Getting Our Feet Wet: Using *Making Meaning*™ for the First Time

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INTRODUCTION

As teachers across the Boston Public Schools (BPS) have continued to implement Readers' Workshop, along with their principals and coaches, they have realized that they lack a strong curriculum and associated resources to use within the Workshop framework. Many teachers have worked with their coaches to develop reading strategy-focused units of study, but there is general agreement that a) developing high quality units takes a great deal of time, b) teachers do not have the material resources at hand to support the units of study, and c) not all or even most teachers have the literacy backgrounds necessary to develop curriculum units that are well-aligned to the strategies they need to teach and to the Citywide Learning Standards. Those teachers who have the requisite literacy backgrounds to find the resources report that they do not have the time to create their entire reading curriculum.

In response to teachers' need for curriculum support for Workshop instruction, the BPS, in collaboration with the Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE), decided to investigate whether Making Meaning, created by the Developmental Studies Center (DSC), could be integrated into Workshop instruction as an appropriate reading comprehension support for the district's teachers in light of their expressed needs. To test this idea, Making Meaning was used in a set of volunteer schools during the second half of the 2003-2004 school year.[1] As part of this pilot implementation, the BPS asked Education Matters to design an evaluation focused on how the curriculum was used and, in light of the findings, the implications for using it in a larger sample of schools.

In response to this request, Education Matters designed an evaluation to address the following questions through the study of eight teachers, their principals and coaches in three elementary schools.

1. How do teachers use the Making Meaning curriculum as part of Workshop instruction?

- What are the variations in how they use it?
- What accounts for the variation?
  - Teachers' prior knowledge and skill with Workshop?
  - Teachers' involvement in a CCL cycle focused on integrating the materials?
  - Principal knowledge and skill with workshop?
  - Principal role with implementation?
  - Coach knowledge, skill, and role in implementation?
  - Other factors?

2. Based on the answers to these questions, what is the potential value of Making Meaning for improving Workshop instruction that specifically focuses on reading comprehension?

[1] One school began using the materials during the first half of the school year.

Evaluation Design. With the support of the BPS and the Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE), we identified the three schools in which to study implementation and visited them to garner teacher support for the evaluation study. Eight fourth and fifth-grade elementary teachers in the three schools agreed to have us study them as they used Making Meaning to teach one week's lessons within a unit of instruction. The sample included teachers with between four and twenty-five years of experience. These teachers taught classes that included English Language Learners (ELL) as well as students with special education plans.

Our sample included teachers who were at various stages of commitment, comfort, and expertise with Workshop instruction. Two of the teachers were described by their principal and coach as fully implementing Readers' Workshop prior to using Making Meaning. These teachers, along with their coach, had been collaboratively developing units of study so that they would have the curriculum and materials they needed for a year's worth of Workshop instruction. The six other teachers were described as being at an earlier stage of Workshop implementation.[2]

Having this diversity in the sample enabled us to gain insight into whether Making Meaning might be of value to a wide range of teachers and not only to those who were having difficulty with the workshop approach. For example, it would enable us to learn whether teachers who were skillful with Workshop saw Making Meaning as congruent with Workshop or as a move away from it. The diversity would help us understand whether and how Making Meaning could be useful to teachers who were comfortable with workshop but who might value, for example, the program's carefully chosen materials and its organizational structure.

We chose upper grade elementary teachers because they face the challenge of developing reading comprehension skills in students who have not yet mastered them. At the same time, students in the upper elementary grades are expected to use their reading skills to gain new knowledge in a range of curriculum areas. Without such skills, students cannot do grade-level work and they leave elementary school unable to read in order to learn in English language arts as well as in the other content areas.

Before continuing with this report, we want to thank the three principals who provided us with access to their schools, coaches, and teachers. And, we want to thank especially the eight teachers who opened their classrooms to us and agreed to have us observe and interview them as they used the Making Meaning curriculum and teaching strategies for the first time.[3]

[2]These six teachers also described themselves as relative newcomers to Workshop instruction even if they had been in the district for many years. Two of these teachers remained doubtful that Workshop instruction could meet their students' needs. Based on our observations, one of the six teachers seemed quite comfortable and adept with Workshop instruction and the implementation of all of its components.

[3]Our sample of teachers, principals and coaches included both men and women. In order to disguise their identities, we refer to all participants as "she" and use letters to represent their names (ie., Teacher A).

Organization of the Report. We begin this report with a brief description of Making Meaning in order to set the programmatic context for the discussion of our findings and their implications. Then, we briefly review the major findings and use them to frame the rest of the report. Finally, we present our conclusions about the district's first effort to offer schools Making Meaning as a supplement to Workshop instruction and raise some issues for further consideration.

WHAT IS *MAKING MEANING*? The complete name of the reading comprehension program that teachers tried this year is *Making Meaning: Strategies That Build Comprehension and Community*. Both strands of the program – comprehension and community – are essential to program's explicit assumptions about the influences on children's ability to learn. As the developers note, "children's ability to learn reading comprehension is inextricably linked to their ability to work together and to bring democratic values like responsibility, respect, fairness, caring, and helpfulness to bear on their own behavior and interactions." (Page *xii*) This dual focus harmonizes well with the requirements and instructional processes associated with Workshop instruction. Making Meaning is aimed at students in grades K-6.

Making Meaning is a structured instructional intervention designed to begin at the start of each school year. As a result, there is a pattern to the series of lessons that constitute a unit, a typical week's Making Meaning lessons, and the curriculum for the year as a whole. The Teacher's Manual that accompanies the fourth grade materials describes this pattern as follows:

> A week of lessons typically begins with a read-aloud of an engaging piece of text, followed by a whole-class discussion of what the text is about. The same read-aloud book is used on subsequent days to teach the students a comprehension strategy and to give them guided practice with the strategy. The week usually ends with the students practicing the strategy independently using classroom library books and discussing their thinking. Each lesson typically requires 20-40 minutes of classroom time, depending on the grade level. In addition to the lessons, the students participate in Individualized Daily Reading, where they read texts at their appropriate reading level independently for up to 30 minutes each day. (Page *xiii*)

The Teacher's Manual provides a) an overview of the Making Meaning approach to instruction, and b) explicit, detailed suggestions for how to use the materials and strategies throughout each unit and its associated individual lessons. The Manual identifies ways in which Making Meaning can become a component of other reading programs including those like Workshop that include mini-lessons, guided reading, and independent reading. It provides strategies for reinforcing the social skills components of the curriculum by asking students to reflect on the quality, for example, of their conversations with one another. And, it provides direct suggestions for how to apply the strategies taught in mini-lessons to each day's independent reading time.

When implementing the program, teachers receive a set of 20-30 children's trade books to use as

read-alouds along with an *Assessment Record Book* to help with monitoring student progress, and a *Student Book* for each student that coordinates with specific lessons.[4] Of course, to implement the units and lessons well, teachers must spend time preparing for them in light of the Teachers' Manual. However, the program supplies virtually all of what teachers need by way of curriculum and materials.

Overview of the Findings. Given this overview of Making Meaning and the fact that most teachers began using it during the middle of the school year rather than at the beginning, what did we learn about their use of the program in the context of the district's emphasis on Workshop instruction?

- **Teachers reported that Making Meaning was valuable to them in that it supported their efforts to increase students' ability to comprehend text in a variety of genres.** In particular, teachers noted that a) the materials were a good match for teaching the reading strategies; b) the use of multiple genres for teaching the same skills was advantageous; and c) the concepts were taught and reinforced across the grade levels.

- **Teachers, coaches, and principals agreed that Making Meaning could be used with English Language Learners (ELL) and with students who have Special Education needs.** Teachers reported that the attention to vocabulary development was important for special populations of students as was the possibility of repeating lessons with additional materials if students needed additional instruction and practice. They especially liked the potential of the social skills curriculum to help special education students develop a learning community among themselves.

- **During this first attempt at implementation, most of the teachers in our sample reported that they thought Making Meaning had a greater impact on themselves than it did on their students**. They provided two reasons for this conclusion: 1) the lessons provided by Making Meaning were more focused and complete than those they had developed on their own or with colleagues, and 2) having well-prepared lessons freed teachers to spend time on other aspects of instructional lesson preparation.

- **Teachers also identified a number of ways in which the program supported their students' learning.** These included a) engaging the students actively during the read-alouds, b) helping students listen to one another, and c) creating a sense of community in the classroom.

- **Observation and interview data led us to conclude that some teachers will need to develop greater understanding of the reading process for themselves in order to implement Workshop and Making Meaning skillfully.** For example, it was not clear

[4]It was not clear to us that all of the teachers in our sample had received all of the materials. They all had the trade-books, but, as far as we know, they did not have the Assessment Record Book.

from observing classroom interactions that teachers could explain to their students how to go about drawing inferences from text. As a result, such teachers seemed to have difficulty helping their students discern the basis for an inference they might draw from a piece of text.

- **Observation and interview data lead us to suggest that teachers, in collaboration with their coaches, will need to make some adaptations to Making Meaning lessons to reduce the time devoted to them.** During this first attempt at implementation, teachers devoted most of their reading time to this program which left them little or no time for other Workshop components such as guided and independent reading.

- **The data strongly suggest that when coaches were integral to implementation, teachers were better able to make good use of the curriculum and strategies than when coaches were not involved.** Two of the three schools in our sample had coaches use CCL cycles to initiate and/or support Making Meaning implementation. The other school had no coach involvement in implementation. Although this evaluation study is based on a small sample of schools and teachers, we think this finding is compelling and worth further consideration if Making Meaning is implemented fully and in a larger set of schools in the 2004-2005 school year.

We present three other findings that are significant in light of the district's adoption of Workshop as its approach to literacy instruction.

- **Workshop was not well-developed in the schools we studied.** Six of the eight teachers in our sample reported that, prior to using Making Meaning, they had not yet implemented all of the components of Workshop instruction, for example, mini-lessons, independent reading, and guided reading instruction. They might have used one or more of the instructional strategies, they said, but not all of them. Or, they might have used each of the components some of the time. Principals and coaches agreed with the teachers' assessment of the status of Workshop instruction for these teachers and for their schools as a whole.[5]

- **Teachers did not know how to select texts for Read-Alouds that would be appropriate for teaching specific strategies. In addition, most were not actively engaging students in discussion of the texts that might be used during a Read-Aloud.** With respect to texts, teachers wondered how to select books that would be good for teaching summarizing skills, for example, or visualizing. With respect to actively engaging students, most teachers reported that they had not been using "turn and talk" or "pair-share" strategies when teaching reading. As a result, students were not having opportunities to consult with their classmates when learning to use the specific reading

[5]Two principals described in detail the status of workshop instruction in their schools. One reported being unsure of its status.

strategies being taught, nor were they being asked to share such conversations with the rest of the reading group.

- **Within the Workshop context, teachers were not confident about their role during independent reading.** Specifically, teachers were not sure how to conduct conferences with students during independent reading time because they did not know how to ask students questions that would get at their understanding of the texts they were reading.[6]

Taken together, even given the small size of the sample for this study, these findings suggest that Making Meaning could be a valuable addition to teachers' repertoire of literacy strategies. The materials and units fulfill a genuine teacher need. However, high quality implementation will depend on a) providing teachers with opportunities to understand fully the components of Workshop instruction and use them over the course of a school year, b) insuring coach and principal understanding of Making Meaning and how it can fit into Workshop instruction, and c) careful attention to teachers' need for further professional development with respect to the instructional skills they need in order to fully use the Making Meaning curriculum and implement all Workshop components.

We turn now to a further exploration of these findings and their implications.

THE FINDINGS

We begin the presentation of our findings with a brief discussion of the status of Workshop instruction in the three schools. Then, we consider the ways in which Making Meaning was introduced and used in the schools. As part of this discussion, we present two examples that describe a) how teachers used the program, and b) what we learned from observing these and other Making Meaning lessons. We also discuss the value of the program from the perspective of teachers, coaches, and principals. Finally, we consider the challenges that arose in using Making Meaning and the implications of these challenges for the next phase of Making Meaning implementation.

1. The Status of Workshop Instruction in the Sample Classrooms. As we reported above, Workshop instruction was not well-developed in six of the eight classrooms we studied. Teachers, principals, and coaches suggested that this was the case, in part, because the district did not require full implementation of Workshop until the 2003-2004 school year. However, from other studies Education Matters has completed in the district, we know that principal leadership has played a large role in explaining the extent to which teachers were using any of the Workshop strategies, even those that had been part of the balanced literacy programs which

[6]We include these last two findings because, although the district provided teachers with Making Meaning as a support and supplement for Workshop, in reality, a number of teachers began to implement Making Meaning without having fully implemented Workshop. Thus, the instructional context for implementation varied across the teachers and schools in our sample.

preceded Workshop implementation. We also know that upper-grade elementary teachers often had less literacy-focused professional development than did their lower-grade colleagues due to the fact that many of the literacy programs began with a primary-grade program.[7] For these reasons, and perhaps others, Workshop was not well-established in six of the eight classrooms.

In addition, several teachers in the sample suggested that, although they had never fully mastered Workshop strategies, they had serious doubts about them as productive instructional tools. To be specific, these teachers did not think Workshop was an effective way to teach students the requisite literacy skills. Therefore, they had not been at the forefront of implementation. Teachers with this perspective made the following kinds of comments.

> We were doing mini-lessons. [But] I've always struggled with the guided reading, the new curriculum that we're using. I don't think there's a strong focus on phonics, I don't think there's a strong focus on vocabulary building....I like it better when the kids have passages in front of them and we talk about passages as a whole group, and they can really look back at their reading. I guess you can call me a traditional teacher in that I like all the students having the same book, all the students building on their vocabulary. I don't like the independence that Boston has gone towards, I don't agree with students going to the library, choosing their own books and teachers not knowing what they're reading. I think at the earlier levels it's a good concept because the teacher can sit down, look at the book for a minute, read the entire thing and know what the kids should be getting out of it. At a fourth or fifth grade level with the chapter books, we just can't do that. Two thirds of the books over there, I've never read....I'm still a very traditional teacher in that I have multiple copies of books that we'll do as a group, or I'll do read-alouds and we study the same book, one book that I'm doing as a read-aloud. But the guided reading and the independent reading stuff they're doing is hard for me to get adjusted to. Teacher A

> With the Readers' Workshop, you're going around and you're hearing all the kids reading individually, and there's no real oral reading like there was in the past. So you might only hear a child read a couple times a week, because they're reading pretty much independently. You're going around tapping them on the shoulder and having them read quietly for you. You're taking some notes and trying to collect some information about the children and what skills they need to work on. If you see them a couple times a week, you're doing OK as far as the program is concerned, but it doesn't feel like enough to me. Teacher C

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[7]Neufeld, B. and Roper, D. (July 2002) Off to a Good Start: Collaborative Coaching and Leaning in the Effective Practice Schools and, Neufeld, B. and Roper, D. (July 2003) Year II of Collaborative Coaching and Learning in the Effective Practice Schools: Expanding the Work. Both papers prepared for the Boston Plan for Excellence and available at www.edmatters.org.

Those who shared these teachers' perspective may not have had the opportunity to fully understand the rationale behind the use of Workshop instruction and/or they may have understood it while remaining unconvinced of its value. Either way, these teachers were not implementing Workshop prior to using Making Meaning.

We also know that a couple of teachers in the sample had never learned how to implement Workshop strategies as a result of the limited amount of coaching and pertinent professional development that had been available to them during the previous two or three years. Other teachers were new to the district and had not found any opportunity for a coherent overview of the design of and rationale for Workshop instruction. As one such teacher remarked:

> I learned on my own from doing the professional development available. The coach that was originally in place at the school to help us with that didn't seem to have a grasp on what Readers' and Writers' Workshop was, unfortunately....I went to a lot of workshops. I went to see [names teachers]. I saw Lucy Calkins, and I saw some of the really good folks. I was able to watch some of the teachers here who had a little more experience and kind of put it together. It's changed every year since I've been here, obviously, the pieces being a little bit different....It's [also] hard to learn, because there's no set way to do it. That's one thing that's tough. If you go see [person's name], you're going to hear one thing, but if you go see somebody who's similar but a little bit different, you might hear something that would change the classroom. Teacher F

And finally, some teachers were resistant to a) having a coach in their classroom, and b) learning new instructional strategies. As a coach who worked with such teachers noted, she did not have access to them because:

> ...the request was that [my demonstration lessons] all should be done [in Teacher X's] room. I think that [as a result, Teacher Y] still went away with her own concept of how Workshop works. I don't think that I was able to elevate her in any way from what she already knew to where we wanted to see Workshop take her. (Coach C)

Coaches' comments supported those made by teachers. They recognized that some teachers had limited knowledge of Workshop which was coupled with their resistance to it due to their doubts about how best to teach reading.

> [These] teachers were really inconsistent with the way they implemented Workshop....They kind of winged it, and what they call guided reading was more like just a traditional reading group where they were working through a chapter book and having kids read aloud and those sort of things. They would revert back to whole class novels. They had some independent reading going on, but the mini-lesson wasn't really teaching into that reading. So you know, I think that's where they were with Workshop to start....I think part of it was philosophical.

> Maybe [it was] a disbelief in Workshop. But, part of it was just practical. I just think that they didn't have a vision for: What should these mini-lessons cover? What's the content supposed to be? And, what am I supposed to go around and talk to kids about when I confer with them? Coach B

This coach reported having had a limited impact on the teachers' movement toward Workshop even when she attempted to provide them with highly structured lesson plans prior to the advent of Making Meaning.

> I'm pretty sure, as soon as I left, they reverted back to whatever they were doing. Even though – and this is what was even harder to figure out, I actually photocopied text for them to use and these sort of ready-made lessons. I said, "Use this in the interim days of the week [when I'm not coaching you]." My impression was they still didn't really follow through. I still felt like it wasn't prescriptive enough, it still left too much to chance. Coach B

Coach C noted that when she began her work at the school, she had to start professional development with the very basics of the components of Workshop instruction in light of teachers' knowledge base.

> Last year, in January, we kind of agreed to enter into the process of looking at Workshop in a classroom, Readers' and Writers' Workshop. Up to that point, I had done some professional development with the team around foundational information. We started with independent reading; we started thinking about choosing "just-right" books. We did kind of a quasi CCL cycle around choosing just the right book, thinking about conferring. We had a smattering of introduction about what Workshop should be looking like in the classroom The professional development I had to do was, in a sense, [describing] where we're moving from and too. And I kind of did this by doing a Venn diagram of what Literacy Collaborative looks like, what Workshop looks like, how they're alike, how they're dissonant, what's a big leap from what we already knew to what we were going to embark upon. Coach C

In contrast, and sometimes in the same school, there were teachers who were skillful with Workshop and were ready for a different kind of coach support.

> These two teachers at the beginning of the year and even last year, their understanding and implementation of workshop was strong and even sophisticated. The basic structures were really clear for them. They had a mini-lesson, they had their independent guided reading and conferring, and they had kid's share. They were already creating units of study. We had done a lot of that in CCL. They had done genre units of study. They'd done strategy based units of study around these comprehension strategies. They'd even done some author studies and that kind of thing, and they were even making connections between

> their Readers' Workshop and their Writers' Workshop. From my experience in the district, they were at the top of what I've seen. Coach B

Teachers with this level of expertise reported that they and their students were familiar with Workshop as an approach to literacy teaching and learning.

> The last two years, they have definitely been in a Readers' Workshop structure where they're very used to coming to the rug, having a very short lesson, going over the skills, talking about them. They definitely talk about what they do – going back, practicing, conferencing, guided reading, all that. In all of the subjects, they do a lot of talking, a lot of interacting. Teacher H

Suffice it to say, within the small sample drawn for this evaluation, there was considerable variation within and between schools with respect to the knowledge and skill teachers brought to their use of Making Meaning. As a result, in addition to what we reported above, teachers with little Workshop experience noted that:

- **When trying to use a Workshop structure in their classes, they were stymied by the curriculum development demands of this approach to reading.** They were unsure about what genres to teach, for example, or where to find appropriate reading materials to use in teaching the reading skills that might be attached to a genre. Only two of these teachers had enlisted coach support for developing units of study.

- **They did not know how to conference with students during independent reading time.** More specifically, teachers reported that they did not know how to ask students questions about their books that would a) reveal their comprehension and/or b) help them develop better comprehension skills.

This variation with respect to knowledge and skill with Workshop is the context into which the eight teachers began using Making Meaning. As we noted above, therefore, only two of the teachers would start to use Making Meaning *as a component* of their more fully developed Workshop instruction. The others would use it, in fact, as a way to get started with several aspects of Workshop instruction.

Given these findings about Workshop and teachers' reports about what they lacked by way of knowledge and skill, Making Meaning seemed likely to address many of the teachers' needs.

We turn next to the ways in which Making Meaning was used in the schools and to teachers' reactions to it.

2. How Making Meaning Was Introduced and Used. The three schools in our sample chose different approaches to introducing their teachers to Making Meaning. In one school, the principal told teachers about the program and asked whether they were interested in attending the

initial one-day introduction to the program. The teachers expressed interest, attended the introductory session, and then began to use the Teachers' Manual to implement the units that were relevant to them.

Their principal suggested that they use Making Meaning as a supplement to their ongoing reading instruction.

> Basically I saw it as a tool, as another tool that provided some ready-made curriculum and instructional materials that wouldn't have them reinventing the wheel all the time. And, I made it clear that they were the instructional managers and they could choose how to use it....One teacher is using it for four or five days [each week], and the other teachers are doing it at least three days [each week]. They're actually using it more than I expected. It would have been okay by me if they just picked stuff they thought would be helpful. Principal A

Their literacy coach was not involved with implementation, but she confirmed the principal's approach to using Making Meaning and added:

> She's not mandating everybody to use it. It's a resource in the building. You become familiar with it, and if it's helpful to you, you use it. So, they really didn't start out with the beginning and think about the strategies piece of it and the social skills element of it. We have tried to address some of that in the Workshop model, because Workshop does give a "turn and talk," that whole piece, go back with a partner, share your ideas. Coach C

Another school in our sample took a very different approach. The principal and coach agreed that teachers needed to begin with the first unit of study, The Reading Life, which introduced teachers and students to the process of the program. In addition, they agreed that the introduction to Making Meaning should be conducted as part of a CCL cycle in which the inquiry component of the cycle would deepen teachers knowledge about how children learn to read. Therefore, from the principal's perspective,

> Even though [The Reading Life] is going to come at different points in the year [because CCL cycles begin at different points in the year], it would always be at the beginning [of implementing Making Meaning]. We needed to do that to establish a consistency, an understanding that this is what we're talking about. So instead of jumping right into questioning or whatever the unit was, we said, we'll go with The Reading Life first. It was a shorter unit. It was a kind of getting in the water. It was a way for the coach to meet with teachers, get inquiry launched, and all those types of things. Principal C

The coach was in complete agreement with this approach to introducing the program.

> The principal and I wanted this to be done through CCL so teachers weren't just

> handed these curriculum guides without talk around them. The guide is helpful to some extent, but we've all probably seen how any script can be done just as poorly as anything else, even though it's right there in front of you. So, the hope with introducing it through CCL was that, with my coaching, with us collaborating together, with teachers watching me teach it, being in their rooms to help them, we could make some decisions about [how to use it]. Do we need to ask this question that the script is telling us to ask, or should we make some adjustments? Coach A

Both the principal and coach fundamentally believed that teachers needed to be given an opportunity to "make meaning" of the Teachers' Manual in order to use the program well.

In addition, in this school, the CCL cycle was used in concert with the curriculum to deepen teachers' knowledge of how to teach reading, not to teach them directly how to use the program. To this end, the CCL cycle that accompanied teachers' use of The Reading Life included attention to multiple aspects of Workshop instruction, as the coach notes.

> We had all of the components of CCL. We met for six hours of inquiry – one hour each week of the six weeks. And we did readings around the principles and basics of Workshop that Making Meaning was bringing out. We read about independent reading, we read about conferring, we read about student talk in classrooms, we read about asking questions – those types of things. Because those were what we were working on, for example, with the "turning and talking" in Making Meaning, or with the unit on exploring expository text. Coach A

By taking this approach, all teachers in the school were introduced to Making Meaning in the context of Workshop. They were not introduced to it as a program from which to "pick and choose," nor were they introduced to it as if it were the school's new reading program. And, in this school, where Workshop instruction had not yet taken hold, through the CCL cycle's connection with implementing The Reading Life, teachers had an opportunity to review or learn for the first time just what was involved in Readers' Workshop instruction.

The third school in our sample took what one might call the "middle-ground" approach to implementation of Making Meaning: the coach used CCL cycles to help teachers implement a Making Meaning unit by focusing directly on the lessons in the Teachers' Manual during inquiry

and debrief times. The teachers and coach chose the unit based on the strategies teachers wanted to stress.

> We knew the first couple weeks of lessons were where the kids got together in groups and did the think-pair-share. That was the focus. We said, "No. We don't really want to do that. It's already halfway through the year. The kids are already doing that. Let's skip these." And we just kind of moved on to narrative text, just because that was another major thing to start looking at, and then we went on to the inferencing. [The other teacher] and I made that decision together. Coach B had a little bit of input, but we kind of looked at what the kids had been doing, what mini-lessons we had already taught for the year so far, and said, "Let's start here." Teacher A

The coach demonstrated one day's lessons and then teachers implemented those designed for the subsequent days. CCL debrief's focused on the coach's lessons. Inquiry focused on planning for the week's lessons. By taking this approach, the coach hoped that the teachers, who were not yet adept with Workshop, would a) deepen their understanding of Workshop and, b) avoid implementing Making Meaning as a scripted curriculum unaccompanied by much teacher thought. However, the strategy was not effective with the teachers in our sample. As Teacher A noted, she never understood why the coach needed to help her understand the Teachers' Manual.

> I can read the teacher guide and figure out [what to do]. I didn't learn anything when I just watched the coach do the lesson. She didn't really do it much differently than I did....By the third week, I said to Coach B, "This is a little crazy. I can read this guide. I can teach this, I would rather you come in and show me something I could supplement to go along with it than to just do this lesson. I said, "Let's think of some things like a guided reading group, a mini guided reading group that we could do the inferencing with." If she could come in and demo that, that would be useful. But not coming in and doing the actual lesson that was in the Making Meaning teaching guide. Teacher A

As a result of teachers' requests, the coach helped them with other aspects of their reading instruction, for example, guided reading groups, literature circles and book clubs. These were components of Workshop that teachers said they had been unable to implement. However, the coach did not find a way to deepen teachers' understanding of the reading comprehension strategies emphasized in Making Meaning. Nor did she find herself able to help teachers make links between the read-alouds and students' independent reading activities.

To clarify how the use of Making Meaning we observed and our related interviews led us to the findings we present, we include two examples of how teachers used Making Meaning. They represent our findings about the interactions between teachers' initial knowledge of Workshop and their use of Making Meaning as well as the interaction of Making Meaning with and without coach support for implementation. We present these examples with the goal of providing the BPS with data and analysis that can guide it in supporting high quality implementation of this

program.

Making Meaning in Classrooms: What Did We See?[8] At the outset, we want to note that the students in all of the eight classrooms we observed were well-behaved during their literacy block. Teachers spent little, if any, time reminding students to stay on task. Attending to student discipline issues, in other words, did not take time away from literacy instruction. This finding reflects the attention that teachers have clearly paid to creating safe and orderly classrooms in which students have the opportunity to learn.

The first day of each series of lessons we observed involved a read-aloud. Teachers read the text recommended by the curriculum guide with attention to the vocabulary words as they arose in the text. As they read, teachers paused to ask students to respond to questions that were written in the guide and which were designed to engage the students with the text around the reading strategy being taught. If it is possible to draw conclusions about students' engagement from observing their body language and faces as they listened, then we would conclude that students were fascinated by the books their teachers read. In addition, in some classes, students asked many questions about the topics presented in the books, thereby, suggesting a high level of engagement. During the pair-share times, however, it was difficult to ascertain whether students were discussing the books and the questions because their comments were inaudible to us.

The second day of each set of lessons might involve the teacher concluding the read-aloud, if she had not read the entire book on day one. Or, it might involve a re-read of the entire book if there were a reason for reviewing the book in light of stressing a comprehension skill. The third day might involve the students in reviewing selected portions of the text with the purpose of practicing a skill, for example, summarizing or finding the most important parts of the text. Most teachers said that the fourth day of instruction centered on independent reading activities.

Making Meaning lessons lasted for approximately thirty minutes. A few were longer. This is a long time for what is ostensibly a mini-lesson, but the time did not appear to be elongated unnecessarily. After the formal lesson, students returned to their seats to read independently. In a few of the classrooms, students were asked to practice the skill emphasized during the read-aloud during independent reading. In most, independent reading seemed unconnected to the strategies emphasized during the read-aloud. The time for independent reading was often brief in light of the schools' schedules. Most teachers, for example, used a forty-five minute reading block. Given that the formal lesson usually lasted thirty minutes, this left a maximum of fifteen minutes for independent reading.

We present these two lesson segments to demonstrate a) the positive potential of Making

[8]Education Matters' researchers observed two or three days of each teachers' use of Making Meaning. In some cases, we observed the first three days of the week; in others, we observed the first, second, and fourth day of the week's lessons. The decision about which days to observe were made in consultation with the teachers in light of how they were using the materials.

Meaning as an addition to Workshop instruction in the BPS, and b) the challenges teachers, and therefore the district, face in achieving high quality implementation. We do not present these two lesson segments merely to point out flaws in the teachers' practices. These teachers were using new materials for the first time and none of them suggested they were using them as well as possible given a) how little knowledge they had of them at the outset, and b) the fact that they could not implement the program as intended by the developers, that is, by beginning at the start of the school year. In addition, in reading these descriptions it is important to keep in mind that while they were aware of the limits of their knowledge and skill with Making Meaning, these teachers welcomed us into their classrooms so that we could learn from their experiences and provide the district with information that could help them, their colleagues, and their students.

Example One. This first example represents teachers who had little experience using Workshop and implemented Making Meaning without coach or principal direction and support.[9] Such teachers were enthusiastic about the Making Meaning curriculum and materials and looked forward to having time during the summer to read the curriculum guides and materials carefully so that they could fully implement Making Meaning in the 2004-2005 school year. They reported that their students were engaged with the materials and participated more during the literacy block as a result of the questions that the Making Meaning guide posed for their consideration. However, teachers with little knowledge or skill with Workshop strategies were not able to implement the Making Meaning as it was intended to be used due to a) their basic lack of familiarity with the related strategies embedded in the Making Meaning curriculum, b) a tendency to revert to more traditional approaches to teaching reading, and c) the absence at the school level of coach or other literacy support to foster higher quality implementation.[10] We present this example to stress the importance of providing teachers with on-site professional development support in order to insure high quality use of Making Meaning and further development of teachers' instructional capacity. Without such supports, teachers will likely transform the Making Meaning units into instructional foci and strategies that are not likely to help students learn the comprehension strategies.

This particular unit was intended to be day three of a unit called Exploring Narrative Text. On days one and two, teachers would have read a book called *Thunder Cake* to the students and would have helped students explore the three elements of narrative text: character, setting, and plot. With respect to the social skills component of the curriculum, students would have begun working with new partners for pair-share work. On day two, teachers would have further explored the concepts of character, setting, and plot with respect to *Thunder Cake*.

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[9]These examples are not descriptions of the complete lesson we observed. Rather, they are segments chosen to reflect varied implementation, the positive features of Making Meaning, and issues in need of attention.

[10]In making this statement, we are not suggesting that implementation should reflect total fidelity to the "script." Rather, we are suggesting that teachers may need help understanding the basic strategy being taught in the Making Meaning lessons and what constitutes good teaching of that strategy. Without such support, teachers for whom this way of teaching is quite new will not be able to translate the curriculum guide into focused instruction.

Day three was to begin with a review of character, setting and plot as they were used in *Thunder Cake* and other books prior to the teacher reading aloud *The Dragon Takes a Wife*. The Teachers' Manual notes:

> **REVIEW STORY ELEMENTS**
> Remind the students that they have been thinking about character, setting, and plot in stories. (If necessary, review the definitions of these three key story elements.) Review that in the previous lesson, you reread *Thunder Cake* and talked about its setting. Tell the students that today they will listen to another story and pay attention again to the way the author uses character, setting, and plot. (Teachers' Manual, Grade 4, Volume 1. Page 141)

During the read-aloud, students were to continue paying attention to character, setting and plot.

The teachers we observed who were new to Workshop had difficulty keeping the focus on character, setting, and plot, and, as demonstrated in example one below, tended to bring other purposes and reading strategies into their lessons. In fact, the lesson observed seemed to become one focused on compare and contrast processes rather than on analyzing narrative texts with respect to character, setting, and plot. As a result, we would argue, students did not have the opportunities provided by the Making Meaning curriculum to focus in depth on the particular comprehension strategy targeted in the curriculum guide.[11]

> Students came to the reading area and quietly sat on the floor awaiting the teacher's introduction of the lesson. In the reading area was an easel with chart paper that had the words "character," "setting," and "plot," written across the top. Teacher X began by saying, "This week, we are going to ***compare*** [emphasis added] another book with *Thunder Cake.*[12] She held up *The Dragon Takes a Wife* and said, "Let's review." In response, a girl recounted much of the story of *Thunder Cake* noting that the girl in the story had to gather ingredients to make the cake. Looking for a definition, the teacher asked, "What are ingredients?" A student replied, "the things you need to make the cake." Teacher X then asked the students to list the ingredients, which they did.
>
> Teacher X continued by saying, "Ok, so we know what the book was about. What is the plot about?" The teacher did not distinguish between "what the book was about," and the book's plot. A girl offered, "When she was a little girl and was afraid of thunder she made a cake." The teacher asked, "How did the cake help her overcome her fear?" A boy answered, "It occupied her time so she didn't pay attention to the thunder." After several more students offered the same opinion as to how making the cake helped the girl overcome her fear, Teacher X, returned to the next specified focus of the lesson and asked, "Why is the setting important?" A girl answered: "the setting is important because it was in the house that they made the cake." Teacher X described the house and explained to the students that the setting, "gives us an overview of

[11]The teacher in this example extended the lesson over a two-day period. We do not comment on that decision which could make sense if there is reason to engage students with the materials more slowly.

[12]To further increase confidentiality, we have given different pseudonyms to teachers when we describe their use of Making Meaning than when we quote them in other parts of the report.

> what's going on." With this review of *Thunder Cake's* plot and setting completed, Teacher X said, "Ok, let's read this book, *The Dragon Takes a Wife*."
>
> Holding up the book, Teacher X asked her students to predict what the book would be about. There was no mention of setting despite the picture on the cover of the book. Many students were eager to venture guesses, some of which were: The dragon marries; the dragon takes his wife on a trip; the dragon has a wife but he leaves her; the dragon is lonely and so takes a wife; and the dragon is jealous of another dragon because he has a beautiful wife and so he takes that dragon's wife. After these amusing suggestions, Teacher X began to read.

Without question, Teacher X had engaged her students in listening to the books being read aloud. They demonstrated having listened carefully to *Thunder Cake* by their ability to relate details of the story which they had discussed the previous week. Many students raised their hands in order to participate. But, the lesson's ostensible focus on character, setting, and plot did not fully focus the discussion. Rather, students were asked to recount the details of the first book, and, having done so, were asked about its plot and setting. It is unlikely that they developed any deeper understanding of plot and setting from the discussion. Nor did the discussion likely focus students' attention on character, setting, and plot as they began to listen to *The Dragon Takes a Wife.* The review of *Thunder Cake*, in other words, as it was implemented did not likely scaffold students' attention to character, setting, and plot and how they influence the development of a story. Thus, students could not have had this knowledge in mind as they began to listen to *The Dragon Takes a Wife*. The discussion later in the lesson suggests that the emphasis remained on comparing the two stories with respect to the lessons embedded in each.

> Teacher X finished reading about half of the book and then asked the students, "OK, what do the two stories have in common?" A girl answered that the little girl in *Thunder Cake* didn't have confidence in herself and Harry [the dragon] doesn't have courage in himself." Teacher X then asked the group, "What did Babushka [the grandmother in *Thunder Cake*] do to help her?" The same girl answered that Babushka helped her bake a cake. According to another student, that helped the girl by making her go outside during the storm. Teacher X now asked the students to connect this aspect of *Thunder Cake* to *The Dragon Takes a Wife* by saying, "Ok, but what about Harry?" A girl answered, "Harry went to Mabel [the fairy] and got courage."
>
> After a few more minutes of lively discussion about the lessons learned from making a thunder cake, Teacher X ended the mini-lesson and told the students they would hear the rest of the book the next day. Then she said, "You're going to go back to your seats and read in your own independent reading books. When I tell you to stop, stop and discuss your book with a partner." There were no further suggestions for what to pay attention to when reading or how to focus the conversation with a partner.

If the purpose of the lessons had been to compare and contrast how two authors dealt with a similar theme – the main character's lack of courage – then this discussion might have been appropriately focused. However, given that the focus identified in the Teachers' Manual was character, setting and plot, the teacher seems to have missed stressing that focus. On the other hand, it is important to remember that teachers like Teacher X reported that their lessons were

more focused now that they were using Making Meaning, and that they had better materials with which to teach than in the past.

Example Two. This second example represents teachers who had become comfortable using the Workshop approach to instruction and were using the Making Meaning materials and curriculum within that context. These teachers, like those represented in the first example, lauded the Making Meaning materials and Teachers' Manual and were pleased to have them as a resource. Their implementation of the curriculum more closely matched the focus in the guide for at least two reasons. First, they had the support of their literacy coach as they implemented the curriculum, and second, at the outset, they were more familiar with teaching reading strategies than their colleagues who reported having little experience with Workshop instruction. These teachers, too, however, reported that their implementation in the second year would improve because of the time they would have to read the materials and plan their instruction over the summer.

The particular days of instruction represented in the example below comes from week five of a unit called Exploring Important Ideas and Summarizing. This was the last week of a unit that focused on two comprehension skills a) making inferences, and b) thinking about important and supporting ideas in a text. With respect to the social skills component of the curriculum, the focus was on a) students taking responsibility for their learning and behavior, and b) students developing the group skills of giving reasons for their opinions and reaching agreement. During week five, students heard *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* and were asked to practice the skills they had been applying to the previous four books in the unit.

Teachers who were familiar with Workshop instruction, had coach support, and were using Making Meaning for the first time were able to sustain the strategy and social skill focus presented in the curriculum. They were more likely to focus on their students' conversation during small group discussions than were the teachers represented in the first example. And, they were more likely to "push" their students to provide text-based evidence for their responses than were teachers who were less familiar with Workshop strategies.

In the example that follows, we highlight Teacher Z's efforts to implement the curriculum as written by a) modeling the strategies for the students, b) engaging the students in conversations with one another, and c) encouraging them to provide text-based detail for their responses. The students did not seem to have grasped fully what was involved in finding important ideas, expressing them in their own words, and developing summaries, but they remained reasonably focused on the process as Teacher Z kept them on task.[13] Teacher Z persisted with the focus of the lesson and encouraged both the social skills – working together with a partner – and the

[13]It is important to remember not only that teachers were using this curriculum for the first time, but that, in addition, students in this fourth-grade class were experiencing it for the first time. Had they been learning from Making Meaning since they entered school (or had Workshop been fully implemented during their first four years of school), their knowledge about how to work in pairs or small groups and to develop summaries might have been better developed.

reading skill of identifying important ideas in a piece of text. In order to demonstrate these two foci, we include a number of exchanges between the teacher and the students.

In presenting this example, we also want to note that it was difficult for the teacher to figure out what were the most important ideas in any of the paragraphs and, for the observer as well, it seemed as though there were multiple important ideas in most of the paragraphs. Some of the difficulty may have arisen from the formulation of the task: students were asked to determine the important idea in the paragraph, as if the paragraph were the entire text under consideration.[14] It seemed that identifying what was important depended on keeping the outcome of the book in mind. This was not made explicit to the students.

> During Day two of this unit, Teacher Z focused the students on finding important ideas in the text, *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks*. She began by reminding the students of the book they had heard the day before and then said, "Today, we are going to use the book to practice writing summaries. You've had a lot of practice with this and we'll do some more today." Then, as described in the curriculum guide, Teacher Z placed a paragraph from the text onto the overhead projector and told the students that she would read it aloud while they followed along. Teacher Z read:
>
> "Twelve years later, on Thursday December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks met James Blake again. Rosa was coming home from her work as a tailor's assistant at a Montgomery department store. She got on the Cleveland Avenue bus and took a seat in the middle section. African Americans were allowed to sit in the back and in the middle section, too, as long as no white passenger was left standing."
>
> When she finished reading, Teacher Z said, "Think for a minute. What is the main idea of this paragraph?" She waited approximately 30 seconds and then, as the Teacher's Manual suggests, modeled answering the question by saying, "When I was reading and thinking, I thought the most important part was that she took a seat in the middle section of the bus. So, I will underline that [which she does]. Any questions?" No one had a question at this point.[15] Although the Teacher's Manual suggests that the teacher write a brief summary note of the most important idea next to the paragraph, Teacher Z did not do this.
>
> At this point, Teacher Z told the class that they would read the next paragraphs and she distributed copies of pages 46-48 of the Student Book. She asked the students to read the second selection and told them that she would read it aloud while they also read it. Then, she wanted them to turn to their partner and, together, choose the most important sentence in the paragraph. Teacher Z read the following:
>
> "At the next stop, some white passengers got on, and because the bus was crowded,

[14]At times, it seemed as if the task might have been made clearer by framing it as considering the most important idea in the paragraph as it pertained to the entire story and not just to the paragraph itself.

[15]The Teachers' Manual does not suggest that the teacher explain her reasons for the selection and there are plausible reasons for choosing a different sentence as most important. No student, however, suggested having thought that another sentence was most important.

moved to the middle section, where Rosa was sitting. The driver told the four African American passengers in Rosa's row to get up. Three of them did, but not Rosa Parks. She had paid the same fare as the white passengers. She knew it was the law in Montgomery that she give up her seat, but she also knew the law was unfair. James Blake called the police, and Rosa Parks was arrested."

Teacher Z then reminded the students to talk to each other and select the most important sentence in the paragraph. A few students begin to talk, but most looked at the paragraph and, on their own, underlined a sentence.

After a couple of minutes, Teacher Z brought the students back together and, following the Teacher's Manual, asked the students, "What is this paragraph about?" The question led to the following dialogue:

Girl A: Rosa Parks
Teacher Z: What about her?
Girl A: She didn't want to sit in the back.
Teacher Z: Can someone say more?
Girl B: She didn't think it was fair because she paid the same fare.
Teacher Z: What's the most important information this paragraph gives you?
Girl B: [undecipherable answer.]
Teacher Z: Can you think about what's *most* important?
Girl B: She knew the law required her to give up her seat.
Teacher Z: Ok. Someone else?
Boy A: It's important to know she was arrested.
Teacher Z: (Pulling together the parts of the answers students have provided:) So, she knew the law, she knew it was unfair, and she was arrested.
Girl C reads: "Three of them did, but not Rosa Parks."
Girl D reads the first sentence of the paragraph.
Teacher Z after listening to the two girls: Which part is important?
Girl D: That white passengers got on.

Teacher Z now seemed puzzled about what to say next. She had been offered multiple options for the most important sentences, but there was no resolution about which sentence might be most important. The Teacher's Manual offers no help on this point but suggests that the teacher jot notes about what the students select in the margin on the overhead. Teacher Z did this. She also walked around the room encouraging pairs of students to make their own selection about the most important sentence and then underline it.

After encouraging a few of the students to make a choice, Teacher Z called on Girl E to read the sentence she chose. Girl E chose "She knew it was the law." For the first time, Teacher Z asked, "Why is that sentence important?" Girl E responded, "Because even though she knew it was the law and she would be arrested, she didn't get up." Teacher Z turned to a boy and asked him to restate Girl E's response, which he did.

Teacher Z then said, "Ok. Those are good choices and you all chose what you thought mattered. Now, here's what I want you to do. Read section three with your partner and discuss what it's about. Write notes in the margin that tell you what the section is about. Underline the sentences that seem important. Any questions?" There were none. Teacher Z then told the students to get started and that she would come around to see how they were doing.

Teacher Z circulated, listening in on the students' conversations. Students, for the most part, did not talk with each other until Teacher Z arrived at their desks. One student commented that a fine of $10.00 didn't seem like much money. Teacher Z replied that it was a lot of money then and to those people. A girl asked an inaudible question to which Teacher Z replied, "Focus on what it says in the paragraphs. If it's not there, maybe we don't know it."

After a few more minutes, Teacher Z called the students to attention, read the third paragraph aloud, and asked, "What did you and your partner think was most important?" A girl read the first sentence and the following dialogue occurred:

Teacher Z: Good, but tell me in your own words what the sentence is about.
Girl tells why the sentence is important.
Boy [offering his choice for most important sentence]: That she went to court and was found guilty.
Girl: She was fined $10.00
Girl: That it's not fair that she had to pay for what she believed in. (Many students' hands are waving in the air indicating that they want to offer their opinions.)
Teacher Z: This is good. What sentence did you choose (nodding to another girl).
Girl: Reads the first sentence and explains that it is important because it tells you whether she went to jail or not.
Teacher Z: Anyone choose a different sentence?
Girl: Rosa and her lawyer appealed to a higher court.
Teacher Z: Why is that important?
Girl: Because it wasn't fair.
Teacher Z: So, she wanted to keep the fight going. That's good. One last thing. I underlined the same sentence as [names girl who had read earlier]. Does anyone else agree with us?
Girl: Yes, because she shouldn't be arrested.
Teacher Z: Ok, but why is that the most important sentence?
Boy: Because she had to go to court for breaking the law?
Teacher Z: Anyone disagree? It's ok to disagree. No one? Because some of you did choose a different sentence.

There were no further comments and Teacher Z told the students they would complete going through the paragraphs in this way the next day. And, on the fourth day, as a class, they would write a summary of the book based on the underlined sentences and their marginal notes. Observation of that day's class revealed the students and teacher working on creating the summary according to the guidance provided by the Teachers' Manual. Teacher Z continued to urge the students to work together to use what they were reading and their notes in the service of developing the summary. She circulated and responded to students as they worked as the following example shows. Despite her encouragement, however, students seemed to work in pairs only as long as the teacher was nearby.

> For example, Teacher Z approached two boys and asked, "What did you guys come up with?" One of the boys replied, "To see if she was guilty." Teacher Z then asked, "How can we summarize? What are the most important words and ideas? The same boy read some words from the paragraph. Teacher Z then asked, "How can you say that in your own words?" The other boy responded, "Rosa went to court and found out she was guilty of breaking the segregation laws." Teacher Z commented, "That could go into our summary. Now, do the same thing with the rest of the paragraphs." However, when Teacher Z walked to another pair, these two boys seemed to stop working.

Teacher Z, based on our observations and follow-up interview, used the curriculum materials and strategies in a way that reflected the intentions of those who designed it. Although some of the interactions did not go as smoothly as she hoped, Teacher Z maintained the focus of the lessons and used both components of Making Meaning: the reading comprehension strategies and the social skills strategies.

In addition, Teacher Z was able to reflect on the lessons and consider how she would have continued the reading comprehension work had her reading period not been truncated by an unexpected schedule change.

> Today, if time was available, I would have said, "Why don't you all open your books, read a chapter, and try to summarize, or read a paragraph, a couple of sentences, and summarize what that says for me." And, I would go to some of the students – there were five, six students I would have targeted right away. "Why don't you read this paragraph, then tell me in your own words what it means?" The independent reading part is key. And then what would happen is, over a couple of days, if I noticed a group of four or five students who were having trouble with the skill, during independent reading time, I might take four kids together as a group, sit on the rug together, sit on the table together, and work on that skill as a small group again. Teacher Z

Coach A observed one of Teacher Z's lessons along with the Education Matters' researcher.[16] Her thoughts about the follow-up conference she would have had with Teacher Z demonstrate the potential power of the coach to support implementation and the likely impact of her coaching support for this teacher to date. When asked how she would have debriefed the lesson with Teacher Z, Coach A said:

> Well, I think I would have talked to Teacher Z afterwards about how it's good to hear what the students' thoughts are, but it's also important they move to get deeper into why they were giving that as their suggestion, and to try to bring that out. Is it because it's the first sentence of a paragraph, the last sentence of a

[16]Teacher Z was not involved in a coaching cycle during the time of Education Matters' evaluation work. Coach A observed for her own purpose: to see how Teacher Z was doing a couple of months after the CCL cycle had ended.

> paragraph? Some of it seemed like it was the thing they knew best about Rosa Parks. And then also for us to look through the text and say, "What do the two of us think is the most important?".....I think what we would maybe have talked about was how, the next day, she could have brought back some of the things for kids to look further in the text for, like, is this just an idea that is mentioned once and disappears, or is this one of those ideas that carries you through text for a very long time, and therefore really helps you understand something about Rosa Parks better? And for Teacher Z, maybe after she's elicited some of these student responses, to share her own ideas, and model, again, I think this because of these things, not that I'm saying this is the best or perfect answer, but to let them in on her own processes for thinking through things. It's hard with modeling sometimes like that because kids do sometimes see that as the right answer, but at the same time, making your process visible is the biggest challenge of modeling comprehension strategies, and letting kids in on that process, and saying to them, "I read this piece and I wasn't sure what was the most important idea, because there seemed to be a lot of important things," and to say, "It's OK to think there's more than one important piece." [I would say] those types of things. Coach A

The teacher and coach comments, make it clear that the teacher is sufficiently knowledgeable about the curriculum and its purposes to reflect on her implementation of it, and the coach is an astute observer who could provide Teacher Z with additional thoughts about how to improve implementation.

In contrast, Teacher X, who had not had the coach observe any aspect of her reading instruction nor her use of Making Meaning, had no reflective comments to make about the lesson we observed. She was pleased that the students had been so enthusiastic about the book, and suggested that the Teachers' Manual provided her with all the support she needed. When speaking about how she learned to teach the lessons, she reported that she and her colleagues,

> ...just followed what the training was about, with the same system that the [one-day] trainer did. The trainer read the books. She asked questions. She asked children to stop. The book tells you everything,...it's self explanatory. [It tells you] when to read. It really helps you to know when to stop and tell them [what to do] – OK, I want you to write questions down, or I want you to infer. Teacher X

We are not suggesting that all of the variation in implementation that we observed was due to the presence or absence of a coach. However, we are suggesting that strong coach support for the implementation of Making Meaning, as well as other aspects of Workshop instruction, would likely improve teachers' understanding of how children learn to comprehend texts and how, as teachers, they can better use a program such as Making Meaning to enhance student learning. Without such support, it is unlikely that Teacher X, or even Teacher Z, would significantly improve their skill with respect to using the curriculum.

As a corollary to this conclusion, we note that it is principals who make the decisions about how to deploy their coaches with respect to improving teachers' knowledge and skill. The principal of Teacher X's school and the principal of Teacher Z's school had very different views of the importance of the coach to successful implementation of Making Meaning.

2. What Teachers, Coaches, and Principals Valued About Making Meaning. In presenting what we learned about how Making Meaning was used for the first time by a sample of eight teachers in three schools, we began with an overview of the program itself. We described its two strands – comprehension and community – as well as the structure of a week's worth of lessons. We reported that teachers, coaches, and principals saw a great deal of value in the Making Meaning program. Specifically, they valued its focus, organization, structure and materials. They recognized that Making Meaning added curriculum content to the instructional focus of Workshop instruction. Briefly, we noted that Readers' Workshop, the context into which Making Meaning was to be implemented, was not well-established in the schools and classrooms in our sample.

In order to enable readers to imagine what Making Meaning looked like in practice, we presented two examples of how it was used in the three sample schools. And, we concluded from these representative examples that when the school's literacy coach was involved in supporting teachers in their use of Making Meaning, implementation seemed to align better with the curriculum's purposes than when coaches were not involved. In each school, the coach's role with Making Meaning was shaped primarily by the principal's view of whether and how the coach should be involved with the program.

Regardless of whether implementation was well-supported by principals and/or coaches, however, teachers reported that Making Meaning was of great value to them. Coaches and principals agreed that the program could be a valuable component of Readers' Workshop instruction. Therefore, we now turn to a more detailed discussion of what teachers, coaches, and principals found valuable about Making Meaning.

A. Making Meaning addressed the reading comprehension skills that all children need to acquire. Teachers valued its literacy content, materials, and the related social skills that are part of the program.[17]

> The things [my colleague and I] liked about it were the comprehension strategies that [the curriculum] actually taught. All of the strategies, for the most part, we had also determined we wanted to teach. We also liked how it's a progression. It's a very clear structure for teaching the kids which we thought worked really well. For some of these kids, routine is so important. If they know what's happening, they really like that. And we really liked the books. We saw *The Dragon Takes a*

[17]The two teachers in our sample who remained unconvinced about the value of Workshop instruction did not fully share this point of view. Their perspective was, given that they were required to implement Workshop instructional strategies, Making Meaning was a valuable addition to literacy instruction.

> *Wife* and we were all excited. And, not only do they give you the one book that you're supposed to use, they also have alternative texts, which is so nice. And so many of them are books you already have, you're already using them, you're doing something with them. And if you haven't heard of them – for the most part I really liked them. Teacher H

In addition, most teachers reported that they could use the curriculum successfully with a wide range of students.

> I think it's a useful addition, absolutely. I think it teaches students not only good skills for reading and comprehension, I think it teaches good community skills. It's very user friendly. The texts that are part of the program are phenomenal. It's adaptable for any learners. I really think that because there's a lot of oral reading to gain the skills, it doesn't alienate those students who usually feel they're left out because the reading is too difficult. They're able to stay involved, and that really helps them. I've used Making Meaning with special education students and I've done it in regular education and I feel both kinds of students have been successful with it. It's a matter of using the program to the best advantage of your class and your school, and making sure that you go step by step the way [the program] wants and use the time wisely. Teacher F

B. Making Meaning provided specific literature to use when teaching the strategies. By doing so, Making Meaning addressed the content and resource piece that was missing from Workshop instruction according to all of the educators in our sample. Experienced Workshop teachers as well as those who were not yet fully confident about using the model valued the books and how they were tied to specific reading comprehension skills.

> I think initially, with all the other units of study that we've done, we've had to create, pulling resources from this book, from this one. Trying to create your own units of study can be a difficult thing to do, and we were creating our own units of study in Writers' Workshop [too] and doing different things for math. So we were thinking, if we could have something – I don't want to say prescripted, but just a guideline to go by – we were very attracted to that [with Making Meaning]. And I think another piece I really liked was the core literature list that was in the units, I think they're very – they're normal texts, texts that I use already in the classroom. They're interesting, they're not these basal readers that the kids can't relate to. They really like the read-alouds. So I think seeing that, in combination with it being a good sequence of things, I think initially that's what made me want to do it. Teacher E

> I think they're pretty good books. I mean, I probably wouldn't have chosen this book or really known anything about it. I might have chosen something else. Or I would probably have thought about using a chapter book and making the inferences that way because what I've done is use a chapter book and then read

> sections of it, and then do different strategies from the book like that. It's also nice that they use a lot more picture books, you know, even though it's an upper grade class. Teacher D

Teachers commented on the value of having texts that represent different genres and a program that is progressive and sequential across the elementary school grades. As teacher Teacher B notes, being able to teach a reading strategy using, for example, poetry as well as fiction and non-fiction texts, enhances students' opportunities to learn to apply the strategy across genres when they are reading on their own. Her quote summarizes much that teachers valued about Making Meaning.

> I like the trade books. I think [the developer has] taken the time to see which book works best for which strategy. I like the fact that they'll teach a strategy, like making inferences, across different genres, which is something students need to do. If they're just taught that in one genre, [students can't] always transition it to other genres. So, it's great that they go across genres like that. I like the community building and working in pairs and small groups. I think that's an important skill for them to learn. It's a difficult skill, but an important skill. I like the concepts they're teaching, I like the fact that those concepts are taught across the grades as well. So they're exposed to those concepts in kindergarten, first grade, and then they get more sophisticated as they move up through the grade levels. It means that if the whole school were using it, then the whole school is using the same language and the teachers are using the same language as the kids. Teacher B

Coaches were fully aware of how much teachers appreciated having high quality, engaging texts to go along with the comprehension strategy lessons. From their experience working with teachers, they knew that the lack of access to relevant materials had been a significant roadblock to better Workshop implementation.[18]

> First of all, the resources were there [with Making Meaning]. Not that they weren't making attempts at teaching those strategies [before], but their biggest complaint to coaches, and I do agree with that, was: you want us to teach these strategies, but we don't have the resources; we don't have the books that allow us to emphasize what strategies. We have to go out and hunt for them, or buy them, or visit the library, and we really don't have the time to do all that. So this was a nice way of packaging them and then helping teachers to think about, in a constructive way, how to teach these comprehension strategies. I think it's a wonderful resource. Coach C

Coaches also recognized that the curriculum that accompanied the materials provided teachers

[18]We want to stress that it was not the books, by themselves, that made Making Meaning valuable. It was the books and the ways in which they were tied to lessons focused on developing students' comprehension skills.

with strategies they could try with their students. For example, Coach B noted that the curriculum enabled some teachers to begin to use student-to-student interactions rather than whole group instruction. And, it suggested to teachers how they might connect the reading strategy taught in the mini-lesson to students' independent reading time.

> I think that because of Making Meaning they were using texts they never would have considered before. The making inference unit in fourth grade uses poetry, and that just never would have popped up. So that was a really nice way to go across a genre. I'm sure had we tried it on our own, we would have used just a narrative fiction. So that's one difference [with what was happening before]. Another difference was with their questions. Those teachers tended to do whole-class instruction. You know, I ask a question, everyone answers it. So this got a lot more of the cooperative structures going on in the classroom. That's another difference. Also, in fourth grade they do some writing, even during the mini-lessons, they'll stop and write questions. They never did anything like that before. And another need they had articulated is: how do we have students respond to their independent reading in writing? With Making Meaning, they were able to make connections between the whole class instruction and the written response in independent reading. So, with making inferences, for example, they would say, "This week, in your reader's notebook, what we'd like you to do is make a T-chart of, 'these were the clues from my story, this is what these clues told me.'" They hadn't been doing things like that. It was more like, "Write about a connection." Coach B

The texts, in combination with the guidance provided by the Teachers' Manual, increased (provided the potential for increasing) teachers' ability to teach the reading comprehension strategies.

C. Making Meaning provided teachers with a structure for teaching reading comprehension lessons. Teachers had been using a structure for their Workshop instruction prior to trying Making Meaning, but, as the coaches quoted above reported, they were struggling with certain aspects of implementation. Making Meaning provided them with a structure that, in a sense, took the guesswork out of crafting lessons. As with the materials, both more and less experienced Workshop teachers valued the structure of the lessons. Those with little Workshop experience found that Making Meaning helped them understand the connections between the parts of the lessons.

> The lessons are there, so it gives you a lot more structure as to what to do with those lessons and how to go about helping the kids to better understand those strategies. We had done some connecting, visualizing, just thinking out loud, you know, questioning. But this does give you a little bit more structure, and also it has specific books that are referenced. So that really helped, and to be able to see how those books were being used. Teacher D

> I used Fountas and Pinnell and that, to me that was like [being] a kid with ADHD. The book is two inches thick and it has limitless material. You look through it and it's like, "Where do I begin?" They give you a lot of strategies to choose from, but it's kind of difficult to get through it all and figure out where you want to begin and which direction to take it....At the beginning of the year, I was joking with [the literacy coach] about writing a book called *180 Days of Readers' Workshop.* I was telling her she should do it. And when she presented this to me she said, "This is exactly what you were looking for, because it's enough weeks to go through the school year and there's a format to it." And actually, that's what I was interested in in the beginning. Teacher C

> I was less systematic [before using Making Meaning]. I had this inventory of skills that I wanted to teach to the kids, and so I would spend time trying to see which skills the kids needed the most, and then teach those skills to the kids, but also knowing I've got all these other skills that I want to teach to the kids too. So that's how I would try to accomplish it, you know, but – I think using this curriculum, you have the concepts that you're teaching to the kids, on every level, and then you also have the flexibility, because it's not a full-year curriculum, to also teach other skills, that the kids – that you've identified that the kids might need. This gives you a good solid base to go with. [Before] I might question myself: How long am I going to teach this concept? When do I go onto the next concept? Am I staying long enough on this concept? Sometimes I was and sometimes I wasn't, but having this [program] I feel more confident, more comfortable that yes, I'm spending enough time on this concept, and yes, there are enough ways to reinforce it, because it's already been done and organized for me to do that. Teacher B

Those with more Workshop experience, valued the "solid base" provided by the curriculum, as Teacher E reports, even if they had developed their own units of studies that were attached to specific books.

> I think it's helped me a lot. It's given me structure, it's given me something tangible. I'm not saying that I read it verbatim and I do nothing else, but it gives you a solid base. It gives you literature, questions you can ask, an order, a sequence. You look at Mosaic of Thought and other books and they tell you that those are the main strategies that teachers should be teaching. But, in the past I've had to pick here, choose here....And, I think the literature they include – I think the books are fabulous. Teacher E

And, they valued the time they had available for other important instructional work.

> We had developed very good units of study that definitely taught very good skills, and we did so much work with it last year. Our units were already mapped out, ready to go, always fine tuned, always well researched, everything. But, there's

> only so many times you can spend that long on units of study, and that was just Readers' Workshop. We also had Writers' Workshop and word study and all these other things. And now I'm teaching a different grade! ...For me [with Making Meaning] it was so much easier to already have the day to day, already be able to plug it in, know what I'm doing, and then I could focus on other things. I don't necessarily think Making Meaning is benefitting them any more or less than what we did, but I know I'm spending a lot less time modifying and accommodating Making Meaning than I was creating my own, and even though I have all these great units, they're for [one grade] and now I'm in [another] grade. So, even though they're these great units and I like them, I think Making Meaning helps me, and it frees up my time a whole lot more so I can focus on everything else. Teacher H

In presenting these findings, we are reporting what teachers valued about Making Meaning and what it provided for them that they had been missing. Reading their quotes might lead to the conclusion that having recognized the potential of the materials, all teachers were able to use them with some level of expertise. However, as we pointed out in presenting Teacher X's use of the curriculum in Example One, recognizing the value of the curriculum did not always translate into high quality use the first time around. In presenting Example One, we noted that Teacher X was not implementing the unit and lessons as the Teachers' Manual suggested. At this point, we want to remind readers that even when teachers identified what they valued about the curriculum and materials, and even when they were accurate in their perception of what it offered, they were not always able to use it expertly.

We stress this point in order to clarify what we think is the relationship among a) the potential for high quality instruction that is embedded in the Making Meaning curriculum and materials, b) the quality of actual implementation that was associated with teachers' initial knowledge and skill, and c) the role taken by principals and coaches with respect to supporting implementation

D. Teachers, principals and coaches, for the most part, valued the social skills component of the curriculum. Some teachers explained that they did not fully implement this component due to starting the program in the middle of the school year. They expected to use it in the next school year. However, some of those teachers who planned to use the social skills curriculum worried about what it meant for them to grant their students more responsibility for their behavior and learning.

> I think it would require them having a lot more responsibility, and, right now, I still think some of them are not ready for that kind of responsibility. And it's hard for me....But what I will do, if I start this at the beginning of the school year, I would implement all of it. I have used the social piece....Like, for example, when I say, "Turn and talk to your partner." That's something we've worked on prior to Making Meaning. So they already know what they need to do, in terms of turning and talking to their partner. We don't always discuss what they talk to their partner about, [though]. Teacher D

Teacher D and others who shared her view, recognized that fully implementing Making Meaning, and Workshop, we would require children to take on more responsibility for their learning. They did not yet seem to understand, however, that taking more responsibility and interacting with peers was not just an organizational flourish provided by Workshop and Making Meaning, but rather a fundamental component of instruction derived from research on the contexts in which children best learn.[19]

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that Teacher D was able to follow the Teachers' Manual and implement some of the "turn and talk" features of the curriculum despite doubting her students ability to interact responsibly in these ways. For example, during one of our observations, we saw students turn and talk to one another about what the title of the poem, "Grounded," meant. After they finished their partner conversations, Teacher D, using a strategy described in the Teachers' Manual, asked several students to report their partners' thoughts Students demonstrated that they had been able to have the conversation about the meaning of the poem's title with their partners and could then report their partner's opinion. And, as the exchange continued, Teacher D reminded students, when necessary, to report their partner's thoughts and not their own.

Ellen: Mary said she thinks somebody is going to get grounded in the story but they don't.[20]
Mary: Ellen thought he's going to be grounded for the rest of his life.
Maria: I think.
Teacher (stressing the process): What did Jody think?
Maria: Jody thought it means that Damon feels he's grounded because he has asthma.
Jody: Maria thinks he's grounded, but he's not.
Anna: I think. [Correcting herself.] No. Tiffany thinks grounded means when you get bored and have to stay inside.

In several of the classrooms we observed, teachers were trying to provide students with more opportunities to learn with one another and share their learning. Helping their students develop such skills may not have been easy, but these teachers were using Making Meaning toward that end. As Coach A commented, teachers will be successful teaching social skills if they approach them in the same way that they approach encouraging students to develop stamina when reading independently.

> I think initially they felt the turning and talking to partners and things like that were challenging. But, as they spent time with it, one of the things they've said positively now has been the good effects it's had in their classroom in terms of

[19]In many Boston schools, teachers struggle with the implications of giving more responsibility to their students as part of Workshop instruction. They remain unconvinced that their students can handle the responsibility and they fear classroom disruption and lack of learning if they loosen their control over their classrooms. It is not surprising, therefore, that the same concerns arose in the context of Making Meaning.

[20]All of the students' names are pseudonyms.

> behavior management, good behavior management and the ability of the kids to talk for longer periods of time. We talked about that. Initially, they're not going to be able to have long times of turning and talking because it's new and you don't want to give them too much time for it to fall apart. So you grow those minutes, just like you grow the minutes of independent reading. You grow the minutes that you allow them to have open for talking. Coach A

Our sample included teachers who recognized the importance of the social skills and their associated lessons but skipped them due to time constraints. Some of these teachers, for example Teacher E who we cite below, had already implemented many of the student-to-student interactions as part of Workshop instruction. Although she might have liked to include additional social skills lessons, her reasons for minimizing them had to do with time and priorities.

> I know the social, emotional part is a big part of the Making Meaning curriculum....But, unfortunately, we might skip over those, because although our kids really need it, [we would skip it] just for the time constraints. And, we feel like we're doing the social piece in other areas [so] that wasn't my number one focus when I saw the curriculum, although I think it's great. Maybe if I were to start from the beginning of the year, I think I might be more apt to start implementing the social piece, but I just felt like if they had a class meeting on the day before, usually [the social skills] would get nixed in order to do guided reading or something like that. Teacher E

Several other teachers cited similar time-related reasons for minimizing the social skills component of the curriculum.[21]

Teachers who were reasonably successful in integrating the social skills curriculum and, thereby, the interactive parts of Making Meaning, reported being pleased with the impact on their students.

> I think that the way that they're working in small groups, sharing their ideas, discussing with their peers in small groups – that certainly has gotten better. I didn't do very much of that at all, although I've always worked at trying to create community in the classroom. I think it's given me some more tools for that as well. Teacher B

Nonetheless, a number of teachers still struggled with the student-to-student interactions that are part of Workshop and Making Meaning. They had difficulty engaging their regular education students in activities such as pair-share and, unlike Teacher F, cited earlier, found it almost

[21]When teachers reported that they weren't using the social skills curriculum, most of the time they were referring to those parts of the curriculum that focused on having students reflect on their interactions with one another.

impossible to implement these interactive strategies with children who have special education plans.

> That's been the hardest part of this whole Making Meaning, getting children to work together,...it's just been an ongoing struggle, and coaxing, bribing or whatever to work with – just trying not to have someone's feelings get hurt because someone doesn't want to work with them. We have made some progress with that...The other part is just getting them to stay on task. [When] they're sitting there talking, sometimes they're not talking about the lesson, and to get them to elaborate on what they're saying, or to get them to use the skills, like prompting one another, very few of them are really doing that well. I'll say maybe three or four are doing it well. And the rest of them are just saying as little as possible and maybe doing some of the work themselves, but not really doing it as a team. Teacher C

Our observations, some of which were described in Example Two, confirmed teachers' reports about the difficulty of teaching children to interact with one another around text. Teaching these skills at the beginning of the school year, as well as beginning them early in children's elementary school years, should improve their ability to learn how to talk about texts as part of mastering reading comprehension. When children are taught the skills, as the example from Teacher D's class demonstrates, they are able to use them. Then, teachers have the opportunity to work with students to deepen the quality of their conversations.

Two of the three principals in our sample were pleasantly surprised by Making Meaning's attention to the social skills aspect of the reading comprehension strategies. These principals understood the importance of teaching the social skills as part of teaching reading comprehension.

> I would highlight that my teachers really were surprised to see how much of the social interaction was taught in the curriculum, and I think that should certainly be highlighted [when introducing the program], because that is something that teachers really do struggle with in Workshop. The kids struggle with it, too. How do you sit and talk quietly? Irene Fountas suggests mini-lessons for the first 20 days of school in her book at the upper grades, and they're not all that well-elaborated. They often suggest [for example], "Talk to kids about management issues related to [whatever]." And the teachers don't always know how to talk to them about it, or how to prevent the problems that are happening. I think Making Meaning does that in a way that surprised all of us, because no one told us about that [component of the curriculum] before we piloted it. From the mini-lesson point of view, I thought – what was really great was not only did it give the teacher a text to read and a skill to teach for, but also strategies on how to get the kids to interact. I saw a lot of great instructional strategies in general in terms of turn and talk to your partner, chart this on the board, in ways that weren't a part of teachers' repertoire all the time, on a consistent basis. [Making Meaning] really

> modeled good instructional strategies that worked great in the Workshop format. Principal B

One principal, however, suggested that there might be something negative for children embedded in the social skills component of Making Meaning. Therefore, she was not enamored of it.

> It's not like it's a bad thing. But I'm a little wary of programs that want to teach our kids how to behave properly, and that's my bias. And we also have other things that do that. We have some stuff that we do at the school and we also have the [named] curriculum. Principal A

Principal A, noted, nonetheless, that some of her teachers were teaching the social skills as part of their reading mini-lessons.

E. Teachers noticed that Making Meaning had a positive impact on their students. Whether or not teachers explicitly taught the social skills curriculum, they used the student interaction strategies that it recommended and reported that their students valued the opportunity to talk with one another as part of their reading lessons. Teachers also reported that students loved the books that were provided for the read-alouds.

> The number one thing this program does that I haven't seen in any of the other programs is that it helps your classroom build community, work with partners and learn how to talk about books, how to ask questions. The kids [with special education plans] really liked that. They liked sitting with their partner and talking about books, and those kids sat and they talked about books, and it was great. It's been nice, it's been really nice. Teacher F

> It was good. My kids enjoyed it. They like the idea of working with other kids as they learn. They say, "I learned from my partner."...They learn a lot from sharing with their partner. It does help them to think out loud and express themselves, because when one says something, it helps the other students to think....So it's really helpful. I think it's good. Teacher G

> With [Making Meaning] I see them talking about – even using words like, I infer that this means – Not even just using the lingo, but starting to be more aware of these strategies, and being more conscious about strategies that they can use, and what good readers do when they read to understand what's going on in the book... Teacher E

> I think they like it. I really see a difference with them. They're participating. I mean, I do have kids that always participate, but I think the social piece, if I were able to implement that fully, I think I would see a lot more interaction around just books. But I do see a difference [anyway]. Just talking about books, you know,

> working with a partner does emphasize that a lot, where you're working with a partner and they do look forward to that, and even just doing the follow up assignments....I do see them becoming more involved and just being more responsible, and sharing more. Teacher D

One teacher in the sample began to see her students using the strategies in other content areas. She noted:

> After we talked about text structure, one of the things that they began to work on was how to ask questions about books, and it started with the whole "wondering"thing. And that was pretty amazing, because I found them really bringing that across all parts of the day, even in math, saying, "Teacher F, I wonder why you're saying that fraction's equal to this." It was pretty amazing that they started questioning to help them make sense of [different text], That was something great. I really liked that.... Teacher F

For teachers who had implemented the surface, organizational features of Workshop, but did not value the Workshop approach to instruction, Making Meaning provided a positive structure and materials. But, these teachers, in contrast to those such as teacher Teacher F and Teacher E, did not think it was making much of a difference to students.

> I don't think there's a real big difference [for students]. They don't see a difference, because we have done so many read-alouds and when we do read-alouds, even before we did Making Meaning, we would read a story once or twice and reflect back on different parts of it. So they're not really seeing a difference in terms of the way we're teaching or what we're doing. We're making a lot more posters and a lot more charts. Before we would just kind of talk about it, where as now we're putting a lot more stuff down in writing. We would just talk about that, we wouldn't actually chart it. Making Meaning says, "Chart it.". Teacher A

Without a deeper understanding of the rationale for Workshop instruction, such teachers were implementing Workshop and Making Meaning as a matter of compliance.[22]

> Since I've started Making Meaning, the kids are doing more independent reading, and using the techniques that we're learning as a whole group through Making Meaning....In the last two years, been doing independent reading although I don't think the kids are getting the most from reading that they could....I do independent reading so I can say I'm doing independent reading. Teacher A

Teachers who remained unconvinced of the value of Workshop reported that their principals valued Workshop and intended to have it implemented for that reason and also because the BPS

[22]It is possible, of course, that even with a deeper understanding of Workshop, these teachers would prefer a different approach to teaching reading.

had adopted Workshop as the district's reading program. Neither what they knew about Workshop, nor what they learned from using Making Meaning, convinced such teachers that these instructional approaches were superior to a combination of basal readers, teacher-chosen independent reading books, and whole-class instruction.

Summary: The Value of Making Meaning. It is far too soon to expect any measurable outcomes from the first implementation of Making Meaning. The program was implemented in the middle of the school year with far less professional development preparation and support than might be warranted. As a result, schools and teachers considered their contexts and made decisions about how and where to begin. They learned from their initial efforts and they concluded that the program is valuable.

The evidence of the value for their students hinges on teachers' perceptions of students' increased active participation during mini-lessons. Teachers consider active participation to be an indicator of engagement and, without doubt, engagement is integral to students' opportunities to learn. In addition, teachers had inklings that students were beginning to see how they could use the strategies taught during Making Meaning lessons in other reading contexts.

Perhaps most important, these teachers who were trying Making Meaning realized that, with the support of appropriate curriculum and materials, they could teach the strategies that students needed to learn.

3. The Challenges of Using Making Meaning and Fully Implementing Workshop. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to try Making Meaning and they reported that they would use it again. Principals and coaches felt the same way. They concluded that the program would contribute significantly to high quality implementation of Readers' Workshop.

At the same time, though, they learned from this first experience that the program presented them with a number of challenges. Chief among these were a) the amount of time needed for Making Meaning lessons, b) teachers' need for more expertise in framing questions to deepen students' consideration of the texts during read-alouds and during independent reading conferences, and c) the potential for relying too heavily on the "script" that appears in the Teachers' Manual.[23]

A. Making Meaning lessons take too much time given the need to implement the other components of Workshop instruction. As we noted earlier, Making Meaning lessons lasted much longer than the time allotted for mini-lessons in the Workshop format. Making Meaning mini-lessons lasted for at least half an hour. Teachers with a forty-five minute reading block did not, as a result, provide their students with sufficient time for either guided or independent

[23]Several teachers commented that, often, it is children's limited vocabulary that stands in the way of their comprehending texts. We have heard the same issue raised by Boston teachers in the context of other evaluation studies, and note it here to remind the district that vocabulary development may need further attention if students are to be able to fully develop their comprehension skills.

reading.[24]

Teachers E, D, and B identifed the challenges posed by the time needed for the lessons and described how they dealt with them.

> The lessons they propose are way too long. They have a read-aloud that they say can be done in one session, one day. We were doing it with what they say you should do and it took about an hour. That got in the way of our guided reading, got in the way of conferencing. So we took that first lesson and broke it up over two days. Other lessons you could do quickly. Other times, they tell you to stop at various points in the text, and have the kids write. Sometimes I wouldn't have them write. I'd have them talk instead. Or they'd say stop four or five times. I'd stop two or three because the time is just too long. I don't think it affected the students' actual understanding. Teacher E

> One of my questions would be the time factor, the fact that, especially on the first day, when you pass that fifteen minute mini-lesson, you know, how do you just fit everything in to that workshop model? [With Workshop alone,] I was getting my reading groups in, my fifteen minutes of mini-lessons, sharing after. Teacher D

> Sometimes I had to shorten the discussion time between the kids. So, instead of giving everybody a chance, I would have one or two kids [speak], three at the most, and then we'd go on to the next thing. Sometimes they had reflections on how the group was going, and sometimes I would cut that off. I couldn't cut it off completely because you do want them to think and reflect about it, because if you do stop entirely, then you find that the group, the community starts falling apart. Teacher B

These three teachers' comments are congruent with those of the other teachers in our sample. And, they reflect what coaches reported as a significant time-related problem associated with program implementation.

> To keep doing Workshop, you really have to modify Making Meaning. And what I've seen in classrooms, from the times I've been in there, is that if you allot an hour to Readers' Workshop, which they don't tend to do – it was usually 45 minutes – their Making Meaning was taking up an inordinate amount of time, going way beyond what a mini-lesson was. What was getting lost was time for independent reading, and from what I could tell, guided reading wasn't really happening at all. That's probably my number-one concern. Coach B

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[24]We know from prior evaluation studies that mini-lessons were frequently too long even without Making Meaning. While Making meaning led to many elongated mini-lessons, for the most part, this program neither created nor solved this set of challenges as they relate to Workshop implementation.

Coaches and principals recognized the challenges presented by the time demands of the program and offered suggestions for adapting it to allow time for independent reading. What is essential in making adaptations, however, as Coach A noted, is to retain the integrity of the Making Meaning program.

> We have to be faithful to the curriculum....You can't just say, "I like Day 1, but I really don't like Day 2 or 3, so I'm going to do Day 4." But there are places to make allowances. [For example, if] there are five follow up questions and the kids can't handle five, which ones are you going to ask? Where are you going to go with it? How many times are you going to have them turn and talk?...If there are four chances to turn and talk, you might only do one or two right now. You might grow to three or four, but you might not. But you can't not do any, you can't skip that. It's an essential component....How many questions, how long you've got, how many people share – those are your decisions, but you have to have a read-aloud, you have to have the kids sitting with partners and talking, and you have to have the kids getting into independent reading. They're non-negotiables. Coach A

In the end, neither coaches nor principals suggested that the time requirements would stand in the way of integrating Making Meaning into the Workshop approach as it should be implemented in Boston's schools. However, they were clear that the decisions about how to reduce the time demands had to be informed by a thorough understanding of the structure of the lessons so that adaptations did not fatally flaw the curriculum.

> I think that the questions that are part of Making Meaning tend to be pretty good questions. But I don't think they're intended for the teacher, necessarily, to ask every single question in sequence....It might even say in the margin [in the Teachers' Manual], figure out which one is appropriate. But that's still a skill teachers have to develop. Even selecting questions. Coach B

Some teachers will be skillful enough to make adaptations on their own. Most, we suggest, would benefit from having the coach or knowledgeable colleagues help them figure out what must remain in a lesson and what can be reduced or even eliminated.

B. Teachers need to become more skillful at asking questions during read-alouds and during independent reading conferences. And, they need to be more skillful in "keeping the conversation going" when students offer answers. During read-alouds, teachers need more skill in asking follow-up questions in response to students' initial answers to the questions provided in the Teachers' Manual. For example, during several of our observations, teachers followed the Teachers' Manual and asked students to a) draw one or more inferences about a character in a story, and b) provide evidence for their answers. Sometimes, students' answers were factual statements rather than inferences; sometimes they were inferences without evidence. Most of the time, teachers did not follow up by asking for the evidence. The following exchange was typical of what we observed. Students answered the first question posed to them,

but not the second. The teacher did not press them for text-based evidence to support their answers.

> The teacher reminds the students about the questions to be answered about *A Band of Angels* by writing them on chart paper so students can refer to them while working. She writes: What kind of person is Ella? How would you describe her? What in the story makes you think that? Students have their readers' notebooks out and the teacher walks around the room to make sure they get started.
>
> Students' answers included: 1. I think Ella is a great person. I think that because she never gave up her dream. She worked for it because she had been through a lot. 2. I think Ella is a good and kind person. She worked hard and never gave up. She helped the school. She believed in herself and her dream. 3. Ella is a helper because she helped people get their dream. She helped raise money for the school. She had courage and spirit.
>
> After fifteen minutes, the teacher says, "I know some of you aren't finished and I'll give you some time later. But, let's share some of what you have written.
>
> > The first student reads: Ella is a helper because she helped people get their dream. She helped raise money for the school. She had courage and spirit.
> >
> > The second student reads: Ella is a person who never gives up She is the kind of person who believes in herself.
> >
> > The third student reads: I think Ella is a very determined person who will stand up for herself and for you.
>
> The teacher tells the students she is pleased with their responses and then adds, "I want you to keep in mind in your own books what kind of person you're reading about and what in the story tells you that.

Clearly, the students in this class were engaged with the text and had ideas with which to answer the teacher's questions. However, only one student provided any evidence for an answer and the teacher did not press them to provide the evidence for their conclusions despite the questions she had posed. Note that the first student who spoke in response to the question, "What kind of person is Ella?" reports that she is a "helper" and provides evidence by saying, "She helped raise money for the school." The student does not provide text-based evidence for the assertion, "She had courage and spirit," however. The second and third students provide no text-based evidence for their conclusions.

We recognize that many teachers are new to Workshop as well as to Making Meaning and, therefore, we present these examples with the goal of strengthening the on-site support available to teachers as they move forward with teaching the reading comprehension strategies. We do not present these examples to fault the teachers. Without a doubt, it is important that students are responding to the teachers' questions and appear engaged with the assignments. Yet, it is the ability to provide the text-based evidence that is important for helping students develop the skill of drawing inferences and for making convincing arguments about a piece of text whether orally

or in writing.[25]

One of the principals in our sample pointed out this need for professional development to accompany use of the curriculum and Teachers' Manual.

> The Teachers' Manual gives you a few questions to start off, but that curriculum could never script the entire conversation and anticipate where the students go wrong. And it's so much dependent upon the teacher, then, to follow where the student has gone astray in their thinking, and provide the right scaffolding to bring them back. I wish I had my notes in front of me from one of my observations that I did in [a teacher's] room, but I remember noticing that the kids were responding to a book, and she asked them to describe the main character, and even with that, their words, for 5th graders, were very simple – "He was a nice man." And this was an opportunity to really deepen the kids – push them to really think, just in terms of vocabulary that could be used – he was determined, he was not expecting a lot. But their answers were very generic and they were all saying the same thing. I was really surprised that she accepted those responses, and didn't further question them to get them to provide evidence and so forth. Principal B

One of the coaches noted that, sometimes, teachers are eager to accept almost any answers that students offer if they have some connection to the piece of text. However, teachers who are more skillful are able to use the Making Meaning curriculum to push students further and deepen their thinking.

> When teachers teach making connections, and kids say, "I have a cousin in Jamaica," they say, "Oh great, you made a connection." But it's not really a meaningful connection....[In contrast], I observed a teacher teaching a making inferences lesson about *My Man Blue*. They had the piece of text up on the overhead, and the kids had a copy and they were marking it up. There was a discussion that followed around: this is the piece of text, this is the inference that I made. What I heard the teacher doing in that lesson was not just taking the answer and moving on, but actually saying, "So, how does that evidence – how does that lead you to that inference?" Because everyone had that same piece of text, she could monitor it more closely. Coach B

Teachers did not speak about needing better skills for questioning students during read-alouds, but our observations, along with those of the coaches and principals suggest this in an area for further professional development.

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[25]We saw some teachers ask for evidence for students' inferences, but this did not happen often in our sample of observations and, when it did, students did not seem to know what the teachers were requesting. We will return to this issue when discussing the limits of the Teachers' Manual and the need for coaching to support implementation of Making Meaning.

Teachers did, however, report that they were not sure how to confer with students during independent reading time. There are two aspects to this issue. First, some teachers are puzzled about how to ask students questions about their independent reading books if they, the teachers, haven't read them. Second, teachers seem to need reminding about the need to tie their conference questions to the focus of the unit of Making Meaning and how making those connections will help them determine whether and to what extent students are mastering the comprehension strategy. Teacher A's comments reveal both aspects of this issue. Her concern is also about how to broaden to conference to include issues other than those tied to reading comprehension.

> I've said to the coach that I don't know how to ask questions in conferences with the kids if I don't know the chapter book they're reading. I always said to her, "How do I do that?" I don't have time to read all the books in the classroom. She would say, "Read a page or two or have the kids read it to you. See if they're reading it, if it's a just-right, challenging or easy book for them. Then, ask some questions just based on those couple of pages." Again, great idea [laughs] but it's not helping me as a teacher assess if they really are understanding character change and development through a story, or the theme – are they getting it? If I don't know the story, I can't tell if they are or not. Teacher A

Principals and coaches agreed that teachers needed additional professional development focused on conferring skills.

> The conferring was still a very difficult thing for them. What to actually look for from a reader and what to teach on the spot, that was probably the hardest part for them....They looked like they were comfortable with the mini-group or the whole group or whatever. It was with the in-close, one on one conferring that some of them still said they were having some difficulty. Principal C

> One of the lessons that I observed, the teacher did go around and confer with the students as they were writing. But, it was not related to any reading strategy. It was responding to the read-aloud book she'd read. So, we determined as an ILT, in talking with the literacy coach, that this really needs to be fleshed out. Principal B

The Teachers' Manual does not fully develop the links between the read-alouds, independent reading and conferring, although it does note that these links should occur. Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers would need additional professional development in order to learn how to make the connections to support further student learning.

D. The Teachers' Manual, by itself, cannot support high quality implementation of Making Meaning for all teachers. The Teachers' Manual provides teachers with guidance for teaching each lesson in a unit. The manual describes, for example, how to introduce read-aloud

lessons, what vocabulary to stress, when to pause and ask questions and what questions to ask at those times. Some questions are posed as essential; others are offered as suggestions. The Manual also suggests which interactive or writing strategies to use with students as they consider answers to the questions. But, the manual can only begin the process of teaching. It cannot script all that teachers must do and say because teachers must respond to students as they offer responses to the teachers' questions and make additional comments in light of the specific text.

Therefore, although Making Meaning is somewhat scripted in its presentation, it does not provide teachers with sentence-by-sentence lesson plans. Indeed, if it were to try and create such complete lesson plans, it would not be congruent with the ideas that underpin its own curriculum or Workshop instruction more broadly construed. What Making Meaning provides is a carefully designed scaffold, a framework, with which teachers can lead reading comprehension lessons that enable students to learn a set of specific reading comprehension strategies.

The scaffold, which includes the materials, the questions, and the interactive and follow-up activities, provides a usable format for teachers who are more and less experienced in Workshop instruction. It is the scaffold, rather than a complete script, that enables Making Meaning to appeal to teachers who are relatively expert with Workshop instruction. They recognize that the program does not require or recommend blind adherence to a set of steps. The scaffold provides a valuable format for teachers who are less expert with Workshop, but it does not provide all that such teachers need to know.

In considering what the Teachers' Manual does and does not provide, and what some teachers may need, we note that the Manual does not go into much detail about what underlies the teaching and learning strategies that constitute the reading comprehension strategies themselves. It describes each strategy in a paragraph at the beginning of the Manual (i.e., pp xvi-xvii of grade 5 V 1). For example, "making inferences" is described as follows:

> Not everything communicated by a text is directly stated. Good readers use their prior knowledge and the information in a text to understand implied meanings. Making inferences helps readers move beyond the literal to a deeper understanding of texts. In *Making Meaning* Grade 5, the students make inferences to think more deeply about both narrative and expository texts.

The description of this reading skill and the others is a useful reminder. But, it may not be sufficient for a teacher who does not know how to go from the description to a set of teaching strategies. And, even though the curriculum provides teachers with a scaffold – a set of materials and activities – designed to enable them to teach students how to make inferences, for example, the description coupled with the activities seems insufficient for those teachers in our sample who did not know how to do this prior to using Making Meaning. Indeed, since there is no additional attention to what underlies the strategies the teachers will use, the lessons that follow appear to assume some prior knowledge on the part of the teacher about a) what these strategies are, b) how they can be used to understand a given book, c) why the book is a good choice for teaching the strategy, and d) how to help students for whom the strategy is a puzzle.

Continuing with the example of making inferences, our observations have led us to think that some teachers who, themselves, understand how to draw inferences from text, nonetheless, are unclear about how to help children develop this reading strategy. They are unable to make the process transparent and, as far as we can tell, the Teachers' Manual does not help in this regard. We think this is why teachers have difficulty asking students the "next question" following a response. They are not sure what to make of the students' responses; they may not understand what the students' incomplete answer implies about what they understand and how to lead them to the next level of understanding.[26] For teachers to gain such skill, it is likely that they need their use of Making Meaning to be accompanied by on-site professional development/coaching support. No Teachers' Manual could be expected to provide this level of instruction for teachers.

To a small extent, the developers of Making Meaning acknowledge the need for teachers to become more knowledgeable about how they make inferences. For example, in the section of the Manual called "Managing the Program," as preparation for the lessons, teachers are advised to "practice using the strategy at least once in your own reading to help you anticipate difficulties the students might have." (p. xxvii) It may be that teachers themselves need more of this kind of guidance, more opportunities to make their own use of the strategies transparent to themselves, if they are to become more adept at moving beyond what can be written in a Teachers' Manual.[27]

Principals and coaches, for the most part, were aware that the Teachers' Manual did not provide teachers with all of the questions they needed to ask or all that they needed to understand about using the program. They knew that the Manual could not help teachers figure out what to ask next in light of a students' response. It could not alert them to the fact that a student might not have made a high quality connection to a piece of text nor provided evidence for the inference she drew. They did not see this as a shortcoming of Making Meaning. They saw it as reason for accompanying implementation with coaching support.

One of the principals, noting that her teachers tended to follow the script without attending sufficiently to the students, understood that this was to be expected during the early phase of implementation. She commented that she had seen the same thing when teachers first implemented the math program, TERC Investigations.

> I do think that whenever you implement something new that has this much of a script, and we saw this with the math, the teachers are focusing so much on

[26]We think this problem is akin to what teachers encounter when they do not fully understand the mathematics they are teaching. In such situations, teachers do not know when a wrong student answer reflects fruitful thinking, for example, and when it represents complete lack of understanding.

[27]In presenting what we think are the limitations of the Teachers' Manual, we do not suggest that it has little value. On the contrary, we think it provides teachers with well-crafted lessons that can help them teach reading comprehension skills. What we are saying is that teachers need professional development along with the curriculum in order to use it to its fullest potential.

> learning the script and they're not listening to the students. They're thinking about their next question because it's written there. Whereas, if you're doing more responsive teaching without a script, you have to listen to the kids to know what to ask next. I think this is the case with any new curriculum like Making Meaning. Their first time through, it they kind of walk through the motions. ...I think the curriculum structures enough opportunities for students to really, authentically respond, and the teachers really liked seeing that. They couldn't help but respond to them. Principal B

While most teachers did try to respond to the students' comments, we either saw or heard of instances in which the script dominated the lesson. Coach B, for example, gave the following example.

> I was in a 3rd grade classroom, I was observing, and the teacher was doing a lesson on visualization, and the kids had all drawn a picture – what they thought a scene looked like. So they all talked about why they thought that, and then the teacher said, "OK, now I'm going to show you how the illustrator drew it, and she showed the picture, and there was this gasp from the classroom. Oh my gosh! And she was just about to move on and I said, "Wait a second, you guys are, you know, you're freaking out. Why? What's the difference [in the pictures]?" And the teacher said, "Why did you ask that? That question isn't in the book." And I said, "You're right, it isn't." [laughs] And, then, she wrote it in her book, and I thought, well, you can't script that, because next year they might not freak out. There's still this art of facilitating a conversation that you can maybe, by following the script for awhile, get into the habit of doing. But I still feel that's where the coaches come in, and peer teaching, and just growing as a professional. Coach B

Coach B mused further about the challenge of making sure that teachers follow the script closely enough that they teach the lessons well, but not so closely that they miss the ways in which their students are responding. She stressed that by following the script too closely, teachers might not engage themselves with the students in order to learn whether they are gaining the strategies being taught.

> Even in a whole class mini-lesson, you only hear from a few kids. So it's really important that teachers float during the turn and talk time, and check-in on those conversations. I don't see that happening. It's almost like that [turn and talk time] is a teacher's time to think, "OK, what am I going to say next." That kind of thing. [But floating] is a way that you would know if the clues really are matching up with the inference, or matching up with the visualization – whatever the strategy is. Coach B

As principal B suggests, it may be that during the first implementation teachers need to pay attention to the script and, as a result, pay less attention to the students some of the time. It will

be important, however, to insure that teachers learn to take advantage of opportunities such as turn and talk to determine how well their students are learning.

Finally, Coach A expressed her thoughts about the value of Making Meaning, and the importance of coaching support and careful preparation for using the lessons.

> I think with any program like that, one of the things I've talked with teachers over and over again in the CCL cycles is that you can't just follow this blindly. You've got to have a sense of what your kids are doing and thinking and saying. And if something comes up, you can't just go on to the next question. And I think this is hard, because some people are loving Making Meaning because it gives them a very ready plan. They don't feel like they have to prepare as much. But, to do it well you do have to prepare as much, and pre-read the lessons and try to understand. Coach A

Making Meaning, as we have stressed, addresses the question of which comprehension strategies to teach, how to teach them, and what materials to use when teaching them. This is a significant contribution to the design and content of mini-lessons within the structure of Workshop. Next, it will be important to a) increase the quality with which Making Meaning is implemented as well as b) address the other components of Workshop instruction that need further attention – linking the mini-lessons to independent reading, improving teachers' skill with questioning, and insuring that guided reading remains a part of Workshop instruction.

Coaching Support for Making Meaning. It might seem, at the outset, that a program such as Making Meaning would reduce the need for coaching or make coaching into little more than a process for insuring fidelity of implementation. Our data suggest that coaching for deep understanding and teacher capacity building will continue to be critical and that the presence of Making Meaning can facilitate, not weaken, the coaches' role.

Coaches in all three schools, regardless of their involvement with Making Meaning, saw it as a positive addition to teachers' resources. And, they noted that the structure gave them greater clarity about what they should be looking for when they observed teachers. For example, Coach B reported,

> Overall, as a coach, I really like it. It's given me this clarity. Just like the teachers, I have a sense of where they'll be next week. And, when I left class yesterday, I knew what the follow up lesson looked like today. Coach B

Coach A made similar remarks, noting that using the curriculum in the context of coaching would encourage teachers to stay with the pacing of the units because the coach would know what to expect during observations and could reasonably ask why a teacher was not doing the next lesson, if necessary. In this way, having a curriculum that is associated with somewhat of a pacing guide gives coaches the authority to ask questions that would have seemed inappropriate given the wide range of teacher flexibility possible within the Workshop design.

In addition, having the curriculum can enable coaches, like teachers, to spend less time developing lessons and curriculum units and more time deepening teachers knowledge and skill.

> I said Making Meaning was liberating the coach to focus on other things. If you have the content piece in place, if you say, "OK, here's the lesson," then it seems to me that the debrief and the planning and inquiry can really focus on some of the higher level elements of pedagogy. So, with those teachers who say, "We get the lesson. Let's focus on the Writers' Workshop," it might be worth saying, "No, let's actually still talk about the lesson, because even though we have the lesson itself, we can really talk about, what kind of questions are we asking students? How much time are we waiting for a response? How do we prompt students to push beyond [where they are]? I think that we can get to those kind of things, where before I didn't think that we could, I didn't feel like we could, because we were just dealing with: What's our lesson going to be? How do we teach our lesson on making inference? Coach B

And, having the curriculum can provide coaches with time to focus on the other components of Workshop that, in many classrooms, have been getting short shrift. As Coach A points out, without a strong independent reading component, the value of Making Meaning, for example, is not likely to be realized.

> I really think independent reading is a big piece. If kids aren't getting active time to practice, nothing's going to take hold. So, maybe now we can do more professional development about conferring and independent reading. And also on just how your year rolls out, because Making Meaning doesn't cover all of the weeks of the school year. At [X school], we thought they might do two weeks of just independent reading, in between some units where it's a heavy time into testing or heavy into holiday stuff. So, they're not doing Making Meaning, but kids are just reading independently for solid amounts of time, and you're conferring, or you're testing a small group, things like that. How Readers' Workshop ties into Making Meaning, I think that's a place where professional development could really go. Coach A

> There may be some challenges to linking CCL cycles to Making Meaning that relate to what has been teachers' prerogative to shape the inquiry focus of a cycle. In the context of Making Meaning, cycles may, of necessity be shaped by the teachers' needs as related to specific reading comprehension skills and to their links to Workshop instruction. Cycles might, for example, focus on specific reading strategies while helping teachers learn how to link their mini-lessons on those strategies to independent reading. In the context of making the link, cycles could also focus on helping teachers improve their questioning skills. We do not suggest that this will be highly problematic. We just note that there may be some new parameters around the focus of a CCL cycle if it is implemented in conjunction with Making Meaning.

Summary: The Challenges of Implementing Making Meaning and Workshop. Without question, based on the sample of teachers, coaches and principals in this evaluation study, we have concluded that Making Meaning has the potential to increase teachers skillful implementation of reading comprehension lessons and, thereby, increase students ability to comprehend texts. However, that potential will only be realized if the BPS addresses the challenges that stand in the way of high quality implementation. In this section of the report, we have stressed three challenges: a) the amount of time required for Making Meaning lessons, b) teachers' need for more expertise in framing questions that will deepen students' understanding, and c) the possible tendency of teachers to rely too heavily on the "script" of the lessons that appears in the Teachers' Manual. By addressing these challenges through the use of coaches and, perhaps, other professional development opportunities, it seems likely that the danger presented by the challenges will diminish and implementation will improve.

CONCLUSIONS

Every teacher in our sample said they would use Making Meaning again, if they had the opportunity, and that they would be better prepared to use it well as a result of this year's pilot effort. Coaches and principals agreed that continuing with Making Meaning would benefit teachers and students. Our data and analysis lead us to agree with their conclusion and emphasize that Making Meaning, like any other instructional intervention, requires high quality support for teachers and principals in order to result in high quality implementation.

With the goal of high quality implementation in mind, we conclude with the following reminders.

- **Making Meaning will only be implemented well and with good effects if implementation is accompanied by the support of skillful literacy coaches.** Although this curriculum is somewhat scripted, teachers cannot use it well if they are not yet proficient in the skills the curriculum suggests they implement. For example, teachers who were not skillful in developing good questioning strategies could not become skillful by using the Teachers' Manual unassisted. The Making Meaning materials do not and cannot anticipate every child's response to questions, for example, and, therefore, teachers still need to hone their listening skills and deepen their ability to ask the next good question that will deepen a child's thinking. It is unlikely that teachers can develop these skills without support from skillful coaches.

- **CCL can be used to encourage high quality implementation of Making Meaning.** However, our data suggest that CCL will not best support teachers if its primary focus is on implementing with fidelity the lessons in the Teachers' Manual. Reasonable fidelity matters because without it the focus of the units and lessons will be lost. However, fidelity by itself can lead to a focus on the surface features of implementation and not to the deeper development of teachers' knowledge and skill. Our data suggest that deeper fidelity, fidelity linked to teacher comprehension, would be better achieved if CCL cycles focused on deepening teachers' knowledge of a) why certain strategies are stressed in

Workshop instruction, and b) how to deepen the use of such strategies.

- **Making Meaning will only be implemented well or with good effects if it has the support of a knowledgeable principals.** Principals play a key role in all instructional improvement efforts. Making Meaning will not be an exception. It is neither the whole reading program for a school nor is it a program that can be implemented without regard to specific teacher, student, and school characteristics. Therefore, school-wide implementation of Making Meaning will be weak if principals are not knowledgeable about the curriculum and if they do not monitor and support teachers in using it. As Education Matters has reported in other evaluation studies, principals vary with respect to their knowledge and skill with instruction as well as with their attention to the ways in which teachers are implementing the district's instructional approaches. The three principals with whom we spoke are no exception. Therefore, we emphasize the need for the district to attend to principals' learning needs if it goes forward with supporting the use of Making Meaning in a larger number of schools.

- **In the context of implementing Making Meaning, the district should not lose sight of the fact that there are other components of Workshop that need considerable attention.** We noted the tendency for Making Meaning lessons to take most of the time available for reading. This particular challenge can be readily overcome. But, we also noted that many teachers were neither developing and instructing guided reading groups nor implementing independent reading and its associated conferences. Teachers readily admit that they need help implementing these components of Workshop. They should get that help so that they can develop reading blocks that fully develop students reading skills.

  In one of the schools in our sample, this issue was important enough that it had the attention of the ILT.

  > Everyone wants to use Making Meaning. It's unanimous. But, the ILT is also worried about the status of guided reading, independent reading, and also that at the younger grades, the teaching for different kinds of strategies, for strategies other than comprehension, word study, for example, really fell by the wayside.... [Implementing Workshop and Making Meaning] is going to require really thinking through all those ways in which [Making Meaning] affects the other pieces of the curriculum. Principal B

  This principal's comment should be at the forefront of the district's thinking as it moves forward with further implementation of Making Meaning.

In conducting this evaluation study, we learned a great deal about teachers' first attempts at implementing Making Meaning. We also learned about challenges that face them and the district

with respect to implementing other components of Workshop. We note them here to remind the district of what it told the teachers: Making Meaning is not the entire reading program. Therefore, Making Meaning can make a significant, valuable contribution to students' opportunities to learn and to teachers' capacity to teach, but there are other components of students learning that need to be addressed and that fall outside of the parameters of Making Meaning. Nonetheless, as we have repeated throughout this report, our evaluation of the use of Making Meaning by eight teachers in three schools strongly suggests that it can make a valuable contribution to students' opportunities to comprehend what they read.