Practicing What We Teach: Effective Professional Development for Educators

A Dissertation Submitted

by

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This dissertation proposal has been accepted for the faculty of

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acceptable standards and fully fulfills the dissertation requirements for the degree of

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This dissertation is dedicated to all of my former, present, and future students.   I have learned – and will continue to learn – far more from you than you will ever know. May you follow your dreams, pursue your goals with energy and enthusiasm, and may you always know the bliss of curiosity fulfilled through exploration and learning.

Acknowledgments

"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we who teach shall be judged more strictly."

JAMES 3:1

This dissertation has been years in the making. It began as a dream I had of attaining my doctorate degree, became a study of the adult education required of and provided for teachers, and eventually evolved into an earnest desire to advance the professional development of educators across the nation. My efforts were only a part of the resulting printed dissertation herein; countless other individuals were integral to the completion of this academic pursuit. Any merit found within must be attributed to them as much as to me. In sincere gratitude for their contributions and support, I thank each one of them.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine professional development in three Nebraska public schools. For decades, the issue of professional development has been dissected, often resulting in unhealthy opposition between faculty and administration. Numerous studies have been conducted on teacher education, often with inconclusive or conflicting results. A review of literature illustrates how professional development has evolved through time, describing how governance, the role of the administration, strategic planning, and budget all affect the success of teacher education. This research study scrutinized four major themes that emerged as having direct influence on professional development for participating teachers: (1) shared responsibilities, (2) the roles of administrators and teachers, (3) forethought and preparation, and (4) expenditures. Methods and procedures of the dissertation study are detailed. Designed to be retrospective in nature, this investigation sought greater understanding of how teachers and administrators perceived the effectiveness of professional development in their schools. Because of the brevity of the study, proposal of extreme changes to professional development is not intended. Rather, the study is intended to corroborate similar studies' findings or perhaps reveal new insights in the field. Findings of the study are scrutinized and interpretation of those findings show correlations to the review of literature and the aforementioned emerging themes. Conclusions include a comparison/contrast of teacher and administrator perspectives as well as a discussion on implications of the study and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: professional development, staff development, teacher education, learning communities, collaboration, governance, roles of the administrator

Practicing What We Teach: Effective Professional Development for Educators

Chapter 1: Introduction

"We Learn . . .
10% of what we read
20% of what we hear
30% of what we see
50% of what we see and hear
70% of what we discuss
80% of what we experience
95% of what we teach others."

- William Glasser, M.D.

Chapter 1 will explain the purpose of the study, including the research question, background and rationale, conclusions, and assumptions. Terms used throughout the research study will be addressed and operational definitions will be incorporated into this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

Because people are naturally predisposed to learning through asking questions, collaborating with peers, exploration and discovery, trial and error, and most notably through continuous practice, it becomes imperative to reflect similar behaviors in teacher education. The professional development many educators experience exposes them to few, if any, of those learning attributes. This study may provide more insight to the issues at the heart of the professional development controversy.

Research Question

The research question for this dissertation focuses on administrator and teacher perceptions and implementation of teacher professional development programs. More specifically: What are the similarities and differences between administrators' and

teachers' perceptions of necessary components for effective professional development for educators?

Background and Rationale

School districts began to take a close look at post-certification training for teachers during the 1960s because student achievement was becoming a serious source of concern nationwide. For many decades, because teachers were better educated than most of the population, very little formal training was needed to equip educators to perform their duties (Dillon, 1976). In fact, Dillon (1976) argued, as recently as thirty-five years ago, once teachers had shown competency by being awarded teacher certification, they were given teaching certificates that did not need to be renewed – ever – and were licensed with the understanding that they could teach indefinitely without being further educated. Clearly, this was not an effective approach. Most states ultimately rescinded permanent certification and instead insisted teachers participate in professional development throughout their careers (Torff & Sessions, 2008).

Approximately three decades ago, a strong push toward improving professional development evolved. Dillon (1976) suggested the additional work teachers were required to undertake was unfortunately not always directed specifically at making professional members more competent or better qualified to educate children. Over thirty years later, however, with multifarious changes to societal and global needs, and with a very different student dynamic than existed decades ago, professional development is more vital than ever before and needs to be revamped in order to meet the needs of a changing world. Teachers and administrators have begun to learn new strategies for coping with the diverse demands of students. Issues such as frank criticism of public

education; deficiencies reported in the areas of math, science, and writing skills; the need

for multicultural education; increased dropout rates; different family dynamics; and

poverty in the schools created a critical need for more extensive and thorough training for

teachers. For all of these reasons, a push toward improving the effectiveness of

professional development for educators became imminent, and many argued – long

overdue.

According to Dillon (1976), "In most school districts, little effective data are

available to assist administrators and teachers in determining the specific skills needed by

professional members to produce quality education" (p. 165). This was no longer true by

the twenty-first century. According to Joyce, Showers, and Bennett's research (as cited

in Burke, 1997), roughly fifty studies on teacher professional development had been

conducted prior to 1957, but five decades later, over 150 studies on the topic are

conducted each year. In fact, some numbers indicate far more than that. According to a

January 4, 2010 WorldCat search, since 1960, 589 dissertations were written on the

subject of "teacher in-service," an astounding 8,760 on "faculty or staff development,"

7,756 on "professional development," and 1,105 on "professional learning of teachers".

With so much research on the subject, many schools are developing highly effective

programs for professional development. Numbers of schools across the nation are

experimenting and trying to utilize protracted information for the ultimate benefit of

students. One such example can be seen in the work of a progressive school in Madison,

Wisconsin. This district became one of the first to model excellence in professional

development. Their teachers were encouraged for years to share their unique areas of

expertise with their colleagues by applying for funding for planning time and organizing professional development activities for teachers in their buildings (Dillon, 1976).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 called for accountability in public school districts to provide "highly qualified" teachers for every student. Professional development of educators began to be transformed. The "new teacher education" comprised three components including policy, research, and outcomes (Cochran-Smith, 2005), which erupted into even greater numbers of studies being conducted on teacher professional development each year. By 2009, many other schools nationwide began to encourage teachers' involvement in their own education. Some schools have even begun offering on-line professional development for educators, creating a broader network for professional feedback and learning opportunities (Ullman, 2010).

The transformation of teacher education is well under way, but as research indicates, it must evolve with the needs of society. It cannot become stagnant if it is to be effective. Brand (1997) claimed it is more important than ever before in the history of education to ensure children are prepared to compete in a global economy. This includes exposing them to lessons involving cultural diversity and technology, as well as the traditional subjects one would expect to see in any school's curriculum.

Professional development, as defined by the National Professional Development Council in 2000, is: "a lifelong collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a daily job-embedded, learner-centered, focused approach" (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2006, p. 217). Mertler (2005), however, contended that traditional professional development sessions were "a gathering of teachers, usually after a long day of teaching or on a jam-packed workshop day, who sit

and listen to an expert describe a new methodology, approach, or instructional material that they typically do not believe relates directly to their classroom situations or teaching styles" (p. 15).

Mertler's (2005) description of professional development is not far from what many educators have experienced. Herein lies much of the problem. While administrators and school boards are finally beginning to focus more on professional development in schools across the nation, unfortunately, resistance from teachers is posing a serious threat to its success (Borko, 2004; Burke, 1997; Dillon, 1976; Jehlen, 2007; Torff & Sessions, 2008; Zimmerman & May, 2003).

Washington correspondent Anne Lewis (1994) went so far as to declare that as an avenue for teacher preparation, professional development programs for educators were quickly becoming one of the least effective, most disrespected components in the field of education. This was true on so many levels and from so many different perspectives, it could simply no longer be ignored.

Conclusion and Assumptions

Research has revealed many factors that should be considered in developing teacher education programs. This dissertation study focused on four issues that emerged most often in literature and studies conducted on this topic. The first, governance, is considered critical by many to the success of professional development for teachers (Brand, 1997; Diamond, 2002; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006; Jehlen, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Newmann, 1992; Senge, et al., 2000). This involves shared leadership among all stakeholders. The role of the administrator is a second issue for consideration. Many would argue the foremost

role of administrators is fostering serious open communication with their teachers,

because that is the driving force behind the influence and efficiency of all other

administrative responsibilities (Boyd, 1993; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Leithwood,

Strauss, & Anderson, 2007; Phillips, 2003; Reeves, 2006; Richardson, 2003; Zimmerman

& May, 2003).   Strong administrators know their teachers' professional strengths and

needs, whether they are expert instructors or those who could benefit by teaming with a

mentor (Crow, 2009). Administrators should know how to motivate and encourage

leadership, but they must also have a keen understanding of what constitutes a good

mentor. A strong teacher is not necessarily indicative of an individual's ability to

perform effectively as a mentor to others. Administrators must be able to discern

characteristics vital to the role of mentor and provide ample support systems for their

success (Gardiner, 2009; Walsleben, 2008). They must understand the importance of

delegating, which of course, reflects the nature of governance. Strategic planning is a

third issue necessary for successful professional development. This involves knowing

what content to include as well as how to provide it (Borko, 2004; Danaher, et al., Drago-

Severson, & Pinto, 2006; Fullan, et al., 2006; Hord, 1994; 2009; Kelleher, 2003; Littky&

Grabelle, 2004; Newmann, 1993; Richardson, 2003; Senge, 1990; Senge, et al., 2000).

Finally, budget is a vital part of the process (Hirsh, 2009; Jehlen, 2007; Ritchhart, 2004).

Interestingly, budget encompasses the other three issues. Savvy administrators often find

the most effective means of educating teachers can come from careful planning and

allowing teacher-leaders to provide learning activities, which conversely saves money

(Chappuis, S., Chappuis, J., & Stiggins, 2009). Together, these four components can be

used to create a strong foundation for teacher education. Each is equally important; not

one can be ignored without consequences. *Figure 1.1* illustrates the connection between

the four components research indicates are needed for effective professional
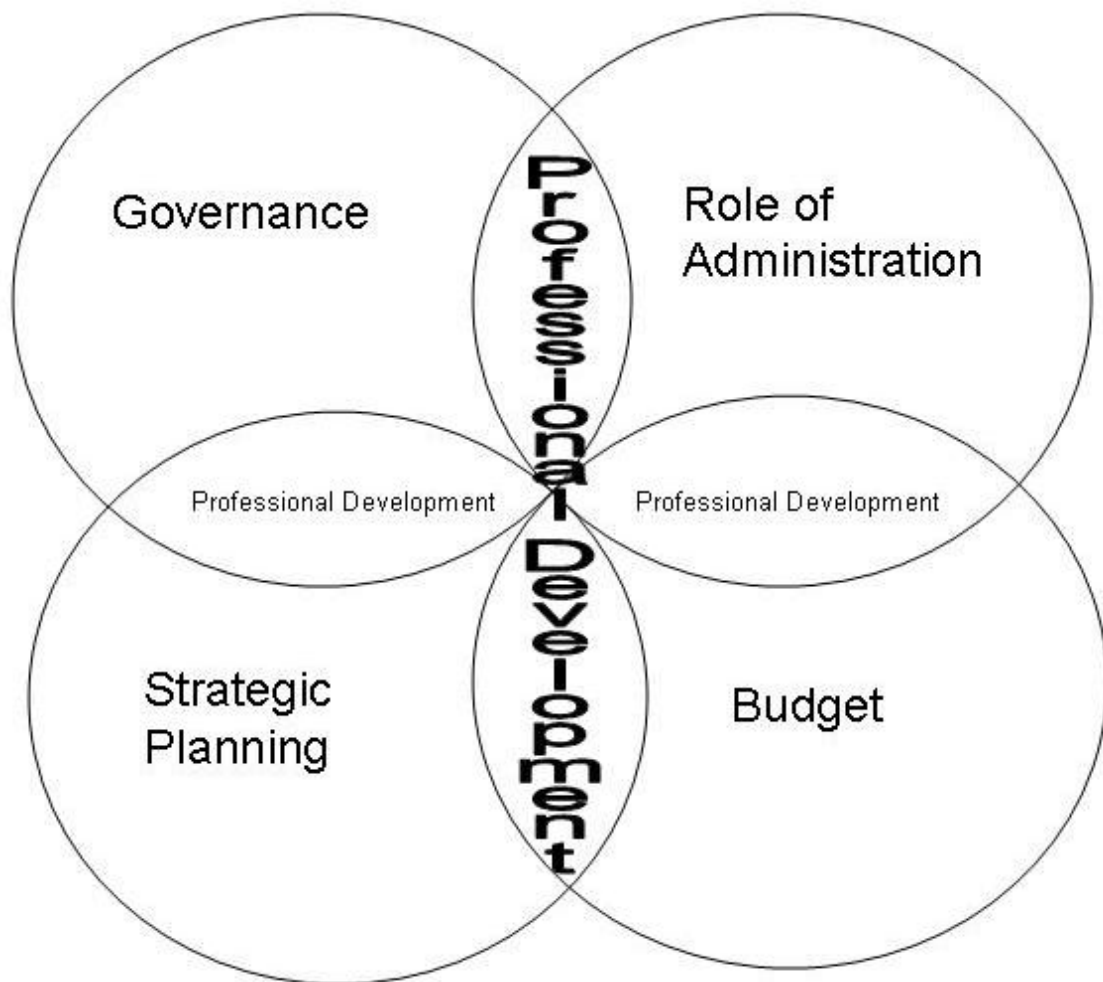
development.

Figure 1.1. **Professional Development Graphic.** These four components emerged as interrelated, interconnected themes from the researcher's review of literature

Despite the number of studies conducted on the subject of teacher professional development, no easy answers are available.   The best that can be hoped for is that educators will access available research and work together to incorporate good strategies for their own growth and ultimately the success of their students.

Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions were used in this research study:

Action research: studies conducted by educators, especially classroom teachers, which allow them to reflect on their work through systematic data collection, thereby providing answers to their questions and creating opportunities to improve quality of instruction (Bennett, 1994)

Adult learning: "the process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise" (Knowles, Holton, III, & Swanson, 2005, p. 174)

Andragogy: "the art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1980, p.24)

Governance: the shared power of planning, administering, and implementing an action; incorporates components such as responsibility for developing, designing, evaluating, and handling academic matters (Diamond, 2002)

Pedagogy: the art or science of teaching; tools for learning; "the 'how' of teaching" (Curtiss-Williams, 2009)

Professional development: (as defined by the National Professional Development Council in 2000) "a lifelong collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a daily job-embedded, learner-centered, focused approach" (DuFour, et al., 2006, p. 217); the learning process that supports and fosters instructionally effective educators; on-the-job teacher training;

interchangeable terms generally recognized by the educational community include "in-service," "staff development," "teacher training," "teacher learning," and "professional learning"

Professional learning community (PLC): a group of educators, both teachers and administrators, who collaborate to share learning experiences with the intent of improving their instructional effectiveness for the benefit of students (Hord, 1997); sometimes referred to as PLTs (Professional Learning Teams).

Self-efficacy: one's judgment about his or her capability to complete a task; one's perception of his or her capacity or power to produce a desired effect (Bandura, 1993)

Summary

Chapter 1 described the purpose of the study, the research question, some background and rationale for conducting the study, and included basic conclusions, and assumptions that can be drawn regarding professional development. Terms used throughout the research study were defined. Chapter 2 will incorporate a comprehensive review of literature on professional development and related studies and a brief explanation of how the literature collection correlates to the dissertation study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Chapter 2 will discuss the literature associated with the professional development of public school teachers for the past three decades. Included will be elements of historical context and how it has changed over the years; theoretical context and the intended purpose of professional development; and a brief summary of what the collection of literature means in conjunction with the dissertation study.

Historical Perspectives

Administrators, teachers, and parents have argued for decades over what it takes to develop effective educators able to succeed in transferring their content knowledge to students, and whether that, indeed, should even be the goal of education at all. Professional development has been a part of teaching since the early days of formal education. It has evolved throughout time; nevertheless, debates over content and implementation of teacher education programs have been waged for years with inconclusive results. One certainty, however, remains; many current professional development programs need to be modified and refined in order for any meaningful changes to occur. If one looks at nothing but terminology, the transformation of teacher education is very clear.   It parallels the dominant social, political, and educational influences of the times. A WorldCat search conducted on January 4, 2010 revealed a pattern. From the onset of formal public education through the 1970s, teacher training was generally referred to by the public as "teacher education" or "in-service". By the 1980s, with education under closer scrutiny, it became "staff development". In the 1990s, a push to "professionalize" teaching careers gave birth to the term "professional development". Finally, in 2006, Fullan, Hill & Crevola suggested "professional

learning" as a more appropriate term, putting the focus on overall intent – that of lifelong learners who educate others via their professional careers. For the purpose of consistency and clarity, the researcher will refer to teacher education as either professional development or staff development throughout the study.

Developing effective professional development programs for educators is critical to student achievement and ultimately all of society. Working to understand the intricacies involved is a laudable effort; unfortunately, to many, it often seems an insurmountable task. Factors such as America's oft-reported deficiencies in math, science, and writing scores; the need for diversity training; declining graduation rates; complex family dynamics; frequently changing individual school demographics; and diverse socioeconomic conditions in the schools give rise to much dissention among experts and their opinions on how to go about providing what everyone needs. Many educators report facing new professional struggles not as prevalent a few years ago such as poor student attendance, criminal activity, and student drug abuse (Brown & Benken, 2009). Furthermore, because of perceived bad experiences many educators have encountered through professional development in the past, teacher attitudes frequently are not conducive to productivity and learning. As Knight (2009) explains, "How teachers view professional learning in their schools on any given day will inevitably be shaped by how they have experienced professional learning in the past…history can be a major roadblock to implementation" (508).

One contention is that educators, as adults, have different learning needs than children. Knowles (1980) referred to this as andragogy, the "theory of adult learning based on the assumption that adult learners learn differently from child learners" (p. 24).

While that makes sense on the surface, another argument indicates a need to take pedagogical information uncovered by research in the last two decades to meet students' needs and utilize it in teacher education. Glasser (1999) made a strong case for supporting the use of learning-teams in schools to incite commitment and excitement among students. One could logically assume adult learners might similarly benefit from such involvement.

Theoretical Context

The purpose of professional development programs is to create effective teachers. Wiggins (1989; 1990) contended the truest assessments must always help learners – whether they are students or teachers – and they must always include something purposeful. He further claimed such tests should provide forward movement, not just reflectivity of prior learning. His assertion sustains what educators have been saying for decades – professional development needs to lead them toward becoming better instructors, not just fill their heads with new information. Teachers attending professional development programs are, in essence, the students - the learners - attending with the sole intent of becoming the best teachers they can for their own students. For this reason, it is critical for presenters of professional development sessions to exemplify excellent teaching strategies and serve as role models for attending teachers. The educational community needs to take what is known about best teaching practices, and incorporate it with adult learning theory – a blend of pedagogy and andragogy. A promising approach to teacher professional development may be to incorporate both methods in teacher education. This requires all parties involved to consider the aforementioned four critical components of professional development when preparing

learning sessions for educators: governance, the role of the administration, strategic

planning, and budget. Each of these will be addressed separately with the support of

academic literature.

Governance.

It is vital that the issue of governance be one of the first addressed in the

estimable effort to improve teacher education. Despite controversy revolving around the

issue of professional development, one point remains clear: it is essential that all

stakeholders be involved in the reformation process. Experts believe administrators,

teachers, and parents should work together to advance education as a practice and as a

means to success for the world's most valuable resource – our children (Brand, 1997;

Diamond, 2002; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Fullan, et al., 2006; Jehlen, 2007; Leech

& Fulton, 2008; Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Newmann, 1992; Senge, et al., 2000). The best

way to do this, many researchers believe, is to equip educators to meet the needs of a

changing world and an emerging group of diverse students who have individual

adversities, talents, and goals (Brand, 1997; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Fullan, et al.,

2006; Jehlen, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Littky & Grabelle, 2004; Newmann, 1992;

Senge, et al., 2000). More relevant professional development would be a significant

means toward this end.

One of the most common complaints of many teachers is the ineffectiveness of

guest speakers who come to present information at staff development meetings. One

teacher said of a professional development speaker,

> He talked for approximately six hours. Don't ask me what he talked about
>
> - I couldn't tell you. In fact, you could look around and see people

reading, grading papers, doing crossword puzzles. If we planned our

classroom activities the way they planned this professional development,

we would be fired. And rightfully so, (Jehlen, 2007, p. 37).

Many teachers become bitter about attending professional development meetings when

they so often feel they, themselves, are more effective educators than the presenters who

come to help them improve.

Administrators are finally beginning to realize educational improvement must

incorporate an element of collaboration to succeed (Boudah & Mitchell, 1998; Brand,

1997; Christensen, 2006; Crow, 2009; Danaher, Price, & Kluth, 2009; Drago-Severson &

Pinto, 2006; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2000; Glasser, 1999; Kelleher, 2003;

Lowden, 2006; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Leithwood, et al., 2007;

Michael & Dobson, 2008; Nelson & Slavit, 2009; O'Connor & Korr, 1996; Phillips,

2003; Rademaker, 2008; Richardson, 2003; Saunders, Goldenberg & Gallimore, 2009;

Sturko & Gregson, 2009; Tienken & Stonaker, 2007). Vygotsky's work in education

indicated learning is often a social activity (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003);

therefore, teachers, as stakeholders, must be allowed to work together if they are to

become more effective instructors.   The first and, arguably, the most vital step in this

process is to allow teachers to get to know each other.   Many educators report feeling

disconnected from their colleagues, and in many cases admit they do not even know all of

the people who teach in their buildings.   It is critical for teachers and administrators to

build community relationships (Brown & Benken, 2009; Hartnell-Young, 2006; Stoll,

Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Without these community ties, any

attempts to work, plan, collaborate, and set goals will likely fail.

In 2009, the National Staff Development Council began to conduct a critical inquiry into the professional development of educators. This was to be a three-phase examination intended to guide future policy and practice; results of the first phase of were published in February 2009. One of the most intriguing findings of the first phase was that teachers in many foreign countries spent fewer hours instructing than teachers in America. Most of their non-instructional time was applied toward professional development – specifically collaboration with colleagues (Joyce, 2009). By providing opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, visit with management, and conduct action research (Steiny, 2009), many administrators have started bridging the gap between the "us and them" mentality that has been counterproductive to education for so long.

Researchers contended that teachers must have a voice in their own professional development, and be allowed to choose what they want to learn (Brand, 1997; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Glasser, 1999; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Lowden, 2006; Lucillo, 2009; Lynd-Balta, Erklenz-Watts, Freeman, & Westbay, 2006; McCarthy, 2006; O'Hara & Pritchard; 2008). Lucillo (2009) is not alone in her assertion that "Teachers know best what they need in the classroom and the more they are involved in implementing professional development, the more effective it will be" (p. 64). Research indicated "session activities should be interactive, collaborative, and encourage participants to be knowledgeable constructors rather than mere recipients of information" (O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008, p. 46). Providing teachers with the power to consider and respond to classroom concerns, to examine alternatives and implement a course of action, it is believed, will promote self-efficacy among educators. Self-efficacy involves a person's ability to analyze alternatives and implement an action plan. O'Connor & Korr

(1996) alleged, "Empowerment without self-efficacy is unlikely" (p. 45). Teacher self-efficacy evolves through a combination of expertise in their content, pedagogy, and focus on students - including their ability to motivate and understand their learners (Schleicher, 2009; Waddell, 2009). Some may ask what teacher self-efficacy has to do with students. The answer is simple. Research by O'Connor and Korr (1996) proved a direct correlation exists between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement. That makes it rather clear. If society wants students to achieve, teachers must possess self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993; Bandura, 1997; Kuchey, Morrison, & Geer, 2009). In order for that to happen, they need to be a part of their own professional development.

In addition to teachers, administrators, and support professionals working together, parents are also considered for inclusion in a facet of professional development. Littky and Grabelle (2004) advocated a significant portion of professional training be devoted to teaching skills and providing an impetus for families to engage meaningfully in the life of the school. They offered examples such as teaching people how to be good listeners; how to ask probing questions; how to collect data to better understand the child, his home, and his culture; and how to solicit help from parents and collaborate with them to provide the best possible learning experiences for the children. It is extremely difficult to include parents in the process, but they provide another component to the planning of professional development that had formerly been overlooked.

Some schools reported increased professional satisfaction and attributed it to their school's shared governance system (Boudah & Mitchell, 1998; Brand, 1997; Christensen, 2006; Crow, 2009; Danaher, et al., 2009; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Kelleher, 2003; Lowden, 2006; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech &

Fulton, 2008; Leithwood, et al., 2007; O'Connor & Korr, 1996; Phillips, 2003;

Rademaker, 2008; Richardson, 2003; Saunders, et al., 2009; Sturko & Gregson, 2009;

Tienken & Stonaker, 2007). Gladys Sossa-Schwartz was a National Board-Certified

English as a Second Language teacher in Virginia. According to this master teacher,

when governance of professional development is handled in the right way, "it's the key to

recharging teachers and giving them the tools they need" (Jehlen, 2007, p. 36).

Obviously, teachers who are burned out – or feeling unappreciated by the public, parents,

and their own students – cannot perform on the same level as those who feel empowered,

valued, and prepared to face the mounting challenges of American classrooms. Teachers

at one school reported spending time working to further their five-year site plan in lieu of

"traditional" professional development. "Every professional member is involved in every

step, from choosing the goal and the interventions to deciding how best to implement

changes" (Jehlen, 2007, p. 36). Doubtless, this is a school intent on student success.

Both administrators and teachers in this school know their students will not succeed

unless educators are at the top of their game.

Governance is a component essential to creating effective professional

development programs. Despite the success some schools celebrate in conjunction with

professional development, many of the nation's schools are in need of serious overhaul.

Irrefutable evidence suggests the professional development of teachers will be futile

unless all invested parties work together in the planning and execution of the training

exercises.

The Role of Administration.

Administrators, as educational leaders, have a responsibility to provide the best professional development they can for their teachers. Of all the duties the administration team is required to perform, providing instructional leadership is by far the most important. They must never lose sight of the fact that everything done in schools is supposed to benefit students. Making teachers effective instructors and training them to develop strong, lifelong learners, is of utmost importance.

One problem administrators face in trying to improve teacher education is "there is virtually no alignment among teacher education; local school curriculum; student performance standards set by schools, districts, or teachers' professional advancement; and the nature of professional development activities" (Newmann, 1992, p. 211). It is not surprising teacher professional development programs nationwide faced such criticism from the public and teachers. As previously noted, the best way to meet the specific needs of individual educators seems to be for administrators to involve classroom teachers in planning the professional development activities (Brand, 1997; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Lowden, 2006; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; McCarthy, 2006). This comprises many aspects of the education including 1) identifying current issues and trends in education of interest to the professional teachers, 2) supplementing independent teachers' strengths, and 3) recognizing and providing education for diverse instructional strategies and various learning styles. Coordinating all of this takes an inordinate amount of preparation by administrators, but previously identified research indicates that without the effort,

professional development will neither be meaningful nor carry over effectively into the classrooms as best practice by professional educators.

One of the most effective ways for administrators to lead is to promote lifelong learning in their teachers. Administrators who encourage educators to look at their instructional practice and really analyze it, provide them with vital information to improve. Many administrators encourage their teachers to conduct action research in their own classrooms so they can see their students and instructional practice through fresh eyes, giving them a real voice in their own professional development (Danaher, et al., 2009; Michael & Dobson, 2008; Phillips, 2003; O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008). Although a savvy administrator knows how to bring his/her professionals together by delegating responsibilities to teachers and allowing them to share in the planning process, too many curriculum innovations have failed because teachers became frustrated, overwhelmed, and forfeited the ownership they had been offered to facilitate and implement change (Senge, et al., 2000). In order to facilitate shared decision making, it is critical that administrators receive extensive training in how to do this effectively. Teachers, too, need to be trained in this area (Chappuis, S., et al., 2009; Leech & Fulton, 2008). Experts asserted administrators should be involved in very serious and frequent open communication with their teachers (Boyd, 1993; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Leithwood, et al., 2007; Phillips, 2003; Reeves, 2006; Richardson, 2003; Zimmerman & May, 2003). This is the only way they will get a sense of teachers' needs, the issues at hand, and viable solutions to problems before they get out of control. Unfortunately, however, administrators are often kept busy with other responsibilities or are uninformed about morale among their faculty, and even in many cases, are wholly unaware of

instructional concerns. It is time to put the focus of administrators' jobs back on their ability to provide true instructional leadership.

Teacher professional development has the potential to be the strongest forward movement in education. Forward-thinking administrators need to be aware of this. Much of their time is spent on evaluating teachers, but when it comes to evaluation and assessment, some educators believed "the focus is backward (on what has already happened) rather than forward (on what is possible)" (Diamond, 2002 p. 42). Focusing on the professional development of classroom teachers appears more purposeful than simply conducting evaluations.

One teacher eloquently expressed his opinion on the significance of the role administrators play in the success of teachers' professional development. "When I feel well taken care of by the principal and other teachers, too, I find myself willing to give more to the kids, and to the school…" (Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006, p. 129). "School principals have the great responsibility and privilege of helping teachers learn" (p. 130). This should be their number one priority.

No school can succeed in its mission without an administrator who understands the vital role and responsibility he/she has. To this end, administrators, especially building principals, are expected to be able to model good teaching for struggling teachers, because it will allow them to observe expert instructional performance (Brand, 1997). It is not enough to bring in an outside source. Many professional development days appear to educators to be an insult to their professionalism. Speakers often come across as experts there to fix what is wrong with the teachers to whom they are presenting (Senge, et al., 2000), decreasing their sense of dignity, professionalism, and vision.

The administrator's job is to act as a liaison between teachers and professional development coordinators. Administrators must ensure that presenters will dignify teachers and empower them. They need to give teachers a chance to tell them what they need. When teachers understand how a program is meaningful, resistance is usually diminished. Paul Mack, former Associate Director of the Regional Professional Development Center in St. Louis, Missouri said, "I've seen the most stressed out educators take on something new because it had meaning for them, when it tapped into the energy and calling that brought them into schools to begin with," (Senge, et al., 2000, p. 383). This is a great example of the difference an effective administrator can have on the success of professional development.

An effective administrator is able to recognize a problem where one exists, diagnose it, and provide guidance to help teachers weak in instructional practice. Administrators must be experts on collaborative learning and know how to promote it among their professional members. Carroll (2009) believes in order for quality teaching to occur, administrators must provide "a collaborative culture that empowers teachers to team up to improve student learning beyond what any of them can achieve alone" (p. 8). They should embrace the opportunity to pair novice and experienced teachers or grade-level and content-specific teachers. Dillon (1976) noted years ago, "Principals are providing more and more leadership for professional development" (p. 165). Decades later, however, their *effectiveness* at providing that leadership remains in question. "The question confronting most school districts is not, 'What do we need to know in order to improve?' but rather, 'Will we turn what we already know into action?'" (DuFour, et al.,

2006, p. 8).   Teachers, parents, and students will be looking to administrators to provide many of the answers to these questions.

Strategic Planning.

It is critical to strategize when preparing for staff development days. Too much time has been wasted on the negative connotation of professional development. Teachers and administrators need to begin to see it in a positive light. One step in the right direction, suggested Fullan, Hill, & Crevola (2006), might be in referring to it not as in-service, or staff development, or even professional development, but rather as "professional learning." They believed this was a more appropriate term because it is more indicative of the purpose.

One of the most significant problems with professional development as it exists in many schools is the absolute absence of any correlation between what teachers learn and what they do in their classrooms. Too many teachers reported a disconnected feeling between their classroom instructional practices and the professional development meetings they attend (Fullan, et al., 2006). The unfortunate reality seems to be that many professional development activities are not providing teachers with the necessary tools to help them improve teaching techniques and become more effective and better equipped to deal with their students' needs.

It seems amazing that with all educators and researchers have discovered about how the human brain works and how people learn, that same knowledge is often not put to use when planning many of the professional development training days for educators in America. In fact, some of the top-performing countries in the industrialized world regularly utilize research findings as a foundation for their professional development,

whereas in the United States, research is largely ignored and even contradicted (Sawchuk, 2009). Traditional workshops tend not to be effective for a number of reasons: 1) an unrealistic amount of content is covered in one session; 2) the passivity of sitting and receiving information creates an atmosphere not conducive to learning – even with a dynamic presenter; and 3) there is no occasion for the presenter to facilitate any type of reflection, thereby impeding the learners' opportunity to put into practice what can only take place when they return to instruction in their own classrooms (Chappuis, S., et al., 2009). Because professional development engages teachers as learners, the lessons, Jehlen (2007) believed, should be taught by current or former master teachers in a manner easily replicated by other professionals. Professional development needs to be differentiated to meet the diversified needs of all teachers. While first year teachers might need to work on discipline; veterans probably do not. Experienced educators often want to focus on new pedagogical strategies, content, or collaborative teaching models. Teachers are learners also; their learning needs should be approached individually (Borko, 2004; Danaher, et al., 2009; Kelleher, 2003; Littky& Grabelle, 2004). Certainly this makes more sense than having the one-size-fits-all kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) professional development sessions previously often recommended by many administrators. One might wonder what common instructional needs a first grade teacher and an industrial technology teacher share. Undoubtedly, there are a few, but they are not relevant or prevalent enough to warrant the time involved in an all-day meeting. It seems much more effective and efficient to let teachers of like-curricula or similar interests come together to learn new strategies and pedagogical techniques.

In 2007, *NEA Today* invited members to share examples of the best or worst professional development they had experienced. Individual opinions varied greatly, based on personal experience, but the stories were telling. Some reported that the commitment their district placed on professional development was a key factor in accepting their positions (Jehlen, 2007). An Ohio teacher, who asked to remain anonymous, represented the other end of the spectrum, insisting,

> The words "professional development" do not conjure up warm, fuzzy thoughts of garnering oodles of information I can use in my classroom. They only warn me of the waste of…a day of my life I can never get back (Jehlen, 2007 , p. 36).

Another teacher alleged the paraprofessionals in his school were not allowed to go for training. They had to remain in the dark and the teachers they assisted were told to "find something worthwhile for our aides to do to keep them busy," (Jehlen, 2007, p. 37). This sent a repressive message to support professionals. It indicated a chasm between "us" and "them" that should not exist.

Strategic vision for each school as a whole is considered essential to the success of any professional development program (Drago-Severson, & Pinto, 2006; Hord, 1994; Kelleher, 2003; Newmann, 1993; Richardson, 2003; Senge, 1990; Senge, et al., 2000). Newmann (1993) contended, "If we want new structures of education to promote improved instruction and learning, we must first make explicit a desired vision or conception of teaching and learning," (p. 3). Some schools reported using their professional development meetings to talk about the vision of their schools. They developed mission statements and took the time to look back as well as forward. They

considered such issues as "what major changes has their school system faced, changing demographics, funding shifts, state mandates, special education costs, growing diversity of students…" (Senge, et al., 2000, p. 297). Once teachers and administrators began to plan together, and to develop a strategy they believed could meet with success, teachers developed a positive attitude toward professional development. Because many teachers were realizing they needed to expand their repertoire of instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students, they began using their limited professional development days to focus on that. This is a good start, but despite some noteworthy improvements in teacher training programs, isolated and fragmented professional development days are not enough.

Another key component to the strategy of making teacher enrichment exercises meaningful is to start developing ways to incorporate them into daily practice, not just minimal, pre-selected days throughout the school year. The preponderance of research shows that professional development will be effective only if it is on-going (Boyd, 1993; Chappuis, S., et al., 2009; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Hord, 1994; Kelleher, 2003; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Lowden, 2006; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; Phillips, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Saunders, et al., 2009; Tienken & Stonaker, 2007). Additionally, it was found to be imperative for teachers to work both individually as well as collaboratively on new pedagogical practices (Fullan, et al., 2006). Continuous professional development can provide cumulative insight and valuable instructional tools to teachers.

It seems everyone has something they want to add to the docket of professional development for teachers. Hill and Flynn (2006) claimed knowledge of English language

usage is not emphasized as much as it was in the past, and, therefore, recommended more training for educators in that area. Burke (1997) contended, "If teachers do not feel prepared to teach the writing process, they should request the professional development they need," (p. 31). Many argued, however, that with all the other areas desperately needing attention, it appears education on the writing process was one that need not be achieved through professional development. To some, it seemed more appropriate for that to take place during methods courses before certification has been awarded. It takes a discerning eye and an analytical mind to really interpret what should be included in professional development (Kelleher, 2003; Lauer & Matthews, 2007). As prior research indicated, one way to do that is to ask the teachers. Invariably, they will rise to the occasion and meet challenges set before them if the challenges are meaningful to them and to improving their students' ability to learn. Another suggestion for determining what should be included in the professional development agenda is to begin researching the district's needs. Teachers and administrators should consider district demographics, research current issues and trends in education, and assess student achievement. Research-driven professional development has proven to be highly effective, fostering school-wide success (Kelleher, 2003; Lauer & Matthews, 2007).

One specific aspect of professional development that seems particularly weak involves developing critical/reflective thinking – or metacognitive thinking - in teachers so it can then be developed in students (Chapman & Inman, 2009; Knodt, 2009; Wilson, Grisham, & Smetana, 2009). Educators need to be able to think deeply not only about their subjects, but also about how they will facilitate learning and how students connect to the material. For decades, professional development has focused on curriculum and

new trends in education. The need for increased technological prowess has been expressed. Additionally, however, Ritchhart (2004) asserted, "We need to design encounters for teachers in which they can develop their thinking abilities, increase their inclination toward thinking, and become more aware of thinking opportunities in the curriculum…" (p. 216).

Many schools nationwide are working on improving instruction and quality of learning by focusing on the big picture: what their vision is. Drago-Severson and Pinto (2006) found in some schools, "The professionals maintain a shared vision based on values centering on student learning. Similarly, professional development is approached as a collaborative and collective effort, rather than seen as an individual task" (p. 131). Administrators across the nation are getting more creative with involving their teachers in the planning. As previously suggested, governance is a key component in planning effective professional development, which involves getting teachers to be a part of the school's strategy.

Budget.

It is undeniable, with the implementation of professional development programs, money becomes a critical issue. Speakers, materials, and technological equipment can be expensive; therefore, it is imperative to find ways to make the most of schools' readily available resources. Many administrators make the mistake of thinking the only way to provide professional development is to hire a speaker from outside the district to come and present to the faculty. Unfortunately, those responsible for implementing the professional development often miss the whole concept of teaching teachers how to think. All too often they seem more concerned with how the packaged materials look and

with their overly-rehearsed address than they do with helping teachers make their content

pertain to individual classrooms and individual students. Ritchhart (2004) argued, "The

focus is almost always on implementing the program rather than interpreting it" (p. 216).

Pretty handouts, pamphlets, and graphic organizers are immaterial unless teachers can

make meaning of them and use them to help their students learn to think deeply about

their lessons.

Not only has the use of professional speakers proven to be one of the least

effective means of educating teachers, but it frequently backfires because presenters are

often considered intruders, much of the time met with resistance from the teachers they

have come to "fix." Teachers do not resist because they are belligerent; they are more

often frustrated with too many opposing philosophies and bombarded by every new

bandwagon and catch phrase so readily adopted by the profession (Senge, et al., 2000).

Money spent on speakers might be better spent on sending teachers to individualized

workshops or on purchasing educational reading materials that could be used to promote

reflective thinking about their practice. Instead of using district funds for hiring speakers

for professional development, some schools provide release time for opportunities to

learn techniques for improving individual instructional practice (Senge, et al., 2000).

This brings the added expense of hiring substitute teachers for participating faculty

members, but that seems much more cost-effective than paying for speakers to whom

many do not listen. When teachers are allowed to work collaboratively on curriculum

and pedagogy, school districts often spend less money on their education and teachers

may very likely learn more in the process. That is good money management.

The most conspicuous resource for teacher education is often the one most overlooked – veteran teachers. According to Drago-Severson and Pinto (2006), "Teaming and mentoring of new teachers by veteran educators is considered a prime method…" (p. 132) of improving instructional practice. Through teaming and mentoring, teachers build relationships, create opportunities to share what works for them, and open up opportunities to reflect on their practice and consider new approaches to instruction (Brand, 1997; Carroll, 2009; Chappuis, S., et al., 2009; Drago-Severson, 2007; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, et al., 2006; Fien & Rawling, 1996; Fullan, 2000; Leon & Davis; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; Michael & Dobson, 2008). In fact, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) is working to promote a mobilization of America's leaders to create learning teams. Such teams would comprise veteran and retired teachers, student teachers, student leaders, and community volunteers. According to Carroll (2009),

> Teaming works. Consider the way nurses, interns, and specialists work in medical teams. Each person contributes varying levels and different areas of skill and expertise to diagnose, treat, and provide care for patients. Teaming leverages the best of each individual's abilities and knowledge. In schools, these teams could contribute to the paramount educational goal: improving student learning (p. 8).

When teacher-leaders emerge, amazing things can happen. Teachers become more confident, more enthusiastic, and more knowledgeable in their pedagogy (Boudah & Mitchell, 1998; Christensen, 2006; Danaher, et al., 2009; Donaldson, 2007; Fisher, 2002; Hord, 1994; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Reeves, 2006; Sturko & Gregson, 2009).

Administrators can promote teacher leadership by inviting select individuals to step forth

and serve in the capacity of mentor to inexperienced teachers (Crow, 2009; Schleicher,

2009). On an informal level, they can encourage their faculty to read academic literature

and share it with their colleagues. Many principals persuade their teachers to visit each

others' classrooms and discuss what they see happening. Some schools even allow

teachers to work part-time as professional development coordinators. One such school

recognized an English teacher/professional development coordinator who, when planning

training exercises, acknowledged and utilized its best resources – faculty members on

staff (Jehlen, 2007). Professional development days at that school looked like mini-

conventions: teachers had multiple topics from which to choose, and most sessions were

facilitated by teachers. Those fortunate teachers embraced the learning opportunities

because they had been invited into the process. This is a prime example of how

governance, planning, and budget can come together through one common goal: that of

including teachers in their own learning program.

Another school described an innovative approach by which, through a voluntary

program, professional members earned extra pay for taking part in an on-going

professional development activity that enriched their teaching. Once a month they

discussed the teaching styles and practices of one or two teachers on their staff. The

teacher under scrutiny chose which lesson to present and any concerns for which he

wanted like his colleagues' feedback. Besides useful suggestions and insights, those

sessions helped teachers see each other as professionals. Moreover, it helped them

identify connections between their curriculum and that of other educators (Jehlen, 2007),

while supporting future scope and sequence planning. By approaching this in such a non-

threatening way, teachers were open to participating and could not help but develop better instructional techniques in collaboration with their colleagues. Again, the extra cost was minimal – probably far less than that of hiring an outside source – and was a highly economical way for teachers to get immediate feedback from colleagues they knew and respected.

Technology is one area that can not continue to be overlooked, in conjunction with both budgetary issues and the pure necessity of incorporating it into educational opportunities. Many teachers admit to being uncomfortable with using instructional technology as a method of teaching. They do, however, concede that with proper training, they would be interested in implementing it into their classrooms (Davis, Preston, & Sahin, 2009). Brand (1997) perceived that kind of training would be best if provided at some time other than the normal school day. He believed time either before or after school should be allotted for this training and contended schools would be wise to hire teachers with expertise in both technology and curriculum, thereby saving money in the long run. Nagin (2006) emphasized a need for teachers to receive professional development time so they could learn to use technology first for their own purposes, better equipping them to transfer their skills to utilizing technology as an instructional tool. Online tutorials and opportunities for practice with a community of learners are suggested for most constructive results (Davis, et al., 2009). Brand (1997) reinforced this belief. He insisted teachers need to develop the confidence and skills to effectively integrate technology into their lessons. In a world immersed in the Information Age, it seems negligent to deny students the technological knowledge they will need to survive in future career enterprises.

Especially in this time of economic crisis, district budgets for professional development are being cut nationwide. Careful planning, prioritizing, inclusion of teachers as presenters, professional learning teams, research-based decision making, use of local experts, termination of costly district teacher assemblies, collaboration with and visitation to other local schools, and shared reading – especially with low-cost Internet sources – are not only viable, but potentially valuable options for providing effective, inexpensive professional development for teachers (Hirsh, 2009). Schools want to get a good product for the money they spend. Involving teachers in professional development presentations is one of the most certain ways to achieve this. By empowering teachers and capitalizing on their professional specialties, money spent on professional development is minimized while results are maximized. It seems impossible anyone would argue against this logic, but some do. Resistance is more than likely due to the fact that many administrators do not know how to go about coordinating such an effort. It is time-consuming and tedious, but time spent perfecting the professional development program will undoubtedly prove to be well worth it in the end.

Summary

Through the use of an extensive review of literature, Chapter 2 illustrated examples of how the professional development of teachers has evolved through time, how in the past it has been considered by many to be highly ineffective, and how it is being improved upon by utilizing data collected through numerous research studies on the topic. This chapter scrutinized four components of professional development considered by experts and researchers in the field to be most critical to the effectiveness of teacher education programs: governance, the role of the administration, strategic

planning, and budget. Chapter 3 will describe the methods and procedures of the

dissertation study. It will include research design, methodology, participants, and data

collection and analysis techniques used by the researcher.

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

Chapter 3 discloses the methods and procedures of the study, including research design, methodology, participants and demographics, ethical consideration, data collection, data analysis, delimitations and limitations of the study, and actual study timeline. A brief summary will clarify details of this chapter.

Research Design

A natural fit emerges in qualitative research for exploring professional development programs in three secondary Nebraska schools. According to Bryant (2004), qualitative researchers are interested in "speaking with authority about the experiences of those in [the] study" (p. 26) and providing a population with some interesting perceptions. The researcher is a secondary English teacher with experience as an adjunct professor at a Midwestern teaching college. As adjunct professor, she facilitated the learning of teachers pursuing masters degrees. Prior to the beginning of the study, all of the researcher's background information was disclosed to study participants. Despite disclosure of the researcher's educational background, participant responses were unaffected because the researcher had no direct contact with or power over them.

The researcher made a purposeful decision to conduct a phenomenographic, as opposed to a phenomenological, qualitative study in this case. In considering the design of the study, it was determined that more objectivity could be ensured if the researcher was not included as a participant. Creswell (1998) says of phenomenology, "The participants in the study need to be carefully chosen to be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon," (p.55) but Marton and Booth (1997) explain that

phenomenology includes the researcher as a participant. Phenomenography, on the other hand, focuses on experiences and perceptions shared by the participants, and does not include the researcher as participant (Hitchcock, 2006). The researcher decided to design this study as phenomenographic because phenomenographers use empirical data to scrutinize others' experiences (Marton & Booth, 1997). All participants have been selected for their personal experiences in the phenomenon of the professional development of teachers. This study seeks a greater understanding of the perceptions of school administrators and teachers regarding professional development practices in their schools.

The research process comprised use of previous experts' studies in the field of professional development and phenomenographic qualitative study methodology techniques.   Purposeful attention focused on veracity of the study design, its implementation, and procedures related to it.

Methodology

This was a qualitative phenomenographic study of three Nebraska public schools. In an effort to conduct a study with a diversity of research participants, administrators and teachers were invited from three Nebraska secondary schools with diverging demographics to participate in the study.   These three schools will be referred to throughout the study as L-1, L-2, and L-3.

Participants and Demographics

Research participants included three Nebraska public school administrators, all of whom were principals and two of whom had doctorates. Sixty high school teachers were invited to participate; ten of them responded. A total of 288 teachers were observed

during their schools' professional development sessions. The researcher conducted e-mail interviews (Appendix A) with principals from the three aforementioned Nebraska schools. The three participating principals were contacted by phone using a script (Appendix B) to introduce the purpose of the study and to arrange meetings with them in person in order to explain details. The interviews comprised eight open-ended questions designed with objectivity in mind. Interview questions paralleled most of the questions used in surveying participating teachers. Interviews were conducted via e-mail to encourage participation. According to Meho (2006), many people believe online communication is anonymous, which may explain why when using this venue some are more likely to participate in a timely fashion and embellish less. Online interviews provide "unprecedented opportunities for qualitative research" (Meho, 2006, p. 1293). McAuliffe (2004) further contended, online interviews "could prove a useful tool for generational quality data" (p. 62). This appears the perfect venue for this study to ensure greater participation of busy professionals, to honor their time by giving them the opportunity to reflect before answering questions so they can be more insightful and detailed with their answers, and to ensure accuracy of their responses.

The three participating principals' assistance was solicited in purposefully choosing 20 teachers from each school to survey. Random selection does not offer as great a likelihood for diversity. The researcher identified specific demographic criteria to the administrators in helping obtain a diverse research sample. This included diversity in the following categories:

1) gender; 2) age; 3) years of teaching experience; 4) degrees awarded.

The researcher provided surveys to the pre-selected 60 teachers (Appendix C) with the principals' help. The survey tool comprised seven open-ended questions designed to be objective in nature. It also allowed space for comments as needed. Ten of the sixty teachers invited to participate returned completed surveys. Participating teachers ranged in age from under 25 years of age to over 51. Two were male, seven were female, and one declined to reveal gender. Six had masters degrees, three had bachelors degrees, and one declined to provide information on formal education. Three had over twenty-two years' teaching experience, three had taught between six and ten years, three had taught between one and five years, and one declined to answer. Five of the teachers who returned surveys were from the school designated as L-1, two were from L-2, and three were from L-3. Demographics of teacher participants are represented in *Table 3.1*.

Table 3.1

Teacher Participant Demographics

	AGE	DEGREES OBTAINED	GENDER	SCHOOL	YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE
TEACHER 1	51+	Masters	Female	L-1	22+
TEACHER 2	36-50	Bachelors	Male	L-1	22+
TEACHER 3	51+	Masters	Female	L-1	22+
TEACHER 4	26-35	Masters	Female	L-1	1-5
TEACHER 5	26-35	Masters	Female	L-1	6-10
TEACHER 6	26-35	Bachelors	Female	L-2	6-10
TEACHER 7	26-35	Masters	Female	L-2	6-10
TEACHER 8	26-35	Masters	Male	L-3	1-5
TEACHER 9	No Response	No Response	No Response	L-3	No Response
TEACHER 10	Under 25	Bachelors	Female	L-3	1-5

Ethical Consideration

In order to protect participants of this study, the researcher: 1) did not engage in any deception throughout the course of the study; 2) minimized shared experiences that may have led the participants by utilizing bracketing as a data collection technique; 3) did not reveal the names or identities of participants or schools in which they are employed; 4) stored all hard data in a locked cabinet and destroyed such data after completion of analysis; 5) stored all electronic data on a computer requiring password access; and 6) received approval through the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix D) and the district office of participating schools L-2 and L-3 to conduct the study (Appendix E). Additionally, all subjects were invited to participate and principals were required to complete a consent form (Appendix F), assuring their protection, in order to participate. They received a *Rights of Research Participants* informational sheet (Appendix G), as did participating teachers.

Further protection of participants was assured by the care taken throughout the teacher participant process. As previously mentioned, the researcher invited help from the principals in creating a diverse research sample; however, to protect teacher participants, the principals simply placed surveys and an informational letter inviting participation (Appendix H) in appropriate mailboxes without comment or coercion. Neither the principals nor anyone else including the researcher knew who chose to participate and who did not. Identities remained anonymous throughout the study, and all data was destroyed after analysis. Surveys were numbered and color-coded for participants' protection.

The researcher's exempt IRB application was approved by committee July 9, 2009 and the study began shortly thereafter.

Procedure

Data Collection.

Data included interviews with three school administrators (principals) and surveys of ten secondary educators. The researcher also attended one session of each school's professional development and collected field notes from observations as well as additional documentation limited to handouts from the professional development sessions, follow-up materials the administration utilized, and various related documents. Such documents included the following: [L-2] Grading Guide Sheets (Appendix I), [L-1] Log (Appendix J), [L-3] Evaluation Form (Appendix K), [L-2] PLC Team Progress Worksheet (Appendix L), and [L-2] Flex Time Registration Form (Appendix M). Further data from observations included room maps drawn by the researcher to indicate layout of the room, attendees, and where they sat (Appendix N). Triangulation of the data ensured reliability of the study.

Data Analysis.

The researcher used QSR NVivo 8 ® to sort and analyze data into emerging themes. The researcher began by typing observation notes, teacher surveys, and e-mail interviews into Word documents. Next, the researcher began entering observation notes from all three participating schools into NVivo ®. Observation notes, teacher survey responses, and administrator e-mails were all coded using NVivo ®. First Free Nodes were established, and then Tree Nodes were determined, which became the emerging themes of the study. Observation notes were also color-coded for determination of

classification of activities (e.g., administrator-driven, teacher-led, question/answer sessions, and verbal/social activities). All data entered into NVivo® was double checked for accuracy of placement to be certain it was properly coded. Maps of the rooms where observations took place were recreated in PowerPoint for later analysis. Veracity of the data was established through triangulation of data collected. Because interviews were conducted through e-mail, member checking was utilized as well (Appendix O). Additionally, the researcher maintained frequent correspondence with two peer reviewers who are considered experts in the field of education in order to ensure objectivity throughout data collection and analysis. Two other peer reviewers with expertise specifically in the field of professional development offered assistance ensuring further objectivity and accuracy of analysis. An audit trail protected the accuracy of the study. The doctoral committee served in this capacity.

Delimitations and Limitations.

A delimitation of this study is that it was set in three public secondary Nebraska schools. A limitation to this phenomenographic design is that the researcher assumed qualitative data would yield thick, rich data. The researcher did not have the time or resources to build rapport with participants necessary to establish trust, which could have impacted the results of the data collected. A further limitation involved the purposeful selection of invited teacher participants into the study. Despite every effort to select in a non-biased way, the potential for some unintentional selection exists.

Study Timeline.

The study took approximately five months. Data collection began after Doctoral Committee and IRB approval in mid-July, 2009. The first data collected were e-mail

interviews with participating administrators. Further data collection continued through October, including teacher surveys, professional development visitation and collection of field note observations and documentation. Data analysis began after all data had been collected in early October, 2009, and took approximately two months.

Summary

This study was designed to be retrospective in nature, with participants and researcher learning from experiences shared in relation to professional development. Because of the brevity of the study, only five months, the proposition of extreme changes to professional development is not intended. Rather, the investigation is intended to either corroborate what similar studies have revealed, or possibly uncover new insights in the field. Chapter 3 detailed methods and procedures of the study, research design, methodology, participants and demographics, ethical consideration, data collection, data analysis, delimitations and limitations of the study, and the actual study timeline. Chapter 4 will reveal the findings of this study and describe data analysis and themes that emerged as a result.

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter 4 will discuss the findings of this research study. Included will be a description of the computer program used to analyze the data, data results, and a description and elaboration of emerging themes. A summation of significant findings will conclude this chapter.

Data Analysis

This study comprised a collection of written and verbal responses regarding educators' opinions of their professional development experiences. Included were e-mail interview responses of three administrators (principals), written responses of ten anonymous secondary educators, and the researcher's observations of 288 educators and their candid comments during three separate professional development sessions. Also included were pertinent materials collected during visitations to participating schools' professional development sessions. The researcher began by using data provided by participating administrators in e-mail interviews. Survey data was limited to the ten teachers who responded of the sixty invited to participate. Observation data was examined to complete the triangulation of the research. Saturation was reached upon analyzing all of the aforementioned data collected.

E-mail interviews between the researcher and participating administrators, as well as teacher surveys and observation notes, were reviewed and compared to address the research question: *What are the similarities and differences between administrators' and teachers' perceptions of necessary components for effective professional development for educators?*

The researcher used QSR NVivo 8 ®, a research software program for qualitative research, to affirm validity of the data analysis. She also conducted periodic meetings with an impartial peer reviewer to ensure objectivity and accuracy.

Themes

This short-term retrospective study was conducted of three schools in Nebraska and included opinions and insights of administrators, teachers, and observations gleaned by the researcher, to see if obvious themes emerged shedding light on this oft-studied, frequently misunderstood topic of critical import. Findings from administrators' e-mail interviews, teachers' surveys, the researcher's observation notes, and collected materials from professional development visitations revealed these four emerging themes common to the topic of professional development: 1) *Teachers and administrators believe professional development responsibilities need to be shared;* 2) *administrator and teacher roles in professional development impact its effectiveness;* 3) *teachers and administrators believe forethought and preparation are vital to professional development successes;* and 4) *teachers and administrators believe professional development effectiveness is not dependent upon expenditures*. Sub-categories under each will be discussed in this chapter as well. Evidence for each of the themes is provided by the researcher. In an effort to discern whether opinions varied between participants, responses within surveys were first compared. Then responses between administrators and participants were compared. Finally, researcher observation notes were critiqued to identify any correlating, as well as conflicting, perceptions.

For clarity, the researcher organized the four emerging themes of the study and their sub-categories into *Table 4.1.*

Table 4.1

Themes Organization Table

Themes	Sub-categories
Teachers and administrators believe professional development responsibilities need to be shared.	Collaboration
	Leadership
	Teacher-Led Sessions
	Teacher Participation
	Teacher Attitudes
	Teacher Input
Administrator and teacher roles of professional development directly impact its effectiveness.	Administrator-Driven
	School Improvement/Accreditation
	School Climate
	Accountability
Teachers and administrators believe forethought and preparation are vital to professional development successes.	On-going Professional Development
	Time Limitations
Teachers and administrators believe professional development effectiveness is not dependent upon expenditures.	Resources
	Technology

The researcher began by analyzing shared professional development responsibilities. Data showed the aspect of shared professional development responsibilities included six sub-categories: 1) collaboration, allowing for educators to meet and discuss issues relevant to their instructional practices; 2) leadership, including serving as mentors for colleagues and conducting action research in their classrooms; 3) teacher input, providing opportunities for educators to make their developmental needs known; 4) teacher-led sessions, encouraging educators to share their expertise at professional development sessions; 5) teacher participation, revealing evidence of teachers' levels of involvement during professional development sessions; and 6) teacher attitudes, disclosing perceptions of the effectiveness of professional development. Next, the researcher scrutinized administrator and teacher roles in professional development, breaking it down into four sub-categories: 1) administrator-driven professional development, offering very little teacher input; 2) school improvement and accreditation, a goal pursued by many districts; 3) school climate, relating to overall effectiveness and perceptions of professional development in the schools; and 4) accountability, measuring accomplishments of duties and responsibilities met. A third sub-category investigated by the researcher involved forethought and preparation of professional development. Planning was viewed regarding: 1) a need for on-going professional development and 2) time limitations. The final sub-category explored was effectiveness and expenditures, which included: 1) resources available and 2) technology.

Shared Professional Development Responsibilities.

The most obvious and critical aspect of shared responsibilities, according to the results of this study, emerged as *collaboration*. When asked to describe a component that

stands out regarding professional development in L-3, Teacher 10 was vehement in responding, "My reading PLC – great collaboration! We share great ideas and are really doing some neat things this year with fluency and comprehension to better our students." Most teachers involved in the study, either via teacher surveys or the researcher's observations, corroborated the importance of working with others in the field. They discussed an essential need to collaborate with their colleagues on pedagogical and other teacher-related issues as a means of effective professional development individually, interdepartmentally, and within the schools where they teach. Administrators also acknowledged the positive impact of collaboration among their staff. Throughout the observations at all three participating schools, the researcher noted high levels of engagement among teachers during moments when they were allowed to discuss information with each other and share ideas. This included such activities as guided discussion of meaningful benchmarks and experiences with grading - both positive and negative. Additional activities included jigsawing work on the second chapter of Robert Marzano's *A Handbook for Classroom Instruction That Works* (2001). Jigsawing is a strategy whereby each member of a small group reads a section of the assigned material and then explains his or her newly acquired information to the group. In this way, more material can be taken in more efficiently and more effectively than if everyone read the entire portion before sharing. After the jigsawing activity, teachers engaged in brainstorming to recall strategies they used in their classrooms last year, and finally prepared to observe colleagues' classrooms to share insights. During such moments, the researcher observed heads together, nods and other affirming gestures, high volume of discussion, and body language that indicated sincere interest and enjoyment in the task.

In regard to the research question, data revealed the import of allowing teachers to be involved in part of the planning, facilitating, and active discussions of their own professional development. In an eight hour professional development session at one school, a forty-five minute time frame was allocated to Professional Learning Teams (PLTs). This appeared to be one of the most productive activities of the day based on observable cues (thoughtful expressions, focus to task, energy in the room, participants taking notes), which suggests collaboration is of high interest to these teachers. Due to time constraints, one administrator announced a five minute warning with the caution that, "If you don't get done, you can continue on your own time." This made questionable the value placed on collaboration by the administrative staff, although, all three of the administrators interviewed as a part of this study indicated support of teacher collaboration as a learning tool for professional development.

The participating principal from L-2 showed a strong interest in collaboration not only among his teachers, but between the teachers and administrators. Following is his answer to this interview question: *Please describe a component or incident that stands out regarding professional development in your school*. Answer:

> This year, our Professional Learning Community (PLC) day was August 12. We had all [L-2] teachers together for the day in our new cafeteria. I believe that day is an example of the collaboration between teachers and administrators to make the day a success. It built on some themes that were started last year. The topics were developed in conjunction with the district School Improvement efforts and a day of planning and preparation

in July. It tied together some issues that fit the   needs

of our building and can be addressed by research-based solutions. It was

 also a preview to other staff   development activities later in the year.

The L-3 principal echoed this sentiment by stating, "We hope there is an on-going

conversation with staff so we both come to the same conclusion of what our general or

individual needs are.   That is always our goal." The L-1 principal also shared what her

school is doing to foster collaboration.

[L-1] teachers also meet the second Wednesday of each month for an hour

to focus on professional learning groups and improving teaching and

learning. Two years ago they read the book *What Great Teachers Do*

Differently by Todd Whitaker (2007). Last year they read a book on

change, and this year they are reading and focusing on Robert Marazano's

nine strategies in *Classroom Instruction that Works* (2001).

Teacher 3 (L-1) wrote, "We had about a dozen teachers purchase the book *Tools for*

Teaching by Fred Jones. We read it and got together to discuss it one summer," in

response to the following question on the survey: *Please describe a memorable teaching*

technique shared by a professional development presenter/facilitator. This suggests a

facilitator of one of the school's professional development sessions suggested

collaboration between teachers as a means of developing skills as educators. Teacher 3

added, "Having taught for many years, I realized how beneficial it was to discuss what

we had read."

Testimonials by teachers and administrators, as well as observations noted by the

researcher, show collaboration to be of primary importance to educators' professional

development. A movement toward this end appears to be gaining ground in the three

schools examined in this study.

Another facet of shared responsibilities important to many of the participating

teachers and administrators is that of *leadership.* This includes teachers taking on

leadership roles as well as being willing to conduct action research in their classrooms.

The L-2 principal validated the hard work and efforts of her teachers at the end of one of

their professional development sessions, and encouraged strong leadership in her closing

remarks, "We do this, not because we're bad teachers, but because we're good teachers

who want to get better. It's important to have as many tools in our box as we can get.

Many of you already do much of this – celebrate that!"

Examples of teacher leadership from participants of this study were numerous.

Teacher 2 (L-1) said,

> Typically [professional development] is planned by administration, but the
>
> last two years, I have been on a staff development committee. It is our job
>
> to identify areas for staff development and help make it happen. Our
>
> school schedules one staff development a month. Recently we have been
>
> involved in learning communities.

Teacher 3 (L-1) stated, "I plan for my own – I attend middle conferences and any

workshops I can find about language arts / middle school…" Of the ten teachers who

participated in the study by completing surveys, five reported serving as planners,

presenters, and/or facilitators of professional development sessions in their schools. One

was the leader of the PLC, and Teacher 7 (L-2) "made suggestions that were ignored."

Teacher 7's school allows faculty to choose from various topics throughout the year to

meet professional development requirements set forth by the district. Attendance is

expected until required hours have been fulfilled. According to Teacher 7,

> I am part of the Nebraska Holocaust Education Consortium and work
>
> closely with leaders at the ADL. They were willing to present a
>
> curriculum for U.S. History to our district, for free. I tried to talk to our
>
> district curriculum leader about it and he ignored me and tried to tell me
>
> no one would go because everyone always got their hours by going to the
>
> traditional sessions. He wouldn't even take a business card from the ADL
>
> people. About two months later, he sent out an e-mail that not everyone
>
> had their hours and he needed suggestions of potential sessions. When I
>
> re-mentioned it to him, he acted like it was the first time I'd mentioned it.
>
> Really frustrating!

It is apparent that leadership is growing in participating schools; however, some

adjustments and improvements on how it is implemented may take time.

A third sub-category regarding shared responsibilities important to teachers

surveyed is *teacher input.* Clearly, this ties strongly to collaboration and leadership. For

the purposes of this study, teacher input will encompass insights and suggestions elicited

by administrators from individuals who may not want, or feel equipped, to take on solid

leadership roles, but are participants whose ideas are valued, nonetheless. For the most

part, this took the form of reflective activities allowing teachers to create personal and

departmental goals for the upcoming school year. Administrators and professional

development team planners from all three schools utilized this process to make

arrangements for future professional development sessions. On the surface, this looked

like an easy and effective way to plan for teacher education. Unfortunately, underlying

obstacles made this more of a challenge to all involved parties than expected. One

teacher who was not engaged in the goal-writing activity, said to the researcher, "I hope

you're having a good time – if you like boring you're getting a lot of it here today, Young

Lady." His apparent cynicism left it unclear whether he would truly prefer someone else

to do the planning and just tell him what he needed to do, or if, perhaps, he felt his

suggestions would not be accepted. Given the opportunity to provide input, however,

most teachers appeared committed to doing their best to be candid and productive as they

worked.

At the L-2 professional development session, one administrator asked the faculty,

"What will your teams do to improve the PLC process this year?" This called for an

individual reflective activity that was then shared with PLC teams. In her e-mail

interview, the L-3 principal said, "Building administrator teams provide training, which is

focused on teachers' goals at the beginning of the year, and is on-going as needed

throughout the year." She further explained,

> The school has a Continuous School Improvement Committee that meets
>
> regularly throughout the year. There is a cooperative and collaborative
>
> effort between this committee, department chairs, and the administrative
>
> team in deciding what topics will be addressed, and when the sessions will
>
> be held. They always review with teachers prior to the end of the school
>
> year to see if they have any concerns or suggestions. A finalized plan is
>
> shared with the entire staff prior to their leaving at the end of the school
>
> year.

This participating principal reported she "likes the Flex Time approach. Teachers have options to choose from. It empowers the teachers. At this time, [I don't] think there is anything [I] would change." Teacher 6 (L-2) also reported of her school that, "All teachers have the opportunity to evaluate the professional development workshops / sessions we attended." That was true for two of the three schools participating in this study.

In addition to wanting opportunities for collaboration, leadership, and input, many teachers also discussed a need for *teacher-led* professional development sessions. As part of the L-2 professional development session, teachers led various activities, both instructional and community building activities, but this comprised only about five to ten percent of the session. This seemed an important part of the professional development session. Teachers listened attentively to their colleagues and lively discussions often ensued as a result. Another obvious benefit is the fostering of the teacher leadership currently being promoted in schools nationwide. Teacher-led professional development, in some ways, is yet in its infancy. Comments from teachers show disparity of opinions on this topic. Teacher 6 (L-2) said, "Subject matter professional development has teachers specializing in certain areas teach the sessions," while teacher 7 (L-2) reported, "[I] led one program last year, not well-attended because of lack of advertising by the district leader." Teacher 8 (L-3) admitted, "Planning is done by district staff and building administration. Sessions are conducted and led by fellow teachers, but themes and approval of sessions come from building or district administration."

Teacher participation also emerged as a sub-category of shared responsibilities. Teacher participation differs from teacher input in that it addresses how engaged teachers

are during professional development sessions. Findings indicated teachers were more likely to participate in activities that involved either movement or a social aspect. Sitting and listening frequently led to distractions. The researcher noticed many teachers on cell phones and laptops, holding sidebar conversations, checking their watches, or exchanging photographs during times requiring nothing more than listening on their part.

Humor also proved a strong hook to teacher participation. At the L-2 professional development session, a teacher led an ice-breaker activity that received positive feedback from other teachers. One of the questions was *If someone made a movie of your life, would it be a drama, comedy, action, tragedy, or romance – and who should play YOU?* Everyone was so engaged at that point in the activity, that even when a group was standing right beside the researcher, it was impossible to understand what they were saying because of the noise level in the room. Nonetheless, heads were together, and all participants appeared to understand what each of their colleagues was saying. Teachers were reluctant to go back to their seats when directed to do so; some even blatantly ignored the directive for a minute or two.

Verbal / social activities allowing teachers to share strategies that work or do not work in their classrooms also met with positive reception. Question / answer sessions proved popular as well. At the L-2's professional development, one teacher stated, "The 'F' policy at [L-2] is holding us back. I had kids last year who met standards, but because of attendance, they failed." The administrator's response was, "Point well-taken." Another teacher contributed this insight, "I could have more kids pass, but not maintaining my integrity," to which a third party added, "Why they are failing is important. We need to look at specific problems. Is it attendance? Were they five

percent away from passing? Is it laziness?" A fourth teacher commented, "Failing is

acceptable now; there is no stigma." A final comment from one teacher cautioned,

"Because of increased credits required for graduation (220 last year to 230 this year),

we'll probably see increased dropout rates among seniors next year." Teachers went on to

share personal experiences they have had with grading – either as teachers, parents, or

when they were students. All of this resulted in the glimmer of a change coming from

administration. After a break, one administrator spoke to the group of teachers thanking

them for their insights and assuring them their comments did not go unappreciated. He

promised them a committee would be forthcoming to address the failures and grading

issues they raised and praised them for their astute observations and dedication.

It is a mistake to assume only verbal / social activities yield participation among

teachers. As previously mentioned, verbal / social activities appeared to be most popular

with teachers, but only at the beginning of the professional development session.

Reflective activities, often those requiring teachers to think quietly and write their

perceptions, seemed to be well-received. During the discussion on grading at L-2,

teachers were given some time to reflect on personal experiences with grading. They

used two learning guide sheets (Appendix G) to facilitate deep thinking on the subject,

and were later asked to share insights with people at their tables, fostering greater

participation among the group. The researcher noted a high level of interest and

engagement during reflective activities, but especially those conducted toward the last

two hours of the eight-hour session. Perhaps teachers were tired and this allowed them

time to absorb some of the information they had received in various venues throughout

the day. Whatever the reason, it was apparent they participated attentively during the reflective activities with surprisingly few distractions and little to no resistance.

Knowing what is expected upfront also seemed to foster stronger participation from teachers. During the L-3 professional development session, most everyone had notebooks and pens; they knew the purpose of their professional development was instructional and they were ready for it. Those teachers had also been given an "assignment" to read some information on formative assessment that had been mailed to them over the summer. They came prepared to discuss and reflect on the topic because they knew what to expect before the session even began. Their interest had been piqued because they had already been thinking about assessment. One teacher addressed her colleagues by asking, "How do you keep students on track to use that feedback?" Another asked, "How do you get students to believe they really can use that data to change?" Yet another wanted to know, "How do students juggle all the various types of formative assessment they encounter from different teachers?" Questions came so fast, there was no time at first to answer them. The teachers were very excited about the topic. Finally, one teacher suggested, "I have a workshop book that shows step-by-step advice I can share. I use it with my speech class." Another noted, "Delivery is the key. Show how they got more right than wrong – it shifts the paradigm." Another teacher corroborated, saying, "Put the number right on the top of the page instead of the number wrong. That gives a positive focus." L-1 teachers' experiences with participation during their professional development were similar. Having been asked to read the first chapter of Robert Marzano's *Classroom Instruction that Works* (2001), they were highly engaged in a discussion on rubrics. One teacher noted, "I used to be very general with my rubrics,

but now I give more specific feedback while offering more choices." Another said, "I think parents need to be educated about this, too. We need to figure out how to have this conversation at the high school level. That is often harder." In response, a third teacher declared, "That is an important consideration for all of us this year," and a final comment from another teacher raised the issue that "this focus on formative assessment seems like a double standard since we focus on summative assessment with report cards and grade point averages." By that point, participation in the group was cinched; not a teacher in the room was disengaged from the discussion. Clearly, teacher participation can be encouraged and achieved with the right approach. Verbal / social activities, movement, humor, well-developed reflective activities, and setting the expectations beforehand were shown to be some of the most successful ways of promoting participation.

Despite the researcher's observation of participation during professional development sessions at all three participating schools, teachers sometimes responded conversely. When asked to describe a component or incident that stands out regarding professional development, Teacher 5 (L-1) stated,

> It doesn't seem we've had much. Most is just information related to school improvement. Our in-service days are spent doing committee work for school improvement. Last year we utilized a learning community format for some professional growth. Most were too busy to fully participate.

Teacher 6 (L-2) said,

> I typically do not enjoy attending school professional development because it rarely applies to activity-based instruction. However, [L-2

administrator] taught an assessment piece last year that was fantastic. It

gave everyone several good ideas to incorporate into their classrooms.

She had us do a lot of interacting, practice in groups, practice in our own

subject areas.

Participation can be a tenuous facet to control. Although teachers generally

appeared to appreciate the opportunity to talk and share ideas, the researcher noted that

limits needed to be set. One carousel activity, requiring teachers to go from one station to

another under time directives, quickly lost its effectiveness as the day grew long, the

teachers grew tired, and leaders began to dominate. Orchestrating activities that allow for

all voices to be heard, while at the same time fostering productivity and interest, can be

challenging.

Teacher attitudes toward professional development are closely tied to all of the

other sub-categories of shared responsibilities. Throughout the three observations

conducted by the researcher, both positive and negative teacher attitudes were detected.

At all three schools, attitudes seemed positive at the onset of the professional

development session, based on body language, smiles, and levels of engagement

witnessed. This tended to be the case during activities of high interest to the teachers –

primarily those they felt they had a vested interest in, those they suggested be a part of

the venue, and those that involved humor or verbal / social opportunities. Toward break

time, lunch time, and at the end of the day, attitudes appeared to shift toward more

ambivalence, and at times even negativity. This included negative comments spoken in

an undertone, "checking out" by sending text messages or working on laptops, doodling,

packing up early, engaging in sidebar conversations, and sagging postures.

One interesting incongruity was noted by the researcher. Two ladies in the restroom were overheard discussing a student they had in common. This occurred after lunch, right before the afternoon session was to begin. They were concerned about his achievement because of information they received during the morning portion of the professional development session. Although it was lunch time, they were still talking about the morning session and applying it to their student. Within minutes of this profoundly positive exhibition, a strikingly opposing attitude was brought forth by a 65 year old veteran teacher. He informed the researcher that he had over 40 years of teaching experience and proceeded to reveal an extremely negative attitude toward L-2's professional development. He said, "It's the same pay whether you do this stuff or not." He said of his PLC group's work to meet district requirements, "We just make everything up." Later the same man walked by the researcher and said, "Well, you're still with us. By, God! If the taxpayers could see the damn waste of money that goes into these days…they wouldn't believe it!" Another teacher asked, "Have you gotten a couple of naps?"

Attitudes among teachers varied somewhat at each of the three participating schools. The L-1 principal told the researcher that some of the staff is pretty angry with her because they liked the old faculty meetings that were strictly informational agendas. Now they have gone to on-going monthly professional development, which she calls "professional conversations." These generally span the time of one to one-and-a-half hours.

She conjectured,

Teachers would say in the past, staff development sessions didn't always

have vision,   focus, or an objective; but in recent years it has been

planned for them with a clear explanation at the beginning of the year of

what the vision is for the year and why. [I] believe they would say it has

not always been of great importance, but now it is.

 Interestingly, although the L-1 principal's perception is that her teachers dislike the

sessions, many of their survey comments and observed behaviors indicated quite the

opposite. The L-2 professional development sessions revealed highly engaged teachers

with positive attitudes for the first five of eight hours, after which, they appeared to tire of

the process and attitudes took a downward shift. The L-2 principal believes,

Some would describe it as boring and something they "have to" go

through. Some would describe it as a chance for professionals to talk

together about strategies and interventions that can help students. Some

would say they gain a few ideas they can take and use in the classroom.

The L-3 teachers' attitudes were positive throughout their professional development

session. The session was three-and-a-half hours long and suggested a community

atmosphere that was both positive and productive. The principal from L-3 said of teacher

attitudes,

Schools are always going to have staff members that think staff

development does not include them. Administrators need to know who

these people are, but truly focus on the people who want to get better. I

always feel eventually they will all come aboard with patience, guidance,

and the proper resources.

Comments from participating teachers' surveys regarding attitude toward professional development varied. Teacher 4 (L-1) said professional development is "generally worthless – the whole lot of them," whereas Teacher 1, (also from L-1) said, "They are good if the purpose is very clear and the program organized." L-1 Teacher 3 asserted, "Every teacher needs professional development no matter how many years they have taught. It needs to be required." Teacher 5 (L-1) gave rave reviews on one session hosted by the area Educational Service Unit (ESU), declaring, "Presenters engaged us and modeled the techniques they were teaching." Teacher 6 (L-2) also lauded a session aligned with helping L-2 become a pilot school for fly fishing, appreciating the hands-on experience and saying, "We were able to do it and not just talk about it." Such an example clearly shows L-2's commitment to allowing teachers choice and a strong correlation to positive teacher attitude toward learning. Teacher 9 (L-3) said, "Too much lecture; often it doesn't apply very well to what we do – seems like a waste of time; drop all the emphasis on 'data analysis.'" Teacher 10 (L-3) said of one professional development session, "The presenter described specific reading strategies to use in our classrooms. She was upbeat – energetic – and made the workshop practical. Professional development is a good thing – I enjoy it – when it is worthwhile to me." Teachers 2 and 4, each from L-1, also had opposing viewpoints. Teacher 2: "Great content, easy to adapt in my classroom." Teacher 4: "Ineffective waste of time," and "Sheer boredom," were used to describe professional development experienced at L-1. Teacher 4 further noted, I realize it's necessary, but I find it to be wholly worthless – especially when high school teachers are in the same session as elementary teachers." Needless to say, it is impossible

to please everyone all of the time, but these educators have provided insight worthy of consideration for improving future professional development.

Administrator and Teacher Roles in Professional Development.

The second theme that emerged as a result of the data collected through interviews, surveys, and observations, is that of administrator and teacher roles. Because of vast pressures and expectations assigned public school administrators, much of the professional development provided to teachers is *administrator-driven*. The L-2 principal admitted it is difficult to avoid this aspect, but strives to "…have more staff members involved so it isn't something the administrators *do to* teachers, but it is something that professionals do to help get better and improve their ability to help students experience success." The researcher's observations revealed less than ten percent of the L-1 professional development session was administrator-driven; at L-2 there appeared to be a fairly equal mix of administrator-driven and teacher input activities, and even a few activities that were teacher-led; and at L-3 about half of the session was administrator driven with a mix throughout the session of activities in which teachers could actively participate.

During the L-2 professional development session, it was clear the administration had a set agenda for the day. Objectives were reviewed via a PowerPoint presentation to begin the day's activities. Objectives included setting goals and benchmarks, looking at statistics of graduation and dropout rates within the district, grading and assessment, and time to work with Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The day was planned so administrators presented research-based information to introduce each topic, followed by various activities to engage teachers in the process. Activities included question/answer

sessions, jigsawing of academic reading material, small group discussion, think/pair/share, and time for quiet reflection. For the most part, the researcher noted highly engaged teachers participating animatedly in professional discussions with their colleagues. Toward the end of the eight-hour session, however, involvement and interest declined sharply. Many teachers began to fidget, doodle, check e-mails on laptops, send text messages on cell phones, hold sidebar discussions with others at their table, and generally lose focus. The administration reserved work time in PLC groups toward the last part of the day; consequently, it became rushed. Teachers, despite their exhaustion and the intensity of the session, revived and showed excitement at the prospect of sharing ideas with their colleagues in a professional venue, only to have their time cut short, as previously mentioned, after about thirty minutes due to time restrictions caused by too heavy an agenda.

The L-3 professional development session, only three and a half hours long, was similar to L-2 in that the administration led with objectives and introduced each segment with research-based data and references to academic works such as Stiggins' "Assessment Through the Students' Eyes" (2007), Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007), and Popham's *Transformational Assessment* (2008). It differed, however, because the agenda was more manageable, more realistic in terms of how much could reasonably be experienced in the allotted time. Teachers were allowed to discuss and problem solve with each other, and if they needed more time, that was honored. Focus was maintained for the entirety of the session, because the session was brief enough for all participants to keep their interest levels up, while still providing enough time for meaningful conversations and learning to occur.

Formative assessment was the primary focus of the L-3 professional development session, and besides backing the information with credible research and allowing teachers a chance to converse on the subject, the administrators also modeled what they were teaching. They provided twenty examples of testimonials from other teachers in the district on how they teach their students to use data to measure their progress – and then how they, as educators, can use the same data to improve student learning. These real-life examples made the task of formative assessment seem doable to the L-3 teachers. Instead of just being *told to do it*, they were *shown how to do it*. The administrators asked teachers for feedback throughout the session, modeling the importance of assessing throughout a learning activity. They concluded the session by having teachers complete an evaluation of the professional development session (Appendix I), which they would later use to prepare future learning sessions for the teaching staff throughout the year. L-2 also had teachers complete evaluations of the professional development session, but the difference was, while L-3 had teachers complete the forms before leaving, L-2 ran out of time and told teachers to bring them back in a couple of days. The value placed on teachers' feedback certainly seemed to vary between the two schools.

The L-1 professional development session was only one hour long; it was one portion of their on-going monthly professional development throughout the school year. Again, an agenda and objectives were projected at the opening of the session. The majority of the hour was devoted to giving teachers time to discuss Robert Marzano's (2001) *Classroom Instruction That Works*. The L-1 principal and her teaching staff obviously shared a respectful and caring relationship, based on smiles, body language, and conversations witnessed by the researcher. The principal from L-1 carefully

monitored each group, listened attentively, and took notes. In response to her e-mail interview regarding her role in professional development, the L-1 principal said she is responsible for planning staff development. She "plans the staff development for the entire school year the summer before, using district goals, staff needs, district policy, current trends, and state mandates (Special Education laws for example) to determine topics."

> The participating L-1 principal also commented on the importance of administration being involved in professional development. Schools are always going to have staff members that think staff development does not include them. Administrators need to know who these people are, but truly focus on the people who want to get better. I always feel eventually they will all come aboard with patience, guidance, and the proper resources.

The L-3 principal said her role in professional development is limited, and explained,

> Principals are always asked to provide input, as they meet monthly with the Associate Superintendent and Director of Education. They routinely talk about what their needs are and where they need help. It is not always formal input, and [I] have never been asked for specific input, but it is on-going. Principals and their supervisors jointly decide what they think is needed for staff development. It is an ingrained part of our culture.

The L-3 prinicipal further described professional development in her school, illustrating her role as leader, visionary, and team member.

> Using faculty meetings for staff development is very beneficial. Teachers

are readily available and it allows the administration time necessary to keep teachers informed without adding to their busy schedules. During such meetings, sometimes a teacher will identify a need. Other times, needs are identified by administrators through the appraisal process (formal or informal). We hope that there is an on-going conversation with staff so we both come to the same conclusion of what our general or individual needs are. That is always our goal.

The L-2 principal described yet another view of his role in professional development. He said,

As the building principal, I'm responsible for professional development, to either be the primary decision maker or to delegate that responsibility. The role has evolved over the 15 years I have been principal at [L-2]. Originally I did more of the detail work myself. The past several years we have had talented and interested Associate Principals who have taken on that responsibility. We share much of the work as a leadership team and also include teachers who are on the School Improvement Team.

He went on to explain the time requirement of professional development for his teachers.

We have seven hours of building time during the school year. We have three and a half hours at the beginning of the year for building issues. We have one day (seven hours) at the beginning of the year to present a kick-off to the PLCs for the year. Teachers also have seven hours of district staff development during the year that is tied to their department

or specialty area. Most of the activities at the building level are provided \

by building staff members and they are tied to the district and building

goals and research-based best practice.

Teachers' perceptions of the role of the administrator in conjunction with

professional development were varied, and somewhat ambiguous. In response to survey

question number one, *Please describe professional development in your school / district*

(who plans it, how often, and when it occurs, typical activities, etc.), some teachers were

not entirely certain. Teacher 5 (L-1) said it was "Planned by administration (principal,

superintendent, activity director), occurs on in-service days for a one to two hour session,

and is usually presented by staff from the Educational Service Unit (ESU)." General

activities, as noted by Teacher 5, were lectures, some small group work, and sometimes

technology-related work. Teacher 4 (L-1) concurred, adding that professional

development at L-1 occurs monthly. Teacher 9 (L-3) stated, "I believe administrators

with possibly some help or input plan it," and went on to describe typical activities as,

"meetings, PLC work, data analysis, learning new trends and activities." Teacher 10 (L-

3) reported professional development at the building level generally focused on "a

common theme developed by administrators," and "the district level focuses on

development workshops in the teachers' area [of expertise]."

The research question – *What are the similarities and differences between*

administrators' and teachers' perceptions of necessary components for effective

professional development for educators? – was examined at this juncture of the study.

An argument could be made that teachers' perceptions of their role in professional

development is directly related to what the administrators perceive as their role. For

example, if administrators view their role as primarily decision-makers and managers of professional development, teachers will view their own role as that of secondary participants; conversely, if administrators share the decision-making process, teachers will likely feel like active members of a team geared toward helping them to develop professionally. With that in mind, the researcher included a question on the teacher surveys that asked *What is your role in professional development in your school / district?* Responses were very revealing. Teacher 3 (L-1) said they "must attend or are docked pay." Teacher 4 (L-1) said, "Go and do whatever they ask me to do." Teacher 5 (L-1) wrote, "Usually I attend, but not very enthusiastically." Teacher 6 (L-2) said it is "required of all staff." They saw their primary role as one with not much vested interest besides that of being *mandated* to attend.

Five of the ten teachers did, however, mention they had a role in planning parts of their school's professional development, three claimed roles as facilitators, and six said they had been asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their school's professional development sessions. Some positive comments regarding how teachers' roles in professional development impact perceptions of their instruction, came forth through teacher surveys. Teacher 8 (L-3) conceded to having "learned how to do team-builder activity and in-class activities to help struggling students (algebra blocks, self-reflection sheets, etc.)," which could then be transferred to enhance his own classroom climate for students. When asked to describe a memorable teaching technique shared by a professional development presenter / facilitator and explain what they found to be most effective about the experience, the teachers who reported having active roles in their professional development generally offered positive feedback. Teacher 2 (L-1) wrote,

"Great content, easy to adapt to my classroom." Teacher 5 (L-1) said the "content was useful / relevant." Teacher 6 (L-2) appreciated the hands-on experience, noting, "We were able to do it and not just talk about it." Teacher 7 mentioned "Practical uses; presented in a concise way," while Teachers 8, 9, and 10 (L-3) reiterated how valuable they found experiences that directly tied into their classroom instruction. Teacher 8 said, "Just having more methods to aid students needing extra help, which will also aid students who already understand the material," made a big difference to instruction. Teacher 9 noted appreciation that one professional development session provided "something I could use in my classroom." Teacher 10 made specific reference to a presenter saying, "She tied in theory but used practical ideas that we could easily implement." When asked *Were you able to implement something you learned from the presenter with relative ease into your own classroom?*- seven of the ten participating teachers responded with adamant affirmatives, two wavered a bit saying they have experimented with what they learned, and one said, "Not directly."

Some teachers perceived their administrator's role in the process in a negative light. Teacher 9 (L-3) said, "NCLB means we seem panicked about numbers and rates – we seem frantic and therefore must try whatever crazy idea they come across." Teacher 2 (L-1) responded, "Up until now, our planning has been more of a 'knee-jerk' reaction to what's going on. It has had very little value." Teacher 3 claimed, "Most of it is done by the administration and unfortunately the follow-up is poor. We have started many things and never finished," according to Teacher 4 (L-1), "I never know what we're doing until I show up. After it's over we've never gone back to it."

Some of the push toward administrator-driven professional development can be attributed to the push for *school improvement and accreditation* in many districts. The L-1 principal explained,

> At L-1, administrators plan two days of staff development at the beginning of the year, one day at the end of first quarter, one day during second quarter, two days during third quarter and one day during fourth quarter. These are whole day staff development sessions that are focused around their committee work and school improvement goals. L-1 teachers also meet the second Wednesday of each month for an hour to focus on professional learning groups and improving teaching and learning. Two years ago they read the book *What Great Teachers Do Differently* by Todd Whitaker (2007). Last year they read a book on change, and this year they are reading and focusing on Robert Marazano's nine strategies in *Classroom Instruction that Works* (2001).

Teacher 2 (L-1) wrote, "It seems the professional development in our school has been driven by school improvement." Teacher 3 (L-1) said, "Administration has us attend training for school improvement, standards, and assessments." Teacher 5 (L-1) showed discontent with the school's push toward accreditation and influence from outside sources when stating, "Professional development needs to be more relevant and not information regarding accreditation and outside visitation (for school improvement)." Teacher 2 (L-1) credited the school with allowing teacher involvement in the planning process, but qualified it by saying, "I am currently on the staff development committee. Our opportunities are limited due to school improvement. We are in the last of our cycle.

We have ideas for next year." When asked *If you could change anything about the way your school / district conducts professional development, what would it be?*- Teacher 3 (L-1) wrote, "I would have teacher input on kinds of professional development needed. It seems like all we do is get trained in school improvement things." When asked to *Please describe a component or incident that stands out regarding professional development in your school / district,* Teacher 5 (L-1) said,

> It doesn't seem we've had much. Most is just information related to school improvement. Our inservice days are spent doing committee work for school improvement. Last year we utilized a learning community format for some professional growth. Most were too busy to fully participate.

It appears that administrators and teachers are often working at cross purposes when it comes to professional development. The administration seems to view their role as leaders of school improvement frequently linked to accreditation aspirations; whereas teachers report wanting more from their professional development time than an opportunity to impresss outside sources. This introduces yet another component of the role of the administration, that of *school climate.* The aforementioned push for school improvement and accreditation has a strong affect on school climate.

During three visitations made by the researcher to participating schools on professional development days, it was noted that all three principals and their administrative teams had fostered positive working relationships with their teachers. The researcher noted all of the administrators and teachers seemed to have an easy, friendly professional rapport and respect for each other. Good-natured teasing never crossed

reasonable boundaries. Teachers at all three schools were greeted warmly by name –

often with pats on the shoulders and always with smiles. At L-2, one teacher concerned

for the researcher, mistaking her for a new teacher, and wanting to ensure that she felt

welcome, offered her a seat. A "reunion-type" atmosphere was created at all three

schools as teachers became reacquainted with each other and welcomed new-comers.

High volume and much laughter punctuated the celebratory climate. New teachers were

introduced and applauded. At L-3, two teachers were celebrating their birthdays and the

entire room erupted into a lively rendition of the "Happy Birthday" song. The researcher

was greeted by teachers at all three schools. L-2 happened to be under considerable

construction, and despite the noise of workers, the debris and mess and chaos, they were

willing to greet each other and work together for the day – most of them with pleasant

attitudes.

The positive climate at L-2 was established immediately upon entering the room

by the school's Mission Statement posted at the front on a large screen: *[L-2] is*

committed to preparing each student to use multiple perspectives and individual talents

to live, learn, and work in a diverse society. This lofty mission seemed to permeate the

atmosphere for much of the day as it was referred to periodically throughout the session.

One L-2 teacher (Teacher 6) made this observation about the day when completing the

teacher survey:

> The professional development you saw at [L-2] for our opening day was
>
> one of the better sessions I've attended in eight years of teaching. There
>
> were assigned tables and because of that, we had the opportunity to
>
> discuss things with teachers from other departments. There was also a lot

of moving around and hands-on pieces which are *much* more captivating

to me and my kinesthetic learning style.

The data collected during this study certainly indicated how critical it is for

administrators to create a positive school climate in order to promote healthy, effective

professional development for teachers. It is one of the key roles administrators play in

the process.

The final role that became apparent through this study is that of *accountability*.

Administrators must find the means to balance their responsibilities, their teachers'

needs, and hold both themselves and their staff accountable for meeting goals. During

her visit to L-2, the researcher noticed the assistant principals and the principal walked

around the room and monitored conversations shared by teachers during activities. The

Instructional Coordinators (ICs), however, did not wander around to observe the process

and listen in on discussions. They clustered up front to talk in a group. Although they

may have been conversing about professional development-related information, it seemed

to send a message to onlookers that they had "checked out" which may have tempted

other teachers to do the same. The researcher witnessed a sharp increase in energy in the

room later when the ICs began to mingle and share actively in the professional

development activities.

Because of commitment to Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) and Professional

Learning Communities (PLCs) in L-1 and L-2, administrators from each of these schools

shared their methods for holding teachers accountable in that venue. At L-2 quarterly

conferences are held with each PLT. The assistant principal explained the process to the

teachers during their first professional development session so everyone would have a

clear understanding of what was expected. This also held the administrative team

accountable for providing support for the PLTs. L-2 teachers were also asked to

formulate personal/professional goals that coincided with district goals (Appendix J).

After writing them down, they turned them into the administration, who would be

accountable for approving them and monitoring progress on them throughout the year.

At L-1 teachers were asked to keep a PLC log of what they were learning and

implementing into their classrooms through the shared reading they were doing

(Appendix H). The log had two sections, one requiring them to write a summary of what

the group shared about assigned reading, and one detailing a lesson they taught using a

strategy from the reading. The L-1 principal described another example of how she holds

teachers accountable for what they are learning during professional development. She

said,

> It is very important to hold the staff accountable. For example, they
>
> recently conducted a training session on the Smart Boards. Teachers
>
> worked on the Smart Boards and will be responsible for teaching at least
>
> two lessons per semester using the Smart Board. Not only are they to use
>
> it, but they are to demonstrate different skills in all four of the lessons.
>
> They are to notify administrators when they are ready and then they will
>
> be observed.

This accountability went both ways; teachers had a vested interest in internalizing what

they were learning so their professional development investment held merit, and the

administration was responsible for providing meaningful professional development that

could be monitored to maximize its effectiveness.

Teachers were also asked to share their perceptions of planning and follow-up of professional development in their schools, both of which tied to accountability. Teacher 1 (L-1) said they were expected to "write short essays / comments to be given to principal." This was a reference to the evaluation forms teachers completed so administrators had feedback on how effective teachers felt professional development sessions were. This is an important component to include in the administrators' accountability to provide meaningful experiences for faculty.

As previously mentioned, Teacher 3 (L-1) claimed, "We have started many things and never finished," indicating a need for greater accounatbility on the part of the administration. Teacher 4 (L-1) reiterated this idea, saying, "After it's over we've never gone back to it." Teacher 6 (L-2) says of follow-up at L-2, it is "usually by departments. We talk aobut the sessions, how we can make changes within our departments." This is another consideration; instead of simply holding individual teachers and administrators accountable for professional learning, departments are also expected to take an active role in being responsible for developing as professionals. Teacher 7 (L-2), however, is "not sure" where responsibility and accountability lie. This makes one question the clairty of operation if individual teachers are able to go through the process and remain uncertain about who they are accountable to and how they are accountable. Teacher 9 (L-3) aslo reported, "I'm not sure," and admitted that the only accountability factor at L-3 is completing the evaluation. Teacher 10 (L-3) noted, "Building administrators and district personnel check teachers' completion of hours. If required hours are not completed, teachers take a dock in pay."

It is uncertain why teachers from the same school reported such different understandings about how the accountability facet works in their professional development. This role of the administrator appears to be in need of more careful attention if all parties are to experience the maximum benefit possible from professional development. Careful attention to detail and preparation are necessary if accountability is to have any impact at all. This provides a seguey into the third theme of the study which involves planning.

Forethought and Preparation for Professional Development.

Forethought and preparation is a theme that surfaced several times throughout this study. The majority of teachers surveyed mentioned their desire for *on-going professional development*, as opposed to professional development that occurs only once or twice a school year. Administrators were not only supportive of this, but seemed to endorse it as much as teachers. The L-3 principal tries hard to foster on-going professional development and said,

> I like to think of it as cafeteria style." L-3 allows Flex Time for professional development so teachers can choose when and what they learn depending on their interests and needs. They are all accountable for 10.5 hours of Building Flex Time each year, as well as 10.5 hours of District Flex Time. The curriculum specialist at Central Office provides content-specific training at the beginning of the year, and on-going training if necessary. Building administrator teams provide training, which is focused on teachers' goals at the beginning of the year, and is on-going throughout the year.

The principal from L-2 shared his school's method of preparing for professional development. The administrative team (three assistant principals) work together on initial ideas for meeting both district and building goals. Then they team up with the School Improvement Team which is made up of some Instructional Coordinators (ICs), some department chairs, and some classroom teachers. They brainstorm, share ideas, make suggestions, work out time segments, and structure the order of agenda. The three assistant principals help them determine who will be responsible for each segment. The L-2 principal lauded his team declaring they are very strong in this area and do much of it without him. During the first professional development session of the school year, teachers are asked to complete a registration form to sign up for Flex Time professional development sessions (Appendix K). This provides them with choices regarding when and what they learn.

Much of the on-going professional development is fostered through collaborative activities, as noted in regards to the theme of shared responsibilities. L-1 teachers get together each month to discuss professional reading. Teacher 2 (L-1) said, "We are given one day of school per month for staff development. Attendance is mandatory." Other teachers mentioned earlier in this chapter who chose to take on leadership roles were clearly involved in on-going professional development because of the time commitment and planning for which they were responsible.

Unfortunately, *time limitations* often hinder the professional development process. This is a concern the researcher noted while observing the three schools' professional development sessions. Presenters and administrators were frequently looking at the clock and adjusting the agenda to accommodate it. During L-2's all-day session, teachers

strived to remain engaged but by the last two hours, even the most valiant attempts to remain focused were foiled by sheer mental exhaustion and too much information being crammed into an eight-hour segment. Sadly, because of time constraints, collaborative activities considered most important to many of the teachers during the L-2 professional development session were severely abbreviated. The

L-2 principal said one possible change he would like to see in the way his school conducts professional development is, "I'd like to see more time available for teachers to be involved." The principal from L-3 echoed that sentiment when she noted, "As educators, it is our responsibility to continue our development and use it in the classroom. As usual, there is never enough time!" The L-1 principal conceded much the same, stating, "I always feel like we are rushing. I would like to take an afternoon every two weeks during contract time to do professional development." Time, or lack thereof, will always be a factor, but with careful planning and prioritizing, perhaps it can be minimized so it does not become a controlling force allowed to derail the professional development process.

Effectiveness and Expenditures.

Money / cost certainly emerged as a theme, but had much less impact than the researcher had anticipated. All three schools included in the study made use of *teachers as resources* for at least part of their professional development. Other resources included shared reading materials, administrators, instructional coordinators, and other research data provided by the three districts. When asked about budget, the L-2 principal explained his school's investment.

The staff development that takes place at [L-2] has a very low cost

because most of it is developed and presented by people in our building. We do get support from the District Office to provide paid substitutes during the year for members of the School Improvement Committee to attend meetings as well as pay for teachers to attend planning time during the summer. We have not hired outside people to come to make presentations. Some departments have money to help pay for some teachers to attend state and national meetings, conferences, and workshops.

He admitted that money can be a factor, but illustrated how L-2 has worked around this so it is not a threat to teacher education in the district. He did concede, "I would like to see more opportunities for individuals or groups of teachers to attend state and national meetings and then bring those topics back to our building or district. I'd like to see more ability to bring national experts to the building level," but does not see that as something that will happen in the foreseeable future. He noted that "From time-to-time, the district brings in national leaders and makes it available to those in the buildings," but most of the professional development presentators are administrative staff or teacher-leaders.

The L-3 principal was very firm in her assertion that, "Budget is only a factor if you let it be." She went on to explain,

There was a time when [L-3] could easily send staff to conferences and provide them time for planning sessions. When the budget is tight, they adjust by sending one person instead of five, buying the books/tapes in lieu of attending the conference, or sharing with other schools. [L-3] uses Central Office staff as a valuable resource for staff development sessions.

The principal from L-1 perceived professional development as very important and advocated spending allowable monies on making it valuable for teachers. She said,

> For example, each year the school district buys all certified staff a book to use in their professional learning community groups. The district has also been very supportive of staff attending conferences and workshops. If a subject is important for staff training and the ESU can not cover the topic, the School Board will also welcome guest speakers or presenters to the district. Since [I] first came to serve at [L-1], [I] have found administration in the district to be supportive of new teachers, providing professional learning opportunities with the ESU #2 mentoring program \ as well as sending them to APL training. APL is a type of classroom management system offered by ESU #1. The speakers are facilitators are from Syracuse, New York so it is a pricey workshop; however, it is well worth the money and both of the district's superintendents have supported sending teachers there. With the stimulus money available in the next couple years, [I] anticipate a great deal will be spent on staff development.

That raises an interesting possibility, but until such monetary assistance becomes available, it appears L-1, L-2, and L-3 have all found ways to provide professional development for teachers without breaking the budget.

Teachers were not asked about the budget for professional development in survey questions upon the researcher's assumption that most of them would be wholly uninformed about any information pertaining to it. Teacher 3 (L-1), however, did

mention it in response to the question *What is your role in professional development in your school / district?* The response, "I make sure I attend training in my curricular area. I pay my own way if I have to," indicates this individual's strong commitment to developing as a professional educator. Thankfully, because of these schools' pledges to support and provide significant professional development experiences for their teachers, teacher out-of-pocket expenses are not necessary. As noted in the discussion on shared responsibilities, most teachers would rather have their colleagues lead discussions than listen to guest speakers. This unexpected synchronization between teachers' preference and district budgets proves a very fortuitous discovery that can be used to great advantage by all involved parties.

Technology is an expenditure topic that cannot go unmentioned. Certainly, technology was utilized as a means of presenting at all three participating schools' professional development sessions. The researcher noted use of Internet and PowerPoint at all three sessions. Teachers, too, were learning to use technology to promote learning in their classrooms, but many admitted to feeling ill-prepared to use technological equipment effectively. Teacher 2 (L-1) described a professional development session designed to prepare teachers in using technology for instruction.

> Last week we had pre-school in-service on Smart Board and Elmo. We spent 20 minutes in seven stations, each providing quality info on how to use and current resources. At the end we were given plenty of time to play with the technology. It got us all excited to use it.

Teacher 3 (L-1) said, "Our technology coordinator trains us in things like PowerPoint, Smart Board, Elmo, clickers, etc." Teacher 9 (L-3) said of technology training,

"Technology development has been useful. It was something I could use in my classroom." Because technology has become such an assumed facet of society, the three participating schools did not make a big issue of it in the study; it is simply a component of education their districts have provided for as a matter of course. Getting teachers the training they need to use it proves easier all the time as younger teachers enter the profession with fresh perspectives and knowledge on how to use technology. These teachers prove valuable resources for L-1, L-2, and L-3.

Findings of this research study were sometimes confusing and conflicting, but one of the most significant findings revealed that the teachers who seemed most satisfied with professional development, were generally the same ones who were active participants of it. *Figure 4.2.* is a Teacher Survey Response Matrix that illustrates this point.

	Q1: Describe Prof. Dev.	Q2: Your Role in Prof. Dev.	Q3: A Teaching Technique from a Session	Q3-A: What Made it Memorable	Q3-B: Were You Able to Implement It	Q4: What Would You Change	Q5: What Stands Out from a Session	Q6: Describe Planning / Follow-Up	Q7: Anything Else You Want to Add
T 1: (L-1)		Attend Leader of PLC Facilitate Evaluate	+		+	− Involve Staff	+		+
T2: (L-1)	+ Leadership	Attend Planning Leadership SDC Member	+	+	+	− More Input	+	−	+
T3: (L-1)	Leadership	+ Attend Planning Leadership SDC Member	+	+	+	− More Input	−	−	+
T4: (L-1)		− Attend	−	−	−	− Less Often / More Input	−	−	−
T5: (L-1)		− Attend Evaluate	+	+	+	− Make It More Relevant	−		
T6: (L-2)		Attend Evaluate	+	+	+	More Choices	+	+	+
T7 (L-2)		− Attend Planning Leadership Facilitate Leader of PLC Evaluate		+	+	− More Useful	−	?	−
T8 (L-3)		Attend Leadership Facilitate	+	+		− More Options			+
T9 (L-3)	−	Attend Evaluate	+	+	+	− Too Much Lecture Waste of Time	−	?	
T10 (L-3)		Attend Planning Facilitate Evaluate	+	+	+	− More Professional Groups	+	−	+

Figure 4.2. **Teacher Survey Response Matrix.** This survey indicates all ten

participating teachers' responses to the survey questions. Teachers are designated as T1

for Teacher 1 and so forth.

The researcher created a matrix (*Figure 4.2*) to illustrate the findings of the teacher surveys and make connections between teacher involvement in professional development and their perceptions of it. An empty box indicates a neutral response or a simple description with no opinion indicated. A plus indicates a positive response. A minus represents a negative response. Question marks indicate that the participant was uncertain or did not know the answer to the question. SDC stands for Staff Development Council and PLC stands for Professional Learning Community. Overwhelmingly, the findings were clear: if administrators want teachers to embrace professional development, they must provide them with leadership opportunities; and if teachers want those opportunities, they must seize them when they are offered. No discernable differences were detected regarding gender, age, or experience.

The researcher also used QSR NVivo 8 ® to conduct a word count frequency of all aspects of the study, including the principals' e-mail interview responses, teacher surveys, and observation notes collected during professional development session visitations. This is illustrated in *Figure 4.3*.

Word	Number of Times	Word	Number of Times
Teacher(s)	**142**	Conversations	14
Development	102	*Goals	13
Professional	81	Ideas	13
*Group	76	Reflective (Reflection)	13
*Time	73	Community (Communities)	12
*Activity (Activities)	67	Experience	12
Student	54	Process	11
Shared / Sharing	**49**	Interesting	10
Administrator(s) (Administrative)	**48**	Opportunity (Opportunities)	10
*Talk(ing)	42	*Agenda	8
Assessment	41	*Collaborate	8
Presenter(s)	41	Effective(ly)	8
Plan(s) (Planned) (Planning)	**40**	*Purpose	8
Principal	**39**	*Team	7
*Read(ing)	38	Education	6
Need(s)	37	Listen	6
Grading	37	Benchmark	5
*Participate (Participating)	30	**Budget**	**5**
Learning	28	Meaningful	5
Like	28	Success	5
Questions	27	Change(s)	4
Instruction(s) (Instructional)	26	*Accountable	3
Teaching	24	*Choices	3
Classroom	23	Ineffective	3
Think	23	Quality	3
Feedback	22	Relevant	3
*Engaged	21	Facilitating	2
Improvement	18	Impact	2
*Together	18	*Involvement	2
*Strategy	16	Movement	2

Figure 4.3. **Frequency of Word Count from Professional Development Study.** This

is a representation of the word count frequency.

Analysis of word count frequency from the study yielded interesting data. The researcher noted the frequency of words that appeared in the study. Word frequency accounts related to themes that emerged from the study are depicted in bold red print. A blue asterisk indicates words that appeared and are related to sub-categories of themes from the study. Highlighted words show synonymous relationships to each other based on color-coding, like words sharing the same color. Underlined words are noted as they reveal the highest rate of frequency; however, they are not considered significant because they would naturally appear numerous times due to the topic of the study. Other words and their frequency are included as a matter of interest. Definite conclusions cannot be drawn about their significance without more research, but they are noted for consideration and speculation. Some of the words one would hope to see surface in a study on professional development such as accountable, choices, quality, relevant, impact, and involvement, did appear. Their infrequency, however, leaves one to question whether the reason was 1) participants did not discuss what they did *not* experience; 2) participants did not discuss what they *had* experienced because they took it for granted; or 3) participants did not report on what was *irrelevant or undesired* in their view. Without asking the participants directly to elaborate on word frequency specifically, one can only conjecture the significance of much of the word frequency that appeared; nevertheless, because it is a part of the findings, the researcher felt compelled by ethical consideration to include it in this chapter.

Finally, during data analysis the researcher scrutinized observation notes taken during the three schools' professional development sessions, as shown in *Figure 4.4.*
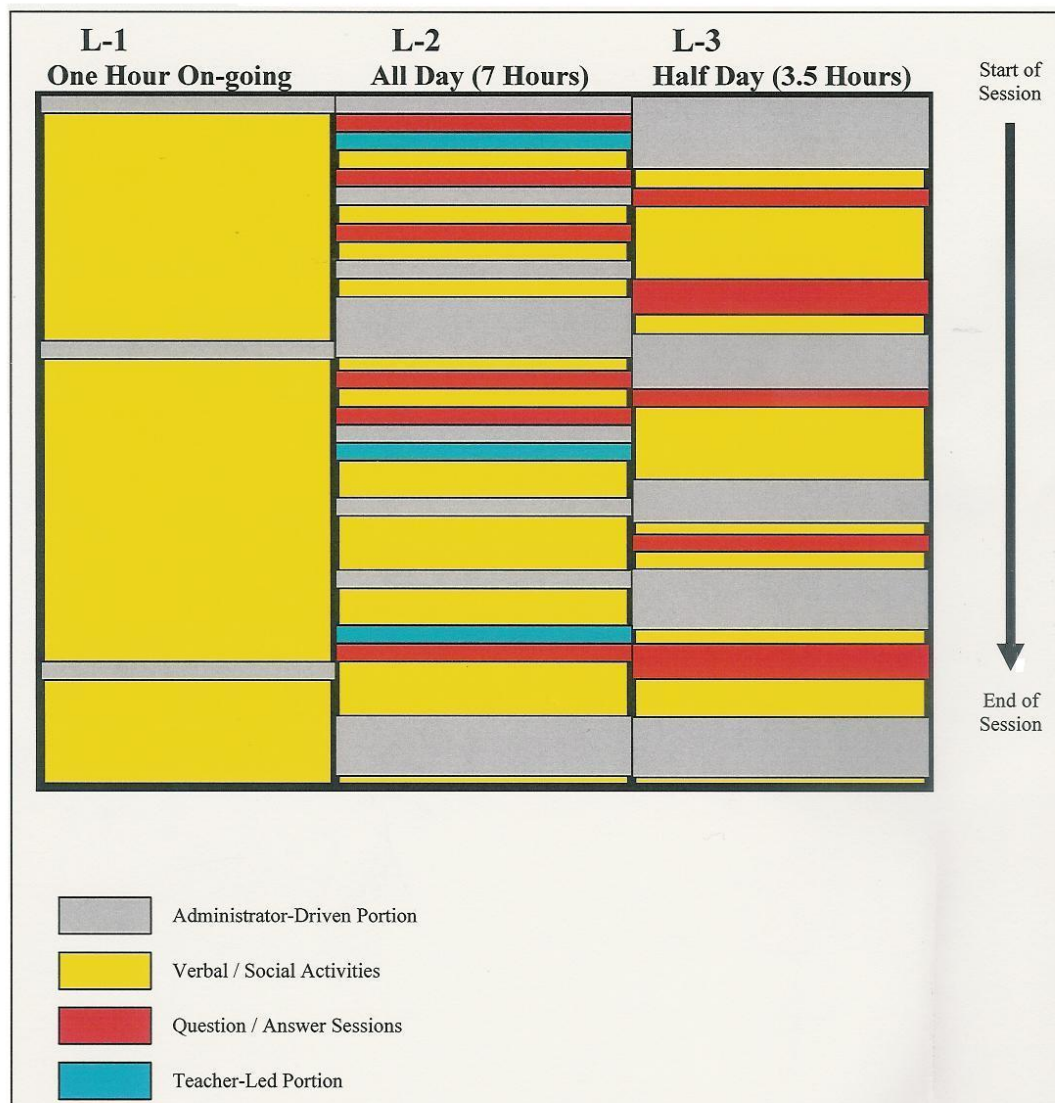
Figure 4.4. **Distribution of Professional Development Activities at Participating**

Schools. This illustrates the findings of the researcher's observation notes regarding

distribution of the professional development activities for each of the three participating schools.

Observation notes were color-coded for clarity. Gray highlighted areas indicated administrator-driven portions; yellow showed verbal or social activities that engaged the teachers as learners; red symbolized question/answer sessions; and blue represented teacher-led activities. It was determined that quite a variance existed in how professional development activities and roles were managed. At L-1, less than ten percent of the session appeared to be administrator-driven and virtually all of it involved active participation of the teachers, either in small and large group discussions or in reflective activities. No question/answer sessions were conducted, and neither was there any evidence of teacher-led activities. At L-2, administrator-driven portions were fairly equal to activities that engaged the teachers as learners. These two components dominated most of the session, indicative of about seventy-five percent of the day. Approximately twenty percent of the day was devoted to question/answer sessions; but most of them occurred in the morning – less than five percent of the afternoon was relegated to question/answer. Only about five to ten percent of the total day was teacher-led. At L-3, almost half of the session was administrator-driven, and about half included activities that involved the teachers as active learners. Approximately thirty percent of the session involved question/answer segments that were fairly equally dispersed throughout. No teacher-led activities were noted.

Summary and Results of Analysis

As noted, four themes emerged from this study: 1) *Teachers and administrators believe professional development responsibilities need to be shared;* 2) *administrator and*

teacher roles in professional development directly impact its effectiveness; 3) *teachers and administrators believe forethought and preparation are vital to professional development successes;* and 4) *teachers and administrators believe professional development effectiveness is not dependent upon expenditures.* The four themes scrutinized in this chapter are closely linked to each other and are, therefore, often difficult to classify separately, but of all of them, one main idea continued to surface: *Teachers need to be involved in their own professional development.* If one could assume that as the "grand theme," it encompasses all of the rest – in order for teachers and administrators to *share responsibilities*, teachers must be allowed to be involved; if teachers have a *role in professional development* along with administrators, it follows that teachers must be allowed to be involved; if *forethought and preparation* is honored, teachers will be allowed to be involved; and in order to maximize resources and minimize the effect of *monetary constraints*, teachers must be allowed to be involved as presenters and collaborators. Asked *If you could change anything about the way your school / district conducts professional development, what would it be? -* comments from ten out of ten teacher surveys provided ample evidence. Here are just a few: "Let us have more input as a staff," "I would have teacher input on kinds of professional develoment needed," "…to be given more of a voice in what is being addressed," "Make it useful / relevant; engage us," "More choices," "More diversity," "We need more variety and to make it worthwhile." They all call for more input, topics applicable to what they teach, and more choice – or in other words, *Teachers need to be involved in their own professional development.* There will always be disparity on the subject of professional develoment. For example, teachers like Teacher 4 (L-1) who claim professional

develoment is an "Ineffective waste of time. Sheer boredom" and teachers like Teacher

10 (L-3) who believe "Professional development is a good thing," but Teacher 10

carefully qualified what this entire research study has revealed: " I enjoy it – when it is

wothwhile to me." In other words, *Teachers need to be involved in their own*

professional development.

Chapter 4 scrutinized the findings of this research study. It detailed the data

analysis and the four emerging themes. It also explained the researcher's use of QSR

NVivo 8 ®, the qualitative computer software designed for analysis. Chapter 5 will

complete the dissertation study by restating its purpose, once again describing the

research design, interpreting the findings, and showing connections to the review of

literature and themes. It will conclude with a discussion on implications of the study and

recommendations for future research studies

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The researcher investigated administrators' and teachers' perceptions of professional development in three Nebraska secondary public schools. This chapter will reiterate the purpose of this study, discuss the research design and interpretation of findings, as well as illustrate any correlation to the literature and thematic context. Implications for education and future research will also be discussed.

The purpose of this research was to reveal and analyze teachers' and administrators' responses to questions related to the nature and effectiveness of professional development. The focus was to determine common themes and hopefully glean new insights into the subject. The following research question directed both description and analysis of the data: What are the similarities and differences between administrators' and teachers' perceptions of necessary components for effective professional development for educators?

Summary of Findings

The research question examined administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of professional development comparing and contrasting their views. Both administrators and teachers reported a desire to make professional development as meaningful for all parties as possible; the differing opinions arose not in how to go about doing that, but rather in finding a balance between their often opposing responsibilities. The four themes emerged through careful examination of principals' e-mail interviews, teachers' anonymous surveys, the researcher's observation notes, and documents collected from professional development visitations. Based on the data collected throughout this study, the researcher determined that both administrators and teachers

have common goals for professional development, and are working to balance responsibilities so those goals can be met.

Theme One: Teachers and administrators believe professional development responsibilities need to be shared. According to Sue McAdamis (2008), president of the National Staff Development Council, the new purpose statement set forth by NSDC "requires all educators to engage, not merely participate, in professional learning" (p. 9). This means they have to actually experience the process through procedures that invite "deep meaning, emotion, and/or reflection" (p. 9). Administrators who participated in the study indicated a strong desire to give teachers a voice in their own professional development. They not only allotted time for teachers to collaborate, both during professional development sessions and during the school year, but also encouraged it. Administrators who took part in this research study elicited teacher input in various ways, the most encouraging of which may have been offering them the opportunity to choose, in part, what they wanted to learn about. Another facet of teacher input demonstrated through the course of this study was the opportunities provided by administrators for teachers to evaluate their learning by sharing their feedback on their perceptions of professional development sessions they attended. Participating administrators also indicated a willingness to delegate responsibilities to other educators, whether that be part of the administrative team or classroom teachers, who showed an interest and aptitude to serve as leaders in the professioanl development process. Teachers who felt they were denied input held professional development in low regard; whereas those who took on leadership roles and became actively involved in their school's professional development reported greater satisfaction with it. Collaboration appeared to be the strongest desire

voiced by participants of the study. Teachers indicated time and again a need to work

together. Researchers have noted this same teacher request for years (Boudah &

Mitchell, 1998; Brand, 1997; Christensen, 2006; Crow, 2009; Danaher, et al., 2009;

Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2000; Glasser,

1999; Kelleher, 2003; Lowden, 2006; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008;

Leithwood, et al., 2007; Michael & Dobson, 2008; Nelson & Slavit, 2009; O'Connor &

Korr, 1996; Phillips, 2003; Rademaker, 2008; Richardson, 2003; Saunders, et al., 2009;

Sturko & Gregson, 2009; Tienken & Stonaker, 2007).   One teacher who participated in

this research study illustrated a common personal need to be allowed time to hold

professional conversations with colleagues, stating, "I would like to have professional

groups in which we read a research article / journal / or book and discuss it. Many

teachers are afraid of research / theory – perhaps this would help them grow in their

field."

Theme Two: Administrator and teacher roles in professional development

directly impact its effectiveness. Participating administrators revealed a keen

understanding of their role in the professional development process, often beginning with

having teachers set personal/professional goals that tie to district standards. This blend

allowed administrators to meet their professional responsibilities while also honoring

teachers' needs. As previously noted, teachers who demonstrated and reported a high

level of interest and satisfaction with their school's professional development program

were generally the same teachers who assisted in planning or facilitating it. This

indicates a strong correlation between accountability and the success of the professional

development process. Teachers, like any learners, need the opportunity to reflect on

successes as well as failures. They need to be capable of analyzing why something worked or why it did not, and then must be able to make necessary adjustments. (O'Connor & Korr, 1996). They must possess a willingness to try again and again until they achieve their goals, or they will likely never achieve any real sense of self-efficacy as instructors. Experts believe teacher self-efficacy to be critical if teacher learning is to be transferred to students, which is the whole point. Research has provided evidence that teacher self-efficacy and student achievement are directly linked (O'Connor & Korr, 1996). If students are to find success in the classroom – and transfer that success to life-skills after graduation - teachers must possess self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993; Bandura, 1997; Kuchey, et al., 2009). In order for that to happen, they need to be a part of their own professional development. The professional development sessions many educators were required to attend in past years exposed them to little if any of the learning attributes that promote teacher self-efficacy. With more studies being conducted on professional development, however, awareness is increasing, as indicated by this response from a participating teacher of this dissertation study: "Just having more methods to aid students needing extra help, which will also aid students who already understand the material," made a big difference to instruction.

       Theme Three: Teachers and administrators believe forethought and preparation are vital to professional development successes. Regardless of professional title, the educators who participated in this study commented on the import of careful planning for the maximum benefit of professional development. One teacher participant of this study summed up the impact of planning by saying of professional development sessions, "They are good if the purpose is very clear and the program

organized." National, state, and district standards must be considered, as well as time

allotted for each professional session, how often sessions will occur, how accountability

will be measured, content of sessions based on teachers' needs and interests, and

resources available. Teachers and administrators also perceived on-going professional

development to be more meaningful to teachers as learners than one-shot sessions held at

the beginning and end of the year, indicative of other similar studies (Boyd, 1993;

Chappuis, S., et al., 2009; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Hord, 1994; Kelleher, 2003;

Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Lowden, 2006; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; Phillips, 2003;

Richardson, 2003; Saunders, et al., 2009; Tienken & Stonaker, 2007). Time,

unfortunately appeared to be a factor – and in some ways a major hindrance – to planning

and implementation of professional development activities. All three schools' study

participants mentioned a desire to have more time to prepare, collaborate, act, and reflect

on what they were learning.

Theme Four: Teachers and administrators believe professional development effectiveness is not dependent upon expenditures. Because both teachers and

administrators perceive cost as not necessarily commensurate with the quality and

effectiveness of professional development, it has become critical to explore other options

to the expensive traditional guest speaker format of teacher education. One principal

participant of the study shared the reminder that "Budget is only a factor if you let it be."

Other research study findings corroborate this principal's assertion (Brand, 1997; Carroll,

2009; Chappuis, S., et al., 2009; Drago-Severson, 2007; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006;

DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, et al., 2006; Fien & Rawling, 1996; Fullan, 2000; Leon

& Davis; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; Michael & Dobson, 2008; Ritchhart, 2004). Recent

budget cuts and teacher preference to find alternatives to traditional professional

development sessions with outside speakers sparked innovative ideas that not only saved

schools money, but also provided significant learning sessions for teachers. Participating

schools have found valuable assets readily available to them in the form of master veteran

teachers, exceptional instructional leaders, open-minded administrators, and teachers with

expertise in professional development-related fields such as technology training.

Technology was a subject mentioned but little explored in this research study, but present

nonetheless. Teachers indicated a desire to become proficient in using technology as a

tool for instruction in their classrooms, and one school provided evidence of technology

training in professional develoment sessions.

Discussion

Numerous studies have been conducted on the topic of professional development

of teachers in the past several decades. Findings have often been inconclusive or

conflicting; however, dominating the results of many past studies is the idea that teachers,

as adult learners, have unique needs – primarily a need for collaboration with colleagues -

if learning is to be internalized and accessible when needed (Boudah & Mitchell, 1998;

Brand, 1997; Christensen, 2006; Crow, 2009; Danaher, et al., 2009; Drago-Severson &

Pinto, 2006; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2000; Glasser, 1999; Kelleher, 2003;

Lowden, 2006; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Leithwood, et al., 2007;

Michael, & Dobson, 2008; Nelson, & Slavit, 2009; O'Connor & Korr, 1996; Phillips,

2003; Rademaker, 2008; Richardson, 2003; Saunders, et al., 2009; Sturko & Gregson,

2009; Tienken, & Stonaker, 2007). This ties directly to the theme of shared

responsibilities between teachers and administrators. In order for teachers to have an

opportunity to collaborate with each other on a professional level, administrators must allow them to have input into they types of conversations they need and how often they would benefit from them. Because teachers are the learners in the professional development foray, their learning needs should be approached individually, the same way they, as educators, are expected to differentiate instruction for their own students (Borko, 2004; Danaher, et al., 2009; Kelleher, 2003; Littky& Grabelle, 2004, p.78). Sadly, teachers are often their own worst enemies in this venture. Most teachers claim to want to have a voice in their professional development, but too many of them sit back and resist leadership roles. Unless teachers are willing to commit to becoming active participants, planners, and facilitators in the process, the collaborative opportunities experts tout and teachers insist they want will not come to fruition. Teachers cannot complain if they are not willing to work toward improving their own education.

Professional development, or more appropriately, professional learning, has been an embarrassment to much of the educational community for far too long. Because people are naturally predisposed to learning through asking questions, collaborating with peers, exploration and discovery, trial and error, and most notably through continuous practice, it is imperative to reflect similar behaviors in teacher education.

Administrators play a key role in the success or failure of professional development programs. They must include teachers in the planning by asking them what they need in order to feel prepared to facilitate learning in their classrooms. It is crucial for the administration to understand the import of allowing teachers choices in their own professional learning. One of the best ways to promote choice appears to be to encourage teachers to submit individualized professional learning plans at the beginning of the

school year, prepare benchmarks, and construct their own learning through the exclusive plans they have designed. Principals in conjunction with teachers can then determine how teachers will implement learning, what accountability will be required, and how they will measure professional growth.

Speakers do not need to be disregarded altogether; however, when they are invited to share information, they need to be carefully screened or previewed and fully prepared to put into practice what they were teaching the teacher-learners. Alternatives to hired outside presenters should certainly be explored. This could take the form of mini workshops headed by on-site faculty sharing their personal expertise, which brings the added benefit of minimizing budgetary constraints. It could include collaboration within departments. It could encompass providing academic reading materials to educators to enhance classroom performance and student advocacy. Certainly, schools should consider promoting teacher-led presentations as a powerful alternative to the traditional hired presenters of years' past. Margolis (2009) encapsulated it best: "There is something fundamentally different about a teacher leading a teacher learning event rather than an outside consultant or even a principal" (p. 80).

Until all stakeholders are involved in the professional development process, its potential to impact the field of education – and ultimately students - will remain untapped. Before stakeholders can be meaningfully involved, they must understand and recognize the components essential to creating effective professional development experiences. This research study has scrutinized perceptions of all stakeholders and the researcher has used the findings to clarify essential components of professional development that emerged from the data.

Effective Professional Development Model.

The researcher used the findings described previously in Chapter 5 to formulate a

model (*Figure 5.1*) to illustrate how shared responsibility, teacher and administrator

roles, forethought and preparation, and effectiveness and expenditures merged, forming a

symbiotic relationship.
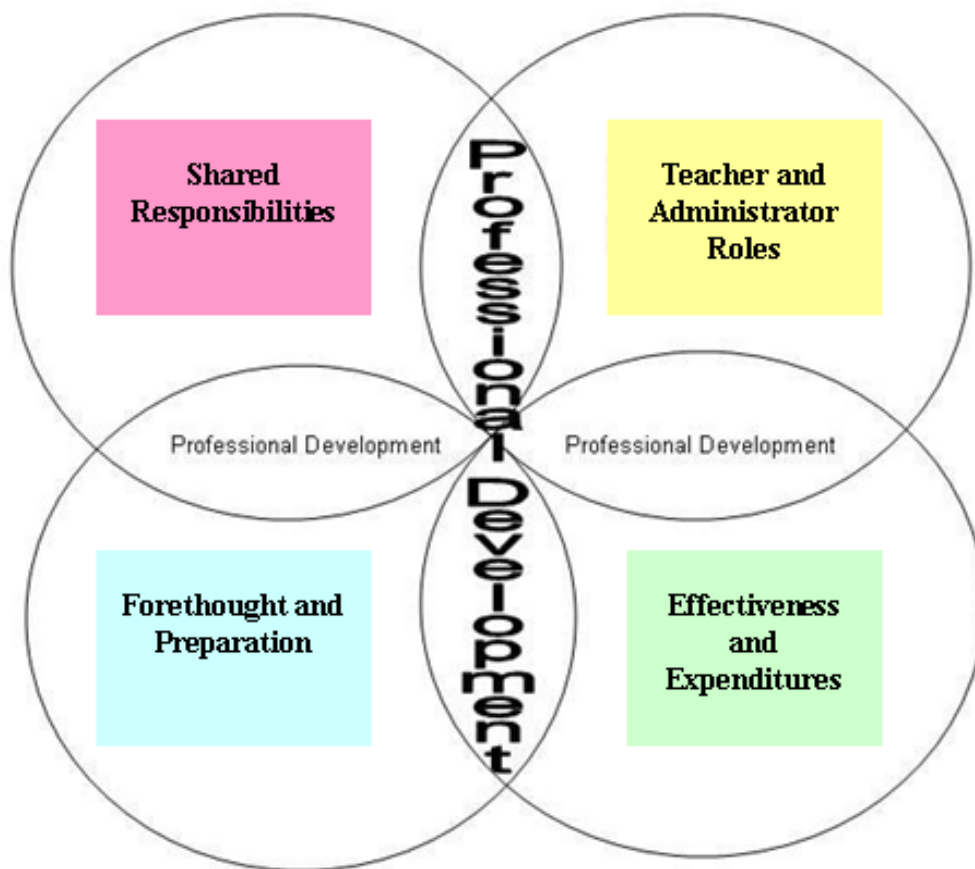
Figure 5.1. **Components of Effective Professional Development: The Trehearn**

Model. This model demonstrates how all four components work together, blend, and are

dependent on one another. Without any one of them, the effectiveness of professional

development is compromised.

In creating the model, the researcher began by scrutinizing other experts' research on professional development. Most of the experts agree that teachers should have a voice in their own professional development (Brand, 1997; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Glasser, 1999; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Lowden, 2006; Lucillo, 2009; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; McCarthy, 2006; O'Hara & Pritchard; 2008). Teachers and administrators who participated in this study concurred, insisting that *responsibilities between them should be shared* so teachers can be more actively involved. Experts also confirm what participating teachers and administrators believe – that both parties need to have frequent open reciprocal communication so *roles are clearly understood* and complementary (Boyd, 1993; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Leithwood, et al., 2007; Phillips, 2003; Reeves, 2006; Richardson, 2003; Zimmerman & May, 2003). This is the only way they will get a sense of the needs, the issues at hand, and viable solutions to problems before they get out of control. Research indicates *strategic vision is essential* to the success of any professional development program (Drago-Severson, & Pinto, 2006; Hord, 1994; Kelleher, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Senge, et al., 2000). Finally, recent research reveals *cost-effectiveness* professional development programs are becoming more popular and are generally regarded as more valuable than some of the traditional venues utilized more than a decade ago (Brand, 1997; Carroll, 2009; Chappuis, S., et al., 2009; Drago-Severson, 2007; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Fien & Rawling, 1996; Fullan, 2000; Leon & Davis; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; Michael & Dobson, 2008).

Implications for Future Professional Development

The push to provide exemplary teachers for every student in every school across the nation is an on-going goal – and concern – among parents, the educational

community, and lawmakers. In order to achieve success in this mission, professional

development provided to educators must be of the highest possible standard. This study

revealed implications for the professional development of teachers. Teachers perceived

their involvement in professional development as an investment and when allowed input,

became stewards of their own learning. The implication of this finding supports the need

for collaboration, accountability, and on-going learning opportunities. It also supports

the implication that teachers may be one of the best – and most readily available –

resources for professional development learning activities. For the teachers who

participated in this study, the four most important components to effective professional

development were sharing responsibilities with the administration, having an active role

in professional development, preparation, and savvy budgetary awareness and

management. All of these components are interconnected and dependent upon one

another. It could be assumed that by allowing teachers a voice in their own professional

development, they will perceive a vested interest and feel compelled to contribute more

to the process, thus saving monetary costs while also maximizing results. Schools

wishing to increase the effectiveness of professional development may want to utilize the

aforementioned professional development model as a means of implementing

components found by other educators and research to maximize potential for the

program's success.

Numerous studies have been conducted on professional development for

educators in the past half a century, most of them with similar results. Almost all studies

find teachers disdain listening to outside "experts," desire more opportunities to become

actively involved in the planning and facilitating and alternative methods of professional

development instruction, and yearn to have more time for collaboration with their peers (Boudah & Mitchell, 1998; Brand, 1997; Carroll, 2009; Chappuis, S., et al., 2009; Christensen, 2006; Crow, 2009; Danaher, et al., 2009; Drago-Severson, 2007; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Fien & Rawling, 1996; Fullan, 2000; Glasser, 1999; Hirsh, 2009; Jehlen, 2007; Joyce, 2009; Kelleher, 2003; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Leithwood, et al., 2007; Leon & Davis; Lowden, 2006; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; Michael & Dobson, 2008; Nelson, & Slavit, 2009; O'Connor & Korr, 1996; Phillips, 2003; Rademaker, 2008; Richardson, 2003; Saunders, et al., 2009; Senge, et al., 2000; Sturko & Gregson, 2009; Tienken, & Stonaker, 2007). The implication is clear: it is time to listen to the research and provide what teachers have been requesting for decades. One of the most effective ways of accomplishing this, according to Marzano (2001) is through reciprocal teaching. Glasser (1999) corroborates this view, asserting, "We learn 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we see and hear, 70% of what we discuss, 80% of what we experience, and 95% of what we teach others." Allowing for more opportunities for teacher-led professional development could result in schools decreasing the cost of providing teacher education, and most importantly, increase the number of highly qualified educators available to students.

Recommendations for Future Research

Somehow, in the complexity of all facets that must be considered when regarding professional development, the most important element is generally disregarded – the students. Students are ultimately the product, yet they are largely ignored in virtually all professional development studies. It is critical that new studies be conducted with a

focus on investigating the impact of professional development on student achievement. Researchers have provided valuable information in terms of what teachers need from professional development; now it is time to see how this correlates with what students need – and get – from their teachers in terms of learning.

Considering the suggested alternatives to hired speakers for professional development of teachers, the budget no longer needs to be a hindrance to good teacher education. Time should not be one either. Throughout the study, the researcher noted issues with time that must be discussed and conquered. One such issue involves administrators admitting there is too much information to disperse in too short a time frame. Another involves teachers' assertions that on-going professional development is more effective than one or two lengthy sessions a year. This suggests not enough discussion has been held on this issue. One could assume if professional development is important, resolving the difficulties inherent in time restrictions must to become a priority. The issue of time should be addressed in future studies.

Summary

For clarity, the researcher created a Themes Matrix (*Figure 5.2*) to address the research question, summarize findings, classify them into themes, compare and contrast teacher and administrator perspectives, illustrate a correlation to literature, provide evidence from the study of feedback from participants, and draw final conclusions.

T h e m e s m a t r l x				

Research Question: *What are the similarities and differences between administrators' and teachers' perceptions of necessary components for effective professional development for educators?*

Themes	Similarities	Differences	Literature	Quotations from Participants
Shared Responsibilities	Both teachers and administrators reported a desire to share planning and implementation responsibilities.	**Administrators** – tend to prioritize national, state, district, and building standards to meet their professional responsibilities. **Teachers** – tend to prioritize pedagogy, the latest instructional research, and personal interest to meet their responsibilities.	**Governance** – (Brand, 1997; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Glasser, 1999; Lauer & Matthews, 2007; Leech & Fulton, 2008; Lowden, 2006; Lucillo, 2009; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; McCarthy, 2006; O'Hara & Pritchard; 2008)	Teacher 2 (L-1) said, "Typically [professional development] is planned by administration but the last two years I have been on a staff development committee. It is our job to identify areas for staff development and help make it happen. Our school schedules one staff development a month. Recently we have been involved in Learning Communities."
Administrator and Teacher Roles	Both teachers and administrators want to have an active role in professional development.	**Administrators** – admit to a desire to include teachers in the process, but face conflict based on accountability issues they must meet. **Teachers** – generally proclaim to want a voice in professional development, but sometimes avoid the leadership roles that would make it possible.	**Role of Administrator** – (Boyd, 1993; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006; Leithwood, et al., 2007; Phillips, 2003; Reeves, 2006; Richardson, 2003; Zimmerman & May, 2003).	L-2 Principal: "Originally I did more of the detail work myself. The past several years we have had talented and interested Associate Principals who have taken on that responsibility. We share much of the work as a leadership team and also include teachers who are on the School Improvement Team."
Forethought and Preparation	Both teachers and administrators recognized a need for careful planning in order to maximize the effectiveness of professional development, but admit time is often restrictive.	**Administrators** – tend to plan too lengthy an agenda at one time. **Teachers** – want more frequent, shorter professional development sessions.	**Strategic Planning -** (Drago-Severson, & Pinto, 2006; Hord, 1994; Kelleher, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Senge, 1990; Senge, et al., 2000)	L-3 Principal: "As educators, it is our responsibility to continue our development and use it in the classroom. As usual, there is never enough time!"
Effectiveness and Expenditures	Neither teachers nor administrators perceived expense to be a controlling factor in the effectiveness of professional development.	**Administrators** – strive to find monies for travel to workshops and promote some teacher-led professional development. **Teachers** – prefer sharing academic reading materials and having opportunities for more teacher-led professional sessions.	**Budget** – (Brand, 1997; Carroll, 2009; Chappuis, S., et al., 2009; Drago-Severson, 2007; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Fien & Rawling, 1996; Fullan, 2000; Leon & Davis; Lynd-Balta, et al., 2006; Michael & Dobson, 2008)	L-3 Principal: "Budget is only a factor if you let it be." Teacher 3 (L-1) said, "I make sure I attend training in my curricular area. I pay my own way if I have to."

Figure 5.2. **Themes Matrix.** This graphic ties all components of the study together.

Professional development must be transformed through rigorous inspection, dissection, and reconfiguration with the intent of making it the vital agent it should be to enhance teachers' effectiveness. Teachers can execute change when they are provided the tools for them to do so. Money, planning time, and control issues must be considered by administrators when professional development is conducted. This will assist educators in truly becoming master teachers.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

L1 ADMINISTRATOR E-MAIL INTERVIEW

Time of Interview: _____
Date of Interview: _____
Interviewer: Mary K. Trehearn
Interviewee: (Name and Job Title): _____

Name and contact information requested for follow-up only, if needed.

I am working on a dissertation for my Ed.D. from College of Saint Mary. I am collecting data on professional development experiences in Nebraska schools. You are helping me considerably by taking the time to complete this on-line interview about professional development; I appreciate it very much. Thank you. It is my sincere hope that some of the information I gather will offer insight into teacher education.

Please answer each question with as much detail as you can.

1. What is your role in professional development for your district? (Who is responsible for planning professional development in your school / district?)

2. Much of the literature I have reviewed indicates budget is a factor that must be considered when planning professional development. If you are able to describe your thoughts on the budget for professional development in your school / district, I would appreciate your insights.

3. Please describe professional development in your district. (When and how often it occurs, types of activities/speakers involved, etc.)

4. If you could change anything about the way your district conducts professional development, what would it be?

5. Please describe a component or incident that stands out regarding professional development in your school / district.

6. Please describe the planning and follow-up for professional development in your school / district.

7. How do you think your teachers would describe professional development in your school / district?

8. Is there anything else about professional development that I didn't ask you that you would like to share?

I know you are a very busy person and I appreciate the time you have taken to share this information with me. Thank you. If it is okay with you, I would like to contact you after I have received your e-mail interview responses so we can review it for accuracy. Thank you again!

For questions: E-mail researcher at
mtrehearn@xxxxxxxx.org
Deadline: Please respond by September 10, 2009

Mary Trehearn's Phone Script
for Administrator Invitation to the Study

DATE:_____
TIME: _____

Hello, my name is Mary Trehearn, and I am a Doctor of Education student at College of Saint Mary. As part of my study, I am required to undertake a research project, part of which I would like to conduct at your high school.

Do you have a moment for me to explain this study? (If not, "Is there a more convenient time I could call back to visit with you about this?")

This phenomenographic qualitative study will explore professional development of educators in three Nebraska schools. I have chosen to invite you to participate in this study upon the recommendation of educators who know you to be a forward-thinking administrator often willing to promote further education in teachers. My hope is that this study will benefit the educational community, particularly concerning teacher education.

I would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience to visit with you further about this study. Would you be willing to meet with me to discuss this before the beginning of the upcoming school year?

Thank you for your time. I look forward to meeting you on _____.

Good bye.

Appendix C: Teacher Survey

L1 **TEACHER SURVEY**

I am working on a dissertation for my Ed. D. from College of Saint Mary. I am collecting data on professional development preparations and experiences in Nebraska schools. It would help me considerably if you would take the time to complete this survey. It should take about 15-20 minutes. You may return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided at the following address:

> Mary K. Trehearn
> xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
> Anytown, NE 68XXX

My email is mtrehearn@xxxxxxxxxx.org. If you have any further information you feel would benefit my study, I would greatly appreciate hearing from you. Thank you very much. It is my sincere hope that some of the information I gather will be used to increase the effectiveness of professional development in public schools. **Please complete the attached survey and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided by SEPTEMBER 15, 2009. Thank you!**

Please complete the demographic information before beginning the survey. Circle the appropriate response.

Gender: M   F

Age: under 25   26-35   36-50   51 and over

Years of Teaching Experience: 1-5   6-10   11-20   22 +

Degrees Obtained: Bachelors   Masters   Doctorate

THE SURVEY:
Please answer the following questions as honestly and with as much detail as you can. When answering these questions, please consider experiences you have had with your school's / district's professional development up to the past ten years, not just your most recent experience.

1. Please describe professional development in your school / district (who plans it, how often and when it occurs, typical activities, etc.).

2. What is your role in professional development in your school / district? Please circle all that apply and explain briefly.

A. Attending

B. Planning

C. Facilitating

D. Evaluating

E. Other

3. Please describe a memorable teaching technique shared by a professional development presenter / facilitator.

A. What did you find to be most effective about the experience?

B. Were you able to implement something you learned from the presenter with relative ease into your own classroom? Please explain.

4. If you could change anything about the way your school / district conducts professional development, what would it be?

5. Please describe a component or incident that stands out regarding professional development in your school / district.

6. Please describe the planning and follow-up for professional development in your school / district.

7. Is there anything else about professional development that I didn't ask you that you would like to share?

Appendix D: IRB Approval Letter

COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY

July 9, 2009

College of Saint Mary
7000 Mercy Road
Omaha, NE 68106

Dear Ms. Trehearn:

The Institutional Review Board at College of Saint Mary has reviewed your revisions that were submitted for your study *Practicing What We Teach: Effective Professional Development for Educators*. The IRB has granted full approval of your study and you are authorized to begin you research.

I have attached copies of date stamped Consent Forms that you will be able to use to make official copies for your participants. I have attached a copy of *The Rights of Research Participants* that must be distributed to each individual.

The IRB number assigned to your research is IRB #CSM 08-102 and the expiration date will be July 9, 2010.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Melanie K. Felton

Melanie K. Felton, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Chair, Institutional Review Board
mfelton@csm.edu

Appendix E: Request and Permission to Conduct Study at L-2 and L-3

Request to conduct a study at XPS

From: **mary trehearn** (mtrehearn@xxxxxxx.org)
Sent: Tue 7/14/09 2:32 PM
To: llukxxx@xps.org

> 3 attachments
> CSM IRB a…doc (165.4 KB), CSM e-mai…doc (19.9 KB), CSM teach…doc (24.0 KB)

Dr. Xxxxxxxx,

I am a doctoral candidate at College of Saint Mary and an English teacher at Xxxxxxxxxx Senior High School. I met briefly with you this morning at 11:00. I am requesting permission to conduct a study at XXXXXXX High School and XXXXXXXXX High School regarding the professional development of educators. I chose these two particular schools at the recommendation of colleagues of mine who know Dr. XXXXXXXXXXXX and Dr. XXXXXXXXXXX to be "forward thinking administrators often willing to promote further education in teachers." I have spent over three months getting approval from the College of Saint Mary IRB committee and making arrangements with Dr. XXXXXXXXX and Dr. XXXXXXXXXXX to collect data on professional development in their schools. I apologize for not contacting you much sooner. I was not aware that I would need to until Dr. XXXXXXXXX advised me to do so this morning when I met with her, or I certainly would have contacted you long ago. Pleaser forgive my lapse.

I know you are a very busy person, especially with the upcoming school year about to begin. I certainly do not want to add to your work load, but I am hoping you will be able to assist me in my study. Briefly, the purpose is to explore three Nebraska schools and their professional development for teachers. School names will not appear anywhere in the dissertation, nor will the names of any of the participants. I have arranged to conduct an eight-question e-mail interview with Dr. XXXXXXXXXXXX and Dr. XXXXXXXXXXXX, an anonymous survey of seven questions to be completed by 20 teachers in each of the two XPS schools, and would like to attend one of the professional development days at each of the two XPS schools. I am also including a third rural school in Nebraska – not a part of XPS.

Dr. XXXXXXXXXXXX tells me her staff will report August 13 for a full day of professional development, and some will attend the voluntary professional development half-day session on August 11. I would like to attend the August 11 session to observe and take field notes, but my concern is number 6j of the GUIDELINES for CONDUCTING EXTERNAL RESEARCH in the XXXXXXXXXX PUBLIC SCHOOLS that you gave me today. It says one reason for disapproval of studies is if, "The proposed research activities are scheduled for either the first or last month of the school year." I hope you will see my study as an "exceptional circumstance." I cannot conduct a study on professional development without meeting districts' pre-set time frames for professional development days.

No students will be involved in the study, no coercion will be used to get teachers to participate (they will simply be invited and may throw away the survey if they so choose), and both principals have agreed to help by completing the e-mail interviews. I have IRB approval from the College of Saint Mary committee and am attaching it and all related forms (interview and survey questions, as well as consent forms and Rights of the Research Participants).

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at this address or you may call me at (XXX) 719-XXXX. I truly hope you will see everything is in order and will be able to approve my study in your district. My hope is that it will provide insights into what Nebraska schools are doing to make professional development meaningful for teachers.

Thank you very much for your time.

Mary K. Trehearn

Mary K. Trehearn

Xxxxxxxx Public Schools

5901 X Street . Box 82889. Xxxxxxxxx, NE 68XXX . (xxx) xxx-1790

July 21, 2009

Mary Trehearn
mtrehearn@xxxxxxxx.org

RE: Request to Conduct Research in the XXXXXXXXX Public Schools

Dear Ms. Trehearn:

Your request to administer a staff development survey to teachers at XXXXXXXXX High School and XXXXXXXXXXXX High School is approved. Please contact Nancy XXXXXXXXX, the Principal of XXXXXXXXXXX High School, and Mike XXXXXXXXX, Principal of XXXXXXXXX High School to secure their permission to proceed with the implementation of this study.

Sincerely,

Leslie XXXXXXXXXXXX
Leslie XXXXXXXXX, Ph.D.
Director of Assessment and Evaluation Services

cc: Mike XXXXXXXX, Principal of XXXXXXXX High School
        Nancy XXXXXXXX, Principal of XXXXXXXXX High School
        John XXXXXXXX, Director of Secondary Education

Title of Research: Practicing What We Teach: Effective Professional
                       Development for Educators

Appendix F: Consent Form

Consent Form Required Format For Adults   *PAGE 1 OF 4*

COLLEGE OF
SAINT MARY

IRB#: CSM 08-102

Title of this Research Study

PRACTICING WHAT WE TEACH: EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR EDUCATORS

Invitation to Administrator

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant
to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are an administrator involved in
professional development, either as a participant or a program designer.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

Educators exemplify lifelong learning through their involvement in professional
development activities. This research is designed to compare what different schools are
doing to make professional development meaningful for teachers and see if there is a
correlation between teacher involvement in professional development planning and
program effectiveness/teaching success in the classroom.

 What will be done during this research study?

You will be interviewed via e-mail. You will be asked to complete an on-line survey
which should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. I would like to be in
attendance at your school's first professional development session of the 2009-2010
school year. I will take field notes over what I observe. Your participation is strictly
voluntary. Furthermore, your response or decision not to respond will not affect your
relationship with College of Saint Mary or any other entity. Please note that your
responses will be used for research purposes only and will be strictly confidential. No
one at College of Saint Mary will ever associate your individual responses with your
name or email address.

Participant Initials
_____PAGE 2 OF 4

__Interviews:__

The e-mail interview tool will comprise eight open-ended questions.
You will be asked to verify the interview responses after data has been collected in a follow-up e-mail.

__Observations:__

Field notes will be taken during your school's first professional development session regarding instructional presentation, agenda for the day, and teachers' attention, reactions and engagement in the session.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

There are no known risks to you from being in this research study.

What are the possible benefits to you?

This study may provide information beneficial to administrators responsible for planning professional development programs. Results may inspire administrators to try new approaches to professional development based on what their teachers desire and what other successful districts are doing. However, you may not get any benefit from being in this research study.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

Benefits to other people are hard to specify, but it is possible that teachers will benefit by becoming involved in strong professional development programs that will improve their instructional effectiveness. This would lead to higher probability of student achievement in the classroom, which ultimately would affect society in a positive way because students will one day graduate and become productive citizens.

What are the alternatives to being in this research study?

Instead of being in this research study, you can choose not to participate.

What will being in this research study cost you?

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

Will you be paid for being in this research study?

You will not be paid or compensated for being in this research study.

What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the end of this consent form.

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person or agency required by law. The information from this study may be published in educational journals or presented at educational meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are your rights as a research participant?

You have rights as a research participant. These rights have been explained in this consent form and in *The Rights of Research Participants* that you have been given. If you have any questions concerning your rights, talk to the investigator or call the Institutional Review Board (IRB), telephone (402) 399-XXXX.
Your completion and submission of the e-mail interview questions indicate your consent to participate in the study. Permission to observe one professional development session, disseminate invitational fliers and invite teacher participation, and collect handouts pertinent and relevant to professional development that you are willing to share is being sought at this time as the school representative. You may withdraw at any time by exiting the survey.

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw") at any time before, during, or after the research begins. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator, or with the College of Saint Mary. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled. If this research team gets any new information during this research study that may affect whether you would want to continue being in the study, you will be informed promptly.

Documentation of informed consent

You are freely making a decision whether to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered and (4) you have decided to be in the research study.

If you have any questions during the study, you should talk to one of the investigators listed below. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are 19 years of age or older and agree with the above, please sign below.

Signature of Participant: Date: Time:

_____   _____   _____

My signature certifies that all the elements of informed consent described on this consent form have been explained fully to the participant. In my judgment, the participant possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research and is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.

Signature of Investigator   Date:

_____

Authorized Study Personnel

Principal Investigator:
Mary K. Trehearn (402) XXX-XXXX

Faculty Advisor:
Lois Linden, EdD (402) 399-XXXX

Participant Initials _____

7000 Mercy Road • Omaha, NE 68106-2606 • 402.399.2400 • FAX 402.399.2341 • www.csm.edu

Appendix G: Rights of the Research Participants

COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY

THE RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS*

AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT ASSOCIATED WITH COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

1. TO BE TOLD EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH BEFORE YOU ARE ASKED TO DECIDE WHETHER
   OR NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH STUDY. The research will be explained to you in a way that
    assures you understand enough to decide whether or not to take part.

2. TO FREELY DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH.

3. TO DECIDE NOT TO BE IN THE RESEARCH, OR TO STOP PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH AT ANY TIME. This will not affect your relationship with the investigator or College of Saint Mary.

4. TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH AT ANY TIME. The investigator will answer your questions honestly and completely.

5. TO KNOW THAT YOUR SAFETY AND WELFARE WILL ALWAYS COME FIRST. The investigator will display the highest possible degree of skill and care throughout this research. Any risks or discomforts will be minimized as much as possible.

6. TO PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY. The investigator will treat information about you carefully and will respect your privacy.

7. TO KEEP ALL THE LEGAL RIGHTS THAT YOU HAVE NOW. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by taking part in this research study.

8. TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT ALL TIMES.

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT YOUR RIGHTS AND WELFARE ARE PROTECTED. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS, CONTACT THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CHAIR AT (402) 399-XXXX.

*ADAPTED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER , IRB WITH PERMISSION

Appendix H: Letter of Invitation

COLLEGE OF
SAINT MARY

**PRACTICING WHAT WE TEACH: EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS**

IRB # CSM 08-102

Dear Educator:
You are invited to take part in a research study because you are a Nebraska high school teacher. The purpose of this study is to explore professional development practices in Nebraska high schools. This research study is being conducted as part of the requirements of the researcher(s)'s EdD program at College of Saint Mary.

You may receive no direct benefit from participating in this study, but the information gained will be helpful to the educational community at large as it may bring forth insights on teacher professional development.

Should you decide to participate you are being asked to complete the following survey which should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Your participation is strictly voluntary. Furthermore, your response or decision not to respond will not affect your relationship with College of Saint Mary or any other entity. Please note that your responses will be used for research purposes only and will be strictly confidential. No one at College of Saint Mary will ever associate your individual responses with your name or email address. The information from this study may be published in journals and presented at professional meetings.

Your completion and submission of the questionnaire indicate your consent to participate in the study. You may withdraw at any time by exiting the survey. This study does not cost the participant in any way, except the time spent completing the survey. There is no compensation or known risk associated with participation. Please read *The Rights of Research Participants* enclosed. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the College of Saint Mary Institutional Review Board, 7000 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68144 (402-399-2400).

Thank you sincerely for participating in this important research study. If you have comments, problems or questions about the survey, please contact the researcher(s).

 If you are 19 years of age or older and agree to the above please proceed to answer the attached survey questions. You may return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. Please complete and return the survey by no later than SEPTEMBER 15, 2009.

Sincerely,

Mary K. Trehearn, M.S.E.
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Anytown, NE 68XXX
(402) xxx-xxxx
mtrehearn@xxxxxxx.org

Appendix I: [L-2] Grading Guide Sheets

THOUGHTS ON GRADING…

Questions(s) about grading:

Goal(s) on grading:

Purpose of grading…

IN CLOSING…

Where are you / where are your current practices?

Where is [L-2]? Where is the district?

Where do you want to go? Where do you want [L-2] to go? Where do you want the district to go?

Grading Practices that Inhibit Learning

Read each grading practice that can inhibit learning. Next, decide which category it falls under:

GRADES ARE BROKEN WHEN:
A – Includes ingredients that distort achievement (ACHIEVEMENT)
E – Arise from low quality or poorly organized evidence (EVIDENCE)
C – Are derived from inappropriate number crunching (CALCULATION)
L – When they do not support the learning process (SUPPORT LEARNING)

Grading Practice	Explanation / Example	A	E	C	L
Inconsistent Grading Scales	The same performance results in different grades in different scho classes.				
Worshipping Averages	All of the math to calculate and average is used, even when "the average" may not be consistent with what the teacher knows abou student's learning.				
Using Zeroes	Giving zeroes for incomplete work has a devastating effect on averages and often zeroes are not even related to learning or achievement, but to nonacademic factors like behavior, respect, punctuality, etc.				
Following the Pattern of Assign Test, Grade, & Teach	When teaching occurs after a grade has been assigned, it is too late the students. Students need lots of teaching and practice that is no graded, although it should be assessed and used to enhance learnir before testing takes place.				
Failing to Match Testing to Teaching	Trick questions, new formats, and unfamiliar material on tests inh learning. If students are expected to perform skills and produce information for a grade, these should be a part of the teaching.				
Ambushing Students	Pop quizzes are more likely to teach students how to cheat than to result in learning. Such tests do not aid in understanding.				
Suggesting that Success is Unlikely	Students may not strive for targets that they already know are unattainable to them.				
Practicing "Gotcha" Teaching	If students do not know the outcomes and expectations of their cla student learning is inhibited.				
Grading First Efforts	Learning is not a "one shot" deal. When the products of learning complex and sophisticated, students need a lot of teaching, practic and feedback before the product is evaluated.				
Penalizing Students For Taking Risks	Taking risks is not often rewarded in school. Students need encouragement and support, not low marks, while they try new or more demanding work.				
Establishing Inconsistent Grading Criteria	Criteria for grading in schools and classes is often changed from d to day, grading period to grading period, and/or class to class. Thi of consensus makes it difficult for students to understand the expectations.				

Appendix J: [L-1] Log

[L-1] Log

School _____   Log # _____   Date _____
Group # _____
Members Present

_____

Divide the reading into five sections (research & theory, classroom practice, classifying, metaphors, and analogies). Each member determine which part to read. After reading, report back to the group what you read. Write a brief summary of what each member shared:

For next month's project:
Teach a lesson using the "Identifying Similarities & Differences" teaching strategy while another faculty member observes. Observers should write a brief summary about the lesson to share next month.

Next Meeting: Date _____ Location: _____

Appendix K: [L-3] Evaluation Form

<u>Evaluation Form: [L-3] Formative Assessment / Feedback August 11, 2009</u>

Please respond to the following questions about the presentation, activities, and discussions. We will use these comments to improve this session for the next group of teachers (use the back of this sheet if needed).

1. What information / discussion / activities were valuable to you? In what way?

2. What information / discussion / activities weren't valuable or didn't seem worth the time? Why?

3. What information / discussion / activities will you be able to use (if any)? How will you use these ideas?

4. What suggestions do you have for how to better use our time and resources during this workshop?

Appendix L: [L-2] PLC Team Progress Worksheet

PLC Team Progress Worksheet

Team Name: **Members:**

<u>Directions:</u>   Record your team's work in the spaces below. Keep the worksheet in your Team folder and update as needed. Team administrators will ask to see the Worksheet when they visit with your team. Administrators will initial and date the worksheet during team visits.

Admin.
Initial   date

_____   _____   Current Reality:

SMART Goal:

_____   _____   Describe how your team's SMART Goal is connected to one of the following school goals:
1. Improve the graduation rate.
2. Improve student achievement.
3. Narrow the achievement gap.

_____   _____   What essential objectives are linked to your team's SMART Goal?

Appendix M: [L-2] Flex Time Registration Form

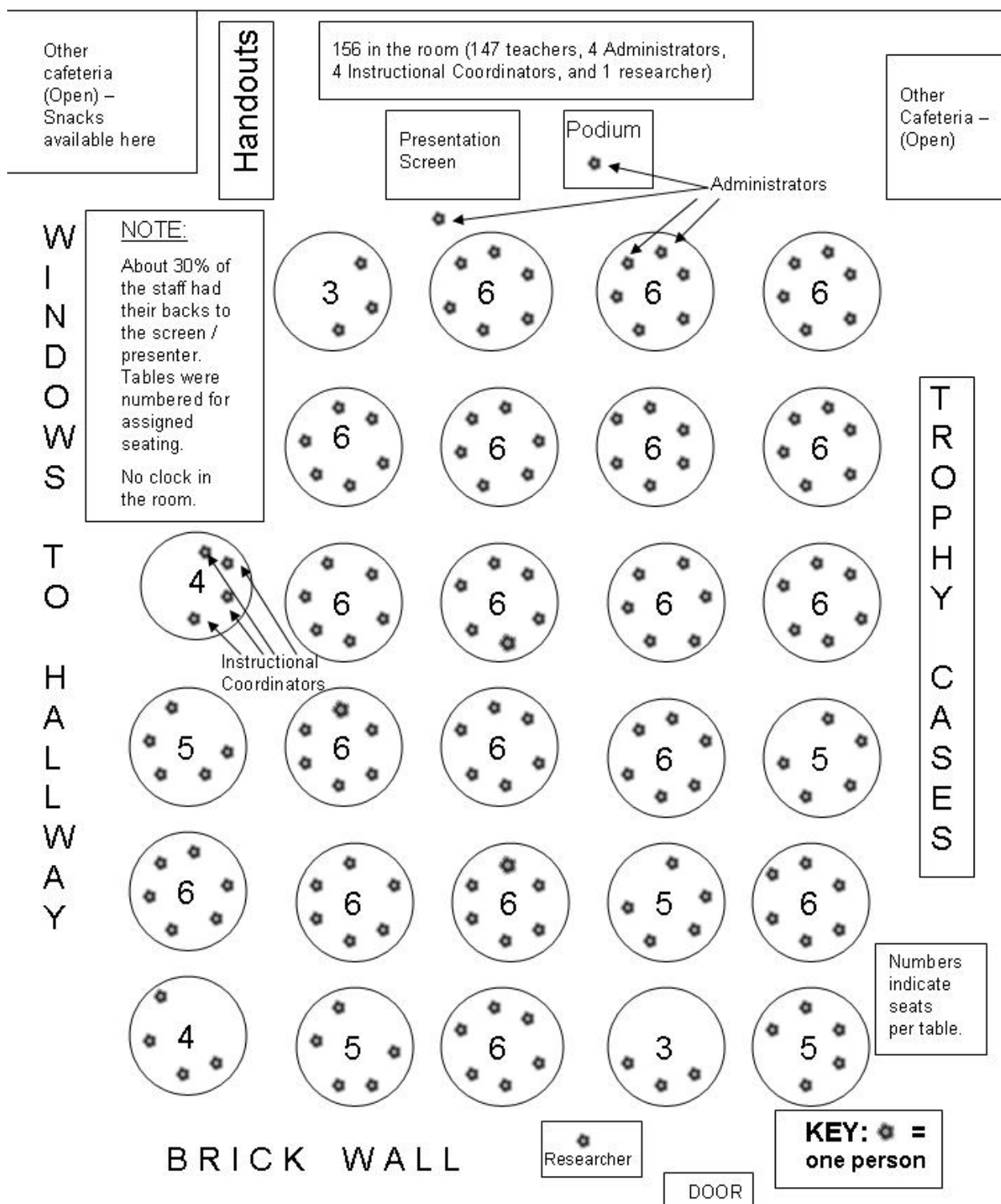**[L-2] Building Flex Time Registration Form** Name: _____

Purpose: All [L-2] teachers are required to take a total of 7 hours of building flex time professional development. The 4 sessions will examine best practices for grading and assessment. These 1 ½ hour sessions will account for 6 hours of flex time and the other hour will be fulfilled by assigned reading prior to the sessions. Teachers will be encouraged to use these strategies and best practices as part of their on-going work with PLCs.

Directions: Teachers must attend each session. Select **one** date/time for each session. Note the morning sessions are two 45-minute sessions offered on consecutive days. Turn your registration form into [administrator's name] mailbox by Friday, August 21.

Session	Dates and Times	Check Here
Session #1 (1.5 hours)	W. and Th. Sept., 9 and 10, 7:00-7:45 A.M.	
	W. Sept. 9, 3:20-4:50	
	W. Sept. 16, 3:20-4:50	
	T. and W. Sept. 15 and 16, 7:00-7:45 A.M.	
	T. Sept. 29, 3:20-4:50	
Session #2 (1.5 hours)	T. and W. Oct. 6 and 7, 7:00-7:45 A.M.	
	W. Oct. 7, 3:20-4:50	
	T. Oct. 13, 3:20-4:50	
	T. and W. Oct. 20 and 21, 7:00-7:45 A.M.	
	M. Oct. 26, 9:00-10:30 fall break	
Session #3 (1.5 hours)	T. and W. Nov. 3 and 4, 7:00-7:45 A.M.	
	W. Nov. 4, 3:20-4:50	
	T. Nov. 10, 3:20-4:50	
	T. and W. Nov. 17 and 18, 7:00-7:45 A.M.	
	Th. Nov. 19, 3:20-4:50	
Session #4 (1.5 hours)	T. and W. Jan. 2 and 27, 7:00-7:45 A.M.	
	Th. Jan. 28, 3:20-4:50	
	W. Feb. 3, 3:20-4:50	
	Th. and F. Feb. 11 and 12, 7:00-7:45 A.M.	
	T. Feb. 16, 3:20-4:50	

Updated: 7/28/09

Appendix N: Room Maps

L1 Professional Development Room Map

(Lecture Hall) - September 16, 2009

4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

21 in the room
(19 teachers,
1 Administrator,
and 1 researcher)

S T A G E

NOTE: Coaches
had their meeting
8:00-9:00 A.M.
(about 8 or 9 of them)

A
D
M
I
N
I
S
T
R
A
T
O
R

researcher

10 seats per row.

18 rows on each side.

KEY: ✿ =
one person

L2 Professional Development Room Map
(Cafeteria) - August 12, 2009 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Other cafeteria (Open) – Snacks available here

Handouts

156 in the room (147 teachers, 4 Administrators, 4 Instructional Coordinators, and 1 researcher)

Other Cafeteria – (Open)

Presentation Screen

Podium

Administrators

WINDOWS TO HALLWAY

NOTE:

About 30% of the staff had their backs to the screen / presenter. Tables were numbered for assigned seating.

No clock in the room.

3

6

6

6

6

6

6

6

4

6

6

6

6

Instructional Coordinators

5

6

6

6

5

TROPHY CASES

6

6

6

5

6

4

5

6

3

5

Numbers indicate seats per table.

BRICK WALL

Researcher

KEY: ⬡ = one person

DOOR

L3 Professional Development Room Map
(Auditorium) - August 11, 2009 12:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

STAGE

Podium

Presenters

Presentation Screen

118 in the room (113 teachers, 2 Administrators, 2 presenters, and 1 researcher)

Assistant Principal

Principal

9
10
12
13
14
16
17
18
20
16

4
8
9
10
10
11
11
12
8

4
8
9
10
10
11
11
12
8

researcher

NOTE: It was very cold in this room.

Numbers indicate seats per row.

BALCONY (unused and roped off)

KEY: ● = one person
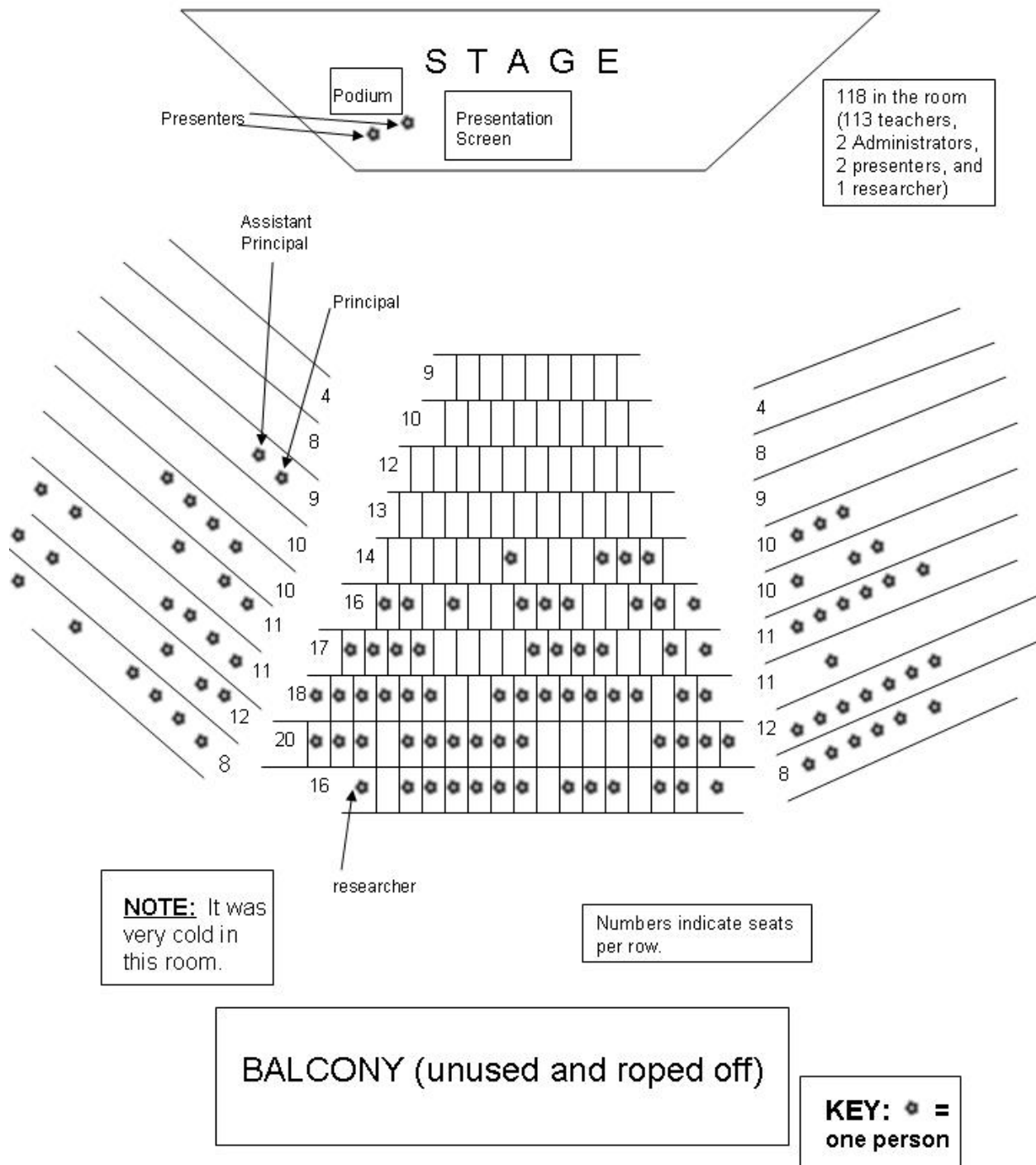
Appendix O: Member Check Confirmation Form

Member Check Confirmation
Practicing What We Teach: Effective Professional Development for Educators

Dear _____,

Thank you so much for participating in the e-mail research interviews from July 17, 2009 through August 15, 2009. I greatly appreciate your willingness to share your insights on the study entitled Practicing What We Teach: Effective Professional Development for Educators.

Attached you will find a summary of your e-mail comments for your review. As part of the research process, it is important that participants confirm the accuracy and completeness of our communication. Please read the manuscript, make any necessary changes or corrections, and e-mail it back to me. If you do not need to make any changes, please return this e-mail stating no changes were necessary. Your e-mail reply confirms the receipt of the e-mail research interview summary and acknowledges your belief that the transcript is a complete and accurate portrayal of our conversation. I would appreciate the return of the corrections or confirmation by _____.

Again, thank you for your time and effort as a research participant in this study. Your input is important. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Mary K. Trehearn
mtrehearn@xxxxxxxx.org
(402) XXX-XXXX

_____

I, _____, acknowledge receipt of the e-mail interview summary with Mary K. Trehearn for the research study Practicing What We Teach: Effective Professional Development for Educators. My e-mail response indicates the interview summary is an accurate and complete account of our communication.