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Judy Richardson and Violeta Janusheva

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The Lasting Impact of “Reading to Learn” and Sustainability of Professional Development

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Abstract: This paper explores the lasting impact of professional development projects through the lens of participants in the Secondary Education Activity (SEA). A brief history and explanation of the SEA project are provided, as well as background about the Macedonian culture and education system. Characteristics of successful professional development, supported by research, are presented: instructional change, intellectual challenge, clearly conceptualized design, and an infrastructure that provides resources over time. A survey of 18 Macedonian teachers was conducted to determine their impressions of the project. Responses are summarized and analysed to determine which characteristics of successful projects were noted. The authors conclude that much was successful about the SEA project, but ultimately the project failed due to a lack of institutional support and resources that sustain successful projects.

Keywords: Professional Development Projects, Sustainable Education Projects, Teacher Training in International Settings, Reading to Learn, Advanced Literacy

Introduction

THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES the lasting impact and sustainability of professional development projects, within the context of the Secondary Education Activity (SEA) Project. The results raise issues about the possible clashes between the goals of funding agencies and the conditions for commitment and lasting change in developing/post-communist countries.

The SEA project was funded through a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) grant to deliver an educational training project in Macedonia. The American Institute of Research (AIR), prime grantee, directed the project; the International Reading Association (IRA), sub grantee, provided volunteers who collaborated with Macedonian colleagues to design modules and to coach Macedonian teachers. The goal was to introduce innovative and engaging instruction for vocational students based on contemporary research and practice with a “Reading to Learn” (RTL) focus. This collaborative effort was funded through 2004 World Bank Funds (U. S. \$19.3 billion) and directed by the USAID through its Education Quality Improvement Program 1 (EQUIP 1), a multifaceted program designed to raise instructional quality in schools in conjunction with Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT). The project lasted from 2004 until 2008. Logistics for the entire project can be found in the AIR report, “Assessing the Progress Related to USAID/Macedonia’s Strategic Objective 3.4” (Shapiro, Stojanov, Dekova, & Anderson, 2004). Volunteers did not expend monies nor communicate directly with USAID or EQUIP.

Background on the Balkans and Macedonia

The SEA reform project was designed for Macedonia, a Balkan country situated above Greece, below Kosovo and Serbia, and between Albania and Bulgaria. Macedonia became a republic in 1991 after dissolution of the Yugoslav Republic. The World Bank considers Macedonia to be a developing country. To Rebecca West, Macedonia is a “bridge between our age and the past” (1941, p. 765). Macedonians describe themselves as family-centered, loyal, and passionate.

Macedonian Educational System: Some Needs and Challenges

Politics plays a major role in education. When a new political party is voted into office, new directors (principals) are usually appointed and then they appoint teachers from their political party. This turnover in school administration causes anxiety and uncertainty for teachers. The Ministry of Education directs education at the country level, with local offices in all towns being responsible for primary and secondary schools. The Bureau for Development of Education at the country level is tasked with providing counseling, training, advising, and support to teachers. Elementary teachers complete pedagogical courses at university, but most who teach secondary students start teaching with little to no pedagogical background. After receiving a degree in their subject, they are hired provisionally and pass an examination. Each school is assigned a “pedagogue”/psychologist who is to provide mentoring. Teacher salaries were about 250 Euros per month at the time of the SEA project. The system at the time of this project provided little continuing education, professional development, evaluation, or rewards.

As Macedonia shifts to a democratic form of government, the educational system shifts. Teachers find themselves with one foot in the past and one in the future, stepping carefully. One participant in this study commented, “I think that our government was trying to find a way to make our educational system better and suitable with other democratic and developed countries. And we are talking about that after the funding has gone, the sustainability of the project is in question and we try to find out why SEA is not sustainable.”

SEA Project Description

The SEA project addressed a request by the Macedonian Ministry of Education to “modernize” education with innovative instructional models that were sensitive to economic and social changes that occurred in Macedonia after 1991 (Howard & Birdyshaw, 2005/2006). The intent was that students’ experiences in a vocational school would be relevant and lead to increased student participation, decreased attrition, and school curricula tailored to support specific industries. SEA was designed to combine advanced literacy skills with school-based career centers and supervised work experiences. “Real” and “virtual” firms were designed in areas such as engineering, economics, farming, medicine, etc., necessitating contextual learning about problem-solving and critical thinking skills. The focus of this article is the literacy component.

Twelve highly regarded educators from the United States and Macedonia worked together to design the teacher training (Ackovska-Leskovska et al, 2004–2005; Lewis and authors, 2011). Four modules focused on literacy were written to complement the other components

of the project (vocational education, AIR). The modules and activities are listed as part of Figure 1. Seven themes were stressed: collaboration, communication, problem solving and decision-making, self-assessment, critical thinking, research, and leadership. The learning process incorporated immersion, adapting and applying the content, and reflecting on and sharing experiences. Each module followed a consistent focus to activate background, construct meaning, and evaluate and apply. Activities relevant to model themes were described, explained, exemplified and then put into practice by participants, especially with group work. Professional development was conducted in phases, with IRA volunteers from the United States, Canada, Sweden, and Portugal participating.

RTL was used as the anchor for module instruction (Haase, 2006). RTL applies reading, writing and thinking skills to content areas, emphasizing contextual learning (Paris & Winograd, 2001) about problem-solving and critical thinking in academic and lifelong learning settings (Buehl, D., 2001; Buehl & Moore, 2009; Richardson, Morgan & Fleener, 2012). RTL is a recognized and highly regarded field of study in the United States and Western Europe; it promotes the use of theory-based strategies to help a reader be critical and thoughtful (Garner & Gillingham, 1987). RTL should not be considered as simply a set of activities or unrelated strategies. Instead, the emphasis must be on students' construction of their own critical reading and critical literacy in a world where information arrives in multimodal forms (Moje, 2008). Teachers were shown how to encourage students to read and reflect on the multimodal forms of literacy they find in their lives (Bean, 2001). The content was designed to be challenging and intellectually stimulating.

Phase one of implementation established cohort one; a team of three to six teachers, a pedagogist-psychologist, and a school director (principal) was selected by each of 15 vocational schools to attend four separate workshops (one per module) of three days duration and held over the span of a year (about 106 participants). Volunteers taught in the first phase. Next, cohort two, consisting of 35 vocational schools formed in the same manner as above (about 220 participants), was trained by Macedonian teacher-trainers (selected from cohort one). These teacher-trainers planned and conducted module training, with support from the volunteers. By 2006, training of teachers in 50 schools was completed. Some cohort one and two teachers were designated as mentors in their schools and regions. Volunteers continued to observe and facilitate mentoring countrywide during years 3 and 4. By the end of the project, teachers in all vocational schools had participated in some level of professional development. To sustain learning over time, mentors conducted study groups and encouraged teachers to write reflective journals and develop action plans. Jankulovska, Haase, and Mickovska (2006) estimated that approximately 2500 teachers participated at some level in the SEA Project.

Grant resources provided release time to attend workshops at a resort area where all accommodations were provided (years 1 and 2); copies of modules and materials; and the opportunity to create lessons in an unhurried environment while consulting with colleagues from across the country. Teacher-mentors earned a small stipend for their extra work on the grant.

Richardson, an IRA volunteer, participated in the project eight times over 4 years. Janusheva—a member of cohort 1, a teacher-trainer for cohort 2, and a mentor—participated actively over the entire project: in the learning process, the dissemination process, the instruction of her own students and the mentoring of other teachers.

Qualities of Successful Professional Development

Characteristics of successful professional development and desired outcomes should apply no matter where a project is delivered (McKeown, 2002). Recent studies (Borko, 2004) help identify salient characteristics, which are presented in Figure 2.

Project success requires instructional change in a teacher's instruction and strategies (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Fullan, 2000; Wilson, Grisham & Smetana, 2009). Change may evolve from uncertainty to more creative ways of thinking and doing (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995) and seeing from the students' viewpoints (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Borko, 2004). Teachers need thinking space to explore their pedagogical beliefs (Appleby, 2009). Change should be teacher-driven rather than university-led (Fisher & Hamer, 2010). The use of small groups during professional development encourages collegiality (Wilson, Grisham & Smetana, 2009) and a "reculturing" (Fullan, 2000) wherein a new professional community develops. The entire "change experience" should be positive and situated so that learning and change is constructed in a socio-cultural context (Barlett & Rappaport, 2009).

The content of professional development projects should be intellectually challenging (Borko, 2004; Buehl & Moore, 2009; Hill, 2004) and intensive rather than superficial and should apply to what teachers actually teach, not just generalities about education (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Content should be targeted as a result of some form of assessment (Fullan, 2000). Content materials often include professional literature for reading and discussion (Wilson, Grisham & Smetana, 2009) or other materials that explain the concepts. Multiple encounters with the content and targeted practice are crucial (Borko, 2004; Wilson, Grisham & Smetana, 2009) with cohesion stressed across strategies and activities (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon & Birman, 2002). Learning should be experience-based because change is "primarily an experientially based learning process for teachers" (Guskey, 2002 as quoted in Wilson, Grisham & Smetana, 2009, p. 709).

Of utmost importance is that the professional development be well designed and clear (Borko, 2004). This is much more essential than the length or timing (Barlett & Rappaport, 2009). The end result ought to be a meshing of the professional development content, the teachers, the facilitators and the content.

However, all of these qualities may still not be sufficient to design and deliver a lasting impact. Although professional development for teachers is often considered to be bottom/up (Fisher & Hamer, 2010), top/down changes must also be made so that administrative support, materials, a reward system and space to implement the changes are in place. Stevenson (2007) notes that a persistent gap between policy and school practices undermines meaningful change. There are "resource requirements for successful enactment of professional development programs" (Borko, 2004, p. 13). "Change is resource-hungry" (Fullan & Miles, 1992, p. 745). The knowledge attained during professional development should be institutionalized to ensure sustainability, and yet unsustainable practices are all too prevalent in professional development (Kevany, 2007). Without a surrounding infrastructure, "enduring success may not be possible" (Fullan, 2000, p. 2). Sustainability is crucial, and has become "a key concept in both government policy and wider global concerns" (Martin, Summers & Sjerps-Jones, 2007, p. 351).

Research Methodology

The authors explored the success of the project while it was ongoing, and two years after its conclusion. We wanted to know if this professional development was sustained over time, specifically two years after the project had expired. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used.

First, the authors reviewed professional literature about the SEA Project and drew conclusions about the match between successful characteristics of professional development and the SEA Project. Next, Richardson reviewed the notes and reports she had made as an IRA volunteer during the training, mentoring and dissemination process, as a means of noting her own perceptions over time (all volunteers wrote reports of their visits, submitted to the IRA International Development Division). Janusheva reviewed these notes and added her own comments to them. Third, an email survey (written in English, Macedonian, and Albanian) was sent to 18 SEA teachers who had participated fully over the entire duration of the project. Although an estimated 2500 teachers were targeted by the project conclusion, these 18 had participated from the start, as part of the original cohort; they became teacher-trainers and served as mentors and observers of teachers in subsequent workshops. They had had time to implement strategies and see change in student performance in their own classrooms, as well as to train and observe other teachers over time. Their perspective was crucial in helping determine the project sustainability. The response rate was 89%; 16 of the 18 responded. The survey was limited to five intentionally open-ended questions, designed to provoke thoughtful and unconstrained responses.

Findings

Reported Progress about the SEA Project Derived from the Literature

In 2005, the third year of the project, Sturtevant and Linek (2007) explored the efficacy of literacy coaching within the context of the SEA. Subjects were original teacher-trainers who were part of the project for all five years (the teachers also asked to participate in this study). Their finding indicated that “efforts to build teacher leadership are off to a very successful beginning, and that the teachers...strongly believe that the project is enhancing their own learning and the learning of their students” (p. 249). Howard and Birdyshaw (2005–2006) also reported that the SEA workshops had energized the participants; they quote teacher-trainer Lazar Dimitrijević: “Macedonian teachers are very well trained in their subject area, but have minimal background in pedagogy before entering the classroom. Professional development has been missing in the past, and now we hold tightly to it” (p. 32). By the third year of the project, it appeared that transfer was occurring, as Howard and Birdyshaw (2005/2006) indicate: “Even after a few months, the results of the SEA training are evident in the classroom. A student from Pero Nakov High School, whose teacher, Elzabeta Lazovska-Tasic, is part of the project, said that she and her classmates enjoy active learning and wish that the more traditional teachers would incorporate active learning strategies such as discussion webs and interviewing. She said, “Our class is more motivating, and we learn more during class. We look forward to coming to class.” (2005/2006, p. 32).

Haase (2006) wrote that SEA teachers “emphasized how much the new techniques helped teachers to reach students, to engage them more fully, and to keep them interested” (p. 22).

In addition, she quoted enthusiastic remarks from students who liked active learning. Jankulovska, Haase & Mickovska conducted a survey of 51 teacher trainers from 15 schools in 2006. They concluded that the SEA project had promoted interactive teaching, increased knowledge in active teaching, and increased motivation to involve students. Teachers considered the strategies learned to be highly applicable. At that time, a high level of support was reported at the school level.

However, Sturtevant and Linek (2007) noted that teachers did express some “dilemmas” and doubts, and recommended further exploration. After the project ended, Lewis (2008) posed the question: “Is our component sustainable after we leave and funding is gone?” She answered, “maybe,” due to the complexity of relationships within the project as well as political and economic changes that occurred in Macedonia over the years of the project. Lewis noted that shared ownership and the structural environment of the educational system are important to sustainability, but that complete integration of professional teacher development, school leadership, school companies, and research-monitoring-evaluation procedures had not occurred.

Notes and Reports

IRA volunteer teams visited classrooms and talked to students. Richardson described her discussions with students during three visits in 2005 in her reports:

Feb 05: I was able to talk with students of the teachers I observed. Their comments reinforced the goal of these modules: students appreciate innovative instruction and like interactive learning.

May 05: I had the pleasure of talking to three students about their impressions of the activity. They liked the involvement and the sharing of opinions. They have noticed that this year they are becoming more involved in the lessons and they like it.

October 05: After this lesson, I talked with some students. They noted they are asked to think more critically. This “breaks the monotony” and sparks interest.

In 2007, Richardson re-interviewed two students with whom she had talked in February 2005. She asked if the teachers in their school still used the strategies; their reply was, “Yes, about six do.” When asked about the other teachers, they said that “these teachers are traditional and only pretended to be involved; now they have gone back to their ‘old ways.’” In another report (2007) she noted issues that might influence the project success:

“However, many of the teacher-trainers at the schools we visited were unable to demonstrate thorough knowledge of strategies. Some of their lack of understanding is probably due to a need for more practice, more mentoring from the SEA trainers, and more confidence in themselves. Unfortunately, a few of the teacher-trainers did not seem to be committed to the project. In these schools, the director does not seem to be involved or understand the project so much as wanting to make a good impression for the visitors. I recommend looking back at the cohort 1 schools to see what has become established and what has not. From this knowledge, the established portions can be used to see why some parts have been institutionalized and then recommendations can be made.”

Survey Responses

Respondents included five highly seasoned teachers and one who was new at the onset of the project. Most had about ten years of teaching experience. All three male teachers within the 18 responded. Two others of the 18 did not respond; one explained orally that she felt very alienated from the project because she had been a director but was demoted during a political change and no longer had any authority. Some of the reasons for the high response rate were most likely the regard everyone had for each other; sending questions and accepting responses in Macedonian and Albanian; and persistence on the part of the authors. A translator of Albanian to English and Janusheva did this translation. In the following summary, quotations are used to show the range of comments and to illustrate the findings.

What do you remember most about the SEA project?

Teachers answered with enthusiasm; they noted the usefulness, group and individual work, opportunity to meet new people and exchange experience, support and modeling. “New” was mentioned 17 times; “active” was mentioned 14 times. One person wrote, “the project went horizontally, vertically and grew in its depth;” another, that the SEA project “made big changes in our education.” One comment sums up the responses: “I remember everything from the SEA project. The first day meeting everyone for the first time; the four modules; assessment and mentoring; the way the whole project was structured, my presentation on research when I was selected to be one of the trainers of the trainers. Most of all, in the IRA volunteers, I saw teacher models, caring and empowering, the teacher that I want to become myself.”

Has your job changed since the SEA project?

Several have changed jobs: two have become university instructors; one now directs teachers rather than teaching himself; two are working at least part-time on a computer project now being conducted by the Ministry of Education. As one commented, “I was selected because of my CV (thanks to SEA).”

Many interpreted the question to mean what type of changes they had made in their instruction. Again, these responses were enthusiastic and positive: “I changed the approach in my teaching;” “Yes, my work has changed a lot with the SEA project, mostly speaking in terms of experience, professionalism, certainty, positive thinking and my wish to achieve the best results in my work as well the work of my students; the biggest are the changes in the cooperation with the students;” “My job is more interesting, the class is more effective and the students are more satisfied.”

Do you use any of the activities from the SEA project now? What are the activities?

Sadly, one respondent answered no, because “After SEA was over, unfortunately all the activities of the trainers finished.” The most often mentioned activities/strategies were the double-entry journal, self-questioning and the research process. These activities were part of the second module about Learning Through Practice, in which teacher and student engagement and exploration were stressed. The activities are listed in Figure 1, which provides a list of the modules and the activities/strategies for each module.

Do you help other teachers to learn about the activities or the content of the 4 modules (Learning in the classroom; learning through projects; learning through community; learning in the workplace)?

Nine teachers (56%) agreed that they often help other teachers learn about the activities: “There are several teachers who use the strategies still, and we talk a lot about usage;” “I always help and answer when someone asks for my opinion and advice.” Many teachers help new faculty with all aspects of their job, including showing them how to teach more actively: “The younger colleagues show interest for these activities;” “Yes, I am a mentor of a teacher who is a new one (a teacher whose first employment is in school);” “Some teachers, especially the new ones have my complete support in preparing their classes.”

Some teachers indicated that they viewed helping other teachers only as a specific mentoring activity to be practiced within the project and so have ceased helping once the project ended: “Unfortunately, the mentorship in the schools never functioned the way it was planned and it was designed;” “As for giving assistance to the teacher, I can say that unfortunately this process stopped at the same time the SEA project was over... our Ministry of Education and Science did nothing in order to verify all the certificates we gained from this project.”

Seven teachers are not helping other teachers to learn the content of the SEA modules: “This last year my support to the teachers is mostly helping them with the new operative system about computers;” “Our principal made a big effort to keep the SEA strategies alive, but his effort does not give the estimated result. Now there is a new project—a computer for every student, and with this new project the organization and the work in the classroom have changed;” “Unfortunately I must say that the government action—computer for every student—would reduce the interest for the strategies.”

Please estimate how many teachers that you trained are still using the information from the SEA project.

Approximately 300 teachers were trained in cohorts one and two, with an expectation that training would continue within schools, thus having an escalating effect to extend the life of the project far beyond its funded conclusion. Only two respondents estimated that almost all of their teachers are still using the information, and another two wrote that about 60–70% still used the activities: “I am pretty sure that teachers are now able to combine the reading strategies and make their own nice lesson plans.”

But five (31%) estimated only 20–40% did while seven (44%) said zero to very few were: “There are teachers who implement these strategies, although I think their number is not big;” “This school year there were some new reforms which didn’t let the teachers to use the new activities, that’s why a lot of teachers were complaining, because they couldn’t use these techniques;” “The situation in the schools here is very bad—the teachers are so unmotivated but you already knew that. I suppose that their number is not big. Unfortunately that is our reality.” A few provided no comment.

Discussion

Our review of the professional literature about the SEA Project indicates that the qualities of instructional change and intellectual challenge were being met into 2006. The project was perceived as well designed and clear, and resource requirements seemed to be sufficient at that time; however, some cautionary comments were expressed (Sturtevant & Linek, 2007).

Richardson noted in her reports that, although teachers and students expressed excitement and satisfaction with the new teaching, over time many teachers seemed to have abandoned these strategies. As well, the majority of teachers, who had participated only in the third phase—training at their own school—did not demonstrate understanding of—or commitment to—SEA goals.

Many qualities of successful professional development, as described in the review of literature, are apparent in the teachers' responses to the five survey questions. Teacher responses to question one (*What do you remember most about the SEA project?*) indicate that they participated actively in new and useful professional development, encouraging them to learn with and from each other in group and individual work. They noted that the project gave them a way (space to think and do) to expand and see from other perspectives ("the project went horizontally, vertically and grew in its depth"). They expressed their enthusiasm to make teacher-driven changes. These comments coincide with the qualities of instructional change and intellectual challenge, identified in the professional literature as two crucial aspects of successful professional development and also with the quality of well-designed and clear professional development

The positive answers to question two (*Has your job changed since the SEA project?*) indicate that teachers felt they had had been able to make personal advancements and changes towards more effective instruction. These comments demonstrate that teachers valued the professional development and realized intrinsic satisfaction through changes they witnessed in student engagement and successful lessons. At least three teachers experienced a reward system that enabled advancement in their careers.

In response to question three (*Do you use any of the activities from the SEA project now? What are the activities?*), teachers identified activities that are designed to encourage the intellectual challenge of experience-based learning through considering professional literature as well as intensive practice and an assessment-based approach to learning. These are qualities often mentioned in successful professional development opportunities.

Comments in response to question four (*Do you help other teachers to learn about the activities or the content of the 4 modules Learning in the classroom; learning through projects; learning through community; learning in the workplace?*) indicated that many viewed helping other teachers only as a specific mentoring activity to be practiced within the project and so have ceased helping once the project ended. Responses to question 5 (*Please estimate how many teachers that you trained are still using the information from the SEA project*) echo the view that, since the project had ended, so had much of the application of project goals. Teachers were disappointed in the reward system (certificates with no "value" for promotion, no career progress); administrative support waned when the project ended; an infrastructure to sustain the project goals was never in place so continuity was swept away when a new grant began. Teachers indicated that new reforms have displaced the support for and emphasis on the goals of the SEA Project. They expressed their dissatisfaction although they feel powerless without administrative support. They must now focus on new materials that seem to present a conflict with the SEA Project goals for teacher innovation and engagement of students as learners. In short, resource requirements necessary to sustained professional development were lacking.

Conclusions

This study considered why an otherwise seemingly successful professional development project ultimately did not have the anticipated impact and possibly did not warrant the amount of money poured into it. Figure 2 compares the “ideal” professional development project to the SEA project. SEA was successful in many ways, in part because it promoted so many qualities of sustained professional development as reported in the literature. The writers of the modules incorporated challenging and new material within a well-planned delivery system. The teachers who participated from the very start support this conclusion; their comments testify to the attainment of these qualities in the professional development experience.

Still, this project seems to have failed to accomplish the big change expected across the country. One reason could be that grant funders terminated the project a year early; the greatest number of teachers may not have had space to think (instructional change) nor space to implement changes (resource requirements) before the project ceased. An under-developed infrastructure may have sabotaged the expectations for the project reach. Macedonian schools are now focused on the use of Internet resources to locate lesson plans. Rather than being complementary with the goals of SEA, many Macedonian teachers view this initiative as a completely separate project that squeezes out any time they might have to use activities and strategies taught in the SEA project. Although both projects could correlate very nicely, there does not seem to be any such coordination. The professional development has not been sustained in the major way envisioned.

The good news is that more than 300 teachers participated directly in professional development about creative teaching and advanced literacy skills with IRA volunteers, and perhaps as many as 2500 or more had exposure to the project. A masterful project design enabled collegial sharing with many other teachers in 50 schools across Macedonia. Two of the original teacher trainers are now working at university level and are using RTL strategies in their instruction. One other teacher has been promoted and now coaches other teachers about RTL. As well, links have been established that should continue to encourage educational change, at least for a small number of teachers in Macedonia. Seeds have been planted and some are growing. However, there is much doubt that the project long-term effects have been worth the costs.

There are some lessons here, relevant not only to Macedonia’s SEA project to develop high level literacy, but also to professional development projects across the world. Borko (2004) cautions that “resource requirements for successful enactment of professional development programs and impact on teacher and student learning” (p. 13) are necessary. A sustainable professional development project needs to change more than the specific teachers involved. Even though teachers should drive professional development (Fisher & Hamer, 2010), teachers must know what to request and feel confident their requests will be honored.

According to the experts, professional development must include a well-developed infrastructure. “Change is resource-hungry” (Fullan & Miles, 1992, p. 746) so top-down resources must be part of the sustenance in a lasting professional development project. Although the Ministry of Education invited this project, after the grant ended no other resources were committed. Approaches to education must have sustainable philosophies, policies and practices” (Kevany, 2007, p. 119). As Fullan (2000) points out, even in very successful professional development, a lack of strong institutionalization impedes change so that enduring

success may not be possible. There must be some means of ensuring sustained support in advance of implementing the project.

Bureaucracy subverts much innovation in any country, especially in countries-in-transition, but there are people who keep trying to find ways to be innovative. Professional development requires nurturing; but nurturing will take a lot more time and physical presence in the country than the SEA project was able to provide. Fien and Maclean (2000) stress that, “Our schools and educators face a compelling responsibility to serve society by fostering the transformations needed to set us on a path to sustainable development in the 21st century.”

The SEA project attempted to be both bottom/up and top/down, but faced possibly insurmountable odds with a professional development project in a country where so much is fluid. Changes are embedded in the instruction of at least some teachers, if not in most of the target schools. There was much about this project that was successful and inspiring. What remains are small successes in some schools and with some teachers, some lasting social and professional interaction, and personal successes such as three promotions among the 16 survey respondents. But, sadly, the impact envisioned for the project at the country wide level seems to have failed (Lewis & authors, 2011).

The authors remain committed to the project goals and professional development. Richardson has taught methods courses with an RTL emphasis in three Macedonian universities while on a Fulbright in 2008 and on continuing visits to the country. Janusheva has earned her doctorate and now teaches linguistics at university, using innovative strategies learned during the SEA project. Pre-service preparation might be a slower but surer route to sustainability, relying on the infrastructure of the university as a resource of support.

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Module Content	Module Content
1: Learning in the Classroom	3: Learning through Community
Discussion Web/debate	Developing critical thinking using expectation/reaction guides
RAFT Role/audience/format/topic	Techniques for interviewing
SQPL Student questioning for purposeful learning	Conducting, analyzing + interpreting research using oral history
Lesson Planning/KWL	Building school + community partnerships
Building Criteria	4: Learning in the Workplace
2: Learning Through Practice	Using visuals for completing tasks + comprehending texts
Self-questioning	Role playing
Double-entry journal	Self-assessment
Collaboration + Communication-structured academic conversations	Development of learning log
Research process	

Figure 1: Module Content (Strategies & Activities)

	The Ideal Project	SEA Project
Instructional change	√	√
Different ways of thinking & doing	√	√
Student perspective	√	√
Space to think & do	√	√
Teacher-driven	√	√
Collegiality	√	√
Small groups-sociocultural context	√	√
Intellectual Challenge	√	√
Intensive & substantive	√	√
Targeted content—assessment-based	√	√
Materials: professional literature/research focus	√	√
Multiple encounters with the content & practice	√	√
Experience-based learning	√	√
Well-designed & Clear	√	√
Meshing content, teachers, facilitators	√	√
Resource Requirements	√	
Administrative support	√	√-
Materials	√	0
Reward system	√	0
Space to implement the changes	√	√-
Sustainability	√	0
Institutionalized/infrastructure developed	√	0

Figure 2: Qualities of Sustained Professional Development Found in SEA Project

About the Authors

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Dr. Judy Richardson is a professor emerita from the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education. She is a specialist in reading in the content areas. She has taught for 38 years in the roles of classroom teacher, as a high school English teacher, as a English second language teacher, as a Department of Defense teacher, and as a college professor. She has published many articles and book chapters as well as three books: *Reading to learn in the Content Areas*; *Read it Aloud!*; and *An English Teacher's Survival Guide*. Her current interest and publications are on the topic of study skills in the electronic age. From 2004 until 2007, she served as a volunteer for the Secondary Education Project in Macedonia, teaching secondary vocational education teachers about innovative teaching strategies. From February 2008 until December 2008, she served as a Fulbright scholar in Macedonia, located at three different universities. Currently, she teaches part-time at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College and the University of Richmond. Her courses include Critical Reading & Thinking Skills and Content Area Reading.

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