TEACHER REACTIONS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

By

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Traditionally, kindergarten programs have been offered in various ways across the province of Ontario (e.g., half day every day; all day, alternate day). Starting in 2010, the Ontario Ministry of Education began implementing full day, every day kindergarten in all publically funded schools. This large-scale innovation has resulted in a number of important changes. The kindergarten teacher is experiencing a variety of these changes.

This qualitative study focuses on reactions and concerns of kindergarten teachers as they begin to implement full day kindergarten. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations with five kindergarten teachers provide information about these reactions and concerns. The Stages of Concern framework, one aspect of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), will be used to discuss these findings and how full day kindergarten has impacted the kindergarten teacher.
Acknowledgements

I would like to start by thanking the five teachers who participated in this study. Without their open and honest willingness to discuss their reactions and concerns towards the new full day kindergarten program, this study would not have been possible. I would also like to thank them for welcoming me into their classrooms, where I was able to observe full day kindergarten, meet ECE partners, and experience some aspects of this new model for kindergarten. In addition, I am grateful to the local school board who supported this research project and gave me permission to work with these teachers and conduct this study.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Barrie Bennett for agreeing to support my research interests and providing me with ongoing feedback and expertise. Dr. Shelley Stagg-Peterson gave me the idea to pursue my own research project and complete a thesis project. I would like to recognize her for this encouragement.

Finally, I especially thank those closest to me for their ongoing support and words of encouragement, my family and friends, for their interest, support and understanding. I have truly neglected so many of them over these last few years as I have pursued my own learning and appreciate their forgiveness and patience. Lastly, to my partner in life, Andy, and our wonderful daughters, Alison and Lindsay: your love, patience, confidence, humour, and gift of time have allowed me to read, write, and study. I am truly grateful to each of you for this opportunity.
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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine how kindergarten teachers react to the introduction of full day kindergarten and how teachers’ concerns may shift or alter over time. Full day kindergarten (FDK) is a new model for kindergarten in the province of Ontario. Starting in 2010, this program began to be gradually introduced across all Ontario public schools. A full-day, every day model for kindergarten will replace current half day, daily or all day, alternate-day models that are currently being offered by the majority of Ontario publicly funded school boards.

The FDK program involves four and five year old students attending school for five full days like all other students in an elementary school. The program is divided into two components: (1) the core-day, and (2) the extended-day. The core-day represents a typical school day where students arrive and depart along with the rest of the student population. Extended-day programs provide families with childcare options either before or after school. The province has opted to fund the school-day portion but expects extended-day programs to be offered by school boards and paid for by parents. This new model for kindergarten has been described as having benefits for Ontario children and families. (Fairholm & Davis, 2010; Pascal, 2009; Pelletier & Corter, 2005; Pelletier, 2012).

The implementation of the mandated model for kindergarten brings about many changes at all levels of individual school boards. As noted by Fullan (2007), change is a complex, multidimensional process. He argues that change can be clarified and
understood by identifying and describing the dimensions of change. These change
dimensions typically involve three areas: (1) the use of new or revised materials, such as
curriculum or programs; (2) possible new teaching approaches or strategies; and (3) potential
adjustments or alternations of beliefs. Ignoring those dimensions may explain why some
people are more or less likely to accept certain changes and factors associated with change.

As I observed the implementation of FDK, I observed a variety of reactions and
concerns being expressed. Those reactions stemmed from educators at all levels of the
school board: superintendents, principals, teachers, and other board staff. I also noticed
‘stronger’ reactions being expressed by kindergarten teachers themselves. They asked many
questions and began to identify a variety of potential concerns. Those reactions are
understandable given that kindergarten teachers are the key stakeholder having to implement
this large-scale innovation.

A key change for teachers was the revision to the current curriculum document, The
Kindergarten Program (2006). Some curriculum changes outlined in the new draft
curriculum, The Full-Day Early-Learning Kindergarten Program, 2010, place an emphasis
on play-based learning and the teaching of self-regulation, two areas that may involve
considerable new learning and possible adjustments to current teaching practice. In addition
to program changes, teachers involved are being asked to form new partnerships that require
collaboration alongside Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) during the core-day. Even
though teaching in teams and collaborating can be positive experiences, the imposed nature
of this collaboration, where teaching responsibilities, planning, and assessment practices are
shared among two professional groups can result in conflict. For example, those new
partnerships may create uncertainties with regards to roles and responsibilities for teachers
within the core-day. In certain schools, where extended-day programs are being offered, ECEs are responsible for providing before and after school programs within kindergarten classrooms. That further impacts teachers who are asked to share classroom spaces before and after school and consider certain adjustments to the physical learning environment in order to accommodate extended-day programs.

Working alongside kindergarten teachers during the first year of FDK implementation in 2010, I noticed further reactions and concerns being expressed. Some teachers appeared to adapt easily to this changed model. They seemed to embrace new learning and new thinking and spoke positively about their experiences. Other groups of teachers seemed to be noticing significant challenges. They indicated a reluctance to accept some of the new ideas and were somewhat resistant to altering existing practices or considering some new ideas. Clearly, kindergarten teachers were experiencing the implementation of FDK in a variety ways and were expressing a range of reactions and concerns. Those observations led me to this focus on studying kindergarten teachers’ reactions associated with this FDK systemic change initiative; how educational change impacts individuals and how individuals experience change.

As I explored the educational change research, I analyzed a variety of frameworks, theories and practices used to examine the implementation and sustainment of educational change. One framework frequently cited was the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall and Hord, 2011). This model has been applied in various contexts to understand and support the implementation of large-scale change at the individual level. The CBAM is a practical, evidence-based model that assists educators to measure, describe, and explain the process of change experienced by individual educators or groups as they implement
educational innovations (Anderson, 1997). This model emphasizes the diverse and individualized meanings people assign to change and acknowledge that implementing any innovation is a highly personal process. Hall and Hord argue that individuals typically experience similar patterns of change, referred to as Stages of Concern (SoC). The SoC aspect of CBAM reflects typical, developmental stages individuals experience during an innovation. Individual teachers may feel certain stages of concern more intensely and then as a concern subsides, others may emerge. School leaders may benefit from identifying those concerns in order to build a supportive and systematic way of meeting individual needs.

**Purpose of the Research**

As teachers implement the full-day kindergarten program, adjustments to current thinking and practice will likely elicit concerns, uncertainties and anxieties. This new program may cause a variety of reactions from teachers with certain concerns being expressed. The purpose of this research is to identify and understand the types of concerns teachers are experiencing. This will provide school board leaders, such as principals, curriculum and program staff, and senior administrators with information to support the implementation process. Identification of common themes or needs may allow change leaders to develop more effective supports or interventions as FDK is implemented in schools over time. Further, teachers might also benefit from understanding the nature of change and the associated reactions and concerns that they might encounter. Understanding these changes and subsequent reactions might better prepare all the school board stakeholders as the FDK program is phased in and implemented all elementary schools in the coming years. Although research is beginning to emerge from other sources during this large-scale
innovation, no specific research has examined the change process related to how teachers are responding to this change.

**Research Questions**

This qualitative research study will focus on the process of change within the kindergarten program. The following questions will be examined:

1. What are kindergarten teachers' experiences with the new FDK program?
2. What are the reactions or concerns of kindergarten teachers to the implementation of this new program and model for kindergarten?
3. How might these reactions or concerns change over time as teachers begin the implementation process and adapt to the new model?

**Format of the Thesis**

In Chapter Two, I provide a review of the literature related to understanding ‘teacher change’ related to the FDK initiative. In Chapter Three, I discuss the qualitative research methods used to gather and interpret the data. In Chapter Four, I present my findings and analysis. In Chapter Five, I provide the implications this study has for more precisely understanding how to initiate and implement large-scale innovations.
CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a review of the possible impact of FDK on students, early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers. Then, I will discuss aspects of change through an explanation of the Stages of Concern (SoC) framework, one aspect of Hall and Hord’s (2011) Concerns-Based Adoption model (CBAM). Next, I will discuss various factors that have been found to affect the implementation of educational change. Last, I will summarize common patterns and themes that Hall and Hord describe through their ten key principles of change.

Background

The benefits of providing children with full-day, every day kindergarten programs have been described in a variety of research studies. Some findings point to stronger outcomes for students such as improved standardized test scores, improved reading skills and comprehension, better mathematics skills, and fewer grade retentions (Barnett & Ackerman, 2006; Hough & Bryde, 1996). Carnes and Albrecht (2007) state, “full-day kindergarten programs buy teachers the time to implement high quality instruction, and creates for students the social environment necessary for the transformations of ‘child’ to ‘student’ so that high quality instruction results in enhanced academic achievement” (p. 8). Pascal (2009), special advisor to the Premiere in Ontario, notes improved social and emotional benefits for children in full-day kindergarten contexts that support the development of self-regulation skills in children. The critical development of self-regulation skills among four and five year olds, acquired through high quality learning environments, may positively alter
the educational trajectory of children (Shanker, 2010; Blair & Diamond, 2008). Preliminary findings from a research study on the impact of FDK in one large school board in Ontario show promise for both the implementation of the program and short-term outcomes for students (Pelletier, 2012). In their recent analysis of early learning and care, Fairholm and Davis (2010) point to other positive outcomes of full-day kindergarten that include economic and social benefits for children, families, and the wider society.

As full-day kindergarten is phased in across Ontario schools, research studies are emerging. Given the newness of this program, one would expect findings to be preliminary with many not yet published. One recent investigation studied the relationship between the two new FDK team members, the early childhood educator (ECE) and the kindergarten teacher (Katz & Ain Dack, 2011). Although kindergarten teachers are not new to the program, the addition of an early childhood educator represents a significant change in the way kindergarten programs are staffed and delivered. Typically, early childhood educators (ECEs) work with young children in a variety of settings (e.g., childcare, nursery school, children’s programs) and are trained to support the growth, care and development of children ranging in ages from infancy to primary-age.

With the implementation of FDK, ECEs are required to work alongside kindergarten teachers. These new working teams represent a significant change that has been imposed through the structure of FDK programs. Katz and Ain Dack (2011) conducted a study in four Ontario school boards where they provided 65 ECEs and teachers with opportunities to voice their reactions to working in partnerships for the first time. They found this new teaching partnership to be a major adjustment for teachers, who have traditionally been solely responsible for delivering the kindergarten program in its entirety. Although ECEs are used
to co-teaching contexts and are generally trained in this way, teachers have not typically worked along side partners within classroom settings. Findings from Katz and Ain Dack (2011) report general uncertainties among the educator teams. They describe an overall lack of clarity of their specific roles and responsibilities and express concerns associated with assessment and planning of programs. The teams voiced frustrations around limited time to meet and plan together and described uncertainties around resolving issues or conflicts that arise between the team members.

Preliminary findings from another study that examined ECE and teacher dynamics show variations in reactions to working together and in other aspects of the new FDK program (Gibson & Pelletier, in press). In their study of 50 ECEs and kindergarten teachers from two school boards, perceptions of shared workload and responsibilities were examined. Teachers indicated that they felt they had a greater workload and share of responsibility for the entire kindergarten program than their ECE partners. The authors posit that this variation may exist because ECEs have more experience co-teaching and may therefore view their role as more shared than teachers, who typically do not have co-teaching responsibilities. This suggests a need for additional training to support the teams establish greater clarity and understanding of their roles. One additional finding was that FDK team’s feel they benefit from working together. They note improvements to their pedagogy and observed benefits for students when they collaborate.

Toronto First Duty is a decade-long research project that examined the integration of kindergarten, childcare, and family supports offered through collaborative partnerships. In the third phase of this research project, effective teamwork among ECEs, teachers, and other staff was identified as an area that required both program and pedagogical leadership.
Access to regular professional development, to ensure that maximum evidence-based practice strengthen the quality of the programs, was also identified as significant in fostering effective practice among the teams (Janmohamed, Pelletier, & Corter, 2011). The authors indicate that, as Ontario implements FDK and brings together early childhood educators and teachers in teaching and learning partnerships, lessons from Toronto First Duty can play an important role in both the formation of policy and educational direction for identifying future learning needs of these groups of educators.

Even though numerous studies are under way as FDK begins, research specifically examining kindergarten teachers’ reactions to change has yet to be undertaken. Examining teacher reactions may provide certain knowledge to guide and assist educators and schools with this new innovation. Those reactions may be used to identify predictable responses to change that may assist in planning and implementing FDK more effectively. Findings may also demonstrate subjective perceptions and variations of reactions and potential factors that might impact these variations. Identifying any common themes among kindergarten teachers may additionally support board and system leaders as they: establish models for professional learning; differentiate supports for individuals and schools; guide the acquisition of specific resources (e.g., FDK coaches, professional texts); or provide guidance and training as full-day early learning-kindergarten is phased in over the next several years.

The Change Process

The literature on educational change is vast and spans over the last 50 years. As researchers attempt to understand the change process, change initiatives are explored and responses to changes are measured and observed. Given educational change can be studied
in many ways, this literature review will focus on two aspects of change. First, I will provide initial discussions and background information on the Concerns-Based Adoption model (CBAM) and how Stages of Concern (SoC), one CBAM framework, has been used in various educational contexts to support our understanding of change. Second, I will examine findings from studies to identify various factors that have been found to affect the implementation of educational innovations. Those factors will guide our understanding about the variations of implementation of specific educational innovations and how change is experienced. The third and final component of the review of research will summarize, through Hall and Hord’s (2011) ten key principles, common patterns and themes about change that have been uncovered. Understanding the psychological dynamics and interactions that occur between individuals experiencing change is necessary before strategies supporting implementation can be determined (Fullan, 1985). This literature review will support deeper understanding as this contemporary innovation, the reactions and actions of teachers as full-day kindergarten, is implemented over time.

**The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)**

Ellsworth (2000) reminds us that “change isn’t new, and neither is its study. We have a rich set of frameworks, solidly grounded in empirical studies and practical applications” (p. 1). Literature reviewed that examines change in education address theories about stages of concern that provide information that helps to understand stages teachers typically progress through during curriculum innovations. Hall and Hord (2011) discuss how “veteran teachers” become “novices” when new ideas or new curriculum are established. Regardless of the origin of the change, teachers have been found to experience certain feelings and
reactions whenever changes in curriculum, instruction, or policies occur. Certain
developmental stages that identify typical expressions of concern can be clustered into four
areas: unaware, self, task, and impact concerns. Those stages, originally identified by Fuller
(1969), describe reactions to innovations over time. Although individuals may feel certain
stages of concern more or less intensely, as certain concerns subside, other concerns often
emerge.

This type of continuum of concerns provides a useful framework for helping to
understand change. In her study of student teachers in the early stages of their careers, Fuller
(1969) described some of these reactions. She described unrelated concerns among teachers
who had yet to experience a change and was largely unaware of it. Self-concerns tended to
be personal in nature and related to teacher anxiety about abilities to take on new demands.
In these contexts, there was little concern that focused specifically on students or teaching.
Task concerns arose quickly when teachers’ began to focus on the specific activity that
needed to occur to get the change underway. At this stage, focus was placed on putting forth
energy towards daily tasks. Teachers expressed concern about the amount of time associated
with implementing the new ideas or adjusting practice. Impact concerns, the most desirable
stage or ultimate goal, was found when teachers focused on student outcomes and ways to
improve the actual innovation.

Hall and Hord (2011) illustrate the CBAM as a tool used to describe, measure and
explain the process of change experienced as educators attempt to implement change. Over
time, this model has been refined to include a variety of frameworks and tools to measure
and support change information and reactions associated with them.
Stages of Concern

Stages of Concern (SoC) is one of the CBAM frameworks that have been used to measure and describe feelings, reactions, and/or motivations a person (e.g., teacher) might have about a specific change. These change reactions might be associated with a new curriculum, instructional approach, or an aspect of teaching that affects the teacher’s practice. During the change process, different points or levels of concern typically occur. Hall and Hord (2011) have identified seven specific categories of concerns in their SoC model that describe common expressions of concerns about innovations. Figure 1 describes these identified Stages of Concern.

Figure 1. Stages of Concern: Typical Expressions of Concern about an Innovation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Concerns</th>
<th>Task Concerns</th>
<th>Self Concerns</th>
<th>Unrelated Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have some ideas about something that would work even better</td>
<td>I seem to be spending all of my time getting materials ready</td>
<td>How will using it affect me?</td>
<td>I am concerned about some other things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Informational</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what my co-workers are doing.</td>
<td></td>
<td>I would like to know more about it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Consequence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is my use affecting clients/students?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


The Stages of Concern framework describes possible progressions of concerns and is one diagnostic aspect of the CBAM used to measure concerns during times of change. In his review of CBAM-related research, Anderson (1997) argues that understanding teacher concerns associated with change is an important focus in order to facilitate teacher development and school improvement efforts. Although some teachers progress through these typical stages, Anderson indicates that not all teachers necessarily experience all stages.
In their study of teacher concerns when implementing a new school-based assessment scheme, Cheung and Yip (2010) found a similar developmental sequence or construct when considering how teachers responded to change. The authors note, however, that the intensity of concerns are not sequential and that early concerns do not need to be lowered before later concerns increase in intensity. They posit that categories of teacher concerns may more accurately describe expressions of concern rather than sequential stages suggested by Hall and Hord.

Stages of Concern can be measured in a variety of ways such as through a standardized, thirty-five item Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoC-Q), an open-ended statement procedure, and through interview strategies. Adaptations of these measures have occurred in numerous studies in an effort to capture stages of concerns among innovators of change (Cheung & Yip, 2010; Anderson, 1997; Van den Berg & Ros, 1984). The vast range of literature reveals how teachers respond to change, by way of new programs and practices, and how these responses vary from person to person in intensity and duration. Understanding and following predictable patterns of change and identifying teacher concerns has wide implications in supporting the movement to higher levels (McFarland, 1998). It allows for the examination of the complex factors that affect the implementation of change.

**Factors Affecting the Implementation of an Innovation**

Whereas stages of concern pertain to attitudes and reactions experienced among teachers during the implementation of innovations, change literature also reveals the complexities of implementing new ideas. Stages of concern and reactions to innovations play a pivotal role in the change process, along with a host of other factors that have been
shown to affect the degree to which a change is actually implemented. Variations of use of specific innovations and degrees to which concerns impact change can be linked to certain factors. Some of these factors will be discussed and include: a) experience, attitudes and efficacy beliefs of individuals involved in the innovation; b) time given to implement certain innovations; c) professional learning supports, and d) the role of leadership in supporting change.

a. Experience, Attitude and Efficacy Beliefs

In their study of primary teachers and their concerns around the implementation of a new mathematics curriculum, Christou, Eliophotou-Menon, and Philippou (2004) found that a crucial factor in explaining degrees of concerns and variations of implementation of a new curriculum was the years of experience the teachers had. Teachers in their early years of teaching were found to be mostly self and task-oriented, spending the majority of their energy managing day-to-day problems and establishing basic classroom management and instructional routines. The more experienced teachers were more interested in the impact concerns with consequences for students and improved learning as their most intense concern. The authors found significant differences in the concerns of teachers across years of teaching experience but not necessarily across years of implementation.

Cheung and Yip (2010) found that the intensity of informational and management concerns were lowered as teachers gained experience with the new innovation. One significant finding was related to consequence concerns. They found that experience alone did not motivate teachers to think more about the impact of this new strategy on student learning. In fact, some of the experienced teachers were found to be less concerned about
their own professional development in student assessment than more novice teachers and were not eager to collaborate to improve the impact this innovation had on student learning. They also found that experienced teachers were more reluctant to accept the change due to strongly held beliefs about more traditional assessment practices. Cheung and Yip argue that this type of reaction is very concerning and signals a need for immediate attention.

Hall (1979) further reinforced this need for attention among teachers with intense consequence concerns and suggested these teachers be the focus of change facilitators as those entering this highly desired stage of concern require attention and specific support. Hall lists three factors that affect the arousal of these impact concerns and states:

[i]f the innovation is appropriate, if the change process has been effectively facilitated, and if other contextual factors do not interfere, it is then possible for individuals to develop consequence and collaborative concerns... It takes a great deal of skill on the innovation users, change facilitators and key administrators for innovation users to develop and maintain an impact concerns profile. (Hall, 1979, p. 204).

Reichman and Artzi (2009) state, “the success or failure of a reform will be determined, at least partly, by the attitude of the teachers who are supposed to implement it on a daily basis on the ground” (p. 36). We must, unequivocally, understand the point of view and the reactions to the proposed change in order to be able to successfully deal with issues that might impact the implementation process.

Snider and Gershner (1999) tracked changes in teacher attitudes and behaviours as they utilized the Internet for the first time in curriculum development and delivery. Using the CBAM Stages of Concern and Levels of Use instruments developed by Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall (1987), the authors found considerable variation of concerns among the sixty-six teachers in the study. They learned that a number of teachers were either under-
prepared or unwilling to use the Internet effectively. Even though further training might have remedied this feeling, the authors found no meaningful change in Internet use over the semester, the entire time of their study. They discovered how attitudes and beliefs impact change processes. The authors reported highly negative reactions towards the government due to the way the proposed reform was “pushed” on teachers without discussion or consultation. Some teachers reported feeling trapped in the reform and felt that students would not benefit under the new proposed curriculum. In addition, they reported that teachers felt that their working conditions and professional status were being compromised with the new innovation, resulting in wide-scale discontent within the profession. This strong reaction led to a two month long strike and wide opposition to the reform with limited acceptance of the new reform the result.

In order for teachers to identify with large-scale reforms, involving massive changes to curriculum or teaching approaches, teachers need to be considered as partners and involved in the process whenever important innovations are considered (Fullan, 2001). According to Berlin and Jensen (1989), participation in innovations vary when teachers do not feel that they have a stake in the change, either because they have not participated in the decision to implement it or when they do not see the value of the change. Positive attitudes towards education and teaching were more likely related to positive educational changes, as was found by McAtee and Punch (1979) in their change studies in Western Australia. They noted that teachers were willing to take on additional work associated with change if they felt students benefited from the curriculum changes that were made.

Waugh (2000) described teacher receptivity as a factor that affects acceptance of change. His study measured receptivity to change and was used to support administrators as
they implemented and managed change processes in schools. Waugh found that teachers positively received and accepted change when three conditions were present. First, teachers needed to understand how the change could be practically implemented compared new ideas with their current system. A second condition highlighted the importance of teachers learning about the proposed change by receiving adequate information and participating in some school level decision-making. This allowed concerns to be alleviated. Waugh also stressed the importance of teachers’ need to see how the change was personally valuable. Personal costs, such as additional time needed through learning and collaboration with others, needed to be balanced against the value of the change towards teacher learning and practice. Third, the author learned that teachers accept change because they perceive that the change has a positive affect on students in terms of learning or happiness. Those conditions, Waugh argues, must be considered, as changes are implemented, particularly large-scale changes.

In his investigations of the implementation of various innovations, Rogers (1995) found that ‘innovation advocates’ played a significant role in supporting new ideas. Although principals can act in this role, teachers as change advocates can be even more influential. In her study of school conditions affecting implementation of a new primary program, Gooden (2000) found collaborative work environments combined with the role of teacher innovation advocates were critical to the success of the program. Kassem (2000) also found teacher leaders positively impacted change. In her study of a school-wide implementation of a critical thinking model, the author states “it became clear that teachers responded most positively to instruction from their peers” (p. 35).
Bandura (1997) defines efficacy beliefs as an ability to plan and execute actions in order to achieve specific goals. When adopting and implementing specific innovations, efficacy beliefs have been found to exert great influence (Charambous, Philippou, & Kyriakides, 2004). In their study of concerns and efficacy beliefs of primary teachers, with respect to the implementation of a new approach to teaching mathematics, teacher concerns and efficacy beliefs were related. Teachers with high efficacy beliefs accepted the innovation more positively and were more likely to implement changes in their teaching. These teachers were also noted to perceive the teaching of math, through the new problem solving approach, as an important effort that was worth pursuing. The authors described high efficacy beliefs teachers as more willing to experiment with new teaching innovations and to be less anxious about changes with fewer reactions or concerns.

The relationship between teachers’ efficacy beliefs and their concern about reforms has been found to relate to levels of use of specific innovations. Gaith and Shaaban (1999) found that teachers with low efficacy beliefs displayed intense self and task concerns compared to teachers with high efficacy beliefs. High efficacy beliefs teachers seemed more confident about meeting learner needs and appeared more confident in their teaching. Those findings have implications for change facilitators and point to the importance of developing interventions to increase teachers’ sense of efficacy in order to reduce teaching concerns. Huberman (1981) argues that “concern for understanding the structure and rationale of the program grows as behavioural mastery over its parts is achieved” (p. 393). In other words, attitudes and beliefs change once changes in behaviours and actions occur. Acknowledging the beliefs and attitudes of teachers may help to build the supportive contexts that are necessary and lead to successful implementations of change.
b. Change Takes Time

“Change is a process, not an event” (Fullan, 2007, p. 68). Although this sounds like an over simplified phrase, it suggests that change takes time. Studies that examine change over time reveal the change process at work and are important in understanding factors that bring about successful change. In general, it takes between three to five years to fully implement change at a high level (George et al, 2000; Fullan, 2001, 2007). Despite this factor, when changes are introduced, many boards of education, schools, and parents are impatient and expect to see significant results in short periods of time. This places teachers under significant pressure and can cause teachers to be reluctant or be skeptical about change (Berlin & Jensen, 1989). Hall and Hord (2011) claim that failure to address key aspects of change can actually lengthen implementation time or entirely prevent its achievement.

Researchers acknowledge that the actions of teachers, the realization of curriculum implementation and teaching, are what create successful implementation. Spillane (1999) describe this as the ‘zone of enactment’, “the space in which teachers make sense of and operationalize their own practice…differences in teachers’ enactment are key in understanding their efforts to change” (p. 159). Understanding that implementing change takes time implies that individuals respond differently to, but gradually come to understand and become effective users of the new way. Williamson and Blackburn (2010) recognize that some people are early adopters and embrace change. Some people rarely adopt change, but most people can move towards supporting change when given sufficient time and information. Given the many factors found to affect change, policy makers and change advocates need to ensure that teachers are given adequate time and support in order to successfully implement innovations.
Christou et al (2004) explained lags in the implementation of a primary math reform because policy makers did not realize the importance of preparing teachers adequately. They viewed the change as an ‘event’, not a process, when they opted for a two-day workshop to explain the change and left teachers to figure out the rest. This result, described by the authors as ‘event mentality’, had serious consequences for the teachers and the innovation, resulting in limited progression over time. The study findings found most teachers remained focused on task concerns and had not made desirable progress to impact concerns. Some teachers had even resorted back to self-concerns and or had abandoned the use of the new mathematics curriculum altogether.

LaRocco and Murdica (2009) present findings from a comparative study between two elementary schools where teachers share their concerns over time regarding the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI), a large-scale educational innovation that involves changing from traditional ways of supporting students with learning disabilities. The authors argue that by studying change over time, as well as concerns expressed by teachers, leaders will facilitate more effective support for the implementation of the RTI innovation. Using the CBAM model and the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoC-Q) (Hall & Hord, 2005), a typical pattern emerged between the two schools involved in the study. Findings showed similar stages of concern among the teachers where personal concerns (i.e., self and task concerns) in the first year of RTI were predominant. This supports the theory that “it takes three to five years to implement new practices to a high level” (George et al, 2000; Fullan, 2001).

Over time, patterns of concern have been noted to change. In Hollingshead (2008), findings indicated that, at the beginning of the adoption of a character education program,
teachers experienced high levels of concern for information but quickly became focused on management-related concerns. As the teachers became more comfortable with the program, various user profiles emerged. Certain profiles of innovation users can be identified and described in four broad categories of users: the resistor; the cooperator; the ideal implementer; and the overachiever. These categories emerged not only in Hollingshead’s study, but have also been confirmed in other studies (Bitan-Friedlander et al., 2004; Hall & Hord, 2005). User profiles described how the implementations were being used, as well as, a way to meet needs of these individuals in more targeted ways through personalized interventions aligned with certain teachers’ user profiles. This research recognized that individual teachers experience change in different ways and that progressions through change occur at different paces. Attempts were made to align profiles and concerns with the sort of support received from either more experienced teachers or more experienced innovation users or central leaders involved in managing the innovation. Results from this study reinforce the importance of considering individual teachers when successfully implementing new ideas or innovations.

c. Professional Learning Support

Professional learning is a significant component that is part of the process of change. Simply put, change involves new learning. Learning enables educators to adjust or change practices in order to support students in more effective ways. Results of studies note the importance of attending to concerns of teachers as new innovations are implemented (Sanders & Ngxola, 2009; Christou et al, 2004; Gaith & Shaaban, 1999). Educational leaders benefit from acknowledging and identifying these concerns in order to increase the prospect
or likelihood of success of the innovation. Senger (1999) describes educational reforms as “fragile and transient” and argues that educational leaders should develop in-service programs and other supports to help teachers get through an innovation.

Without this important professional development and support, especially among less experienced teachers, there is a strong possibility that concerns will not progress from self and task concerns to later impact concerns. Teachers may, in fact, regress back to self-concerns if task concerns intensify, resulting in limited implementation success. Kelly and Staver (2004) reveal that systematic, ongoing professional learning is necessary to assist both beginning and veteran teachers in addressing their concerns and sustaining specific actions during innovations. They argue that those activities need to specifically target the different needs of teachers as changes are planned, prepared for, taught, and assessed. The importance of supporting teachers throughout the implementation process has been well documented (Hall & Hord, 2011; Fullan, 2001; Waugh, 2004).

Effective professional learning:

[b]uilds on existing knowledge and understandings that can either facilitate or impede with the acquisition of new ideas and approaches. This is particularly so at a time of significant educational reform, when teachers and schools are challenged fundamentally to change direction and practice. (McCaslin, 2006, p. 181).

As noted in a wide body of literature, effective professional development requires three core features and three structural features (Quick, Holtzman & Chaney, 2009; Starkey, Yates, Mey, Hall, Taylor, Stevens & Toia, 2009; Garet, Porter, Desimone, & Birman, 2003). These features, when combined, have been frequently been cited as having significant impact on learning. They have grown out of a well-known professional development model known as the Eisenhower Professional Development Program (Porter, Garet, Desimone & Birman, 2001). Core features of this model for effective professional learning include:
i) subject and pedagogical content knowledge;  
ii) active learning; and  
iii) coherence.

Of the twenty-one characteristics of effective professional development strategies, Guskey (2003) found “the most frequently cited was enhancement of teachers’ content and pedagogical knowledge” (p. 748). McLaughin and Mitra (2001) describe this critical core feature as knowledge of first principles. The authors state that “without understanding the theory upon which their new practice is based, teachers lack the capacity for self-critique or for providing reflective feedback for colleagues, so practice likely will stagnate” (p. 307). Given this core feature often competes with other professional learning needs, managers of change need to deal with the “fundamental interrogatives of why, what, how, and by whom” (Grant, 2009, p. 21) within the change community. Grant reinforces the need for teachers to know why a change is happening, what benefits it might have, how the change is going to happen, and who will be the true agents of the change. As leaders take the time to deepen the knowledge of content and pedagogy, some of those questions can be addressed.

A second core feature, described as active involvement (not passive reception of information) is embedded in professional learning contexts. Observing educators and asking for feedback, planning, modeling and engaging in meaningful discussions and reflection are some examples of active learning strategies that have been found to deepen understanding of content and pedagogy. This “action oriented” core feature is more about teacher’s constructing their own knowledge, rather than passively receiving it (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).
A third core feature, coherence, is addressed when learning is connected to and incorporates participants’ own knowledge and understanding. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) describe how these “learner-centred environments build on strengths, interests, and needs by attending to the beliefs, attitudes, skills and knowledge the learners bring together” (p. 192). This knowledge-of-practice conception, described by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), assumes the feature of coherence by suggesting that the “knowledge educators need to teach well is generated when teachers treat their own classrooms and schools as sites for intentional investigation at the same time that they treat the knowledge and theory produced by others as generative material for interrogation and interpretation” (p. 250). Fullan (2007) refers to cohesion as a dilemma of being often “too tight” or “too loose”.

In order to achieve cohesion within a larger system, Fullan describes professional learning opportunities that foster positive peer interactions and effective collaboration.

d. Leadership Support

Sergiovanni (2000) states that local leadership can make a difference in creating healthy, rigorous schools. Fullan (2001) argues that change can be led and that leadership is a factor that makes a difference in successful implementation of change. He states very clearly, “educational leaders must come to appreciate the early difficulties of trying something new” (p. 5). Observers of educational change contend that educational leaders need to understand the change process in order to successfully support and implement innovations (Fuller, 1969; Fullan, 2007; Hall & Hord, 2011).

McLaughlin and Mitra (2001) state that successful change “requires a supportive principal, one who not only understands the values and perspectives underlying the project,
but also actively endorses its core principles from the beginning of the project” (p. 311).

Principals need to support and lead change. Having high expectations for staff, supporting increased need for knowledge and guiding school learning communities towards implementing change require principal commitment (Hord & Hirsh, 2009). Research findings from significant studies indicate that principal leaders who fully understand the importance of early learning will develop and apply a range of strategies that positively affect students, educators, and families in school communities (Cantalini-Williams & Telfer, 2010).

In their extensive use of the CBAM and its various tools and frameworks, Hall and Hord (2011) noted the role of leadership and its relationship to change in their research findings. When examining research findings on change, they noted very distinct variations of the same innovation across schools and were puzzled with this outcome, given that all teachers had received the same professional development and curriculum materials. Socioeconomic situations and other factors were also deemed similar. Differences among the principals in these schools led Hall and Hord to embark on further research in the area of principal leadership. They discovered that leadership was key in the implementation of change. These findings led Hall and Hord to establish detailed descriptions of change facilitators that help to explain the various roles leaders take as they support the implementation of change.

Three commonly found styles of change facilitators have been described and include ‘the Initiator’, ‘the Manager’, and ‘the Responder’. A summary of these styles can be used to understand the actions of change facilitators and the impact these actions have on implementation success (see Figure 2). Hall and Hord’s research suggest that leadership styles impacts implementation success. Not only do principals benefit from understanding
their own leadership style in relation to change, but the information can benefit other leaders who are responsible for supporting and teaching change facilitators that lead at the ground level in schools.

Figure 2. Summary Characteristics of Change Facilitator Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiators: Make it happen (chess player metaphor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(vision, passion, push, consistent decision making, strategic sense: always thinking ahead)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers: Help it happen (simple board game player metaphor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(efficient, follow the rules, organized, focus on use of budget/resources, protect their staff, try to do it all themselves)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responder: Let it happen (flipping coins metaphor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(concern for feelings and perceptions, most friendly (some reclusive), listen to all, let others take the lead, delay decision-making want everyone to be happy and get along)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hall & Hord, 2011. p. 128

In a summary of research findings, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) have established “strong claims” about school leadership. Based on the results of a wide body of previous research evidence, the authors argue that there is a strong bank of knowledge that exists about effective leadership practices that allow them to make these strong claims with a degree of confidence. Although classroom teaching and individual actions are the most influential in terms of student learning, a significant claim states that “leadership acts as a catalyst without which other good things are quite unlikely to happen” (p. 28). Leithwood et al further conclude that no research evidence exists that would find improved student achievement without the presence of talented leadership. This reinforces the significant role
of school leaders who are involved in supporting any innovation process. The authors use the term “total leadership”. This term acknowledges the influence of leaders from a variety of sources that include teacher leaders, staff teams, parents, central board office staff, students, and vice-principals, in addition to principals and head teachers. Fullan (2001) also describes the impact of organizational conditions within schools on effective change. Peer relationships, administrative leadership and external school board support create a dynamic that can lead to positive results.

The role of leadership teams in supporting the implementation of change has been well documented. LaRocco and Murdica (2009) measured individual teacher concern using the CBAM to determine change in teacher practice and implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) in their classrooms. They argue that education leaders need to understand these basic feelings to facilitate changes that relate specifically to new learning. Through this knowledge, leaders will gain information about what teachers need, when, and what actions will support their professional development needs. When leaders manage change, they need to support different kinds of learning and at different times. This learning includes: knowledge acquisition and insight; habit and learning; and learned anxiety (Schein, 1993). When individuals are anxious or frustrated, knowledge acquisition can be complex. This leads to possible reluctance to learn new things. Changes in habits depend on many factors but school cultures have been found to significantly impact change. In cases where school organizations appear to punish or reward certain actions, change can become difficult to achieve. Given successful change involves pressure, it is the support through interactions with peers, administrators and knowing others that leads to positive actions (Fullan, 1985).
Spillane (2006) advocates for distributive leadership within schools and argues that congruence of perceptions between central office staff and school leadership teams most effectively supports the achievement of specific goals. In their study of school and district effectiveness, Chrispeels et al (2008) stress the importance of ‘developing people’ in order to achieve specific goals. This involves providing teachers with opportunities to collaborate with grade level peers where teaching and instructional practice are examined. The authors also highlight the importance of showing teachers and administrators models of best practices and coordinated professional development opportunities. Leadership teams can provide a structure and support that guides these desirable change initiatives that have been found to lead to successful implementation of innovations. Fullan (2007) states that leadership at all levels of a system is the key level for any reform initiative.

As noted in a range of literature, changes are complex processes and have a certain amount of chaos associated with their implementation (Waugh, 2008). Fullan (2001) states:

> [c]hange may come about either because it is imposed on us (by natural events or deliberate reform) or because we voluntarily participate in or even initiate change when we find dissatisfaction, inconsistency, or intolerability in our current situation. In either case, the meaning of change will rarely be clear at the outset, and ambivalence will pervade the transition. (p. 30-31).

The study of change aids in understanding and supporting important innovations in education. It can be used to explain the predictable nature of change and of supports for along the way. By following and charting the progress of change, and providing necessary interventions, change leaders can more effectively implement the change process, leading to a greater likelihood of adoption. “It is the responsibility of the educational leaders and policy makers to acknowledge and identify the concerns of teachers in order to increase the prospects of success for educational innovations” (Christou et al, 2004, p. 172). The
Concerns-Based Adoption model, with its various tools and frameworks, have provided researchers with reliable strategies to acquire a wide body of information about educational change, both individual reactions as well as variations of levels of use of specific innovations. Based on this wide body of research evidence, a number of repeating patterns have been identified (Hall & Hord, 2011). Those patterns can be grouped into certain themes or principles that seem to hold true during times of educational change. Those ten principles, or lessons learned over time, will be discussed in the following summary.

**Ten Principles of Change**

The first key principle is that change involves new learning (Hall & Hord, 2011). This is based on a premise that in order to achieve an improvement, less successful practices need to be replaced or altered with more effective ones. This involves new learning and the need for high quality professional learning during times of change. A second principle of change acknowledged earlier in this review suggests that change is a process, not an event. George et al (2000) documented that educational change take time to implement. This information is particularly helpful among change leaders as they prepare and plan for change. In particular, large-scale changes involve time and effort, which needs to be acknowledged up front. A third principle of change describes the school as the primary unit for change. School staffs and leaders will “make or break change efforts” (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. 9). This further reinforces the need for system support and uniquely targets learning opportunities for teachers and schools as they undergo change. Individuals have been identified as the agents and implementers of change, a fourth pattern or principle. As noted by Senge (1990), “success in any reform hinges on what happens at the smallest unit of the
organization: for schools, it is the teacher who implements new policy and practice in the classroom” (p. 181).

We know that systems and organizations, such as the Ontario government, adopt new innovations such as the implementation of FDK. That is the easy part. The complexity evolves as those individuals responsible develop the necessary skills and competencies to successfully implement the change. Leaders of organizations benefit from identifying and anticipating certain reactions in order to devise ways to facilitate the implementation of a change. Hall and Hord state, “in order for change to be successful, an ‘implementation bridge’ is necessary” (p. 10). This bridge provides support for teachers and schools as current practices are gradually replaced with newer ones. Without this ‘implementation bridge’, individuals and organizations are required to make giant leaps, often failing to adopt the expected changes.

A fifth important principle identified as important in successful change processes is the need for specific actions or events that support certain changes. These are often described as change interventions. An intervention might include opportunities for training or professional development. These supports are directed towards individuals or groups with a focus on meeting the specific needs at specific points in time. Change leaders often mistakenly focus solely on innovations and neglect to plan for various interventions over time. As noted in McLaughlin and Mitra (2002) “reformers and reform advocates, policymakers and funders often pay little attention to the problem and requirements of sustaining a reform, when they move their attention to new implementation sites or active involvement with the project” (p. 304). Paying attention to specific and focused interventions throughout the change process is central to success (McLaughlin & Mitra, 2002;
Building on this assumption is the sixth principle, the need for focused interventions to reduce or eliminate resistance to change. This action involves identifying possible reasons for resistance, such as a sense of loss or grief associated with stopping an action. Resistance to change may also result from significant questions about the value of the change itself or may be due to perceptions that changes to teaching practice can be difficult. Williamson and Blackburn (2010) acknowledge that people respond to change in different ways. Resistance is typically found when the change is not valued or when individuals are uncertain they will be successful with the change. Regardless of the reasons for resistance, change facilitators need to identify these causes and work towards providing interventions that are targeted to support the resistance, if successful implementation can take place.

Although teacher actions are what cause changes to be implemented, the importance of administrative leadership cannot be overstated. “If administrators do not engage in ongoing active support, it is more than likely that the change effort will die” (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. 14). The eighth principle focuses on the importance of creating collaborative teams among those leading the change. School-level and system-level leaders might include teacher leaders, administrators, consultants, and superintendents. If this team focuses on cohesive strategies and supports, they can make a significant difference to the degree of success of the change. Mandates or opposed changes are often criticized due to a lack of consultation or consideration for those directly involved in the change. However, Hall and Hard argue that mandates, when clear and expected, actually support the change process, providing the mandate is accompanied by necessary support. When mandates fail, this is often due to weak implementation processes.
Finally, Hall and Hord suggest that learning contexts influence professional learning and change processes. Certain organizational conditions, such as staffs that collaborate and focus on student learning, create positive change contexts. As communities of professional learners, these types of schools identify actions and learning that needs to happen to in order for them to better support the learning needs of students. Hord (2004) found these communities to value change and actually seek change as a means of contributing to teacher efficacy. Shared and supportive leadership is often part of these positive learning contexts. These ten principles, gathered through extensive research and described by Hall and Hord (2011), provide readers with an opportunity to understand change more deeply, learn how to facilitate innovations more effectively, and provide lessons learned from the study of change.
CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe how this research study was designed and implemented. I will first review the methods undertaken and describe the participants in the study. Then, I will describe how Hall and Hord’s (2011) Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) has been used to support the data analysis and limitations associated with this study.

Research Design

To examine reactions and concerns associated with the implementation of FDK, I decided to engage in a qualitative research study. A qualitative approach allows for the study of individual teachers and what they have in common as the new model for kindergarten is implemented. As stated by Creswell (2007), “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 37). Through my interactions and observations with participants, I was able to focus on the individual perceptions of teachers as they experience change. This approach allowed me to explore lived experiences of people “in order to develop practices or policies, or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 60). This study enabled me to assess reactions, feeling, attitudes and perceptions of kindergarten teachers in the new program.
Participants

In my role as a program consultant, I am heavily involved in guiding and supporting the implementation of this new model for kindergarten. As a result, I have become familiar with both the schools and staffs involved in this implementation process. I was able to identify twenty experienced kindergarten teachers from these schools. Those teachers had more than five years experience teaching kindergarten. I randomly selected ten experienced teachers from this list and invited them to participate in the study over a four-month period, from January to April 2012. Five teachers accepted this email invitation and were identified as participants in this study. An initial interview was established where participants were informed of the purpose and timelines of this study. I was able to interview each participant three times between January and April 2012. Each interview lasted between thirty and sixty minutes in length.

The five teachers in this study are experienced kindergarten teachers. They have been teaching between six and fifteen years in various kindergarten settings. All teachers have experience teaching in half day, daily kindergarten, all day, alternate day kindergarten, and the new full day, every day kindergarten program that is being implemented across Ontario schools from 2010 until 2014. I felt it important for teachers in this study to be experienced kindergarten teachers, as they would most likely be the ones able to compare and contrast the new model against prior ones. Experience might also influence how change is being experienced by way of comparing “then” and “now” in terms of how students are responding to the new program and how some of the imposed changes have impacted teaching, both positively and negatively. Two of the teacher participants began implementing FDK in 2010, the first year of the provincial roll out. The remaining three teachers began the
implementation process in September 2011.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The research design consists of a series of semi-structured interviews and two classroom observations, conducted with each of five experienced kindergarten teachers in FDK programs. Participants met with me for these semi-structured interviews in either their classrooms or in my home. These interviews were conducted outside of the school day in order to have more lengthy, uninterrupted, and relaxed conversations. I began each of the interviews with the reminder of the purpose of the study and the importance of providing honest and open responses are, both positive and negative ones. I followed the written guide for this semi-structured interview (see Appendix 1), yet had the flexibility to interject to seek clarification or ask the participant to expand on some of her thinking. Firmin (2008) describes how interviews provide researchers with opportunities to hear what people are thinking, feeling, and saying. The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed me to probe further and gather more detail and description of topics that occurred during the interview. As noted in Ayres (2008), “development of rich, relevant data rests on the interviewers ability to understand, interpret and respond to the verbal and nonverbal information provided by the informant” (p. 811). Through active listening, responding and probing throughout the interview, I feel that I was able to gather important information that could be used to describe teacher’s experiences during this time of significant change in the way that kindergarten is delivered. All interviews were recorded for later transcription and analysis.
In addition to these semi-structured interviews, I conducted two classroom observations with each of the participants in their FDK settings. As I gathered field notes during these observations, I was able to capture a glimpse of what each of the teacher’s experienced in their kindergarten classrooms as well interactions and observations with their teaching colleagues (i.e., early childhood educator partners) and the children. I was able to use interview findings to test my interpretations and determine a connection between what was said and what was observed. As stated by McKechnie (2008), “qualitative observational research is exploratory. It seeks to uncover unanticipated phenomena… It acknowledges reactivity to be inevitable on the part of both the observed and the observer and seeks to address and understand this through researcher reflexivity” (p. 574). These observations allowed me to confirm some of the issues and responses that had been shared by the teachers in prior interviews. I was able to observe, first hand, some of the reactions that had been expressed such as how the teachers interacted with early childhood education partners, how planning and assessment strategies were being used, and what students were experiencing in FDK. Not only did the observations act as validations of certain concerns or reactions that had been expressed, but they also helped me to deepen my understandings of the issues that teachers were experiencing.

Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews combined with classroom observations generated considerable information. As concerns and reactions began to be unfolded, I explored the meaning of teacher reactions and responses and engaged in ongoing analysis and interpretation. I used the CBAM Stages of Concern (SoC) framework to determine the
nature of the concerns expressed and looked for patterns across the participants and possible changes in reactions over the course of this four-month period. I felt that the use of this framework would support understanding of the change process and allow me to measure reactions and concerns among teachers in new full day kindergarten contexts. The data analysis allowed me to identify feelings and perceptions of individual teachers and an opportunity to determine if any predictable patterns or reactions exist. I analyzed interview responses and observations by sorting and categorizing personal, management or impact types of concerns in an effort to understand the change process more thoroughly. The use of the CBAM framework, which has been widely and broadly used in multiple educational contexts, provided one useful way of understanding the changes brought about by FDK.

Limitations

Although this research provides insight into kindergarten teacher reactions and concerns regarding the implementation of full day kindergarten, this study is not without certain limitations. As the researcher, a program consultant employed by a large public school, I have fairly significant responsibilities to support the implementation of FDK. Even though I attempted to gather, analyze and discuss the findings as accurately as possible, potential biases may exist based on my values and beliefs about the importance of this early learning initiative. Gathering data from interviews and observation can also lead to “potential for generating reactivity or observer effect…closely related to the problem of observer effect is the problem of observer bias, the idea that data will be limited by the characteristics of the individual collecting those data” (McKechnie, 2008, p. 574). In her study of the changing expectations of kindergarten teachers, Goldstein (2007) cautions
around being too quick to characterize or understand certain observations due to the ‘unforgiving complexity’ of teaching (p. 392). I am aware of potential bias associated with the collection and analysis of this sort of qualitative data.

A further limitation of this study is related to my role as a program consultant and the interactions I have with teachers while gathering data through conversations and observations with kindergarten teachers. A consultant is often viewed by others as an “expert teacher” and is sometimes perceived to be in a position of power and authority. While I feel this was not the case among study participants, I am aware of this potential bias when examining the findings. In addition, the teachers involved in the interviews were encouraged to answer openly and honestly, but due to the personal nature of change and subsequent reactions, participants may limit their responses or respond in ways that don’t completely capture their own concerns about FDK.

A final and important limitation relates to the small scope of this study. Given any reaction or response is always within a certain context and at a certain point in time, data gathered is just that, specific to individuals within their own context. Although an effort was made to obtain multiple perspectives around this change initiative, the small number of teachers involved may limit the depth and breadth of the findings. Interviews and observations allowed me to obtain rich descriptions of possible reactions and concerns, but due to the small sample, findings are not representative of all teachers and cannot be generalized. Nonetheless, as common themes emerged, the possibility exists to use this data to influence further research regarding reactions and concerns from a broad range of stakeholders (e.g., ECEs, principals) over a longer period of time. In addition, these findings will support the broader implementation of this program.
CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

During this research project, I sought to understand the experiences of kindergarten teachers as they began to implement full day kindergarten with their students. I discovered a number of reactions and concerns expressed by these five teachers and noticed commonalities and differences in their reactions and their concerns associated with this new program. Findings from this study will focus on common themes that emerged and stem from analysis of verbatim transcripts of the interviews and field notes generated during classroom observations. This qualitative data was read and reread in an effort to establish familiarity with the responses and to seek greater understanding. Data was analyzed individually to allow for clear understanding of meanings of what was stated or observed. Patterns and themes were then identified among the study participants and were clustered to determine typical reactions and expressions of concern. They were analyzed using Hall and Hord’s (2011) Stages of Concern profile to determine the type of concerns expressed among the teachers. This is presented in the form of a narrative discussion with participant quotes used to enrich this discussion. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants in the study.

The key questions explored in this research study were:

What are kindergarten teachers’ experiencing with the new FDK program?

What are the reactions or concerns of kindergarten teachers to the implementation of this new program model for kindergarten?

How might these reactions or concerns change over time as teachers begin the implementation process and adapt to this new model?
Responses to these questions form the basis for this discussion and have been grouped into common themes. Themes will be discussed in relation to the type of concerns expressed by the teachers in the study. Hall and Hord’s Stages of Concern framework: self, management and impact concerns, will appear as the major headings, with common themes presented within each of these areas of concern.

**Self Concerns**

Hall and Hord (2011) describe self-concerns as either informational or personal. Initially, when a change is introduced, people typically respond by expressing a need for more information. Teachers in this study had many informational concerns when FDK was first introduced at their school but they did not express many of these types of concerns during the course of this study. That was likely due to the timing of the study; teachers were already involved in the daily implementation of the new program and had sought and received considerable information about the program either through training, professional reading and conversations. At the beginning of the research, two of the teachers had already been teaching FDK for over a year while the other three had only been involved for four months. Informational concerns were low, personal concerns and reactions were expressed and can be grouped into three broad categories: partnership concerns; extended day concerns; and school-related issues or concerns. One teacher also identified a strong personal concern associated with implementing the new program. Her concern seemed connected to a loss of efficacy in her teaching. Concerns will be presented in the following section.
**Teacher and ECE Partnership Concerns**

As stated in the Ministry of Education’s *Reference Guide for Educators*, teachers and ECEs are expected to bring their own unique strengths and professional training to kindergarten in a “collaborative and complementary” partnership (p. 10). As partners, they are jointly responsible for planning and delivering daily activities, monitoring and extending children’s learning, organizing the learning environment, working with parents and assisting during daily routines. They have unique and specific roles. Teachers and ECEs represent the FDK team and have a duty and obligation to cooperate according to the legislation that governs FDK programs.

Working in this way is unique to kindergarten teachers in schools. Teachers often work with others but do not typically share duties in their own classrooms and generally have the freedom and responsibility to make their own decisions. This new staffing model represents an important change for teachers and was noted among respondents as one of the greatest personal concerns associated with the new program. During each of the interviews and classroom observations, I was able to identify this strong theme as one that was expressed repeatedly. Personal reactions of teachers seemed to subside over time although all respondents indicated concerns associated with this new teaching partnership.

Lauren described some of her initial concerns about working in partnerships. Prior to beginning FDK, she described how she worried about a partner and indicated that she spent a fair bit of time thinking about this new relationship. She was uncertain about her role and how things might change with an ECE partner. Lauren expressed this anxiousness:

> I was really nervous to be put in a position where I needed to share my space and my students with someone else. It is a little off putting and nerve wracking because there are so many unknowns at first when you begin this kind of partner relationship.
Things like what if we don’t get along, what if we see things differently, what if …there are so many things that we don’t know about working alongside someone else. This can be a real worry.

She later described how similar concerns have been expressed among many of her colleagues and how some were experiencing considerable challenges working in partnerships. Lauren explained that her initial concerns quickly dissipated once she met Hannah [ECE] and recognized that Hannah was a respectful partner that had much to offer in the program. Lauren now laughs at these initial anxieties that seem to have vanished. One thing she did acknowledge, however, was an ongoing concern associated with working in partnerships. Increased workload, handling conflicts, role clarity and working efficiently were some additional considerations Lauren described as she figured out how to work alongside another person. In a later discussion, Lauren described working with a partner as an experience similar to living with someone:

For example, if you are a tidy person and she is messy, we need to figure this out in order to get along. I think it can be challenging to figure out some of this. I am not sure teachers are as equipped to deal with some of the interpersonal skills that are required of them when they work with partners. This is very new.

Although Lauren expressed many positive aspects of working with her partner, she also acknowledged the various personal concerns associated with this change in how kindergarten programs are now being staffed.

Carrie, another teacher in the study, described her initial partnership experiences as extremely stressful. She found it exhausting to be always negotiating and figuring out how to successfully work with someone else. At the beginning of her partnership, Carrie described several challenges. Time was a big issue for her. She described how she wished that she and her partner had more time to get to know each other on a personal level before being forced
into an “arranged marriage”. She used this analogy to explain how she felt when she was required to work with someone else without even “dating” or getting to know each other. Even though she was excited to be working with an experienced colleague, she found this adjustment very difficult and wondered what a partner would bring to the kindergarten program.

So here I found myself, trying to figure out how to implement this new play-based program, and on top of this, I have a person who is trying to work with me. It was a very delicate dance. I felt pretty insecure anyways…. This just added to this.

Her own feelings of insecurity associated with the new program and the changes she was experiencing seemed to be exacerbated when asked to work alongside a new colleague. Carrie further stated her frustration with the amount of time it was taking for her to support her partner.

I have had to help Susan [ECE] a lot; she just didn’t know how to do certain things. She had difficulty with planning compared to other ECEs in our school. She just puts things out and lets kids figure out what to do…. I want a little more structure to this… so I have had to help her with planning. This is hugely difficult though, because we have no time together. At the end of the day, Susan can leave; she is hourly [referring to remuneration].

Interestingly, even though Carrie and her partner continue to learn to work together more effectively, Carrie described how some of these personal concerns still exist. She stated that they are still trying to figure out how they can compliment and support each other in the program. Carrie felt that as long as teachers and ECEs are paid differently [salaried versus hourly], time to meet and work together is going to be an ongoing challenge.

Two experienced kindergarten teachers, Barb and Karen, explained a similar experience when working with ECE partners. They both described how they needed time to figure out who was doing what. Barb noticed an increase in her workload. Not only would
she plan the lessons and the activities, but also she described how she needed to take additional time to explain things to her ECE partner. Karen described her initial reactions to working in partnership as challenging.

I am so used to being in charge. Letting go has been a big deal. While I still need to guide her [ECE], I don’t want to be the warden and say all of these things like you need to do this or that. This is not my job. It is hard because I don’t think teachers want to take on the role of being boss. We need to figure out how to work together.

Barb, a kindergarten teacher for over 15 years, described the new partnership as a journey. She explained this experience as one that has required her to re-define her role.

While she and her partner work effectively together, Barb described her experiences with a partner as very challenging and very new, despite all of her years of experience working as a kindergarten teacher. Barb passionately shared her experience.

In these last four months of FDK, I realized that I needed to relinquish some of my ownership and propriety. I have had to re-define my role in the classroom. It is like a transformation. I have had to listen to Debbie [ECE] and incorporate her ideas. I have had to give up being totally responsible for everything. I have had to learn to share this power with the children, their parents, other staff and our principal. I am so used to running my own show for so long. This has been a real journey. I have had to re-evaluate, re-shape, re-think my pedagogy…and trust that another person can also be part of this classroom and support these children. I have had to really reflect and Debbie has helped me with this. It has been a huge personal journey fraught with many joys and challenges.

Clearly, those reactions were initially highly personal in nature and describe an important change for this kindergarten teacher. Even though personal concerns seemed to diminish over time, working in this new partnership was identified as a concern for many kindergarten teachers.
Extended Day Concerns

Other personal concerns identified in this study relate to the impact associated with the extended day program, which is the addition of childcare options for students both before and after school. The extended day program is another important change associated with full day kindergarten. Prior to its implementation, childcare was typically provided in only certain school sites and was often provided by various childcare organizations not employed or connected to school boards. The teachers in this study indicated that they have had very little to do with childcare providers or programs. Childcare was largely viewed as something teachers did not get involved with. With the introduction of FDK, school boards are now required to offer childcare options in all schools, where sufficient demand exists. Schools and childcare now reside under the Ministry of Education (Atkinson Charitable Foundation, 2012). This has caused considerable reaction and concern among teachers. Teachers are impacted in that they are being required to share their classroom spaces with extended day staff and students, resulting and a range of personal reactions and concerns.

Lauren indicated support for extended day programs and understands how families and children benefit from a seamless day of care and learning. Below you see how Lauren acknowledged how this impacts her classroom teaching and practice.

There are challenges in terms of sharing space with the people who may be using it before and after school. In the best of all worlds, people would work seamlessly because everyone is professional and respectful and pulls their weight, but I know that when one or more people share a space that don’t meet this, problems exist. Extended day is a huge challenge. I guess for the first time, I think teachers are being asked to consider that their space doesn’t really belong to them and I think this is a bit of a stretch for some people.

Lauren further described how she has had to adjust her expectations. She no longer has a classroom free of children. Both before and after school, the classroom she shares is
occupied with children attending the extended day program. She has needed to make several
adjustments and has needed to figure out how to share resources and space effectively.
While Lauren spoke positively about the extended day and indicated that things were
working well, she expressed concern about this additional responsibility given the many
other considerations, adjustments and changes that she had been experiencing with the
introduction of FDK.

Time pressures were expressed as a personal concern for teachers and ECEs working
in extended day classrooms. Kathryn, another experienced kindergarten teacher, described
how there were definite challenges and frustrations in extended day classrooms.

We work so well together, all three of us, but I get very frustrated because we are
always overlapping; communication is a big challenge. Sandy [ECE 1] arrives early
for the extended day. When the bell goes, we then begin our teaching day together.
Then Penny [ECE 2] arrives. The three of us hardly have any time together. This
limits our time for collaboration and planning. We end up coming in on evenings and
eating dinner to plan and talk. Keeping in touch and communicating with each other
is a huge challenge. We do not have time to write everything down so end up missing
things. The extended day adds some glitches to things.

The teachers seemed to agree that extended day options supported the needs of
families and children. That said, a few issues personally affected those involved. I noticed
that those issues only were identified among the two teachers directly impacted by the
extended day. As not all teachers were involved in extended day programs, the issue only
emerged if it was directly impacting the classroom space, materials, and team members
involved in the extended day.

**School-related Issues or Concerns**

A number of additional personal concerns were expressed among the teachers
throughout this study. Some of these concerns seemed to go beyond specific partnership or program issues and appeared to relate to challenges associated with working within a broader school community. A few teachers acknowledged they were already experiencing many changes. Some indicated that incorporating the needs of other school staff or other school-related matters just added to their feelings of stress and concern. Carrie described the enormous stress she felt when interacting with other FDK teachers and ECEs in her school. Previously, she explained that she and another kindergarten teacher collaborated and shared in planning and professional dialogue. Since the implementation of the new kindergarten program, Carrie has found collaborating effectively with the other kindergarten teams difficult. She described how there seemed to be less collaboration and more competition.

Carrie explained that she has had enormous difficulty working with the other teams:

In the past, we used to work and talk together regularly. Now, I find the FDK school team to be too large. There are too many dynamics and strengths and needs. I have a lot to contribute and have had much experience teaching kindergarten, but I feel that my voice is not heard in this large group. I do not feel that we have an inclusive and collaborative working environment in my school. Even my principal has not been able to support this collaboration issue.

Karen described a similar reaction. Even though she felt that her own partnership had grown in so many positive ways, she was concerned about the lack of teamwork among other kindergarten classes. When referring to other classes and FDK teams, a third teacher, Barb comments that:

[w]e are just not on the same page. Sometimes we are forced to collaborate but honestly, this is unproductive. It can actually be difficult. I need permission to NOT collaborate right now. I have enough to do with my own partnership and figuring this out. I wonder if this new program might change the way teachers do their planning and how they work together?
In another discussion with Lauren, challenging experiences with her principal were described. She generally felt supported by her principal who seemed to really have a genuine and heightened interest in FDK; nonetheless, she worried about the way her administrator seemed to sometimes overgeneralize or over simplify key areas.

Sometimes, a little bit of knowledge can lead them [principals] to make some challenging decisions or generalizations. For example, I use a really wonderful assessment tool. It works for my partner and I. My principal thought it was so great too. Before long, all of the teams were being asked to use the same tool. It just didn’t make sense. It didn’t fit within the others’ practice or context. Some were struggling with this and kind of felt that this had been forced on them. I felt responsible for being the one to generate this thing in the first place. There is great danger here. It is not like you can just oversimplify the thought and decisions that are behind certain things in kindergarten. I don’t think my principal really understands how complex some of this stuff is and how it connects to a more specific situation.

Other challenges associated with being teachers in a larger school environment were identified. In a few cases, study participants expressed how they were forced to comply with school activities, regardless of how appropriate or inappropriate they were. In one interview, Lauren noted that she and her partner were really working on creating effective activities and experiences for their students.

We were really challenging each other. I was learning so much with Hannah [ECE]. Then, the other kindergarten teams had an idea about a special school-wide concert for parents and this silly craft to give out as gifts. Hannah thought it was a crazy idea to get involved with this. I think FDK has added a whole new layer to our decision-making. We are working so hard to understand our new program and are trying to learn together. In come the others and they disrupt our good work. If we choose to ignore them, it feels like we are not part of the school or aren’t somehow collaborative. But honestly, being part of this goes against our core values and what we think is best. Having some autonomy and yet being part of a larger organization involves a very stressful balancing act. I feel like I have to help Hannah understand that somehow you have to play the big school game. It is hard.
Loss of Efficacy

Teacher efficacy can be defined as “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance.” (Bandura, 1977, p. 15). As Carried described her concerns about the new play-based approach to teaching kindergarten, she appeared to be struggling with her beliefs about being able to support student learning in this new way. Prior to FDK, Carrie explained that she ran a good kindergarten program. She described how her children had thrived and that she had helped them with their English language development and their literacy achievement. In the new program, Carrie appeared less confident about her abilities. During an interview, she revealed that prior to the new program, she would assign children a task and the children would rotate through various learning centres. She described this common practice as a way to make sure that children had specific experiences and as a way of her accounting for the learning. With FDK, Carrie described some new concerns:

I do not think I am suppose to rotate kids through tasks any more, but I am not sure how to get the same results [learning]. I cannot be in all of the different play centres at the same time so how do I know they are learning anything? I am trying to figure this out. I do not really know how to give children more responsibility and still have them go to where I want them to go so I can cover my curriculum and make sure that I get all of the teaching covered.

Carrie seemed to be really questioning her ability or capacity to teach the curriculum in a play-based way, a new requirement of FDK. She appeared frustrated and even stated that “her world has turned upside-down”.

The nature of these personal concerns seemed to stem from the many changes kindergarten teachers were experiencing as the new program was introduced. During this study, intensity of some of these concerns, particularly the partnership interactions, decreased
over time. In fact, many positive aspects of working with ECEs were identified and will be later discussed. During many of the interviews, a variety of management concerns were identified as the teachers adjusted to implementing the new program with their partners. As relationships with ECEs continued to evolve and unfold, teachers seemed to shift a great deal of attention to the action strategies associated with implementing the new program. Planning, assessment, and understanding play-based learning were a few management concerns expressed among study participants. Many of those relate to what Hall and Hord (2011) describe as management concerns; concerns associated with performing the task and adjusting to the new innovation.

**Management Concerns**

Planning for the new play-based program was a significant management concern expressed by the teachers. During various classroom observations, I noticed both teacher and ECE refer to a common template that was posted in the classroom. This template described various learning centres that were planned, required materials and props, and the curriculum areas that were being addressed. Variations of similar planning sheets were displayed in a few classrooms visited. The teachers explained that their plans had evolved from trying to figure out how to communicate ideas with each other and how to ensure that there was some intentional focus on certain overall expectations identified in the FDK program [curriculum]. Kathryn laughed and said with a groan.

[p]lanning has been a huge deal. This is about our third attempt at a learning centre plan. We are trying to figure out a way to share our plans so that we know what each of us are doing and who is doing what. We keep trying different ways, but this one seems to be working now.
Carrie identified a certain frustration when planning for a play-based approach.

I do not really know what I am doing. I do not really know how to plan for play and what it is suppose to look like. So I am not doing a theme any more, great…I don’t come in on weekends anymore to set up my room and decorate for the theme, but now, what am I doing? I am trying to figure out how to make our block centre more purposeful, but not a theme. I have no idea. I need to figure out more about how to set up good learning centres. I am also trying to figure out how to support the kids in smaller groups and spend less time on whole class teaching, but I don’t really know what I am doing now. I still do quite a bit of large group teaching, even though I know I am not suppose to. Like how do you plan and organize all of this so you know you have covered everything you are suppose to?

She openly shared her planning process with me. Planning seemed to be largely untaken by this teacher and did not appear to reflect the ideas of the ECE partner. Further, the plans recorded did not seem to connect what was actually happening during observation times. Clearly Carrie was using one of her former planning processes, used prior to FDK, but was experiencing difficulty making this match with the new program.

Another teacher, Karen, explained how her planning process had changed over time. She typically initiates a plan for learning centres, making this visible for her partner. Then, Debbie [ECE] adds to the plan or plans for a few of her own learning centres, such as for science or art.

Management concerns related to planning seemed to be common among most of the teachers interviewed. I noted that teachers had concerns about the additional time and effort involved in creating a more transparent plan. Teachers described that plans included more time for play and less time involved in planning for whole group experiences. Most teachers recognized the impact and positive aspects of planning with a partner and implementing more play-based experiences for children. They also expressed the challenges associated with making plans more visible and understandable for ECE partners. Carrie stated that:
In the past, I just had a daybook with plans for me. They were pretty sketchy, sometimes even just in my head. Now, I need to make them visible so that others can see them and add to them. This has caused a real increase in my workload.

Kathryn described how managing certain aspects of this new program has been a really big deal for her and her teaching colleagues.

We have more kids, more adults… managing all of this has been huge. Planning…. Who is doing what when, what are purposeful centres, where do we put things, honestly, this took until February until we finally connected and have figured this out. I think we are getting it just now.

The teachers observed and interviewed were expending considerable effort as they negotiated the planning and implementation of the new FDK program. These management concerns indicated that they were trying to implement the new innovation and had been incorporating some new ideas and approaches.

A further management concern identified by several teachers related to assessment practices in kindergarten. With increased time for play and more student-initiated learning, teachers expressed concerns associated with managing effective and efficient assessment strategies. Prior to FDK, teachers indicated that they spent more time gathering assessment data through either paper or pencil tasks or through individual student assessments.

Although observational strategies had been used in the past, teachers appeared to be putting more effort towards understanding how to better use observation as a primary source of assessment. They described how they were identifying ways to observe and document learning through anecdotal notes and the use of technology (e.g., digital cameras, video images). When asked to describe some of the changes she had experienced, Kathryn explained that she had changed how she assesses student learning. She described how she and her partners were taking observational notes during play to document student learning.
At first I was not so sure if this was enough evidence [observational notes], after all, I am the one that needs to write report cards. Just after Christmas this year, I pulled out some paper and pencil tasks and asked children to record a pattern [math concept]; I was not sure if they knew this and I needed to be sure. I somehow thought this piece of paper would help me. Now, I realize I do not need to do these little one on one snippets, I have so much richer documentation. Penny and Sandy [ECEs] have helped me with this a lot. We are learning to gather some really good observational notes.

Carrie described documentation of learning through observation as a huge new area of learning for her. She explained that she was learning to use digital photographs and other forms of documentation.

Learning to organize all of this has been a big challenge for me. I am trying to figure out what you are suppose to write down and what is not that important. Then, organizing it all….that is another story! I need to learn more about this.

Kathryn revealed a management concern associated with an effective kindergarten timetable. While she recognized the importance of supporting young children and creating a flow of the day that worked for them, she found this difficult to achieve with the many scheduled activities that interrupt the children throughout the day.

We have timetable issues here. Having two breaks for eating and playing is not exactly ‘seamless’ like it is suppose to be. There are just too many transitions. We really need to work on this.

Karen, on the other hand, noted how the schedule worked so well.

Since Melissa [ECE] is in the classroom when the children are eating their lunch, I can actually join our staff and feel like I belong to the larger school. I am not so isolated any more. It is nice to interact with other adults and feel like you are part of the staff.

The teachers described other management concerns associated with the new program. Some of these concerns seemed to be connected to the new program, whereas others appeared to reflect ongoing teacher issues and challenges. Importantly, even though
management concerns were ongoing, a number of impact concerns were identified in this study.

**Impact Concerns**

Hall and Hord (2011) describe impact concerns as the ultimate goal. At this level, the concerns focus on improved outcomes for students, improved teaching, and overall positive impacts from implementing the new idea. Several impact concerns were expressed and observed will be discussed in this next section.

One significant impact stated by all of the teachers in the study was the positive impact full day kindergarten was having on their students. Each of the teachers described not only improved achievement, but also growth in many other areas. Barb stated that her students were thriving in FDK:

> The daily continuity allows us to continue to work on projects over time. We know the kids so well and how to support them in differentiated ways. I can honour their needs. Mostly, the kids can handle the full day. They are doing so well!

Lauren indicated that her students were making so many gains; nonetheless, she worried about an overemphasis on academic achievement. She knew her kids were doing better than in prior years, yet was concerned that the focusing on these academic results might drive decision makers or teachers to neglect other important aspects of FDK. She explained the difference now that children attend school for full days:

> Well, there continue to be some challenges for some children, but generally, I think kids really benefit from being in school all day. I worry a bit that people think children will leave FDK super smart, really advanced... because of some of the messages that are being reinforced related to achievement. While I do think that children are doing better academically, they are certainly more solid, they also have also shown me that they benefit from the daily continuity FDK provides. The children leave my class and see themselves as learners, as being very capable little people who
can take on challenges. I think they will leave kindergarten loving school and knowing that it is a stable place where they can really learn and grow.

In addition to the many positive gains noted among the students, teachers identified that FDK brought attention to their school, provided them with additional professional learning experiences, and encouraged the principal to become more involved in supporting kindergarten. One teacher stated that with the implementation of FDK, it was like “they have shone a spotlight on kindergarten”. She identified that, not only had the board provided kindergarten classes with additional resources and materials, but she had also benefited from some of the Ministry support materials and local professional learning opportunities. She explained how the “newness” of the program meant there were added opportunities, including those to develop her own leadership skills. She believed that this increased attention, even in the media, meant that people were finally recognizing the importance of the early years and that this significant government investment had positive, long lasting effects.

Most teachers noted increased effort and involvement from the school principal with the new FDK program. Some, like Lauren, found that the added training principals were receiving was evident.

I can tell that part of the implementation of this new program has been to help the administrator understand more about what is going on in kindergarten. I really appreciate this because I have always worked with administrators who don’t really understand kindergarten. Now, they are starting to get it. It has become less of my job to help others get the message; now my principal can help with this.

Teachers noticed an increase in principal knowledge due to the additional support they had been given. Barb stated that:

[p]rincipals are starting to know what effective practice looks like. I think they have been getting messages around the dos and don’ts of kindergarten. This will allow them to support positive practice, not simply reinforce ineffective practice. They are
starting to understand what good kindergarten looks like. This is really good. Prior to this, principals pretty much kept clear of kindergarten. They would just pop in and run out… they would say things like ‘they are really cute’ or ‘look at the fun stuff they do’. Now, I think they are starting to understand ways they can help teachers to do a better job. They can add some pressure to teachers who are not willing to take on some of the new changes.

All of the teachers noted some positive impact due to the increased attention and support given to kindergarten by the principal.

A number of teachers described several other collaboration concerns that related to certain benefits from working together with ECE partners. Despite initial concerns and adjustments made to their role, teachers noted many positive consequences of this new partnership. Not only did teachers describe an increased ability to work with small groups of children, so that they could focus more precisely on student needs, they also indicated that they were becoming more involved in play and observing their students’ learning more effectively. A few teachers indicated that they had been learning a lot with their ECE partners. Having an additional adult partner was reported to be valuable with an improved learning environment and higher quality play. Some ECEs were described as having benefited their teacher partner. Kathryn described her partnering experience as a “wonderful thing”. She believes the unique skills both she and ECEs bring to her team creates really positive learning for everyone.

They [ECEs] bring to the table a whole vast knowledge about social development and they really understand play…they don’t get the writing and reading and math as much…they are happy for me to take care of that, it is my specialty. They are learning more about this though and as for me, I am learning so much from them. It is amazing.

Kathryn also spoke about the ongoing collaboration that took place with ECEs. She described how they have helped her look critically at her materials and have challenged her
to remove unnecessary items that just take up space. Kathryn has been challenged to learn more about creating higher quality play environments and is conducting her own research investigation to help her figure this out. Much of this, she shared, was inspired by the ECEs that invited her to think differently about assessment and classroom practices.

Lauren also described her experiences working with a partner. “Working with a skilled colleague is so great. This includes not just managing the classroom and working with children, but also, I have benefited so much from co-planning and co-assessing. I have learned so much.” Even though the other teachers did not directly express the same passion or clarity about the positive impact of working with ECEs, they did refer to ways ECEs have supported their practice and student learning. All teachers indicated that going back to a half day kindergarten model or going back to working on their own, without a partner, would be a real challenge. They fully support the Ontario government’s full day kindergarten program.

One final impact concern I observed in this study was the impact FDK appeared to be having on the teachers’ practice and pedagogy. *The Full Day, Early-Learning Kindergarten Program* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010) states that knowledgeable and responsive educators are essential. This document describes the need for teachers and ECEs to have a passion and deep respect for their children and highlights the importance of reflective practice. Reflective learning is viewed as a reciprocal process where teams learn from each other, their children, and their families. Throughout this study, each of the teachers showed a willingness to reflect, share, and describe the impact of FDK on students, but also on themselves and their practice. Karen describes her deeper understanding of being a responsive educator through this scenario.

I think I used to try and control everything, and plan for everything, regardless of what the kids needed or were interested in. I have finally realized that it is okay to sit
back and listen. For instance, we were outside today and there were some sticks on the ground. Some children brought them inside. We decided to see what sort of marks the sticks would make if you painted with them. That was neat – it was not part of the plan, but it was still okay. I realize I don’t have to organize and manage everything all of the time. The children learned so much from this emergent experience!

Similar statements were made by several of the other teachers involved this study. During classrooms observations, I observed children engaged in a variety of meaningful play experiences. Even though some teachers continued to struggle with certain long held traditions such as the use of generic worksheets or too much large group teaching time, efforts were being made by all of the teachers to engage in deeper reflection. They were all re-thinking certain traditions and practices and either had replaced, or were considering replacing, these traditions with more meaningful experiences. Carrie, for example, reflected on her use of worksheets. During a professional learning session, she was challenged to remove this practice. She decided to try this and discovered children continued to learn without them. In a reflective conversation, she wondered if maybe children would learn more without them [generic worksheets]?

Barb described her entire first year in FDK as a “real learning journey”.

Relinquishing ownership and re-defining her role were reflected in the following statements.

I now tell my children that they need to make important choices about their learning. I remind them that they are growing their brains and doing important work [when they play]. I have watched the children become inspired and start thinking on their own. These sorts of connections are very powerful. Sometimes the children say things like “I am having a science moment”. This is very impressive.

Barb also described the impact various professional resources and a new curriculum document has had on her practice. These materials have been very influential to her and
have given her permission to incorporate more open-ended materials and choices into her program.

Other teachers commented on how the increase in time for kindergarten has meant that they can relax a little bit and enjoy the children more. “We have more time for play,” stated Kathryn. She further describes the increased time at school:

More time for play has been so fabulous. I have always believed in play, I have just struggled with it when I am on my own. Now, we can work with small groups of kids on the things they need, yet still give them lots of time to explore and play. This has been so great. They are learning so much. I am learning to figure out how to enter play and what to say to support the learning. This is a something I need to work on more…the questioning thing.

Lauren also noted how she felt that their day was spent so much more effectively in full day kindergarten. When comparing this to how she used to spend her time, she indicated that while she was able to continue to work with more small groups, she also had so much more time to devote to play. Prior to FDK, Lauren explained that she had so much less time and less flexibility. Now, she explains, “I can really get into the play”.

Summary

This chapter has identified and discussed the numerous findings as they relate to the key research questions. The themes that emerged were identified within Hall and Hord’s Stages of Concern framework, part of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). Teachers were found to experience concerns within each of these areas of concern: personal, management and impact concerns. They described various reactions and concerns that have resulted from the implementation of full day kindergarten. Important themes, such as the effects of working with early childhood educators and adjusting to this new program were
identified. In the final chapter, I draw some conclusions about those experiences and reactions and describe certain implications.
CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I start with a brief review of the purpose of this study. I then present the key findings and the implications those findings have related to large-scale systemic change projects. I end with a few suggestions for future research.

This study was established to investigate how teachers were reacting to the implementation of full day kindergarten. I set out to investigate their concerns and reactions to the many significant changes that they were experiencing as part of the new model for kindergarten that has been imposed by the Ministry of Education. My main motivation was to determine if any patterns of concerns or reactions existed among teachers as they adjusted to this change. Although many individuals play an important role in the successful implementation of FDK, I realized how significant the role of the teacher was when adapting to change and successfully implementing this new program. Individual actions of teachers are central to the successful implementation of a new idea (Van den Berg, & Ros, 1984; Christou et al, 2004; Fullan, 2007). Identifying these reactions and concerns, and determining if any patterns exist among the teachers, will provide information to future implementers of FDK as well as to system leaders (e.g., superintendents, program coordinators and consultants) responsible for supporting the implementation of this large-scale change.

Discussion

Hall and Hord’s (2011) stages of concern served as a framework for examining what teachers were experiencing as they began to implement FDK. Respondents expressed a
variety of personal concerns, with the most noted pertaining to working with early childhood educators in partnerships. Teachers identified challenges in establishing role clarity and described new learning associated with teaching in a more open and transparent way. Initial personal concerns were related issues such as getting along and respecting each other. Those concerns seemed to subside almost as soon as the partners began to teach together.

Additional partnership concerns relate to challenges associated with resolving conflicts or differences in pedagogy and practice. Another personal concern expressed relates to the impact of extended day programs. Those concerns are associated with the sharing of space and resources, as well as challenges in communication among teachers and ECEs due to overlapping hours of the two ECE partners. Other personal concerns related to broader school issues such as concerns when collaborating with other FDK teams as well as helping the principal to understand aspects of kindergarten more deeply.

One teacher demonstrated considerable personal concern related to her effectiveness and her ability to understand and properly implement the new, play-based program. She described being stressed and overwhelmed with several aspects of the new program. Even though personal concerns were expressed throughout the entire study, I noticed that they were not as dominant once teachers settled into the new program and began to work with ECE partners and their students.

Despite diminishing personal concerns over time, working with an ECE partner was identified as a concern for all kindergarten teachers in this study. This may suggest a need for ongoing attention and support as FDK is expanded in the next few years.

During the time of this study, teacher respondents expressed a variety of management concerns. Those concerns tended to relate to issues of planning and assessment. For
example, teachers described some of the benefits of the new program (e.g., more time for play, small group instruction), but also indicated that more time was taken to plan and communicate effectively with their ECE partners. Working to establish effective planning and assessment tools, to ensure greater transparency and efficiency, was described as a management concern that common among all teachers studied. This may be a result of the increased time for play in full day classrooms and greater attention that was being paid to play-based learning. In addition, teachers were exploring ways to observe and document learning through play. For some, this was a fairly new area of learning that represented a management concern common among FDK teams.

A number of impact concerns were expressed during this study. Many of these pertained to the positive impact teachers felt FDK had on their students and learning. They described how the full day kindergarten program supported much needed continuity for children and how daily contact allowed for more time to provide students with variety of learning contexts, including much more time for play. Teachers noted improved achievement, such as more students achieving reading targets. Importantly, even though a concern was expressed about an overemphasis on achievement, teachers described both academic and socio-emotional benefits of FDK. One teacher described how she noticed increased social skills and how her students viewed themselves as capable and competent problem solvers. So, although academic achievement was described as important, teachers felt the impact of full day kindergarten went beyond these outcomes.

Other impact concerns described were associated with improved pedagogy and practice for teachers. Teachers found opportunities for self reflection and described how they were learning new ideas and practices. Some described how they had rethought many
aspects of their program due to the implementation of FDK. For example, some described how they had removed traditional activities such as a focus on “the letter of the week” and generic craft projects. Others noted much more time for play and less time for whole class teaching. Some of these described pedagogical changes were found by the teachers to have a positive effect for students. Through more purposeful play-based experiences, teachers described how their students had greater opportunities to learn and demonstrate learning in more meaningful contexts. Several teachers described how they felt more confident with play-based learning and how it positively impacted students.

Teachers also described how working with knowledgeable partners [ECEs] helped not just their students, but themselves. They found the collaborative partnership had positive effects on certain aspects of their practice, such as the development of more meaningful assessments and opportunities to support students more precisely in small groups. In addition to the benefits of working in partnerships, teachers described the impact of FDK on their professional learning due the heightened attention kindergarten has received and expanded professional learning and leadership opportunities. Some teachers described how some of the newly acquired professional resources, training, and other opportunities supported their learning and allowed them to grow professionally. In addition to these opportunities, teachers described how FDK seemed to increase their principal’s interest and knowledge about kindergarten.

Personal, management, and impact concerns were identified and discussed by all of the teachers; however, with four of the five teachers, impact concerns seemed to dominate concerns in this study. This may be due to a variety of reasons such as the fact that these teachers have a great deal of experience and have been teaching Kindergarten for a number
of years. Given their expertise and background, these teachers may be more experienced in adapting to change or may recognize change more readily, resulting in fewer personal and management concerns than teachers with less experience. The teachers in this study may simply be more open to change or may have more strategies in adapting to new situations due to potential high levels of efficacy. Perhaps as teachers’ self-selected participation for this study, they might be positive change advocates who reflect and adjust in an effort to become even more effective. Perhaps the one teacher that experienced the greatest difficulty, particularly her feelings of loss of self efficacy, may represent the concerns and reactions of other FDK teachers who did not participate in this study. The findings of this small, qualitative study may allow for certain implications to be drawn. Those will be discussed along with suggestions for future research.

**Implications**

This study has a practical value for those involved in implementing full-day kindergarten. One key assumption about CBAM is that it focuses on the individual. The use of the stages of concern framework allows for the identification of individual concerns. Identifying concerns of FDK teachers may help move individuals to a higher level of concern. Many studies have concluded that appropriate time, training and acknowledgment of individual concerns may result in a shift from informational and personal concerns to higher levels of concern. Kaplan (2011) found that acknowledging concerns through professional learning was effective in supporting change. He found that less generic and more highly developed training methods such as peer discussions, sharing sessions, peer coaching, and working together was found to have positive impact. Similar training and
professional learning opportunities might support teachers as FDK is introduced and sustained. In addition, training and professional development activities for teachers must be coordinated and sustained over time to allow for greater depth and breadth of learning. Joint training with ECEs may help to address some of the concerns teachers expressed about learning to work in partnerships as well as to deepen common understanding about the curriculum, planning, assessment, and other aspects of professional practice.

As described by teachers in this study, leadership plays an important role as new programs are implemented. In addition to strong principal leadership, schools require support from strong district leadership in order to develop and sustain positive instructional change (Moffett, 2000). Teachers in this study identified the need for principal support and understanding about early learning. Berlin and Jensen (1989) state that central office staff can help to nurture principal learning through information, training, and support that enables them to provide effective leadership. A few teachers in the study also identified this need. Knowledgeable and supportive leaders play an important role that support ongoing professional learning and provide pedagogical leadership (Janmohamed et al, 2011). Study findings reinforce the importance of principal and district leadership in order to support successful implementation of new programs and policies.

As noted in Toronto First Duty, Phase 3, the role of school principal and early years coordinator was critical in supporting new teaching teams such as the two professional groups of teachers and ECEs. Demonstration of this collaborative relationship and helping to establish role clarity would be significant for successful partnerships and working teams. Support for these teams is required both at initial implementation as well as over time, in order to sustain and expand the growing program and changed vision for kindergarten.
Clearly, the attitudes and behaviours of those in the study cannot be generalized due to the small sample size. That said, the changes in attitudes and behaviours of these teachers are instructive and may be of interest to other teachers as they embark on a similar change. The findings are consistent with Hall and Hord (2011) who found that, during the early phase of an innovation, informational and personal concerns highest. They warn that unless those early concerns are addressed, they may not progress to more important task and impact concerns. Those early concerns may be addressed in early professional development settings as a means of acknowledging them and recognizing the possible reactions associated with these changes.

As personal concerns subsided, teachers were found to move to higher levels of concern. Given that all Ontario schools will be impacted by FDK by 2014, with many teachers responding and reacting to this significant change, the developmental nature of change expressed by the teachers in this study may provide insight into FDK and how teachers are affected in various ways. This may help others as they begin implementation and consider certain actions that will be associated with the new program.

Research shows that teachers who have a vested interest in changing are more likely to do so (Guskey, 2003). Findings from this small study seem consistent with this research. Changes in education, including changes made to kindergarten, are certain and have been studied extensively from multiple perspectives and positions. Kotter and Cohen (2002) describe how those involved in change need to be encouraged to view change as urgent and important. They suggest that a guiding team creates a clear vision with strong communication lines in order to effectively support those involved in the change. Logic
informs us that having such a guiding team, comprised of change facilitators (e.g., principals, teachers, ECEs, system leaders and program staff), would help lead and support this new innovation in Ontario schools.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study has addressed some of the reactions and concerns associated with the implementation of the new model for kindergarten. The limitations of the research suggest that further research is needed.

Considering the magnitude of this new model for kindergarten across the province, a larger sample size of teachers would provide more detailed descriptions and information about specific reactions and concerns of FDK. In addition, expanding the research sample to include all stakeholders in FDK (e.g., ECEs, principals, and parents) might allow for broader understanding of issues and concerns. That effort would aid in the identification of additional reactions that would allow for more effective support of the stakeholders in FDK.

Teachers in this study described many of the changes associated with the new model for kindergarten. One large change has been an emphasis on play-based learning as a means of supporting students in kindergarten. Teachers in this study described a need for deeper understanding about play-based learning and how to plan and support students in this way. One area of research that might be considered is how play-based learning supports students within FDK contexts. Considerable research exists on the benefits of play, including the most recent statement on play-based learning produced by the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education (2012). Research has not yet determined the effects of the new Ontario kindergarten program, with increased opportunities for play. This research may provide
teachers and ECE with concrete evidence and support for a play-based program.

As FDK emerges in Ontario, other areas of concern may emerge and that need to be considered. Even though literature exists on various interventions at various levels of concerns, additional research may be able to identify more specific and precise ways of supporting FDK and those involved in the change. Further research may also include the use of Hall and Hord’s Levels of Use framework to determine the fidelity of the new program and how play-based learning is being used to support the development of children in Kindergarten.

**Final Words and Reflections**

Well-known educational researcher, Michael Fullan, has studied change and describes change as a complex process that “can be unlocked and even understood, but rarely controlled” (Fullan, 2001, p. 46). His extensive syntheses of the research reinforce the value and importance of understanding change and working towards effective implementation processes. As teachers embark on teaching in a new model for kindergarten, many significant changes are occurring. In response to this shift come various reactions and expressions of concerns. In order to support the implementation of FDK, and those involved in it, identifying and understanding these reactions allow for the development of various supports and interventions. Given the results of this study, I conclude that a need exists to provide ongoing support and professional development to help address concerns and to guide and sustain this large-scale change as it is implemented over time.
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APPENDIX 1

Semi-Structured Interview with Full Day Kindergarten Teacher

Interview Questions

1. With any change come successes and challenges unique to those who are part of the change. Could you describe to me some of the successes and/or challenges you have experienced with the implementation of FDK in your school?

2. Now I would like you to think back to when you first learned that full day, every day Kindergarten was coming to your school. What were your initial reactions? How did you feel? Could you describe these initial thoughts and feelings to me?

3. In contrast to when the implementation of FDK was first announced, how do you feel now about the new Full Day Kindergarten program?

4. What concerns do you have about the support you have received as you implement this new initiative? (probe for things like system and school –level training, administrator support, accurate information provided through colleagues, resources etc.)

5. Describe how you feel about Full Day Kindergarten so far? Do you see this as an important educational initiative? Why or why not?

6. What additional information would you like to add that would help other teachers understand the implementation of Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten?
APPENDIX 2

Invitation to Participate (email)

Dear Kindergarten Teacher:

I wanted to let you know that I am working on my research thesis as part of my Master of Arts in Education with Dr. Barrie Bennett, from OISE/UT at the University of Toronto.

As you are aware, you are teaching in Ontario's new full day kindergarten program that is being implemented from 2010-2014. This new model for kindergarten has required teachers like you to undergo several changes. The purpose my research study is to identify how Kindergarten teachers are reacting to this change. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to identify specific reactions or concerns associated with this change and how this has impacted your practice. Through the responses of several teachers, I hope to be able to identify any issues or reactions. This information will provide others, such as teachers embarking on the change or change facilitators (principals, central staff) with possible strategies or actions needed to support teachers during this transition time.

The final thesis report may be shared with school board staff (Executive Superintendent, Early Learning Administrator, Program Coordinator) for the purposes of supporting and guiding the wider implementation of full day kindergarten and as a means of helping other kindergarten teachers.

I invite you to participate in this study over a four month period of time. The study begins in January and ends in April 2012. I will ask you to participate in a series of one-on-one interviews at a location and time of your choice. Any responses or comments made during these interviews will be kept strictly confidential. Names of people, schools and any other identifying information will be replaced with pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality. In addition to these 30-45 minute interviews, I would like to observe you teach in the full day Kindergarten classes. I would like to observe two times, once at the beginning of the study and a second time towards the end. Each observation session will last for approximately 60 minutes in length. I will not interact with your or your students as I do not want to interrupt regular classroom activities. Again, these observations can be held at a time that is convenient for you. The purpose of observing is to note what the teacher is doing during a portion of the day.

If you think you might be interested in participating in this study, please reply to this e-mail or contact me at home, by December 23. I will then be in touch with you to arrange for an opportunity to schedule some dates for interviews and observations.

Thank you for considering participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Wendy Goulden
wendy.goulden@utoronto.ca
and
Dr. Barrie Bennett, b.bennett@utoronto.ca
APPENDIX 3

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Thank you for offering to participate in this project. This letter explains what is involved so you can make an informed decision about taking part. I am conducting the research project with Dr. Barrie Bennett from OISE/UT at the University of Toronto called: **Teacher Reactions to the Implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten.**

As you are aware, Ontario is implementing The Full Day, Early-Learning Kindergarten Program over the next few years. The process began in September 2010 and will continue until 2014 until all public schools provide Full Day, Every Day Kindergarten in all of its schools. This new model for Kindergarten replaces current half day, daily or all day, alternate day models for Kindergarten. As you are aware, this program requires Kindergarten teachers to undertake several changes.

The purpose of this study is to identify how teachers react to this change. You will be asked to identify any reactions or concerns that you have or had, as the program is introduced and is implemented. You may also describe how your reactions have changed over time during the implementation of this new program.

Data gathered from this study will provide me with insight and understanding about Kindergarten teacher reactions to change. Understanding these important issues and topics, related to the changes in Kindergarten, may help support change facilitators (i.e., central staff, principals, senior administrators). In addition, information gained may provide guidance around specific strategies or ways to help support teachers as full day Kindergarten is implemented in many other schools.

Participating in these interviews will take approximately 30 minutes each month. I hope to gather information 3 or 4 times from January to April 2012. These interviews will be arranged at a time and location that is convenient for you. Conversations will recorded and then later transcribed. Your own name, the real names of other people and places will be replaced with pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality. In addition to these informal interviews, I would like to observe you teaching in your full day Kindergarten classroom on a couple of occasions. During these times, I will not interact with students or yourself, so as to not interrupt regular activities. Through conversations and observations, I am seeking to understand reactions and concerns that you have as this new Kindergarten program is introduced.

Before you start to participate in this study, I would like to reassure you that you have several very definite rights.

- First, your participation in the interviews and observations is entirely voluntary.
- You are free to refuse to answer any questions.
- You are free to withdraw from interviews at any time.
- Excerpts from the transcript of interviews may be included in published accounts, but under no circumstances will your real name or identifying circumstances be included.
I would like to express my appreciation for your participation in this project. Should you have any questions you are welcome to contact myself, the researcher by phone (519) 885-1380 or e-mail (wendy_goulden@wrdsb.on.ca). If you give your consent to be interviewed/observed and understand your rights as a participant in this project, please sign below. I am required to hold this information during my research study.

__________________________________________ (Signature)

__________________________________________ (Printed name)

__________________________________________ (Date)

(Facilitator: keep signed copy; leave unsigned copy with participant)