schools (five matched pairs) were selected that met these criteria. However, during the two-day site visits to these ten schools, it became apparent that two of the DAT only schools did not have a true District Assistance Team, but rather had a modified support team called a School Site Team (SST). Additionally, two of the five Distinguished Educator-assigned schools replaced their District Assistance Team with a School Site Team.

All four of these schools described above [i.e., two without a DAT (but with a SST) and two with a DE + DAT (that was replaced with a SST)] were located in the same district. None of the four schools were in Corrective Actions; therefore, this district was not required to form a District Assistance Team. Instead this district provided School Site Teams to make annual monitoring visits to all schools.

Two Distinguished Educators were assigned to two schools within that district, because the district agreed to participate in the LDE pilot program. The state selected lower performing schools within the district to place the DEs in since no schools in that district were in Corrective Action. These schools were then required to have DATs because they were participating in the DE pilot program. After the two DATs conducted the initial needs assessment at each school, the DATs were replaced with the district support team (the School Site Team).

\(^1\) The five middle schools with a DE were the only five in the state that had a DE during the LSDAP pilot program. More information on the specifics of the sampling procedure is found in a later section of this chapter.
All six of the remaining schools in the study had either a DAT only or a DE + DAT. There were no further deviations from the initial study design in these six schools.

Although districts without Corrective Action schools are not mandated to participate in any LDE accountability initiatives, they are held responsible for school improvement at each school. Therefore, there are two types of District Support Teams (DSTs) utilized in this study: District Assistance Teams and School Site Teams. The DAT is composed of district and school personnel who have been trained by the LDE. The School Site Team is composed of district and school personnel but, as a group, was not trained by the LDE. The composition and processes that differentiate between the School Site Team and the District Assistance Team will be further described in Chapter Four in the case studies. These teams (DATs and SSTs) will be referred to as District Support Teams (DSTs) throughout the remainder of this document.

The major difference in the two groups of schools supported by external change agents, in this study, was the Distinguished Educator. The group of schools with a Distinguished Educator will be designated as the DE + DST group of schools. The DST at each DE + DST school may be either a DAT or a SST or both. The group of five DST only schools will be designated as DST only.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The purpose of this study is threefold:

1. To examine the extrinsic capacity and amount of effort (i.e., expertise, commitment, and resources/authority) of the external change agents,

2. To explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators with regard to the influence of the external agents in their school on school effectiveness.
processes (i.e., discipline, teacher collaboration, student/teacher expectations, and the quality of instruction) and Fullan’s school improvement processes, and

3. To compare the level of support and the perceptions of support in both groups of schools (i.e., DST only and DE + DST) with the Quality of Instruction at each school and in each group of schools.

There are several research questions and five research hypotheses that guided the research. (These were previously stated in Chapter One.)

Research Questions (RQ)

RQ I. What is the extrinsic capacity of the DSTs?

A. Expertise

1. Who composed the teams?

2. What areas of specialization did team members have?

3. Where the team members adequately trained?

B. Commitment

1. What initial support was extended (SY 1999-2000)?

2. What on-going support was given by the DST (SY 2000-2001)?

3. What is the overall commitment to the accountability program in the school?

C. Resources/Authority

1. What resources were available to the team for school improvement support to the target school?

2. What type of authority does team have to make school improvement
changes?

D. Processes of the DST and Faculty.

1. What school improvement processes involved both the DST and faculty?

2. How often did the DST and faculty work together?

RQ II. What resources or support provided by the DSTs & DEs influenced:

A. Effective School Processes (i.e., discipline, teacher collaboration, student/teacher expectations, and the quality of instruction)?

B. Fullan’s School Improvement Processes (i.e., utilizing external change agents, individuals taking responsibility, having a moral belief in the process, understanding that change is planned and managed, and actively initiating and participating in school improvement activities)?

RQ III. What are the effective strategies and barriers to success experienced by external change agents?

A. What resources/strategies provided (i.e., staff development, parental involvement, funding) by the DSTs and DEs are perceived to be effective?

B. What are the barriers to success faced by the DSTs and DEs?

RQ IV. What is the nature of the relationship between DEs and DSTs?

RQ V. Was the quality of instruction affected by both

a) the extrinsic capacity of the external change agents, and

b) the internal change agents’ perception of the influence exerted by external change agents on the school effectiveness processes and school improvement processes?
Research Hypotheses (RH)

RH I. Mean scores on the Classroom Management Component (i.e., the teacher maintains an environment conducive to learning), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH II. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component A (i.e., the teacher delivers instruction effectively), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH III. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component B (i.e., the teacher presents appropriate content), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH IV. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component C (i.e., the teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH V. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component D (i.e., the teacher assesses student progress), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.
The Problematic Nature of Student Achievement

In the early phases of reform it is difficult to know exactly what processes to track. Tyack and Cuban (1986) suggest three reasons: (1) the time lag between initiation and implementation of a reform; (2) the uneven penetration of reforms in various educational settings and communities; and (3) the difference in impact across social groups.

A reader may ask, Why don't you have research hypotheses using student achievement as the outcome variable? There are a number of reasons that student achievement is not highlighted in this study, and they are discussed in this section of the document.

Student achievement, in Louisiana, is currently measured by criterion referenced LEAP exams. However, the LEAP exams from years SY 1998-99 were significantly different from the LEAP21 exams given in SY 1999-2000. The SY 1999-2000 LEAP 21 exams were directly aligned with the new state content standards and are intended to be as difficult as the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). The scores are also reported differently (i.e., no longer pass/fail but one of five achievement ratings). Important measures are sometimes not measured consistently during the time an innovation goes into operation, and that is definitely the case with the LSDAP.

Keeping this in mind, the only SPS scores reported in this study will be an interim score that was calculated at the midpoint of the LSDAP's two-year cycle during the summer of 2000. The score is reported as the Progress toward the Growth Target. Each school in Louisiana is given a Growth Target, which gauges the amount of "improvement needed every two years to reach the state's ten-year goal or five points, whichever is
greater" (Jacobs, 2001, p. 22). This score is presented as a percent of the gain made toward the Growth Target (GT). For example, if a school's SPS in 1999 was 36.7 and the Growth Target was 11.8, and the school made an interim SPS of 48.2, the Progress toward the Growth Target was 97.5%. This school made 11.5 points of the 11.8 points need to meet their Growth Target.

It should be reiterated that this study's quantitative focus is the examination of the quality of instruction rather than the change in a school's SPS score. Any state's accountability index based on CRT and NRT test scores may not be sensitive enough to gauge the change in student achievement, especially within a short timeframe such as one or two years. An examination of what is going on in the classroom is probably a better indicator of future student achievement. Louisiana's SBSESE member credited with the formulation of the LSDAP, Leslie Jacobs, stated that research findings in Tennessee and Texas show "(a)verage gains of students taught by effective vs. ineffective teachers can differ by 50 (or more) percentile points" (2001, p 35).

In addition to the lack of sensitivity of the accountability index to gauge student achievement, other reasons for gains in SPS early in the LSDAP may be evidenced. For example, as districts and schools learn the formula for the accountability index, careful attention to specifics (i.e., bonus points, elimination of zero scores for absent students) may result in an inflated score. The assumption here is, the gains made from these manipulations will occur early in the program and will be one-time only gains. Over the ten-year accountability projection, these manipulated gains will not affect a school's true

---

2 Teddlie, Kochan, and Taylor (2000, in press) postulate that educational change occurs gradually, with attitudinal change occurring first, followed by behavioral and cognitive change. Assuming their model is correct, "true" behavioral change in the classroom should precede cognitive change (achievement gain).
growth in student achievement. During the initial two-year accountability cycle in which this study was made, an examination of the quality of instruction is a better indicator than a school's School Performance Score.

Research Design

This exploratory multiple-case study (Yin, 1989, 1993, 1994) used qualitative and quantitative methodology to examine external agent support in ten public middle schools. Did these external change agents have any influence on Fullan's school improvement processes and school effectiveness processes (specifically the quality of instruction)?

According to Yin (1994), "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (p.13). The evidence from multiple-case designs is considered more compelling, and the overall study is regarded as being more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983) than those from single-case designs. This study employed a comparative case analysis of the events, processes, perceptions and changes that occurred as the result of external change agent involvement at the school level. This multiple ethnographic case study utilized participant observation, open-ended interviews and document analysis.

Most researchers committed to the thorough study of a research problem find that method is secondary to the research question itself (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This multiple-case study utilized a Type VII parallel mixed model design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 151) in which there is a mixture of approaches at all three stages of the study (type of investigation, type of data collection/operation, type of analysis).

In this study, the qualitative data and analysis (related to the research questions) are more important than the quantitative data and analysis (related to the research
hypotheses). This “type of data collection/operations” stage of this design is also referred to as a “dominant - less dominant parallel QUAL + quan design” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 15; Creswell, 1995).

In this study, qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed simultaneously. By using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, the researcher is better able to triangulate the findings of the study (e.g., Patton, 1990).

Classroom observations and structured interviews with teachers, principals and Distinguished Educators were conducted on the school site during a two-day visit to the school. The District Assistance Team-leaders, or School Site Team-leaders, were interviewed at a later date away from the school because they were not available at the school site. If the District Assistance Team conducted a needs analysis for the school and provided a Data Notebook, this document was included in the analysis.

Prior to this study, a pilot study involving two schools was conducted in the spring of SY 2000. The two-case exploratory study provided the groundwork for the focus of the present study. For example, the pilot study provided insights into the processes and activities of the Distinguished Educator and District Assistance Team. Information on community type, SES, and school size was used to match the two schools. One school had a DE and a DAT and the other only had a DAT.

The dependent variables for the present study were also defined based on the pilot study. The pilot study served to narrow the focus of the examination and alert the researcher to problems with data collection (e.g., archival data needed to be included in the study to triangulate interview information).
The interview instruments for the present study were developed in the summer of 2000, following the pilot study. Classroom observations and interviews were completed in the fall and winter of SY 2000-2001. Data analysis was conducted in the spring of 2001.

Sampling Procedure

Selection of Schools

The hypotheses and research questions for this study require a specifically designated population consisting of low performing middle schools in Louisiana. A purposeful homogeneous sample of middle schools was selected to examine information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 1990). Only five middle schools in Louisiana had a Distinguished Educator on their campus as the result of the LDE pilot program. These five schools are included in the study as the DE + DST schools. Five schools with a DST only were matched to these DE + DST schools in a procedure described in more detail later in this section.

The researcher requested permission from superintendents in five districts to conduct the study. Following the superintendents’ approval, principals were then requested to give permission for the researcher to conduct interviews and classroom observations in their schools.

Although the cases in this study were selected for homogeneity, the study may also be described as utilizing an outlier design due to the contextual characteristics of these low performing schools. Initially, the schools proposed for the study were to have the LDE label of Academically Unacceptable. However, only two of the five DE + DST middle schools had this label. The pilot program was a statewide initiative and many
districts did not have Academically Unacceptable school; therefore, the state placed DEs in the lowest performing schools in some districts with the district superintendent’s cooperation. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that these ten schools were outliers in the sense that they represented the lowest performing schools in their districts.

Using the LDE School Performance Score Category and Data Report (LDE, 2001), the five DE + DS middle schools were matched with five DST only schools. The matching characteristics were:

- Community type (i.e., large city, urban fringe of a large city, mid-size city and urban fringe of a mid-size city),
- LDE School Performance Score (SPS),
- Percent free and reduced lunch students,
- Percent minority,
- Percent Special Education and
- Projected Growth Target of the SPS.

Tables of the matched characteristics of the paired schools (Tables 4.3, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, and 4.11) can be found at the beginning of each case study pair of schools in Chapter Four.

Matching Characteristics

Community type was defined by the LDE (2000) as:

1. Large City – a city having a population greater than 250,000;
2. Mid-size City – a city having a population of less than 250,000;
3. Urban Fringe of a Large City – any incorporated place or non-place territory defined as urban by the Census Bureau;
4. Urban Fringe of a Mid-size City – any incorporated place or non-place
territory defined by the Census Bureau. (Other community types were not included in this study.)

A list of all DST only middle schools with the same community type as the DE + DST school was compiled. Then the matching characteristics noted above (LDE School Performance Score (SPS), percent free and reduced lunch students, percent minority, percent Special Education and projected Growth Target of the SPS) were used to match the DE + DST schools to the DST only schools with the closest numerical magnitude. For example, a DE + DST school with a SPS of 35, 85% Free and Reduced Lunch, 75% Minority, 18% Special Education students, and a Growth Target of 12 was then matched to a DST only school with the closest matching numerical magnitudes.

The ten schools included in the study represent three distinct regions of the state (the Northwest, Central, and Southeast areas) and, therefore, provide a good geographical cross-section of the state. In addition, the schools include two school performance categories (i.e., eight schools are Academically Below Average and two are Academically Unacceptable). The sample schools represent four community types: urban fringe of a large city, large city, urban fringe of a mid-sized city and a mid-sized city.

Only two schools of the ten case studies are Corrective Action schools (refer to Chapter One, for an explanation of Corrective Actions). (See Table 3.1) These two schools (i.e., Matched Pair - Five) are the only schools required by the LDE to have District Assistance Teams. However, as noted above, any district involved in the Distinguished Educator pilot must also provide that school with a DAT. Therefore, of the remaining four DE-pilot schools, two had DAT continued support and two replaced
the DAT with a School Site Team after the initial needs assessment. (See the first section in this chapter for more details on DSTs, DATs, and SSTs.)

Table 3.1
Matched Pairs of Sample Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School with DE DE + DST</th>
<th>Performance Category</th>
<th>Matched School DST only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. T.S. Elliot Middle School</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
<td>Kennedy Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thoreau Middle School</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
<td>Roosevelt Junior High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Twain Junior High</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
<td>Jefferson Junior High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Longfellow Junior High</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
<td>Lincoln Junior High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Steinbeck Middle School</td>
<td>Academically Unacceptable</td>
<td>George Washington Middle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Corrective Action- Level I

Note. These schools have been given pseudonyms.

Levels of Sampling

The five Distinguished Educators selected for this study all served middle schools. This sample represents five of the six DEs initially assigned to middle schools in the state pilot study. A school in which a DE had been assigned was removed from the study amidst allegations of testing irregularities. Test scores were disregarded and the DE was reassigned. Therefore, for this study, all middle schools in the state with a DE have been included in the sample.

A second level of sampling was conducted to identify teachers for classroom observations within the ten schools. The sample was limited to mathematics, science, social studies, and English/Reading teachers who were the regular classroom teachers, not substitute teachers. Ideally, the teachers selected for classroom observations would be certified to teach in those core classes; however, the low certification rate of teachers
in these schools eliminated this criterion. Several schools in this study had between thirty and forty percent uncertified teachers and this high number of uncertified teachers may be a reason for the low school performance scores. Uncertified teachers were observed because, without their inclusion, the number of teachers in the sample would have been too small. Substitute teachers were not observed.

Classroom schedules and class rosters were obtained from school principals or assistant principals prior to each school site visit. Substitute teachers were noted each day. A random sampling strategy was then used to select from among the available teachers at each school. One teacher was selected for each core subject per grade whenever possible. Field trips, school assemblies, and weather related absences precluded observations in some classes. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide the frequency data for those classroom observations per grade level and core subject.

The third level of sampling was conducted to find teachers to participate in the structured interviews. During the two-day site visit, teachers were asked if they would volunteer for an interview during their planning periods, before or after school. One teacher from each grade level was selected based on availability. Other teachers were informally interviewed throughout the two-day visit. Table 3.2 lists the interview participants at each school. Altogether fifty-eight (58) principals, assistant principals, teachers, and DST-leaders were interviewed.
Table 3.2
Interview Participants at Each School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools by Matched Pairs</th>
<th>Persons Interviewed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T.S. Elliot Middle School</td>
<td>Principal, Assistant Principal for Instruction, 6th grade teacher, 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, DAT-leader</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy Middle School</td>
<td>Principal, Assistant Principal for Instruction, 6th grade teacher, 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, DAT-leader</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoreau Middle School</td>
<td>Principal, Assistant Principal for Instruction, 6th grade teacher, 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, DAT-leader</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt Junior High</td>
<td>Principal, Dean of Students (most involved with SIP), 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, DAT-leader (Only has two grade levels)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Twain Junior High</td>
<td>Principal, Assistant Principal, 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, 9th grade teacher, SST-leader</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Junior High</td>
<td>Principal, Assistant Principal, 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, 9th grade teacher, SST-leader</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longfellow Junior High</td>
<td>Principal, Assistant Principal, 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, 9th grade teacher, SST-leader</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Junior High</td>
<td>Principal, Assistant Principal, 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, 9th grade teacher, SST-leader</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinbeck Middle School</td>
<td>Principal, Staff Developer (most involved with SIP), 6th grade teacher 7th grade teacher, 8th grade teacher, DAT-leader</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Middle School</td>
<td>Principal, Staff Developer (most involved with SIP), 7th grade teacher, (no 8th grade teachers were available for interview on this day due to a field trip), 9th grade teacher, SST-leader</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrumentation/Measures:
Qualitative Instruments

Yin (1989) defines case study work as the attempt to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result.

The exploratory research questions guided the development/implementation of the interview protocols and archival examinations in this multiple-case study.
General Description of Types of Instruments Used.

The choice of standardized open-ended interviews (Patton, 1990) was made to best utilize time, such that only one interview per person would be needed. All interviewees were asked the same basic questions, in the same order, that were determined in advance. Using the same questions also increased comparability of responses. The standardized open-ended interview approach is not only systematic, but interviewer judgment during the interview is reduced. One weakness of this type of interview is that the highly focused questions may constrain or limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers. The interview protocol included specific questions to be explored regarding the perception of extrinsic capacity of the external change agents, the perception of the influence of the external change agents on school effectiveness processes and Fullan's school improvement processes.

Field notes were made from direct observation of the general school campus, physical plant, school organization, campus activities, and the faculty's interactions with students and each other. This provided a thick narrative description needed for the qualitative case study. Thick descriptions were captured to provide evidence of transferability of the conclusions. Archival data (Data Notebook, certification rates) were also collected and examined if available.

Principal and Teacher Interview Protocol

The principal and teacher interview questions were identical with the exception of one question, "How did your teachers/principal respond to the DE?" The first four research questions (Research Questions I, II, III, IV) were addressed with this interview
protocol. (See Appendix A). The interview protocol included questions to explore the following:

- **Extrinsic capacity of DST (Items RQ I, A - D)**

  Using research findings cited in the literature review (e.g., Havelock, 1971; Hord, 1992; Kell & Louis, 1980; Loucks & Cox, 1982; Louis, 1980; McKibbon *et al.*, 1981; McLaughlin, 1989), extrinsic capacity is defined as the expertise, commitment and resources/authority (e.g., authority to hire and fire faculty, released time from other duties, availability of resources for the school) of the external change agents.

- **Perception of the DST and DE (if applicable) influence on school effectiveness processes and Fullan's school improvement processes (Items RQ II A - B),**

- **Effective strategies and barriers to effectiveness of the external change agents (Items RQ III A - B), and**

- **The relationship of the DST and the DE (if applicable) (Item RQ IV).**

**District Support Team-Leader Interview Protocol**

Research Questions I through IV also guided the development of the DST-leader interview questions (See Appendix B). The basic organization of the DST-leader interview protocol followed the four components described above in the principal/teacher interview protocol with a few exceptions. The questions for the DST-leader were more focused on the activities actually performed by the team and the DST-leader’s perception of the faculty’s Fullan’s school improvement processes.
Distinguished Educator Interview Protocol

Research Questions II, III, IV, and V guided the development of these interview questions (See Appendix C). Four main focus areas are included in the protocol:

1. Four processes as shown in research findings in Kentucky that are specifically effective for external change agents such as the Distinguished Educator (i.e., opening lines of communication throughout the organization, building trust and rapport among staff members; developing tools designed to facilitate meetings, negotiating difficult issues, providing for reflection, and fostering evaluation) (Item RQ III A);

2. School effectiveness processes (Item RQ II A);

3. Fullan’s school improvement processes (Item RQ II B); and

4. The nature of the relationship of the DE and DAT, if applicable (Item RQ IV).

District Assistance Team Notebook Document

District Assistance Teams spent two to three days at each school site gathering information for the school’s need assessment from:

➢ parent, teacher, principal, and student questionnaires,

➢ classroom observations,

➢ focus group discussions,

➢ archival data analysis and

➢ grand tour observations.

This information is provided to the LDE for analysis and is summarized in a Data Notebook. The Data Notebook is returned to the school to provide information to formulate the school’s School Improvement Plan.
The quality of the data gleaned by the DAT during the needs assessment provided information about the effort and commitment of the DAT. For example, one DAT only collected five out of over sixty (60) questionnaires from the teachers. The DAT could have reissued the questionnaire or asked for the others to be submitted. Another DAT did not triangulate the data properly, and several of the weaknesses of the school were not documented in the information gathered through the needs assessment.

The use of the notebook by the DAT to monitor and help implement the SIP was also an indicator of the on-going efforts of the DAT. For instance, did the DAT use this information to help the school plan for school improvement or monitor for implementation?

In addition, the return rate for the questionnaires provided information about the school community. For example, if the return rate for the teacher questionnaire was very low, that might indicate that the teachers’ buy-in to the process was weak.

**Instrumentation/Measures:**

**Quantitative Instruments**

**Classroom Observation Summary Form**

The Classroom Observation Summary Form is used to record information regarding observable performance attributes outlined by the LaCET (See Appendix D). The Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching delineate the practices considered by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and officials at the LDE to be effective teaching practices. The LaCET instrument was used to address Research Question V and the five research hypotheses regarding the Quality of Instruction across
four domains. This instrument has been used extensively over the past ten years in
Louisiana.\(^3\)

Classroom observations, for this study, were conducted to gauge variations in the
quality of instruction. A school’s instructional staff is generally defined as those
personnel at a school who provide direct instructional services to students. Only one
observer was used for all one hundred-seven (107) classroom observations to eliminate
any inter-rater reliability problems. The observer used nineteen prompts to rate each
teaching attribute using a four-point scale ranging from ‘unsatisfactory’ to ‘excellent’. The nineteen indicators on the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching are
discussed below, along with the definition for each.

**Classroom Management Component.**

The teacher maintains an environment conducive to learning. This component
targets the teacher’s behavior in establishing and maintaining the learning environment.
(Relates to Hypothesis I).

1. The teacher organizes available space, materials, and/or equipment to
facilitate learning. (The focus is on the organization of the classroom and
materials.)

2. The teacher promotes a positive learning climate. (The focus is on the
atmosphere of the classroom, teacher assistance, communication of high
expectations, teacher’s indication of confidence in all students, and the
teacher treats all students in a fair/equitable manner.)

---

\(^3\) LaCET was used initially to evaluate beginning teachers. The version of LaCET used in this study is the
research version developed during the School Effectiveness and Assistance Pilot (SEAP). The research
version has four responses: Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Area of Strength, and Demonstrates
Excellence.
The teacher maximizes the amount of time available for instruction. This component focuses attention on the teacher’s ability to manage classroom time.

3. The teacher manages routines and transitions in a timely manner. (The focus is on the promptness in beginning the lesson, systematic routines, smooth transitions, and full utilization of time available.)

4. The teacher manages and/or adjusts time for activities. (The observer notes the teacher’s ability to manage instructional time. For example, the ability to handle ‘early finishers’, interruptions, and digressions from learning activities.)

The teacher manages learner behavior to provide productive learning opportunities. The teacher demonstrates ability of management of students and teacher discipline.

5. The teacher establishes expectations for learner behavior. (Attention is given to the teacher’s ability to manage learner behavior to provide productive learning opportunities and to establish and maintain high behavioral expectations with students.)

6. The teacher uses monitoring techniques to facilitate learning. (This focus addresses the procedures the teacher uses to maintain appropriate learner conduct and to deal with behavior problems when they occur.)

Classroom Instruction Component.

The teacher delivers instruction effectively. This component covers teaching strategies and methods, use of materials in the classroom, arrangement of activities and the relationship of instruction to objectives. (Relates to Research Hypothesis II)
7. The teacher uses technique(s), which develop(s) lesson objective(s). (The observer notes the techniques used to carry out the lesson objectives.)

8. The teacher sequences the lesson to promote learning. (A continuity of past, present, and future lessons is noted, easy-to-follow sequence designed to promote student learning.)

9. The teacher uses available teaching material(s) to achieve lesson objective(s). (The observer notes the teacher's ability to meet individual differences, maintain student interest, and provide variety in instruction.)

10. The teacher adjusts the lesson when appropriate. (Adjustments include re-teaching of content when necessary, transitions to new topics to capture the teachable moments and movement to a different instructional method.)

The teacher presents appropriate content. This component addresses the teacher's mastery of content and the ability to convey it. The observer is focusing on the accuracy of the content presented, the teacher's ability to communicate content at a level where student can understand it, the teacher's ability to relate the content to real world applications and his/her command of content-related resources that will assist students in their learning. (Relates to Research Hypothesis III)

11. The teacher presents content at a developmentally appropriate level. (The focus is on the teacher's knowledge of content and the ability to adjust content to the abilities, achievement levels, and interests of the students.)

12. The teacher presents accurate subject matter. (Does the teacher use accurate and up-to-date information and adjust instruction to compensate for the text or other out-of-date or inaccurate material?)
13. The teacher relates relevant examples, unexpected situations, or current events to the content.

The teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process. The teacher’s effort to get and keep students involved in learning is the focus of these indicators. (Relates to Research Hypothesis IV)

14. The teacher accommodates individual differences. (Attention is given to the teacher’s techniques for involving students in the learning process by demonstrating his/her recognition that students perform at different levels and in different ways.)

15. The teacher demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively with students. (The focus is on correct oral and written communication, giving clear directions, and using vocabulary appropriate to the level of students.)

16. The teacher stimulates and encourages higher order thinking at the appropriate developmental levels. (The teacher should encourage both critical and creative thinking through a variety of questioning techniques.)

17. The teacher encourages student participation.

The teacher assesses student progress. This component focuses on formal and informal assessment practices. (Relates to Research Hypothesis V)

18. The teacher monitors ongoing performance of students. (This indicator assesses the teacher’s informal assessment techniques of monitoring of academic progress.)

19. The teacher provides timely feedback to students regarding their progress.
In addition, LaCET includes fifteen (15) prompts regarding the extent of specified instructional strategies that the observer sees being used in classrooms is included (e.g., direct instruction with the entire class, independent or group centers). (See Appendix D for the entire list) These prompts were scored on the degree in which the observer witnessed those strategies during the observation of the class (i.e., none, some, extensive, or N/A for not applicable). The information from this section of LaCET was triangulated with the results from the five major components of LaCET to enhance the findings.

These quantitative data were aggregated at the school-level and reported as frequency distributions and mean scores.

Psychometric Properties of LaCET

Data analyzed in a research study of over one-thousand (1000) classrooms (i.e., 1997-98 SEAP Cohort Two Study) provide information on the psychometric properties of the research version of the LaCET (Teddlie, 1999). All the item-subscale correlations for the LaCET instrument were in the moderate-to-high range (.65 - .80), except for a couple that were in the moderate range. All of these item-subscale correlation coefficients were significant at the $p < .0001$ level.

The overall Cronbach’s alpha for the total LaCET scale was .96. This indicates a very high reliability for the overall instrument. The subscale reliabilities are as follows:

1) The Cronbach’s alpha for the management subscale (including the six management items) was .91,

2) The Cronbach’s alpha for the instruction subscale (including the thirteen instruction items) was .95,
3) The Cronbach's alpha for Instruction Component A (Teacher delivers instruction effectively) was .89,

4) The Cronbach's alpha for Instruction Component B (Teacher presents appropriate content) was .77, and

5) The Cronbach’s alpha for Instruction Component C (Teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process) was .85.

The construct validity of the LaCET instrument (research version) was determined by a principal component factor analysis. A one factor solution emerged from this analysis indicating that all of the attributes assess a different aspect of the same overall good teaching behavior. The strength of the explanatory power of this one factor was very high (Teddlie, 1999):

1) The factor loadings for the 19 attributes (items) was from .67 to .83,

2) Nine of the factors loaded at .80 or higher on the factor, and

3) Eight of the factors loaded between .71 and .79 on the factor.

Observer Characteristics

Observer personal bias can be reduced by uniformly and objectively observing subjects. Prior to this study, the researcher/observer has made over two-hundred (200) classroom observations of teachers. This experience provided proficiency in scoring teacher attributes. In addition, the researcher was trained in the spring of 2000 as a DAT member. This training included an examination of proper practice in using the LaCET instrument for classroom observations. For example, the observer records what the teacher and students say and do, which is relevant to the performance attributes under
investigation. This type of scripting, combined with the researcher's extensive experience with classroom observation, contributes to a reduction of observer personal bias.

Additionally, triangulation of data sources (quantitative, qualitative) is another technique used in this study to assess whether or not there is observer bias. (See Appendix F for a triangulation of data sources.) Information in Chapter Five and Six will address this issue in more detail.

Summary of Protocols Used in the Study

Table 3.3 contains a summary of instrumentation used in this study.

Table 3.3
Instrument Type, Confidentiality Issues and Limitations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>Confidentiality Issues</th>
<th>Limitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Classroom Observation Summary Form</td>
<td>Numeric</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Inter-rater Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Only one observer was used in this study.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DST-leader Interview Protocol</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Data Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. DE Interview Protocol</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Data Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Principal and Teacher Interview Protocol</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Data Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Data Notebook</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Data Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Additional Prompts Regarding Instructional Strategies Observed</td>
<td>Numeric</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Inter-rater Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Only one observer was used in this study.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection Procedures

The superintendent of each district was sent a letter asking for permission to study the specific schools in that district. Usually, a contact person at the district office was given the information. Principals at the case study schools were asked to participate via a
letter and a phone call following the letter. The principals scheduled the observation
dates and announced the visit to teachers asking for their participation. The school site

The researcher, in the fall and winter of 2000 and early spring 2001, conducted
both the qualitative and quantitative part of data collection. Qualitative data collection
consisted of classroom observation, document analysis, and interviews with principals,
teachers, the DST-leader and the DE.

Each school had two days of classroom observations and interviews. The
principal interview generally was conducted prior to the first classes of the day. This
allowed for time to plan the observation schedule and get a list of substitute teachers for
the day. The assistant principal, or person most involved with the SIP, was interviewed
at the close of the day or at lunch. The teachers were interviewed the following morning,
at lunch or after school. The DST-leaders were interviewed at the district office or by
phone. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed into notes.

Quantitative data gathering consisted of classroom observations using the LaCET.
The researcher conducted approximately five to six observations on each day she visited
a school. In all, one hundred-seven (107) individual teachers were observed for
approximately forty-five (45) minutes per class period.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

Interviews made up most of the data gathered qualitatively. As the data were
gathered, the researcher developed a system of coding and categorizing for the types of
interviewees, groups of schools, and questions asked (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The
information gathered was systematically put into units that related to the interview
questions. As the interviews were completed the data were entered into a computer data management system. The compilation was ongoing.

Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) constant comparative method was utilized for interview data sets. This analytical method involves two general processes (a) unitizing, or breaking the text of interview material into units of information that will serve as the basis for defining categories, and (b) categorizing, or bringing together into provisional categories those units that relate to the same content, devising rules that describe category properties, and rendering each category set internally consistent and the entire set mutually exclusive.

Artifact or document analysis (i.e., the Data Notebook) was also utilized in the study. The compilation and summary of the DATs’ comprehensive school need analyses was reported in the LDE Data Notebook. The extent to which this document was completed by each DAT showed the level of participation of that DAT in this part of the school improvement process.

These multiple data sources, the interviews, observations and artifacts provided a rich collection of data. They also allowed for data triangulation, which Patton (1990) describes as a means of comparing and crosschecking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different people. Overall themes emerged (Boyatzis, 1998) which are described in Chapters Four and Six.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data obtained for the LaCET instrument were used to address the five Hypotheses and Research Question V. While the observations provided both qualitative and quantitative data, the primary purpose was to gather quantitative data regarding the
nineteen effective teaching indicators. Inter-rater reliability was not a concern because there was only one observer. The unit of analysis for the hypotheses was the teacher level.

Frequency counts and percentages were generated for the number of teachers observed by grade and core subject. Descriptive statistics were first computed for each school and compared to the matched school (see Table 5.3). This information was added to the qualitative data gathered in the case studies and presented in Chapter Six.

Means and standard deviations were computed for all nineteen items on the LaCET. This was used to give an understanding of the overall differences between instruction in DE + DST schools and DST only schools.

Three steps were used in analyzing statistical significance for the five Research Hypotheses.

1) The nineteen (19) items on the LaCET were divided into five groups, with each group of items corresponding to a specific hypothesis. For instance, Research Hypothesis I concerned LaCET items 1 – 6; therefore, information on those six items constituted the data set for Research Hypothesis I.

2) An overall Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) was run for each of the five groups of items corresponding to the five hypotheses. If this MANOVA was significant, then the null hypothesis was rejected. In those cases when the MANOVA was significant, there was evidence to support acceptance of the Research Hypothesis.
3) In cases with a significant MANOVA, the individual item values (univariates) were also examined for significant results.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an outline of methods that were followed in this study to identify and explore the extrinsic capacity and processes of external change agents in the implementation of school improvement activities. The study utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and data sources in order to provide a better understanding of the internal processes associated with the quality of instruction within these ten middle schools.

The methodology employed here also provided for the triangulation of data sources. As noted by Patton (1990), triangulation helps to solve the problem of relying too heavily on a single data source or method. For this study, triangulation provided a method for verifying through a number of data sources the extent to which external change agents impact a school’s climate, culture, and quality of instruction.

Chapter Four provides a more in-depth look at the case study information, while Chapter Five summarizes the quantitative data from the classroom observations.
CHAPTER FOUR
QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Introduction

The qualitative results detailed in Chapter Four identify the components of external change agent extrinsic capacity, which influenced the local capacity of schools in the diffusion of strategies for the adoption of school improvement innovation at ten middle schools in the state of Louisiana. The chapter begins with a description of the type of mixed model design used in this study, followed by a discussion of the selection of schools as cases. The ten cases are then presented in matched pairs and are summarized to conclude the chapter.

Chapter Four provides a more detailed look at ten middle schools in Louisiana and the amount and extent of the support provided them by external change agents. The quantitative data presented in Chapter Five will complement these qualitative data. The mixed methodological approach was utilized to thoroughly explore the research questions that have guided this study.

The results from Chapters Four and Five provide a comparison of the quality of instruction in five schools with two types of external change agent support (i.e., District Support Teams and Distinguished Educators) and five schools with only one external change agent support (i.e., District Support Teams). In case study research, it is important to remember that the “qualitative design needs to remain sufficiently open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry. Qualitative designs continue to be emergent even after data collection begins” (Patton, 1990, p. 196).
The composition of the two types of external change agent support was described in detail in Chapter Three. More detail regarding specific school sites is found throughout this chapter.

**Case Study as Qualitative Methodology**

The present study involved a multiple case examination of external change agent support in ten public middle schools from five certain districts and their influence on school effectiveness processes and Fullan's School Improvement Processes. Using comparative case analysis, the events, processes, perceptions and changes that occurred as the result of external change agents were examined. The study involves multiple ethnographic case studies utilizing participant observation, open-ended interviews and document analysis.

Most researchers committed to the thorough study of a research problem find that method is secondary to the research question itself (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). According to Yin (1994) "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (p.13). The case study used in this analysis utilizes a Type VII parallel mixed model design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 151) in which the quantitative component (i.e., classroom observation data) serves to enhance the more dominant qualitative study. This design is also referred to as a "dominant-less dominant parallel QUAL + quan design" (p. 43).

In this study, qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed simultaneously. Classroom observations and structured interviews with teachers, principals and Distinguished Educators (DEs) were conducted on the school site during a two-day visit to the school. The District Support Team (DST)-leaders were interviewed.
at a later date away from the school because they were not available at the school site. If
the DST conducted a needs analysis for the school and provided a Data Notebook, this
document was included in the analysis. By using both qualitative and quantitative data
collection methods, the researcher is better able to confirm the findings of the study.

Comparison of Activities of District Assistance Teams (DATs)
and School Site Teams (SSTs)

The hypothesis and questions for this study required a specifically designated
population consisting of low performing middle schools in Louisiana. A purposeful
homogeneous sample of middle schools was selected to examine information-rich cases
for in-depth study (Patton, 1990). The selection procedure is detailed in Chapter Three.

As described in Chapter Three, there were actually two types of DSTs in this
study: (1) District Assistance Teams (DATs), formed by suggestions from the Louisiana
Department of Education (LDE); and (2) School Site Teams (SSTs), which replaced the
DATs in one district. See Figure 4.1.

![Figure 4.1]
DE Means Distinguished Educator; DST is a generic name for District Support Team;
DAT means District Assistance Team; SST means School Site Team

Table 4.1 delineates the activities of the two types of support teams (i.e., DATs
and SSTs). The major differences between the two external change agent teams are:

➤ The DAT’s support is based on the needs specific to the school whereas,
the SST uses the same standards for all schools;
The SST monitors every school in the district annually and the DAT is advised to monitor monthly (usually no DAT member serves on a team to more than one or two schools); and

It is assumed that the DAT will become involved in the school improvement process by participating and assisting with school improvement activities and finding resources for the school.

Table 4.1
A Comparison of Activities of District Assistance Teams and School Site Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES OF DISTRICT ASSISTANCE TEAM (DAT) (As suggested by the LDE)</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES OF SCHOOL SITE TEAM (SST)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➤ Participate in school needs analysis</td>
<td>➤ Assess the school’s implementation on district standards (i.e., Using test scores to direct instruction to improve academic achievement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Assist in interpreting data</td>
<td>➤ Monitor implementation annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Participate in school visits to report results to principal and faculty</td>
<td>➤ Provide feedback on the findings of the site visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Participate in monthly visits to assigned schools</td>
<td>➤ Support all district low performing schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Seek/suggest resources to implement SIP</td>
<td>➤ Principals are required to serve on one site visit to another school in order to view other school improvement strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Assist in evaluating implementation of SIP and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Support no more than four schools (LDE, 2000c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ten (10) schools sampled had a greater variation of external change agent support than first anticipated. This unexpected finding enhanced the results. Table 4.2 clarifies the variation of support for the ten case studies. Rather than two types of external change agent support initially assumed as support agents, four distinct types of assistance were provided to these low performing schools (i.e., DE + DAT, DE + SST, DAT, SST).
Table 4.2
Matched Pairs of Case Studies and External Change Agent Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matched Pairs of Schools</th>
<th>External Change Agent Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T. S. Elliot Middle School</td>
<td>Distinguished Educator District Assistance Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy Middle School</td>
<td>District Assistance Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoreau Middle</td>
<td>Distinguished Educator District Assistance Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt Junior High</td>
<td>District Assistance Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Twain Junior High</td>
<td>Distinguished Educator District Assistance Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jefferson Junior High</td>
<td>District Assistance Team (initially) School Site Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longfellow Junior High</td>
<td>School Site Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Junior High</td>
<td>Distinguished Educator District Assistance Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinbeck Middle</td>
<td>District Assistance Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington Middle</td>
<td>District Assistance Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each school paired with a Distinguished Educator school had only one type of support, either a District Assistance Team or a School Site Team. The DE schools had two different types of external change agent support (DAT Only, DAT initially followed by SST).

Case Study Format

The case studies were written following the outline below from data generated through qualitative collection and analyses described in Chapter Three. Following a context analysis of the paired schools (i.e., proximity to one another, changes in leadership, test score comparison, means from the LaCET instrument on the quality of instruction, and other observable differences in the two schools), the dimensions outlined
below were used to describe each school. There were some deviations from this outline
due to the emergent quality of the data.

External Change Agents and Processes

I. Background Information
   A. Location and facility description
   B. Resources (e.g., science labs, computers, texts)
   C. Organization or management (e.g., teaming concept, special instructional
time)
   D. Classroom management (e.g., tardies, routines)
   E. Leadership observations

II. Distinguished Educator (if assigned)
   A. Background Information (e.g., level of education, previous experience, faculty
responses)
   B. Perception of DE’s influence to change:
      1) School Effectiveness processes (discipline, teacher collaboration,
student/teacher expectations, and quality of instruction)
      2) Fullan’s School Improvement Processes (responsibility, moral
belief, planned and managed change, active participation, importance of
external change agents)

III. District Support Team (i.e., District Assistance Team and/or School Site Team)
   A. Extrinsic Capacity (expertise, commitment, resources/authority)
   B. Perception of effective strategies and barriers
   C. Perception of DST’s influence to change:
1) School Effectiveness processes (discipline, teacher collaboration, student/teacher expectations, and quality of instruction)

2) Fullan's School Improvement Processes (responsibility, moral belief, planned and managed change, active participation, importance of external change agents)

IV. Relationship between the External Change Agents (if DE is assigned)

A table displaying the contrasts and commonalities between the matched schools is presented following the description of the data collected and reported at each school as described above.

Case Studies/
Pair One: T. S. Elliot Middle School and Kennedy Middle School

Context Analysis

T. S. Elliot Middle School and Kennedy Middle School are both found within the same district in one of the top three most populated cities within Louisiana. The school site visit to T. S. Elliot Middle School had to be postponed from the scheduled dates because the teachers in that district stayed home for a one-day sick out to protest low salaries.

Several key leadership positions were changed during the two-year focus of this study, SYs 1999-2001. The superintendent in this district was hired in 1999. The former superintendent volunteered the district for the Distinguished Educator pilot. A new principal was hired in year 2000 at T. S. Elliot Middle School at the midpoint of the two-year Distinguished Educator pilot.

In a reorganization effort, the superintendent has announced that T. S. Elliot Middle School will be closed at the end of SY 2000-2001 and the students will be
transferred to a nearby middle school that is currently housing students with behavior problems. It is rumored that T. S. Elliot Middle School will become a Special Education Resource School.

Some specific observations made at the DE + DST T. S. Elliot Middle School that were not evident at Kennedy include:

» A stronger police presence (e.g., one policeman was stationed near the entrance most of the time),
» More discipline problems (e.g., numerous tardies and referrals),
» A greater number of uncertified teachers (e.g., only two out of five math teachers were certified), and
» Teacher morale was very low. The teachers did not know where they would be transferred next year due to the district reorganization effort.

The involvement of the District Assistance Team at T. S. Elliot Middle School was much more extensive and focused, perhaps because this was the lowest achieving middle school in the district. The change in the progress toward the schools' School Performance Score Growth Target was very comparable (i.e., 46.3% gain at Kennedy Middle School and 50.4% gain at T. S. Elliot Middle School). (See Table 4.3).

The overall mean for all ten schools on the nineteen indicators of the LaCET instrument was 2.5140 (SD = .6349). The mean for T.S. Elliot was 2.6364 (SD = .6742) and 2.5455 (SD = .5222) for Kennedy Middle School.

Six persons were interviewed about each school (T. S. Elliot Middle School and Kennedy Middle School). The interviewees included: the principal, the assistant principal for instruction, three teachers and the DAT-leader. The following table (Table
4.3) summarizes some of the important archival information about the two schools.

**T. S. Elliot Middle School**

**Background Information.** T. S. Elliot Middle School (TSEMS) is located in an urban residential area close to a main thoroughfare in a mid-size city. The present building was constructed in 1931 as an elementary school. It was closed in 1973 and was converted into a middle school. In 1976, the school was renovated with over one million dollars of funding. Within the last two years, T. S. Elliot Middle School has been refurbished with new wiring to accommodate newer technologies. The two-story building is a square formation with the inside of the square being a quadrangle area for students to gather before school and during lunch. The school is free of graffiti except on the bathroom walls and stalls. The school contains 32 classrooms.

The Distinguished Educator and the principal both noted a lack of enough classrooms (e.g., one teacher was teaching in the auditorium). However, the average number of students in the classes observed over the two-day visit was only nineteen (19). There are many computers in the classrooms, averaging approximately fifteen per class. Students, in most classes, were not observed using the computers. The library was housed in an old classroom. Few students was found there during the two-day visit.

The school has two assistant principals to coordinate the principal with instruction and discipline. Security cameras and two policemen also help to monitor the students. Students wait in line to see the assistant principal at the discipline office near the front entrance. Most students were waiting in line because of their tardiness. The assistant principal for discipline was never seen outside of that office during the two-day site visit.
Table 4.3  
Matched Pair # 1 of Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T. S. Elliot Middle School (DE + DST)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Configuration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students: 641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% (SY1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96% (SY2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 27: 23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kennedy Middle School (DST only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Configuration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students: 747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99% (SY1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99% (SY2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 27: 32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Performance Score (SPS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.4 (SY1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.3 (SY2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 27: 29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Growth Target: Growth Targets represent the progress a school must make every two years to reach the 10- and 20-year goals. This percent is the school’s midpoint progress toward that Growth Target. Generally, each school’s Growth Target will be the difference between the school’s SPS and 100, divided by the number of remaining growth cycles, or five points, which ever is greater. Every two years, a new SPS will be calculated for each school and a new Growth Target will be set for the next two-year interval (LDE, 2001a).
The principal is serving her first year as principal at T. S. Elliot Middle School. She was an assistant principal at another middle school for seven years prior to coming to this school. She was very grateful for the help of the Distinguished Educator. One of the biggest concerns of the Distinguished Educator and the principal is that only two of the five math teachers are certified. Both, the Distinguished Educator and the principal, expect the scores to be low in math as a result of this.

The assistant principal for instruction was not very positive about the Distinguished Educator's role at T. S. Elliot Middle. He answered no to every question concerning the influence of the DE on various processes. He explained,

She and the DAT team came in and suggested things we were doing here for a couple of years. I had a problem with that personally. They had the idea of reinventing the wheel... A lot of these things were already going on or were in place before the DE came. They (district leadership) thought the DE would really come in here and work miracles and miracles were already being worked.

Distinguished Educator. Ms. Pickering was assigned to T. S. Elliot Middle School in October of 1999, as were all Distinguished Educators in this study. The new superintendent, hired in January 2000, had not volunteered the district for the two-year DE pilot program, but his predecessor did. A deputy superintendent under the former superintendent allowed the T. S. Elliot Middle School faculty the option of voting to remain in the pilot program or withdraw. The faculty voted to remain in the program without ever meeting with Ms. Pickering.

Prior to her assignment as a Distinguished Educator, Ms. Pickering was a high school teacher for over thirty years. She is a petite woman with a warm smile. She is
described by teachers as a “life saver”, “wonderful” and “worth her weight in gold”. One teacher commented, “This is the first person I’ve ever seen who was brought in from the outside of our parish (district) who actually did help us”. The principal said, “When I looked at the job description, it was pretty generic, so I gave her a list of things that I wanted her to be a part of. Everything I have requested - she has done it.”

Ms. Pickering and two other teachers remarked that before the DE’s arrival, the district ignored the school. The DE explained,

I believe this school was the place where you sent the people who you wanted to move from someplace else. The central office just left them alone. They (the administrators) didn’t call the central office and the central office didn’t come out here until I (DE) showed up on the scene and all of a sudden the DAT team was here and people were here.

Ms. Pickering worked side by side with the teachers “cleaning out bookrooms” and other everyday activities to help build trust with the faculty. Several staff members marveled at her work ethic. Getting teachers to reflect on the quality of their instruction has been very difficult for Ms. Pickering. She feels that only about ten to fifteen percent of the faculty reflect and evaluate their progress. Ms. Pickering believes her biggest impact on instruction came from “teaching them (faculty) how to write lesson plans”. The teachers had not been required to write plans until this year.

Teachers described the barriers to the Distinguished Educators success as: no cooperation from last year’s principal, time restraints, and the lack of authority. The administrators think her lack of administrative expertise was a barrier.
The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline. It is the perception of the teachers and Ms. Pickering that she does have an influence on the discipline (i.e., safety and orderliness of the environment) of the school. Ms. Pickering is on the discipline committee. However, both administrators did not believe that Ms. Pickering had any influence.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations. When Ms. Pickering arrived at T. S. Elliot Middle School she remembered that most of the faculty had very low expectations for the students. They said, "You don’t understand, our children just can’t". She believes now that a “majority” of the teachers has higher expectations than a year ago. The principals were split on their perception of the DE’s influence on student expectations. The principal said, “In working with the teachers in planning their lessons, she did an in-service on lesson plans, writing effective lesson plans, effective teaching strategies. That impacted student expectations and teacher expectations”. The assistant principal felt she had no impact.

The teachers and principals alike believe that Ms. Pickering has opened lines of communication among the faculty and between the faculty and district office. She attributes her success to the formation of instructional focus groups in which the teachers are guided to share experiences and concerns. Ms. Pickering added that moving toward a middle school teaming concept facilitated a positive change in teacher collaboration. The teachers overwhelmingly attribute their move toward more instructional collaboration to her encouragement and facilitation.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. Instructionally, Ms. Pickering notes that the teachers were not “teaching to the standard
and benchmarks when I came". Lesson plans were nonexistent. Now "we are" (teaching
to standards and benchmarks with lesson plans). The teachers agree that the quality of
instruction has improved.

The DE and Fullan's School Improvement Processes. "They did see that it was
up to them (to take responsibility for school improvement) and I could help them,"
affirmed Ms. Pickering. She adds, "I'm not sure we are there yet," when asked if the
faculty has a moral belief in the school improvement change process. She indicates that
"I'm excited" about the increase in participation among the faculty. All teachers
interviewed formally and informally believe that Ms. Pickering's work as an external
change agent has played a large part in the move to school improvement.

District Support Team. The only DST serving T.S. Middle School was a District
Assistance Team. Therefore, for this case school, the DST will be referred to as the DAT
to emphasis the difference in the structure from the School Support Team.

DAT: Expertise. The District Assistance Team at T. S. Elliot Middle is comprised
of all central office staff. The DAT-leader is the science supervisor. Other members
include: a staff development facilitator familiar with the school, a special education
person, and two district curriculum supervisors at the middle school level. The training
of the DAT was not highly regarded by several DAT members in the district. The DAT-
leader made several references about how the LDE changed the program throughout the
process.

DAT: Commitment. The DAT-leader described the commitment of the team,
"They think it is good. It is here to stay. They are willing to do whatever they have to do
to help children." One teacher said, "The DAT team coming here was a very good thing,
but by not following through with what they said, it became a very bad thing. The next time someone says the DAT team is coming, it’s not going to make a difference.” All stakeholders agree that the DAT was not as involved with the school after the data were collected for the needs assessment.

The initial involvement of the DAT was apparent because of the prolonged time and work necessary to prepare the needs assessment. The faculty did not perceive that the DAT returned to the school because when one individual member did return, the faculty saw the team member in his/her role as a central office staff (i.e., science supervisor).

One disappointment noted by the DAT-leader concerned the Data Notebook (i.e., the LDE analysis of the DAT’s needs assessment). The team worked diligently on the needs analysis and submitted the findings to the LDE in December of 1999. The Data Notebook, with the results of the questionnaires, interviews, etc., was not returned to the district until November 2000. The DAT could not help the school to begin the School Improvement Plan process without this information. Perhaps this delay gave the faculty the perception that nothing was done.

Although the LDE strongly recommends that the DATs assist and monitor implementation, the DAT-leader acknowledged that they did not return to TSEMS to do this. He said, “We haven’t been given anything to follow up with. We haven’t been given anything to do when we go back”. The assumption here is that the DAT-leader is waiting for more specific guidelines from the LDE concerning monitoring. However, the LDE refrains from too much direction to allow districts to design their own protocol based on the needs of the schools and district. It appears to be a no win situation because
district personnel complain when the state provides too many requirements or guidelines and yet the same district personnel delays action waiting for the state to give more recommendations and procedures. The LDE could offer this type of training (e.g., follow up protocol for low performing schools) on a volunteer basis.

DAT: Resources/Authority. The team members were not freed of other responsibilities by the districts but the DAT leader was told by his supervisor that the “DAT was to become my primary focus”. The perception of the DAT-leader’s authority to make effective changes at the school was attributed to his ongoing communication with the central office director. The assumption here is that the central office director, not the DAT-leader, has the authority to make school improvement changes at T. S. Elliot Middle School.

The principal described the effectiveness of the DAT, “I think they were effective in getting out information that was accurate and fair. I don’t think they had to cut any corners. They could be straightforward with their information”. The principal also added that she used the information gathered by the DAT to understand her role as the new principal and to keep her “focused on what is important”.

The school did receive a temporary building this year after requesting it for several years. In addition to that resource, some routines of the faculty were changed. The DAT leader explains, “We were privy to many things, some in confidence. One person was dropping her child off and coming to school late everyday. That stuff has stopped.”

Unknown to the faculty, the DAT made arrangements to have a condemned building adjacent to the school torn down. “There were dogs in there, (and) vagrants. I
told them that if that building was next to (a highly regarded school in a better part of the city) it would’ve been gone a long time ago”. The DAT-leader said we “can’t take credit for that. It was a ten year battle”. However, if the faculty had known that the DAT renewed the efforts to have the building demolished, then perhaps some of the negative feelings about the ineptness of the DAT would not have been experienced.

One teacher commented,

I think while they (DAT) were here, everybody was on their toes. They (the staff) would wonder what are they going to write about me? What are they going to think about me? You saw teachers that didn’t do – do something for the first time. They were really nervous and scared about being talked about. I think that basically someone was watching – someone with the power to do something, but nothing was done.

The assumption here is that the presence of the DAT did change teacher behaviors, at least temporarily, and perhaps the continued involvement of the DAT would continue to change the efforts of some teachers.

No teacher or administrator interviewed could describe a barrier to the effectiveness of the DAT. One teacher said, “I don’t know what the barriers are but I wish whatever they were that someone would do something about it. I was so hoping that they would change things and it didn’t change.”

**The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline.** There were mixed perceptions of the DAT’s influence on discipline at the school. Most teachers and all principals felt they had no influence. However, one teacher said, “There were several safety things done. I don’t know if they did it”. Again, the faculty did not appear to have
knowledge of what contributions were made by the District Assistance Team. The most obvious reason for this lack of information was the absence of any communication between the teachers and the DAT.

The DAT also made changes in discipline policy. "If it (student’s behavior) is bad enough to be removed from the classroom, they must be escorted to the office." This policy was observed several times during the site visit. When a teacher notified the office that a student had misbehaved, an administrator came to the teacher’s room to get the student.

District Assistance Team and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations. Two of the three teachers interviewed believed that the DAT’s involvement at the school encouraged them to have higher expectations of the students. Both principals disagreed. They felt the DAT’s involvement did not change expectations about students. The teachers also felt that teacher expectations of students increased temporarily because “It was a scare. Are they looking at me?”

Most faculty members did not perceive the District Assistance Team as influencing teacher collaboration. Nevertheless, one teacher did say, “There was a lot of negative collaboration” as the result of the DAT involvement. This reference was made concerning the teachers’ negative comments about the lack of district support for the school.

The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. The Distinguished Educator does attribute some of the changes in the quality of instruction to the DAT, “I do think they brought up some very good ideas, which we did use in our School Improvement Plan.” Two of the three teachers believe the quality of instruction
at T. S. Elliot Middle has changed "phenomenally". The third teacher could not decide if the changes were the result of the new principal, the DE, or the DAT. The District Assistance Team leader said, "I do know that I did see a change in the quality of instruction".

**District Assistance Team and Fullan's School Improvement Processes.** The District Assistance Team leader feels that when the scores did not rise as anticipated, the teachers' acceptance of responsibility to increase student achievement fell. He explained, "They are very passionate about their students. We (DAT) went into the school the day after the test scores were released. They were devastated. They did not have the level of success they had anticipated. They were crying."

The DAT-leader does not believe that the faculty as a whole "understands what the DAT does" or has a belief in the process. He believes the change in the principal and eight faculty members left much of the faculty without any knowledge of the entire process. The DAT-leader feels, "Some of the teachers saw the importance of it (implementation of the School Improvement Plan as planned and managed)". Overall, the District Assistance Team-leader feels that the faculty does not embrace many of the Fullan's School Improvement Processes.

**Distinguished Educator and District Assistance Team Relationship.** The Distinguished Educator described the relationship as "Wonderful. I met with them all the time". The DAT leader agreed, "I've known (Ms. Pickering) for ten years. We go way back. I think it is important to bring someone in from the outside." The principal also mentioned that they had a good relationship and worked very closely together.
Kennedy Middle School

Background Information. The two main buildings of Kennedy Middle School form a T on the campus. The three-story, modern buildings built in the 1960s sits on the corner of a busy intersection in a mid-sized city. Exterior stairwells on both ends of the building can be seen from the highway. A city golf course sits on one side of the school and a large canal filled with weeping willows on the other. These two geographic points and the streets making up the intersection separate the school from the many small, old, disrepaired homes found in the neighborhood. The school is clean and in good shape.

The classrooms were not overcrowded: an average of twenty (20) students were observed during the visit. There were no science laboratories, and the science classrooms were just like the others, without any special supplies. Computer labs were in full use and engaged the students in problem solving. Every classroom observed during the two-day site visit had two to four computers. The students were using some of them sporadically during the class period. Internet wiring and service was being installed to the principal’s office and throughout the school during the visit.

The principal who has been at Kennedy for several years has two assistant principals. The halls were quiet with few to no tardies. The discipline in the school was exceptionally positive. Unlike all the other case schools, the students did not wear uniforms. The principal noted that they did not receive enough responses from parents to initiate the policy. One teacher described the decrease in parental involvement at the school over the past couple of years. She said that since the casinos opened, a lot of parents were hired there and were not involved as volunteers at the school any longer.
DAT: Expertise. The District Assistance Team at Kennedy Middle is made up of central office staff and school administrators. The DAT-leader is a principal of a large elementary school in the city. The DAT-leader's supervisor called her two days before the team met at Kennedy Middle School to inform her that she would lead the team. The other DAT members were selected because they had some of the LDE training for District Assistance Teams. The teachers and principals did not know what kind of training the team completed. The team appeared to follow the guidelines for conducting the needs assessment as outlined by the LDE.

DAT: Commitment. As is the case of most schools in this study, Kennedy Middle School is not in Corrective Action and is not required by the LDE to have a DAT. This District Assistance Team was brought together to gather information to write the Title I plan, not to fulfill the requirements or recommendations of the Louisiana Department of Education.

Data necessary to write a Title I plan are very similar to the type of data generated by the DATs' needs assessment. The information collected by the DAT was analyzed at the district central office, rather than sent to the LDE. Therefore, no Data Notebook was prepared. The DAT-leader understood that her only requirement on this team would be to lead the need analysis. She had no responsibility to help with the School Improvement Plan or monitor implementation. Kennedy Middle School used the information gathered by the impromptu DAT to write the Title I plan and used that plan as their School Improvement Plan.

The teachers were unsure if the school had actually received a report of the findings. The principal said that the DAT leader came back and presented the report to
the faculty, although no teacher remembered the presentation. The report was found in
the principal's office under many other papers on a bookshelf. The team did not come
back to monitor or provide more feedback to the staff.

**DAT: Resources/Authority.** The teachers felt that the DAT did not have any
resources or authority to make changes. The principal felt that their greatest resource was
their "recommendations and credibility". He continued, "When someone comes in from
the outside with a different perspective, it adds validity to your point. Their opinions
may be valued a little higher than those working in the building everyday". The only
barrier perceived was that the DAT "had a lot of irons in the pot" and had little time to
commit to the school. The principal would like to have a DAT that is more involved at
his school but adds "let that be their only job".

**The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline.** Both teachers and
administrators feel that the DAT had no influence on discipline at the school. The
teachers attribute the positive change in discipline to the principal's zero tolerance policy.

**The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations.**
Teachers and administrators gave the Louisiana School and District Accountability
program the distinction of increasing student and teacher expectations. One teacher
remarked, "Parents realize the state is making their children accountable". The teachers
believe that the administration supports collaboration and they have seen more
collaboration in the last two years. However, the faculty did not feel that the DAT had
any influence on teacher collaboration.

**The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction.**
Instructionally, the administrators discussed their concern that seventy-five (75) percent
of this year’s sixth grade classes are reading on a second grade level. The assumption is that all teachers would have to work harder with this group of students. The principal feels that the “outside perspective (DAT) helped with documentation for those mediocre teachers” thus impacting the quality of instruction at his school. He felt this documentation could be used as a catalyst to those “mediocre” teachers to improve the quality of their instruction. However, the teachers felt the DAT had no effect on instruction.

**The DAT and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes.** The DAT-leader, as well as the administration, feels that the limited interaction by the DAT and the faculty at Kennedy Middle School did not contribute to any influence of Fullan’s School Improvement Processes with the staff. In addition, due to the short time that this DAT worked at the school, the DAT would not have any knowledge about the faculty’s perception of these Fullan’s School Improvement Processes.

Information gleaned from the interviews with the principal, assistant principal, DAT-leader, and three teachers has been summarized in the following table (Table 4.4).

**Pair Two: Thoreau Middle School and Roosevelt Junior High School**

**Context Analysis**

Unlike all other matched pairs of case studies, Thoreau Middle School (TMS) and Roosevelt Junior High (RJH) are not found within the same district. Although both schools are designated Urban Fringe of a Midsize City, Thoreau Middle is located in a small city. The difference in population between the two cities is ten thousand inhabitants (i.e., a population of 9,000 in the TMS area as compared to 19,000 in the RJH area.
Table 4.4
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair # 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE OF DAT</th>
<th>T. S. Elliot Middle School (DE + DST)</th>
<th>Kennedy Middle School (DST only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Composition</td>
<td>Mostly Central Office Personnel - Supervisors</td>
<td>Mixed: Administrators and Central Office Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Training</td>
<td>Varied: Some had early training and needed updates</td>
<td>Same as T. S. Elliot Middle School (TSEMS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: Initial Support</td>
<td>Strong. Conducted a thorough Needs Analysis</td>
<td>Average: Needs Analysis was not as complete as TSEMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: On-going Support</td>
<td>DAT-leader returned to assist and monitor</td>
<td>No support. Did not return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Provided by DAT</td>
<td>T-Building, Funding, etc.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority/Power of DAT</td>
<td>Authority via DAT-leader communication to Central Office Director</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Linkage</td>
<td>Initiation, Planning, Monitoring</td>
<td>Initiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Interaction with DAT</td>
<td>Interaction after initial Needs Assessment was infrequent.</td>
<td>No interaction after Needs Assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEPTION OF IMPACT ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PROCESSES</th>
<th>T. S. Elliot Middle School DE</th>
<th>T. S. Elliot Middle School DST</th>
<th>Kennedy Middle School DST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate: Discipline</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Student Expectations</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Expectations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Collaboration</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Yes, if all or 5 of the 6 persons interviewed at the school said yes. Mixed, if two or more of the interviewed had different responses from others. No, if all or all or 5 of the 6 persons interviewed said no.
Both low-income school neighborhoods appear extremely similar and could almost be interchangeable. However, Thoreau Middle School protects the school from the neighborhood with fences and locks, and Roosevelt Junior High needs no such protection. It should be noted that Thoreau Middle School did have safety concerns with the neighborhood as evidenced by several weapon incidents at school. Roosevelt Junior High had fewer resources than TMS and a deficient facility.

The principal at Roosevelt Junior High has served there since 1973. He is one of three principals in the ten (10) case studies that have tenure greater than five years. The remaining seven case studies have all had leadership changes during the two-year period, SYs 1999 – 2001, which is concurrent with the DE pilot. Ms. Alexander, the principal at Thoreau Middle School is one of those new appointments. Her success at another school in the district prompted district leadership to transfer Ms. Alexander to Thoreau, in 1999, with an increase in salary. However, in the interview she expressed that she was not a willing participant in the transfer. Ms. Alexander indicated that she did not want to start a new career at another school (i.e., Thoreau Middle School).

Neither school is in Corrective Action. Thoreau Middle School was required to have a DAT team because they were participating in the Distinguished Educator pilot. However, Roosevelt Junior High also had a DAT team. This pair of schools had typical District Assistance Teams in that the teams followed the guidelines as prescribed by the Louisiana Department of Education (e.g., the DAT at Kennedy Middle School, in the matched pair # (1) case studies, did not follow the LDE guidelines. The team only collected information for the Title I school application).
Roosevelt Junior High’s DAT was not as focused or involved as Thoreau Middle School’s team. However, RJH’s DAT-leader and a newly hired, enthusiastic assistant principal acted as the motivating force behind most school improvement initiatives.

Another key distinction between the two schools lies in their organizational structure. The middle school concept of teaming has been initiated at Thoreau Middle School, whereas Roosevelt Junior High is still departmentalized. TMS is a typical grade 6 through 8-middle school and RJH is a typical grade 7 through 8-junior high.

Over the last two years, the teachers at RJH were generally more focused on raising student test scores. However, several teachers remarked that their teaching habits and strategies had not changed. Thoreau Middle School had the greatest observable focus on quality of instruction. However, the school was still plagued with a high rate of teacher turnover and thirty-five percent of the faculty is uncertified.

The Progress toward the School Performance Score’s Growth Target was extremely high for both schools. The DE + DST school, Thoreau Middle School, had the highest progress score (i.e., 160.5% progress toward their Growth Target) in the study and one of the highest in the state. Roosevelt Junior High’s progress score (i.e., 144.3% progress toward their Growth Target) was higher than the four other DE + DST schools and all DST only schools.

The mean for Thoreau Middle School on the nineteen indicators of LaCET was 2.8333 (SD = .3892) and 2.7500 (SD = .7071) as compared to an overall mean of 2.5140 (SD = .6349) for all ten schools in the study. Both schools showed the highest means for each groups of schools (DE + DST which had a mean of 2.6316 and DST only school with a mean of 2.300).
Six persons were interviewed about Thoreau Middle School. They included: the principal, the assistant principal for instruction, three teachers and the DAT-leader. In addition, other central office personnel and faculty were informally interviewed (i.e., one of the DAT members) but will not be included in the summary table. Since Roosevelt Junior High only had two grade levels, five persons were interviewed. They include: the principal, the assistant principal for instruction, and two teachers one from each grade and the DAT-leader.

The following table (Table 4.5) summarizes some of the important archival information about the two matched schools.

**Thoreau Middle School**

**Background Information** Thoreau Middle School's district has a minority of only 22.8%, mostly African Americans with some Hispanics. Several residents of the district estimate that about 75-80% of the African American population live in the town and surrounding area of Thoreau Middle School. The district is growing at a very fast pace due to the influx from a neighboring metropolitan area. The income for most residents is derived from white-collar jobs and almost equally from the blue-collar jobs in the numerous chemical plants throughout the area. The district tax base which contributes to the schools in the district can be gauged by looking at the expenditures per pupil and teacher salaries which match the state averages of approximately $5600 per pupil and an average $31,000 per teacher respectively.

Thoreau Middle School is one of six middle schools in the district but holds the not-so-noteworthy title of having the lowest attendance, lowest test scores, and highest suspension rate of all middle schools (LDE, 1999). Before the state announced
Table 4.5
Matched Pair # 2 of Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Configuration</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>School Performance Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Urban Fringe of a Mid-Size City</td>
<td>35.6 (SY1999) 54.7 (SY2000) Progress toward GT*: 160.5%</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students: 537</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Minority</th>
<th>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>% Special Education</th>
<th>Class Size:</th>
<th>% Faculty w/ Masters or Higher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89% (SY1999) 88% (SY2000)</td>
<td>84% (SY1999) 76% (SY2000)</td>
<td>24% (SY1999) 23% (SY2000)</td>
<td>1-20: 72% 21-26: 24% Over 27: 4%</td>
<td>SY2000 48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Configuration</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>School Performance Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Urban Fringe of a Mid-Size City</td>
<td>38.7 (SY1999) 55.3 (SY2000) Progress toward GT*: 144.3%</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students: 283</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Minority</th>
<th>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>% Special Education</th>
<th>Class Size:</th>
<th>% Faculty w/ Masters or Higher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98% (SY1999) 96% (SY2000)</td>
<td>91% (SY1999) 93% (SY2000)</td>
<td>15% (SY1999) 17% (SY2000)</td>
<td>1-20: 38% 21-26: 43% Over 27: 19%</td>
<td>SY2000 61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>Class Size: SY2000</th>
<th>% Faculty w/ Masters or Higher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69.4 (SY1999) 77.3 (SY2000)</td>
<td>1-20: 32% 21-26: 39% Over 27: 29%</td>
<td>SY2000 37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Growth Target: Growth Targets represent the progress a school must make every two years to reach the 10- and 20-year goals. This percent is the school’s midpoint progress toward that Growth Target. Generally, each school’s Growth Target will be the difference between the school’s SPS and 100, divided by the number of remaining growth cycles, or five points, which ever is greater. Every two years, a new SPS will be calculated for each school and a new Growth Target will be set for the next two-year interval (LDE, 2001a).
Performance Labels, the local education agency moved to the forefront of educational reform by replacing the existing principal, offering substantial bonuses for teachers transferring to the school, and accepting a Distinguished Educator during the state’s pilot program. All indications are that this district is taking the new accountability program seriously.

Three blocks off one of the oldest highways in Louisiana (and the USA) on the edge of a mid-sized city with around 9,000 people, TMS resembles a correctional institute. A six-foot black iron fence separates the school from the many small wood-framed houses with tiny yards clustered together in the local community. Parking for the school is limited and in very close proximity to the only entrance to the school, which was protected by a police officer of considerable girth during the site visit. There are other gates but these are chained and locked. Inside the gate the school appears very orderly, with students making their way to class quietly in pairs or groups of three. Two teachers stand in a central position in all buildings chatting together as students move to their next class. The small administrative office at the entrance to the school has several students waiting for parents to go home and some to see the principals. The secretaries hardly notice when a visitor enters the door.

From the entrance of the school, seven buildings (e.g., one gymnasium, four stand-alone wings, one administrative building and a cafeteria) make up the campus. There are no hallways in most buildings, so most classrooms open to the outside. The classroom doors can only be opened from the inside. An administrator explains that when those buildings were added the design was requested for security reasons.
On the first day of a scheduled two-day site visit at TMS, the faculty and students were still in shock from the new accounts of a suspended student who brought a gun to the school and threatened a student and teacher the day before. The incident happened immediately following the final class of the day. No injuries occurred and the student was arrested on campus. The faculty assumed that I was a crisis counselor. The captain of the local sheriff’s department held an assembly to discuss the incident and repercussions for students who violate the law. This was the second loaded gun brought to the school this school year, and two knives had also been removed from students. The principal and two teachers remarked that their training from local universities had not prepared them for this scenario. The site visit was canceled and classroom observations would be made at a later date.

Two weeks later the first day of the two-day site visit was made. The average class size observed was eighteen. School records indicate that there is a very large turnover of staff at this school. Thirty-five percent of the staff does not hold teacher certificates.

All classes had bell work activities. The first thirty minutes of each morning of the day, students move to classes with homogeneous grouping for Task Time to practice focused content review in preparation for standardized testing. Most classrooms are colorfully decorated. Students, in navy uniforms, chat quickly between classes and respond politely to adults. Few tardies were recorded throughout the two-day observation period.

Thoreau Middle School has no science laboratory classrooms. The old blackboards had been replaced with whiteboards in most classrooms. Textbooks and
classroom materials were ample. Two extra paraprofessionals work with teachers to provide a greater focus on test-prep content in math and language classes. Special education specialists are used extensively in classrooms with inclusion students.

The principal at TMS, Ms. Alexander, was transferred there two years ago. A district director, also a DAT member, responded that her transfer was to provide strong leadership to the school. In the interview with Ms. Alexander, she said “This is not anything I was looking for at this time in my career, I was not looking at starting over”. Ms. Alexander was not seen outside of her office over the three-day visit. The two assistant principals did monitor the breezeways and handled discipline matters.

Distinguished Educator. The Distinguished Educator, Ms. Gibson, a former Director of Special Education in the adjoining district, earned her Ed.D. in early and middle childhood education. She is an attractive, energetic woman described as “being able to think outside of the box” and having a great “drive”. One assistant principal’s description of Ms. Gibson was, “Wonderful, a life saver. I don’t know if we would have been able to do everything we have done if she had not been here. Her focus was on instruction. She did a lot of things that we hoped we could do – but having the magnitude of things we have to deal with other than that – I don’t know if we could’ve done as good (of) a job without her.”

Ms. Alexander, the principal, remembers her first meeting with the DE. “She appeared and said ‘What can I do to assist you?’ and I said you can help me with instruction. There are other directions I have to take. From there she (Ms. Gibson) took off and revamped our whole instructional system at the school.” Others listed Ms. Gibson’s strengths as “the ability to get people to use their own abilities to change” and
“a resource person”. One teacher stated, “We think about her like God. I’ve been teaching eight years and I learned more from her about teaching in one year than I did in four undergraduate years and masters in college”.

The faculty perceived “understanding the role of the Distinguished Educator”, “acceptance by the faculty” and “the administration” as barriers to Ms. Gibson’s effectiveness. One teacher felt that a few teachers tried to “sabotage” the efforts of the DE, although specifics were not given. The principal, Ms. Alexander, said, “they (the teachers) knew the administration was backing her. We did, we backed her.” One teacher who resented that a Distinguished Educator had been sent to TMS said, “She used our ideas to become her ideas. Those were the same things that we have known all these years and yet were never implemented. I will give her credit because she did implement them.”

Some of the effective strategies implemented by the Distinguished Educator were: preparing student practice tests and rewards for progress, weekly focus groups, establishing middle school teaming, regular classroom visits/monitoring with feedback for the teachers, and helping the faculty to assess data and relate the findings to the classroom.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline. The principal and teachers agreed that the DE had little impact on discipline. Ms. Gibson said “What I do as far as impacting discipline, is to look at what is going on in the classrooms because teachers that have good classroom management have good lessons - for the most part, children are involved and engaged. If we can get that going on then we can address the discipline aspect of it.” As mentioned earlier in this case study, Thoreau Middle School
has a problem with safety. The DE believes that safety is “directly community related”. Safety and community relations are the “next major steps for this school”.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations. Student and teacher expectations have been raised at Thoreau Middle School in the last two years. Ms. Gibson stated,

Faculty expectations of students were very low when I got here. In fact, there were several on the faculty who came to me and told me very specifically that these children were different and we should not expect more from them. That has dramatically changed since we got our test scores back. Individuals who felt that way have left.

Teachers and administrators agreed that the DE had a great impact on teacher and student expectations.

Teachers did not perceive an improvement in collaboration. One teacher said that there was a divide between teachers who “liked her” (DE) and those that “disliked her”.

Another teacher added that she doubted that communication and collaboration has improved. Teachers at TMS perceive collaboration as generic rather than instructional in nature. Although Ms. Gibson saw marked improvement in sharing and collaboration in the weekly focus groups and the implementation of the teaming concept, the teachers did not perceive that teacher collaboration had improved. A reasonable assumption here is that any dialog was collaboration, rather than instructional dialog.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. Good classroom management and effective teaching strategies were observed on both days of observations. On teacher remarked quite earnestly, “In my first five years of teaching, I
learned how to be a classroom manager. The DE taught me how to be a teacher this year.” Almost no teachers taught from their desks. The teachers and students were observed to be engaged even during unexpected walk-through observations. This was not typical of most classes observed at other schools in this study during the course of the site visits. The principal felt that the DE had the greatest impact on the quality of instruction. On the other hand, one teacher gave the principal credit for impacting the quality of instruction through her strong recruitment of new and qualified teachers to replace the high number of teachers transferring from TMS.

The DE and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. The Distinguished Educator senses that the faculty’s responsibility to embrace change “is as individual as the teachers are” because some “embrace it” and others “wait for change to happen to them”. Only about “twenty percent feel a moral belief” to change behavior for school improvement, and “sixty to seventy percent (of the faculty) feel that it (school improvement emphasis) is something that will go away”. The DE further stated that “The majority of the staff feels the need for active participation and they have embraced it and they are moving forward”. Ms. Gibson feels “a work ethic came into play there”. She believes that only “ten percent (of the faculty) probably feels there is no need for an external change agent, while the majority of the faculty understand the concept and realize that someone who is not of the system has a different view point. I think they see a value in an external change agent.”

DAT: Expertise. Thoreau Middle School’s DAT consisted of three directors who are the central office personnel directly responsible to the superintendent. Another member, the DAT-Leader, was hired with the sole responsibility of working on
accountability issues. One director’s explanation for this particular choice was, “When we talk to faculty and principals we have the authority and power to get things done. But there’s a two-edged sword: the faculty sees that this must be important because all the directors are here.” She goes on to explain that the “directors will always be on the team – it’s too important.”

DAT: Commitment. As stated above, the commitment of this DAT appears to be very strong, probably stronger than with any other DAT in the study. The DAT-leader described the objective of the team, to “get the issues out in the clear. (To) find out what needed to be done and do what we could do to help get those things done.” The principal, faculty and Distinguished Educator reflected that the team members were available to them “on demand” and were seen frequently the first year and less during the second, but they continued to come periodically. The team was perceived by all to be well trained, informative and resourceful. One teacher boasts that of all the DATs in Louisiana, “We have the best”.

DAT: Resources/Authority. The resources provided to this school by the DAT were greater than any other DAT in the study. The reason for this may be that of the DAT was comprised of district directors, who were proactive in jump starting the school improvement processes. For instance, it was the directors’ recommendation that TMS be given an extra assistant principal that other middle schools in the district were not afforded. In addition, a stipend was paid to certified teachers to work at TMS, and each will receive the stipend each year they remain at the school. However, even with this expenditure of funds, TMS still has a high teacher turnover problem. There were sixteen new teachers at the school this year.
The DAT leader's sole responsibility is to work with the low performing schools in the district. He participated in every School Improvement Planning meeting at Thoreau Middle School. The DE described his (DAT-leader) involvement, "He made sure the people on the (SIP) team had a true understanding of what the DAT team was saying (in the needs analysis and their recommendations). That particular strategy has proved itself out because it helped us to develop a really strong plan of where we needed to go".

The commitment and authority of this DAT is better understood by all stakeholders and better defined than any other DAT in the study. One teacher explained her perception of the district's involvement, "I think the accountability push made the district focus on the school. They could have ignored us. We were the dirty little secret in the district, as long as the district was not held accountable. As soon as these students were (held accountable), they (the district) had to put their money and time into the school."

Faculty perceptions of the strengths of the District Assistance Team included: "They could get things done", "They were thorough", "The DAT team brought the information to the powers that can make a difference", and "They were available and had expertise". On several occasions, the DE and principals alluded to the thoroughness of the DAT's data collection and analysis to provide a valid and comprehensive needs assessment.

Barriers to the DAT were perceived to be "time limits, schedules and other responsibilities" of the team, and "A lot of resentment (from the faculty). We've been struggling for years and now they come. We were ignored." The Distinguished Educator
felt that the biggest barrier the DAT faced was not being able to get the faculty to understand that the needs assessment pointed out weaknesses "from the information that the teachers and students gave, and it is not something that the DAT generated". The DAT-leader felt that some resistance from the new administrator was a barrier.

**The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline.** The faculty's perceptions of the District Assistance Team’s influence on school effectiveness processes were mixed. Two teachers and one assistant principal felt the DAT had no impact on discipline. Another teacher and one assistant principal felt that they did have an influence. One teacher commented, "They (DAT members) were visible at recess and in classrooms. They were everywhere all day. I enjoyed that. The kids said they care."

**The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations.** All of the teachers interviewed and the assistant principal perceived that the DAT did have an influence in raising student and teacher expectations. The principal felt that the increase in expectations was "already in place, because the new administration came in and laid out expectations from day one." Both teachers and principals felt that the DAT did not improve teacher collaboration. The principal initiated the teaming concept in response to the DAT needs assessment finding that the teachers did not collaborate.

**The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction.** The interviewed faculty members unanimously believes that the quality of instruction has improved and that the involvement of the DAT has had a direct impact on the implementation of effective strategies within the classroom. One example was the release from classroom instruction time to develop and prepare test-prep materials and strategies. The DAT-leader said there was "absolutely" a change in teaching strategies in
the last two years. He said, "Teachers are teaching from bell to bell. . . . There has been some movement to other strategies." Most staff members felt that the DE had the greatest impact on improving the quality of instruction.

**The DAT and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes.** The DAT-leader reflected, "Most faculties, if given the opportunity, . . . they want to change. They want to be successful." He believes that most of this faculty did take the responsibility to change. Did they feel a moral belief in the process? He replied, "I think they liked the process and got a lot of information." He believes the "credibility" of the process gave the faculty ownership of the information. Whether or not the faculty had a moral belief in the process was left unanswered. However, the DAT-leader does feel that the staff believes that having external change agents are "the only way to get things done."

**Distinguished Educator and District Assistance Team Relationship.** The administration and teachers perceived the relationship between the Distinguished Educator and the District Assistance Team to be strong and effective. The DE stated, "My working relationship with the DAT team was exceptional. They were Johnny-on-the-spot whenever we needed them. They have always been a phone call away. I can continue to meet with anyone of them at any point in time because of issues or concerns. That working relationship continues to be very strong. I could not function without it."

### Roosevelt Junior High

**Background Information.** Roosevelt Middle School is located on the fringe of a moderately large city (i.e., population 19,000) in central Louisiana. Although thirty-nine percent of the community is below the poverty level, half of the residents hold white-collar jobs. The tax base in this district provides a per pupil expenditure of $4,600 as...
compared to the state average of $5,600 and average teacher salary of $27,000 as compared to the state’s $31,000. The school is 98% African American though the district average is only 40%. The assistant principal describes the region as “a very poverty stricken area”. Roosevelt Middle School has been classified by the State Department as Academically Below Average with a SPS of 38.7 (La. Dept. of Education, 1999).

The school sits in a low-income residential area. Neither fences nor security officers were found at the school. The first adult seen in the building during the site visit was Mr. McCormick, the principal. He is African American in his late 60s who has been the principal of Roosevelt Middle since 1973. He describes his faculty as “child conscious” and boasts that faculty turnover is low. He is often seen at the entrance lobby because strategically the location gives a view of both academic wings and the students’ commons area. The students appear to be very quiet moving from class to class and on time for each class.

The administrative office is located behind a glass-receiving window where the office staff meets each visitor. Perpendicular to the main entrance lobby are two wings of classrooms. Most teachers are found at their doorways between classes. The faculty was very friendly and responsive to questions. Moving past the main entrance is a commons area where “Tiger Pride” is painted on opposing walls. Behind the commons area is a gym with a stage area. The facility seems to be very tight in that it lies within a small area and all buildings are connected. Few students are found outside the main facility because there are no designated areas for students marked by benches and/or tables. There are ample areas for the students to meet within the main building structure.
All classroom doors are open during instruction. The observed classes appeared to have many empty seats. The average class observed over the two-day period was fourteen (14). There were at least 2 empty classrooms in each wing each hour.

Obviously, the school does not meet its enrollment capacity. The library is housed in an empty classroom, and the few books found there were kept on shelves of wooden slats. Resources appeared scarce (e.g., few bulletin boards, several broken windows, sewer problems in the restrooms). One to three computers could be found in every classroom.

There is not a problem with uncertified teachers. Roosevelt Junior High has two Teach For America teachers. Many of the teachers and students appear to have a very informal relationship, in and out of class. Several students would sit on rather than in the desks. Without a more extensive observation period in the school, it would not be reasonable to state whether this was an exception or the rule.

The percent that represents the midpoint evaluation of the Progress toward the Growth Target for Roosevelt Middle went up more in this DST only school than in any other DST only school. The new assistant principal exclaimed, “Our test scores went up tremendously last year! No one is paying us attention. No one is giving us credit”. She explained that the local newspaper had written an article about another school in the district, which had a little higher increase in test scores. She felt that Roosevelt Middle School’s accomplishments should also have been recognized.

The school has one assistant principal and an administrative assistant for discipline. The new assistant principal is dynamic and progress focused. She remembers hearing horror stories about the school and was not well received by the faculty because she was the outsider. However, her new initiatives brought a perception of making
progress at the school. Some of her initiatives included: providing supplies for all students, launching a school-wide initiative for note taking, implementing a family math and reading night, initiating a school-wide behavior plan and a new math program. She convinced every teacher in the school to write a grant for their classroom. Sadly, not one teacher received a grant. "We'll try again next time," she optimistically exclaimed.

**DAT: Expertise.** Roosevelt Junior High did not participate in the Distinguished Educator pilot program. Although not required by the LDE, since RJH is not in Corrective Action, the district did form a District Assistance team. The team is comprised of all central office staff: the district Middle School Supervisor, Director of Special Services, a Special Education Supervisor and a technology specialist.

**DAT: Commitment.** Typically, the DAT-leader is the most involved member, and this was the case with RJH. In order to demonstrate to the faculty that she (DAT-leader) was committed to Roosevelt Junior High, "I went to functions that I didn't have to, like the Sweetheart Ball, to let them know that I truly, truly care about you." After the data were collected for the needs assessment, she was the only member of the DAT to return to the school. The DAT-leader did work with the School Improvement Team to write the School Improvement Plan and did return to informally monitor implementation.

**DAT: Resources/Authority.** The principal described his perception of the authority of the DAT "the DAT can 'only make suggestions' but 'only the administration can implement them'". Overall, he felt that the DAT team gave him more influence with his faculty since the ideas in the School Improvement Plan came from several sources, not just one (the principal). The assistant principal echoed that the greatest strength of the DAT was that they were the outsiders, and they can "see things you may not see".

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
One teacher agreed with the administration but another teacher said, “I don’t need any team. I go to workshops on my own, order my own materials - if a teacher cannot be self-sufficient, she cannot teach.”

The DAT-leader admitted the only authority the team had was to make recommendations to the principal. It was up to him to incorporate the recommendations into his plan for the school. The DAT-leader said, “It was our job to make him (principal) want the same things we wanted” for the school.

The only resources provided by the DAT was a state grant that provided “things that other schools take for granted, like a copy machine.” The DAT-leader said that those funds provided resources so that Roosevelt Junior High is “no longer the school that time has forgotten.”

No faculty member cited any barriers to the DAT’s effectiveness. However, the DAT-leader felt that her biggest barrier was the lack of leadership in the school. She explained, the “leadership wasn’t strong enough. A lot of people thought that he was overdone. He had become too relaxed.” She continued, “The faculty had become complacent and (were) not moving forward.”

The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline. Teacher responses to the influence of the DAT on school effectiveness processes was mixed. A teacher who worked with the DAT-leader on the School Improvement Plan was very positive about the team’s influence on discipline. The DAT-leader believed that the DAT created “an awareness on what needed to be done”, and then the administration and staff worked to improve the safety and orderliness of the environment.
The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations.

The two teachers had opposing views on the DAT’s influence on teacher and student expectations and teacher collaboration. The DAT-leader “hoped” the team had influence on teacher and student expectations. However, she did not believe that teacher collaboration had improved.

The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. The DAT-leader was quite positive about the team’s influence on the significant changes made with the quality of instruction. One of the most difficult negotiations made by the DAT-leader with the faculty was to convince the teachers that they “can’t use the same old lesson plans. They had to write new ones based on the School Improvement Plan.” The principal and assistant principal believe that any improvement in school effectiveness processes was directly attributable to the action of the administration, not the DAT.

The DAT and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. The DAT-leader explained why she felt the faculty took responsibility to change, “They were angry because they were labeled (as a poor performing school). They did not like the bad press. We told them that they were the only ones who could do something about it.” She believes that they now have a moral belief in the process especially since their scores increased so much. How does the staff feel about external changes agents like the DAT? The DAT-leader responded, “I think when they look at where they were and where they are now, they will see that the staff didn’t change. The kids didn’t change . . . . The principal was the same. The only change was the DAT.” She believes the faculty values the team. However, as shown earlier, the interview responses of the faculty indicate otherwise. Several staff members commented on the involvement of the DAT-leader,
however, all faculty members believe that any school improvement changes that did occur were the direct result of their work, not from anyone outside the school.

Several members on the faculty, including the principal, had very strong feelings about outsiders. The question was asked in informal conversations with teachers and the principal during the site visits, “Would you like a Distinguished Educator or someone similar to come to your school to help with instructional strategies?” Two teachers and the principal all responded an emphatic no. These faculty members felt that they (or the school) did not need the help because RJH has very qualified people already on the staff. Several other members of the staff who were interviewed, including the three noted above, resented the involvement of the DAT because the district had assigned the team to the lowest performing schools in the district. It was apparent that the low performing label was difficult for the faculty to accept.

Table 4.6 summarizes the interviewees’ responses.

Pair Three: Mark Twain Junior High and Thomas Jefferson Junior High

Context Analysis

Mark Twain Junior High and Thomas Jefferson Junior High reside in the same district only a few miles from one another. The district is largely made up of suburban communities adjacent to a very large metropolitan area. District funding supports higher expenditures per student and higher teacher salaries than the state average [i.e., $6,708 (state average was $6,171) and $33,688 (state average was $32,384) respectively for SY 1998-1999] (LDE, 2000d).

This particular district monitors school improvement with School Site Teams (SST) as described in Chapter Three and illustrated in Table 4.1. The district did form a
Table 4.6
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair # 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE OF DAT</th>
<th>Thoreau Middle School (DE + DST)</th>
<th>Roosevelt Junior High School (DST only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Composition</td>
<td>All Central Office Personnel – Directors</td>
<td>All Central Office Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Training</td>
<td>Strong training program. Completed all updates.</td>
<td>Varied: Some had early training and needed updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: Initial Support</td>
<td>Strong. Conducted a thorough Needs Analysis and planned for SIP</td>
<td>The DAT-leader had the only strong commitment to the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: On-going Support</td>
<td>All members of the team returned to monitor and support</td>
<td>Only the DAT-L returned to monitor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Provided by DAT</td>
<td>New leadership, extra assistant principal, funding</td>
<td>None other than some DAT-leader involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority/Power of DAT</td>
<td>Very powerful. Most members were directors with a lot of authority.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Linkage</td>
<td>Initiation, Planning, Monitoring</td>
<td>Initiation by entire DAT. Planning and Monitoring by DAT-leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Interaction with DAT</td>
<td>Interaction after first year was less frequent.</td>
<td>Interaction after first year was less frequent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEPTION OF IMPACT ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PROCESSES</th>
<th>Thoreau Middle School (DE)</th>
<th>Thoreau Middle School (DST)</th>
<th>Roosevelt Junior High School (DST)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate: Discipline</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Student Expectations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Expectations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Collaboration</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Yes, if all or 4 of the 5 persons interviewed at the school said yes. Mixed, if two or more of the interviewed had different responses from others. No, if all or all or 4 of the 5 persons interviewed said no.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
DAT for the DE + DST school, Mark Twain Junior High (MTJH), as directed by the LDE. However, after the initial needs assessment, the DAT was replaced by the School Site Team, which served to monitor and provide feedback to the school on implementation of school improvement strategies. The District Assistance Team-leader was interviewed but declined to answer most questions because the work of the DAT was to complete the needs assessment only, and she did not feel that she knew enough about the faculty’s school improvement efforts. Therefore, she felt that the questions should be answered by the SST-leader who was added as an interviewee. (See Table 4.1 for a comparison of the activities of the SST and the DAT.)

Thomas Jefferson Junior High (TJJH) has never had a District Assistance Team. The only external change agent support came from feedback given after the annual visit of the district’s SST. The School Support Team at both schools was comprised of many of the same district personnel.

Both schools had changes in administration within the last two years. Mark Twain Junior High has had three principals in two years. The principal took a sabbatical leave during SY 1999 – 2000 and an interim principal was placed at the school. In SY 2000 – 2001, the principal returned for one semester and left at midyear to accept another position outside of education. His assistant principal was promoted to the principalship. Thomas Jefferson Junior High replaced their principal in 2000.

The Distinguished Educator at Mark Twain Junior High was not as well received as the other four DEs in the study. During her first year at the school, SY 1999-2000, the principal asked the DE to pack her belongings and leave the school. After discussion
between officials from the LDE and the leadership in the district, she returned the next day to complete her two-year service.

Both schools had a mean below the overall mean for the ten schools (i.e., 2.5140, SD = .6349). Mark Twain had the lowest mean among the five DE + DST schools with a 2.4167 (SD = .6686) and Thomas Jefferson Junior High had a mean of 2.18.18 (SD = .6030) on the nineteen indicators of instructional quality as measured by the LaCET instrument.

This is the only matched pair of case studies where the Progress toward the school’s Growth Target (i.e., the change in SPS indicators in a positive direction toward the school’s Growth Target) was greater for the DST only school, TJJH, than for the DE + DST school, MTJH (i.e., the DE + DST school had 82.4% growth toward their Growth Target and the DST only school had 126.9% progress toward their Growth Target) (See Table 4.7 below).

Both schools had six persons interviewed: two teachers from each grade level, the principal, the Title I coordinator (in lieu of an assistant principal for instruction), and the School Site Team leader. In addition, the DAT leader from MTJH was informally interviewed.

Mark Twain Junior High

**Background Information.** Mark Twain Junior High is located off a main thoroughfare in a fairly newly developed area of the city. Traffic from the four-lane highway can be heard on the school grounds. The building is a relatively modern two-story structure that gives the appearance that it is new enough to have sufficient wiring to support any technology initiative. The dark brown, plain building does not reflect the
### Mark Twain Junior High (DE + DST)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Configuration</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>School Performance Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Urban Fringe of a Large City</td>
<td>38.5 (SY1999) 48.3 (SY2000)</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Minority</th>
<th>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>% Special Education</th>
<th>Class Size:</th>
<th>% Faculty w/ Masters or Higher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73% (SY1999) 74% (SY2000)</td>
<td>87% (SY1999) 85% (SY2000)</td>
<td>14% (SY1999) 14% (SY2000)</td>
<td>SY2000 1-20: 12% 21-26: 24% Over 27: 64%</td>
<td>SY2000 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Thomas Jefferson Junior High (DST only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Configuration</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>School Performance Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Urban Fringe of a Large City</td>
<td>43.2 (SY1999) 56.9 (SY2000)</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Minority</th>
<th>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>% Special Education</th>
<th>Class Size:</th>
<th>% Faculty w/ Masters or Higher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76% (SY1999) 77% (SY2000)</td>
<td>74% (SY1999) 67% (SY2000)</td>
<td>17% (SY1999) 16% (SY2000)</td>
<td>SY2000 1-20: 32% 21-26: 17% Over 27: 51%</td>
<td>SY2000 27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## STATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>Class Size:</th>
<th>% Faculty w/ Masters or Higher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69.4 (SY1999) 77.3 (SY2000)</td>
<td>SY2000 1-20: 32% 21-26: 39% Over 27: 29%</td>
<td>SY2000 37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Growth Target: Growth Targets represent the progress a school must make every two years to reach the 10- and 20-year goals. This percent is the school’s midpoint progress toward that Growth Target. Generally, each school’s Growth Target will be the difference between the school’s SPS and 100, divided by the number of remaining growth cycles, or five points, whichever is greater. Every two years, a new SPS will be calculated for each school and a new Growth Target will be set for the next two-year interval (LDE, 2001a).
personalities of the faculty. The main office and classrooms were filled with staff members who imparted warm welcomes. The floors are clean and polished. The freshly painted lockers are in good shape, but were tied with wire so they couldn't be used.

Resources appeared to be plentiful. One hallway was designated as the science wing. Each science room had a fully supplied laboratory for student use. However, no student work or experiments were observed from previous lessons. All classrooms had two to five computers, although no students were observed using them. One teacher used a computer for the PowerPoint presentation and projected the lesson to a fairly expensive SmartBoard (an electronic board and projection screen for computer presentations where the presenter's touch to the board replaces the mouse clicks). Several teachers used audio tape players to reinforce reading assignments. The computer lab uses a locally developed software model "I Can Learn".

The two administrators were not seen in the halls or in the classrooms although their firm presence is reflected in the orderliness of the school's procedures. Students knew the rules: up one stairway and down the other. There were few or no tardies. The students were fairly quiet in the hallways. Other than that, they were typical middle school students. Discipline inside and outside the classroom was positive. All students wore uniforms. There were two policemen on duty who very diligently checked the students to see if they were where they were authorized to be. Teachers stood in their doorway during the change in classes to monitor and speak with students.

With the exception of one Asian teacher, every teacher seen on the two-day visit was Caucasian. Special Education assistants who follow specific students throughout the day visited several classes. Most teachers wrote the objectives on the board. There were
no standard opening activities as seen in a majority of the schools. There was an average of twenty-seven (27) students in each class observed. Many of the teachers observed earlier in the day teaching a structured lesson for the entire hour were seen later in the day sitting at their desks talking to kids informally.

**Distinguished Educator.** Ms. Brooks was assigned to Mark Twain Junior High in the fall of 1999 as the Distinguished Educator. She had served as the principal of an elementary school for 11 years and has over 30 years experience in education. The current principal was on sabbatical last year and describes his relationship with her as “a strain. When she spends a half hour with me that is thirty minutes I could be doing something else. When she spends time with others that is time they lose.” However, he was the principal that volunteered to have a Distinguished Educator at his school. He reflected, “We were excited to have the extra help, an extra principal that doesn’t have to deal with tests, fire drills, just work on instruction”.

The assistant principal described Ms. Brooks relationship with last year’s interim principal as volatile, “She (Ms. Brooks) insulted a friend. He called her in and told her to get her stuff and leave”. The State Superintendent of Education intervened to have her placed back into the school. Several teachers describe her as “intimidating”. One teacher added, “I feel like I’m being told rather than try this”.

On a positive note, when asked about Ms. Brook’s effective strategies, the teachers and principals’ remark, “If we need a task done, like our School Improvement Plan, she is very knowledgeable” and “She’s involved. She keeps us on track.” However, both the DE and principal felt that the lines of communication are not open between Ms. Brooks and the faculty. Ms. Brooks feels she has built trust and rapport among staff
members but the teachers and administration believe her strong personality has kept that from happening. The principal noted, “It has been a struggle” for her to gain the cooperation of various groups within the school.

When asked about barriers to the Distinguished Educator’s success, the principal responded that she came in late and “all she wants to do is sit back and talk”. The assistant principal stated “Personality, without a doubt is the biggest barrier”. Teachers referred to her as being “very direct”. Ms. Brooks felt her greatest barrier was the lack of action taken by the administration on her recommendations. The school “did not feel that things needed to be done” since this school was not in Corrective Action. Ms. Brooks feels that having a better-defined role, as the DE would add credibility to recommendations. She also felt that the because of the problem with last year’s principal, one of her two years at MTJH was worthless. “I did not have the opportunity to work with this faculty at all last year”, she replied.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline. Following the schools needs assessment; the District Assistance Team stated that a strength found at Mark Twain Junior High was the safety and orderliness of the school’s environment (i.e., discipline). They found students to be well behaved and polite. The principal noted “It is a better atmosphere this year” and “We tried to do our share (to improve climate). I’m sure our DE had a part with that. It was a concentrated effort mostly by our teachers.”

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations. The Distinguished Educator pulled the faculty survey from the DAT’s needs analysis to describe the teachers’ expectations of students. She explained,

The teachers in this building, better than 80% of them, don’t think that the
children can do it. If you have that many teachers walking around with that attitude what do you think is going to happen? That is the kind of things I have to deal with.

Ms. Brooks believes that the teachers assume that if the “children are not able to perform” then they feel “it’s hopeless”. However, the administrators feel that the teachers do expect more from the students than they have in the past but do not feel that the DE has helped to change the teachers’ expectations. Every teacher interviewed, informally or formally, said that the Ms. Brooks had not been in their classroom more than once this year. The teachers felt that very little contact had been made on a one-to-one level between them and DE.

The principal and teachers interviewed did not believe that the Distinguished Educator had any impact on teacher collaboration. The principal suggests, “A lot of my teachers feel she comes on too strong. We had a wonderful working environment. Still do. I’m not saying she demolished that. Teachers are happy to come to work”. Ms. Brooks sees the problem with teacher collaboration as the isolation of faculty members by core subjects. “The bottom line is that you need to be coming together. I told the principal that this is something that is going to have to be mandated”.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. Teacher and administrator responses about the impact of the Distinguished Educator on the quality of instruction were similar. The principal simply expressed, “She was not a big part” in contributing to changes in the teachers’ quality of instruction. Even Ms. Brooks believes that she was somewhat ineffective: “You can’t talk about the instructional issues, or delivery systems if people do not come to the table to have the conversation”.

160
The DE and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. The Distinguished Educator believes that “we are not there yet” when asked if the faculty has taken the responsibility to make school improvement changes or had a moral belief in the process. The perception of the principal is that some approaches to change are occurring with his staff. The principal further stated, “This faculty does not feel that they need external change agents because they feel they are doing what needs to be done. They have the knowledge without someone else coming into the building”.

District Assistance Team/School Site Team. The LDE required volunteering districts to provide a District Assistance Team for every school accepting a Distinguished Educator in this pilot program. This district did provide a DAT to conduct the schools needs assessment. However, after the plan was written, the DAT was replaced with a School Site Team that visits the school annually.

The DAT-leader was interviewed; however, she had no knowledge of the perceptions and processes of the faculty at MTJH because of the short time she was involved at the school. The SST-leader was also interviewed but again, as a result of the very limited time spent at the school, she did not feel she had the information needed to answer the interview questions. Overall, the SST-leader felt that the feedback given to the principal for the School Site Team evaluation would provide the principal with the knowledge to make the school improvement changes. The assumption of the SST-leader was that it is the principal’s responsibility to initiate, implement and find resources to sustain school improvement strategies.

The faculty responses to interview questions described the perceptions of the impact of the activities of the DAT on school effectiveness processes and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes.
Improvement Processes at MTJH. The DAT conducted a needs assessment, which generated data to determine the school’s strengths and weaknesses. A Data Notebook was produced from these data by the LDE. Based on the findings of the DAT’s needs assessment, a School Improvement Plan was written for the school. Although this was the only involvement of the DAT with MTJH, the resulting SIP did have some influence on school improvement processes.

**DAT/SST: Expertise.** The teachers who were interviewed felt they “didn’t know a lot about them” when asked about the extrinsic capacity (the expertise, commitment and Resources/Authority) of the DAT. Information gathered from teacher descriptions of the DAT’s activities when they came to gather facts for the needs assessment confirmed that the DAT did not follow LDE procedures in completing that task. For example, the classroom observations were informal with no information reported on the quality of instruction, and the principal was not given a questionnaire. This was a big concern for the Distinguished Educator because the only report about instruction would come from “what the teachers say” they are doing rather than what could actually be observed.

**DAT/SST: Commitment.** The extent of their commitment to the process to provide feedback and to monitor implementation was stated by all who were interviewed “They never came back”. The DAT-leader explained that the needs assessment was the team’s only responsibility. Based on the responses from the faculty, this must not have been explained to them. The principal proudly acclaimed that the greatest support for school improvement efforts came from his School Improvement Team and from the regional service center. He adds that the School Site Team did “the same thing (as the DAT). It’s the same kinds of people and we get a huge amount of support from our...
system, the superintendent’s office.” Overall, the dialog about the School Site Team appeared to be more positive than the dialog about the DAT.

**DAT/SST: Resources/Authority.** From information gained through interviews, the DAT did not provide any resources to the school. However, the district did provide professional development funds. The Distinguished Educator also noted that the district provided math and language facilitators to the school. It is difficult to determine if the DAT’s needs assessment and the resulting School Improvement Plan brought these resources, or if the resources would have been provided anyway. Both teachers and principals did not perceive the DAT as having any authority; rather they were viewed as a team that gathered information about the school’s strengths and weaknesses.

Three effective outcomes of the DAT noted by teachers included: “They forced us to sit down and think of our school”, they “point(ed) out some things we need to work on” and “the DAT Leader helped us with our School Improvement Plan”. Barriers discussed by the faculty included time restraints and purpose. “Most of us got the impression they were going through the motion, for bureaucracy. They have to do it so I can put it in a folder”.

**The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes.** Teachers, administrators and the Distinguished Educator all agreed that the District Assistance Team had no influence in changing: the safety and orderliness of the school’s environment, faculty collaboration, student expectations, teacher expectations, and the quality of instruction. The principal feels that the teachers were making these changes without the DAT support.
The DAT and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. The interview data gathered did not show that the faculty or Distinguished Educator perceived the DAT as having any influence on Fullan’s School Improvement Processes.

Distinguished Educator and District Assistance Team Relationship. The Distinguished Educator describes the relationship between herself and the DAT as “non-existent”.

Thomas Jefferson Junior High

Background Information. Thomas Jefferson Junior High is located about one half mile from a four-lane highway leading away from the city. The neighborhood is quiet with small wood framed or brick homes. Most parents work in blue collars jobs at the nearby construction plant. The black brick apartment building adjacent to the two-story school has several broken windows. Sea gulls line the roof of the gym. The school grounds and classrooms were clean and tidy. Student work was not displayed anywhere throughout the school. The main bulletin board at the entrance to the school had announcements that were four months old. Noise from the construction of the school’s new roof disrupted the quiet neighborhood as well as some of the classes.

The teachers were not as receptive to visitors as in the other schools in the study. Students and teachers used the large library extensively during the two-day visit. The science classrooms had one demonstration desk with running water, but little or no supplies. Almost every classroom has two student computers and one teacher computer. Except for a few students who were allowed to play games on them, the computers were not used. The reading lab had eleven computers and was in use during the two-day visit. The math honors classroom had ten computers and calculators on each desk. In most
classrooms the resources (texts, maps, supplies) were nonexistent. This was surprising because the two-paired schools are both in the same district. However, the principal explained one possible reason. We "would have been a Title I school if the children had turned in the parent slips. We were about ten students short. That would’ve given us $280,000." Another problem cited from the principal was that there are thirteen special education classes and only three teachers are certified in that area.

The classrooms at each end of the school building encircled a large common area. This layout provided for easy monitoring of students, yet little supervision of students was observed. Students did get to class on time; however, both inside and out of class, the students were disrespectful to each other and to the teachers. It was observed that most teachers did not speak to one another between classes nor in the lounge.

The teacher union in this district is very strong. One teacher explained that when a teacher is asked to substitute in another class during her planning period, union policy ensures that the teacher is paid for that extra duty. Additionally, the teachers’ lessons and tests must be correlated to the state’s benchmarks, but union policy states that the teachers do not have to write the benchmarks in their lesson plans. As one teacher simply stated, "no extra work without compensation”.

Each class had the same Word of the Day. A few teachers incorporated the word into the lesson. However, most teachers wrote the Word of the Day on the board but did not refer to it. One teacher explained that at TJJH, the Level 1 classes are the better classes and Level 2 classes are the “bad ones".
Most teachers were reluctant to be interviewed or observed in the classroom. In every informal interview, the teachers laughed when asked what type of support they receive. They indicated that they had no support other than from a friend on the faculty.

For the most part, students were not engaged in the learning process. Three teachers showed videotapes during the two-day visit. There were about twenty-five students per class in the classes observed.

The principal could be found most of the time sitting on a large desk in the main hallway monitoring students. She was dressed very comfortably and took time to chat informally throughout the two days. She lives in another district and wishes she had “not worked in this parish (district)”, “but would finish out time here”. She described her job at Thomas Jefferson as “ok”. This is her second year as principal, although she was the assistant for three years. When asked what caused the rise the test scores over the last two years, the assistant principal explained that the scores went up because the “testing procedures were sloppy (during the last test administration), (there were) a lot of zeros entered for children”. Changing the quality of instruction was never mentioned in any of the formal or informal interviews.

School Site Team. Thomas Jefferson Junior High did not have a Distinguished Educator or a District Assistance Team. However, they do have a School Site Team (SST), with many of the same district personnel who were assigned to Mark Twain Junior High’s team.

SST: Expertise and Commitment. The School Site Team had a couple of members who have been trained by the LDE as District Assistance Team members, but as a group, they were not specifically trained as were the DATs. The SST makes an
unannounced annual visit to each school in the district. However, each principal said that they did find out about a week or two in advance when the team would come. The SST observes classrooms and interviews the staff and students. They leave an exit summary with the principal about what was observed and some recommendations for improvement. The team does not return to monitor implementation of the recommendations. The next annual visit may have different members than the one that visited this year.

**SST: Resources/Authority.** The teachers feel that they have no support from the administration or district with the exception of some professional development offered by the district. The faculty did not perceive the SST as having any authority. The faculty views the School Site Team as an evaluative group who helps the administration set priorities for improvement. Other than the feedback given to the principal at the end of the annual site visit, the SST provides no resources to the school.

**School Site Team’s Influence on School Effectiveness Processes.** Teachers and administrators agreed that the School Site Team has no influence on school climate, culture or the quality of instruction. The only influence the SST could have on school effectiveness processes would be contingent upon the principal receiving the information gathered by the SST and implementing changes based on their recommendations.

**School Site Team’s Influence on Fullan’s School Improvement Processes.** Faculty members who were interviewed did not believe that the School Site Team had any influence on the administration to make changes that impact school improvement. It was suggested by the district leadership that Thomas Jefferson Junior High would be paired with another school in the district to help write the two schools’ School Improvement
Plans. The TJJH principal felt that the two assistant principals would work together to write the plans. However, the other school formed a School Improvement Team made up of several faculty members to work on the school plan, and the assistant principal at Thomas Jefferson Junior High was given that responsibility alone.

The following table, Table 4.8, summarizes the interview information gathered at the two schools and from the District Support Teams (DST). The external change agent support, excluding the Distinguished Educator, was defined as the DAT/SST for Mark Twain Junior High because both types of DSTs were involved there. Thomas Jefferson Junior High only had a SST.

**Pair Four: Longfellow Junior High and Lincoln Junior High**

**Context Analysis**

Longfellow Junior High and Lincoln Junior High lie in separate areas of the district. Longfellow is located in a growing city, whereas Lincoln is found in a quieter more rural area. Both facilities are similar in appearance and quality of construction. The principal at Longfellow Junior High is described by the SST-leader as having his “heart and soul in that school.” He coached at the school before moving into administration in 1999. Several teachers commented they were not pleased about his promotion because they did not perceive him to be an instructional leader. The principal at Lincoln Junior High has just finished her fourth year in that position but is planning to retire at the end of this school year.

The DE + DST school, Longfellow Junior High, was provided with a DAT to conduct the needs assessment. Following that, the team was dismantled. The district’s School Site Team conducted annual site visits as they did to the other three schools from
Table 4.8
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair # 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE OF SST and/or DAT</th>
<th>Mark Twain Junior High School (DE + DST)</th>
<th>Thomas Jefferson Junior High School (DST only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Composition</td>
<td>All central office personnel with one principal. 7-8 members on the team.</td>
<td>Same SST as MTJH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Training</td>
<td>Only one member trained with DAT training</td>
<td>Same SST as MTJH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: Initial Support</td>
<td>DAT provided needs assessment and SST monitored progress</td>
<td>SST monitored progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: On-going Support</td>
<td>Annual assessment of school improvement progress</td>
<td>Same as MTJH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Provided by DAT/SST</td>
<td>DAT provided data for School Improvement Plan, no other resources</td>
<td>SST provided feedback to principal on 12 standards, no other resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority/Power of SST and/or DAT</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Linkage</td>
<td>Initiation by DAT, assistance with the SIP by the DAT-leader, and annual monitoring by SST</td>
<td>Annual monitoring by SST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Interaction with SST and/or DAT</td>
<td>One time only with DAT, annual for SST</td>
<td>Annual for SST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEPTION OF IMPACT ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PROCESSES</th>
<th>Mark Twain Junior High DE</th>
<th>Mark Twain Junior High DST</th>
<th>Thomas Jefferson Junior High DST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate: Discipline</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Student Expectations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Expectations</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Collaboration</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Instruction</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Yes, if all or 4 of the 5 persons interviewed at the school said yes. Mixed, if two or more of the interviewed had different responses from others. No, if all or all or 4 of the 5 persons interviewed said no.
this district that are included in this study. An almost identical SST supported Lincoln Junior High.

Longfellow Junior High’s mean on the nineteen instructional indicators of LaCET was 2.7273 (SD = .4671) and Lincoln Junior High’s mean was 2.4545 (SD = .9342), as compared to the overall mean for the ten schools at 2.5140 (SD = .6349). As shown in Table 4.9, the Progress toward the Growth Target for both schools is almost identical (i.e., 97.5% and 96.1%) with the DE + DST school, Longfellow Junior High, having the slightly higher percent.

Both schools house seventh, eighth and ninth graders. Six people involved at each school were included in the interviews. They include: one principal, the Title I coordinator (in lieu of an assistant principal for instruction), three teachers (one from each grade level) and the SST-leader.

**Longfellow Junior High**

**Background Information** Longfellow Junior High is located in a district in south Louisiana that is above the 1999 state average in per capita income and below the state average in unemployment rate and person’s living below the poverty level. However, the percent of residents with less than a high school education is greater than the state average and the number of residents holding a Bachelor’s degree or higher is lower the the state average. The majority of the students at Longfellow Junior High are from single parent homes and reside in government subsidized housing apartments. The school has an outstanding history in the community. The mayor, several city councilmen and a current member of the state legislature have all attended Longfellow Junior High.
Table 4.9
Matched Pair # 4 of Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Configuration</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>School Performance Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Urban Fringe of a Large City</td>
<td>36.7 (SY1999)</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students: 802</td>
<td></td>
<td>48.2 (SY2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Progress toward GT*: 97.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority</td>
<td>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>% Special Education</td>
<td>Class Size:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55% (SY1999)</td>
<td>83% (SY1999)</td>
<td>18% (SY1999)</td>
<td>SY2000 1-20: 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55% (SY2000)</td>
<td>80% (SY2000)</td>
<td>16% (SY2000)</td>
<td>21-26: 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 27: 51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Lincoln Junior High (DST only) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Configuration</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>School Performance Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Urban Fringe of a Large City</td>
<td>44.7 (SY1999)</td>
<td>Academically Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students: 694</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.6 (SY2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Progress toward GT*: 96.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority</td>
<td>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>% Special Education</td>
<td>Class Size:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% (SY1999)</td>
<td>83% (SY1999)</td>
<td>18% (SY1999)</td>
<td>SY2000 1-20: 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56% (SY2000)</td>
<td>81% (SY2000)</td>
<td>19% (SY2000)</td>
<td>21-26: 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 27: 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% Faculty w/ Masters or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher: SY2000 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| STATE |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Performance Score (SPS)</th>
<th>Class Size: SY2000</th>
<th>% Faculty w/ Masters or Higher: SY2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69.4 (SY1999)</td>
<td>1-20: 32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.3 (SY2000)</td>
<td>21-26: 39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 27: 29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Growth Target: Growth Targets represent the progress a school must make every two years to reach the 10- and 20-year goals. This percent is the school's midpoint progress toward that Growth Target. Generally, each school’s Growth Target will be the difference between the school’s SPS and 100, divided by the number of remaining growth cycles, or five points, which ever is greater. Every two years, a new SPS will be calculated for each school and a new Growth Target will be set for the next two-year interval (LDE, 2001a).
The three-story, brown-brick building, built in 1986, is located about one block off of a busy six-lane highway in the district. The clean, orderly campus has a police vehicle parked near the front driveway. The library is large and quite busy with teachers and students. Empty classrooms on each floor indicate no problem with overcrowding. Science classrooms had laboratories and ample supplies.

The principal was seen throughout the observation period monitoring both in classes and out. His focus during the two-day site visit was the number of students not doing homework. Each student without his/her homework had to sign a book in the class and was reported to the principal. It appeared that students were only tardy for a few teachers’ classes. The same student who casually walked into one class five minutes late was prompt for two other classes. One teacher had eight tardies in one class and others had none.

Most teachers write the daily lesson objective on the board. Bulletin boards display the Longfellow Word of the Day and teachers use the word in their lessons. In addition to the annual CRT and NRT exams given statewide, Longfellow Junior High’s district gives a common district test to gauge student progress. The testing program is in its second year. The teachers have specific skills to teach to meet the district’s expectations for the exam. The average number of students in each class observed during the two-day site visit was 24.

The new principal is in his second year in that position. He served as the assistant principal for six weeks before the appointment to the principalship. Perceptions of the leadership in the school were mixed. Three teachers referred to the “leadership problem”. One teacher said, “He was a coach that did nothing but throw balls.” Another
alluded he had "no professionality". The Distinguished Educator felt that he was earnest and hardworking.

_Distinguished Educator._ Ms. Mathews is a former high school teacher and Title I Staff Developer with over thirty years experience. The well-spoken, intelligent woman has a positive, outgoing personality. The principal describes her as "full of knowledge and energy". The DE describes herself as a "servant leader." One teacher said, "She is a people person. She was always there with a helping hand, like a co-worker."

The faculty believes the focus group discussions were most effective in bringing teachers together. Teachers describe her as "knowledgeable" and "will pick up the phone to get things done". The only barriers that the staff felt Ms. Mathews might have faced were the administration and lack of time to accomplish all she wanted to do. This was the only school that did not list the receptivity of the teachers as a barrier.

_The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline._ In the DAT's needs assessment, the parents, teachers, administration and students rated safety high at Longfellow Junior High. However, discipline was listed as a weakness of the school. Ms. Mathews, the Distinguished Educator, helped to form a discipline committee that she feels is making progress. The principal felt that she had "a little" impact on discipline. However, the teachers felt the principal had the greatest impact on this indicator.

_The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations._ Raising teacher expectations was credited to the DE by the principal, "most definitely". Two teachers said it was hard to determine who had the greatest influence because the Distinguished Educator and the new administration both came at the same time. All interviewees felt strongly that the DE had a large influence on increasing teacher
One teacher stated, “The thing I like about this whole accountability is that at one point no one was talking and now everyone is talking”.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction  Has the quality of instruction improved at Longfellow Junior High? The response was a resounding yes from the DE and each teacher and administrator. Teachers and administrators who were interviewed genuinely felt that the DE had a substantial influence on the quality of instruction.

The DE and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes  The Distinguished Educator enthusiastically described the faculty’s progress on Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. “I feel good about that (the progress)”, she said. Ms. Mathews believes the faculty is moving toward taking responsibility for school improvement changes. One example given by the DE was the involvement of two teachers who volunteered to recruit parents for the PTA, which was no longer functioning as a school organization due to the lack of membership. She adds, “Everyone knows they have a part to play (in planning and managing the change process).” She also believes that the DAT’s involvement with the school’s needs assessment helped the faculty to see the importance of external change agents.

District Assistance Team and School Site Team. The District Assistance Team at Longfellow Junior High was highly respected by the principal. The Distinguished Educator felt that the team explained their responsibility to the faculty, “What they were here to assess and look at some ways to do things differently”. Similar to the DAT at Mark Twain Junior High, the District Assistance Team was dismantled after the school’s
needs assessment was completed. A School Site Team was given the responsibility to monitor and provide feedback annually.

**DAT/SST: Expertise.** The DAT was comprised of central office personnel who had been completed the LDE’s District Assistance Team training. The SST was similar in composition to Mark Twain Junior High’s team. The principal serving on the team would change from school visit to school visit because the principals rotate on and off the team for the one site visit per year as required by this district. The SST, as a group, did not have the extensive, formal training for the site assessment as the DATs.

**DAT/SST: Commitment.** The DAT was short-lived. However, the DAT-leader did help the school to plan the School Improvement Plan. The SST visits each school annually. The SST-leader felt the information gathered and reported to the principal indicated a sufficient commitment to district’s schools. However, she did say that if a school or principal did not make progress toward implementing the SST recommendations, the team should then provide more frequent visits to that school.

**DAT/SST: Resources/Authority.** Neither team (DAT or SST) had any authority to help initiate or implement school improvement strategies. Their only goal was to provide the administration with information gathered at the school for the School Improvement Plan. It was the principal’s responsibility to initiate, implement and sustain school improvement procedures. Other than the feedback from the team’s observations, the DAT or SST gave no resources to the school.

**The DAT/SST and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline.** All faculty members who were interviewed felt that neither the DAT nor SST had any influence on discipline at the school. As noted earlier, all agreed that the principal had the greatest
influence. The principal was observed in the classrooms and hallway throughout the two-day site visit.

The DAT/SST and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations. All interviewees except one teacher felt that the DAT had an impact on raising teacher expectations. The DE was credited with improving teacher collaboration. Perceptions about the DAT or SST raising student expectations were mixed.

The DAT/SST and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. Again, the DAT or SST's influence on the quality of instruction was mixed. The principal and the DE agreed that the visibility of the teams did contribute to changes in teacher behaviors. The principal and the DE assumed that the district is serious about teachers' efforts to increase the quality of their instruction. However, the teachers disagreed. They felt the DE had the greatest influence on improving the quality of their instruction.

The DAT/SST and Fullan's School Improvement Processes. The SST-leader said the principal at Longfellow Junior High "listens" and "pays attention" to the SST recommendations. Therefore, she feels that his staff has been more proactive in their approach to change than before the principal's appointment. She predicts "movement" in the school's progress toward meeting their school improvement goals.

Lincoln Junior High

Background Information. The twenty-five (25) year old school building sits in a low-to-middle class neighborhood. Most families have two parents who work. A large fabrication plant provides the community with most of its employment opportunities. Lincoln Junior High is several miles from Longfellow Junior High. The school is located farther out of the city just off one of the oldest highways in the state. One teacher
remarked, "We've always been isolated, away from the rest of the parish. . . . So we have always felt isolated - on our own." Another teacher said that the only time she saw her district supervisor was at workshops away from the school.

The principal at Lincoln Junior High has been there for four years. Although she is youthful in appearance, she will be retiring at the end of this school year. The assistant principal helps with discipline. It is the Title I coordinator who has led the School Improvement Team to write their SIP. Therefore, she was included as an interviewee. The SST-leader remarked that Ms. Dune, the principal, has a problem with the quality of her teachers and teacher turnover. Ms. Dune did not refer to any problems with teacher quality and stated that she had no problem with teacher turnover. She emphasized that all of her core classes had certified teachers.

Instead of utilizing the middle school teaming concept, Lincoln Junior High is departmentalized. The students are fairly punctual with few tardies being registered during the site visits. Two teachers showed videos during the two-day site visit. Several students were observed sleeping during class. The average number of students observed per class at Lincoln Junior High was twenty-two (22).

Resources appear greater at Lincoln Junior High than at Thomas Jefferson Junior High, the other DST only school in this district. This could be the result of Title I funds since Lincoln Junior High is a Title I school, while Thomas Jefferson Junior High is not. Ms. Dune and several teachers noted that Title I personnel in the district and in the school are great sources of support. The principal explains, "We get information (about the School Improvement Plan process) from our Title I personnel. . . . We are doing it in steps. Our Title I people keep us focused."
Although Lincoln Junior High did not have a DAT, the principal did get some support (at central office meetings) from personnel in the district who were DAT trained. The philosophy of the district appears to be that the principal is responsible for school improvement changes. Rather than sending trained personnel (e.g., DATs) into the schools, the principals can receive the information at district monthly meetings. Ms. Dune explains the process,

We did not fall into a group to get a DAT... Every month we (principals) attend a meeting and the first part of that meeting involves helping us with our School Improvement Plan. The people conducting it are members of the parish DAT team who have been trained. At one meeting they (district personnel) brought in a representative from Region I (regional service center) who was the DAT training staff member. He came to offer assistance.

Although the principal at Lincoln Junior High mentions her staff's involvement in formulating the SIP, there appears to be little outside support for the faculty other than the information brought back by Ms. Dune from her principal's meetings. The district did provide the school with a two-to-three day consultant to explain test data and the differences between CRT and NRT tests.

**School Site Team.** Like the other three schools in this district (i.e., Longfellow Junior High, Thomas Jefferson Junior High, and Mark Twain Junior High), Lincoln Junior High has an annual School Site Team visit to provide feedback to the principal on the school's movement toward school improvement strategies. The composition of this team is almost identical to the SSTs at the other three district schools in this study, with the exception of the principals who serve on the team once a year and are rotated off the
team. The expertise, commitment, and Resources/Authority described in the Thomas Jefferson Junior High case study are identical to the perceptions of the Lincoln Junior High faculty.

Perhaps this is because the perceptions of the SST’s purpose (i.e., provide feedback) and limitations (i.e., no resources or on-going support) are well known throughout the district. One teacher was angry that more resources were not provided to them at the school level, “There is an abundance of resources (in this district). This made us mad. I get so frustrated that I feel I have to look at the LEAP test so I can teach those concepts.”

The faculty’s perceptions of the SST’s influence on school effectiveness processes and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes are described below.

**The SST and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline.** It was the consensus of the faculty that the SST does not influence discipline at Lincoln Junior High.

**The SST and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations.** Ms. Dune worries, “That (student expectations) really bothers me. I don’t think that has risen. We have to convey that (high expectations) to kids. We aren’t doing that enough.” The principal was alone in thinking that the district has high expectations for her teachers.

**The SST and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction.** The credit for improving the quality of education was given to the new accountability program. The teachers, principal, and Title I coordinator gave specific examples of how the accountability program has changed teachers’ instruction (i.e., “I see myself giving more word problems to address the LEAP”, “Now that we have accountability we are looking
for ways to change, we cannot lecture to class(es)”, and “I think because of accountability
and the focus on the LEAP . . . I find a lot of our teaching techniques are varied. I’ve
seen more teachers using computers, overheads, videos and audio tapes than in the past.”

The SST and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. With the exception of the
principal, the faculty did not see that the staff is adopting Fullan’s School Improvement
Processes.

The following table, Table 4.10, is a summary of the information gleaned from
interviews about the extrinsic capacity of the external change agents and the perception
of their influence on school effectiveness processes.

**Pair Five: Steinbeck Middle School
and George Washington Middle School**

**Context Analysis.**

Steinbeck Middle School and George Washington Middle School are both found
in the same district within the largest city in Louisiana. This district has forty-eight
(48) percent of their schools performing at Academically Unsatisfactory compared to the
state average of five (5) percent of the total number of schools.

The two school facilities are absolutely polar opposites of one another. Steinbeck
Middle School is a relatively new facility in a prosperous neighborhood with an
abundance of personnel and other resources. An old, unsightly structure, George
Washington Middle School, is located in a poor, fairly unsafe neighborhood with few to
no resources.

Steinbeck Middle School has had three principals during the last three years and
several others since it’s inception fifteen years ago. The principal at George Washington
Middle School has been at that school for eight years.
Table 4.10  
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair # 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE OF SST and/or DAT</th>
<th>Longfellow Junior High School (DE + DST)</th>
<th>Lincoln Junior High School (DST only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Composition</td>
<td>SST: All central office personnel with one principal, 7-8 members</td>
<td>Same SST as Longfellow Junior High, different principal as a member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Training</td>
<td>SST: Only one member trained with DAT training</td>
<td>Same SST as Longfellow Junior High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: Initial Support</td>
<td>DAT provided needs assessment and SST monitored progress</td>
<td>SST monitored progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: On-going Support</td>
<td>Annual assessment of school improvement progress</td>
<td>Same as Longfellow Junior High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Provided by DAT/SST</td>
<td>DAT provided data for School Improvement Plan, no other resources</td>
<td>SST provided feedback to principal on 12 standards, no other resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority/Power of SST and/or DAT</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Linkage</td>
<td>Initiation by DAT, assistance with the SIP by the DAT-leader, and annual monitoring by SST</td>
<td>Annual monitoring by SST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Interaction with SST and/or DAT</td>
<td>One time only with DAT, annual for SST</td>
<td>Annual for SST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEPTION OF IMPACT ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PROCESSES</th>
<th>Longfellow Junior High DE</th>
<th>Longfellow Junior High DST</th>
<th>Lincoln Junior High DST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate: Discipline</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Student Expectations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Expectations</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Collaboration</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Yes, if all or 5 of the 6 persons interviewed at the school said yes.  
Mixed, if two or more of the interviewed had different responses from others.  
No, if all or all or 5 of the 6 persons interviewed said no.
The involvement of the District Assistance Team at Steinbeck Middle School was greater than at GWMS. The change in the progress toward the schools' School Performance Score Growth Target was dissimilar (i.e., 118.6% gain and 50.0% gain), with the DE + DST school, Steinbeck Middle, having the larger gain (See Table 4.11). The principal, the assistant principal for instruction, three teachers and the DAT-leader. The mean for instructional indicators on LaCET for Steinbeck Middle School was 2.5455 (SD = .5222) and 2.000 (SD = .5000) for George Washington Middle School. The overall mean for all ten schools, as measured by LaCET, was 2.5140 (SD = .6349).

Five persons were interviewed at George Washington Middle School, including the principal, the instructional leader (the staff development specialist) and two teachers. The following table (Table 4.11) summarizes some of the important archival information about the two schools.

Steinbeck Middle School

**Background Information.** Steinbeck Middle School has low performance scores and is currently in Corrective Action (e.g., the School Performance Score is below 30). It was quite surprising to see lovely two-story homes with circular drives located adjacent to the school and a new gated community of upscale homes under construction across the street. The fifteen-year-old facility appears to be more like a new community college than a middle school. Unlike many schools in this city, this edifice is fully air-conditioned. However, the impressive structure is a facade because the quality of construction is poor. The principal said that the contractor "skipped town" when irregularities were found.
Table 4.11
Matched Pair # 5 of Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steinbeck Middle School (DE + DST)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Configuration</strong></td>
<td>Community Type</td>
<td>School Performance Score (SPS)</td>
<td>School Performance Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Large City</td>
<td>27.7 (SY1999)</td>
<td>Academically Unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students: 1412</td>
<td></td>
<td>44.3 (SY2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Minority</strong></td>
<td><strong>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</strong></td>
<td><strong>% Special Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Class Size:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99% (SY1999)</td>
<td>88% (SY1999)</td>
<td>10% (SY1999)</td>
<td>1-20: 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99% (SY2000)</td>
<td>87% (SY2000)</td>
<td>9% (SY2000)</td>
<td>21-26: 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geo^eWaShmgto^M!3dl^cEoonBS^nly)</strong></td>
<td>School Performance Score (SPS)</td>
<td>22.1 (SY1999)</td>
<td>Academically Unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.5 (SY2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Minority</strong></td>
<td><strong>% Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</strong></td>
<td><strong>% Special Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Class Size:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99% (SY1999)</td>
<td>87% (SY1999)</td>
<td>13% (SY1999)</td>
<td>1-20: 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99% (SY2000)</td>
<td>81% (SY2000)</td>
<td>12% (SY2000)</td>
<td>21-26: 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Class Size:</strong> SY2000</td>
<td><strong>% Faculty w/ Masters or Higher:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Performance Score (SPS)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-20: 32%</td>
<td>SY2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.4 (SY1999)</td>
<td></td>
<td>21-26: 39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.3 (SY2000)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 27: 29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* Growth Target: Growth Targets represent the progress a school must make every two years to reach the 10- and 20-year goals. This percent is the school's midpoint progress toward that Growth Target. Generally, each school's Growth Target will be the difference between the school's SPS and 100, divided by the number of remaining growth cycles, or five points, which ever is greater. Every two years, a new SPS will be calculated for each school and a new Growth Target will be set for the next two-year interval (LDE, 2001a).
The students who attend Steinbeck Middle School (SMS) do not live in the prosperous community that lies adjacent to the school on the main thoroughfare. They come from low-to-middle class families living in small homes or the dilapidated apartments found behind the school. When asked where the children who live in those large beautiful homes attend school, one administrator replied that they go private schools in the city. One assistant principal for discipline noted that Steinbeck Middle School is a popular place because parents would rather send their children to this public school than other public schools in the district. The average number of students observed in classes during the two-day visit was 28, the most for any school in the study.

The suspension rate is low, perhaps because there are seven staff and police who are responsible for discipline and safety. There is no assistant principal for instruction and curriculum. The principal said instruction was “my job”. However, with such a large school to manage, it appears that instruction has been delegated a backseat to discipline issues. There are over 100 faculty members. This is a high number of faculty members given a teacher-student ratio for the school of 14:1. To counterbalance the need for an assistant principal for instruction in this large school, there are three staff developers who are teachers that spend all of their time helping with various parts of the curriculum (i.e., a Title I or staff developer whose responsibility is implementing a program based on aligning content standards).

Discipline in the classrooms and hallways at SMS was much more relaxed than at other schools in the study. For instance, teachers locked their doors after the tardy bell so that “all of the tardies would have to find somewhere else to go” and would not disrupt the class instruction. Five students in different classrooms were observed eating snacks
and drinking sodas during instruction. One student used her cell phone to call a friend during a test. Many students wear hooded jackets over the school uniforms, which are not allowed in most schools.

The apparent loss of control by most teachers may be a direct result of the chaos generated by class period changes. It takes students at least 10 minutes to go from one class to another. The hallways are too small for the large number of students (approximately 1400). The bell schedule is staggered so that each wing of the school allows those students to move to the next class while the other wings are in session. However, the noise from the various class changes can be heard in all wings. Some students have classes in an area that causes them to travel through a wing that is not in transition. Some teachers who monitor the halls blow whistles to keep the students moving during the change. One teacher commented that it takes two weeks at the beginning of each year to teach the students how to change classes. This appears to be the biggest distracter of instruction and also takes away from instructional time.

Acoustics in the building are poor. Several students and teachers talking loudly in the halls can be heard through the closed doors in the classrooms. At least three wandering students were observed dancing, singing, and/or waving at other students from the hallway.

Steinbeck Middle School has an abundance of resources. The library is large and contemporary, with a computer center, copy room, and many books. Computers are found in every classroom, but the students and the teacher use only a few of them. Although there are no science laboratories, all rooms had many curriculum specific
resources (e.g., science supplies for experiments, calculators, resource texts, teacher resources).

The principalship at SMS has changed three times in three years. Furthermore, several teachers debated during the two-day site visit whether there had been ten or eleven principals at the school over the last fifteen (15) years. While instability in leadership is a factor at many schools in this study, SMS has had extreme instability during its entire history.

The new administrator, Ms. Crosby, described the attitude of the faculty as “very negative” when she arrived in SY 2000 – 2001. She said that the teachers, principal and Distinguished Educator were “at odds” last year. Ms. Crosby feels determined to turn that around and to “clearly focus everyone to what it is we are suppose to be doing”. There is a definite focus on the middle school teaming concept at the school that has brought about more teacher collaboration.

Distinguished Educator. Ms. Dodge, a former math specialist in a neighboring district’s elementary school, is the Distinguished Educator at Steinbeck Middle School. Teachers describe her as a “very professional lady”, “very skilled”, and “works hard across the curriculum”. The principal, Ms. Crosby, said

She is that extra pair of hands and eyes that I need. I cannot always rely on the (other) administrators because they have their own duties. She becomes that extra body to make sure the team meetings are focusing in the right direction; that the “P R” (public relations) is getting out there - that I need in the community”. Several teachers and the principal made numerous remarks about the relationship

186
between the DE and the faculty and principal last year (SY 1999-2000). The principal recalled, “She (DE) is a very assertive person. She goes after things very aggressively, so she stepped on the (former) principal’s toes. . . .Teachers say, ‘She barks orders’ and I think that becomes a bone of contention for them”. However, Ms. Crosby, who acknowledges that she is grateful for the support, has tried to “let everyone relook at that (aggressiveness). Show them the positive.” Ms. Crosby explains that Ms. Dodge is “excited about what she does. She is here for instructional support. Some of the other stuff she has got to let go of.”

Overall, every teacher interviewed accepted some type of support that Ms. Dodge offered and appreciated her efforts. Although, they all agreed that they did not know why she was at Steinbeck Middle School. Ms. Dodge did send several memos and letters to the faculty “letting them know a little bit more about myself and ways I can support them”. The teachers did not read the information or the information did not explain the Distinguished Educator program well enough because the teachers who were interviewed repeatedly stated they were unclear as to her purpose. Several teachers remarked they “resented that the state brought someone in”. No teacher interviewed was aware that the DE program was a pilot and that the district had volunteered to participate. It was obvious that the level of communication at this very large school between the DE and faculty was poor.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline. The principal and DE both recall a recommendation that Ms. Dodge made about improving the lighting in the parking lot. Both feel that this kind of information and persistence on the part of the DE to take action on this recommendation did have an impact on the safety of the students
and faculty at SMS. Two teachers noticed that Ms. Dodge professionally directed
students to behave in an appropriate manner in the hallways and classrooms. "I've never
seen her ignore a situation", said one teacher.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations.
Ms. Dodge has “very high expectations" of the teachers in her school. The teachers and
administrators feel that her focus on instruction has impacted both teacher and student
expectations to improve. Increased teacher collaboration was attributed to the initiation
of the middle school teaming approach and Ms. Dodge’s focus group sessions. The DE
felt that the teachers were still moving toward a more collaborative climate at SMS.

The DE and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. Ms. Dodge
listed modeling, observations and feedback as strategies to help teachers improve
instructional strategies. However, the teachers interviewed gave several other ways that
the DE influences the quality of instruction (e.g., she provided specific lessons and
activities, encouraged teachers to visit each others classes, discussed a variety of
strategies in the focus groups).

The DE and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. Ms. Crosby, the principal,
felt that Ms. Dodge was effective in moving the teachers to take responsibility to change,
believe in the process of school improvement and accept external change agent support.
Ms. Dodge reflected that when she arrived the teachers were not “doing what they are
suppose to be doing, in terms of instruction.” She felt that only the teachers who were
willing to embark on Fullan’s School Improvement Processes (i.e. taking a responsibility,
a moral belief in the process, active initiation and participation, and the importance of
external change agents) were those who had made the greatest improvement in teaching effectively.

**DAT: Expertise.** The District Assistance Team was comprised of a retired principal, who was the DAT-leader, and two Title I supervisors from the central office. Ms. Barry, the DAT-leader said that she understood that the DAT at SMS would have four or more members but that only three were assigned. All three had the DAT training provided by the LDE, but Ms. Barry felt the other DAT members’ training was “not as good as hers.” Most teachers had no knowledge of the training or the expertise of the DAT. No teacher could name more than one member of the DAT and some did not know any DAT member’s identity.

**DAT: Commitment.** Initially, the DAT scheduled time to come to Steinbeck Middle School to collect information for the needs analysis. However, the response rate for the teacher, parent and student questionnaires was so poor the first time (i.e. 5%, 16%, and 22% respectively in a school of over 1400 students) that the DAT returned to do it again. The District Assistance Team did conclude another needs assessment a year later during the fall of year 2000. The second Data Notebook had not been returned to the school by the LDE at the time of this site visit (12/2000). This DAT was willing to collect information twice for the needs assessment, which was a very time consuming process. Additionally, several teachers and the instructional staff developer remembered that the DAT-leader came back often that first year and the other members did come by from time to time.

**DAT: Resources/Authority.** The DAT-leader was very disgusted with the effectiveness of the support team. She felt that the responsibilities of the other members
kept them from being as involved as the school needed them to be. The teachers did not
know if the DAT brought any resources to the school. The DAT-leader said that the
school was “rich in instructional materials”. The team reported in the Data Notebook that
SMS had “more resources than any other school in the district”.

The Steinbeck Middle School DAT did not have any authority other than giving
recommendations. The DAT-leader called the recommendations “constructive criticism”.
She said, “We offered our services but we were never invited to do projects with the
teachers.” The DAT-leader felt that the lack of communication between the principal and
her team was the biggest barrier to their effectiveness in bringing about school
improvement change.

The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline. The DAT rated the
discipline a the school as the greatest strength of Steinbeck Middle School in the Data
Notebook. However, the teachers and administration did not feel the DAT had any
influence on this indicator. The DAT-leader felt that overall the team would have had an
impact on school effectiveness processes if the school had initiated the recommendations
of the District Assistance Team.

The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations.
The teachers interviewed felt that teacher expectations may have changed because “we
knew they were coming”. No faculty member felt that the DAT had any influence on
student expectations or teacher collaboration. The principal laughed at the questions
about DAT’s influence on school effectiveness processes and answered “No way” to
most questions.
The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. One teacher expressed her positive perception of the intent of the DAT “to improve the quality of instruction”. All teachers and administrators interviewed agreed that the DAT did have an influence on this indicator. The principal stated, “Their presence demonstrated that they wanted to increase potential and increase learning.”

The DAT and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. Overall, the DAT-leader, Ms. Barry, felt that her team’s support for the staff and students was ineffective and at times “felt useless”. She felt that the state accountability policy was a “good step” in helping teachers to move toward change. Ms. Barry did not feel the staff had made any Fullan’s School Improvement Processes and was unsure as to the influence of the DAT on this indicator.

George Washington Middle School

Background Information. The 1930s facility sits only twenty (20) feet from a four-lane highway in the heart of a large city. The vast majority of the students live in substandard housing and most parents would be classified as working poor. However, information gathered by the District Assistance Team on a survey showed that a number of parents are involved in school activities (i.e., clubs, organizations, and class field trips).

The six large entrance doors are locked. An armed guard and metal detector greet students and visitors at a side entrance. The teachers have a key to the front entrance and can be seen utilizing those doors. The administrative office is on the second floor. There is a lot of activity there at all times. In addition to the typical daily operations of the school’s administrative office, students come there for school supplies.
Mr. Casey, the principal, is rarely found in his office. He walks the campus continually making sure that everyone is where they are suppose to be. He uses an investigative approach when handling students in the halls. Mr. Casey questions where they have been, where they are going, and who is their teacher. He allows them to go on their way but follows the students or notifies one of the hall monitors to follow them until they reach the appropriate destination. Although he has an assistant principal, Mr. Casey counts on a teacher specialist for instructional support for his teachers. The assistant principal deals with discipline problems. His lack of involvement with instructional concerns is reflected in his response on the DAT questionnaire. Mr. Casey answered that he disagrees with the statement “As a principal, I have a substantial effect on students' academic achievement.”

There is a lot of construction going on in the building, since air conditioning is being installed. It is surprising that a school located in a city with such a potentially large tax base and in such a warm climate has not had air conditioning before now, [e.g., there are quite a few inequities of facilities, personnel and overall district support at the two matched schools (GWMS and SMS)]. The construction has caused some teachers to lose their rooms temporarily while the system is being installed. In addition to those misplaced teachers, George Washington Middle School (GWMS) has 5 floating teachers who must use another teacher's room during their planning time. Each of these floating teachers teaches core subjects (i.e., Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science). Although the lack of available classrooms would appear to mean that the school is overcrowded, the average number of students observed in class during the two-day site visit was nineteen (19).
Few classrooms had bulletin boards, posters or student work displayed. Holes were found in the walls and ceilings. The classroom doors had plywood nailed where glass used to be. Desks were turned over in some classes and trash was found on dirty floors. The most unsubstantiated finding of the DAT in the needs assessment was that the school had "an abundance of resources, including curriculum materials".

Classroom instruction was constantly being interrupted. Announcements were made almost every hour, and other teachers would often stop by a classroom to visit with the teacher being observed. There were a few tardies throughout the two-day visit in classrooms. Of the fifty-four (54) teachers, thirteen teach special education. There are eight paraprofessionals. The school does not have a Distinguished Educator.

DAT: Expertise. The DAT is made up of a former technology teacher, the DAT-leader and two central office personnel (i.e., Title I specialist and Director of Vocational Education). All three had training, although teachers were unsure if they did.

DAT: Commitment. The team completed a need analysis although triangulation of the data was not complete (i.e., sources of information about the school’s strengths and weaknesses were vague or left out). The DAT-leader said that the team did go back “as needed” but felt that “it was the school’s responsibility to implement the plan on their own”. However, the faculty did not recall if the team returned to the school.

DAT: Resources/Authority. The DAT-leader described the resources given to the faculty by the DAT as “recommendations to use best practices”. The team had no authority other than to conduct a needs assessment.

The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Discipline. Fifty percent of the students surveyed at GWMS in 1999 disagreed with the statement “I feel safe at school.”
Teachers and administrators concurred that the DAT had no influence on the discipline at GWMS. The principal believes that he has the greatest impact on this indicator.

The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Collaboration and Expectations. The principal laughed at each question concerning the DAT’s influence on school effectiveness processes, “They were worthless”. The instructional specialist at GWMS was more optimistic and she felt that the DAT presence did influence teacher expectations. The teachers felt that the DAT had no impact on the culture of their school.

The DAT and School Effectiveness Processes: Quality of Instruction. The instructional specialist disagreed with the other interviewees again. Most interviewees felt that the DAT had no influence on the quality of instruction.

The DAT and Fullan’s School Improvement Processes. The DAT-leader believes that it takes “a five year turnaround” before you can see school improvement changes in a school. He feels that the faculty “now sees what is going on”. His comments were not specific to his perception of how the DAT influenced the faculty’s approaches to change.

Information gleaned from the interviews with the principal, assistant principal, DAT-leader, and three teachers has been summarized in the following table (Table 4.12).

Cross-Case Comparison

A cross-case study of the ten middle schools allowed for the examination of the similarities and differences, which were found during the two-day site visits and subsequent interviews with District Support Team-leaders. Table 4.13 summarizes some of the cross-case comparisons found in the study.
Table 4.12  
Summary Analysis of Interviews for Pair # 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE OF DAT</th>
<th>Steinbeck Middle School (DE + DST)</th>
<th>George Washington Middle School (DST only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Composition</td>
<td>Retired principal and two Central Office Personnel</td>
<td>Retired teacher and two Central Office Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise: Training</td>
<td>Varied: Some had early training and needed updates</td>
<td>Varied: Some had early training and needed updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: Initial Support</td>
<td>Conducted a poor Needs Analysis but returned the following year to do another one.</td>
<td>Poor triangulation of data for the Needs Assessment. No real commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment: On-going Support</td>
<td>DAT-leader returned often to monitor and support. Other member came infrequently.</td>
<td>Little to no support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Provided by DAT</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority/Power of DAT</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Linkage</td>
<td>Initiation, Planning, Monitoring</td>
<td>Initiation by entire DAT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Interaction with DAT</td>
<td>Interaction after first year was less frequent.</td>
<td>Little to no interaction during two-year period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEPTION OF IMPACT ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PROCESSES</th>
<th>Steinbeck Middle School DE</th>
<th>Steinbeck Middle School DST</th>
<th>George Washington Middle School DST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate: Discipline</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Student Expectations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Expectations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture: Teacher Collaboration</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Instruction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Yes, if all or 4 of the 5 (or 5 of the 6) persons interviewed at the school said yes.  
Mixed, if two or more of the interviewed had different responses from others.  
No, if all or all or 4 of the 5 (or 5 of the 6) persons interviewed said no.  

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Leadership Stability

A palpable observation was the instability of leadership in the ten schools, specifically the DE + DST schools. Three of the five DE + DST schools had principals serving in their first year in that position at the beginning of SY 2000 – 2001, at the midpoint of the DE pilot program. The other two schools had principals who were appointed the same year (SY 1999-2000) in which the DE was assigned.

Four principals at the DST only schools served there for over four years [e.g., the range is from four to over twenty (20) years]. Only one of the DST only schools had a new principal. The instability of the leadership in these schools presents a problem for the continuity of the school improvement strategies. However, a change in leadership was not always viewed as negative. Frequently, the DE recommended support for the principal or a change in his/her assignment.

Table 4.13 denotes the leadership stability at these three schools as low (i.e., the principal has been in that role at that school for one year or less), medium (i.e., the principal has been in that role at that school for two years), and high stability (i.e., the principal has been there for more than two years). This is not to say that a principal with two years experience at one school has an average tenure. The one, two and over two years time frame here was selected specific to the ten principals in the case studies because of the high rate of instability in administration. With these designations (i.e.,

---

1 It could be that the high instability in the DE + DST group was a function of the districts' assignment of DEs to schools with principals with little administrative experience.
Table 4.13
Cross-Case Comparison of the Ten Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DE + DST SCHOOL</th>
<th>Leadership Stability</th>
<th>DST Resources</th>
<th>DST Expertise</th>
<th>DST Authority</th>
<th>DST Commitment</th>
<th>DST Influence</th>
<th>DE Influence</th>
<th>Progress Toward Growth Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Elliot</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thoreau</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>160.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mark Twain</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Longfellow</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Steinbeck</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>118.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DST only SCHOOL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Kennedy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Roosevelt</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>144.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>126.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lincoln</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. George Washington</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** 1. Leadership Stability: Low – one year at school as principal, Medium – two years at school, High – over two years.
2. Resources: Low – only provided needs assessment, Medium – needs assessment + help with SIP, High – financial, policy changes, etc.
3. Expertise: Low – did not complete 5-day training, High – completed 5-day comprehensive training.
4. Authority: Low – None, Medium – did make changes with district help, High – can hire/transfer, pay bonuses.
5. Commitment: Low – did not return after needs assessment, Medium – at least one team member returned infrequently, High – the team returned to the school frequently to plan and monitor.
low, medium, and high), there are four principals in the low category, two in the medium category, and four in the high category.

**District Support Team Resources**

What the support team brings to the table often gives educators the perception of the quality of their involvement. If the District Support Team only provided a needs assessment, the DST was designated as a low provider of resources. If the District Support Team provided more feedback than the needs assessment and at least one of the team members became involved at some level in the School Improvement Plan, the DST was designated as medium in providing resources to the school. If the DST provide more than some personal involvement (i.e., providing a T-building, bonuses for teachers), then the rating was high. The faculty perceived the team as working to help the school.

This categorization provided insight into the resources provided to schools with a DE and those without a DE. The schools, which had a Distinguished Educator, had more resources provided by DSTs than the DST only schools. All DE + DST schools had high or medium levels of resources from the District Support Teams.

In all, of the ten District Support Teams, two were rated high, four were rated medium and four were rated low in providing resources to the school. Note that all four low classifications were in the DST only schools. The presence of a DE appears to increase the chances that a DST will provide resources to the school.

**District Support Team Expertise**

This category was simply described as the level of formal training the DST participated. If the team had the five-day training provided by the Louisiana Department of Education, the team was rated as high in expertise. This training involves extensive
review and work with conducting a needs assessment, school improvement processes, and writing effective school improvement plans. The only two schools (both DST only) without DAT training (i.e., Thomas Jefferson Junior High and Lincoln Junior High) were in the district that monitors school improvement annually with School Site Teams. Two DE + DST schools also had SSTs. However, since they were initially given DATs for the needs assessment, the DST was rated as high in expertise because of the training of the DATs.

**District Support Team Authority**

Some educators interviewed had high hopes that the DST would be able to help them. Others hoped that they would not “rock the boat”. Whether or not the DST did or could do anything was a judgment that most school level educators were quick to make. A common phrase from those interviewed was, “They didn’t do anything.”

Almost all teams, eight of the ten, had little or no authority to do anything other than conduct a needs assessment. Most DST members were encouraged by the regional service centers, the LDE, and their district leadership to become more involved with the schools, but the DAT-leaders concurred that the members of their team did not have time. The team members were not given released time from their other responsibilities, nor given any special authority to make important school improvement changes. The only two DSTs who had high or medium authority were both serving DE + DST schools.

The DST rated as having high authority was comprised of high levels of district leadership (i.e., directors). These directors secured bonuses for employees willing to work at this low performing school and had the authority to transfer teachers and principal in and out of the school. The medium authority DST utilized the district
leadership to get some things changed (e.g., discipline policy changes, a building torn
down).

**District Support Team Commitment**

"Putting in the time" could best describe this indicator. A DST which only
conducted a needs assessment and did not return to the school in any capacity was rated
as low in commitment. The five teams rating a low were the four School Site Teams
from the same district and one team who conducted the needs analysis to gather
information for a Title I application. These five teams were split between DE + DST and
DST only schools.

The three DST who were rated as medium in commitment were the teams who
officially remained as the DAT for those schools, even if they did not become involved.
These teams did conduct a school need analysis which is more than the SST did. Again,
these medium committed DSTs were split across both groups of schools. The only two
highly committed DSTs were in DE + DST schools. These two DSTs were also high in
expertise and were the only DST who provided high amounts of resources.

**Perceptions of District Support Team Influence on School Effectiveness Processes**

The summaries of perceptions of the interviewed educators found in Tables 4.4,
4.6, 4.8, 4.10, and 4.12 provided the information to rank the DSTs as having high,
medium (mixed) or low levels influence on school effectiveness processes. The five
categories in those tables include:

- Climate- Discipline (e.g., Safe and Orderly Environment),
- Culture – Student Expectations,
- Culture – Teacher Expectations,
Culture – Teacher Collaboration, and
Quality of Instruction.

The perceptions of the five to six educators interviewed for each school were tallied as yes, no, or mixed as a general perception of how much influence the DST had at that school on all five indicators². For example, on criterion one (Climate – Safe and Orderly Environment) if three teachers and one principal stated that they felt the DST has some influence on the safety and orderliness of the school environment, then the result would be yes because four of the five interviewed would have agreed on yes (the same for a consensus of no).

All five DSTs in DST only schools were perceived as having a low level of influence on school effectiveness processes. These five schools also had DSTs with low levels of authority, although not all low authority DSTs were viewed as having low influence.

The only two DE + DST schools with DSTs who were perceived to have low amounts of influence on school effectiveness processes were the only two DE + DST schools that had low leadership stability and low DST authority. Perhaps this combination of leadership instability and a lack of district authority relegates a District Support Team to having little influence on school effectiveness factors.

Perceptions of the Distinguished Educator’s Influence on School Effectiveness Processes

The summaries of perceptions of the interviewed educators found in Tables 4.4, 4.6, 4.8, 4.10, and 4.12 provided the information to rank the Distinguished Educators as

² A DST is perceived as having “low” levels of influence if three (or more) out of five of the results from those tables, in the categories listed above, were “no”. The DST is perceived as having “high” levels of influence if three (or more) of the five results in those tables were “yes”. If the results were mixed, the DST would be perceived as having a “medium” influence on school effectiveness processes.
having high, medium (mixed) or low levels influence on school effectiveness processes. The perceptions of the five to six educators interviewed for each school were tallied as yes, no, or mixed as a general indication of how much influence the DE at that school had across all five indicators. The results were analyzed using the process described for DSTs.

Four of the five DEs were rated high on influencing school effectiveness processes based on the perceptions of the educators interviewed. While four of the five DEs faced receptivity of the faculty as a barrier to their effectiveness, four of the five DEs were perceived as having influenced school effectiveness processes. If the interviewees perceived the receptivity of the faculty as a barrier to the DE, it must have been an initial receptivity problem because the DEs could not have been effective without working closely with the faculty.

One Distinguished Educator had "personality" problems with the faculty. This DE did not recover from those difficulties. She was perceived as low on all five indicators of school effectiveness. It should be noted that this Distinguished Educator also acknowledged her lack of influence, "You can't talk about the instructional issues, or delivery systems if people do not come to the table to have the conversation".

Summary of Findings

Overall, there were two important findings concerning the perceptions of the Distinguished Educator's influence on school effectiveness processes.

1. The DEs were not perceived as having influence on discipline. The DE who was persistent in making the perimeters of the school (i.e., parking lot) well lighted was the only DE who was perceived as effective in
providing a safer campus. The other DEs were not perceived as an influence on this indicator, even if they served on the discipline teams which they helped to form.

2. The Distinguished Educators were perceived by all educators interviewed (with the exception of the one DE who was in discord with the faculty), as having a direct influence on the quality of instruction. This was the indicator that was perceived as being influenced the most by the Distinguished Educators. It is also probably the most important factor for meaningful school improvement.

Teddlie and Springfield (1993), in a longitudinal study of school effectiveness processes, found the some schools focus their efforts in "changes designed to raise achievement test scores, while others were more comprehensive attempts to move the school toward excellence" (p. 219). An example of these two types of schools can be found in Matched pair # 2 (i.e., Thoreau Middle and Thomas Jefferson Middle Schools). Clearly, Thoreau Middle School exhibited very positive results along all dimensions discussed in this chapter and is an example of a school with more comprehensive instructional changes. Thomas Jefferson Junior High, on the other hand, is an example of technical change which will probably peak at some point (change at Jefferson involved tightening up sloppy testing procedures).

DE + DST schools are more likely to bring about "comprehensive attempts to move the school toward excellence". Future studies will provide more information about the long-term effects of these two types of external change agents.
Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the result of the qualitative analysis phase of this study. Results from the interviews and other data sources were presented in pairs of case studies. Background information regarding each school’s demographics, school leadership, and finally, responses to the interview guide probes were presented in a narrative form. A final cross-case comparison of the ten schools was developed along with eight dimensions of contrast: Leadership stability, DST resources, DST expertise, DST authority, DST commitment, DST influence, DE influence and progress toward growth target.

Given the length of this chapter, answers to the Research Questions (which are qualitative in nature) are addressed in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER FIVE
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the differential modes of external change agent support in the diffusion of an innovation (i.e., the Louisiana School and District Accountability Program). The assumption here is that schools with more external change agent support, which are perceived to influence school effectiveness processes and school improvement approaches to change, will have teachers who demonstrate more effective teaching strategies than schools with lesser external change agent support. Creemers (1994) found that effective instruction at the learning classroom level is more important in determining the quality of school outcomes than school level factors (e.g., school climate). Those factors which are most 'proximal' to the student (i.e., teacher) are likely to be more important than those that are more 'distal' from him (i.e., school or district) (Stringfield, 1994).

Will schools which are provided more external change agent support [i.e., Distinguished Educators (DE) and District Support Teams (DST)] show higher incidences of effective instructional strategies than schools without this greater level of support (i.e., schools with only some support provided by District Support Teams) as shown on the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (LaCET) instrument? This question is at the heart of this research.

This chapter will present the quantitative results from one hundred and seven (107) classroom observations in ten (10) middle schools throughout Louisiana. One observer made all one hundred-seven (107) classroom observations. Extensive
experience with classroom measures of teacher attributes and specific training on the proper use of LaCET helped to protect the researcher against observer bias\textsuperscript{1}.

Examination of data gathered from the two main groups of schools yielded information about the quality of instruction within those two groups (DE + DST and DST only schools). It should be noted, however, that each school within these two groups were provided somewhat differential modes of external change agent support. For instance, some DSTs were comprised of District Assistance Teams (DAT) with high-to-medium authority, while some schools had a School Site Team (SST) with no authority and little expertise. Naturally occurring variances in the experimental manipulation, a common problem in field studies, are more likely to lead to Type II errors (failure to identify a true effect) than Type I errors (incorrect rejection of the null hypothesis) (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).

Descriptive analysis of the quantitative data from the five matched pairs of schools in this chapter yields information that enhances the analysis of the qualitative data summarized in Table 4.13. Results from the qualitative and quantitative data are blended together in Chapter Six.

The Classroom Observation Summary Form was used to record information regarding observable performance attributes outlined in the Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching (See Appendix B). The observer rated each teaching attribute using a four-point scale ranging from 'unsatisfactory' to 'excellent'. The instrument gauges a

\textsuperscript{1} Triangulation is the major technique used in this study to guard against the issue of observer bias. Other qualitative measures (e.g., principal and teacher perceptions of DE influence on teaching quality) were used to compare the results from the classroom observations. Results from this triangulation process are discussed in Chapter Six.
teacher's ability to demonstrate effective practices in classroom management and instruction.

As described in detail in Chapter Three, the LaCET measures five components of effective teaching.

1. Classroom Management Component (six items)
2. Classroom Instruction Component A – The teacher delivers instruction effectively (four items).
3. Classroom Instruction Component B – The teacher presents appropriate material (three items).
4. Classroom Instruction Component C – The teacher provided opportunities for student involvement in the learning process (four items).
5. Classroom Instruction Component D – The teacher assesses student progress (two items).

In addition to the LaCET, a checklist of fifteen (15) specified instructional strategies (e.g., cooperative/collective learning, sustained writing) was included to report the 'extent' the observer saw these strategies in the classroom observations.

The chapter has four (4) parts:

1. description of the sample for the classroom observations,
2. restatement of the hypotheses,
3. descriptive and inferential statistics, and
4. summary of the quantitative results.

207
Description of the Sample for the Classroom Observations

A total of one hundred-seven (107) teachers were observed. The teachers were selected through a stratified, random selection procedure from among the teachers at each school. When possible, a science, math, social studies, and language arts teacher was observed at each grade level. Field trips, unexpected student assemblies, and high absentees due to weather conditions, caused some deviations from the intended sampling.

Table 5.1 breaks down the observations by grade level and group (i.e., DE + DST schools and DST only schools).

Table 5.1
Observations Conducted by Group Per Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Frequency in School Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total by Grade</td>
<td>% of Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations were conducted at four grade levels. Five of the ten schools were middle schools with grades six, seven and eight. Four junior high schools had grades seven, eight, and nine housed on campus and one junior high had only grades seven and eight. Three of the five middle schools with a grade 6-8 configuration were DE + DST schools. The remaining two DE + DST schools were junior highs with seven, eight and nine grades.

Observations in schools with DE + DST support totaled fifty-seven (57) out of the one hundred-seven (107) total number of classrooms observed. Observations at DAT
only schools totaled fifty (50). Grades six and nine had the fewest classroom observations because of the variation in configurations between the middle schools- and junior highs.

Frequency data were calculated for the number of observations made in each of the two groups by subject matter. Table 5.2 summarizes that information.

Table 5.2
Observations Conducted by Group Per Core Subject Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Frequency in School Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total By Subject</td>
<td>Total % of Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English/Reading</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of frequency data across core subjects revealed the following: 28.1% of the total observations were conducted in English or Reading classes; 27.1% of the total observations were conducted in mathematics classes; 22.4% were conducted in science classes; and 22.4% of the total were conducted in social science classes.

There was a higher incidence of observations in English/reading and mathematics classes. During the two-day visits, substitute teachers were found teaching in core areas; observations of those substitute teachers were not conducted. In cases where another teacher could not be found in that core subject classroom, then an alternative core teacher was randomly selected to observe. In most cases, English and mathematics teachers were observed as the replacements because there are generally more Language Arts and mathematics classes than science and social studies classes. For example, some of the
schools teach two different classes of English and Reading, rather than one class of Language Arts.

Restatement of the Hypotheses

The quantitative data allowed for the testing of the following five hypotheses.

Research Hypotheses (RH)

The overall hypothesis to be tested in this study is that mean scores on the quality of teaching (as measured by LaCET) will be higher at the DE + DST schools than at the DST only schools. The unit of analysis is the teacher.

This overall prediction is made because the DE + DST manipulation should be stronger than the DST only manipulation. The DE should be able to expend more energy working with and improving individual teachers.

RH I. Mean scores on the Classroom Management Component (i.e., the teacher maintains an environment conducive to learning), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH II. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component A (i.e., the teacher delivers instruction effectively), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with only a DST.

RH III. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component B (i.e., the teacher presents appropriate content), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.
RH IV. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component C (i.e., the teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

RH V. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component D (i.e., the teacher assesses student progress), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

A description of each item on the LaCET instrument was provided in Chapter Three. The psychometric properties of the instrument were also described there.

Means and Standard Deviations for LaCET

A comparison of the means and standard deviations for the LaCET for each school enhances the qualitative data presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Four results compared the five matched pairs of schools on the extrinsic capacity of the DSTs and the perception of influence by the Distinguished Educator and District Support Teams. The addition of the school means for the components of effective teaching indicators connects ‘Quality of Instruction’ to the extrinsic capacity of external change agents and the perception of their influence on school effectiveness processes.

Table 5.3 presents a comparison of means and standard deviations by matched pairs of schools. In each case, the mean score across the nineteen (19) LaCET items was higher for the DE + DST school than it was for the DST only school.
Table 5.3
Comparison of Means and Standard Deviations for Matched Pairs on the LaCET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matched Pairs of Schools</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T.S. Elliot (DE + DST)</td>
<td>2.6364</td>
<td>.6742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy (DST only)</td>
<td>2.5455</td>
<td>.5222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoreau (DE + DST)</td>
<td>2.8333</td>
<td>.3892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt (DST only)</td>
<td>2.7500</td>
<td>.7071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twain (DE + DST)</td>
<td>2.4167</td>
<td>.6686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson (DST only)</td>
<td>2.1818</td>
<td>.6030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longfellow (DE + DST)</td>
<td>2.7273</td>
<td>.4671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln (DST only)</td>
<td>2.4345</td>
<td>.9342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinbeck (DE + DST)</td>
<td>2.5455</td>
<td>.5222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington (DST only)</td>
<td>2.0000</td>
<td>.5000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mean score refers to the average scores across the nineteen (19) LaCET items.

Computed group means and standard deviations for each of the nineteen (19) individual variables which collectively measured effective teaching behaviors are summarized in Table 5.4 by groups of schools. The teacher is the unit of analysis. Each item listed in this table was given a score of 1 to 4 (i.e., 1 = unsatisfactory, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = area of strength, 4 = demonstrates excellence).

The bolded statistics on Table 5.4 indicate that these numbers are the higher for the two groups. Only two of the nineteen (19) indicators had higher means for the DST only group of schools. They are in the Classroom Management domain (i.e., organizes available space and materials to facilitate learning and promotes a positive learning climate). The other seventeen indicators had higher means for teachers in DE + DST schools.

The highest mean found for DST only teachers was computed for indicator Classroom Management: Organizes Space and the lowest mean for Student Involvement: Higher Order Thinking Skills. The highest mean found for DE + DST teachers was

212
computed for the indicator Appropriate Content: Accurate Subject Matter and the lowest mean for indicator Student Involvement: Accommodates Individual Differences. See Table 5.4 for more comparison.

In addition to the major indicators listed above, the LaCET Observation Instrument also allows the observer to record the ‘degree’ (i.e., none, some, extensive, or not applicable to the lesson) to which the observer witnessed any of fifteen (15) instructional strategies utilized during the class observation. Table 5.5 summarizes the differences in the number of observable strategies utilized by teachers in the two groups of schools. For example, in 14 out of the 50 classes observed (or 28%) in the DST only schools, teachers used time (sometimes or extensively) in their class for alternate assessment strategies. Teachers in the other group (DE + DST schools) were observed nineteen (19) times in the fifty-seven (57) classroom observations (or 33.3%) using strategies that included alternate assessment. The difference in the two percentages (33.3% - 28%) was +5.3%. Therefore, teachers in DE + DST schools used alternate assessment as a teaching strategy 5.3% more often than teachers in the DST only schools. The differences in the percentages are summarized on Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 indicates that seven of the fifteen strategies listed were observed more often in DST only schools and eight of the fifteen strategies were observed more often in the DE + DST schools. However, the DE + DST schools showed much higher differential incidences for the fifteen strategies (i.e., +13.875% as compared to the +4.11% for DST only schools).
Table 5.4
Means for DE + DST Schools and DST only Schools on LaCET Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of Effective Teaching</th>
<th>DE + DST Schools</th>
<th>DST only Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain: Classroom Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizes Space</td>
<td>2.8421</td>
<td>.4136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Climate</td>
<td>2.5965</td>
<td>.8207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain: Maximizes Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routines</td>
<td>2.7018</td>
<td>.7311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusts Time</td>
<td>2.7193</td>
<td>.7259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain: Manages Learner Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>2.6842</td>
<td>.9289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>2.6140</td>
<td>.9211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain: Effective Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching</td>
<td>2.6316</td>
<td>.8584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequences lesson</td>
<td>2.8246</td>
<td>.5708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching materials</td>
<td>2.7368</td>
<td>.8134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusts Lesson</td>
<td>2.6842</td>
<td>.6023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain: Appropriate Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Level</td>
<td>2.8421</td>
<td>.5913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate Subject Matter</td>
<td>2.9825</td>
<td>.4815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Examples</td>
<td>2.7018</td>
<td>.6805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain: Student Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodates Individual Differences</td>
<td>2.2982</td>
<td>.6537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates Effectively</td>
<td>2.6491</td>
<td>.7194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Order Thinking Skills</td>
<td>2.4211</td>
<td>1.0168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages Participation</td>
<td>2.7193</td>
<td>.9403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain: Assessing Student Progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors Ongoing</td>
<td>2.3860</td>
<td>.7735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely Feedback</td>
<td>2.6316</td>
<td>.5552</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 107
Table 5.5
Differences in Strategies Observed in DE + DST Group vs. DST only Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Strategies Observed</th>
<th>Percent of Classes Utilizing Strategies in DE + DST Schools</th>
<th>Percent of Classes Utilizing Strategies in DST only Schools</th>
<th>% Greater for DE + DST School</th>
<th>% Greater for DST only School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative/Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>19/57 = 33.3%</td>
<td>17/50 = 34%</td>
<td></td>
<td>+0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Instruction with Entire Class</td>
<td>55/57 = 96.5%</td>
<td>45/50 = 90%</td>
<td>+6.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent or Group Centers</td>
<td>54/57 = 94.7%</td>
<td>32/50 = 64%</td>
<td>+30.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Work (Self-paced, Individual Assignments)</td>
<td>47/57 = 82.4%</td>
<td>28/50 = 56%</td>
<td>+26.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Individual Instruction (Differential Assignments)</td>
<td>6/57 = 10.5%</td>
<td>8/50 = 16%</td>
<td>+5.50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Tutoring</td>
<td>34/57 = 59.6%</td>
<td>35/50 = 70%</td>
<td>+10.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained Writing/Composition</td>
<td>35/57 = 61.4%</td>
<td>31/50 = 62%</td>
<td>+0.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Computer</td>
<td>12/57 = 21%</td>
<td>6/50 = 12%</td>
<td>+9.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Other Technology</td>
<td>20/57 = 35%</td>
<td>20/50 = 40%</td>
<td>+5.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Subject Matter</td>
<td>28/57 = 49.1%</td>
<td>25/50 = 50%</td>
<td>+0.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Hands On Learning</td>
<td>17/57 = 29.8%</td>
<td>17/50 = 34%</td>
<td>+4.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Assessment Strategies</td>
<td>19/57 = 33.3%</td>
<td>14/50 = 28%</td>
<td>+5.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Self-assessment</td>
<td>18/57 = 31.6%</td>
<td>6/50 = 12%</td>
<td>+19.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Discussion</td>
<td>43/57 = 75.4%</td>
<td>35/50 = 70%</td>
<td>+5.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Questioning Strategies</td>
<td>48/57 = 84.2%</td>
<td>38/50 = 76%</td>
<td>+8.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE DIFFERENCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+13.8875%</td>
<td>+3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multivariate Analysis (MANOVA) Results

The testing of each hypothesis began with a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between the two groups on the entire set of dependent variables associated with that hypothesis. If a significant MANOVA was found, the univariate ANOVAs within that group were then examined.
The data were first analyzed using five MANOVAs for the five components of the LaCET (i.e., one Classroom Management domain, and four Classroom Instruction domains: Effective Instruction, Appropriate Content, Provides Opportunities for Student Involvement, and Assessing Student Progress) as the dependent variables. If no significance was found, no further examination of the data for that domain was done.

These analyses revealed significant multivariate effects for two domains within the Classroom Instruction component of LaCET. These two were: Presents Appropriate Content \( [F(3, 103) = 3.36, p<.05] \) and Provides Opportunities for Student Involvement \( [F(4, 102) = 3.12, p<.05] \). The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups on those two sets of dependent variables.

Table 5.6
Differences in Strategies Observed by DE + DST Group vs. DST only Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of LaCET</th>
<th>Wilks' Lambda</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>Level of significance p &lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>.94054</td>
<td>(6, 100)</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Instruction</td>
<td>.91641</td>
<td>(4, 102)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Content</td>
<td>.91083</td>
<td>(3, 103)</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.022*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Student Involvement</td>
<td>.89110</td>
<td>(4, 102)</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.018*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing Student Progress</td>
<td>.95203</td>
<td>(2, 104)</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.078</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \alpha = .05 \)
Univariate ANOVA Results.

Since the MANOVA results indicated a significant effect for two instructional components of LaCET, univariate ANOVAs were then used to examine each of the seven items within the two significant domains to determine where differences existed between the groups. Table 5.7 presents the univariate ANOVA statistics for all seven items, including the four items with significant findings.

Table 5.7
Significant Univariate ANOVA and Means for Two Instructional LaCET Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Mean: DE + DST Group</th>
<th>Mean: DST only Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents Content at a Developmentally Appropriate Level</td>
<td>(1, 105)</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.047*</td>
<td>2.8421</td>
<td>2.5800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents Accurate Subject Matter</td>
<td>(1, 105)</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>.004*</td>
<td>2.9825</td>
<td>2.7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates Relevant Examples, Unexpected Situations, or Current Events to the Content</td>
<td>(1, 105)</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>.013*</td>
<td>2.7018</td>
<td>2.3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodates Individual Differences</td>
<td>(1, 105)</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>2.2982</td>
<td>2.2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates Ability to Communicate Effectively</td>
<td>(1, 105)</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.535</td>
<td>2.6491</td>
<td>2.5600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulates and Encourages Higher Order Thinking at the Appropriate Developmental Levels</td>
<td>(1, 105)</td>
<td>10.42</td>
<td>.002*</td>
<td>2.4211</td>
<td>1.8400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages Student Participation</td>
<td>(1, 105)</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>2.7193</td>
<td>2.4400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

α = .05

Univariate Effect for Presents Content at a Developmentally Appropriate Level.

There was a significant univariate effect for Presents Content at a Developmentally Appropriate Level \( [F (1,105) = 4.02, p< .05]. \) This indicates that there was a significant
difference between the two groups (DE + DST teachers and DST only teachers) on this indicator. The mean for the DE + DST group was 2.84 and for the DST only group was 2.58. The findings were in the hypothesized direction.

Univariate Effect for Presents Accurate Subject Matter. Results from the univariate ANOVAs indicated that the independent variable had a significant effect on Presents Accurate Subject Matter \([F (1,105) = 8.76, p< .005]\). This indicates that there was a significant difference between the two groups on the degree to which teachers present accurate subject matter. The mean for the DE + DST group was 2.98 (the highest mean for that group on any LaCET indicator) while it was 2.70 for the DST only group. The findings were in the hypothesized direction. This indicator is sometimes referred to as Accurate Content Knowledge.

Univariate Effect for Relates Relevant Examples, Unexpected Situations, or Current Events to the Content. Additional results from the univariate ANOVAs indicated that there was a significant effect for Relates Relevant Examples, Unexpected Situations, or Current Events to the Content \([F (1, 105) = 6.40, p< .05]\). The mean for the DE + DST group is 2.70 and for the DST only group is 2.30. Again, the results are in the hypothesized direction.

Univariate Effect for Stimulates and Encourages Higher Order Thinking at the Appropriate Developmental Levels. The last, and perhaps the most instructionally important result from the univariate ANOVAS, was found for the indicator Stimulates and Encourages Higher Order Thinking at the Appropriate Developmental Levels \([F (1, 105) = 10.42, p < .005]\). The mean for the DE + DST group is 2.42, while it was only 1.84 for the DST only group (the lowest for all the indicators). Again, the results are in
the hypothesized direction. This indicator assesses a teacher's ability to find ways to help students to think critically, which develops other skills such as: making decisions, solving problems, visualizing, reasoning, analyzing, interpreting, and knowing how to learn.

Summary of Qualitative Results

Overall Hypothesis

The overall hypothesis tested in this study is that mean scores on quality of instruction variables (as measured by LaCET) are higher at the DE + DST schools than at the DST only schools. This overall prediction is made because the DE + DST manipulation should be stronger than the DST only manipulation. The DE should be able to expend more energy working with and improving individual teachers. Five separate alternative hypotheses were tested, two of which were supported.

Research Hypotheses (RH)

RH I. Mean scores on the Classroom Management Component (i.e., the teacher maintains an environment conducive to learning), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of external change agents (i.e., DEs + DSTs) than in matched school with a DST only.

Result: There is no evidence to support RH I.

RH II. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component A (i.e., the teacher delivers instruction effectively), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of external change agents (i.e., DEs + DSTs) than in matched school with only a DST.

Result: There is no evidence to support RH II.

RH III. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component B (i.e., the teacher

219
Presents appropriate content), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of external change agents (i.e., DEs + DSTs) than in matched school with a DST only.

Result: There is statistical evidence in support of RH III with regard to all three indicators on this component:

- Presents Content at a Developmentally Appropriate Level,
- Presents Accurate Subject Matter, and
- Relates Relevant Examples, Unexpected Situations, or Current Events to the Content.

RH IV. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component C (i.e., the teacher provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of external change agents (i.e., DEs + DSTs) than in matched school with a DST only.

Results: There is statistical evidence in support of RH IV with regard to one of the four indicators: Stimulates and Encourages Higher Order Thinking at the Appropriate Developmental Levels.

RH V. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component D (i.e., the teacher Assesses student progress), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of external change agents (i.e., DEs + DSTs) than in matched school with a DST only.

Results: There is no evidence to support RH V.
Chapter Six integrates the results discussed in Chapters Four and Five to provide a comprehensive picture of the differences between DST + DE schools and DST only schools. Implications for practice and further research are also presented.
CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Study

A school accountability system alone is unlikely to improve quality teaching and learning. External change agent support alone offers no assurance that a school faculty (internal change agents) will develop the capacity to change. Nevertheless, the quality of the support can enhance a school’s internal capacity and commitment.

McLaughlin (1989) found that the active commitment of district leadership (a type of external change agent) was essential to project success and long run stability. She concluded that without the active support of district central office staff, individuals responsible for implementation typically did not put forth the effort necessary to successfully effectuate and sustain school improvement strategies. Many studies indicate that district involvement is crucial for sustaining success in school improvement initiatives (e.g., Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; Hill, Wise, & Shapiro, 1989; Jacobson, 1986; Muller, 1989; Murphy, Hallinger, & Peterson, 1985; Paulu, 1988).

In addition to district support, some states have added an additional external change agent. In Kentucky, a Highly Skilled Educator is provided by the state for struggling schools. Louisiana’s Distinguished Educator (DE) program was modeled after this plan. These high profile educators (e.g., teachers, administrators, university personnel) are selected and trained by the state to help schools that are in some form of Corrective Action. The addition of this type of external change agent to work with District Support Teams (DSTs) creates a unique collaborative resource for low performing schools. It is that mixture of combining the two resources (DEs, DSTs) from
their specific sources (state and district) that provides additional significance to this study.

This chapter is divided into the following five parts.

(1) Restatement of the research questions and discussions of findings.

The research questions were all answered using qualitative data sources. While Chapter Four summarized the qualitative results using the case study approach, that chapter was so lengthy that the answers to the research questions were postponed to Chapter Six.

(2) Restatement of the findings associated with the research hypotheses.

Since these results were detailed in Chapter Five, they are simply restated in this chapter.

(3) Implications of the results form the study.

(4) Conclusions and Recommendations for Practice.

(5) Recommendations for Further Study.

Restatement of the Research Questions and Hypotheses and Discussion of Findings

Research Questions (RQ)

The five research questions are responded to in the order that they were presented in Chapter One. The order follows the logical sequence of the study’s methodology.

Research Question I. What is the extrinsic capacity of the DSTs?

A. Expertise

The perception of the expertise of Distinguished Educators in instructional strategies, accountability policy specifics and processes/strategies of change agents was evident in the interviews with administrators, at the school and district level, and teachers. Therefore, the expertise of the DE was not a variable for examination in this study. Additionally, all DEs received the same training over the two-year period.

223
The expertise (e.g., prior experience and training) of the DST members was described by the interviewees as the experience each member had prior to serving on the DST. For example, if a member was an administrator for fifteen years or a Title I coordinator, the faculty perceived the DST to have expertise because, collectively, the team had a lot of experience. Additionally, faculties in schools, which had one type of DST [District Assistance Teams (DATs)], felt that the team demonstrated expertise in conducting the schools' needs assessment and providing a Data Notebook.

1. What is the composition/specialties of the team?

The choice of individuals to serve on a school's DST may make the difference between a team that is “working on” a school rather than “working with” one (Tafel & Bertani, 1992). What expertise or authority does this type of external change agent bring to the school?

The combination of two types of DSTs [i.e., District Assistance Teams and School Site Teams (SSTs)] in two schools contributes to complicate the descriptions of the composition of such teams. Therefore, to simplify the description of the composition of the DST, only the SSTs’ composition will be described unless noted otherwise.

The DATs at these DST only schools (there were four schools with this combination) only collected data for the needs assessment, they were not concerned about the progress of that school’s improvement. The faculty members interviewed could not name the team members. On the other hand, the SST did have a clear goal to monitor the schools progress, was more concerned with school improvement, and was more familiar to the faculty. (The only discussion of the DATs at these schools was their...
competence in collecting the needs assessment data, therefore, the results on that indicator reflected their expertise.)

The following are the various types of DST combinations found in this study.

- All central office personnel with several directors (i.e., high level administrators),
- All central office personnel (e.g. Title I coordinators, core-subject supervisors, staff development facilitators);
- Central office personnel mixed with school level administrators;
- Retired school employees serving as DAT-leaders, with the remainder of the team coming from the central office or from local universities. One large district utilized retired employees and university personnel in an effort to reduce the number of central office staff; and
- SST members who are central office staff with one principal rotating on the team per annual visit. There was at least one DAT-trained member on each SST.

Each team had three to five members with the exception of the SSTs who are comprised of seven to eight members. There was one consistency found during the examination of the composition of District Support Teams - a Title I specialist served on each DST.

The DSTs have shared experiences with the faculty in that most members serving on the team were former teachers and administrators in that district. This shared experience translated as expertise to the faculty because the team was familiar with the problems specific to the culture of the area and schools.
The Distinguished Educator, on the other hand, did not come from the district in which they were assigned and at least three teachers in two different schools made reference that he/she did not understand the problems in that district.

2. What is the variation in the quality of training for team members?

The training of the District Support Team members was varied. The School Support Teams, organized in one district to make annual school site visits and provide feedback on a dozen district standards (e.g., using daily activities to improve test scores and academic achievement, insuring the quality of teacher responses in re-directing student learning), did not have any comprehensive group-wide training.

Several DAT-leaders remarked that the 5-day training provided by the Louisiana Department of Education to the District Assistance Team members varied in quality. DAT members who went through the first training sessions felt that they did not receive training comparable to those who were trained later in the program.

DAT training provided during this two-year period (SY1999-2001) was a comprehensive preparation that included the following:

- Conduction a comprehensive school needs assessment,
- Instruction on developing a school’s mission/vision,
- Determining the school’s priorities,
- Writing goals and objectives,
- Developing the school improvement plan,
- Implementing research-based practices,
- Planning for staff development,
≥ Assessing implementation of the plan, and
≥ Supporting and monitoring the plan.

It was the perception of all interview participants that the DATs did have expertise in conducting the school needs assessment and, for those DAT members who participated, the expertise to help develop a School Improvement Plan. Unfortunately, the high level of training provided for the eight District Assistance Teams did not often lead to an opportunity to initiate and implement School Improvement strategies.

While training on conducting the school's needs assessment was less than half of the total instruction, nine out of ten DATs (as a group) only conducted the needs assessment. The majority of the training was not utilized or not evidenced.

B. Commitment

1. What initial support was extended by the DST (SY 1999-2000)?

Providing early and on-going support to struggling schools is a non-debatable necessity for implementation of school improvement strategies. Initial support, for this study, is defined as the DSTs' involvement with the schools' needs assessment, the triangulation of the data for the Data Notebook or similar reporting documents, and the development of the School Improvement Plan.

All five DE + DST schools and the only Corrective Action DST only school had a Data Notebook compiled by the LDE of information gleaned from the school's needs assessment. The DAT conducted the needs assessments in those schools. Two DST only schools had a SST report, and the other two schools had a district-report similar to a Data Notebook.
Four schools had strong initial support in that the school needs assessment was thorough and complete, and the triangulation of data was accurate. All four of these schools were DE + DST schools. Five schools had average initial support. One of these five schools did a poor job of gathering data for the needs assessment, but did return to try to get better survey return rates for a second needs assessment the next year. The other four schools did not complete a thorough needs assessment (i.e., the two SSTs’ visit report) or did not utilize the whole team while conducting the needs assessment. Lastly, one DST only school had poor initial support because the team did not conduct a thorough needs assessment, did not triangulate the data sufficiently (e.g., reported weaknesses of the school that were not substantiated by data) and did not return to help implement or monitor any improvements.

Collectively, only one DAT returned to help implement the school plan and develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Individually, three other DAT-leaders returned to help the schools develop their SIP. All other DST members left this part of the process to the individual schools. Therefore, schools where a DST-leader returned to support school improvement activities, the two groups for examination may best be described as DE + DST-leader support schools and DST-leader only supported schools rather than assuming the entire team had an influence on school improvement activities.

2. What on-going support was given by the DST (SY 2000-2001)?

A study by Pajak and Payne (1991), which explored principals’ perceptions of the central office, indicated that principals want “district office administrators and supervisors to become more actively supportive of school-based change efforts” (p.1). On-going support is described as the DST’s support or assistance after conducting the
needs assessment (e.g., in initiating, implementing, and/or monitoring school improvement strategies at the school). To be considered on going the support should be given more than once a year (i.e., the SST’s annual visit). The following are instances of on-going support:

- One ‘team’ did return several times to a DE + DST school to help develop the SIP, monitor for implementation and generally support school improvement processes;
- Three DAT-leaders returned several times to help plan for school improvement and monitor progress;
- Four SSTs visited the schools annually and therefore would not be considered as providing on-going support; and
- Two DSTs did not return to the school after conducting the needs assessment.

Several teacher responses about on-going support were very passionate. For example, one teacher said, “The DAT team coming here was a very good thing, but by not following through with what they said, it became a very bad thing. The next time someone says the DAT team is coming, it’s not going to make a difference.” Common responses from teachers and principals were: “they were not as involved this year”, “haven’t seen them”, and “they did not come back”. At least three references were made about the school being the district’s “dirty little secret” and the district central office staff just “leaves us (the faculty) alone”.

Given this feedback, it was surprising to find that several of the DST-leaders did come back to follow through with their commitment to the school (i.e., both
administrators and DST-leaders gave specifics of their visits). However, the faculty saw the DST-leader as returning to the campus in his/her regular central office role rather than as the school's DST-leader. For example, the DST-leader may also be the middle school science supervisor. When he/she returned to the school to monitor for implementation, most or all faculty members did not view him/her as returning in the role of their DST member but rather the science supervisor. Therefore, most faculties felt unsupported by the DSTs, even when some support was extended.

Any benefits from a DST’s visit to the school was assumed by the faculty to be something extra that just happened to come their way, rather than a conscious effort of a DST. More dialog between district personnel and the school’s faculty, especially concerning visits to support the school improvement plan, may have reduced these abandoned feelings of many on the faculty.

2. What is the overall commitment to the accountability program in the school?

As noted earlier, McLaughlin (1989) posits the active commitment of district leadership was essential to project success and long run stability. She concluded that without the active support of district central office staff, individuals responsible for implementation typically did not put forth the effort necessary to successfully effectuate school improvement strategies.

District Support Team leaders were asked about their over-all commitment to the process. All DST-leaders, except the retired school employee, cited a lack of time (due to an overload of responsibilities) as a barrier to their commitment to sufficiently support the school in the school improvement processes. Overall, the DST-leaders felt the
accountability initiative was helpful in bringing about needed changes in the efforts of educators to focus on student achievement. This was an indication of their commitment to the accountability program.

C. Resources/Authority

1. What resources are available to the team for school improvement support to the target school?

Funds, knowledge, materials, time, and specialized forms of assistance (e.g., writing a school improvement plan, assembling resources for staff development) can all be considered resources. Faculties valued the time given by DST members on-site; in fact, faculties identified the most common barrier to the DSTs' effectiveness as a lack of time.

No school faculty member had knowledge of any funds provided by the DST. DST-leaders also acknowledged that, as a team, they were not given any funds to help the school. Few DSTs were credited with providing classroom materials. Again, if classroom materials were supplied, this was viewed as a traditional role of the supervising district personnel, rather than resources received from a supporting school improvement team.

Special assistance was given in at least four schools when some DAT-leaders aided with the development and writing of the School Improvement Plans. However, again, most teachers were not aware that the DST helped write the school's improvement plan and, therefore, assumed the DST did not help.

Several principals remarked that the school's needs assessment and the Data Notebook were important resources resulting from DST involvement. An obvious
conclusion for why this information was important would have been because it helped build the foundation for systemic school improvement. However, this was not the case. The principals felt the information gleaned from the needs assessments empowered their position at the school because it reinforced what they (the principals) had been "saying for years".

Four principals stated that although the needs assessment did not "tell them anything they (the principals) did not know", the DST needs assessment reports did give credibility to changes the principal already wanted to make. For example, one principal felt the report gave him added authority to demand more from poorly performing teachers and to require these teachers to attend specific professional development. This empowerment may have resulted in the initiation of some school improvement activities.

Similar to the common misperception that the DSTs did not come back to support the schools, the faculties did not always know what resources were provided by DSTs. For example, one DST helped to get a dilapidated building torn down next to the school, but no faculty member knew this. In another school, the DST provided an additional assistant principal for that school, but the faculty did not realize the new position was the result of the DST efforts, rather than a policy change at the district level. Several other instances DSTs giving resources or support to schools without the knowledge of most faculty members were evidenced in this study (i.e., time spent by the DST at the school after the needs assessment and DST-leaders working to develop the School Improvement Plan).

If the faculties had known about the actual DST efforts to provide resources (even though this occurred relatively infrequently, would the knowledge of this support have
stimulated the school staff to initiate and implement school improvement strategies?

Although DST support was modest-to-nonexistent, the fact that some support was never acknowledged leaves one to question why such sharing of information was so difficult or infrequent between district personnel and school staff. This is an indication there is no new role for these districts (e.g., facilitative and supportive) at this time.

2. What perception of authority does the DST have to make key policy changes and staff hiring and firing?

It takes a high degree of skill to provide schools with a blend of pressure and support – pressure to encourage schools to do their best and support for experimentation and risk-taking (Sparks, 1991). Most DSTs felt they had no authority to provide the pressure to make changes. Only one DST was composed of central office directors who did have the authority to make policy and recommend transfers and hiring of employees. One other DST reported their findings to a high-level central office staff member who never become involved at the school. For the most part, the DST-leaders acknowledged the team had no authority.

Whether the DST was given any formal authority or not, most teachers believed the team had authority. One teacher commented that several of the teachers at her school distorted facts during the needs assessment because they were afraid to tell the truth about many of the things that happened at the school. The assumption of these teachers was that the DST would impose some sort of sanctions or reprimands for the actions (or lack of actions) at their schools. Another teacher said that “teachers who never teach” actually prepared lessons for the days the DST would be on campus for the needs assessment. Several teachers indicated that the DST had a short-term effect on the quality of
instruction because teachers in the school did make efforts to improve their teaching when district personnel were working in the schools.

Behaviors did change because of the involvement of district personnel, even if for a short time. If the involvement of the DST had been on-going, would the change in teachers’ behaviors have made any impact on the quality of instruction?

D. Processes shared by both the DST and Faculty.

1. What processes did the DST participate with the faculty?

Overall, the school needs assessment appears to be the only process shared by the DSTs and faculty. Some DST-leaders did participate in more activities (e.g., development and writing of SIPs) with the faculty than the team as a whole.

2. How often did the DST and faculty work together?

Other than the school’s needs assessment, the faculties and most DSTs did not work together collectively. Only one DST was considered to have highly influenced school improvement processes at that school. This particular team did visit the school as a team and was “only a phone call away” at any given time. One of the DST members (in an informal conversation) provided the reason why this team was so involved at the school. This director (one of three high level district personnel) felt that their team was using this situation to learn more about the assistance given by DSTs in order to provide guidance (to other DSTs) for future district involvement in their lowest performing schools.
Research Question II: What are the strategies initiated by the external change agents (DSTs & DEs) that impact:

A. Effective School Processes

There were two parts to this question: (a) Were the external change agents influential on the five effective school processes? And (b) What were the strategies that were effective? The interview answers to Research Question II listed above and to Research Question III (i.e., perceptions of effective strategies of the external change agents) were almost exactly the same. Therefore, the effective strategies will be reported later in this chapter in the results for Question Three. The following results are the perceptions of the influence the two types of external change agents had on school effectiveness processes.

Six of the ten DSTs were not perceived to be influential on any effective school process (i.e., a safe and orderly environment, student expectations, teacher expectations, teacher collaboration, and the quality of instruction). One DST was recognized by the faculty to be influential on three of these processes (i.e., student expectations, teacher expectations, and quality of instruction). This was also the same DST with the highest level of involvement and which had the highest authorities from the central office on it (i.e., the directors). The other three DST had mixed perceptions of influence. The DSTs perceived to be the most influential were those serving at DE + DST schools. The presence of a DE enhances the perception that the DST was influential1.

---

1 The process whereby this occurred is unclear. Did the DEs talk to the faculty members about the role of the DST? Did the combination of DE and DST at a school lead faculty members to believe the overall process was more important? Did the DE enact some of the DST initiatives?
Four Distinguished Educators were perceived as having influence on three or four of the five effective school processes. One Distinguished Educator was not perceived to influence any effective school processes. This DE was described as having a strong or demanding personality and was asked by the principal to leave the campus on one occasion. Additionally, this Distinguished Educator served the only DE + DST school which did not have a Progress toward the Growth Target score greater that its matched school.

The Distinguished Educators were perceived as having the greatest influence on the quality of instruction and the lowest amount of influence on the safety and orderliness of the environment. This is not surprising since the DEs spent the majority of their time working with the faculty on curriculum and instruction.

The DSTs were perceived to have the greatest influence on teacher expectations and the lowest on teacher collaboration. Historically, district involvement at the school site was predominately supervising instruction with the expectation of effective teaching. Therefore, the DST members are still perceived to be in the role of instructional supervisors.

The following is a breakdown of the faculties’ perceptions of external change agent influence on specific effective school processes.

1. School climate: Discipline

The Distinguished Educators were not perceived as having influence on the discipline (i.e., safety and orderliness of the environment), with the exception of the one DE who persistently worked to improve the lighting in the parking lots. This is understandable since the DEs are considered instructional leaders rather than managerial.
No DST received favorable perceptions on this indicator. Only two of the ten DSTs were given mixed perceptions (e.g., if two of the six faculty members interviewed had different responses from the other four) of influence on the safety and orderliness of the environment. These two DSTs were considered to have high or medium overall influence on school effectiveness processes. Both of these DSTs were serving DE + DST schools.

2. Culture: Student Expectations

Three Distinguished Educators were viewed as being influential in increasing student expectations to improve academically. One was perceived as having mixed influence, while the other was perceived to have no influence.

Most DSTs (i.e., six out of ten) were not perceived as having influence on student expectations. Only one DST was perceived as being influential on student expectations; the other DSTs had mixed perceptions of influence.

3. Culture: Teacher Expectations

The results were highly similar for DE perception of influence on student and teacher expectations. However, some DSTs were perceived as having more influence on teacher expectations to improve. Three DSTs’ were rated as high on this indicator, but seven out of ten were not perceived as having an impact on teacher expectations.

4. Culture: Teacher Collaboration

Views were mixed on the Distinguished Educator’s influence on teacher collaboration. Two DEs were perceived as influential on this indicator and two others were given mixed perceptions. Two strategies recognized by the several faculty members (in schools where the two DEs who were acknowledged as influential on this
indicator) that initiated and sustained teacher collaboration were: the on-going instructional focus groups and the constant dialog between these DEs and the faculty about instructional strategies and pertinent research. No DST was perceived as having an impact on teacher collaboration.

5. The Quality of Instruction

With the exception of one Distinguished Educator, all the DEs were perceived by the faculty as having influence on the quality of instruction at the school. Many teachers echoed the sentiment that the DE had the greatest impact on the quality of instruction at their schools. Only two DSTs were perceived to be influential on this indicator and two had mixed perceptions of influence.

This perception of the influence of the DE on quality of instruction was important form a methodological point of view. This qualitative interview data triangulated with the quantitative observational data (see Chapter Five) leading to the conclusion that schools with DEs had better instruction (than schools without DEs). Neither data source was conclusive by itself, but the combination of concurrent (QUAL + QUAN) data sources provided strong evidence for the instructional role of the DEs.

B. Fullan’s School Improvements Processes (i.e. taking responsibility, a moral belief in the process, change is planned and managed, active initiation and participation, importance of external change agents)?

The responses to this set of questions were the most nebulous. The first question asked was: What strategies or resources did the DST or DE use to influence “individuals in the school to take responsibility” for school improvement processes? The most common answer to this and the next three questions (i.e., What strategies were used to
build a moral belief in the school improvement process?, How did the DST/DE help show that change is planned and managed?, and What were the processes of the DST/DE that actively engaged the faculty in the initiation and participation of school improvement processes?) was “They (the faculty) are not there yet”. Most interview respondents assumed that the faculties had not adopted any of (Fullan’s) school improvement processes. No external change agent viewed their role as helping the faculty to develop these processes or approaches to change.

The Distinguished Educators, as a group, could describe the faculties’ belief in these approaches to change better than the DST-leader. Often a DE would estimate how many members in the faculty believed in one of Fullan’s processes (e.g., “twenty-five percent believe that”). The ease with which the faculty could be described indicated the insight that several of the DEs had with regard to their faculties. Obviously, the great amount of time spent with the faculty one-on-one provided the DEs’ with this intuitive knowledge that only insiders could have. Perhaps this insight reflects the metamorphism from an external support to a more internal one.

However, in all interviews with administrators, teachers, and external change agents, the language used to respond to questions about Fullan’s school improvement processes reflected the fact that those interviewed were unfamiliar with the language or the processes at their schools. The information garnered from this research question did not add much to the knowledge base for this study.

Research Question III: Perceptions of effective strategies and barriers to success.
A. What resources/strategies provided (i.e., staff development, parental involvement, funding) by the external change agents (DSTs and DEs) are perceived to be effective?

Most of the interviewees were indifferent about the DSTs' strategies. About half of the faculty members believed the DST did not contribute any support to the school (e.g., “I am not aware of anything they did.”). However, the other half recognized the importance of the information gleaned from the needs assessment, especially as seen by an outsider. Seven staff members, mostly principals, commented that their team was objective and fair.

The interviewees responded at length about the effective strategies of the Distinguished Educator. The four most often discussed DE strategies were:

1. Using focus groups to get teachers’ input and to generate instructional dialog,
2. Modeling lessons,
3. Supplying research-based information on classroom strategies, and
4. Coaching teachers to improve instructional techniques.

Some of the more often cited effective traits of the DEs were: team leader, ability to listen, offers constructive advise, a resource person, has a great work-ethic, child oriented, shares things, research-based, knowledgeable, and “has connections to find answers”.

In a study of Kentucky Distinguished Educators, Davis and associates (1997) found that the DE contributed to a collaborative climate of change through activities that promoted: opening lines of communication throughout the organization, building trust...
and rapport among all staff members, developing tools designed to facilitate meetings, negotiating difficult issues, providing reflection, and fostering evaluation. Questions from the Davis study were included in the interviews in the present study. Again, the answers were tenuous but for different reasons. The language was not unfamiliar to the respondents, but the processes listed above were considered as daily events for the Distinguished Educators. For example, the traits and strategies described above were the activities and attributes that made it possible for the DE to accomplish these on-going practices.

Although the school staff felt that the Distinguished Educators were always moving to accomplish these activities described above, the DEs in the present study did not feel that they had met all of these goals. For example, the two activities that the DEs found to be most difficult to execute were “providing reflection” and “fostering evaluation”. It was obvious that the six activities found in the Davis study were directions that the DEs, with the one exception, considered vital to build the faculties’ capacity for change, thus confirming the his study. The question arises whether the Distinguished Educators were selected with these convictions or whether the training instilled their beliefs in those processes.

B. What are the barriers to success faced by the external change agents (DSTs and DEs)?

Time and funds were listed as the biggest barriers to a DST’s effectiveness. Many faculty members understood that the DST was composed of district personnel who had new additional responsibilities added to their regular jobs. Another common
response was the lack of acceptance from the faculty. Most of the interview participants said that the DST did not have any barriers, or they did not know of any.

The biggest barrier cited for DE effectiveness was the administration of the school. Several staff members, in the four schools where a new principal was hired a year after the DE was assigned, recognized the difficulty for the Distinguished Educator to initiate improvement processes because the initial administration did not support the DE pilot program or the DE assigned to the school. Overall, at least one teacher in each of the ten schools felt that the principal did not support the DE.

Although the interviewees did not list the following as barriers in responses to interview questions, there appears to be two impediments to the receptivity of the DEs' support. Both of these barriers were reiterated throughout the study. First, the faculty, including the administration, did not understand that the DE pilot program was a voluntary program. Each DE did explain the pilot program to the faculty. However, all of the school staff interviewed believed that the State assigned the DE to their school because the school was low performing. The LDE did select the schools in which the DE was assigned and the district superintendents were asked to allow that school to participate in the DE pilot program. Principals were quick to acknowledge their school was “not in Corrective Action”; meaning this school does not need a Distinguished Educator. There was definitely a resentment that the school was singled out to receive a DE.

For the most part, the DEs faced a great deal of resentment during the initial year, however, at the time of this study, the faculty voiced appreciation for the support given by the DE. Obviously, with time, most faculty members accepted the Distinguished
Educators (with the exception of one). However, at least one interviewee at each school noted this initial resentment to the DE assignment.

The second obstacle to the DEs’ effectiveness concerned the leadership at the schools (i.e., the instability of leadership and/or the lack of instructional leadership at the school). The DE, who was perceived as the most ineffective, had three different principals during the two-year service. Two Distinguished Educators had a different principal each year during the two-year pilot program. Both DEs felt that they had to start over when the new principal came onboard. However, both felt that the new principal did interact more positively than the former administrator. Perhaps, this more positive attitude from the new principal was because the DE was assigned before his/her arrival; therefore, the DE-assignment was not based on his/her performance at that school.

Two DEs had new administrators who were appointed the same year that the Distinguished Educator was assigned and remained for the entire two-year program. These two situations were different. One principal was a former teacher and was very excited to get a chance to lead the school. The other administrator was transferred from a successful position and greatly resented the change in position. Obviously, both principals interacted differently with the DE. One was excited for the support, while the other resented being a part of the school.

Research Question IV: What is the nature of the relationship between DEs and DSTs?

The relationship between the DE and the DAT (all DE + DST schools had a DAT initially) was considered positive. The DE and DAT-leader in three of the five schools
rated the relationship as high or great. In the two DE + DST schools where the DAT was quickly replaced by the SST, the DAT and DE had very little contact with the team. Therefore, there was no relationship between the two types of external change agents.

Research Question V: Was the quality of instruction affected by both
a) the extrinsic capacity of the external change agents, and
b) the internal change agents' perception of the influence exerted by external change agents on the school effectiveness processes and school improvement processes?

For this study, extrinsic capacity is defined as the power and ability of the DST to provide schools with support for school improvement processes. Components of extrinsic capacity include expertise, commitment, and the administrative quality of the role. The extrinsic capacity of DSTs (see Table 4.13) was rated as high, medium, or low in a table summarizing results from the qualitative analysis. To receive a high rating for extrinsic capacity, the DST must have had at least three high ratings of faculty perceptions on components of extrinsic capacity (i.e., expertise, resources, authority, and commitment) in Table 4.13. A medium extrinsic capacity rating requires at least one high and one medium on the same components. A DST receives a low if the team does not garner at least one high and one medium.

Two DSTs are categorized as having high extrinsic capacity. These are the two DATs, which had the highest ratings on involvement and authority. Four DSTs received a medium rating. All four low rated DSTs were found in DST only schools. The DE + DST schools had two high ratings and three medium ratings. The non-DE schools had
four low ratings and one medium rating. The DSTs were perceived as being more involved when a state-employed Distinguished Educator was housed at that school.

The DST and DE influence ratings, Quality of Instruction Means, and Progress Toward Growth Target in Table 6.1 were taken directly from Table 4.13. The Quality of Instruction means come from Table 5.3, while the Progress toward Growth Target percentages come from five different tables in Chapter Four.

Table 6.1
Cross-Case Comparison of the Ten Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DE SCHOOL</th>
<th>Extrinsic Capacity of DST</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Quality of Instruction Means</th>
<th>Progress Toward Growth Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DST</td>
<td>DE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Elliot</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.6364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thoreau</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.8333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mark Twain</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.4167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Longfellow</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.7273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Steinbeck</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.5455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-DE SCHOOL</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low *</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Kennedy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2.7500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Roosevelt</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2.1818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2.4545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lincoln</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. George Washington</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Significant findings were found for four of the thirteen indicators on two of the four components of the LaCET Instructional domains.

The pattern of ratings presented in Table 6.1 illustrate an overall relationship between extrinsic capacity of the DSTs, perceived influence of the external change agents, quality of instruction, and progress toward growth targets. This overall pattern favors the DE + DST schools over the DST only schools in all cases.
(1) All but two ratings in the DE + DST school are high or medium for extrinsic capacity and the perception of influence of the external change agents. With the exception of one rating, every DST only school received a low rating.

(2) Analyses from Chapter Five indicates that there were significant differences between the two groups of schools on some quality of instruction variables, such that DE + DST schools had higher quality of instruction than DST only schools. In the paired comparisons in Table 6.1, the DE + DST school has a higher overall quality of instruction means in all five cases.

(3) On the Progress toward Growth Target indicator, the DE + DST school outscored its matched pair DST only school in four out of five cases.

The presence of the DE appears to have a positive effect in attitudinal, behavioral, and cognitive areas. The preceding section has included discussions of the processes whereby this DE-effect emerged during the LSDAP pilot study.

**Restatement of the Findings Associated with the Research Hypotheses**

**Research Hypotheses (RH)**

The overall hypothesis tested in this study was that mean scores on the quality of teaching (as measured by LaCET) will be higher at the DE + DST schools than at the DST only schools. The unit of analysis is the teacher.

This overall prediction is made because the DE + DST manipulation should be stronger than the DST only manipulation. The DE should be able to expend more energy working with and improving individual teachers.

RH I. Mean scores on the Classroom Management Component (i.e., the teacher maintains an environment conducive to learning), as measured by LaCET will be
higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

There were no overall significant findings (i.e., the overall MANOVA was n.s.).

RH II. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component A (i.e., the teacher delivers instruction effectively), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with only a DST.

There were no overall significant findings (i.e., the overall MANOVA was n.s.).

RH III. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component B (i.e., the teacher presents appropriate content), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

There was a significant finding (overall MANOVA significance level, p < .05) and three significant univariate indicators (i.e., Presents Content at a Developmentally Appropriate Level; Presents Accurate Subject Matter; and Relates Relevant Examples, Unexpected Situations, or Current Events to the Content) to be significant for DE + DST schools. These results indicate that teachers in DE + DST schools were significantly better than teachers in DST only schools in terms of presenting content at an appropriate level, presenting subject matter accurately, and relating relevant examples, situations, and events.

RH IV. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component C (i.e., the teacher
provides opportunities for student involvement in the learning process), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in a matched school with a DST only.

There was a significant finding for this hypothesis (overall MANOVA significance level, \( p < .05 \)). In the ANOVA analysis, which followed, one univariate indicator (i.e., Stimulates and Encourages Higher Order Thinking at the Appropriate Developmental Levels) was found to be significant. These results indicate that teachers in DE + DST schools were significantly better than teachers in DST only schools with regard to stimulating and encouraging higher order thinking skills.

RH V. Mean scores on the Quality of Instruction Component D (i.e., the teacher Assesses student progress), as measured by LaCET will be higher for teachers in schools with a combined support team of DEs + DSTs than in matched school with a DST only.

There were no overall significant results (i.e., the overall MANOVA was n.s.).

Implications of the Results from the Study

The implications drawn from the three primary purposes of this study will be discussed first.

Purposes of Study

1. To examine the structure and intensity of effort (i.e., initiative, intensity of the relationship, expertise, scope, and linkage) of the external change agents
It does make a difference who is selected to serve as an external change agent. A DST which is committed and willing to give time and effort to the school is perceived to be more effective than teams who do not make this commitment. This intensity of effort has been found to influence teaching behaviors at the school and therefore, the quality of instruction. The findings from this study indicate that (a) the relationship between the DST and faculty, (b) the scope of influence (e.g., the number of teacher who know and understand what actions and supports are offered by the DST), and most importantly, (c) the time invested at the schools as a member of the District Support Team (which is valued and wanted by most faculty members) does make a difference in the attitude and behavior of the faculty at those schools. Although only one DST actually expended efforts to work with the faculties on school improvement activities, the faculty at that school felt they had the “best DAT in the state”.

Distinguished Educators, for the most part, are considered experts in their field, and although there was initial resentment about their presence on the campus, the faculty later embraced their work, advise, and support. However, it was quite clear that even if a DE had the expertise and commitment, he/she could relegate him/herself virtually ineffective if the Distinguished Educator is considered too pushy or demanding by the faculty. Every word and action of the DEs are scrutinized by the faculty, therefore, most DEs make special efforts not alienate the teachers or administrators.

2. To explore the perceptions of teachers and administrators with regard to the influence of the external agents in their school on school effectiveness processes and school improvement approaches to change
The findings from this study revealed that there is a relationship between the perceptions of the teachers and administrators with regard to the influence of the DST on school effectiveness processes and the level of expertise, resources given, authority of the DST and commitment to the school. A Distinguished Educator was perceived to have influence on school effectiveness processes if the faculty accepted her support.

Information concerning Fullan’s school improvement processes was nebulous (perhaps because the researcher assumed the faculty had knowledge of the terminology) and did not contribute to the findings. The Distinguished Educators do work with their faculties with the understanding that these approaches to change must be acquired by the faculty. However, the perception of the Distinguished Educators, as well as other interviewees, was that these approaches are internal to the stakeholders and, therefore, are not easily manipulated by external change agents.

3. To compare the level of support and the perceptions of support in both groups of schools (i.e., DST only and DE + DST) with the Quality of Instruction at each school and in each group of schools.

The faculty at these ten middle schools did accurately perceive the level of support given by the external change agents, for the most part. The support for all but one very involved DAT was perceived to be modest or nonexistent. In two instances, support given by the DST was unknown to the faculties and, therefore, not acknowledged as support by the staff.

However, there is direct relationship between the support given by external change agents and the quality of instruction, as shown by descriptive and inferential statistics on the one hundred and seven (107) classroom observations. Teachers in
schools with Distinguished Educators showed significantly higher ratings on instructional indicators than did teachers in schools without DEs. This was expected because the DE expended more time and instructional support in their schools; therefore, the manipulation was greater.

Other Implications of the Study

There were a number of other implications from the findings in this study, including the following:

➢ DSTs were perceived by their faculties to have authority even when they did not see themselves as having any authority.

➢ Resources, such as funds and materials, were not as important to the school staff as the DST's commitment of time.

➢ Leadership instability, the high rate of uncertified teachers, and the inability of schools to retain quality teachers were barriers that these ten schools deal with each year. Even the most actively committed DST, (e.g., which transferred in a successful principal, added another administrative position at the school, and paid incentives for teachers to work there) could not overcome the obstacles listed above (e.g., the principal wants to quit, the rate of uncertified teachers during the two-year pilot program was as high as thirty-five percent, and the administration had to replace sixteen teachers during SY 2000 – 2001).

➢ The faculties' acceptance of the support and expertise of the Distinguished Educator was varied. Distinguished Educators in four schools (not including Thoreau Middle where the district was very involved) were not taken as seriously as they wanted to be. The school staff, particularly the administration, was quick
to point out that all but one DE + DST schools were not in Corrective Action. The DEs at those schools felt that since this was a pilot program rather than the true accountability program, they had no authority to make significant changes at the school, and the school staff often did not see the need for DE support.

Two barriers to the DSTs’ effectiveness, as perceived by the faculty, were (1) a lack of time to commit to more on-site involvement at the school (no DST was released from any other responsibilities) and (2) delays by the LDE in returning the Data Notebooks (i.e., one DST-leader said he waited eleven months for theirs). These barriers gave the faculty the impression that the DST dropped the ball because the team did not return after the needs assessment to discuss the findings until a significant time had passed.

Progress toward Growth Targets were not good indicators of the quality of instruction. The two largest gains on this indicator in the DST only schools were the result of two technical changes (Teddle & Stringfield, 1993) [superficial changes “designed to raise achievement test scores, (rather) than more comprehensive attempts to move the school toward excellence” (p. 219)]. The quality of instruction in those two schools had not significantly changed over the past two years (SY 1999 – 2001) (this was acknowledged by the administrators and teachers), however, the Progress toward Growth Target(s) were very high (i.e., 144.3% and 126.9%).

Closer examination of the two schools revealed that in the first school (i.e., with a 144.3% Progress toward the Growth Target), a DE-like person (i.e., a new assistant principal for instruction) had motivated the faculty to place a focus on
instruction, specifically focusing on information that would impact the CRT and NRT exams. This DE-like person did not model lessons, coach teachers or provide specific instructional help, but was the cheerleader for the faculty. Although the teachers at that school admitted that their teaching behaviors had not changed, they did place a focus on testing preparation and testing content.

The principal at the second school (i.e., with Progress toward the Growth Target at 126.9%) explained that the year prior to the calculation of this indicator (SY 1999), a “lot of zeroes” were given for students on the CRT and NRT exams because of student absences and poor administration of the exams. The following year, she assigned a school staff member to “get rid of the zeroes” by paying more attention to the administration of the exams and “chasing down students to take the exam”.

Both cases indicate that the Progress toward Growth Target(s) could be elevated without changing the quality of instruction. These gains should be one-time only gains and therefore should not affect that school’s progress label thereafter.

➢ In Louisiana, there does not appear at this time to be a new role for district leadership (e.g., facilitative and supportive rather than managerial and supervisory). Individually, the district personnel serving on DSTs were perceived to maintain their regular roles as supervisors, special program coordinators or directors rather than a district team member assigned to support overall school improvement at that school. The lack of communication between the district personnel and the faculty was an indicator of this relationship.
Teacher morale in these ten middle schools was low. Teachers felt abandoned by the district. One teacher commented that she was embarrassed to tell anyone where she worked because it was the impression of the community that the school only had “bad” teachers. For the most part, teachers indicated they do want help and do want to improve. District expectations for these teachers were perceived to be low; therefore, the teachers met those expectations.

Distinguished Educators did change teaching behaviors one-on-one with teachers who accepted the help. One teacher commented, “When I started teaching it took five years to learn how to get good classroom management skills. It took the Distinguished Educator one year to teach me how to be a good teacher.”

Most superintendents in these districts did not interact with the Distinguished Educators face-to-face, but assigned other district personnel to hear the recommendations. For the most part, DE recommendations for school improvement were not addressed at the district level.

District Support Teams were more involved when a State-assigned Distinguished Educator was housed at the school.

Teachers who did not feel supported by their administration or the district indicated instructional support, if needed, could come from fellow teachers and the regional service centers located throughout the state. Instructional support from these two sources are not continually given. For example, teachers cannot leave their classrooms to help other teachers without hurting the instruction of their own students. Regional Service Centers provide professional on-going support, but cannot meet the needs of every unsupported teacher in the state. The
best support must be at closer proximity to that teacher – the administration at the school and/or district personnel.

These are the most important findings that had not already been addressed. The following section will discuss recommendations from information gleaned from throughout the study.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Practice

Several observations are offered in regard to the findings of this study. They are potentially important and have implications for various audiences concerned with educational reform.

Conclusions

Overall, the data support the predictions of the researcher that the structure and commitment of District Support Teams in combination with a state-assigned external change agent (i.e., Distinguished Educator) can impact the quality of instruction in low performing schools. Cuban (1998) has categorized educational reforms as first-order changes that are superficial and do not affect the basic organizational processes, but may improve efficiency and second-order changes that alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together, including roles, structures and goals. The investment of quality external change agents provides second-order changes that do make a fundamental difference in school improvement by enhancing the capabilities and improving the performance of individual teachers by building capacity for change.

The two types of external change agents (i.e., DST & DE) have the potential to make up a collective support team of educators from different educational venues that work together to support change by providing a rich array of perspectives that can far
exceed the impact of a single change agent (Ginsberg, Johnson, & Moffett, 1997).

Moreover, the selection of qualified individuals to serve on this collective team contributes to the extrinsic capacity of these external change agents to build support for the internal change agents (i.e., the teachers and principals) in the schools. The conceptual figure in Chapter One (Figure 1.2) outlines this support linkage and the resulting influence on school effectiveness processes and student achievement.

**Recommendations for Practice**

The following recommendations are intended to provide guidance for districts and States involved in educational reforms.

1. The Louisiana School and District Accountability Program (LSDAP) provides training for district personnel (i.e., DAT) and guidance for the scope and sequence of assistance in low performing schools. The selection of these individuals is made at the district level. The districts should select individuals who would be willing to commit time and energy to the entire school improvement processes. Additionally, these individuals should be released from other responsibilities to actively participate in on-site activities at the school.

2. Distinguished Educator training should include sensitivity and/or group dynamics training to ensure that the communications and actions between the DE and faculty are facilitative and respectful of the personal backgrounds of the faculty members. Selection of educators to serve as Distinguished Educators should not include persons with strong, demanding personalities.
Although all DEs have somewhat strong and persistent personalities, most temper these traits by using strategies to facilitate change.

3. Dialog between district personnel and faculty members must be ongoing and frequent, especially in low performing schools. This will bring about an avenue to develop a new role for district personnel as facilitators and supporters rather than supervisors and policy managers. Additionally, the DST-leaders should announce their roles as part of the DST when they return to the school. This would clarify the misconception of a lack of support because the DST member was viewed by the faculty as returning to the school in the member’s traditional role at the central office (e.g., supervisor or Title I specialist).

4. DSTs by themselves are not perceived to be very powerful agents of change. Districts need to increase the authority of these teams. For instance, cross-district DSTs, serving two or three low performing schools, would make the DST more of an external team and more powerful.

5. Since the DE + DST have the potential to be a powerful combination, districts should be sure that the DST-leader becomes highly associated with the DE. Then, when the DE leaves the school, the DST-leader might serve as a contrived surrogate.

6. All levels of district personnel, including the superintendent, should actively participate in the initiation, implementation and institutionalization of school improvement processes. This initial investment of support could make
the difference whether a district has four schools in Corrective Action at the current time or seven during the next accountability cycle.

7. The current LSDAP policy permits the Distinguished Educators to serve in a school less than two years (they are assigned in October of the beginning of the accountability cycle) before the next calculation of performance scores. The initial resentment of faculties, high incidences of uncertified teachers, leadership instability and a high mobility of teachers at these schools precluded the two-year cycle as too short to develop long-term institutional changes. This cycle should be at least three years.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

**Methodological Lessons from the Current Study**

Three major methodological lessons for future research in this area emerged from this study. These three lessons are elaborated below.

1. Use classroom observations to determine the quality of instruction rather than School Performance Scores to determine student achievement. School Performance Scores are calculated every two years. In this short time, the calculation may not have the sensitivity to measure gains from effective teaching. Classroom observations, if conducted properly, can determine the quality of instruction.

2. Use both qualitative and quantitative data sources. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data sources is helpful in all research studies for the purposes of triangulation. In this study, the two types of data complemented each other and verified findings. Qualitative data collection
provided many answers to questions that did not surface until data analysis
(i.e., why the Progress towards Growth Target(s) was high for DST only
schools?).

3. Extend the study to include two phases – a quantitative survey of all DE
schools and matched schools and case study analyses similar to this study.
The Distinguished Educator Program has moved from the pilot phase to the
accountability phase with more DEs being assigned to Corrective Action II
schools beginning in SY 2001. Extend the quantitative data collection to
include all DE + DST schools and their matched schools. Then conduct case
study analysis to examine the findings in schools where further examination is
required.

The role of the external change agent in school improvement initiatives will be
further explored in the wake of the current accountability push. The next section will
present some avenues for exploration.

Areas for Further Study

➢ Conduct longitudinal studies into the sustainability of the quality of instruction in
DE + DST and matched schools. These studies would provide insight into the
ability of DEs to implement and institutionalize effective teaching and learning.

➢ Conduct more in-depth studies of schools without external change agents where
school performance scores are increasing. These studies could identify processes
other schools, with or without external change agents, could adopt. On the other
hand, these studies may examine the effects of schools making technical changes
which are superficial and those making fundamental changes that can sustain school improvement processes.

➢ Conduct a study to examine why district involvement is greater in schools with state-assigned external change agents.

➢ Conduct a study of the district superintendent’s role as a change agent. Such studies would provide valuable information about the importance of district leadership and investment of authority (pressure) and support in school improvement.

Lastly, factors that affect implementation of innovation have led researchers to search for different ways to best characterize implementation (e.g., Berman, 1981; Clark, Lotto, & Astutuo, 1984; Cohen, 1987; Firestone & Corbett, 1987; Hall & Hord, 1987; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Louis & Miles, 1990). Successful implementation does not predict continuation of initiatives (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). The RAND Change Agent Study found that “the net return to the general investment was the adoption of many innovations, the successful implementation of few, and the long-run continuation of still fewer” (McLaughlin, 1989, p. 5). Sustaining the innovation is a major concern and has been examined in literature (e.g., Corbett, Dawson & Firestone, 1984; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Yin, Herald & Vogel, 1977). The various approaches an organization can take to change, coupled with the many factors that impact the effectiveness of change allude to the idiosyncratic nature of education.
REFERENCES


Hall, G. E. & Hord, S. M. (1986). *Configurations of school-based leadership teams*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education.


270

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


U. S. Legislative Code: Section 1337(g) of Title 43, (1978). The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act.


APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL/TEACHER INTERVIEW

1. Tell me about your District Support Team’s involvement in your school
   a) last year (SY 1999-2000).
   b) What about this year?

2. a) After the DST’s School Analysis, what part did the team play in formulating the
    school improvement plan?
   b) Which members participated?

3. a) After the School Analysis, how often did you see the DST at your school?
    b) Why did they come? Who?

4. How well prepared or trained do you feel the DST had to provide the school analysis
   and school improvement support?

5. What kinds of resources were provided to your school by the DST that you feel was
   the direct result of their participation in the accountability plan?

6. What are some of the strengths of the DST?

7. What are some barriers that may have limited the effectiveness of the DST?

8. In respect to the DST, describe your perception of how the DST impacted each of the
    following:
    a) School environment (discipline, safety)
    b) Student expectations
    c) Teacher expectations
    d) Quality of instruction
    e) Teacher collaboration

IF DE is housed at the school:

9. Tell me about your DE’s involvement in your school
    a) last year (SY 1999-2000).
    b) What about this year?
    c) How often do you interact with the DE?

10. How did your teachers/principal respond to the DE?

11. What are some of the strengths of the DE?

12. What are some barriers that may have limited the effectiveness of the DE?
13. In respect to the DE, describe your perception of how the DE impacted each of the following:
   a) School environment (discipline, safety)
   b) Student expectations
   c) Teacher expectations
   d) Quality of instruction
   e) Teacher collaboration

14. a) How would you describe the relationship between the DE and the DST?
    b) What do feel were obstacles to the relationship of the DE and DST?
    c) What strategies did they share?

15. a) How much time did you spend with the DE each week last year?
    b) This year?

16. Are there any other comments you would like to share at this time?
APPENDIX B

DST-LEADER INTERVIEW

Name:___________________________________

a. Describe your current job.
b. Tell me about each of the members on your DST

DST Structure

I. Expertise
   1. Describe the expertise or specializations of DST members on your team that contributed to your effectiveness.
   2. Tell me about the training you received as a DST
      a. Do you feel you were adequately trained to be effective at (School)?
      b. How would you change the training if you could?

II. Commitment
   3. Initially, how did your DST feel about the accountability program?
      a. Have those feelings changed?
   4. What type of commitment do you feel your district has to the program?
   5. How would you describe the DST’s initial involvement with the school in SY 1999-2000.
   6. How would you describe the DST’s on-going support in SY 2000-2001?

III. Administrative Property of the Role
   7. Describe any special authority your DST was given by the district to make key policy changes.
      a. Tell me about staff hiring and firing in the last two years at (School).
      b. What part did your DST play in the hiring and firing of staff?
   8. Do you feel that your DST has the power/authority to make effective changes at (School)?
   9. Were you or any other DST members freed of other responsibilities to make time for this duty?
      a. Could you describe how this affected your ability to be effective?
   10. Describe any resources that were made available to your DST for school improvement support at (School).

School Effectiveness Processes

IV. Climate
   11. What are some of the changes made at (School) as a result of the LDSAP that directly contributed to a safe school environment?
      a. Do you think the changes were effective?
      b. Who was responsible for initiating those changes?
      c. Did you or the DST play any part in initiating or implementing the changes?
12. What are some of the changes made that involved discipline procedures at (School)?
   a. Do you think the changes were effective?
   b. Who was responsible for initiating those changes?
   c. Did you or the DST play any part in initiating or implementing the changes?

V. Culture
13. Tell me about (School’s) focus on learning.
   a. How, if any, has it changed in the last two years?
   b. Is the DST responsible for those changes in any way?
14. How did the collaboration of the DST with the school personnel in forming the School Improvement Plan promote a widely shared vision for a commitment to quality teaching and learning – if any?
15. Describe any new collaborative relationships among the faculty that you may have witnessed in the last two years?
   a. Do you feel the presence of a DST contribute to more effective collaborative relationships? Explain why or why not.
16. How would you describe the change in student expectations at (School)?
17. How would you describe your DST’s expectations for school personnel at (School) to implement school improvement strategies that will impact student productivity?

VI. Quality of Instruction
18. Can you describe any effective instructional strategies implemented that were given special attention as a result of the accountability program?
   a. Who was responsible for initiating these strategies?
   b. What or how did the DST address the quality of instruction?
   c. After completion of the SAM, how often do members of the DST observe classrooms as part of monitoring implementation?

School Improvement Approaches to Change

VII. Individuals must take responsibility
19. How would you feel the teachers at (School) accept the responsibility to increase student achievement?
   a. What about the administration’s acceptance of responsibility?
   b. How responsible do you feel about your responsibility to increase student achievement?

VIII. A moral Belief For the Process
20. How would you describe the faculty’s belief in this process.
   a. Describe your belief in this process.
IX. Change is planned and managed
21. Would you describe the implementation of the SIP as “planned and managed”? Why or why not?
   a. How has the DST’s cooperation contributed to a planned and managed change in school improvement strategies?

X. Active initiation and participation is essential
22. Describe the type of response given by the faculty for initiating the LDE accountability program.
23. How would you describe the faculty’s participation this year? (SY 2000-2001)

XI. Importance of External Change Agents
24. How would you describe the importance of external change agents to the school improvement process?
   a. IF a DE is on-site – distinguish between DE and DST importance.

XII. Nature of the relationship between DE and DST
25. Can you describe the working relationship between you and your team and the DE?

X. Strategies/resources
26. What were the most effective resources/strategies provided by the:
   a) DST
   b) DE (if applicable)
27. What do you feel were some of the barriers to success that
   a) the DST faced?
   b) the DE faced? (if applicable)
28. What activities or strategies do you feel the DE used to impact the following:
   1) opening lines of communication throughout the organization?
   2) building trust and rapport among staff members?
   3) developing tools designed to facilitate meetings, negotiate difficult issues, provide reflection, and foster evaluation?
   4) gaining cooperation of various groups?

Is there anything else you would like to contribute to the interview?
APPENDIX C

DE INTERVIEW

The same questions will be administered to all five middle school Distinguished Educators.

Name: _______________________________________________________________

I. Training
   1. Describe the adequacy of your training as a DE to be effective as a school improvement change agent.

II. Four processes of DEs (see: Research question one above)
   2. Describe what you have done as a change agent to open lines of communication throughout the school.
      a. What about throughout the district?
   3. Describe what you have done to build trust and rapport among staff members.
   4. Tell me what tools or processes were utilized to facilitate meetings.
      a. How did you negotiate difficult issues with the staff?
      b. How was the staff encouraged to reflect on their experiences?
      c. What were some of the strategies you incorporated to foster self-evaluation among staff?
   5. How did you gain cooperation of the various groups within the district and faculty?

III. School Effectiveness Processes
   Climate
   6. Tell me about your involvement in strategies that impacted discipline at your school.
      a. What about changes that affect the safety in your school?
   Culture
   7. Describe your processes that contributed to increasing faculty collaboration.
   8. How does your presence at (School) affect a focus on learning?
   9. Describe changes in faculty expectations of students to meet state goals since you first came to work here.
   10. How would you describe the district’s expectations of this school’s faculty to meet state goals?
   11. How do your expectations of this faculty differ from the central office’s expectations?
   Quality of Instruction
   12. Describe your strategies to increase the quality of teaching here.
      a. Which strategy has made the biggest impact?
      b. Do you feel these strategies will become everyday procedures to these teachers? Why?
   13. How do you feel that the presence of the DST in the school improvement process has an impact on the quality of instruction?

IV. School Improvement Approaches to Change
14. I am going to list five (5) school improvement approaches to change. I want you to give me your feelings about the extent to which the faculty has embraced these approaches, if at all.
   a. Individuals must take responsibility for change
   b. A moral belief for the process
   c. Change is planned and managed
   d. Active initiation and participation is essential
   e. Importance of external change agents.

V. Nature of the relationship between DE and DSTs
15. Describe your working relationship with the DST.
16. How effectively do you think your DST was trained?
   a. How would you recommend the DST training be changed?
17. Overall, how effective do you feel your DST was last year in initiating school improvement processes?
18. Describe the difference in DST involvement this year as opposed to their involvement last year.
19. What types of resources were made available to the school through the efforts of the DST?
20. What resources/strategies did the DST provide that you feel were the most effective?
21. What resources/strategies would you say was YOUR most effective contribution?
22. What were/are some of the barriers to success that:
   a) the DST faced?
   b) You faced?

284
APPENDIX D
LaCET
Classroom Observation Summary
Non-scannable Form

Observer Name/Code: ____________________________

Legend: N/O = Not Observed 1= Unsatisfactory 2= Needs Improvement 3= Area of Strength 4= Demonstrated Excellence

II. DOMAIN: MANAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II A1. Organizes available space, materials and/or equipment to facilitate learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II A2. Promotes a positive learning climate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II B1. Manages routines and transitions in a timely manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II B2. Manages / adjusts allocated time for planned activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II C1. Establishes expectations for learner behaviors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II C2. Uses monitoring techniques to facilitate learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. DOMAIN: INSTRUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III A1. Uses technique(s) which develop(s) lesson objective(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III A2. Sequences lessons to promote learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III A3. Uses available teaching materials to achieve lesson objective(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III A4. Adjusts lesson when appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III B1. Presents content at a developmentally appropriate level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III B3. Relates relevant examples, unique situations, or current events to the content.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III C1. Accommodates individual differences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III C2. Demonstrates ability to communicate effectively with students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III C3. Stimulates and encourages higher order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
thinking at appropriate developmental levels.

III C4. Encourages student participation.


III D2. Provides timely feedback to students regarding their progress.

IV. DOMAIN: INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Extensive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV A1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A7.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A8.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A9.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A11.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A12.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A13.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A14.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A15.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:

None: The instructional strategy is not used at this time in the classroom.
Some: The instructional strategy is used at times in the classroom.
Extensive: The instructional strategy is used a majority of times in the classroom.
N/A: The instructional strategy is not applicable in the classroom.

286

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
APPENDIX E (A)

PERMISSION FOR INTERVIEW

TO: Teachers/Principals/External Change Agents

FROM: Janet G. Stevens, LSU (Questions may be addressed to Janet G. Stevens, M-F, 8:00 a.m. –5:00 p.m., at 225-754-8887).

DATE:

RE: Permission for Interview

Our schools are involved with the School Improvement Process, which is an important component of the State's Accountability System. The state has provided a model of school improvement that is based on the involvement of all members of the school community in improving student achievement.

This year’s school analysis will help determine the school’s improvement in this process. An outside research student from LSU will assist in collecting and analyzing information from interviews and classroom observations. The name of the study is “Differential Modes of External Change Agent Support in Diffusion of Innovation”. The study will involve 10 schools in La. with external change agents in order to examine the impact external support agents make on schools working to improve student learning.

External change agents, randomly selected teachers, and administrators in selected middle schools will be asked to participate in the interview process. The interview will take about 15-30 minutes. The results of the interviews will help educators understand perceptions about external change agents and their processes. There is no known risk for participation. Participation in the study is voluntary and educators may change their minds and withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they may otherwise be entitled. Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless law requires disclosure. All responses are anonymous and will be held in the strictest confidence.

Please select from one of the choices below regarding your involvement in the interview process. Your favorable consideration is greatly appreciated.

EDUCATOR: __________________________ SCHOOL: __________________________

___ Yes, I agree to participate in the interview.

___ No, I do not agree to participate in the interview.

Signature __________________________ Date: __________________________

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
APPENDIX E (B)

PRINCIPAL LETTER

October 15, 2000

Mr(s) Principal
XXX Middle School
Somewhere, La.

Dear XXX

I am requesting permission to visit your school in order to collect data for a research study. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University. The purpose of my study is to examine the impact of the District Assistance Teams (DATs) and Distinguished Educators (DEs) on student productivity.

In order to collect this data, I would want to observe some classrooms to assess any differences in schools with external agent support. With their permission, interviews will be conducted with administrators, teachers, DATs and DEs – if available at your school. All schools in this study will not have a Distinguished Educator.

Your superintendent has given permission for me to pursue data collection with your approval. I feel that schools need external support during implementation of school improvement and want to explore the most effective processes of external agent support.

I understand the pressures and time restraints within the schools and will minimize the time I spend there involved in data collection. Strict confidentiality will be maintained. I would greatly appreciate your permission to conduct my study at your school. I have enclosed a permission form and envelope. The results of my study may produce information that can best help your school utilize these external change agents to improve student performance. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 225-754-xxxx or email geauxlsutigers@xxx.com

Sincerely,
Janet G. Stevens
LSU
# APPENDIX F

## TRIANGULATION OF SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Document Analysis/ Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| IA Expertise: Composition of the DST | 1. DSTa Notebook  
2. DST-Leader | 1. Document  
2. Questions #1, 2 |
| IA Expertise: Variation in training of DST | 1. DST-Leader  
2. Principal  
3. Teacher | 1. Question 2  
2. Question # 4  
3. Question #4 |
| IB. Commitment: Initial Support of DST | 1. Principal  
2. Teacher  
3. DST-Leader | 1. Question #1  
2. Question #1  
3. Question #5 |
| IB. Commitment: On-Going Support of DST | 1. Principal  
2. Teacher  
3. DST-Leader | 1. Questions #1b, 2, 3  
2. Questions #1b, 2, 3  
3. Question #6 |
| IB Overall commitment to accountability program in the school | 1. DST-Leader | 1. Questions #3, 4 |
| IC. Administrative Property of the Role: Resources | 1. DST-Leader  
2. DE  
3. Principal  
4. Teacher | 1. Question #10  
2. Question # 19  
3. Question # 5  
4. Question #5 |
| IC. Administrative Property of the Role: Perception of Authority | 1. DST-Leader | 1. Questions #7, 8, 9 |
| ID. | | |
| IIA School Effectiveness Processes that impact school climate (Safe & Orderly Environment) | 1. DST-Leader  
2. DE  
3. Principal  
4. Teacher | 1. Questions #11, 12  
2. Question # 6  
3. Question #8a, 13a  
4. Question #8a, 13a |
| IIA School Effectiveness Processes that impact school culture (High Expectations & Teacher Collaboration) | 1. DST-Leader  
2. DE  
3. Principal  
4. Teacher | 1. Questions #13-17, 28  
2. Questions #2-5, 7-11  
3. Question # 8 b, c, e; 9c, 13 b,c; 15  
4. Question # 8 b,c,e; 9c;13 b,c; 15 |
| IIA School Effectiveness Processes that impact the Quality of Instruction | 1. DST-Leader  
2. DE  
3. Principal  
4. Teacher | 1. Question #17  
2. Questions #12 & 13  
3. Question #8d; 13d  
4. Teacher Question #8d;13d |
| IIB School Improvement Processes | 1. DST-Leader  
2. DE | 1. Questions #18-23  
2. Question # 14 |
| IIIA Resources/strategies provided by external change agents perceived | 1. DST-Leader  
2. DE | 1. Question #26  
2. Questions #20 & 21 |

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
| as effective | 3. Principal  
4. Teacher | 3. Question # 6, 11  
4. Question #6, 11 |
|---|---|---|
| IIIB Perceptions of barriers to success | 1. DST-Leader  
2. DE  
3. Principal  
4. Teacher | 1. DST-Leader Question # 27  
2. Question #22  
3. Questions # 7, 12  
4. Questions #7, 12 |
| IV. Relationship between DST and DE | 1. Principal  
2. Teacher  
3. DST-Leader  
4. DE | 1. Question #14  
2. Question #14  
3. Question #24  
4. Questions # 15-18 |
VITA

Janet Gibson Stevens was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, on August 1, 1952. She is the daughter of Jean and James Gibson of Vivian, Louisiana.

She was raised in Caddo parish and attended North Caddo High School in Vivian. After graduating in 1970, she attended Louisiana State University. Ms. Stevens received a Bachelor of Science degree in secondary mathematics education in 1974, and later earned a master of education degree in educational administration in 1976. Further graduate study earned Ms. Stevens an Educational Specialist in Supervision in 1980.

Ms. Stevens began her teaching career at Walker Middle School in Livingston parish. She returned to north Louisiana in 1980 with her husband, Charles, and two children, Kristen and Kyle to teach in her hometown. She remained there with her family until 1997 when she returned to Baton Rouge to pursue her doctorate at Louisiana State University.

Ms. Stevens joined the staff of the Louisiana Department of Education in February of 2001, serving as Program Manager of the Distinguished Educator Program. Her primary responsibility is to oversee the cohort of Distinguished Educators as they work to improve the quality of education in Louisiana’s lowest performing schools.

She has one brother, James Bruce Gibson and one sister, Joy “Sham” Shamburger. She has been married to Charles M. Stevens for the past 29 years.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Janet G. Stevens

Major Field: Educational Leadership & Research

Title of Dissertation: Differential Modes of External Change Agent Support in Diffusion of Innovation

Approved:

[Signatures and names]

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures and names]

Date of Examination:

June 29, 2001