COLLEGIAL COACHING:

TEACHER ACCEPTANCE OF A MODEL

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The foundation of this study was to analyze the positive and negative influences a collegial coaching model had on moving a culture in crisis to one of productivity and collaboration. Change indicators identified as positive contributors for a cultural change are accountability measures, school improvement, professional development, collegial coaching, enhancing classroom activities and instructional delivery, and staff movement toward collaboration. These identified elements are the basis of the interview and survey questions completed by the interviewees.

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected to determine if a coaching model was a viable means to change and enhance classroom teachings and practices of teachers for development of students. Data collected through a naturalistic inquiry process demonstrated if staff was willing and able to change their approach to instructional delivery. The information obtained through the semi-structured interviewing process known as Responsive Interview Model revealed the thoughts and feelings of teachers and administrators as their responses answered three research questions on the identified change indicators. The interview data was analyzed and categorized into unanimous, supported, and individual themes. Completion of a survey supported the ten interview questions and supplied quantitative data highlighted within the review of literature.

Responses to interview and survey questions categorized staff members into one of the three groups of educators identified by Barth (1990). A ranking order of the identified elements supplied additional quantitative data surrounding participants' perceptions of the influence each element has on school improvement.

Data obtained through the participants' answers revealed relevant positive and negative aspects of a collegial coaching model. In addition, responses unveiled if professional development delivered by colleagues impacted requirements of accountability and student improvement for sustainable change.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5. CHAPTER

LIST OF TABLES

1. CHAPTER

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Introduction

> American schools remain central to the fabric of society and productivity. Every citizen has the right to develop skills and knowledge that will enhance his or her quality of life – this is a core tenet of the social purpose of education.
>
> Kelly and Peterson in Tucker and Codding (2002, p. 247)

Since President George Bush enacted a federal mandate known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, schools have looked different as educators alter traditional methods of instruction and delivery of classroom skills. NCLB procured the statement, "Failure is not an option for today's students – at least not one we would conceivably choose" (Blankstein, 2004, p. 2). A sudden urgency to improve education and the children affected by this decision has led to the establishment of higher accountability and school improvement. Educational institutions have been continuously seeking new arrangements for students to reach proficiency in reading and math. Districts failing to achieve proficiency and meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) face consequences on several political levels. The urgency to improve schools has all but eliminated traditional ways of educating children and replaced old teaching techniques and strategies with research-based programs and methods of instruction. Act 48 forces teachers to enhance personal education through on-going professional development. The objective to

strengthen instructional strategies and implement academic change in the classroom encourages more creative approaches to education. Accountability measures have pressured schools and teachers to change. Change is no longer an option, but how schools and districts choose to elicit this change depends on specific needs of educational situations.

The guiding principle of K – 12 schools has been to prepare students to exist and prosper in a technological society, where competing forces for employment are global. Friedman's (2006) book *The World is Flat* emphasizes the need for lightening swift advances in technology and communication. Students' abilities to adapt in this explosion of globalization rely on the educational foundation given to young adults. An overwhelming task, appropriate measures must be instilled in schools to compel a change toward improvement. Collins (2001) stated in his book *Good to Great* that the success of an organization was not a single defining action:

> Good to great comes by a cumulative process – step by step,
> action by action, decision by decision, turn upon turn of the
> flywheel – add up to sustained and spectacular results. It was a
> quiet, deliberate process of figuring out what needed to be done
> to create the best future results and then taking those steps one
> way of the other. (p. 169)

Blankstein (2004, p. 53) emphasized four "circles of support" needed for successful outcomes for schools and students: student learning (focus); authentic pedagogy; school organizational capacity, including the creation of "professional communities" to support the first two items; and, external support. An institution may commit to the adoption of new textbooks, curriculum, or a change of administrative personnel and teachers to produce change. Continuing professional development for teachers instills vigor and new concepts of teaching to hold the interest of students, to

keep them engaged, and to challenge them to think deeply. Schools are required to structure a course of action that demonstrates staff is accountable and committed to educating all students regardless of ability level.

One of the five "core propositions" that guide the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2007) asserted that teachers must be members of "learning communities . . . who contribute to the effectiveness of their schools by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development". The Keys Initiative of the National Education Association (2007) has been designed to help educators develop shared commitment to high academic goals, collaborative problem-solving, continuous assessment for teaching and learning, and on-going learning for professionals. The premise that teachers should be engaged in a "continuous process of individual and collective examination and improvement of practice" and that staff development should be "job-embedded and site-specific" is endorsed by the American Federation of Teachers (2007).

Following the merger of two intermediate buildings at Steel Town into one seven-eight configuration, it was vital to find the means to support both teachers and students. It was believed that providing teachers with skills that challenge students to accomplish the organization's goals of academic success could be brought about by re-teaching teachers. Administrative leadership would not be enough. Teachers had to become empowered as teacher leaders gain confidence in their own abilities to meet the needs of the students and to deliver lessons utilizing new and different formats.

Capacity building for staff members at Steel City Middle School was impacted by the introduction of peer mentors, or "content coaches", a name used to identify staff

members representing the academic areas of reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and language. Content coaches were the system thinkers whose task was to coordinate professional development activities to support student growth. This researcher believes that activities can be abundant, organized, and demonstrated to colleagues; however, whether this endeavor is transferred into the classroom is dependent upon an individual's personality, self-confidence, and ability and willingness to change. This study seeks to reveal if teachers have a willingness to embrace a collegial coaching model and to analyze if such a model is a viable avenue to pursue in school improvement.

1.1.1 External Factors

1.1.1.1   Accountability

External accountability is a major force in the development of internal accountability measures and action plans. Weak internal accountability systems do not help districts or schools respond productively to requirements set forth by external pressures. Elmore (2004, p. 134) described accountability in reference to four major ideas to which state and local educational policies must adhere: the school is the basic unit for the delivery of education and hence the primary place where teachers and administrators are held accountable; schools are primarily accountable for student performance, generally defined as measured achievement on tests in basic academic subjects; school-site student performance is evaluated against externally set standards that define acceptable levels of student achievement as mandated by states or localities; and evaluation of school performance is typically accomplished by a system of rewards, penalties, and intervention strategies targeted at rewarding successful schools and

remediating or closing low-performing schools. When evaluating student performance, accountability professed that *all* children reach the same level of proficiency:

> Accountability mechanisms are, literally, the variety of formal
> and informal ways by which people in schools *give an account* of
> their actions to someone in a position of formal authority, inside
> or outside the school. (Elmore, 2004, p. 140, italics in original)

Accountability mechanisms can take a variety of forms. Student report cards are indicators to demonstrate individual student achievement not subject to scrutiny from society. State assessment tests publicly demonstrate attainment of *adequate yearly progress* (AYP) for the building and district and within specific subgroups. Local progress subject to public scrutiny is evaluated against progress of school districts across the state. Schools that consistently fail to achieve AYP are subject to public discourse. Societal scrutiny of local progress has forced many districts to establish new expectations for staff and students, to revise educational programs, and to alter how schools are maintained.

New accountability measures succeed or fail at the local level depending on how schools choose to solve the problem. All facets of education need to be evaluated and explored to determine how new initiatives can effectively lead to improved student performance. An assessment of how accountability and school improvement measures have empowered teacher leaders in school-wide decision making and delivery of professional development in the middle school building are guided by the questions to be answered.

1.1.1.2   School Improvement

Substantive school reform is based on the premise that the very purpose of schooling is to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential to their future success (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005, p.12). **A** centerpiece of the Bush administration, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) demands a marked improvement in schools across the nation by 2014.   NCLB has created the most pronounced change in accountability for education since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was issued in 1965. Federal policy-making has given permission for state governments to become involved in shaping the future of schools across the nation and local districts and teachers are faulted when improvements are not realized. Taken from the Department of Educations' (PDE) website (www.pde.state.pa.us), Pennsylvania's model for school improvement is:

> . . . standards-based and aligns clear standards to curriculum, instruction, assessments, interventions, and resources. Data informs school improvement planning, and researched-based strategies and professional development are used to produce high student achievement, close achievement gaps, and build capacity for schools, districts, and the state.

Schools have adopted new textbooks, curriculums, tests, and programs through the years. Students have been ability grouped and building schedules have been changed among a myriad of other internal modifications. But, the combination of these actions has not been enough to raise student achievement at all schools and in all subgroups. "Attempts to change the stable patterns of the core of schooling, in the fundamental ways described above, are usually unsuccessful on anything more than a small scale" (Elmore, 2004, p. 10). Leaders looking to improve schools must *envision* the future, exploring occurrences of the past to shape possibilities. Embracing a vision of the future, leaders

within schools must see the big story: see trends and patterns and not just one-off or one-time occurrences (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 121).

To combat a stagnate dilemma, districts in Pennsylvania are required to raise student achievement through the employment of data analysis, collaborative and purposeful planning, innovative programs, focused and researched based professional development, aligned instructional assessments, and leadership development. Research supports a linkage between collaborative culture and improving schools. Teaching can no longer be a "lonely profession" where each teacher assumes responsibility for his or her own room and students, thus creating a formidable barrier toward change. Reactive measures need to be taken, and teachers need to recognize problems and become creative thinkers, empowered with the knowledge and skills to combat deficiencies before them. Teachers must continue to learn along with their students to help their students.

1.1.1.3 Act 48 / Professional Development

One area recommended to create organizational meaning toward substantive school improvement is the education and continuing professional development of teachers who service children. Elmore (2004, p. 90) believed the immediate cause of this situation was a simple, powerful idea dominating policy discourse about schools: that students should be held to high, common standards for academic performance, and that schools and the people who work in them should be held accountable for ensuring that students – all students – are able to meet these standards.

Schmoker (2004) cited a "broad, even remarkable concurrence" among educational researchers and organizational theorists who have concluded that developing

the capacity of educators to function as members of professional learning is the "best-known means by which we might achieve truly historic, wide-scale improvements in teaching and learning" (p. 432). Teachers were not previously held accountability for sustaining improvement in their own teaching techniques, styles, and strategies. They were not subjected to scrutiny from peers or the public until published accounts of student academic performance created public discourse about schools. The practice of continuing education for professionals has existed in the fields of research and development, health care, even social services for years. Educators are not being treated unjustly; rather, they are expected to enhance their practice with new techniques, similar to the occupations mentioned. When serving the public, the public expects only "the best".

The goal of current professional development endeavors – building the collective capacity of a staff to achieve its goals through job-embedded learning – flies in the face of traditional staff development (DuFour, et al, 2005, p. 18). Increasing the knowledge and skills of individual teachers is not sufficient to foster sustained school improvement. Effective professional development for the collective staff must focus on student learning, learning that impacts PSSA scores and demonstrates measurable outcomes to validate schools are attaining AYP. Professional development, in the consensus view, should be designed to develop the capacity of teachers to work collectively on problems of practice within their own school and with practitioners in other settings, as much as to support the knowledge and skill development of individual educators (Elmore, 2004, p. 24). Isolationism is a memory of the past as collaboration comes to the forefront as a method to combat mediocrity and low expectations for students. On-going professional

development is meant to establish a continuous learning cycle for adults, similar in nature to the circular path of development experienced by students.

Research has recognized that utilization of collegial coaches to deliver professional development to peers is one strategy schools have employed to enhance teacher learning. Results of numerous studies validate the premise that improvements in the classroom influence the ability of students to achieve at higher levels of performance. Research validates that a common set of practices shared across a building may help establish the improvements desired within a building.

1.1.2 The District

Steel Town School District is located southwest of Pittsburgh and is considered a small urban community. The school district encompasses five municipalities that differ considerably in wealth and in diversity of its residents. The ethnicity of the students in April 2007 was 53% white and 47% black. This difference continues to narrow with each passing year.

Many residents of the areas comprising Steel Town School District were previously employed in one of the many steel mills located along the Monongahela River. As the mills closed, residents were forced to relocate or find other means to support their families. The two largest contributors to the district's tax base are the local hospital and the school district. The district's free and reduced lunch population sits at 63%, a percentage reflecting the lack of employment in the region. The emergence of new employment opportunities in the community and surrounding areas has been slow.

The district's population has been on a decline for the past several years. In 2005, the school district served 4,717 students in grades K – 12. In September 2006, the enrollment was 4,332 and dropped to 4,255 in March 2007. As economics forces more families to relocate, this downward population trend is projected to continue and, with it, any stable tax base. The school district relies on grant monies to keep students competitive with surrounding districts and to help support technology and other initiatives and programs. State and federal tax monies and grants and Title I services have provided after school programs and tutoring opportunities for students not meeting state standards.

No Child Left Behind has forced many changes in the district over the years. This change spurred a restructuring of schools, curriculum, and programs. Progress has been seen in PSSA scores and AYP attainment in the elementary and intermediate buildings. The middle school also has realized a turnaround during the 2005-2006 school year after a rigorous and changing curriculum was initiated by administration and staff. District emphasis is currently on the high school, a building headed into Corrective Action II.

1.1.3   The Middle School

Steel Town Middle School, formerly Central Hall, came about through the merger of the two intermediate buildings three years prior. A restructuring in the district led to a seven-eight building configuration for the start of the 2004-2005 school year to accommodate the social and academic needs of students. The number of students enrolled totaled a little over 800 at the start of the 2004 school year. Enrollment declined

to 706, evidence of a loss of population in the area. The anticipated enrollment figure for the 2007-2008 school year is hovering around 650 students.

The merger of the two intermediate buildings combined two stark contrasts. Students from a more affluent area attended Intermediate Building #1. The free-reduced lunch rate was 47%. Students were predominately white with a minority population of 25%. Students enrolled at intermediate Building Two came directly from the city of Steel Town. The free-reduced lunch rate was 73% and the minority population was 50%.

Current enrollment at Steel Town Middle School sits at 310 black, 385 white, and 11 American Indian or Hispanic. The minority population percentage is approximately 45%. The free-reduced lunch rate at the building is 72%, a percentage higher than the district rate. The percentage of special education students with IEP's at the middle school fluctuates between 25% and 28%.

When Intermediate Building #1 housed grades five-through the students had been meeting AYP and demonstrated academic success on the PSSA tests for several years. This was not the case for Intermediate Building #2 or Central Hall before the 2004 merger. Central Hall had been on the NCLB warning list because of low PSSA scores and failure to achieve AYP. Mathematic scores on the 2002 -2003 PSSA test for Central Hall recorded students who were 1.8% advanced, 9.1% proficient, 24.7% basic and 64.4% below basic. Reading scores were slightly better with 3.6% advanced, 22.5% proficient, 32.4% basic, and 41.4% below basic. Table 1.1 demonstrates how PSSA scores have affected the status of Central Hall since 2003 and before the merger.

Table 1.1: Steel Town Middle School AYP Status

2003 Status	2004 Status	2005 Status	2006 Status
Warning	Made AYP	Warning	Warning

The merger created the hope that student achievement on the PSSA test would increase with the infusion of students from Intermediate Building #1 who had achieved proficiency. Educational programs, grouping, and scheduling changes at Steel Town Middle School emerged as external pressures created the opportunity for internal change. The introduction of academic coaches, or *content coaches,* created a venue to "teach the teachers". Content coaches existed in the building for three years. The following charts show PSSA test results of Steel Town Middle School since the merger and during the three years of the collegial coaching model. On the face of it, an analysis of the PSSA scores in Table 1.2 and Table 1.3 shows a slight increase in student achievement.

Table 1.2: Steel Town Seventh Grade Students: PSSA Results

7th grade	Math Adv.	Math Prof.	Math Basic	Math Below	Reading Adv.	Reading Prof.	Reading Basic	Reading Below
2005 2006	21.0%	27.9%	22.3%	28.8%	18.9%	27.6%	20.4%	33.1%
2006 2007	20.2%	26.7%	20.8%	32.3%	19.3%	24.6%	27.0%	29.1%

Table 1.3: Steel Town Eighth Grade Students: PSSA Results

8th grade	Math Adv.	Math Prof.	Math Basic	Math Below	Reading Adv.	Reading Prof.	Reading Basic	Reading Below
2004 2005	11.7%	21.1%	24.5%	42.7%	9.4%	27.7%	20.1%	42.8%
2005 2006	9.7%	27.6%	27.4%	35.3%	19.4%	33.2%	16.8%	30.6%
2006 2007	15.6%	23.1%	23.3%	38.0%	24.4%	29.4%	18.1%	28.1%

In *Good to Great* (2001), Collins observed that successful companies continually assess current performance with an eye toward continued improvement, hope, optimism, and action. Content coaches identified areas of weakness based on an analysis of student scores on the PSSA. An emphasis on open-ended questioning, vocabulary development, higher thinking skills, reading comprehension, and math computation was needed to help raise scores further.

1.1.4   Internal Factors

1.1.4.1   Administrative Leadership

Central office leadership has changed since the merger; however, personnel have maintained a commitment to improving and enhancing the educational setting for students in the district. The current superintendent has spent her entire career in the district in various capacities. The superintendent has permitted building leadership to shape the direction of school improvement within their buildings under watchful eyes. The superintendent is open to new and fresh ideas and requests building administrators to "think outside the box."

Leadership at the building level changed since the 2004 merger. The first year of the merger had a head principal with two full-time assistant principals, one half time assistant principal, and one dean of students. During the middle of the 2004-2005 school year, the principal left for personal reasons, and one of the assistant principals became the instructional leader of the building. The change led to one principal, one assistant principal, and one dean of students for the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year. The

three administrators were at the middle school since the merger and were cognizant of the problems, needs, and strengths of the staff and students.

The leadership change resulted in internal changes in curriculum, scheduling, professional development, and academic programming. The new principal was a proponent of collegial coaching, enhanced technology, and continuing staff development. His vision became the sense of urgency needed to encourage and motivate staff to work toward higher standards for adults and students. Teachers became empowered as a sense of belonging and trust transcended on the culture of the building. Emphasis was placed on creating a professional learning community where teachers collaborate on school improvement efforts to reduce isolationism of a *traditional* school setting. Staff became revitalized and empowered and teacher turnover diminished considerably.

1.1.4.2   Staff

Sixty-two educators engage in direct instruction of students at the school. This number does not reflect the interns, tutors, instructional assistants and other personnel who support the students. Thirty-six staff members are certified in the five major academic areas of math, reading, language, science, and social studies. The age range of the staff is between 23 and 55 years. The mean age of the majority of staff members is 30, with most involved in education less than six years. Approximately 30 staff members possess an Instructional I teaching certificate.

District teachers formerly believed that teaching at Central Hall was the worst position to have. Student discipline problems were abundant and hampered student learning. Staff members are now encouraged to help make decisions on the direction the

building is going to reach and sustain improvement under new leadership. Analysis of results from the PSSA, Terra Nova, and 4-Sight test identified weaknesses in educational programming. Once disillusioned by perceptions held by other teachers in the district, the staff became renewed and revitalized as an increase in PSSA scores finally came to fruition. Teacher leaders emerged and have become the proponents for professional development. A sense of "family" emerged as teachers collaborated and cooperated with administration and colleagues to enhance student learning and to create projects and activities to challenge more advanced thinking.

1.1.4.3   Educational Planning

The structure at Steel Town Middle School promoted progress toward AYP but not enough to warrant a "business as usual" attitude. PSSA results shared with staff helped to demonstrate the urgency for change. Data from standardized tests was used to construct an agenda for internal change and establish a focus for academic achievement of students. Collegial coaching was only one aspect of the structural change. Additional internal modifications were necessary to support the school's vision.

Students were previously subjected to a seven period day, no study halls, and an hour and a half fourth period for lunches to be taken into consideration. The remaining six periods were 45 minutes in length under the former schedule. A new configuration emerged, which divided the student day into eight periods for inclusion of study halls and team plans. All periods were 45 minutes in length.

Students identified as basic or below basic in the areas of reading and math were given the opportunity to attend tutoring sessions for remediation and support after study

halls were instilled in the new building schedule. The district hired two additional tutors in 2006 after data collected on student progress showed substantial student growth with only two tutors. Four tutors, two in both reading and mathematics, assisted students daily and worked on areas of weakness during a 45 minute time slot. Grant money to support this endeavor required students to participate in the tutoring program for a total of 60 hours. If a student were deficient in both reading and math, the student could transfer to tutoring opportunities in the other academic area after completion of the initial 60 hours.

Construction of an eight period day allowed for creation of a team plan for teachers of the five academic areas. Teachers used data to identify areas of weakness and strengths for approximately 125 students. Lessons were constructed, strategies shared, parent meetings called, students tutored, or other activities completed to help students work toward their potential. Team plans gave teachers the opportunity to create interdisciplinary projects to challenge students to higher levels of thinking and skill attainment.

Data and teacher recommendation were used to place students in ability level groups for language arts classes. Only students identified as "gifted" previously had the opportunity to participate in a more rigorous program. Students were now ability-grouped into a compressed (identified and non-identified gifted), advanced, average, or low language arts class. Similar skills were taught; however, the complexity level and expectations were geared toward student ability.

Reading and Language classes have been scheduled back to back to allow for a 90 minute language arts block. The extended time gave reading and language teachers the opportunity to coordinate activities and projects together. Lower level language arts

classes were placed at the beginning of the day when students have a greater attention span to work more efficiently. More advanced language arts classes were scheduled at the end of the day.

Students working below basic were placed in a "Foundations" Reading and Language class. Students identified as special education or students who did not qualify for special education but were part of the Title I program at the Intermediate school were scheduled into these classes. The teachers were dual certified in special education and Language Arts. The classes were smaller and more individualized, working at a slower pace on established standards. An approved research-based program supported the curriculum for the classes. Many of the students attended reading tutoring to supplement their education.

Coordination with the intermediate buildings has created a restructuring of the math department by setting higher standards for student achievement. Based on PSSA scores, 4-Sight Data, informal teacher assessment, and teacher recommendation, students were recommended for inclusion in a more rigorous math class. Three years ago, all seventh grade students were placed in a basic seventh grade math class, thus allowing only a very small percentage of students the opportunity to take Algebra I in eighth grade.

Seventh grade students were currently placed in either an Algebra I or Pre-Algebra class based on the above mentioned criteria. This curriculum change prompted the creation of geometry classes for approximately 75 eighth grade students. Eighth grade students who did not qualify for Geometry were placed in Algebra I or Algebra Part A. The new math structure was more challenging and rigorous, promoting higher student achievement.

Similar to the Language Arts classes, low achieving math students were placed in a Foundations Math class. The Foundation Math classes were kept to a minimal size, and students were instructed in the basic skills of Algebra at a much slower pace. Students were transferred to a higher level course as academic skills were met. Students in Foundation Math classes often received supplemental tutoring services.

All math classes rotated through a six day cycle to utilize a computer-based instructional program called Compass Learning. The program was obtained through a competitive grant called Enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) with a total award in excess of $125,000 per year for two years. The school wrote a supplement to the original grant to keep the program intact. This interactive program was selected during the summer of 2003 as a means to improve the students' reading, math, and writing skills. The program was a standards-based assessment with individual learning paths. Teachers programmed specific lessons for students to coordinate with classroom activities, differentiated instruction via interactive lessons, and provided home access for an increase in parent involvement.

Technology integration has been fast and furious. Four classrooms of 30 computers now exist where previously there was none. The library was equipped with two areas for computer instruction. Two computer labs housed classes for acquisition of skills in Excel, Word, and Power Point. Math and reading classrooms were equipped with a Promethean Board, an interactive Smart Board, accompanied by a LCD projector. Teachers created lessons for the class, used a classroom set of student ActiVotes to test comprehension and competencies, and allowed students to complete activities and problems at the board. The promethean board was linked to the internet and allowed

teachers additional access to resources and activities. A mobile promethean board and LCD projector were available to staff members who did not have access to a classroom Promethean Board.

1.1.4.4   Content Coaches

The administrative team from the building and central office used EAP grant money to create five new positions at the middle school called *content coaches*. Recognized as motivated and outstanding teachers in the classroom who utilized a number of new approaches in teaching, their task was to research, present, and model instructional strategies designed to impact student success across all academic areas. Coaches were certified and represented the areas of reading, math, social studies, science and special education. Content coaches worked alongside administration to determine the needs of the building through analysis of PSSA and 4-Sight data. They received four hours of additional pay weekly at the contractual rate of $21.75 per hour. The coaches met as a group every Tuesday and Thursday morning, but much of their preparation for faculty meetings was completed on their own time.

Two additional staff members from reading and the visual arts joined the original collegial team in January of the 2006 – 2007 school year. Additional grant money would allow the inclusion of five additional coaches during the upcoming school year whose task would focus on integration of technology in classroom instruction.

Content coaches have been in place at Steel Town Middle School for three years. The coaches were not readily accepted by members of the staff the first year. Professional development activities they demonstrated to the staff lacked luster during

the initial year. As confidence in their abilities began to emerge, so did creation of more interactive and fun activities for utilization in the classroom. Content coaches directed professional development meetings two times a month during the third year. Staff members have been more actively engaged as coaches structured meeting time more efficiently and productively.

1.1.4.5   Staff Meetings

DuFour, Eaker, and Dufour (2005) wrote:

> The best professional development occurs in the context of the workplace rather than the workshop as teachers work together to address the issues and challenges that are relevant to them. It is pursued in a social setting with opportunities for interaction rather than in isolation. It is directly and purposefully designed to help educators accomplish the collective goals of their team and school rather than having individuals pursue their personal interests and agendas. (pp. 19, 20)

The district's teachers' contract allowed for two additional hours a month for building administrators to meet with faculty. Faculty time previously resembled a "gripe" session with very little accomplished to educate children. Teachers departed the meeting feeling disgruntled and disillusioned. A plan of action was developed during the summer of 2005 to guide faculty meetings for the year.

Faculty meetings at the middle school evolved through professional development learning activities the last two years. Meetings were held on the first and third Wednesday of the month and lasted from 7:15 until 8:15.

Content coaches did not appear comfortable with their leadership capacity during the first year. Administration led the introduction and demonstration of activities. Year two concentrated on strategies to increase reading comprehension across all academic

areas through the use of webs and graphic organizers. The introduction of weekly school wide vocabulary was instilled in classrooms through use of a "word wizard", a staff member representing the "voice" of vocabulary. Emphasis during year three centered on scaffolding, open-ended questions, and various skills in math computation.

Coaches constructed a plan for delivery of professional development based on data analysis, an emphasis of accountability and school improvement. Although coaches have taken the lead on proving professional development, complete buy-in needs to be established with members of the staff. Collegial coaching has faced resistance and criticism from some staff members. A sense of ownership from staff needed to be instilled with the teachers if the coaching model is to sustain itself, regardless of a change in administration or the addition or loss of personnel.

1.1.5   Statement of the Problem

As staff faced factual data and personal fears, the middle school demonstrated a commitment to transforming the building from one of failure to one of prosperity, establishing clarity and purpose in the organization. Accountability and school improvement was the impetus for desired and needed change. Whether the work and commitment of the coaches led the school toward a cultural transformation for sustained change, the process relied heavily on individual staff members and their attitudes. "Although people may like eventual *change*, they often don't like *changing* because the process can be uncomfortable" (Blankstein, 2004, p. 31, italics in original).

American schools were traditionally modeled after the assembly line method that permeated the automobile industry. Educators weary of innovative approaches showed

reluctance to endorse new and different approaches in education, thus minimizing any school improvement efforts. Barth (1990, pp. 53, 54) concluded in his research that three groups of educators are present in educational settings:

1. Teachers who are unable and unwilling to critically examine their teaching practice, and unable to have other adults – teachers, principals, adults – examine what and how they are teaching.

2. Teachers who are quite able and willing to continually scrutinize and reflect on what they do and make use of their insights to effect periodic change.

3. Teachers who are able and willing to critically scrutinize their practice and who are quite able and willing, even desirous, of making their practice accessible to other adults.

Using teachers to instill new and varied methods of instruction for instruction to colleagues was not a novel idea, but accomplishing the task creates feelings of insecurity and fear. New skills and knowledge could be disseminated, but the number of strategies actually making its way into the classroom was dependant upon the comfort level of individual teachers. Teachers are often resistant to embracing change when it imposes on their daily routine. Creating collaboration and instilling teachers to become leaders to sustain a change effort was a daunting task.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of using teacher content coaches on teaching practices of faculty at a middle school. This study collected qualitative data through interviews and quantitative data through survey completion from teachers, content coaches, and administration. An analysis of the data categorized teachers at the middle school into one of Barth's three descriptors of educators and reveal if a coaching model was accepted by the staff as a means to change and influence teaching practices. Questioning also evaluated if the following six elements identified by

the researcher as change indicators from the review of literature has an influence on progress and student achievement at Steel Town Middle School:

- Accountability Measures
- School Improvement
- Professional Development
- Collegial Coaching
- Enhancing Classroom Activities and Instructional Delivery
- Staff Movement toward Collaboration

Quantitative data was collected through teacher completion of a survey that encompassed the above named change indicators.

1.1.6 Major Research Question

How has professional development delivered by colleagues provided a basis for change and influenced teaching practices of staff members at Steel Town Middle School?

1.1.7 Interview Questions

1. What are the 3 top responsibilities of classroom teachers?

2. Is reflection on teaching practices useful? In what ways?

3. Has professional development been helpful? In what ways?

4. Has accountability and school improvement played a role in structuring professional development activities? In what ways?

5. What contributed to your professional development?

6. Has professional development activities demonstrated by colleagues been an influence on your teaching? In what ways?

7. What do you believe are the advantages or disadvantages of peer coaching?

8. What is the importance of including peers in the teaching process?

9. What do you believe is the influence of professional development activities on instruction?

10. What to you would indicate that teachers have moved away from isolationism toward a collaborative effort for school improvement and establishment of a professional learning community?

1.1.8 The Study

Questions posed to interviewees were meant to probe the attitudes and perceptions of staff in regard to accountability, school improvement, and professional development activities administered by colleagues. Indicators of individual perceptions substantiate any movement toward the establishment of professional learning communities. Creating a common understanding of the challenges coincided with the commitment required to establish change. Changing fundamental assumptions or beliefs was harder still (Blankstein, 2004, p. 52).

The researcher conducted interviews and survey completion with ten of the thirty-six academic teachers and two administrators who have been at Steel Town Middle School during the three years of this initiative. Their perceptions on professional development and use of a coaching model to enhance teaching, classrooms, and school reform was unveiled through a naturalistic inquiry process. A content analysis on the qualitative and quantitative data revealed the success of this effort and identified where changes need to be made for future development and sustainability. In addition, teacher responses categorized staff members into one of Barth's (1990) three descriptors of teachers.

1.1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Middle School - The building that houses seventh and eighth grade students.

Intermediate School - The two district buildings that housed grades 4, 5, and 6.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) - This educational reform act instituted by President George Bush calls for increased accountability for student learning, higher academic standards, and rigor in education.

Accountability - It is based on the State's content and achievement standards, valid and reliable measures o f academic achievement, and other key indicators of school and district performance such as attendance and graduation rates. (www.pde.state.pa.us)

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) - An individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. AYP is the minimum level of improvement that districts and schools must achieve each year. (www.pde.state.pa.us)

External Factors - Outside factors that affect the operations of the school that are not based on decisions made by school personnel.

Internal Factors - Factors affecting the operation of the school that are directly based on decisions or occurrences within the school.

PSSA - Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

4-Sight Tests - A benchmark assessment tool that enables districts to predict student achievement 5 times a year in the areas of reading and math. Questions mirror the PSSA and appear to be a good indicator of student achievement when students take the state test. The 4-Sight test has been utilized as a tool to identify students in need of remediation and extra assistance.

Improvement - Engagement in new learning practices that work, based on external evidence and benchmarks of success, across multiple schools and classrooms, in a specific area of academic content and pedagogy, resulting in continuous improvement of students' academic performance over time. (Elmore, 2004, p. 103)

Safe Harbor - Safe Harbor status allows a school or district to achieve AYP without meeting the standard achievement targets. If a school or subgroup does not meet the performance targets, but does reduce the percentage of below-proficient student by 10% or more, it will be considered to have met AYP. (www.pde.state.ps.us)

"Making Progress" - A school identified as making progress is one that was previously in either School Improvement or Corrective Action but has made AYP for one year. (www.pde.state.pa.us)

Warning - A warning status means that the school fell short of the AYP targets but has another year to achieve them. These schools are not subject to sanctions, but should

examine where improvement strategies need to be made so targets can be reached the following year. (www.pde.state.pa.us)

School Improvement - Schools or districts are designated as needing school improvement when they do not meet AYP targets for two or three consecutive years. Chapter 4 standards and federal requirements under No Child Left Behind are the determiners for school improvement. (www.pde.state.pa.us)

Corrective Action - When a school or school district does not make yearly progress for four or more consecutive years, the state will place the entity under a "Corrective Action Plan". The plan will include resources to improve teaching, administration, or curriculum. (www.pde.state.pa.us)

Act 48 - Instituted July 1, 2000, Act 48 requires all education professionals to acquire 6 collegiate credits or 180 hours of continuing education every 5 years to maintain an active certificate.

Professional Development - The label attached to activities that are designed in some way to increase the skill and knowledge of educators. (Elmore, 2004, p. 93)

Content Coaches - Lead teachers from various academic areas (science, social studies, math, language, reading, and special education) who research best practices and instructional strategies and disseminate the information and found techniques during bi-weekly staff meetings.

1.1.10   Summary

School reform created schools that did not resemble traditional models of mass

production schools. Teachers must learn to teach in new and different ways to hold the

attention of students and compete with advances in technology. Schools were forced into

urgency to make changes that improve student achievement and keeps schools from

falling into the traps of government intervention. Political mandates, which often clash

with methods of teaching and managing, provided the final stumbling block to truly

transforming a school (Blankstein, 2004, p 43.) Additional barriers that threaten school

change efforts were: many schools do not know what they want, what they need, or the

difference between the two; lack of sufficient time for collaboration and planning;

resistance based on concern and fears; and, waiting for the dream person or program (Blankstein, 2004, p. 44 – 47). Steel Town Middle School was forced to make internal changes to improve student achievement after being placed on the state's "warning" list. The study exposed the staff's perceptions surrounding collegial coaching and six indicators that might have positively impacted the incremental growth demonstrated by students on the PSSA test.

The review of literature that follows demonstrates the impact accountability and school reform has on education when implementing any type of change in structure and educational planning. The evolution of professional development demonstrates how empowering teachers leads a building from one of isolation to one of collaboration. Examples of *change models* from the education or corporate world create a structure that all stakeholders can "buy into" and support. Complexities must be overcome when involved in any change effort, and the affect change imposes on individuals could be overwhelming. It is essential to have the support, guidance, and proper leaders in place to elicit the change needed to impact the culture of a building. An individualized and exact framework that rests on the strengths and weaknesses of a specific organization guides an organization toward the desired goal. Review of what has been accomplished and what still needs to be done makes the task one that is in a cycle of continuous change.

Qualitative and quantitative data collected in the study determined if professional development activities delivered by colleagues at Steel Town Middle School influenced teaching practices of the staff. Teacher responses categorized staff at the middle school into one of Barth's (1990) three groups of educators. Increased PSSA scores have demonstrated progress in student achievement, but teacher responses to the interview and

survey questions revealed if peer coaching contributed to the increase in academic growth or if additional factors influenced student achievement. In addition, interviewees' responses reveal if a coaching model assists in a move from isolationism to collaboration and the development of enhanced instruction. An analysis of the participants' responses determined a future structure to lead to sustainability of the organization's initiative and identifies changes necessary to keep the coaching model as a viable option.

2. CHAPTER

2.1 Review of Literature

2.1.1 School Improvement

> . . . classroom improvement, teacher development, and school improvement must be systematically linked if substantial progress is to be achieved.
>
> Fullan, Bennett, and Rolheiser-Bennett, 1990

The report *A Nation at Risk* exposed how American schools were failing to educate students to successfully compete in a global society. Federal mandates, state plans, and greater local accountability affirmed a resolution toward school improvement. A significant number of school-age children are reading at a "below basic" level as America enters the twenty-first century. The percentage of black and Hispanic students at the below basic level in both math and reading is staggering in relation to the white student population. Projected levels of the high school drop-out rate is plummeting, more so for blacks and Hispanics, not increasing as society have been led to believe. Students in other countries, such as China, Japan, and Denmark, are performing at higher levels of academic achievement than Americans. Public opinion of troubled times in American schools substantiates a need for immediate action and improvement initiatives. Ignorance, avoidance, and enduring the problem drains the energy and good will of the masses.

In its simplest form, the practice of large-scale improvement is the mobilization of knowledge, skill, incentives, resources, and capacities within school and school systems

to increase student learning (Elmore, 2004, p. 103). A sweeping reform legislation known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) pre-empted the most influential movement in education to date in school renewal. This legislation caused educators to investigate what has been occurring in schools and to incorporate necessary measures for students to reach established guidelines. Schools identified as failing, or improvement schools, must show immediate progress within state-mandated guidelines or suffer consequences. This measure caused teachers to be scrutinized in their work with children by parents, the community, politicians, and society. The stakes are high for everyone involved in education as each individual is held accountable for revitalization of education and higher student achievement. Teachers and administrators have been influential components in any school improvement effort, especially teachers (Crandall, 193, p.6; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1006, p. 13), and it is essential that *all* stakeholders tackle this problem.

Improvement means engagement in learning new practices that work, based on external evidence and benchmarks of success, across multiple schools and classrooms, in a specific area of academic content and pedagogy, resulting in continuous improvement of students' academic improvement over time (Elmore, 2004, p. 103). Murphy (1991, p. 65) contended *school improvement* actually means "improving practices" that frequently require personnel to learn to teach to a higher level without feeling inadequate or being blamed for past practices. However, schools as organizations are not typically designed as places where people are expected to engage in sustained improvement or where they are expected to subject their practice to the scrutiny of peers or the discipline of evaluations based on student achievement (Elmore, 2004, p. 91). Small enclosed classrooms and schedules with little flexibility for time to converse with colleagues have

helped perpetuate the attitude of teachers, "Once I close my door, no one knows what I am doing".

Teachers can no longer act as solo practitioners, operating in isolation from their colleagues. Accountability signals a time for change and teachers must be prepared to formulate, establish, and implement change processes toward school improvement and accountability. The relationship between professional development and *collective accountability* is essentially reciprocal. Reform is an investment in knowledge and skills to achieve a desired end (Elmore, 1996, p. 101).

Collective accountability must extend from formal leadership to leaders who emerge during the change process to all staff members (Zmuda, Kuklis, & Klinel, 2004, p. 163). The commitment to accountability and school improvement hinges on enhanced learning and achievement for *all* students. The establishment of trust and shared leadership between stakeholders is required for collective accountability to guide its members through a change process.

Fullan, Bennett, & Rolheiser-Bennett (1990, p. 14) identified four areas of focus to aid in school improvements efforts:

- **Shared purpose** - shared vision, mission, goals, and objectives transfer to unity of purpose
- **Norms of collegiality** - mutual sharing, assistance, and joint effort among all stakeholders
- **Norms of continuous improvement** - teachers are constantly seeking and assessing potentially better practices inside and outside their own school
- **Structure** - organizational arrangements, roles, and formal policies which explicitly create working conditions that support and inspire movement in all aspects of the school culture

"School improvement requires teachers and administrators to believe they can make changes in students' ability to learn" (Murphy, 1991, p. 66). No longer can schools

preserve the "quick-fix" mentality that previously permeated schools. In the book entitled L*eadership for the Schoolhouse,* Sergiovanni (1996, p. 140) identified two policy instruments to impact school improvement: capacity building and systems-changing. *Capacity-building* involves enabling and empowering teachers by increasing personal skills and their commitment to professional values. Skillful implementation of research-based teaching strategies has a substantial impact on student achievement (Joyce, Murphy, Showers, & Murphy, 1989, p. 75). *Systems-change* involves changing basic theories of schooling in ways that allow for a new sense of what is effective and good practice through a new distribution of authority. Restructuring schools through professional development opportunities led by teachers allow teacher leaders the opportunity to establish sustainable efforts toward school renewal.

Teacher leaders are the link between classroom activities and school improvement for sustainable change. With inclusion of all staff members in structuring student engagement and learning, a powerful innovator seeks a technical repertoire to increase instructional certainty: use reflective practice to enhance clarity, meaning, and coherence; use research to foster investigation and exploration; and use collaboration between staff members to enable each to give and receive ideas and assistance. The four areas of focus in conjunction with inclusion of the unique strengths of one's employees, professional development workshops that are structured, purposeful, meaningful, and data driven, build capacity to move schools toward school improvement. The current reform movement changes education in association with the challenges, possibilities, and new emphasis on teachers' professional development.

2.1.1.1   Move toward School Improvement

Many teachers enter the profession because they want to find solutions to problems and make a difference in the lives of children. One cannot make a difference at the interpersonal level unless the problem and solution are enlarged to encompass the conditions that surround teaching and the skills and actions needed to make a difference (Fullan, 1993). Schools needing to improve must create a sense of urgency that motivates educators to become an effective change agent, utilizing added vitality, self-renewal, and continuous learning. Teachers have to take responsibility to improve schools, or schools will not improve. Collins (2001, p. 65) in *Good to Great* has urged organizations to realize that the first difficult step toward improvement is to "confront the brutal facts" about themselves. Educators need to move beyond mediocrity and become more critical of themselves and the institutions in which they work.

The move forward requires a competent system driven by "systems thinking". Zmuda (et al, 2004, pp. 41, 42) distinguished between a competent and incompetent system in the book *Transforming Schools: Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement.* In an *incompetent system*, staff members recognize and accept limitations in their ability to elicit change. What is lacking is clarity about how an innovation relates to why staff are present, how one innovation relates to another, or how an innovation has an effect on other elements of the school. A perceived reality of conditions results in educators' assumptions that what they are doing impacts the school's core belief. In a *competent system*, staff members are committed to seeking answers through conversation and action research. Teachers are knowledgeable of expectations, and actions are consistent with these expectations. Systems thinking allows educators to examine reality

and embrace "problems as friends", and to restructure elements of the system into "what it could be". The link between habitual practices and reality in a competent system enables educators to satisfy core beliefs. A created *vision* paints a picture of what the school could become.

An educational institution looking to improve strives to become a high-performing school in which all students meet adequate yearly progress and reach proficiency on state mandated tests. Thompson (2003) describes a high performing school district as one ". . . in which the overwhelming majority of students in all schools are meeting high standards of learning regardless of their ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds and in which the district decisively and effectively intervenes in schools where student performance is declining" (p.2). Many changes in education are undertaken to motivate learning institutions toward a positive direction.

Thompson (2003, p. 2) cited eight critical factors that must be addressed if a school wants to structure a high-performing school:

- Systems are standards based.
- Purpose is to enable all students in all schools to meet high standards.
- Climate of school is nurturing and supportive.
- System holds itself accountable for success of schools.
- Administration ensures intensive, on-going, high-quality professional development for all employees.
- System resources (personnel, funds, resources, time, etc.) are strategically focused on supporting powerful instructional practices.
- Personnel collects and uses data effectively.
- System engages in active, open, substantive, and clear two-way communication.

Lambert's (2005, pp. 63, 64, and 65) thoughts of a school reform process journeyed through three major phases: instructive, transitional, and high leadership capacity. The *instructive phase* encompassed a collaboration of participants to be attentive to results, start conversations, solve difficult problems, challenge assumptions,

confront incompetence, focus work, establish structures and processes that engage colleagues, teach new practices, and articulate beliefs. The *transitional phase* allowed teachers to assume more responsibility and emerge as teacher leaders. Principals relinquished some authority and gave teachers the ability to formulate decisions and resolve problems confronted by the school. As teachers emerge as leaders, peer coaches helped to expand building level professional development. The *high leadership capacity phase* encouraged teachers to actively identify crucial questions and uncover resolutions to problems. Teachers took responsibility for structuring a method to achieve the objectives in conjunction with the principal.

Essential steps are necessary to move from the isolationism that permeates schools to a culture of collaboration. According to Fullan and Hargreaves (1996, pp 128, 129, 130), four main types of collaboration existed in a school culture:

1. *Individualistic.* Teachers develop their own practice and techniques for classrooms and may not consider the relevant experiences of colleagues. Adults entering their domain are considered an "invasion of privacy.

2. *Balkanized.* Small groups of people align themselves with particular techniques of ideology and pit themselves against others with opposing beliefs.

3. *Contrived Collegiality.* Teachers appear to be collaborating, but the culture of the school has not changed. Teachers collaborate without challenging their beliefs or approaches to teaching and learning.

4. *Collaborative.* Teams of highly skilled individuals are committed to helping students learn by becoming active learners themselves. Analysis of data is used to discover ways of improving teaching and learning by solving problems in conjunction with their professional colleagues.

Ineffective practices have continued to be tolerated when teachers were abandoned and did not know the possibilities of new and different teaching techniques. Without any point of comparison, the isolated teacher failed to confront the fact that (1)

the teacher next door might be three times as effective or (2) much of their own teaching

was inferior (Schmoker, 2006, p. 24). Teachers not monitored fell silently into one of the

four categories described by Fullan and Hargreaves. The move from mediocrity, inferior

teaching, and incompetence has been challenged through school improvement efforts that

support on-going learning for adults and students, collaboration among colleagues, and

empowerment of individuals working toward sustained change. Collaboration was a

means to an end. The structure of schools as they stand has been hostile to the learning

of adults, and because of this, they are hostile to the learning of students (Elmore, 2004,

p. 93).

2.1.2 Professional Development for School Improvement

> High quality staff development is a central component in nearly
> every proposal for improving education.
>
> Guskey, 1986, p.5

Lindstrom & Speck (2004) cited Darling Hammond (1997), Elmore (2002), and

Stigler & Hubert, 1999) to generate this comprehensive definition of professional

development:

> Professional development 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. It emerges from and meets the learning needs of
> participants as well as clearly focusing on student learning.
> Professional development is not something that is done to
> individuals or faculties on a periodic basis as new mandates or
> education fads appear. It is an on-going sustainable process that
> builds collaboration, generates and shares professional
> knowledge, uses current research, and informs the daily work of
> teachers and leaders. (p.10)

Kentucky's Educational Plan (704 KAR 3:035 Section (2)) defined professional development as ". . . those experiences which systematically over time enable educators to acquire and apply knowledge, understanding, skills, and abilities, to achieve personal, professional, and organizational goals and to facilitate the learning of students". Based on school plans, priority must be attached to programs that increase and support teachers' understanding of curriculum content and methods of instruction appropriate for each content area. School improvement means improving practices in which personnel learn to do things better without feeling inadequate or being blamed for past practices (Murphy, 1991, p. 64).

Barth (1990) acknowledged that staff development, or professional development as now called, is one of the most essential ways of improving a school. Current professional development programs provide educators the opportunity to solve problems together, consider new ideas, evaluate alternatives, and frame school wide goals. For pupils to improve, principals and other school leaders must establish a three-way link, connecting whole-school improvement, teacher professional development, and classroom improvement (MacGilchrist, 1996, p. 72). Modeling appropriate ways of interacting with students could be demonstrated through teacher interactions observed during staff development programs. Sharing of strategies consisting of quality knowledge generates a shared and mutual commitment toward school improvement among staff if done systematically and deliberately. Lack of communication and interaction has stifled successful movement.

Joyce (1990) believed:

> The future culture of the school will be fashioned largely by how
> staff development systems evolve . . . whether better-designed

curriculums will be implemented, the promise of new technologies realized, or visions of genuine teaching profession takes form, all depend to a large extent on the strength of the growing staff development programs, and especially whether they become true human resource development programs. (p. xv)

Teacher-training programs cannot always be duplicated in real-life teaching situations because of varied student profiles. A teacher participating in on-going career training keeps knowledgeable of new research-based teaching strategies and programs to impact children's learning patterns. As societal issues change, so should the educator's teaching strategies.

Crandall (1983) conducted a study entitled *Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement,* which focused on school improvement for the implementation of new curricula and instructional practices. Crandall studied 61 innovative practices in 146 schools nationwide. The processes teachers encountered for changing their practice "is one of imitation or emulation under conditions of non-competition in a profession where status reward accrue for revealing trade secrets to others" (Crandall 1983, p. 8). Results of his multi-year study demonstrated sustainable change in classroom technique after innovative practices were instituted in a classroom. Teacher efforts to create an active, hands-on approach to teaching benefit more students academically.

Research has shown that linking professional development to teacher quality yields student success (Sullivan, 1999). Factors that lead to student success are teacher commitment, exemplary practices, training, and administrative leadership. To obtain commitment, teachers should be involved in problem-solving, decision making, and in developing new materials and practices with clear, direct leadership from building and central office administration (Crandall, 1983, p. 7). The *American Institute of Research*

(AIR) has identified six characteristics of professional development that are equally important to improve teacher learning: form, duration, collective participation, content, active learning, and coherence (Lewis, 2002, p. 489).

Using components of various change models, effective professional development must focus on defining and implementing what Schwahn and Spady (1998, p. 22-23) stipulate are the *Five Pillars of Productive Change:*

- **<u>Purpose</u>** - This is the deep reason teachers must share in order to find value and meaning in their work.
- **<u>Vision</u>** - As a blueprint or road map for change, a vision brings purpose to life, provides a concrete description of what the organization will be like when operating at its ideal best, and gives everyone a clear direction to pursue and standards against which to pursue their performance and results.
- **<u>Ownership</u>** – A strong commitment and investment to the purpose and vision can be established through heavy involvement of employees in both design and delivery.
- **<u>Capacity</u>** - The knowledge, skills, resources, and tools needed to successfully make the changes and improvements in the school setting can be generated through effective professional development.
- **<u>Support</u>** - This comprises the policies, decisions, attention, resources, and procedures that enable employees to make and sustain change efforts.

The intent of staff development under the Five Pillars of Productive Change was to transform staff and constituent willingness and motivation into the concrete capacities of knowledge, ideas, skills, information, tools, and competencies that enable individuals to make productive contributions to an organization (Schwahn & Spady, 1998, p. 90). As Fullan (2005) wrote, "Capacity building . . . is the daily habit of *working* together, and you can't learn this from a workshop or course. You need to learn it by doing it and getting better at it on purpose" (p. 69, italics in original). New routines and ways of teaching need to become ingrained in the culture of the school, and this endeavor requires a long-term, continuous commitment from staff.

Organized learning as a method to resolve challenges is a proactive stance to uncover a sustainable avenue for change and an opportunity for continuous renewal. School improvement provides options for stakeholders to restructure instruction toward the goals and vision of the proposed change. Outside factors may influence the environment of the child, but educators can influence a child's opportunity to learn. Teachers need to know and be willing to sacrifice personal egos. A fragmented approach to staff development may strengthen an individual teaching in isolation; however, the competency of the whole system will remain unchanged. The challenge is to assembly individuals together in school improvement efforts without jeopardizing a staff member's individual freedom in the classroom.

2.1.2.1 Professional Development "Then"

The first few days of school were initially dedicated to updating teachers' skills, knowledge base, and invigorating everyone in the school district for the new school year. Teachers were subjected to a "guest" speaker or a novel approach of the year, typically replaced by a new approach twelve months later. Teachers felt they wasted valuable time they could have spent getting their rooms ready for the children.

Early efforts to promote the growth of teachers resulted in workshops called in-service education. In-service included activities engaged in by school personnel and designed to contribute to the effectiveness of teachers (Shipp, 1965, p. 274). A more comprehensive definition was given by van Lakerveld and Nentwig (1996):

> School-initiated in-service education.. . .derived from the curriculum needs and plans of the school. It may concern the school as a whole or in part (for example, a subject department),

as well as provide for the individual teachers' in-service needs.
(p. 68)

Early in-service implied that because of the rapid growth of knowledge, teachers lacked proper command of their subject matter and methods of teaching it; so, activities were structured in a fashion to combat this deficiency. Teachers were in-serviced to behave and perform similarly to the early 1990's factory-model system of hierarchical structure, insufficient for the demands of today's society. This one-size-fits-all type of professional development designed to "fix" *all* students was disjointed and a waste of time and money.

The term *staff development* emerged after educational leaders realized a more productive structure was required to help teachers develop individual capacities. Staff development was the term now applied to describe the learning situations teachers endured the first few days of school and on an occasional day throughout the school year. Although attempts were made to keep teachers current on educational issues and practices, the practice of an outside consultant conducting a single-shot attempt to guide teachers in the correction of local problems was not legitimized with educators. During "hit-and run" workshops, teachers could often be seen correcting papers, reading a magazine, or closing their eyes for a short nap. During the 1970's, as little as 10% of strategies demonstrated to classroom teachers during staff development days were actually instituted in the classroom once teachers returned to the building (Showers & Bruce, 1996, p.12). This nonreciprocal type of staff development failed to develop the whole potential of individual stakeholders. Duke (1990) stated previous staff development efforts were:

- designed for groups;
- able to encourage collective growth in a common direction;
- focused on similarities;
- guided by school and district goals;
- able to lead to an enhanced repertoire of skills/concepts.

"The connection between this type of professional development as practiced and the knowledge and skills of educators is tenuous at best; its relationship to the imperative of improving instruction and student performance is, practically speaking, nonexistent" (Elmore, 2004, p. 94 citing Feiman-Nemser, 1983, p. 163). Endeavors to bring in an outside "expert" failed when teachers were subjected to a "one-size-fits-all" approach. There was no specific local knowledge to make the person credible. A lack of dialogue transferred to passive interaction as the audience sat (being spoken to), and there was lack of any plan for follow-up (Perry, 2002, p.23).

Kent (2004, p. 428) concurred with this ill-designed model as she hinted that previous efforts were ineffective due to short duration, low intellectual level, poor focus, little substantive research-based content, and was outdated, lacked follow-up, neglected teacher concerns and connections to challenges teachers faced, and implemented from the top-down. The sessions did not challenge teachers to inquire, criticize, participate, or create. Failing to take command of their own profession, these staff development activities perpetuated and reinforced "schooling-as usual" (Lambert, 1989, p. 79). The one-shot workshop fell short of addressing the needs of teachers for systematic learning about teaching. Teachers often departed from the sessions feeling disgruntled and weary of time lost from the classrooms as large-group in-services failed to meet diverse adult learning needs.

"The dominant training model of teachers' professional development – a model focused primarily on expanding an individual repertoire of well-defined and skillful classroom practice – is not adequate to the ambitious visions of teaching and school embedded in present reform initiatives" (Little, 1993, p. 129). Little (1993) stated:

> The present pattern of professional development activity reflects an uneven fit with the aspirations and challenges of present reform initiatives in subject matter teaching, equity, assessment, school organization, and the professionalization of teaching. Much staff development or in-service communicates a relatively impoverished view of teachers, teaching, and teacher development. (p. 148)

Given the descriptors of past professional development efforts, evidence pointed to a necessity to alter top-down improvement strategies. Efforts to engage teachers and administrators in acquiring knowledge and skills to solve problems provided only short-term wins. "To the degree that people are being asked to perform activities they have no knowledge of, and at the same time are not being asked to engage their own ideas, values, and energies in the learning process, professional development vacillates from building capacity to demanding compliance" (Elmore, 2004, p. 102). Guskey (1986, p. 5) inferred that these efforts did not take into account what motivates teachers to engage in professional development or the process for change. Utilizing an impersonal approach with staff transcends to a rocky start in school improvement if educators do not visualize or instill a will toward change and improvement.

2.1.2.2   Professional Development "Now"

Current professional development and the emergence of the Nation's reform agenda requires teachers to rethink their practice, construct new classroom roles and

expectations about student outcomes, and teach in ways they have never taught before, and probably never experienced as a student. Showers, Joyce, and Rolheiser-Bennett (1987) described a model of staff development that encompassed presentation of theory, demonstration of skills, protected practice, and feedback. Theory answers "*why*" new approaches are being proposed. Demonstration allows individuals to "*see*" the new strategy being applied. Practice transfers to application of the new strategy. Observer feedback leads to sustainability in the classroom.

Current professional development changes emerged after educators were perceived as adult learners. A determination was made that professional development must concentrate on local schools, be specific to identified needs, and continue through on-going follow-up support for success (Kent, 2004, p. 434). On-going follow-up participation helped to guarantee change and sustainability toward a desired end.

In contrast to Duke's previous definition of staff development, current efforts focus on individuals and their unique capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Participants are required to reflect critically on the practice and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy, and learners. Although both past and current professional development endeavors intended to foster and enhance skills and practices, present day ideology represents the unique differences of the individual, not similarities of the group. Lambert (1989, p. 81) stated that the new trend in staff development assists professionals to:

- inquire into and reflect upon practice;
- elicit and share craft knowledge;
- identify and create options for learning;
- allow teachers to lead and work collaboratively;
- learn about new developments in the profession;

- design schools and district systems that open opportunities and encourage participation.

The new vision allows teachers to help design the restructure of schools as they communicate their own thinking and teaching, initiate change in the school's environment, contribute to the educator's knowledge base, and share in the school's leadership (Lambert, 1989, p. 80). Professional development is no longer subject specific, but includes teaching, methodology, classroom management, coping with diversity, problem-oriented learning, and improvement of study skills. The move toward building specific direction, as supported by van Lakerveld and Nentwig (1996, pp. 68, 69), provided attention to:

- *context* - internal and external situations to identify needs and potential;
- *needs prioritized* - with room for short-term wins to allow for a sense of success;
- *goals* - realistic in nature, taking into account information on the roles of staff members;
- *organization and method* - develop objective and precise tasks for each participant;
- *resources* - through staff competencies;
- *evaluation* - on-going, keep records, document decisions, and revisit to monitor progress.

Collegial participation and sharing with peers increases planning and reflective practice in conjunction with satisfaction in one's work, coupled with an increased sense of ownership in the process. Murphy and Miller (1996) believed effective staff development practices allow teachers to actively plan in-service activities, set goals and select activities, and assess personal learning through demonstration and concrete experiences. The new professional development structure takes time, even years, as challenges emerge. The establishment of a high level of trust between administrators and teachers fashions this culture of collaboration and change. To prepare a culture for

change, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995, p. 597) believed professional development must:

- engage teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the process of learning and inquiry;
- be grounded in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are participant-driven;
- be collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and focus on teachers' communities of practice rather than on individual teachers;
- be connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students;
- be sustained, on-going, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice;
- be connected to other aspects of school change.

The vision of professional development as a life-long, inquiry-based, and collegial activity must have top-down support for this bottom-up reform. If managers intend to develop teachers' capacities and responsibilities for student learning, institutional structures must provide opportunities for teachers to access knowledge about the nature of learning and the development and performance of young adult learners.

2.1.2.3   Rationale for Professional Development

> Lifelong inquiry is the generative characteristic needed because post-modern environments themselves are constantly changing.
> Fullan, 1993

According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the mantra of the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the learning environment of professional development for teachers must address the context (organization of the professional development), the process (the how), and the content (the what) (Lewis, 2002, p. 488). Teachers as solo practitioners foster misdirected notions of students and expectations. Some students require extraordinary teaching to achieve extraordinary results. There is

no clear cut model or preferred program teachers can utilize to achieve desired results, but effective and on-going professional development for teachers structured toward solving specific problems in a school for students may be a catalyst for change. Elmore (1996) believes. "Getting more students to learn at higher levels has to entail some change in both the way students are taught and in the proportion of teachers who are teaching in ways that cause students to master higher level skills and knowledge" (p. 2). Teacher participation in professional development activities leads to acquisition of specific, concrete, and practical ideas directly related to the day-to-day operation of classes.

Research studies have demonstrated that students' scores on standardized tests are more closely related to the academic ability of their teacher than to any other teacher characteristic (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Murphy & Miller, 1996; Hanushek, 1981; Smith, 2001). With this being said, professional development provided to staff should improve student achievement, foster professional communities, create activities that provide teachers with a sense of urgency, validate teachers' commitment to professionalism, engender caring attitudes, and foster a respect for learning (Langer, 2000). The National Education Association (NEA) believes:

> Collaborative time among teachers and other school personnel is essential in sustaining reflectiveness and collective self-examination so necessary for effective functioning, self-renewal, and reform. (1994)

A consensus view of professional development described by Elmore (2004, p. 96) is derived from the assumption that learning is essentially a collaborative endeavor rather than an individual activity – educators learn more powerfully in concert with others who

are struggling with the same problems – and the essential purpose of professional development should be the improvement of schools and school systems, not just the improvement of individuals who work in them. Little (1982, p. 55) cited three factors to promote collegiality and a greater commitment toward student improvement when teachers work together:

- It builds interdependence to ensure the success of professional education.
- It provides opportunities for teachers to work closely with colleagues in meaningful learning.
- It enables practitioners to show that they can exercise autonomy and build initiatives for continuous learning.

Guskey (1982) conducted a study to determine the influence a change in learning strategies has on the relationship between teacher expectations and student achievement outcomes. Forty-four teachers were placed in either a mastery or control group. Differences in feedback and corrective procedures and the amount of time and appropriate level instruction provided to students categorized each group. Results of the study showed that as teachers adopted more effective instructional practices and, as a result, experienced a change in their effectiveness with students, the relationship between initial expectations for performance and student achievement outcomes appeared to be reduced (Guskey, 1982, p. 348; Champagne, 1980, p. 401).

Teacher expectations for student performance, and presumably the behavioral manifestations of those expectations, have been shown to relate to the measure of student academic performance (Guskey, 1992, p. 345). If teachers believe students cannot learn, their instructional styles and perceptions of students' possible success are diminished. Senge (1999) believed that until a system is changed, it continues to create the same results. The necessity to conduct a needs assessment of the organization is paramount to

prioritize problems for correction. Regular staff development and supervision may assist in identifying problems and needs of a school setting before a crisis surfaces (Champagne, 1980).

Lewis (2002, p. 489) identified six characteristics of professional development recognized by the American Institute of Research (AIR) to improve teacher learning and, consequently, impact student achievement: form, duration, collective participation, content, coherence, and ownership. *Form* supports teacher networks or study groups in lieu of traditional classes or workshops. *Duration* subscribes to the notion that the longer and more intense professional development is the better. *Collective participation* involves teachers from the same school, grade, or subject matter participating together in activities. *Content* combines content with how it should be taught. *Active learning* allows participants to observe, and to be observed, to plan classroom implementations, to review student work, and to present or direct activities for others. *Coherence* demonstrates how professional development supports other activities within the school. *Ownership* allows for the establishment of professional communities infused with collaboration, reflective dialogue, and shared norms.

Improving teaching through professional development focuses on "tuning" present skills or learning new ways of teaching (Joyce & Showers, 1980, pp. 379, 380). *Tuning* means working on one's craft to: become affirmative; actively involve students; manage logistics more efficiently; ask penetrating questions; induce students to be productive; increase clarity and vividness of lectures and illustrations; and better understand the subject matter. This is easier to accomplish than mastering a new

teaching strategy, where the teacher needs to think and behave differently while carrying out a new approach to instruction.

Staff members are remaining more constant in school buildings; therefore, the influx of fresh ideas from new hires has not been as readily forthcoming as was the case in previous years. Moore (2000) validated the need for continuous adult learning through the statements:

> Staff development provides a catalyst for professional growth, staying current in best practices, and overall improvement in the quality of your program. It sparks curiosity, motivation, and new ways of thinking; it empowers each of us with problem-solving skills. Most effective when on-going and includes appropriate, well thought-out training and individual follow-up through supportive observation and feedback, staff dialogues, study groups, mentoring, and peer coaching. (p. 14)

Professional development as a catalyst for change in a learning community maximizes school improvement initiatives mandated by NCLB. Staff development should be designed to ". . . alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end" (Griffin, 1983, p. 2). Teachers report that a beneficial means to improve the quality of their professional practice is to devote more time learning from and working with colleagues (Wasley, 1991). Professional development as a component of school improvement sparks curiosity, motivation, and new ways of thinking; provides purpose, collaboration, commitment, and community; and acts as a vehicle to accomplish goals (Kent, 2004, p.428).

2.1.2.4   Teacher Efficacy in Professional Development

Individuals and organizations that desire success face the challenge of continuously learning, improving, and changing. Maintaining the status quo is the kiss of

death for a school striving for renewal and improvement. School entities lack the ability to implement and sustain any productive change efforts without improved capacity. A means to produce a cultural change and resurgence of energy in staff is to increase emphasis on professional development.

Schools are continually pursuing channels to improve their identity in the community and validate student achievement. Attention that permits an educator's participation in decision making, increases opportunities for meaningful, collective participation in activities and organizational goals of the educational community. Empowering teachers to become active participants in this process fosters autonomy, choice, control, and responsibility to meet established goals. Whether all educators are willing participants, eager to examine their roles and teaching in a school improvement effort, leads to a question encompassing teacher efficacy.

Barth (1990, pp. 53, 54) characterized three groups of educators in a school:

1. Teachers who are unable and unwilling to critically examine their teaching practice, and unable to have other adults – teachers, principals, adults – examine what and how they are teaching.

2. Teachers who are quite able and willing to continually scrutinize and reflect on what they do and make use of their insights to effect periodic change.

3. Teachers who are able and willing to critically scrutinize their practice and who are quite able and willing, even desirous, of making their practice accessible to other adults.

The last two groups of Barth's descriptors foster the empowerment of future teacher leaders who can advance schools forward in school improvement. Empowerment is defined as a process in which school participants develop the competencies to take charge of their growth and resolve problems (Short, 1994, p. 488).   Individuals possessing these characteristics may be linked to the six dimensions of teacher

empowerment referenced by the *Empowered School District Project* (1989-1992): involvement in decision making, teacher impact, teacher status, autonomy, opportunities for staff development, and teacher self-efficacy. Effective professional development offers teachers the opportunity to grow and develop professionally and learn command of their subject matter and teaching skills. Self-efficacy and teacher perception positively influences school life and establishes a sense of accomplishment, one highly correlated to increased student achievement.

Effective school change establishes a common vision which teachers have a vested interest to support. Pierce and Hunsaker (1996, p. 102) described steps from a clinical model called *School Innovation Through Teacher Interaction* (SITTI) to empower teachers to make changes and to create experts among faculty members. The six axioms of the SITTI plan to support long-term substantial change are:

1. Professional development which results in improved practice should be generated on an individual school basis.

2. A school culture supportive of improved practice and professional growth is basic to successful professional development.

3. Long-term change in educational practice takes considerable time and is the result of long-term professional development.

4. Teacher ownership is critical to maintenance of the reform movement.

5. Professional development which does not improve student outcomes is not important.

6. Professional development should be designed in such a way that the outcomes of the program can be clearly stated and measured to give direction to improvement efforts.

Kent (2004) referenced Hassel (1999) to define professional development as the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding

educational results for students. Duke (1990) stated that, "Professional development is a dynamic process of learning that leads to a new level of understanding or mastery and a heightened awareness of the context in which an educator's work may compel them to examine accepted policies and routines" (p. 71).

Believing that empowered people produce, staff members must feel trusted, develop ownership in school initiatives, and commit to solving problems that enrich the school climate. Empowered individuals have the willingness to become active problem solvers and meet the challenges that await them. Teachers in schools with a tighter sense of mutual commitment are more prone to exercise influence on each others' norms of good practice (Elmore, 1996, p. 17). Short (1994, p. 488) noted that openness and risk taking of an empowered staff creates an empowered school, and empowered schools are organizations that create opportunities for teacher competencies to be developed and displayed.

Professional development activities offer teachers opportunities to grow and develop professionally, to learn continuously, and to expand individual skills. A self-evaluation of individual practices causes a reexamination of one's own teaching techniques and skills. Attaining new skills to add to one's repertoire gives teachers a sense of freedom within their classrooms, one that ultimately affects the academic achievement of students. A new appreciation for self-awareness elicits a commitment to the school culture. In a sense, professional development empowers staff to take risks, improve the quality of problem solving, and move toward productive change for children.

2.1.2.5 Characteristics of Ineffective Professional Development

One can easily compile a listing of ineffective professional development characteristics when scrutinizing former practices for delivery of professional development. Previous in-service meetings lacked clear objectives, individualization, options and choices for learning activities, a relationship to the learners' interests and needs, and the development of responsibility, trust, and concern on the part of the participants (Wood & Thompson, 1980, p. 375).

One-shot workshops of the past void of these elements gave way to the professional activities currently experienced by educators. New demands on professionals to help students "excel" have eliminated the notion that outside speakers with no knowledge of local socio-economics or the community's composition provide "solutions" to the school's problems. Teachers as learners should not be made to sit and be spoken to; rather, they should be actively engaged in hands-on activities that can be transferred to the classroom. Company made textbooks should not dictate what or how lessons should be taught. Educators need to have a stake in what they are being asked to do *with* children and *for* children because they know the students. Empowered teachers produce strategies to best assist the children they service. Supplying teachers with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions that correspond to local and unique problems helps accomplish this task.

Dickenson, McBride, Lamb-Milligan, and Nichols (2003, p. 164) state that the nature and expectations of teachers, their lack of preconditions for change, poor understanding of staff development elements, outright teacher resistance, lack of administrative support, and lack of necessary resources are reasons previous professional

initiatives failed. Additional barriers for effective professional development cited by the

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) (1998) include:

- tendencies toward fads and/or quick-fix solutions;
- overload or too many competing demands;
- lack of attention to site-specific differences;
- teacher turnover;
- failure to allow sufficient time to plan for and learn new strategies;
- attempts to manage by central office staff, rather than provisions to develop capacity and leadership at the school level.

Educators must challenge traditional mental models and ways of visioning and

teaming if they hope to create meaningful change (Isaacson & Bamburg, 1992, p. 42).

Wood and Thompson (1980) maintained that problems might still surface with current

professional development activities. Negative attitudes persist because of poor planning,

organization, and activities too impersonal and unrelated to day-to-day problems of the

participants. The inability to become involved in the planning and implementation of the

in-service may also lead to teacher discontent. Professional development encompassing a

district focus, not a building focus, inhibits participant involvement. Strategies and skills

intended for implementation in the classroom need to be modeled and practiced by

participants during the allotted time, with follow-up time scheduled for feedback and

collaboration among peers. Professional development must develop into an on-going,

site-based strategy to alleviate problems unique to the specific school culture, not a

sporadic, non-relevant occurrence.

2.1.2.6 Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

> Effective professional development is simultaneously personalized and technical, individual and collaborative, theoretical and practical, site-based and networked-based.
>
> Perry, 2002, p.28

Extended professional development opportunities aligned with curricular content and accompanied by on-site follow-up support produce significant changes in classroom practices and benefits for students (Weiss & Pasley, 2006). Participants experiencing satisfaction in the process and actively involved in planning, setting goals, and selecting activities transfer knowledge to the classroom setting. Many descriptors are given to describe effective professional development, but the overriding theme hinges on whether educators recognize more about their subjects, their students, and practice, and make informed use of what they know (Little, 1997). Effective professional development involves teachers as learners and as teachers.

The definition of effective professional development taken from Goals 2000 states the undertaking must possess "rigorous and relevant content, strategies, and organizational supports that ensure the preparation and career-long development of teachers and others whose competence, expectations, and actions influence the teaching and learning environment." The definition taken from this report describes professional development as a bridge between where prospective educators are and where they need to be to meet the challenges of guiding all students to achieve higher standards of learning and development. Effective professional development provides a framework to link the vision of the school or district with the attainment of goals.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI, 1997) identified ten principles of high-quality professional development for providers and recipients to

prepare and support educators to achieve high standards of learning and development for themselves and their students. These principles coincide with the characteristics of high quality professional development supported by the U.S. Department of Education Professional Development Team:

1. Focuses on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school community.

2. Focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement.

3. Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community.

4. Reflects best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership.

5. Enables teachers to develop further experience in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards.

6. Promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools.

7. Is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development.

8. Requires substantial time and other resources.

9. Is driven by a coherent long-term plan.

10. Is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning and this assessment guides subsequent professional development efforts.

Educational researchers have utilized this framework to establish an individualized premise for effective professional development. Elmore (2004, pp. 94, 95) believed effective professional development should focus on the improvement of student learning through improvement of the skill and knowledge of educators, similar to the OERI's principles. Elmore's outline of a productive model includes elements that are:

intensive and sustained; occurs through collaborative planning and implementation; engages teachers toward continuous inquiry and improvement; connects to daily work; and is relevant and appropriate to the local site. Students should be provided with the best objectives, learning opportunities, and evaluation procedures.

Ediger (1995, p. 194) contended staff development should stress meaning, purpose, high morale, and provisions for individual differences, interest, quality, attitudes, goal attainment, and acceptance. Respect for others, problem solving skills, and self-concept development by participants are cited as well. Showers, Joyce, and Bennett (1987) and Joyce and Showers (1980) propose a combination of theory, practice, demonstration, and feedback in combination with sustained practice to advance in a positive direction. Their idea of modeling, or demonstration of the skill, is a vital component of any training program if transferability to the classroom is desired. Feedback administered by peers, coaches, observers, or self that is regular and consistent makes the teacher aware of personal behaviors and alternatives to elicit a more desired teaching strategy. Incorporating best practices from adult learning theory, active participation, and hands-on activities have more direct application to the classroom than didactic, telling experiences.

Elmore (2004, p. 96) details a consensus view of professional development. Elmore's list correlates to similarities found in the professional development framework of Guskey (2003) and Weiss and Pasley (2006):

- Focuses on a well-articulated mission or purpose anchored in student learning of core disciplines and skills (Weiss & Pasley, 2006)
- Derives from analysis of student learning of specific content in a specific setting
- Focuses on specific issues of curriculum and pedagogy (Guskey, 2003; Weiss & Pasley, 2006)

- Derives from research and exemplary practice (Guskey, 2003)
- Connects with specific issues of instruction and student learning of academic disciplines and skills in the context of actual classrooms
- Embodies a clearly articulated theory or model of adult learning
- Develops, reinforces, and sustains group work
- Ensures collaborative practice within schools (Guskey, 2003)
- Networks across schools (Weiss & Pasley, 2006)
- Involves active participation of school leaders and staff (Weiss & Pasley, 2006)
- Sustains focus over time – continuous improvement
- Provides models of effective practice (Guskey, 2003; Weiss & Pasley, 2006)
- Is delivered in schools and classrooms   (Guskey, 2003)
- Practice is consistent with message
- Uses assessment and evaluation   (Weiss & Pasley, 2006)
- Actively monitors students learning   (Guskey, 2003)
- Provides feedback on teacher learning and practice (Weiss & Pasley, 2006)

Weiss and Pasley (2006) offered the following additional suggestions for a well-designed system-wide professional development framework:

- Must be based on content and practice and planned as a coherent set of strategies to develop teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge;
- Crucial alignment of district policies with instructional reforms and garnering the support of school/district administrators;
- Change takes time and work to help teachers gain time for learning, which stakeholders need to know;
- Grounded in research and clinical knowledge of teaching and learning;
- Use existing teacher expertise to plan activities and cultivate leaders;
- Includes mechanisms for garnering principal's support.

Through a "bottom up" approach, in contrast to the "top-down" approach of previous professional development activities, suggested areas of emphasis are identified following an assessment of the needs, strengths, and weaknesses of the staff. Following an internal examination of the school and its stakeholders, Ediger (1995, p. 192) suggested staff development programs should:

- stress meaning, understanding, and acceptance by teachers,
- emphasize purpose and reasons for the undertaking to improve teacher-learning situations,

- build morale of participants and thus increase energy levels for guiding optimal student progress,
- provide for individual differences among teachers,
- secure teacher interest and attention,
- attain quality attitudes toward the teaching professional,
- facilitate definite goal attainment by participants,
- follow guidelines of acceptance and respect for others and their contributions,
- develop problem-solving skills with participants,
- enhance the self-concept of individuals.

Regardless of what framework is utilized, professional development involves a continuous process with school personnel, supports school-wide improvement, stimulates individual growth and engagement in teaching, and supports career advancement (Kent, 2004, p.431). Empowering teachers to construct a framework to deliver innovative skills and practices to colleagues gives stakeholders ownership in improvement of the educational community.

2.1.3   Change Models

> Involving teachers in their schools, supporting and valuing what they do, and helping them to work more closely as colleagues are not just worthwhile humanitarian things to do for their own sake. They also have impact on the quality of teaching and learning in our classrooms.

These statements made by Fullan and Hargreaves (1996, p. 2) supported a change process teachers must experience to move from isolationism toward collegiality, and subsequently student improvement. Personnel involved in a change process must be cognizant of what the change is, how it will occur, and how it will benefit the overall goals of the organization. The shared meaning, or *vision*, must be instilled in the building and embraced by all stakeholders. *Vision* means "an ideal and unique image of the future for the common good" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 125). A vision brings meaning and

purpose to any challenge and is made real through a well thought-out purposeful strategy. "Visions are images in the mind, impressions and representations. They become real as leaders express those images in concrete terms to their constituents" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 129).

> Only when systems are in risk do you have the opportunity for real
> change.
>
> Thompson, 2003

The incapacity of United States Schools and practitioners, who work in them, to develop, incorporate, and extend new ideas about teaching and learning into core teaching, has caused educational leaders to contemplate a change in current structures. DuFour (et al, 2005) contends that school transformation requires ". . . more than changes in structure – the policies, programs, and procedures of a school. Substantive and lasting change will ultimately require a transformation of culture – the beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and habits that constitute the norm for the people throughout the organization" (p. 11).

Kotter (1996) stated, "Needed change can still stall because of inwardly focused cultures, paralyzing bureaucracy, parochial politics, a low level of trust, lack of teamwork, arrogant attitudes, a lack of leadership in middle management, and the general human fear of the unknown" (p. 20). However, struggles and challenges construct an institution, and its people fight harder for change when they recognize the value and potential outcomes of their work.

Skills and strategies demonstrated to staff during a one day in-service may be utilized once or twice before staff members revert back to former classroom practices. Speakers lamenting on new curricular programs profess to deaf ears if teachers know

money to support researched-based programs is nonexistent. Consensus of opinion between teachers echoes the phrase, "If we wait long enough, this too will pass". Duck (1993) refers to these individuals as *change survivors,* "Cynical people who've learned to live through change programs without changing at all" (p. 63). Stricter guidelines from state and federal mandates have given urgency to problematic situations faced by schools.

Reform efforts must address core processes of teaching and learning if they are to markedly change what happens in schools (Kent, 2004, p.427).   Unless teachers recognize the reason to change, or potential positive student outcomes that could result from change, minimal efforts toward school improvement are taken. Fullan (et al, 1990) established a framework to motivate educators to inquire into current situational conditions of their school or classroom to structure desired change. The following four cogs Fullan (et al, 1990, p. 4) considered for validation of professional development goals in a changing school are:

- **Content** – teacher's knowledge of curriculum, child development, and learning styles
- **Classroom management** - what teachers do to prevent misbehavior
- **Instructional skills** - less complex teacher behaviors (i.e.: wait time)
- **Instructional strategies** - concept attainment and cooperative learning

Fullan (1991) professed that the undertaking of change is to, " . . . effectively replace structures, programs, and/or practices with better ones" (p. 51). Innovations that do not address the needs of the school and approaches that have no support among staff members never lead to meaningful change (van Lakerveld & Nentwig, 1996, p. 69). Gaining support and establishing a vision for change and enhanced student learning through teacher led professional development do not come without resistance. The indoctrination of new ways of thinking and teaching into established repertoires require

leaders to become creative in their efforts. Individual schools must determine what plan of action performs best within their own context during a change initiative. No "one-size-fits-all" mentality can "fix" American schools. Looking at successful models of change motivates administrative and teacher leaders to construct a remedy to impact unique, personal problems.

2.1.3.1   Planned Educational Change

The type of change leaders attempted to implement in schools could be described as linear efforts of change. Linear efforts work in a stable world; however, students in a school make the environment anything but stable (Sergiovanni, 1996). Human interactions and events taking place in schools are described more as nonlinear. Sergiovanni (1996, p. 160) described planning a systematic and detailed plan for change:

- Decide what it is that you want to accomplish, and if possible, state it as measurable outcomes.
- Provide clear behavioral expectations to people by deciding and communicating who will do what and how it will be done.
- Train people to function in the new way.
- Once the change is introduced, monitor by comparing what you expected with what you observed.
- Make any corrections in the system that may be necessary.

The researcher believes a "one-size-fits all" mentality about children's abilities portrays students who are anything but "little stereotypes". This stringent thinking did not allow for the flow of teachers' creative thinking necessary to support any viable change toward improved student learning. Sergiovanni's process allowed the establishment of a new change - complete with a check and balance for possible alteration.

A look at four phases in the evolution of educational change and how it operates in practice has been highlighted in the work of Fullan. Descriptions of the phases of "planned educational change" distinguished by Fullan (1991) were typical of the linear thinking described by Sergiovanni.

- **Adoption Phase** - During the 1960's, large-scale curriculum innovations, inquiry-oriented instruction, and student centered instruction and individualized instruction were embedded in practice.
- **Implementation Failure Phase** - Lasting from 1970 until 1977, "change for the sake of change" without a vision to sustain success led to the demise of any successful endeavors.
- **Implementation Success Phase** - A "quick-fix" philosophy with small-scale innovations between 1978 and 1982 characterized this phase of educational change.
- **Intensification v. Restructuring Phase** - Between 1983 and 1990, school-based management, teacher instruction and decision making, and enhanced roles for educators became central. Documents such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983) led to more comprehensive reform measures than ever before.

Traditional planning was intended to increase the likelihood that desired school improvements would be implemented, but unanticipated consequences often produced opposite effects (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 161). The top-down mentality seen in former models meant to "fix" children did not work. The *quick fixes* did nothing to improve individual pupil growth and achievement. When Fullan's last phase surfaced, reforms were labeled *"intensification";* school-based management, teachers in instruction, decision making by employees, and enhanced roles for educators became identified as *"restructuring"*. Teachers were finally given an opportunity to make some of their own decisions about school structures after state and federal mandates surfaced in the early 1990's.

The problem of the meaning of change has been central to making sense of "educational change" (Fullan, 1991, p.4). It is no secret that No Child Left Behind

(NCLB) forced school districts to become more accountable for what is occurring in schools. Large-scale curriculum innovations, inquiry-oriented instruction, student-centered instruction, and individualized instruction became the groundwork to guide schools toward proficiency. Accountability and on-going professional development for teachers forced educators back into adult classrooms after departments of education constructed a foundation for acceptable and relevant professional development.

School systems were not designed to respond to the pressure for high academic performance from standards and accountability. A school's community failure to translate this pressure into useful and fulfilling work for students and adults is dangerous to the future of public education (Elmore, 2004, p. 90). Schools must prepare students for a changing society, and educational institutions must have an individualized planned course of action, different than ones of the past, to accomplish this task. Elmore (1996, p. 2) has referred to the new era of accountability as the *Progressive Period,* where the priority is to change schooling from a teacher-centered, fact-centered, recitation-base pedagogy to a pedagogy based on an understanding of children's thought processes and their capacities to learn and use ideas in the context of real-life problems.

Skills and know-how are central to successful change, but textbook driven curriculum and weak incentives has not elicited noticeable change in teachers' practices. In his work *Change Forces*, Fullan (1993) stated the following:

> Mastery involves strong initial teacher education, and continuous
> staff development throughout the career. But it is more than this
> when we place it in the perspective of comprehensive change
> agentry. (p. 16)

As change continues to be a focal point of an educational organization's goals, it becomes apparent that identifying types of change that could be beneficial to the

65

organization and its impact on stakeholders is crucial. Implementation of any change must be supported with a vision that garners support from individuals participating in the change process. The implementation process of change can face failure from encounters with one of the three common traps identified by Drucker (1999, p. 86):

1. Make sure the innovation is in tune with strategic realities.

2. Do not confuse "novelty" with innovation".

3. Do not confuse "motion" with "action".

Leaders of change vacillate between these traps several times unless the focus of the change effort is kept clear and concise. To avoid failure in implementation of any change initiative, Fullan (1991, p. 22) supported strong leadership focusing on instruction, high expectations for students, clear goals, an orderly atmosphere, frequent monitoring, parental involvement, and school improvement teams. Each building has unique needs, and unique people to meet those needs. As buildings within a district restructure efforts to meet the individual needs of its student population, the success realized affects other facilities. Each small successful step in a school commits the educational institution to district, county, or state goals. Researchers provide frameworks to follow, but research cannot dictate upon which direction individual educational communities should embark.

2.1.3.2   Corporate Model for Educational Change

Educators need not rely solely on research by Fullan or Sergiovani to construct a model for change. A change process model established in the corporate world may aid educators attempting to adhere to the demands and accountability measures of the

educational sector.   Change processes from the corporate world provide principles to create innovative ideas and solutions to problems in an educational setting.   An analysis of models shows similarities between Fullan and Kotter's (1996, p. 21) eight steps for transformation of an organization:

1. **Establish a Sense of Urgency** - examining market and competitive realities; identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities.

2. **Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition** - assembling a group with enough to lead the change effort; encouraging the group to work together as a team.

3. **Creating a Vision** - creating a vision to help direct the change effort; developing strategies for achieving that vision.

4. **Communicating the Vision** - using every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision strategies; teaching new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition.

5. **Empowering Others to Act on the Vision** - removing obstacles to change; changing systems or structures that undermine the vision; encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas.

6. **Planning for and Creating Short-Term Wins** - planning for visible performance improvements; creating those improvements; recognizing and rewarding employees involved in the improvements.

7. **Consolidating Improvements and Producing Still More Changes** - using increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that do not fit the vision; hiring, promoting, and developing employees who can implement the vision; reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents.

8. **Institutionalize New Approaches** - articulating the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success; developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession.

A company's reason for existence is comparable to the mission statement of an educational organization.   Emphasis on a vision that sets clear and precise goals for improvement is woven throughout Kotter's change process.   Vision gives meaning to the work being done, either by an individual or an entire entity.   A vision leads the charge for

betterment of a group or individual. Personal visions of stakeholders lead to organizational change for everyone concerned (Fullan, 1993, p.13). The force required to elicit prosperity to a company or a school setting needs a structured and well-defined process to attain the desired level of achievement. In the corporate world, prosperity translates into dollars and cents. Prosperity translates to a greater percentage of students attaining proficiency in a school setting.

Competition among school districts in an era of globalization and continual change, where students need the skills and capabilities to be successful in society, are similar to situations encountered between and among corporations. New approaches to produce a viable "product" - in schools the students are the product - needs to incorporate the strengths of empowered employees to develop and intrinsically instill novel approaches designed to develop individual capabilities to greater heights. The opportunity to engage in meaningful learning gives members of an organization a sense of being valued by management and builds mutual trust and respect for the creation of a "team".

Drucker (1999, p. 141, italics in original) utilized the notion of knowledge-worker productivity to instill a quality approach to teaching and identified six major factors as a determiner for this productivity:

1. Knowledge-worker productivity demands that we ask the question: *"What is the task?"*
2. It demands that we impose the responsibility for their productivity on the individual knowledge workers themselves. Knowledge workers *have* to manage themselves. They have to have *autonomy*.

3. Continuing innovation has to be part of the work, the task and responsibility of knowledge workers.

4. Knowledge workers require continuous learning on the part of the knowledge worker, but equally continuous teaching on the part of the knowledge worker.

5. Productivity of the knowledge worker is not – at least not primarily – a matter of the *quantity* of output. *Quality* is at least as important.

6. Finally, knowledge-worker productivity requires that the knowledge worker is both seen and treated as an "asset" rather than a "cost". It requires that knowledge workers *want* to work for the organization in preference to all other opportunities.

A window of opportunity for change is created when a policy of systematic innovation involves the stakeholders of the organization.

Senge (1999) stated, "Sustaining any profound change requires a fundamental shift in thinking" (p. 10), asserting:

> Most advocates of change initiative, be they CEO's or internal staff, focus on the changes they are trying to produce and fail to recognize the importance of learning capabilities. This is like trying to make a plant grow, rather than understanding and addressing the constraints that are keeping it from growing. (p.9)

Heads of organizations must instill in employees a sense of urgency and not accept a "business as usual" attitude. Employees must be encouraged to take risks and "think outside the box". Although predominately linked to the corporate world, Senge's work has great value in managing internal conditions that challenge people in an educational setting.

To *think outside the box* requires employees to incorporate fresh and novel skills and tools into commonplace activities necessary to energize the vision of the corporation. Similar to Kotter, Senge believes organizations must look *within* at the expertise and knowledge of their employees, empower them, and give them the information and support to create and sustain needed change.

Creating professional development opportunities from the grassroots empowers employees to define and construct a unique vision and accompanying strategies for future success. Kotter (1996) affirmed the need for companies and districts to create leaders, believing:

> The vision, communication, and empowerment that are at the heart of transformation will simply not happen well enough or fast enough to satisfy our needs and expectations. We cannot choose to waste the talent or expertise of those who make up the heart and soul of the organization. People need to be encouraged to lead, at first on a small scale, both to help the organization adapt to changing circumstances and to help themselves grow. (pp. 165, 166)

Individuals spontaneously connecting with other individuals and creating new groups and alliances were a more influential force for revolutionary change than formal institutions (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 9).

Kotter (1996) stated that the best-performing firms he knows operate in highly competitive industries with executives who spend most of their time leading, not managing, and employees who are empowered with the authority to manage their work groups (p. 167). The philosophy easily transfers to education when leaders willingly empower their staff to create "organizational learning" that directly impacts colleagues, and subsequently, students. *Organizational learning* has been defined by Collinson, Cook, and Conley (2006) as, ". . . ongoing learning in a deliberate manner with a view to improvements supporting the organization's goals" (p. 110).

Adult learning brings about an advantage for the individual, as well as the community or corporation that adversarial forces cannot extinguish, even as employees come and go. Senge (1999) described this competition as follows:

70

These and other corporate statements echo the theme that learning is the only infinitely renewable resources. Competitors can gain access to other resources: capital, labor, raw materials, and even technology and knowledge (for example, they can lure away your people). But no one can purchase, duplicate, or reverse - engineer an organization's ability to learn. While the gains from downsizing, reengineering, and "slash and burn" retrenchments often fail to sustain themselves, the gains from enhancing learning capacity have proven to be sustainable, cumulative, and self-reinforcing. (p. 22)

In her book *Managing Change – the Art of Balancing,* Duck (1993) recommended that to create a proper environment for change there should be creation of a Transition Management Team (TMT). In a school setting, the TMT team translated to identification of a teacher leadership team. Eight primary responsibilities of the TMT model are to:

- establish context for change and provide guidance,
- stimulate conversation,
- provide appropriate resources,
- coordinate and align projects,
- ensure congruence of messages, activities, policies, and behaviors,
- provide opportunities for joint creation,
- anticipate, identify, and address people problems,
- prepare the critical mass.

Top leaders and administrators must relinquish some control over the workplace for success of employee leadership teams. Organizational leaders need to request from employees what should be done, rather than informing employees what to do. A coalition built with employees breaks down walls that thwart success and hinders ownership in the process. Utilizing expertise found within an organization, employees learn from each other as they work toward the desired end.

2.1.4 Teacher Leaders Coach Colleagues in Professional Development

Teachers must be a learner in order to teach.

Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995, p. 91

Teacher knowledge and leadership have been recognized as a major resource to the school community, one that previously went untapped (Darling-Hammond, et al, 1995, p. 94). Administrators did not typically employ the untapped energy, talent, and leadership of teachers immediately at their disposal. Referring to Drucker's (1999) six factors for knowledge workers, teacher leaders become considered a capital asset toward increased student productivity. Permitting teachers to make decisions about their training and on-going professional growth influenced a viable and sustainable change in the workplace as ownership of the change effort internalized. A site-based management perspective empowered employees and transformed schools into communities of learners, utilizing knowledge to construct decisions for systemic change.

Zmuda (et al., 2004) believed:

> The charge to make teachers participate more actively in staff development and feel connected to the purpose of the school requires nothing short of a fundamental shift of school culture: educators must move from viewing change simply as a predictable cyclical process (innovation to innovation, year to year) to viewing change as a more profound, deliberate opportunity for perpetual growth. (p. 16)

Wasley (1991) offered a generic definition of teacher leadership as, ". . . the ability to encourage colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider without the influence of a leader" (p. 170). Individuals in leadership roles acquired names as content coach, collegial coach, peer coach, cognitive coach, mentor, or others to describe a teacher leader. Active participants willingly embarked on a continuous

improvement journey because they welcomed the challenge and the possibility of a worthwhile endeavor. However, asking teachers to change what they do requires support and guidance from administrative leaders, or teachers become unbalanced in their instructional delivery. The formation of teacher-research groups, peer review groups, or teacher networks and partnerships with other school districts or local universities emerged as local districts restructured professional development for employees.

Connections with individuals or guest speakers unfamiliar with specifics of the school district have not been sufficient to establish operative adult learning. The cost of introducing outside educational consultants to local districts has restricted professional development activities to only several days during the school year. This cost prohibitive practice has stalled any movement for on-going professional development.

Sufficient time allotted for collegial support and discussions has ensured acceptance and collective ownership of a coaching initiative. New ways of extending collaboration have to be disclosed if traditional methods are to be discarded and previous behaviors adjusted. Coaching allows education professionals to assist each other in negotiating the distance between acquiring new skills or teaching strategies and applying them skillfully and effectively for instruction (Showers, 1985, p. 46; Joyce, et al, 1989, p. 70).

Showers (1985, pp. 43, 44) stated that the purpose behind coaching is to:

1. Build communities of teachers who continuously engage in the study of their craft.

2. Develop a shared language and set of common understandings necessary for the collegial study of new knowledge and skills.

3. Provide a coaching structure for the follow up to training that is essential for acquiring new teaching skills and strategies.

The SITTI clinical model previously discussed defends Showers' concept of peer coaching. The SITTI's model "identifies the needs of the faculty, establishes "experts" among the faculty who will act on the needs, provides support for change and improvement through peer coaching, and monitors the achievement levels of the students as an indicator of the effectiveness of the program" (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996, p. 103). As an integral part of the SITTI model, peer coaching allows for: training in observation and feedback skills; building team cohesiveness; developing action plans for each team member; establishing a peer observation cycle; providing formative feedback after each observation; and evaluating personal performance against previously set goals (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996, p. 103).

The function of a collegial coach is to invigorate their colleagues' teaching. "They [the teachers] found the hardest part of using a new model of teaching was not learning what to do as a teacher but teaching the students to relate to the model" (Joyce & Showers, 1982, p. 4). The essence of a teacher leadership team operates in a context of training, implementation, and general school improvement (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p. 13). The building of community networks within the school helps to abolish the isolationism that hindered creative forces meant to invigorate teachers' instructional strategies.

Garmstrong (1987) highlighted two additional coaching components to the mix – technical coaching and challenge coaching. The following table provides a brief synopsis of similarities and differences among the three. This table has been obtained from the article *How Administrators Support Peer Coaching* by Garmstrom (1987, p. 25).

Table 2.1: How Administrators Support Peer Coaching

	Technical Coaching	**Collegial Coaching**	**Challenge Coaching**
Major Goals	- Accomplish transfer of training - Establish common vocabulary - Increase collegiality and professional dialogue	-Refine teaching practices - Stimulate self-initiating, autonomous teacher thought - improve school culture - Increase collegiality and professional dialogue	- Develop solutions to persistent instructional problems - conduct action research - Promote instructional improvements to other teachers
Observer Practices	- Checks presence, absence, degree of teaching behaviors - Make value judgments - Establish several Observations and postconference cycles on the same topic	- Clarify in a preconference learning objectives, teaching strategies, and observer role - Help teachers recall, analyze, and evaluate teaching decisions - Enable teachers to make value judgments - Enable teachers to select preconference, observation, postconference topics.	- Envision a desired state or defines a problem (challenge) - Plans action research - Develop, conduct, and test solution approaches - Evaluate and recommend adoption for self or others
Skills	- Observation and data collection of specific teaching methodology - Feedback, reinforcement, conferencing skills	- Observation and data collection of success indicators, teacher behaviors, and special area about which teacher requests data - Facilitating, in-depth conferencing	- Interpersonal communications, problem solving, and planning - Observation, data collection, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis
Major Premise	- Teachers will improve teaching performance provided objective data is given in a nonthreatening and supportive climate	- Teachers will acquire career-long habits of self-initiated reflection and improvement, providing an opportunity to develop skills in doing so	- Problem-solving efforts by those responsible for carrying out instruction can produce insightful, practical improvements in instructional design and delivery
Special Resources	- Training in teaching methodologies	- Training in coaching - Models from administrators, department chairs, faculty meetings	- Norms of collegiality and professional dialogue - Release time for planning and group observations - Access to literature or specialists

Descriptors show collegial coaching as a credible option for educators wishing to impact a school's culture. Collegial coaching creates open professional dialogue and helps teachers feel "efficacious", a quality the Rand Corporation found in the 1970's to

be the variable most significantly related to successful schools (Garmstrong, 1987, p. 21).

Collegial coaching intends to refine teaching practices, deepen collegiality, increase

professional dialogue, and allow teachers the opportunity to scrutinize their instruction.

Collegial coaching is most effective for promoting self-initiating, autonomous teaching in

a school culture. Teachers analyze and judge how their decisions affect student learning.

The work of Showers (1985, pp. 45, 46) supported successful transfer of collegial

training in five ways:

1. Generally (though not always) teachers who practice new strategies more
   frequently and develop greater skill in the actual moves of a new teaching strategy
   than do uncoached teachers who have experienced identical training.

2. Use the strategies more appropriately in terms of their own instructional
   objectives and the theories of specific models of teaching.

3. Exhibit greater long-term retention of knowledge about and skill with strategies in
   which they have been coached and, as a group, increase the appropriateness of use
   of new teaching models over time.

4. Are more likely than uncoached teachers to teach the new strategies to their
   students, ensuring that students understand the purpose of the strategy and the
   behaviors expected of them when using the strategies.

5. Exhibit clearer cognitions with regard to the purposes and uses of the new
   strategies, as revealed through interviews, lesson plans, and classroom
   performance than do uncoached teachers.

The practice established in schools of using the "inside" expertise of employees is

a framework successfully implemented in changing companies. The introduction and

empowerment of employees, or teacher leaders, brings fruition to the organization's

vision. Through the use of their own employees, districts may structure staff development

programs around teaching approaches with known potential for increasing student

learning (Joyce & Showers, 1987, p. 11). Researchers and advocates of school reform

cite collaboration as the key to lasting school improvement (Gideon, 2002, p. 41).

Collaborative initiatives must address issues that teachers identify as immediately useful and purposeful, planned, and structured into the regular workday of teachers and administrators. Scheduling time during the day for collaboration and training should be a priority for the leader of an organization.

As Lieberman, Saxl, and Miles (1988) noted:

> Teacher leaders . . . are not only making learning possible for others but, in important ways, are learning a great deal about themselves. Stepping out of the confines of the classroom forces these teacher-leaders to forge a new identity in the school, think differently about their colleagues, change their style of work in a school, and find new ways to organize staff participation . . . .It is an extremely complicated process, one that is intellectually challenging and exciting as well as stressful and problematic.
> (p. 164)

2.1.4.1 Evolution of Teachers as Coaches

Adults desire to acquire knowledge in informal situations that are non-threatening and where social interactions exist. Wood (1989, p. 377) believed the type of professional development proposed for today's schools may be linked to the experiential learning process. Characteristics of the process included:

1. Initial limited orientation followed by participation activities in a real setting to experience and implement what is to be learned.

2. Examination and analysis of experience where learners identify effects of actions.

3. Opportunities to generalize and summarize, to develop principles and to identify application of those principles.
4. Try out principles in work settings and develop confidence.

Wood (1989, p. 377) stated advantages of the experientially-based training are:

- Understanding tied to concrete experiences similar to experiences on the job;

- Remembering principles and skills more easily because they are tied to a sequence of personal actions and consequences;
- Learning by doing is more likely to be applied in the job setting.

Many school improvement efforts to direct change and impact student achievement prior to 1980 failed. Schools lacked intensive support systems available to sustain intensive training efforts. Low teacher motivation and effort led to an unhealthful attitude among participants. Money issues led to the disappearance of any initiatives that required outside consultants.

Between 1980 and 1987, Showers and Joyce (1980, 1996) maintained that modeling practice under simulated conditions, and practice in the classroom, in conjunction with feedback, was the most productive training design model for continued technical assistance in the classroom.

> Teachers who had coaching relationships – that is, who shared aspects of teaching, planned together, and pooled their experiences – practiced new skills and strategies more frequently and applied them more appropriately than did their counterparts who worked alone to expand their repertoires. (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p.14)

Current professional development practices involve the participation of faculties, or groups of teachers, to identify students' most pressing needs, to select appropriate content, to design training for the staff, then, to evaluate the impact of the strategies on students. A radical change in relationships among teachers and between teachers and the administrative staff needs to occur to establish teachers as coaches of professional development (Showers & Bruce, 1996, p. 16). The collegiality needed to realize the objective of coaching prospers best in middle class environments where resources are better, working environments are more congenial, staff is more carefully selected, and a sense of hope and possibility are strong (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 32).

Teachers continually make innumerable, practical, everyday decisions of great importance to their students. Teachers sharing expertise with colleagues created a vast repertoire of new techniques for each member of the staff. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) maintained:

> Involving teachers in their schools, supporting and valuing what
> they do, and helping them to work more closely as colleagues are
> not just worthwhile humanitarian things to do for their own sake.
> They also have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning
> in our classrooms. (p. 2)

The above statements validated the inclusion of teacher leaders, and the entire instructional staff, in designing changes necessary for improvement.

A peer coaching model typically consists of a group of six to eight individuals who meet regularly to focus on the vision of the building and strategies necessary to intensify student achievement. It is important for teacher leaders to link the form and content of teachers' professional learning to the outcomes sought for all students (Hargreaves, 2003). According to ASCD, the focus of a professional development leadership group is to give staff members competencies to:

- design curriculum and instructional innovations;
- integrate a school's practice and programs;
- study the latest research on teaching and learning;
- monitor the impact of new practices on students and staff;
- analyze and target a school wide need.

Coaching as a partnership hinges on two prerequisites. The person being coached must consent to be coached, and the coach must have an unswerving commitment to that person's performance. Continuous communication that focuses on goals, results, timelines, program expansion, and successes prohibits problems from distracting away from the objective. Resentment and unrest by colleagues may appear as the initial

process commences; therefore, a coach must utilize all available personal skills to provide a comfortable and enjoyable, yet educationally sound, activity. The establishment of trust and a sense of purpose between participants are crucial.

2.1.4.2 Validation for Teacher Leaders in School Reform

> Students of coached teachers had greater achievement on a
> model-relevant test than did students of uncoached teachers.
> Glatthorn, 1987, p. 33

Implementation of several projects throughout the United States validates use of a coaching model to provide professional development. Results of Chrisman's (2005, p. 17) study, called *California's Immediate Intervention Underperforming School Program,* cited three conditions to preempt strong teacher leadership:

- Teachers should have ample opportunities to make decisions about teaching and learning and be provided time to meet collaboratively.
- Informal action research should utilize assessments to identify different instructional strategies that encourage student learning.
- Internal leadership structures such as team teaching, mentoring, or collaboration to share lesson design gave teacher leaders a focus on instructional strategies.

Research tells us that adults learn best when concrete experiences permit individuals to apply what is being taught in informal situations, allowing for social interaction (Wood, 1980, p. 374). Institutional arrangements for professional development must provide opportunities for teachers to share what they know with what they want to learn, connecting their learning to the context of their teaching. Teachers learn by doing, reading and reflecting, collaborating with other teachers, looking closely at students and their work, and sharing what they see (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

Professional development activities led by teacher leaders allows colleagues, novices and veterans the ability to make decisions in how to best present knowledge and skills to students after "best practices" are demonstrated. Joyce (et al, 1989, p. 70) disclosed that through demonstration of "best practices" in program planning, one middle school went from 30% to 72% success the first year to 94% the second year. Success was contributed to:

- the culture of the school and the process of innovation;
- the ways teachers learn new teaching strategies;
- the ways teachers transfer new skills in the classroom;
- models of teaching and learning skills.

Several internal elements should be adhered to in an educational community before instituting any program that upholds the development of teacher leaders. David (1996, p. 7) contends educational institutions need to contemplate the following for successful implementation of collegial coaching:

1. Develop a communication network through a well-thought-out committee structure.

2. Enable leadership to mobilize others and encourage them to participate in mobilizing others through reflection and planning for schoolwide ownership of the improvement agenda.

3. Focus on student learning to maximize learning opportunities.

4. Focus on adult learning in two areas:
   - new skills, assistance, and practice in asking hard questions and gathering evidence about what is/is not working.
   - access to new knowledge to be active decision makers and to change their teaching and learning practices and beliefs.

5. Create schoolwide perspective to energize school goals and directions, coordination and communication, and allocation of resources and equity.

Several initiatives in support of teacher leaders are documented in educational journals. Lewis (2002, p. 488) cited two projects in defense of teacher leadership in a *Phi Delta Kappan* issue. A study conducted in a California school found that teachers, who worked with peers in consistent, high-quality learning, focused on content and pedagogy related to that content, demonstrated considerable improvements in student achievement on state tests. In Pittsburgh, Lewis (2002) found that students of teachers who taught to high standards, and where curriculum, assessment, and professional development were aligned with one another, outperformed students in schools where this goal was not ingrained in the culture.

Guiney (2001) identified a study in Boston where external coaches, former teachers with expertise in school reform, literacy, or math, returned to Boston schools to offer professional development to staff members weekly. The coaches customized teacher instruction to focus on instruction and specific learning needs of the students and adults in the school. The coaches worked with staff and demonstrated behaviors to integrate a teacher's learning with practice, providing ongoing feedback as progress was realized and creating activities for a whole-school collegial endeavor. Two central strategies behind the Boston initiative were to (Guiney, 2001, p. 740):

1. Focus on instruction and professional development to improve instruction.

2. Create an emphasis on helping teachers work together, make their work public, and end teacher isolation.

Many teachers in the Boston schools adopted new teaching strategies, resulting in improved student learning. With assistance, teachers emerged as teacher leaders to model innovative practices to colleagues.

Richmond County Public Schools in Augusta, Georgia, initiated a whole-school staff development project called the *Models of Teaching Program* in the spring of 1987 (Murphy, 1991; Murphy, 1992). The program provided a regular collaborative environment for teachers of varying backgrounds, knowledge, and skills. Focus was on a wide range of teaching strategies, from direct instruction to activities that engaged students in more intensive learning (Murphy, 1991, p. 63; Murphy, 1992, p. 71). Initial endeavors were instituted in three schools and then extended to all twelve.

This ambitious staff development effort was modeled from Joyce and Showers and was comprised of theory, demonstration of teaching models, expectations for practicing the models, peer coaching in the classrooms, and study groups. Professional development activities created the emergence of teacher leaders after assessment data was analyzed. Initial models included cooperative learning, mnemonics, concept attainment, inductive reasoning and synectics to organize classrooms into study teams. Initial models also included using link words, assisting memorization, classifying information into categories, learning concepts, building and testing hypotheses, using analogies to reconceptualize problems and generating solutions (Joyce, et al, 1989, p. 71). Four principles at the center of this approach were (Murphy, 1991, pp. 63, 64):

- Organize teachers into study groups to examine teaching, curriculum, and academic content.
- Establish an instructional council to examine the learning climate of the school and select areas of improvement.
- Give faculties more than 100 hours of training in four student learning models.
- Train cadres of teachers to provide service to their colleagues in professional development.

The Richmond schools excelled as adults developed a shared understanding of good teaching and learning (Murphy, 1992, p. 71). Teachers and administrators believed

they could elicit a change in students' ability to learn. Restructuring led to a transformation of the roles of all personnel and a reorientation of the norms of the workplace. Leaders identified the needs of the schools and made options available to staff to address those needs. The result of their efforts led to increased rates of promotion and fewer discipline problems (Murphy, 1991, p. 67; Joyce, et al, 1989, p. 73). Staff members accepted the process of learning rather than blaming one another for not being perfect after observing what colleagues accomplished in the classroom. This collegial group discovered that a vigorous approach to problem solving was the single biggest determinant of capacity building while passivity and denial are the enemies of change (Murphy, 1991, p. 65). As Murphy (1992) stated:

> As we get to know one another better as teachers and borrow from one another's storehouses of ideas and practices, we will become more cohesive as faculties and better able to work together to improve our schools. (p. 72)

Caldwell (1985) described a study conducted at Webster Groves, a suburb of St. Louis County, Missouri, a predominately middle class school district. The school board approved a content and process workshop series called *Teaching Effectiveness* to promote the district goal of improving instructional effectiveness through the use of research-based effective practices in classroom instruction. The incentive for teachers to utilize this program promised to reward, recognize, and reinforce excellence through a master teacher concept. Identifying and training staff development teachers and having these leaders train other teachers was the foundation of the project.

Thirty-six indicators helped principals identify teachers considered as excellent in instructional strategies to become in-service teacher leaders. The teachers' task was to direct the workshop and other instructional activities that entailed effective instruction.

84

An outside consultant worked with teacher leaders to construct mini-lessons for presentation to district staff. Activities included making content decisions, using allocated instructional time more effectively, using practice periods more efficiently and effectively, using motivation and reinforcement principles to increase learning, preventing discipline problems, teaching to both halves of the brain, and extending students' thinking.

Immediate results were positive, and an evaluation demonstrated a high degree of satisfaction with the leadership team. Although initial actions led to resistance from some participants, a sense of camaraderie and affiliation built cohesiveness among staff as the project continued. Follow up was necessary to determine the degree to which learned strategies had been implemented in the classroom. Immediate goals according to Crandall (1985, p. 57) were to:

- provide knowledge and experience with research-based effective teaching practices for district staff,
- build commitment to and support for teachers' professional growth,
- reward, recognize, and reinforce excellent teachers and afford these teachers opportunities for continued professional growth.

To establish ownership in a school improvement effort, Crockett High School in Austin, Texas, supported a collaborative culture among staff members through the indoctrination of a campus leadership team, learning communities, grade-level meetings, department meetings, and cadres (Gideon, 2002). The campus leadership team met weekly to discuss curricular concerns, visit classrooms, and focus on instructional strategies, student work, and congruence of the curriculum. *Cadres* were groups of teachers who met to plan and implement school projects that focused on common concerns, especially staff development. The task was to generate ideas and identify

internal resources to tailor professional development to the needs of teachers and conditions of the school.

Learning communities were chaired by administrators and teacher leaders chosen by colleagues. During bi-weekly meetings, participants shared successes, analyzed data, shared instructional strategies, and planned a cohesive delivery of instruction. Grade-level meetings identified individual and collective needs of students with a focus on attendance, behavior, external factors, and parental meetings. Department meetings led to the development of common work plans for each core of study. Students were exposed to a common core experience in each subject area through shared planning and preparation by teachers. Each endeavor empowered individual staff members in some task and ensured ownership in the process.

A similar cadre project was recognized by Fullan (et al, 1990) in the study *The Learning Consortium* instituted February 1988 in Toronto. Eight educators formed a cadre to become workshop leaders and assume responsibility for the school's professional development. Innovations identified as "quick fixes" were discouraged in lieu of more favorable approaches toward sustainable long-term change. Positive results of the project supported establishment of teacher leaders in a school community.

Freedom Area School District, a small district in rural Pennsylvania, invested ESEA Title III monies to instruct the professional staff in high-interest instructional techniques (Champagne, 1980). The intent was to challenge the relationship between teachers and students and to require that teachers offer at least one high-interest project to share with colleagues. During the two years of implementation, a 17% to 48% increase in eight of the ten goals was seen. School vandalism dropped to almost zero, student

attendance increased, and teacher absenteeism dropped significantly. When Title money disappeared, however, staff development ceased to exist. New accomplishments faded and areas of concern reappeared. The research concluded that direct teacher development efforts focusing on instruction and teacher-student relationships has obvious positive effects on the school and student learning (Champagne, 1980, p. 400).

2.1.4.3   Principles behind Peer Coaching

The guiding purpose behind any peer coaching model is to motivate teachers to improve instructional delivery by becoming more reflective about their teaching skills and strategies. "Research has indicated that professional growth can be a worthwhile endeavor when it is viewed as a collective enterprise, where teachers share successes and learn from each other's mistakes, and stifled without continual interactions," (Glazer & Hannafin, p. 180). An administrator's teaching skills and experiences serve an important role, but, more importantly, administrators need to be willing to move a staff forward and support building and individual efforts. Benefits derived from collegial coaching are teachers and administrators who share ideas, brainstorm solutions to common teaching challenges, and learn from one another. A reduction in the risk of isolationism that permeates traditional school settings helps to improve rapport among stakeholders and enhance self-esteem.

Traditional schools were organized in such a manner to prohibit student-centered activities, and teachers did not have the knowledge to teach in student-centered ways because, as students themselves, they were not exposed to this style of teaching (Firestone, 1993, p. 8). Teacher coaches help colleagues explore personal thinking and

teaching styles and support experimentation in untried practices in an effort to foster continued professional growth. New resources may be available, but staff members may not have the capacity to use these resources effectively in the classroom. Redesigning the workplace - the roles and responsibilities of teachers - takes dedication and fortitude from the entire educational community. Student learning is not on a volunteer basis, and neither should be adult learning.

The biggest proponents of a peer coaching model surfaced in the work of Showers and Bruce. Showers and Bruce (1996, pp. 14, 15) believed four principles guide successful implementation of their model:

1. All teachers must agree to be members of peer coaching. Study teams can be used to support each other in the change process.

2. Omit verbal feedback as a coaching component. The primary activity is planning and developing curriculum and instruction in pursuit of shared goals. Feedback felt as evaluative will disintegrate any collaborative activity.

3. When pairs of teachers observe each other, the one teaching is the "coach" and the one observing is the "coached". The aim is to learn from colleagues with no feedback.

4. The collaborative work of peer coaching teams is much broader than observations and conferences.

Showers (1984) stated these four principles guide educators through five relevant functions: companionship, feedback, analysis, adaptation, and support. Communication provided teachers with the opportunity to talk about successes and failures and receive objective, non-evaluative feedback from peers. Teachers helped each other extend control over new approaches until it is internalized, spontaneous, and flexible.

Coaches provided a combination of external knowledge by experts and personal experiences to open avenues of communication for future teaching and building

connections. Coaches model classroom teaching strategies, spearhead collaborative engagement in evaluating students' work, and connect staff to the most resent research on best practices (Guiney, 2001, p. 742). Glatthorn (1987, pp. 33, 34) has expanded Showers' five major functions of peer coaching in his writing:

1. Companionship as teachers talk about their success and frustrations with new models of teaching to reduce isolationism.

2. Technical feedback given as teachers practice new models. Feedback is objective and not evaluative in nature.

3. Continual emphasis on analyzing the application of the new model of teaching. The model needs to be internalized so it becomes spontaneous.

4. Help to adapt model to the special needs of students.

5. Coaches provide support.

The type, focus, and distinguishing features of Glatthorn's (1987, p. 32) *cooperative development model* were illustrated in the following table.

Table 2.2: Glatthorn's Cooperative Development Model

TYPE	FOCUS	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS
Professional Dialogue	Reflection about practice	Guided discussion, focusing on teaching as thinking
Curriculum Development	Production of materials	Collaborative development of curriculum, using naturalistic processes
Peer Supervision	Analysis of teaching	Observation of instruction, followed by analysis and feedback
Peer Coaching	Solving of problems	Development of specific skills, usually based on models of teaching and supported through staff development
Action Research	Solving of problems	Development and implementation of feasible solutions to teacher-identified problems.

Cooperative professional development was a process by which small teams of teachers work together, using a variety of methods and structures, for the professional growth of the institution (Glatthorn, 1987, p. 31). This process encompassed cooperative

development, colleague consultation, and peer coaching. *Professional dialogue* has given teachers the opportunity to become thoughtful decision makers in three aspects of cognitive thinking: teachers' planning, before and after instruction; teacher's thoughts while teaching; and teachers' theories and beliefs. *Curriculum development* has utilized teacher-generated material and detailed lesson plans to adapt for special education and enrichment activities. Colleagues observe, identify patterns of teacher and learner behavior, and note intended or unintended learning outcomes through *peer supervision*. *Peer coaching* was the link to a specific staff development program. Teams of teachers identify a problem and propose a solution during *action research*.

Glazer and Hannafin (2006) proposed the *collaborative apprenticeship model,* which legitimizes reciprocal interactions to promote professional development, and encouraged peer-teachers to serve as modelers and coaches of strategies aimed at improving instruction – onsite, ongoing, and "just in time". Reciprocal interactions are interactions that support teacher learning and development through story telling, backscratching, discussing and resolving conflict, brainstorming, giving and seeking advice, modeling, sharing ideas, motivating and reinforcing, and posing and responding to task-based questions. Teachers and coaches progress through four different stages during implementation of the *collaborative apprenticeship model* (Glazer & Hannafin, 2006*)*: introduction, developmental, proficient, and mastery. The aim of the model is to establish a collaborative effort in which all teachers act as a coach, or the teacher being coached, contributing to the shared goals of the building.

During the *introduction* stage, the teacher leader promotes and models use of strategies in workshops or classroom environments. After introduction, the peer-teachers,

or those being taught, model the lesson to their students and reflect on their experiences. Teachers interact and reflect on the lessons taught to obtain a better understanding of the interpretation of the implementation strategy and expectations.

The *developmental* stage provides scaffolding, coaching and fading to design, and implementation of new instructional strategies during planned meetings. This stage takes the coach into the classroom of a peer to assess progress of the implemented lesson. Sharing, refining, identifying conflicts, and resolving issues make the coach responsible to colleagues for lesson design and delivery. An encouraging coach helps promote positive attitudes and builds confidence in peers as lesson design continues.

The identification of areas of improvement and exploration are the basis of the *proficient* stage. Giving and seeking advice during this stage empowers the peer-teacher to become responsible for the formation of new ideas and strategies. The unprompted reciprocal interaction, or backscratching, allows for sharing knowledge, experiences, resources, and learning activities or materials in multiple classrooms of the building. The social affirmation and confidence developed helps staff continue in their efforts toward improved learning.

The peer-teachers previously coached are now becoming the new coaches to colleagues during the *mastery stage*. The new teacher leaders have demonstrated confidence in their abilities to support and mentor a new cohort of teachers. During this stage, the emergence of individuals, who fluctuated between the role of mentor and peer-teacher, have been revealed as individual comfort levels change.

Similar characteristics have been seen between Glatthorn's (1987) model, the collaborative apprenticeship model, and that proposed by Showers and Bruce (1996).

91

Small teams of teachers worked together, using a variety of methods and structures for their own professional growth. The benefits derived from peer coaching were collegiality, enhanced teacher understanding of concepts and strategies, strengthened ownership for change, and opportunities to explore a new concept and instill new strategies. Professional dialogue facilitated reflection on instructional practices and helped teachers become more thoughtful decision makers in regard to student instruction and planning.

Staff members must feel comfortable as the student or the teacher in a coaching model. The environment must support reciprocal interactions, open communication, and a sharing of meaningful opinions and contributions from all staff members. Interactions must be genuine, open, and honest. Although conflicts might arise during discussion, a true professional community did not allow disagreements to hamper progress. Disagreements should be utilized as a catalyst for continued discussion toward the desired end.

Teachers have been known to transfer a demonstrated skill into their active repertoire and use after being introduced to it through a coaching experience. Developing "executive control" of the new skill, how it works, and how it can be adapted to students required the support of a peer coach. Discomfort and awkwardness were components that reverted teachers back to the smooth, less efficient classroom performance. Similar to athletes, teachers put newly learned skills to use if they were coached and guided. When not observed, old habits and techniques reemerge.

2.1.4.4 Preferred Characteristics of Effective Teacher Leaders

Elmore (2004) visualized the role of the leader as central to managing a successful change movement. Leaders must select the best and most reputable teachers to deliver effective professional development programs to peers. Elmore (2004) maintained:

> Knowing the right thing to do is the central problem of school improvement. Holding schools accountable for their performance depends on having people in schools with the knowledge, skills, and judgment to make the improvements that will increase student performance. (p. 9)

Valuing and supporting individuals that possessed the knowledge, skills, and resources to affect the culture, norms, beliefs, and disbeliefs of the school created an avenue for change. Survey consensus has shown that colleagues *willingly* follow teacher leaders who are honest, competent, forward-looking, and inspiring (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 24). Kouzes and Posner (2002) contended:

> When they are performing at their peak, leaders are doing more than just getting results. They're also responding to the expectations of their constituents, underscoring the point that leadership is a relationship and the relationship is one of service to a purpose and service to people. (p. 27)

Successful efforts to increase and reach higher standards in pupil growth depend largely on the success of teachers to acquire new knowledge and scientifically proven instructional practices to teach to higher standards. Individuals whose persona have demonstrated "effective knowledge processing . . . . (and) the kind of symbolic conduct that builds cohesiveness, trust, and commitment" (Perkins, 2003, p. 29) have been the teacher leaders being sought after in new professional development movements. Placing

the wrong people in leadership positions could be detrimental to overall building goals when in the midst of school improvement.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated that, "Credibility is the foundation of leadership" (p. 111). Initial resistance to a coaching model was minimized when an administrator selected individuals perceived as credible to colleagues, possessing certain characteristics, capable of interjecting new ideas toward promoting solutions to problems, and that envisioned the future. It has been essential to remember that teachers want leadership by professionals based on expertise and experience, rather than, hunch and intuition. The most active resistors to fight outside consultants also fight inexperienced teacher leaders. Classroom teachers selected as coaches must be willing and capable of taking on the "fight".

New and different working relationships needed to be established for teacher leaders to make a positive and lasting contribution to the improvement of teaching and learning in a given setting (Wasley, 1991). Initial indifference and opposition could be turned around when professional development meetings satisfied personal needs and members were provided with ongoing, high-quality, and meaningful assistance. Teacher leaders might not always be the most senior individuals in the building; therefore, the administrator must anticipate additional stress and reluctance to the process from staff members not selected to serve in this capacity.

The teacher coach should possess a calm disposition, have trust-building skills, serve as a mediator, have determination and perseverance, be recognized as a leader, foster leadership among teachers, and connect teaching to the soul (Guiney, 2001, p. 740). Standard prerequisites of a teacher leader have been knowledge of classroom

processes and school effectiveness; knowledge of interpersonal and adult development; knowledge of instructional supervision, observation, and conferencing; and knowledge of local district needs (Zimpher & Howey, 1992). Knowledge of local needs eliminated ill feelings about "outside experts" that permeated previous workshops.

Neubert and Bratton (1987, p. 31) believed credibility, support, facilitation, and availability were equally important. For the sake of challenge, change, and growth, individuals selected must be willing to take a risk and move out of their own comfort zone to share personal successes and failures with colleagues. Classroom leaders should possess adequate content acknowledge and communicate their own needs as help-receivers as well as help-givers (Fullan, 1996, p. 41).

Credible teacher presenters should be articulate and charismatic in their emphasis of new practices. Teacher leaders should demonstrate and emphasize how strategies could be practically and efficiently implemented in the classroom through explicit demonstration of hands-on activities. The teacher leader must be acknowledged as exemplary and effective in their classroom practices to win over peers. Conversations with colleagues should be positive and sincere. Sharing similar experiences and common collegial bonds with other teachers tends to increase credibility of a teacher leader (Crandall, 1983, p. 9). Their individual energy and positive outlook have made it enjoyable for others to be around them, making it much easier for teachers to accept, adopt, and implement learned activities.

Wilson (1993, p. 24) emphasized the following characteristics of teacher leaders to help establish a shared purpose toward the enhancement of instructional practices.

- These individuals are hard-working and highly involved with curricular and instructional innovation.

- Their creativity is demonstrated by their power to motivate students from a wide range of backgrounds and activities.
- They are gregarious and make themselves available to other teachers as a resource or an advocate.
- They energetically sponsor extra curricular activities for young people.

A coach as an extension of the principal should hold the same vision and goal-oriented tasks as the building leader. Coaches seek to enhance the instructional capacity of others and recognize demands imposed on them by others. Resistant teachers tend to be more demanding and instill controversy with those who sit passively. Teachers in isolation work in a comfort zone and are sometimes reluctant to "try" innovative teaching strategies. Because of this, teacher leaders must continually emphasize the building vision with opposing and reluctant participants and inspire and influence others through their own excitement during role modeling presentations.

2.1.4.5   Teacher Leaders Provide Educational Change

Teachers and teacher educators exert leadership as change agents
for the profession as a whole as well as for their local schools.
Darling-Hammond, et al 1995, p. 99

Many students did not learn because they are surrounded by teachers who did not know how to teach to the high standards necessary for collective accountability (Sparks & Hirsch, 1997). Instructional coaches in a school have provided teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to raise academic standards. Changing the beliefs and common practices of faculty members has been a difficult and arduous venture when openness to change has not been readily accepted.

Fullan (2001, p. 44) and Dickenson (et al, 2003, p. 163) agreed that most people define culture as "the way we do things around here". Scott (1999) defined culture as,

"The accepted ways of doing things in the workplace" (p. 88). Both ideologies have produced both positive and negative attitudes in teachers and students. Teachers might remain passive and unmotivated or charged with energy and new ideas. Students might be excited about learning as they encountered varied and new activities or bored and disinterested as they listened to lectures or learned through recitation. Culture within a building has embodied the performance, behavior, and attitudes of teachers and students.

The position "this is how we do things" served as the biggest barrier toward effective staff development than money, time, or best practice research and was difficult to extinguish. Culture has driven the performance of the participants and the impact it has had on any change effort. Senge (1999) and Fullan (1998) are authors who linked a supportive culture to reform of successful teaching and learning, not only of the child, but of the adult. Textbooks alone did not provide the skills and instructional techniques required for sustained change in a school culture. Searching for a strategy to improve schools led to conflict and confusion, and competing priorities could make the change effort a rocky road to travel. Focus on the desired end result was the priority at the forefront.

Guskey (1986) described the relationship between staff development and the process of teacher change through the model below:

Table 2.3: Guskey's Process of Teacher Change Model

staff development	→	change in teachers' classroom practices	→	change in student learning outcomes	→	change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes
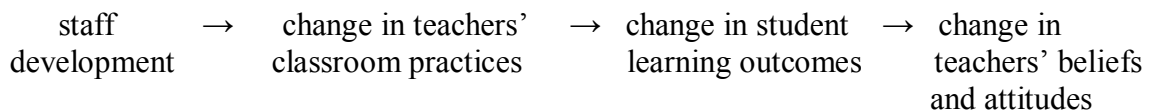
A key factor in the endurance of maintaining new practices could be validated in terms of the learning successes of a teacher's students through the use of formative

assessments. Guskey's model showed that a change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes changed only after demonstrated results were seen. Although simplistic in nature, the model typified the relationship between a teacher's on-going use of a new practice and acceptance that the practice was worthwhile. A noticeable change in student learning elicited a change in teaching attitudes. More positive attitudes emerged toward teaching and personal responsibility for students' learning – similar to a sense of self-efficacy (Guskey, 1986, p. 88).

Efforts to change school culture inevitably involved changing theories of schooling and school life itself (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 3). Change has been a difficult process for teachers and required extra time, work, and effort. It has brought about anxiety and might be viewed as threatening by some individuals. Referring back to the idea of *collective accountability,* individual teachers were accountable for ensuring that what was taught was aligned with what was intended students learn; they were also accountable for ensuring that student work improved continuously in measurable student engagement, persistence, and satisfaction (Zmuda, et al. 2004, p. 177).

When educators identify low achieving students, they observed children who refused to participate in class activities, failed to complete homework, displayed hostile and disruptive behavior in class, day-dreamed or exhibited poor attention span, made little or no eye contact with the teacher, offered excuses for incomplete homework, had excessive unexplained absences, and saw no need to participate in class activities. An opportunity to exchange ideas in an environment of trust and collegiality motivated stakeholders to find the energy to improve conditions, beliefs, and attitudes when support and guidance for improved and modified means of delivery instruction and skills were

present. Practices found to be useful in helping attain desired outcomes should be retained; those that did not work should be abandoned.

> As faculties become empowered to pose and solve problems, they assume leadership for change from within rather than looking forward or outward for leadership.
>
> Darling-Hammond, et al, 1995, p. 100

Professional development for educational change relied on building the capacity of members of the organization. A failure of any educational change was related to the fact that the reform was never fully implemented in practice: "i.e. real change was never accomplished" (Fullan, 1991, p. 15). Instructional leaders could change the educational mindset of a building by continually stressing individual professional development and its impact on testing results and data.

San Diego City School (SDCS) undertook a program known as the "Back to Basics" initiative between 1998 and 2002. It was assumed that improvements in student achievement were ultimately linked to concerted efforts to improve teachers' learning. Teachers' learning was linked to improving instructional practice, supported through professional development and strong leadership.

A significant goal of SDCS was to improve teacher quality through the establishment of "learning communities". The focus of improving student learning became paramount as teachers were asked to recast their practice to public view. The basic goals, strategies, and beliefs of SDCS were:

- increasing student learning through strategies;
- focusing clearly on instruction;
- implementing content-based reform;
- setting high standards for all students;
- providing support for students to meet high standards;
- increasing teachers' learning through strategies.

99

The premise of the model was that a teacher's practices rests on a professional knowledge base rather than being reinvented by individual teachers in the privacy of their rooms. Success was accomplished by changing the practice of isolationism to one of collaboration and sharing. Teacher leaders speaking to educational change looked to structure a change in beliefs and practices through acknowledgement of the change, how it would occur, and how it would benefit the overall goals of the organization.

Fullan (1991) stated, "Solutions must come through the development of *shared meaning*" (p. 5, italics in original). Shared meaning was not recognized in original models of educational change when educators looked for the "quick fix" or the "innovation of the day". Professional development brings together a *shared meaning* of the goals and vision of the educational community through a sense of togetherness, cohesiveness. Change for the sake of change, as was practiced during the 1970's, cannot exist in today's world if the goal is to prepare our students to compete in a global technology-oriented society.

Fullan (1993, p. 21 -22) identified eight basic lessons of what he refers to as the "new paradigm of change" if educators are to be labeled as accountable for implementation of any successful change. These are:

- Lesson One: You can't mandate what matters.
- Lesson Two: Change is a journey, not a blueprint.
- Lesson Three: Problems are our friends.
- Lesson Four: Vision and strategic planning come later.
- Lesson Five: Individuals and collectivism have equal power.
- Lesson Six: Neither centralization nor decentralization works.
- Lesson Seven: Connection with the wider environment is critical for success.
- Lesson Eight: Every person is a change agent.

Change agentry and moral purpose feed upon each other and are intertwined. Fullan (1993) maintained, "Moral purpose, or making a difference, concerns bringing about improvements" (p. 12). As teachers questioned how to make things better for themselves and their students, they experienced a sense of vitality and self-renewal. Change agentry caused teachers to develop better strategies for accomplishing moral goals when given the right "tools" to engage in change productively (Fullan, 1993, p.12). A movement toward a norms-based approach, which includes professional socialization, purpose and shared values, and collegiality and natural interdependence, encouraged teachers to practice in more complex ways and to become more responsive to the unique circumstances they faced (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 167). Greater self-efficacy has promoted teacher empowerment and transfers to more positive contributions to student achievement.

Joyce (1999) maintained that, "The future culture of the school will be fashioned largely by how staff development systems evolve . . . whether better-designed curriculums will be implemented, the promise of new technologies realized, or visions of genuine teaching profession take form, all depend to a large extent on the strength of the growing staff development programs, and especially whether they become true human resource development systems" (p. xv). A change initiative must become embedded in the philosophy and teachings of the educator to directly influence student performance and achievement and become part of the culture.

Although teacher leaders could drive a change in classroom instructional delivery, it was much more difficult to change the individual beliefs and attitudes of staff members. Ambitious teaching has been an individual trait, not a professional expectation

(Elmore, 1996). Guskey (1986) stated, "Staff members must be presented with evidence of improvement and change in the learning outcomes of students before there is a significant change in the beliefs and attitudes of most teachers" (p. 7).

People who have been well-informed about the effectiveness of a program hold it in higher esteem than those individuals who either did not have the information or did not pay attention to the information (Murphy, 1991, p. 64). Change has not come easily, nor has it come without turmoil and problems. "People who try to change organizations often run up against attitudes that seem unchangeable," (Senge, 1999, p. 334). Change could happen with the proper leaders and processes in place. Stakeholders involved in change must be patient and value the small increments of success that emerged throughout the process. A key factor for sustainability of any instructional change had demonstratable results of the learning success of the teachers' students (Guskey, 1986, p. 7). Validation might be represented by acquisition of data from teacher-made tests and quizzes and standardized or state mandated tests. Change for school improvement has taken time, energy, and stamina and has not occurred overnight.

Institutions must be careful they do not fall into traps that hinder successful change. Fullan (1991, pp 21, 22) summarized several concerns that could result in failure during any implementation of change:

- district tendencies toward fads and quick fixes;
- too many competing demands or overload;
- failure to understand or take into account differences among schools;
- underfunding projects;
- trying too much with too little.

The context of individual schools and districts, the make-up of the students, and the socio-economic conditions of the district and community has impacted the conditions

for change. Certainly student performance on state mandated tests, especially low performance levels, determined the urgency for change. Teacher leaders with a strong sense of vision and goal oriented strategies influence decisions that dictate school reform. Districts should no longer seek the expertise of outside consultants but look within at the expertise and knowledge of their employees. Empowering employees by giving them access to information and by allowing them to construct a vision for change validates their desire and willingness to tackle new and unexplored avenues for school and personal renewal.

2.1.5 Summary

Providing for school improvement required a plan and vision of where a school was and where they wanted and needed to be. The role of professional development in any school improvement movement was recognized as a vital component for educational change. It is recognized that providing a means to build the capacity of members of the organization and impact the culture of the organization has evolved through the years.

Research has shown that to elicit change in the performance of a child, it is important that teachers possess the necessary skills and tools to teach students and challenge their academic achievement. The need for urgent and high-quality staff development and training was essential to accomplish this. Previous workshops incorporated the expertise of outside consultants who had no stake in the school district and who may not have been cognizant of special areas of concern or the make-up of the educational community. Staff members were disenchanted that solutions were not provided to help remedy local problems. Many of the activities and ideas demonstrated

by outside consultants did not find their way into the classroom because the one-shot workshop had no follow-up and did not provide the means or reason for change.

Educators began looking at corporate models as a framework for change. It was realized that empowering employees to become the change agents in school improvement provided support for strategies and programs that would be incorporated in the schools. As stakeholders in the process, teachers as leaders of change provided a purpose and gave validation to the necessity of continued professional development in any school improvement effort. Using their expertise of classroom practices and research-based strategies, teacher leaders could provide colleagues with the skills and knowledge necessary to impact the achievement and abilities of the children they teach. Teacher morale and accountability could grow as educators began to believe in and substantiate their own abilities to impact the lives of students.

Teacher leaders as recognized credible leaders in the classroom provide the knowledge and basis for change in local situations. Factors may still prohibit demonstrated activities from making their way into the classroom, but continuing on-site evaluation of the process must be conducted to ensure success. The evolution of professional development has shown the empowering teachers moves a building from one of isolation to one of collaboration.

3. CHAPTER

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Introduction

Steel Town Middle School is in an urban district with a low socio-economic student population posturing at 73% free and reduced lunch. The student body is comprised of 55% white and 45% African-American. Students PSSA test results are predominately in the basic and below basic categories and have placed the building on the state's warning list, especially in the black, IEP, and economically disadvantaged category. The building is in dire need of drastic changes in many areas and requires a restructuring as part of school improvement. However, if any organization truly desires to demonstrate measurable "success", many internal changes are required to attain the desired outcome. Organizations must restructure a multitude of services to students and alter the attitudes, beliefs, and instructional strategies of personnel.

A considerable amount of educational work highlighted in the literature review points to constructing a planned change in educators' willingness and ability to work with students. Research has validated that instructional capabilities and educational competencies of educators influence the achievement levels of students (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Hanushek, 1981; Murphy & Miller, 1996; Smith, 2001; Sullivan, 1991). Teachers must possess a multitude of teaching strategies to impact the vast array of student abilities and learning levels. Professional development activities designed to

enhance instructional delivery might be provided to educators, but whether the teacher has utilized new teaching strategies in their classroom was influenced by individual perception and willingness to change what has been *common practice* in the classroom setting.

How schools address continuing professional development for employees was not outlined in No Child Left Behind (NCLB), but NCLB emphasized the importance of the education of professional employees as a component of school improvement. In the pursuit of student excellence, it has been essential to have teacher excellence. Teachers could no longer work in isolation without communicating with colleagues to construct best practices. Society should expect from teachers what teachers expect from students – *excellence*. Excellence for all members of an educational setting, teachers *and* students, should be an element of the vision and mission of schools.

3.1.2   Purpose of the Study

Educational institutions involved in a school reform effort have been required by NCLB to incorporate certain programs into their structure to transform a stagnant culture to one of collaboration and academic achievement. One of the many areas of importance is an emphasis on continuing professional development for staff. Professional development might be provided to personnel in a number of ways. Research by Showers and Bruce (1996) indicated that utilization of colleagues for the delivery of professional development helped establish ownership in a school-wide reform movement and created more collaborative efforts among teachers. Collegial coaching allowed for expanded

communication and direct interaction between staff members to organize and select activities necessary to accomplish change within the confines of the establishment.

Goodenough (1981, p. 103) defined *culture* as a phenomenon associated with how groups of people interact with each other. The intent of this study was to unveil the culture and core beliefs of staff members at Steel Town Middle School in response to professional development and the introduction of a collegial coaching model for delivery of professional development. Teacher responses determined if educators recognize the urgency and need to institute researched-based instructional practices designed to enhance student achievement in the classroom. Ten of thirty-six academic educators at the middle school during the three year building initiative participated in the interview and survey process, reflecting on personal classroom practices and professional development. Their responses helped to uncover if a sense of urgency had been established to elicit a transformation of the classroom and a cultural change in the building. Two administrators commented on the intent of the collegial model for school reform and their perceptions of its effectiveness among the staff.

Demonstrated instructional activities incorporated in classrooms have categorized teachers into one of Barth's three descriptors of educators. An analysis of six change indicators highlighted in the review of literature revealed the effectiveness of collegial coaching at the middle school as an attempt to move staff from an isolated to a collaborative culture. The six change indicators referenced in the literature review and touched upon during the interview process and survey were:

- Accountability Measures
- School Improvement
- Professional Development
- Collegial Coaching

- Enhancement of Classroom Activities and Instructional Delivery
- Staff Movement toward Collaboration

3.1.3   Statement of the Problem

3.1.3.1   Major Research Question

How has professional development delivered by colleagues provided a basis for change and influenced teaching practices of staff members at Steel Town Middle School?

3.1.4   Research Questions

1. What role does professional development play in relation to accountability and school improvement?

2. How has collegial coaching enhanced teaching practices and instructional delivery?

3. How has collegial coaching influenced a move from isolationism to collaboration and the establishment of professional learning communities?

3.1.5   Design of the Study

The researcher for this study utilized a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research to explore the role of professional development in school improvement and to determine if a collegial coaching model influenced classroom instruction. Study design uncovered similarities and differences among teachers and classroom practices following demonstration of instructional activities by colleagues.

A quantitative approach provides numerical data to support or reject questions posed. Quantitative data for this study are acquired through a survey completed by participants. A survey is a research study in which data are collected from members of a

sample for the purpose of estimating one or more population parameters (Jaeger, 1997, p. 450).

Collection of qualitative data encompassed direct interaction by the researcher with middle school staff through use of the interview process. Qualitative researchers employed the techniques of *participant observation* and *in-depth interviewing* (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998, p.2) as a researcher probes, observes, and records others as an impartial participant. In addition, Patton (2001) maintained:

> The data for qualitative analysis typically comes from fieldwork. During fieldwork, the researcher spends time in the setting under study – a program, an organization, a community, or whereas a situation of importance to study can be observe, people interviewed, and documents analyzed. The researcher makes firsthand observation of activities and interactions, sometimes engaging personally in those activities as *participant observer* (p.4, italics in the original).

In education, qualitative research has been frequently called naturalistic because the researcher has frequented places where the events he or she was interested in naturally occur (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998, p. 3). A researcher utilizing a qualitative method of naturalistic inquiry has collected data directly from the source. A qualitative approach required a researcher to develop empathy with the people under study and to make a concerted effort to understand their points of view (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998, p. 235). Bogdan and Bilken (1992, pp. 29 – 32) identified five features of qualitative research that pointed to the effective nature of inquiry-based research:

- Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.
- Qualitative research is descriptive.
- Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products.
- Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
- "Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.

Patton (2001, p. 213) pointed to five purposes for conducting qualitative research along a continuum from theory to action:

1. *Basic research*: To contribute to fundamental knowledge and theory
2. *Applied research*: To illuminate a societal concern
3. *Summative evaluation*: To determine program effectiveness
4. *Formative evaluation*: To improve a program
5. *Action Research*: To solve a specific problem

Questions posed to the interviewees have spoken to each of Patton's purpose of qualitative research. The extent to which each purpose has been covered was dependent upon participants' responses. The mixed methodologies employed for collection of two types of data was designed to add credence and validity to the collection of data and design of the study.

3.1.6 Interview Process

Rubin and Rubin's (2005, p. 36) Responsive Interviewing Model (R.I.M.) was the framework for interviews conducted in the study. The model allowed for flexibility in questioning the interviewees based on the unique questioning session of each individual. Characteristics of the R.I.M. model revealed:

1. Interviewing is about obtaining interviewees' interpretations of their experience and their understanding of the work in which they live and work.

2. The personality, style, and beliefs of the interviewer matter. Interviewing is an exchange, not a one-way street; the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is meaningful, even if temporary. Because the interviewer contributes actively to the conversation, he or she must be aware of his or her own opinions, experiences, cultural differences, and even prejudices.

3. Because responsive interviews depend on a personal relationship between an interviewer and an interviewee and because that relationship may result in the exchange of private information or

information dangerous to the interviewee, the interviewer incurs serious ethical obligations to protect the interviewee.

4. Interviewers should not impose their views on interviewees. They should ask broad enough questions to avoid limiting what interviewees can answer, listen to what interviewees tell them, and modify their questions to explore what they are hearing, not what they thought before they began the interview.

5. Responsive interviewing design is flexible and adaptive. Because the interviewer must listen intently and follow up insights and new points during the interview, the interviewer must be able to change course based on what he or she hears.

Interviews were conducted with ten of the thirty-six academic teachers and two administrators employed at the middle school during the three years the coaching model was in place at the middle school. All teachers were Level II educators and represented the academic areas of science, social studies, mathematics, reading, and language. As educators described to be experienced and knowledgeable in their field, participant responses allow the researcher to identify critical perspectives of the collective staff toward a collegial coaching model and transferability of demonstrated activities into the classroom. The principal's responses provided data concerning any building level change that might have been observed during the three year time frame. Responses from the Dean of Students provided additional data to describe any cultural change. The varied perspectives of personnel at the middle school helped to solidify the credibility of the researcher's findings as similarities and differences in responses are recognized throughout the interview process and survey completion.

The researcher conducting the study was an administrator at Steel Town Middle School during the three year initiative. The researcher had an administrative move to the high school during the time the study was conducted. With approval of the dissertation

committee, the researcher conducted interviews personally since teachers interviewed were no longer supervised directly by the researcher. The researcher's advisor assisted on solidification of the interview questions.

3.1.7 Data Collection

Four background questions were posed to each individual interviewed, accompanied by ten discussion questions relating to accountability, professional development, collegial coaching, and responsibilities of teachers. Responses to the initial background question have been highlighted in a section entitled *"Meet the Interviewees"*. The last three background questions were addressed in a separate section of the study.

Flexibility in the semi-structured nature of the R.I.M. model allowed the interviewer to ask additional questions to achieve a more in-depth understanding of the interviewees' responses. "Depth is achieved by going after context; dealing with the complexity of multitude, overlapping, and sometimes conflicting themes; and paying attention to the specifics of meanings, situations, and history" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 35). Flexibility in questioning helped to determine how members of the middle school staff instituted professional development activities demonstrated by colleagues into daily lessons. Follow up and additional questioning helped to reveal if the coaching model moved the middle school staff toward a culture of collaboration that influenced the formation of professional learning communities. An interview guide accompanied the research questions to provide a "framework within which the interviewer would develop questions and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth" (Patton, 2001, p. 344).

A survey consisting of ten supporting questions corresponded to the interview questions and is to be completed following each interview. Participants responded to 70 research survey items encompassing professional development, collegial coaching, building initiative, technology, and additional educational issues relating to the six elements identified by the researcher as relevant components of school renewal. The final piece of the survey was a one through six ranking of these elements. Completion of the survey and ranking order of identified elements is the final piece to the mixed-methodology design.

3.1.8 Interview Guide

A guide provided a "framework within which the interviewer could develop questions and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth" (Patton, 2001, p. 344). Interview schedules and observation guides generally allowed for open-ended responses and were flexible enough for the observer to note and collect data on unexpected dimensions of the topic (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998, p. 71).

Replication of the interview questions assured that each of the six change indicators identified by the researcher was covered in some degree. The R.I.M. model allowed for the flexibility needed to keep the conversation moving in the direction of the research topic. In addition, the interview guide established questions to be answered by interviewees through completion of the survey.

3.1.9 Background Questions

1. What is your educational background and what position(s) have you held?

2. What do you perceive is the vision for the school as teacher see it?

3. How has the school's culture changed during the three years content coaches provided professional development to the staff?

4. What do you think the connection is between a school's culture and student achievement?

3.1.10 Interview Questions / Discussion Topics

Interview questions and survey questions are found in the appendix of this document.

3.1.11 Recording the Data

A tape recorder was utilized during each interview to assure that attention was given to the interview process and accuracy of the responses. Notes were taken during questioning and additional questions might be formulated to maintain the intended direction and time of the interview. Non-verbal behaviors were noted if the interviewees' actions contributed to analysis of the qualitative data collected. Utilization of key words during questioning guaranteed a response to the six elements of school improvement highlighted in the review of literature. The paper survey was to be completed following completion of the interview session. Approximately 45 minutes was devoted to each participant to conduct the interview and complete the survey. Additional time was allotted if needed.

"Post-interview reviews" would be completed by the researcher with the aid of a tape recorder and notes taken during the interview session shortly after the interview was

conducted. This quick response procedure allowed for accuracy in reporting and analysis of interpreting responses.

3.1.12 Analysis of the Data

> Data analysis is the process of systemically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998, p. 157).

Data was collected using a quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview) approach. Content analysis of the data was completed in a timely manner before the researcher lost touch with notes taken. Responses collected from this study correlated to the staff's interpretations of six change indicators (*accountability measures, school improvement, professional development, collegial coaching, enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery*, and *staff movement toward collaboration*) that might influence school improvement, individual teaching practices, and student achievement at the middle school. Discussion through flexible interviews unveiled each person's perception of the importance of professional development and determined transferability of instructional activities delivered by colleagues into the classroom.

The participant interview allowed for an open in-depth conversation about the research topic. Flexibility in questioning offered clarification when needed. Analysis of the data collected determines key concepts at the conclusion of each interview. Responses of the interviewees on ten interview questions were organized into central

themes that emerge during discussion. *Recurring themes* were responses mentioned by five or more teacher interviewees, *supported themes* were mentioned by three or four teacher interviewees, and *individual themes* were mentioned by one or two teacher interviewees (adapted from Del Greco, 2000). Administrator responses were categorized into *recurring themes* (mentioned by both administrators) and *individual themes* (mentioned by one administrator). The three themes were summarized through construction of a table. Responses to interview questions were categorized separately according to teachers' responses (themes) or administrators' responses (themes).

Individual responses to the 70 survey items were categorized as possessing a *strong influence* (given a value of three), *moderate influence* (given a value of two), or *no influence* (given a value of one). Participant responses to the survey were placed in a frequency table. The quantitative data in the frequency chart was averaged to obtain a numerical mean score for each of the 70 survey items. The final section of the survey was a one through six ranking of six change indicators presented by the researcher that had an influence on school improvement. Participant ranking of the change indicators was placed into a table and an average was calculated to tabulate a consensus ranking of the elements. Teacher and administrator responses to the survey ranking were highlighted separately. This mixed form of quantitative and qualitative data collection helped to ensure that the results of the study were dependable.

3.1.13 Summary

The intent of this study was to determine if a collegial coaching model served as a basis for a change in teaching style and if demonstrated skills were actually transferred

into a classroom setting. The background and interview questions were specified along with a guideline that permitted exploration of six change elements of school improvement identified by the researcher. Completion of a paper survey further revealed the staff's perception of a coaching model and if demonstrated skills were included in the daily teaching routine. Additional factors that could have influenced a change toward teacher collaboration are revealed in responses of the ten teacher interviewees. Acquisition of quantitative and qualitative data through a mixed methodology approach would be summarized in table format, identifying similarities and differences in the range of responses provided by both teachers and administrators.

4. CHAPTER

4.1   Analysis of Interview and Survey Data

4.1.1 Introduction

A school initiating a cultural change for promotion of student achievement has traveled through a number of unknown and exciting experiences.   The researcher identified six elements that might have positively influenced a cultural change at Steel Town Middle School in teacher expectations, instructional delivery, and improved student achievement.   The six elements were: *accountability measures, school improvement, professional development, collegial coaching, enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery*, and *staff movement toward collaboration*.

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence professional development delivered by colleagues provided a basis for change and influenced teaching practices of staff members at Steel Town Middle School. Responses of interviewees categorized teachers of Steel Town Middle School into one of the three groups of educators identified by Barth (1990, pp. 53, 54) as being present in educational settings:

1. Teachers who are unable and unwilling to critically examine their teaching practice, and unable to have other adults – teachers, principals, adults – examine what and how they are teaching.

2. Teachers who are quite able and willing to continually scrutinize and reflect on what they do and make use of their insights to effect periodic change.

3. Teachers who are able and willing to critically scrutinize their practice and who are quite able and willing, even desirous, of making their practice accessible to other adults.

A two prong approach for collection of data was utilized to obtain quantitative and qualitative data to ten interview and corresponding survey questions. The primary method of data collection for the research study was personal interviews of ten academic teachers and two administrators employed at the middle school during the three years the coaching model was in place. Administrator #1, the former middle school principal, used his vision for the school to establish the coaching model as a structure to promote student achievement and cultural change. Additional items listed in the survey corresponded to the interview questions and the ranking of the six change elements to supply quantitative data. Data collected served as a resource for districts interested in instituting a collegial coaching model and hinted at strengths and weaknesses of the model.

4.1.2 Methodology

A mixed method of naturalistic inquiry allowed for collection of quantitative and qualitative data directly from the source. The qualitative method permitted an analysis of the similarities and differences of the professionals' responses to ten interview questions and personal reflections pertaining to professional development and collegial coaching. A quantitative approach provided through survey completion supports or rejects proposed elements of change and substantiates answers to the interview questions.

The Responsive Interviewing Model established by Rubin and Rubin (2005) allowed the interviewer to conduct semi-structured interviews with flexibility in questioning for a more in-depth understanding of the interviewees' responses. Rubin and Rubin (2005, pp. 64 – 68) contended that gathering credible results was based on

three important premises – interviewing people that were experienced, knowledgeable, and came from a variety of perspectives.

The researcher conducting the study was an administrator at Steel Town Middle School during the three years the coaching model was employed. The researcher's qualifications include certification as a Level II special education teacher, a K – 12 principal, a supervisor of special education, and a Superintendent's Letter of Eligibility. The researcher has since transferred to an administrative position at the high school and is no longer a direct supervisor of the middle school teacher participants. With approval of the researcher's advisor, the researcher conducted the interviews personally. Interviewees were advised that names were not divulged and access to audio tapes and notes were not shared with any individual.

4.1.3   Demographic Data of the Interviewees

The teachers chosen for participation in this research study were seventh and eighth grade teachers involved in the coaching model at Steel Town Middle School for three years. The ten teachers were Level II educators and represented the academic areas of Reading, Language, Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics. Teacher participants have been recognized as positive influences on student success by administration and peers. Two of the teachers interviewed are currently content coaches and provide professional development to the staff during morning faculty meetings. Two of the teachers were content coaches, but withdrew from participation after several months on the team. Since the start of the 2007 school year, two interviewees have become technology coaches, teachers offering professional development of technology to enhance

instruction and engage students in active participation. Eight of the ten teachers have spent their entire career in Steel Town School District. Four of the participants were male, and the other six female. With the exception of one interviewee, who transferred to the high school, nine of the participants have remained on staff at the middle school.

Administrator #1, the principal of the middle school during the three years of the coaching model initiative, has spent his entire career in Steel Town School District and advanced through a variety of positions. The second administrator, the Dean of Students, spent two years in a small adjoining school district before coming to Steel Town. The two administrators had a combined total of 49 years experience in education. Both males, the administrators were at the middle school before the merger and witnessed numerous changes that occurred in the school's culture as various initiatives were employed. Both transferred to the high school during the summer of 2007 to serve in similar capacities.

4.1.4   Meet the Interviewees

The following section describes each teacher and administrator to provide the reader with a sense of familiarity while maintaining the participant's anonymity and confidentiality.

> **Teacher #1** - Teacher #1 has 12 years experience teaching middle school students in the school district, holding a Bachelor's degree in Biology and General Science and an additional 24 credits. The first eight years of teaching were spent at Intermediate School #1, the building exhibiting success on the PSSA. Teacher #1 came to Steel Town Middle School the first year of the merger and has been at the building since 2004. This individual instructs eighth grade students in Astronomy. Instructor #1 was a content coach when the model was first introduced, leaving the team after four months. This individual currently serves as a technology coach and feels comfortable in this position.

Teacher #2 - Teacher #2 possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and English Literature with additional certifications in Social Studies and English. The individual is currently attending graduate school and majoring in Public Management. The interviewee's first year in education was as an educator in a Catholic school. He has been at Steel Town Middle School for four years teaching eighth grade Language. Teacher #2 currently serves as a technology coach for the building and believes that weaknesses and deficiencies observed in the academic content coaches have helped the technology coaches present skills and strategies in a manner that is non-threatening to the staff.

Teacher #3 - This teacher is certified as both an elementary teacher and middle school Language Arts teacher. This instructor has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and 24 post-graduate credits. Teacher #3 served as a substitute in the district for 10 years while raising a family before obtaining a permanent position. Instructional time was spent in an elementary setting as the ABC teacher and as a substitute for other grade levels before passing the middle school Language Praxis. All twenty years in education have been spent in Steel Town School District. Teacher #3 dedicates additional personal time assisting students before and after school.

Teacher #4 - Instructor #4 holds a Bachelor's Degree in History and Political Science and is working on a Master's Degree. This individual is Level II certified and teaches seventh grade Social Studies. A professional contract was obtained after substituting for two years, and he has been in a classroom for four years. Teacher #4 was also at the high performing Intermediate Building #1 (according to PSSA scores) and transferred to Steel Town Middle School the first year of the merger. This individual is the advisor of one of the after school tutoring groups sponsored by a local college.

Teacher #5 - Teacher #5 holds a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and General Science and previously taught eighth grade Physical Science before electing to move to the seventh grade Ecology class. This individual has been at Steel Town Middle School for four years after having taught several years in Florida. Teacher # 5 is entering his fourth year as a content coach at the middle school. This person is involved in an after school activity for students known as TSA.

Teacher #6 - Teacher #6 is certified as an elementary teacher and taught second grade for two years before receiving a Masters Degree in Reading and moving to the middle school as an eighth grade reading teacher. A Level II instructor, this individual teaches lower ability students and gifted students. Instructor #4 is involved in after school activities for students. As a former student in the school district, Teacher #6 has been at the middle school since the merger and has taught only in Steel Town School District.

Teacher #7 - Teacher # 7 spent four years as a substitute in the school district in a number of capacities before getting hired as a secondary mathematics teacher.

Teacher #7 holds a Bachelor's Degree in Math and a Masters in education. The instructor taught math at Intermediate School #2, the building experiencing failure, before transferring to Steel Town Middle School. This individual has worked in the district for fifteen years and is a life-long resident of the community. Teacher #7 has been a content coach since its inception and represents the math department.

Teacher # 8 - Teacher #8 has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and 36 credits towards a Masters degree. This individual took the middle school Praxis for Language Arts and currently teaches seventh grade Reading. Teacher #8 began her professional career as a day to day substitute and had many long term substituting positions before being offered the position of a seventh grade Reading teacher. This teacher was a content coach for a few months, but withdrew from the team for personal reasons. Teacher #8 has a high regard for the technology coaches.

Teacher #9 - Teacher #9 did not begin her career in education, but as an accountant at a community health center. This individual holds a Bachelor's degree plus 24 additional credits in the area of mathematics. Teacher #9 spent the majority of her career at the middle school and recently transferred to the high school at the start of the 2007-2008 school year. Her belief is that continuous learning for teachers is paramount to student achievement and believes "change is necessary and good".

Teacher #10 - Teacher #10 has been a Reading/Language teacher in the district for six years. This individual is presently going to graduate school to obtain administrative certification. The classes of this teacher are varied and student ability encompasses the gifted to low ability. Teacher #10 states that his use of technology in the classroom has been slow. He believes he is more willing to try new things and share. Working alongside colleagues, Teacher #10 engages in more interdisciplinary projects now than in prior years.

Building Administrator #1 - The entire career of Building Administrator #1 has been in Steel Town School District. Beginning at the former Central Hall as a Social Studies Teacher, this individual moved through the ranks to become a building administrator. This administrator saw the need for change and introduced the collegial coaching model at the middle school while building principal. This individual has moved to the high school to become the building principal after evidence of positive change at the middle school was witnessed by Central Administration. Administrator #1 possesses a Bachelor's and Master's Degree and a Doctorate. This individual is certified as a Social Studies teacher, K – 12 principal, and holds a Letter of Eligibility.

Building Administrator #2 - Building Administrator #2 has held a variety of positions in two school districts over his thirty two years in education. Thirty years of his professional career has been at Steel Town School District. This

administrator's career began as a physical education teacher and included time as an assistant attendance officer, an attendance officer, and Dean of Students. Administrator #2 holds a Bachelor's Degree along with credits toward administrative certification. This individual spent many years in the middle school setting and was present at Steel Town Middle School before the merger and during inclusion of the coaching model. Administrator #2 moved to the high school during the summer of 2007.

4.1.5 The Interview Process and Survey Completion Time Frame

Nine of the ten teacher interviews and survey completion sessions were conducted in October 2007 at the middle school. The participant-researcher session with the tenth teacher was conducted at the high school, a site conducive to her new position. Administrative interviews were held during November 2007 at Steel Town High School.

The researcher utilized a scripted set of questions during the interview process. Notes were taken by the researcher during each interview. Written notes were reviewed by the interviewees for accuracy and clarification at the conclusion of the interview sessions. In addition, each interview was audio-taped after receiving permission from the interviewees. The researcher carefully reviewed responses and transcribed them personally in written form shortly after the conclusion of each interview. Utilizing interview notes and audio-taped responses, the researcher noted and charted responses, following a pattern of similarities and differences in the interviewees' responses. Interviewees were assured that strict anonymity would be maintained.

4.1.6 Addressing the Interview and Survey Questions

Data gathered for this study encompassed two forms of data collection, quantitative and qualitative. Interviewees' responses to the first background question are

located in the section entitled *"Meet the Interviewees"* to establish the educational and professional background of each participant. Interviewees' personal reflections about a building vision, cultural change, and any link between a school's culture and student achievement elicited responses through completion of background questions 2, 3, and 4 and were documented in a section apart from the interview questions.

Personal responses to ten interview questions served as collection for qualitative data in regard to professional development and collegial coaching. The emergence of key concepts has been categorized into three themes that emerged following analysis of the interviewees' responses. Responses have been classified into: *recurring themes* – mentioned by five or more interviewees; *supported themes* – mentioned by three or four interviewees; and *individual themes* – mentioned by one or two interviewees but considered important to the research topic (adapted from DelGreco, 2000). Administrator responses to interview questions have been categorized as *unanimous themes* (both administrators mentioned) or *individual themes* (one administrator mentioned).

Completion of a paper survey has provided quantitative data to establish reliability. Each item in the survey focused on an aspect of school improvement, professional development, and activities prevalent at the middle school. Interviewees responded on the influence each item had on them personally. Responses were assigned a numerical rating as possessing a *strong influence* (3), *moderate influence* (2), or *no influence* (1). The numerical values showed a relationship between each indicator and identified those areas having the most influence on six elements of change highlighted in the study: *accountability measures, school improvement, professional development,*

collegial coaching, enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery, and

staff movement toward collaboration. An average of the interviewees' responses to the

survey have been calculated, charted, and classified as teacher or administrator responses.

To help categorize the strength of the averages, the following conversion has been

utilized to demonstrate importance:

1.50 – 2.00	Low Influence	(identified as **L** in table)
2.01 – 2.24	Low-Moderate Influence	(identified as **L/M** in table)
2.26 – 2.50	Moderate Influence	(identified as **M** in table)
2.51 – 2.75	Moderate – Strong Influence	(identified as **M/S** in table)
2.76 – 3.00	Strong Influence	(identified as **S** in table)

Ranking of six elements for school improvement identified by the researcher were

tallied and an average was calculated. The mean of the elements were placed in

numerical order to identify those which had the most influence (lower averages) to those

having the least influence (higher averages). The numerical values indicated those

elements interviewees perceived as most influential in school improvement.

4.1.7   Teacher Responses: Background Questions

4.1.7.1   Background Question 2

What do you perceive is the vision for the school as teachers see it?

> We have students of many different backgrounds, so we need to
> make certain all students have the same opportunities to learn.

This statement by Teacher #1 encompassed the middle school visions of *all* ten

teacher interviewees. Teacher #8 pointed out, "The staff needs to work together with one

another for betterment of the students." Teacher respondents believed this goal could be

accomplished through use of several avenues.

All ten interviewees spoke of an increase in student achievement and PSSA scores as the overriding vision of the building. Teacher #2 emphasized, ". . . the push to increase PSSA scores for reading and writing and doing as much internally with the help of the content coaches." Teacher #6 concurred on the importance of emphasizing reading and writing; but, Teacher #7 added the importance of, "The inclusion of math and reading into all content areas across the curriculum and development of cross-curricular activities."

Teachers #3 and #4 stated the vision was to develop students who could score proficient on the PSSA, and teacher #10 added, "Giving teachers the tools and strategies they can utilize to make a difference, staff can accomplish this task." Teacher #5 spoke of an emphasis on teaching students skills they could utilize across *all* academic areas, not only in the academic area of each individual teacher.

Interviewees' responses focused on the success of the students as the pivotal point of the vision of the middle school. This statement by Teacher #9 summarized the visions spoken about by the interviewees.

> Help students learn by giving them the abilities and skills they need in reading and math. This will help with the PSSA. Our vision is to give students more improved test scores and get them more involved in their own education.

4.1.7.2   Background Question 3

How has the school's culture changed the three years that content coaches provided professional development to the staff?

It's scary to think some people may not know some of the things taught by the content coaches, like graphic organizers. We need accountability among staff to do some of the things shown;

especially, if it is known they don't do it. Administration should step in to make these people adopt new techniques.

This comment made by Teacher #2, who continually learned on his own, was the lone dissenter who stated he did not witness a change in the culture of the school because, "The activities are not helpful." Teacher #2 continued,

I don't think the coaches are prepared enough. It's becoming a joke. The coaches should be credible. The ideas of the program are solid and seem like a good idea, but execution is not there.

Teacher #9 witnessed a slight change and added, "The initiative started off well but started to become more negative toward the end of the third year." Toward the end of the third year she believed, "The coaches weren't working together as a team and other staff members became cynical that they did not do as they preached." Teacher #9 continued:

At the end, people were not as open to ideas as they previously were. The coaches weren't open to ideas. They didn't want to hear other people's ideas. Coaches lost respect and trust from the staff. I think a coaching model is a good idea. We just need to make some changes and adjust.

Teacher #8 noted positive aspects to the model:

It made staff more aware that professional development was a necessity to attain proficiency in teaching. Learning has to continue. Basic awareness is a big plus. The coaches made awareness come alive.

However, on the negative end, she believed the coaches set themselves apart from the rest of the staff. "They did not use the talents of the individual coaches to their optimum level to help the staff."

Teacher #3 thought the culture changed with the emphasis to improve reading and math scores. "Teachers and students were held accountable for success in the school.

Teachers worked hard with kids." Teacher #4 thought coaches opened up more classroom opportunities for teachers and new techniques. "Things they didn't learn in college." Teacher #1 believed teachers were more resistant at the onset of the initiative, especially veteran teachers. Teacher #1 stated, "Teachers are now more accepting of change and more willing to try different things. I definitely see a change in the teachers."

Teachers #5 and #6 believed a cultural change emerged and resulted in greater collaboration among the staff. Each noticed an increased awareness among students and staff toward utilization of different techniques. Teacher #10 clarified this with the response, "Some teachers started to collaborate more, communicate and share more, but not all teachers."

All respondents agreed that a coaching model was an excellent idea, but the model needed to be introduced appropriately, and credible individuals must be incorporated to elicit sustainable change. The statement made by Teacher #7 summarized the feelings of interviewees who believed a cultural change emerged as a result of the work of the content coaches.

> For the most part, we moved in a positive direction because classroom teachers are beginning to appreciate what others are doing and help each other by bringing other aspects into their classrooms. Staff members are less isolated and more collaborative. Team plans allow you to discuss the techniques shown and decide how you can help each other out.

4.1.7.3 Background Question 4

What do you think the connection is between a school's culture and student achievement?

All teachers interviewed agreed a connection existed between a school's culture and student achievement. The positive nature of one has transcended to the positive nature of the other. Teacher #7 utilized math terms to call it a "positive correlation". Teacher #6 said, "They go hand in hand. If teachers model and are excited, students have better achievement, they appreciate it more, understand it more, and pay more attention."

Teacher #3 responded, "Kids do change over the course of the year as they learn our expectations," but she added, "The big obstacle is to educate our parents about our expectations so they can help us instill this feeling for achievement in our students." Teacher #3 believed:

> Students do not have the support they need to come here everyday and take things as seriously as they need to. If it's on the report card, kids say their mother and dad think it's important. If it's not on the report card, kids will do only what they have to. I now take a grade when we practice the PSSA prompts. I hope that changes kids' perception of its importance. The school puts an emphasis on increased scores, but I don't think kids thought it was as important as a report card grade.

With such an emphasis from the group on the teacher and how they project their expectations, Teacher #7 maintained:

> The more positive the culture is, the more ambitious the school's culture is, the more innovative the culture is, the more understanding the culture is, the students are going to feel safe and have a positive learning environment. The better things are going in the school's culture, the better things will go with student achievement. There will be greater effort on their part.

As teachers implemented techniques demonstrated by the coaches, Teacher #1 pointed out, "We are providing more opportunities for students to get better grades by the different things we do." Teacher #6 believed, "Similarities in teaching styles can help

130

students achieve connections from class to class and across the curriculum." Teacher #4 explained even further:

> When teachers have a clear vision of learning in the classroom, I think it impacts student achievement because when you bring new techniques and when you are more prepared in a variety of ways, it gives students new opportunities to learn in different ways for multiple learning levels. Students see teachers as more prepared.

Teacher #2, who did not see a change in the culture of the middle school, maintained a positive connection established between culture and student achievement resulted in positive change:

> Once there is a pattern of what you ought to do, of what's accepted and what's not accepted, the students' achievement and behavior will follow into that pattern. If we say we are a culture that values certain things, and we don't prove it, the kids will figure that out very quickly.

Several teachers agreed that what students *see* and *feel* from the teacher influences student performance. Teacher #9 believed, "Teachers' attitudes can determine how well a student does, especially in a middle school. If students sense conflict and negativity, it does affect what happens. Kids are in tune to this." Teacher #8 agreed:

> Culture is a composite of everyone in the building and everything contributes to the culture. If a culture is stagnate, positive, or negative in what it does, it affects student achievement. Everyone needs the same vision to work toward student achievement. Students are very perceptive to a teacher and the staff. They pick up on so many things that we do not realize they do. If there is negativity in the culture, the students pick up on it.

A statement from Teacher #10 expressed the overall feeling for the teacher group:

> If the teachers are willing to adapt and change, try different things, so will the students. If teachers believe students can achieve, and get that idea across to the students, they [students] will begin to believe in themselves. It just takes time and

teachers can't give up when they [teachers] don't see immediate success.

4.1.8   Interview and Survey Questions

Each educator was asked a series of ten questions during the interview encompassing accountability, school improvement, professional development, and a collegial coaching model. The flexibility of Rubin and Rubin's (2005, p. 36) Responsive Interviewing Model (R. I. M.) allowed for flexibility in questioning interviewees based on the unique questioning session. Additional questions were asked for clarification of a response given and follow-up questions added depth to an interviewee's response. Teacher responses were categorized into *recurring themes, supported themes*, or *individual themes.* Administrator responses were categorized into either *unanimous* or *individual themes.*

A corresponding question to each interview question was placed in the survey and was designed to gather quantitative data on specific items highlighted in the review of literature and as aspects of school improvement. Interviewees' responses in the survey illustrated if the elements possessed a *strong influence (*given the value 3*), moderate influe*nce (given the value 2), or *no influence (*given the value 1*)* on their teaching style and practices. Survey items were totaled and an average was computed from the respondent's answers.

The last section was the participants' ranking of six elements of change in school improvement identified by the researcher through review of the literature: *accountability measures, school improvement, professional development, collegial coaching,*

enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery, and *staff movement toward collaboration.*

4.1.9 Teacher Responses: Research and Survey Questions

4.1.9.1 Interview Question #1

What are the top three responsibilities of classroom teachers?

Interviewees listed what they believed were the top three responsibilities of teachers. Their responses were categorized into *recurring* (five or more similar responses), *supported* (three or four similar responses), or *individual themes* (one or two responses). The number following each response identified the number of staff members who indicated a particular area as an educator's responsibility.

Recurring themes mentioned by teachers surrounded discipline, creation of a safe environment, and academic content. Recurring and supported themes centered on activities teachers did personally. The seven individual themes listed, in contrast to the recurring and supported themes, spoke to responsibilities teachers had to students.

Table 4.1: Interview Question #1

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Discipline (6)	Modeling positive, behavior, and dress (3)	Creating interest in subject area
Curriculum, skills, and content (6)	Teachers continuously learning (3)	Understanding student situations
Safe environment (5)		Provide need for lifelong learning in students
		Develop self-confidence in students
		Assure students succeed
		Know and teach to strengths and weaknesses of students (2)
		Keep students engaged

4.1.9.2 Survey Question #1 - Teacher Responsibilities

How influential are the following in creation of a competent teacher?

Teachers were asked to explain how influential the following listed items were in creation of a competent teacher: proficiency in delivery of instruction; classroom management; collaboration with colleagues; dedication to student achievement; restructuring activities for all students; and use of best practices. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* given the value 2, and *no influence* given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.2: Survey Question #1

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Influ-ence
Proficiency in delivery of instruction	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	3.0	S
Classroom management	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	27	2.7	M / S
Collaboration with colleagues	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	26	2.6	M / S
Dedication to teacher achievement	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	28	2.8	S
Restructuring activities for all students	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	23	2.3	M
Use of best practices	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	27	2.7	M / S
TOTAL SECTION												2.68	M / S

Interviews revealed that all six elements were considered influential in creation of a competent teacher. *Proficiency in delivery of instruction* is viewed as the number one priority for teacher competency. This item corresponded to *curriculum, skills*, and *content* as a recurring theme that emerged during the teacher interviews.

Responses from interviewees demonstrated that the ability to *restructure activities to meet the ability levels of all students* had only a moderate influence in creation of a competent teacher. *Classroom management*, receiving an average of 2.7, a moderate to strong influence, substantiated its place as a recurring theme. The lowest score of 2.3, *restructuring activities for all students*, correlated to individual themes addressed by the

teachers, representative of teachers' responsibilities to students. The quantitative values corresponded to responses given during the interview process and validated what was said by the interviewees.

4.1.9.3 Interview Question #2

Is reflection on teaching practices useful? In what ways?

There was a unanimous response from interviewees concerning the usefulness of reflection in teaching.   All responded that they reflected daily in some way in order to *correct things that went wrong*. "You can improve the next time around, and you know exactly what parts you have to change or spend more time on" (Teacher #6).

The ten teachers reported they have changed from "year to year, possibly class to class" (Teacher #9) dependent upon results of the lesson conducted. Identification of reactions, behaviors, and answers from students were essential to determine if a change needed to occur in the classroom. As Teacher #3 related, "If their heads are down during my lesson, then I didn't do my job." Teacher #7 pointed out, "I can't grow as a teacher if I don't look back." Teacher #7 continued:

> I can't be arrogant to say my way is the only way. I need to look
> at what others are doing, ask what they are doing, and then be
> willing to change and make myself a stronger teacher.

All interviewees believed it was essential to reflect formally or informally if there was desire to become a better teacher.   Teacher #8 used the informal technique of "journaling" to critique lessons. Journaling was done after each lesson, possibly after each class period, depending upon the needs and ability levels of the students:

> To reflect on your teaching, the best way is to journal. It shows
> you how you taught, what strategies you used, and what you can
> do differently in different situations. It helps you see how you

reacted in the past and how you might handle it [the lesson] in the future.

Teacher #1 wrote notes in the teacher's manual next to the lesson to assist with development and changes for future lessons. Student performance and attitude was an indispensable motivator for Teachers #2 and #4. Teacher #2 reflected to change timing and presentation of materials based on the "response, reaction, and behavior of the students." Teacher #4 reflected on the researcher's question and mentioned:

You need to spend your life in reflection. You live and you learn. If something didn't go right, you need to look back and ask, "Why didn't it go right? How could this have been better? What made it go right?"

No matter what technique is utilized, reflection was the motivator to provide change and create a better teacher. "Reflection gives you insight to how you taught a lesson, what was effective and what was not" (Teacher #10). Teacher responses were categorized into *recurring* (five or more similar responses), *supported* (three or four similar responses), or *individual themes* (one or two responses). The number following each response indicated the number of staff members who identified a particular focal area for reflection. *Improvements for lessons and future plans*, a recurring theme from all respondents, validated statements made by the interviewees. Eight of the ten teachers believed reflection helped make changes essential to meet the needs of the students they taught.

Table 4.3: Interview Question #2

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Improvements for lessons and future plans (10)	Response, reaction and behavior of the students (4)	Restructuring timing and presentation (2)
Produce more meaningful lessons (7)	If results anticipated did not materialize (4)	Search for "why" it didn't work
Reflect for change to meet the needs of the students (8)		Can't grow as a teacher
		Insight about oneself

4.1.9.4   Survey Question #2 - Reflection on Teaching

How much influence has personal reflection of the following impacted a change in instruction delivery?

The survey had teachers respond if reflection of the following influenced a change in instructional delivery: change or willingness to change teaching philosophy; restructuring daily repertoire to include best practices; increased focus on student achievement; making accommodations for varying student abilities; proficiency in delivering quality instruction; and recognition of the urgency to change. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* given the value 2, and *no influence* given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.4: Survey Question #2

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Influ-ence
Change in teaching philosophy / willingness to change	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	27	2.7	M /S
Restructuring daily repertoire to include best practices	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	26	2.6	M / S
Increased focus on student achievement	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	29	2.9	S
Making accommodations for varying student abilities	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	25	2.5	M
Proficiency in delivering quality instruction	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	27	2.7	M / S
Recognition of the urgency to change	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	26	2.6	M / S
TOTAL SECTION												2.67	M / S

An *increased focus on student achievement,* which had the highest score of the items, validated participants' belief that reflection on lesson delivery helps to make changes when necessary. Reflection on teaching practices had only a moderate influence when interviewees had to *make accommodations for varying student abilities.* An average value of 2.7 for *change in teaching philosophy or willingness to change* is representative of responses that continually referenced a need to reflect to change. The averages calculated coincide with interviewees' responses surrounding the influence personal reflection had on delivery of instructional skills.

4.1.9.5   Interview Question #3

Has professional development been helpful? In what ways?

Each interviewee believed professional development is important and essential in a constantly changing world. Many teachers stated that if teachers do not learn and change, they are not capable of preparing students for the future. Teacher #2 mentioned:

> I didn't learn all I need to learn in undergrad or graduate school.
> You can't stop learning in other jobs and you can't stop here.
> Other professions have to keep going to school. Why do teachers
> think we should be any different?

Professional development had caused Teacher #10 to ". . .accept different tools and strategies I could use to keep my students more engaged." Teacher #8 pointed out:

> Professional development is always helpful. It helps me be more
> critical of myself and how I respond to students. Professional
> development makes me aware that education is always changing.
> People, circumstances, and culture is always changing, and we
> need to change with them. Professional development helps me
> be in tune with teaching.

Teacher #5 did not believe he was a natural teacher so he had acquired a supply of techniques from professional development meetings to mold himself into a better teacher. "Professional development forces me to think, critique, and present information in ways that I never thought of before."

Emphasis on acquisition of technology skills from Teachers #1, #3, and #4 was introduced in the discussion. Teacher #3 pointed out, "We can no longer teach just out of a book. We have to use technology. That's what they [students] are use to." "Technology can be used to engage students and get information for them quickly" (Teacher #1).

Several teachers highlighted activities derived from the content coaches' meetings and how each was incorporated in the classroom. Teacher #1 used the promethean board, graphic organizers, and KWL chart to assist students to organize thoughts for sequencing events. Teacher #4 had students construct mobiles to illustrate understanding of skills. Teacher # 6 found graphic organizers and questioning techniques to be extremely useful to measure student comprehension. "Professional development gets teachers more focused and acquire a higher level of thinking; then, we have higher expectations for students" (Teacher #6).

Individuals #6 and #9 credited professional development with reminding people of what was already learned in college. "It reminds you about things you may have forgotten when you were first teaching, things you should be doing all the time" (Teacher #9).

Teacher #7, similar to statements made by other interviewees, chose to select the professional development activity personally engaged in. "When I'm forced to participate

in some PD activities, I don't like them because the presenter does not understand our students or what I see everyday." Many teachers responded that they preferred an internal model for presentation of professional development rather than seeking advice from educators outside the district.

Teacher responses were categorized into *recurring* (five or more similar responses), *supported* (three or four similar responses), or *individual themes* (one or two responses). The number following each response indicated the number of staff members who saw value to participation in professional development.

Table 4.5: Interview Question #3

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Changing world; teachers need to change with it (6)	Technology training (3)	If you don't take advantage of it you fall behind
	New strategies and techniques to engage students (4)	Makes student succeed
	Some meetings aren't useful (3)	Presentation of information
	Makes one become a better teacher (3)	Helps you remember what one already knows
	Higher expectations for students (3)	Easy access to techniques
		Critical of my lessons
		Ask questions to my colleagues of what to do in certain situations
		See the bigger picture outside the classroom
		Opens lines of communication (2)

4.1.9.6   Survey Question #3 - Professional Development

How much of an influence has participation in professional development activities impacted the following?

The survey asked teachers to indicate if participation in professional development influenced a change in delivery of instructional skills, adapting lessons to challenging student body, willingness to change classroom procedures, rejuvenation of self and development of a positive attitude, development of interactive lessons for student,

collaboration with colleagues, and increased use of technology in the classroom. Teachers ranked the impact of professional development as possessing a *strong influence* (given the value 3), a *moderate influence* (given the value 2) or *no influence* (given the value 1) on the cited activities. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.6: Survey Question #3

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Influence
Delivery of instructional skills	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	25	2.5	M
Adaptability of lessons to challenging student body	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	24	2.4	M
Willingness to change classroom procedures	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	25	2.5	M
Rejuvenation of self and development of a positive attitude	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	26	2.6	M / S
Development of interactive lessons for students	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	28	2.8	S
Collaboration with colleagues	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	28	2.8	S
Increased use of technology in the classroom	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	28	2.8	S
TOTAL SECTION												2.63	M / S

Participation in professional development activities had a moderate to strong influence on each item highlighted in survey question #3. A comparison between survey questions #2 and #3 showed that although teachers believed reflection had a strong influence on an educator's *willingness to change*, providing professional development to staff has a moderate impact in *changing classroom procedures*. The survey answers of Teacher #5, reporting a strong influence across the board, indicated that professional development has had a tremendous impact on his teaching. Teacher #10 was least influenced by the impact professional development had on teaching style. *Collaboration with colleagues* and *increased use of technology* was highlighted continuously during the interview process and received a high numerical average. This high numeric

measurement validated responses made by interviewees concerning the importance of technology in schools.

4.1.9.7   Interview Question #4

Has accountability and school improvement played a role in structuring professional development activities? In what ways?

The teacher group believed accountability, school improvement, and the middle school on the "warning list" was the impetus to introduce the coaching model at the building. The identification of needs and weaknesses in the school's culture has made personnel ". . .more aware of what we needed to do, and how to do it. The coaches gave us the techniques, lessons, and activities to use to enhance instruction" (Teacher #6). Teacher #2 felt, "Accountability gave the staff the opportunity to develop solutions to attack the problems faced by the students and staff."

Many interviewees directed their comments to the impact school improvement and accountability played in attaining adequate PSSA scores. "Everything is based on passing the PSSA" (Teachers #9 and #4). Teachers #4 and #7 believed accountability was forcing teachers to teach to the test. "Because we are teaching to the test, we need to create all kinds of professional development to get us [the teachers] to change our teaching style" (Teacher #7). Teacher #7 continued, "We are no longer teaching kids to be thinkers. We are teaching them to pass the test. We are producing a good worker, not a good thinker."

Teacher #9 believed accountability forced the math department to rewrite the curriculum to ". . . meet the needs of the students and give them the knowledge they need

to compete in society." Teacher #9 said the curriculum change is an improvement that

may not have occurred if accountability was not at the forefront.

Teacher #10 reminded the researcher:

> PSSA scores have forced us to look at areas of weaknesses and strengths. Scores have identified where we need to improve and professional development given in the building has been geared toward helping us strengthen these areas – if people use them.

"Teachers need to be accountable as we expect kids to be accountable. If teachers

are not accountable to the education of the students some would just sit there and

continue to do the same things they have done in the past" (Teacher #3). Teacher #5

explained in depth:

> Teachers realize that what we were doing before wasn't working and they realized that they had to pay more attention during professional development meetings and try some of the techniques. I don't think we would have done what we did if we weren't on school improvement and with lower scores. People would have remained status quo and would not have changed.

Teacher #1 summarized for the teacher group with the remark, "What we do in

professional development is because of accountability and school improvement."

Table 4.7: Interview Question #4

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
More focus on passing PSSA (5)	Using data to bring about program change (4)	Using data to determine needs and weaknesses (2)
	Teaching to the test (4)	Teachers need to be accountable to education of students
		Coaches provide techniques and skills to elicit change
		Gave validity to what teachers do in the classroom
		Gave confidence to teachers
		Develop solutions to problems

Survey Question #4 - Accountability and School
                        Improvement

> *What influence has the following had on an increased emphasis on*
> *professional development for teachers?*

Staff members responded on the influence the following have had on structuring

professional development activities at the middle school: national accountability;

district/building accountability; emphasis on increased PSSA scores; middle school's

position on the state warning list. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate*

influence given the value 2, and *no influence* given the value 1.   An average was

calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.8: Survey Question #4

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Influ-ence
National accountability	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	1	22	2.2	L / M
District / building accountability	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	25	2.5	M
Emphasis on increased PSSA scores	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	28	2.8	S
Middle school on state warning list	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	25	2.5	M
TOTAL SECTION												2.5	M

Respondents believed an *emphasis to increase student PSSA scores* had the

greatest impact for utilization of professional development activities demonstrated by

peers. The average of 2.8 for this line item was represented by a high number and

conflicts with responses from five individuals who mentioned the influence professional

development had on increasing PSSA scores, a recurring theme during the interviews.

The teacher group believed *national accountability* had little bearing on

acceptance of professional development. Interviewee #2 indicated that the school and

district's condition had not influenced his involvement with professional development

activities. His statement during the interview coincided with his survey responses and

validated his statement, "It is a teacher's responsibility to continue their learning. I would hate to believe that they [teachers] do not see it essential to their development." Teachers #4 and #5 ranked all four line items as having a strong influence on an increased emphasis for professional development.

4.1.9.9   Interview Question #5

What contributed to your professional development?

Interviewees were asked to list for the researcher resources utilized to obtain individual professional development, either through the school or on their time. Respondents were to include any activities they participated in during their professional career. Responses were categorized into *recurring* (five or more similar responses), *supported* (three or four similar responses), or *individual themes* (one or two responses). The number following each item indicates the number of staff members who participated in each activity listed.

Table 4.9: Interview Question #5

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
College Courses (6)	Professional readings and *Master Teacher* pamphlet (4)	Individual Research (2)
Team Plans (7)		Governor's Academy
Content (academic) coaches (7)		Middle School Conference
Technology coaches (7)		Math / Science Collaborative (2)
Attending meetings outside district (5)		Pitt intern
Sharing with colleagues outside the district (6)		District meetings (2)
		Presenter at a conference
		Blogs on the internet (2)
		Administration

Seven of the teachers stated they obtained an adequate supply of professional development from the academic coaches, but they also emphasized the success of the

newly instituted technology coaches. Activities demonstrated by technology coaches include: United Streaming, Wikis, Promethean Board training, Grade Quick training, Ed-Line training, surfing the internet, Power Point, and presentation of an array of web sites. Dissemination of activities and skills have been crucial for professional development sharing during *team meetings*, mentioned by 7 of the 10 interviewees. Teachers saw the value of *attending meetings outside the district*, such as Mon Valley Learns and BOSS, the county-wide professional development day, to attain professional development activities for implementation in classroom instruction. The line item, *interactions with peers outside the district,* accounted as an additional recurring theme.

4.1.9.10 Survey Question #5 - Contributions to Professional Development

What influence has the following had on personal professional development?

Teachers indicated if participation in the following impacted their professional development: collegial coaching; team plans; professional meetings/collaboration with colleagues outside the district; college courses; individually sought after resources; and establishment of learning communities in the building. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and the influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.10: Survey Question #5

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot.	Avg.	Influence
Collegial coaching	3	1	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	23	2.3	M
Team plans	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	29	2.9	S
Professional meetings / collaboration with colleagues outside district	2	2	3	1	3	2	2	3	2	2	22	2.2	L / M
College courses	1	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	1	2	22	2.2	L / M
Individually sought after resources	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	24	2.4	M
Establishment of learning communities in the building	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	23	2.3	M
TOTAL SECTION												2.38	M

Eight of the ten interviewees repeatedly referenced the value of *team plans*, a recurring theme, and how meeting daily gave them the opportunity to share resources and strategies, to communicate about students and with parents, and to construct interdisciplinary activities. Positive comments made about team plans were represented by the strong influential score of 2.9.

According to the survey, *collegial coaching*, the basis for this research, had only a moderate influence for acquiring professional development. Teachers #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, and #10 lamented on the success of the technology coaches and expounded on the numerous activities they had been able to incorporate into the classroom from them. Teacher #9, now at the high school, stated, "Any use of technology in the classroom enhances lessons."

A score of 2.3 from the interviewees demonstrated that the *establishment of learning communities* in the middle school had only a moderate influence. Only Teachers #5 and #7 saw the establishment of learning communities in the middle school. As Teacher #5 stated, "We are talking more and sharing, but we still have a long way to go."

Six of the ten teachers stated that *college courses* provided an avenue for professional development, categorized as a recurring theme in the interviews, but receiving the low score of 2.2 in the survey, suggesting a low to moderate influence for attainment of skills and knowledge for the classroom. A score of 2.2 on the survey for *professional development meetings outside the district* contradicted the same element as a recurring theme during the interviews. The statement made by Teacher #8 may substantiate the difference.

> If I attend professional development activities I'm interested in, I get more value from it. Sometimes when I am forced into a meeting, I find no value in the presentation.

4.1.9.11 Interview Question #6

Has professional development activities demonstrated by colleagues been an influence on your teaching? In what ways?

Seven of the ten individuals interviewed stated the coaching model influenced their teaching, three spoke of a moderate influence, and one teacher stated the coaching model had no influence. Teacher #2, who stated professional development demonstrated by colleagues had no influence on personal instruction, described how constant reading and college courses have kept him abreast of strategies and techniques demonstrated by the coaches. As a language teacher, he was cognizant of graphic organizers, KWL charts, and highlighting. When all teachers in a school were instructed on similar strategies, he did recognize, ". . . the value for students when everyone is utilizing similar techniques across all academic areas."

Teachers #8, #9, and #10 said the work of the coaches has had limited influence on their teaching. Teacher #8 stated, "What they [coaches] present to the group validates

what I do in the classroom." Teacher #9 also experienced validation of teaching through their presentations, but added:

> It didn't change my teaching style, but it helps me think about what I do. I became more aware of questioning. I would pick and choose what they [coaches] showed us, but I already used vocabulary and graphic organizers even as a math teacher. I believe it would be more beneficial to departmentalize their presentations. For example, bring in reading strategies and present just to the math teachers. I think there would have been more buy-in.

Teacher #10 found the questioning strategies most beneficial. "I watch the questions I ask and try to give students questions that test their comprehension and force them to think critically." Aside from questioning, "The techniques they have presented validate what I already do."

Seven teachers claimed they have been greatly impacted by the coaches and have adopted many of the activities as their own. Teacher #1 noticed a change in the students as more colleagues incorporated the coaches' strategies in lessons:

> Students are bringing their textbooks. They know how to use graphic organizers, outline chapters. Students are more organized in their thinking. The consistency across the building has been beneficial.

Teacher #5, who believed he was not a natural teacher, stated, "I don't know all the techniques, so it helps me grow as a teacher." He contended he was more comfortable and assured of his teaching as he familiarized himself with the additional skills.

Increased collaboration among staff was acknowledged by Teachers #3, #4, and #6. Teacher #6 spoke of the cross-curricular activities done among the disciplines by implementing strategies presented by the content coaches. Teacher # 3 pointed out:

> It is always good to go to a colleague. There is an increase in sharing and talking. You can always go to a colleague for help

and advice. It is easier to have someone in the building to help you when you have doubt.

Teacher #4 substantiated the work of the coaches with the comment:

The work of the coaches has given me the ability to vary my lessons. I try to use different strategies every day of the week so it is not the same. It has helped me keep the attention of the students. The different strategies and techniques I learned helped me meet the learning styles of varied learners.

Work the technology coaches had provided to the staff had positively impacted individual perceptions of their endeavors. The majority of the teachers spoke highly of the technology coaches and how they [technology coaches] had tailored presentations to meet individual needs and weaknesses of the staff at the middle school.

Table 4.11: Interview Question #6

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Technology coaches more of an influence (6)	Ability to vary lesson design (4)	Students more readily utilize skills from class to class
	Validates what I already do in my classroom (3)	Consistency of activities in the building (2)
	Ability and willingness to change with more skills available (3)	Coaches in building when questions arise
	Personally – no (3)	Self-reflection
	Brings more awareness of various ways students learn (3)	Enhancement of questioning techniques (2)
		Non-threatening atmosphere with coaches
		Bring other disciplines into academic area
		Structuring of inter-disciplinary units
		Use of graphic organizers, highlighting, KWL charts (2)
		Encourages seeking out additional resources

4.1.9.12 Survey Question #6 - Influence of Peer Coaching

How influential has peer coaching been on a change in classroom instructional delivery?

Staff members responded if peer coaching influenced: a change in teaching style; willingness to implement best practices; learning to adapt to a challenging student body; move from isolationism to collaboration; and integration of technology in instructional delivery. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Overall results to survey question #6 averaged the lowest numerically of all ten survey questions. A comparison of *establishment of learning communities* in survey question #5, which received an average value of 2.3, to a *move from isolationism to collaboration* in survey question #6, did not substantiate positive responses given in regard to increased communication and collaboration occurring between staff members. Survey averages indicated that neither was influenced by professional development or collegial coaching.

According to survey question #5, *collegial coaching* had only a moderate influence for acquisition of individual professional development. Comparing this result with results in survey question #6, collegial coaching did not appear to influence other identified aspects of the teaching process. The greatest impact of collegial coaching noted by many teachers was the work accomplished by the technology coaches. Receiving an average score of 2.6, representing a moderate to strong influence, validated positive comments made by interviewees about the technology coaches.

Table 4.12: Survey Question #6

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Influ-ence
Change teaching style	3	1	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	1	21	2.1	L / M
Willingness to implement best practices	3	1	2	3	3	3	2	1	2	2	22	2.2	L / M
Learning to adapt to a challenging student body	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	25	2.5	M
Move from isolationism to collaboration	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	21	2.1	L / M
Integration of technology in instructional delivery	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	26	2.6	M / S
TOTAL SECTION												2.3	M

4.1.9.13   Interview Question #7

What do you believe are the advantages or disadvantages of peer coaching?

Implementation of a coaching model is a fairly new concept in education. During the interview process, all interviewees stated they were accepting of a coaching model and believed it was an innovative way to disseminate information to peers. Teachers believed individuals who deliver information to staff members needed to be credible and reliable, as well as respected by their peers.   Teacher #2 referenced the review of literature when he stated:

> They [coaches] are not necessarily the most senior staff member, but these individuals do need to possess the knowledge and skills to pass information along to the remainder of the staff in a way that they [coaches] are perceived as credible and trustworthy. Their actions need to validate their position.

Respondents were candid of the work currently being conducted by the technology coaches.   The interviewees were extremely supportive of the technology coaches and believed they were more influential than the academic coaches. Teacher #3 found the technology coaches "more prepared and credible." Teachers #1 and #2, who

are currently technology coaches, said, "We took what we saw as positives and negatives of what the content coaches did to tailor our presentations" (Teacher #2). For example, instead of presenting one idea to the entire staff, the technology coaches set up multiple learning sessions, and colleagues selected the session which was more beneficial to satisfy individual needs.

Teachers were asked to list advantages and disadvantages they believed exist in collegial coaching model. Responses were categorized into *recurring* (five or more similar responses), *supported* (three or four similar responses), or *individual themes* (one or two responses). The number following each item indicates the number of staff members who listed similar advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages listed encompass positive relationships that have developed between the coaches and staff. *Sharing ideas, strategies, and techniques* was recognized as an advantage by every teacher. *Obtaining **new** ideas, strategies, and techniques* is categorized as an individual theme. *Sharing concerns and fears with a peer,* as a recurring theme, emphasized the expanded communication among staff.

Disadvantages of a coaching model leaned toward perceptions staff members have of the coaches and the persona exhibited by them. Negative perceptions appear to impact cynicism in the model. Comments about disadvantages to a coaching model were validated by teacher responses illustrated in several research questions.

Table 4.13a: Advantages of Peer Coaching

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Someone to connect and communicate with in building (7)	Comfort level with peers (4)	All staff using similar skills and techniques
Sharing concerns and fears (8)	Collaboration with colleagues (4)	Ability to keep current
Sharing personal ideas, strategies, and techniques (10)	Support from peers (3)	Obtaining **new** strategies and techniques (2)
Familiarity with district (5)		Positive interactions (2)
Not a one time occurrence (6)		Motivator for change (2)
		Ways to integrate information given
		Curriculum update

Table 4.13b: Disadvantages of Peer Coaching

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Cynical people against model (8)	Coaches not prepared (3)	Coaches not credible
Animosity and resentment toward coaches (8)	Staff members fearful of change (3)	Coaches don't practice what they teach
Needs to be departmentalized, not generalized (5)	Lack of accountability from coaches (3)	Lack of trust and respect toward coaches (2)
	Staff members are coaches only for the money (4)	Lack of involvement from other staff members who can contribute (2)
	Some teachers don't want to share (4)	Coaches who will not accept feedback and criticism
		Non-academic teachers cannot utilize skills and techniques
		Coaches with a feeling of superiority: their way is the only way (2)
		Violation of contract
		Morning meetings
		Lack of training for coaches (2)
		Comfort level threatened

4.1.9.14   Survey Question #7 - Effects of Peer Coaching

How influential has peer coaching been on the staff's perceptions?

Teachers responded if peer coaching influenced them in regard to the following: networking and collaboration; learning best practices; obtaining Act 48 credit; enhancement of instructional delivery; communication with colleagues who instructed

similar students; colleagues familiar with conditions of district/building; accessibility/not a one time occurrence; and attitude of the staff. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.14: Survey Question #7

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Influ-ence
Networking and collaboration	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	24	2.4	M
Learning best practices	3	1	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	23	2.3	M
Obtaining Act 48 credit	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	24	2.4	M
Enhancement of instructional delivery	2	1	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	21	2.1	L / M
Communication with colleagues who instruct similar students	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	23	2.3	M
Colleagues familiar with conditions of district / building	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	22	2.2	L / M
Accessibility / not a one time occurrence	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	25	2.5	M
Attitude of staff	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	23	2.3	M
TOTAL SECTION												2.31	M

The effects of peer coaching on the *enhancement of instructional delivery* received the lowest average score of 2.1, representing a low to moderate influence. The numerical value of 2.1 mirrored the value for *change in teaching style* in survey question #6. These low scores did not represent a strong impact for collegial coaching on teacher instruction.

The *accessibility of colleagues* in the building to provide and support classroom practices received the highest influence value from teachers. As established by the teachers, the coaching model opened doors for *sharing ideas, strategies, and techniques*, as well as, *fears and concerns for assisting students* to reach proficiency, both high recurring themes during the interview sessions. *Networking and collaboration*, having a moderate influence score of 2.4, coincided with the positive influences of *daily accessibility for teacher support.*

155

4.1.9.15   Interview Question #8

What is the importance of including peers in the teaching process?

Many of the teachers' answers referred to the advantages listed in the prior table of research question #7 that all agreed upon, the sharing of ideas and strategies to help one another. As Teacher #8 said, "We are all in this process together and, ideally, we have the same motivation and goals. It is easier to do something together than by yourself."

Teacher #1 felt peers help you "tweak" what did not work in the classroom and provided support to make lessons more beneficial for students. "I tried this and it didn't work. How did you do it?" Teacher #9 agreed. "When you share ideas and different techniques, you bring about more sharing of ideas and increase communication."

Even participants cynical of the coaching model believed the concept of collegial coaching was a valuable tool for renewal and school improvement if done correctly. Teacher #2 pointed out:

> Whoever is providing the professional development to the staff is doing it themselves in the classroom. It is not a person from the outside who is not in the classroom. The presenters have the same type of kids we do and understand the local situation. There is opportunity for follow-up because the presenters don't go away when they are done.

Teacher #6 echoed a similar sentiment about the availability of peer coaches in the building. "They are always willing to help you, to get things for you. They are accessible." Teacher #10 stated, "They are in the classroom same as you with the same kind of students. They can tell you what has worked for them and what has not."

The ability to expand communication with peers was an overwhelming theme in many of the interviewees' discussions. Communication has allowed individuals to "share

and steal from each other" (Teacher #4). Teacher #10 claimed, "Communicating helps you continue to learn on an informal level." Teachers #4 and #7 implied that a comfort level existed with colleagues more so than with individuals unfamiliar to current situations. "I know there are classrooms I can walk into and people I work with will help me" (Teacher #7). "The support is more evident" (Teacher #9). Teacher #4 believed sharing provides a teacher with opportunities to keep students engaged:

> Anytime you have more ammunition to fire at these kids, they're better off and you're better off. You, the teachers, are working together. You are the students. You don't want classrooms to get stagnant and old.

Several teachers spoke of the necessity to include colleagues outside the original coaching group to share their successful classroom experiences. The interviewees' believed all teachers had something of value; therefore, others' instructional knowledge should also be made available to staff members looking for new ideas and strategies to implement. The theme of "sharing creates ownership" emerged. As Teacher #3 pointed out, "I taught two years with co-teaching in certain subject areas. I had no problem with it. They had some ideas I never thought of; I had some ideas they never thought of." Teacher #5 agreed. "It's nice to get professional development from other teachers, not just from coaches. It's good for the staff to see what others are doing in their academic area. It validates your professional status."

Teachers' responses to benefits derived from working with peers were categorized into *recurring* (five or more similar responses), *supported* (three or four similar responses), or *individual themes* (one or two responses). The number following each item indicates the number of staff members who remarked about a particular area.

Table 4.15: Interview Question #8

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Collegial support (5)	Accessibility after the PD session concludes (4)	Peer offers suggestions (2)
Peers in the classroom and understanding difficulties encountered (5)	Easy to accept professional development from peers rather than administrators (3)	Cost effective measure
Sharing of ideas, strategies, and techniques (6)	Development of cross-curricular activities (3)	Reduction of discipline issues
Opens communication (6)		Cognizant of what is being taught in other academic areas in the building
Collaboration (5)		Respect for peers
		Similar motivation and goals
		Reduces isolationism

4.1.9.16 Survey Question #8 - Importance of Peer Coaching

How has the impact of including peers in the teaching process influenced elements of school reform?

Teachers were asked to indicate how including peers in the teaching process influenced the following elements of school reform: familiarity with students/conditions; collaboration among staff; collegial support; accessibility to resources; sense of urgency for change; and common vision for the school. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Teachers responded that the inclusion of peers in the teaching process increased communication: the sharing of ideas and strategies, and supports collaboration are recurring themes highlighted during the interview session. Responses about *collaboration among staff* supported responses obtained during the interviews. The high average score of 2.6 represents a moderate to strong influence for this line item. In contrast, survey completion surrounding *collegial support* was not viewed as a strong

influence, receiving a low average score of 2.2. *Collegial support* was cited as a recurring theme by five of the 10 teachers during the interview session. The overall influence of elements referenced in survey question #8 was viewed as a moderate influence by the teachers.

Table 4.16: Survey Question #8

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot.	Avg.	Influ-ence
Familiarity with students / conditions	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	22	2.2	L / M
Collaboration among staff	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	26	2.6	M / S
Collegial support	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	22	2.2	L / M
Accessibility to resources	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	23	2.3	M
Sense of urgency for change	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	24	2.4	M
Common vision for the school	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	24	2.4	M
TOTAL SECTION												2.35	M

4.1.9.17   Interview Question #9

What do you believe is the influence of professional development activities on instruction?

"You can't say that what any of us is doing is perfect" (Teacher #2).

All interviewees cited a high influential affect of professional development on classroom instruction. The idea of sharing ideas and strategies with each other ranked high on the scale from all respondents. Teacher #1 stated, "You have more of a bag to pull from." Teachers #1 and #2 stated they take what they think apply to them and the ability levels of their students. Teachers may not have utilized the entire presentation, but they took something back with them. "No point in learning something if you're not going to use it, at least something from it" (Teacher #2). Teacher #10 added:

> Professional development gives teachers strategies to teach students of varying ability levels, help them achieve, and push them further to higher levels of thinking. Professional development allows the teacher to be more creative and do other

159

things in the classroom. It gives you a "bag of tricks" to use with students to hold their interest.

Acceptance of professional development was dependant upon the willingness of others to accept what was delivered to them. Teacher #8 believed:

> You have to take professional development you receive and put it to good use to help the kids. Professional development can improve classroom lessons; improve how you facilitate in your classroom. You can be better prepared for different ability levels of the kids.

Teacher #9 believed use of professional development activities depended on the willingness of teachers to change and utilize the knowledge and help given to them:

> If you have someone who won't change, they won't use it. If they are open, teachers will accept professional development and be more willing to change and share, more willing to adjust. It is important to use different techniques in the classroom because it helps teachers present more understandability to students, hold their attention. If you accept anything, you'll be a better teacher, especially if you taught fifteen years. You need to adjust a bit.

Teacher #3 spoke of change. "It's too easy to say you don't want to change." However, by accepting and utilizing some of the strategies presented to him by peers, he said, "I'm actually teaching, not just being a disciplinarian. I'm having fun!"

Conversations pointed to the positive influence professional development of teachers has had on the achievement level of students. The advantages students realize were highlighted in the literature review as a positive aspect derived from teachers' professional development. Teacher #5 responded:

> I never thought of different ways to help kids to read. To me it was you take something and read it. Now I consider how different students read and tailor my lessons to their ability. Because of professional development, I feel more comfortable in the reading process than I did initially.

Teacher #6 pointed out:

> When you're [teacher] learning new things and using and implementing it, you'll see a change for the better. You're teaching methods and techniques even the kids understand. Different techniques make it easier to adapt from class to class based on ability.

Teacher #4 saw more students willing to participate in activities and encountered less emphasis on controlling unacceptable behaviors.

Teacher #7 believed that as more professional development was provided to staff, there was a quiet push from parents and students for teachers to utilize various techniques.

> Parents and students see which teachers are holding back and kids are asking, "Why can't we do that?" It's not coming from administration. Teachers see others who are holding back, and now those individuals are starting to feel the pressure. Professional development and what teachers are doing in the classroom is forcing change in a very quiet, left-handed way. When teachers see progress in other classes, they will be moved to try some new things.

Table 4.17: Interview Question #9

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Variety of new ideas, strategies and techniques to utilize in the classroom (6)	Impacts student achievement (3)	People take only what they believe applies to them
	Improvement of lesson design (4)	Keeps educator current
	Holds interest of students (3)	Positive interactions among colleagues
	Influences varying student abilities (3)	Implementation of reading concepts into the math curriculum
	Technology keeps students interested (4)	Students retain information better (2)
	Elicits change in the culture of the school (4)	Teachers and students become life-long learners
		Pushes students to higher levels of thinking

4.1.9.18   Survey Question #9 - Influence on Instruction

What influence has professional development activities had on a school in reform?

Survey results from teachers indicated the influence professional development had on: enhancing student learning; adaptability for all learners; learning best practices or research based practices; change in student expectations; increased use of technology in the classroom; and requirement of accountability and school improvement. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.18: Survey Question #9

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Influ-ence
Enhancing student learning	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	26	2.6	M / S
Adaptability for all learners	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	24	2.4	M
Learning best practices / research based practices	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	22	2.2	L / M
Change in student expectations	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	22	2.2	L / M
Increased use of technology in the classroom	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	27	2.7	M / S
Requirement of accountability and school improvement	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	23	2.3	M
TOTAL SECTION												2.4	M

Increased use of technology in the classroom received the highest average score of 2.7, placing it the moderate to high range. The high survey result corresponded to interview statements made by teachers concerning technology and the technology coaches. *Enhancing student learning* follows close behind with an average of 2.6.

Teachers viewed school reform as having a low to moderate influence on *learning best practices* and *change in student expectations.* Answers reflected statements made concerning the unwillingness of some teachers to change and adapt new teaching

techniques. A low average score of 2.2 for *learning best practices* corresponded to a previous survey item completed by participants. A line item in survey question #7, which asked teachers to respond to how influential peer coaching was on learning best practices, also received a low numeric score of 2.3.

4.1.9.19 Interview Question #10

What to you would indicate that teachers have moved away from isolationism toward a collaborative effort for school improvement and establishment of a professional learning community?

Teachers indicated the greatest contributor for sharing and eliminating isolationism was establishment of team plans in the building two years prior.

Teacher #3 believed:

> Team meetings and talking to each other on a daily basis has given us a greater emphasis on getting kids to think. There is a change in the atmosphere, one that you want to get to achieve better and get them to produce better on the assessments. I never pushed the PSSA's so much. Now I start thinking about it from the start of school. The culture of the staff has changed. Achievement is set at a higher standard.

Teacher #1 cited the sharing of activities among the team she was on. Cross-curricular activities were being developed, and they have never been there before (Teachers #4, #6, and #10). "Students see how the activities they are doing build the unit from class to class" (Teacher #5).

The sharing of ides and strategies has slowly encouraged staff members to share beyond team members. Teacher #2 stated he, ". . .sees pockets of it, but some pockets need to be improved. We need more pockets and bigger pockets."

Other teachers cited increased communication between staff members that did not exist in prior years. Teacher #7 commented that special area teachers were asking her for suggestions to incorporate academics in special areas classes (i.e.: music, art, Spanish, etc.). Teacher #9 emphasized that seventh grade math teachers shared activities and lessons daily while on lunch duty. Teacher #8 remarked that younger teachers come to her for help and assistance. "Younger staff is not as experienced, so they'll ask for help, and it should bring the staff closer together." Teacher #10 mentioned, "Staff members use e-mail to inform colleagues of different websites, ideas, and technological skills that can be utilized in the classroom."

Expanded communication among staff members has also been witnessed by Teachers #5 and #6. Not only has teacher involvement in discussions at faculty meetings increased slightly, Teachers #5 and #6 have noticed teachers talking and sharing in the halls. Teacher #5 continued:

> As a content coach, more staff members are coming up to me and asking me questions. They want to know how to implement one of the strategies into their lesson or ask for clarification of something we did.

Several teachers point out that more conversation has developed between staff members of the same department. Teacher #6 said, "The department teachers are talking more to each other than in previous years. We are starting to make things standard from class to class. We didn't do that before."

Several references were directed to the collaborative work of the Science department. Science teachers have met at least once or twice a week as a group to

discuss teaching ideas, curriculum, and labs to conduct. "The science department represents the epitome of the sharing of ideas" (Teacher #7).

However, even with an increase in the amount of collaboration witnessed, Teacher #2 pointed out, "Sometimes people's personalities get in the way of collaborating. Some people are unwilling to change, no matter what."

Indication by teachers of an increase in collaboration and a move from isolationism was represented in the chart. Teachers responses were categorized into *recurring* (five or more similar responses), *supported* (three or four similar responses), or *individual themes* (one or two responses). The number following each item indicated the number of staff members who have had similar responses.

Table 4.19: Interview Question #10

Recurring Themes	Supported Themes	Individual Themes
Sharing activities and materials among team (5)	Discussions taking place at lunch (3)	Culture of staff changed (2)
Sharing activities and materials among departments (6)	Collaborative efforts seen with the science department (4)	Discussions at morning faculty meetings (2)
Team plans (7)	Sharing extending beyond the team of 5 people (3)	Discussion in hallways
Cross-curricular activities: interdisciplinary projects (7)	Efforts for standardization of curriculum (4)	Peers ask content coach for advice and help
Personal communication with colleagues (5)		Departmental meetings (2)
		Overall student achievement set at higher standard
		Non-academic teachers asking for help to implement reading strategies in their lessons
		Use of e-mail to disseminate information (2)
		Seeking help from veteran teachers
		Teachers writing across the curriculum and utilizing appropriate techniques

4.1.9.20   Survey Question #10 - Isolationism to Collaboration

What has been the impact of the following activities to move a staff from isolationism to one of collaboration and establishing professional learning communities?

Teachers indicated if the following items moved staff away from isolationism toward more collaboration: sharing of ideas and resources; discussing current professional journals/articles; working collaboratively with colleagues on student projects; curriculum changes or development; focus on student and building achievement; and utilizing activities demonstrated by coaches in classroom. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Sharing of ideas and resources was again shown to be highly influential among the teachers. Sharing was cited as a recurring theme during the interview session and in supplementary questions. Other line items were ranked in the low to moderate influence range. The administrator of the building distributed journal articles and readings to the staff in an effort to initiate self-reflection. This activity produced the lowest average score of 2.0 of all 70 survey items.

Table 4.20: Survey Question #10

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Influ-ence
Sharing of ideas and resources	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	29	2.9	S
Discussing current professional journals / articles	2	1	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	20	2.0	L
Working collaboratively with colleagues on student projects	1	3	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	24	2.4	M
Curriculum changes / development	2	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	23	2.3	M
Focus on student / building achievement	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	29	2.9	S
Utilizing activities demonstrated by coaches in classroom	3	1	2	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	21	2.1	L / M
TOTAL SECTION												2.43	M

4.1.9.21　　Ranking Six Element for School Improvement

Teachers ranked the following identified change indicators from most influential (1) to least influential (6) in regard to eliciting change in a school. Indicators for change highlighted by the researcher are: *accountability measures, school improvement, professional development, collegial coaching, enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery*, and *staff movement toward collaboration.*

An average was tabulated from the teachers' responses and a ranking order was assigned to the elements. *Enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery* was perceived to be the most influential of the six to affect positive change. This particular element was mentioned repeatedly during interviews and highlighted as being influential to teaching in survey questions.

Professional development, the essence of the research study, was demonstrated to have a strong impact on change. Responses from the teachers justified the need for professional development and the correlation to positive student achievement. *Collegial coaching* did not rank near the top.

Staff movement toward collaboration was typically illustrated to have a moderate affect on various areas of school reform and accountability during the interview process. In contrast, collaboration was ranked as the least influential element for change.

Table 4.21: Ranking Six Elements for School Improvement

Teacher #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot	Avg.	Ranking
Accountability measures	3	1	1	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	43	4.3	fifth
School improvement	2	4	5	2	1	2	5	4	6	4	35	3.5	third
Professional development	5	2	2	3	4	3	4	2	2	2	29	2.9	second
Collegial coaching	4	5	6	4	3	5	2	3	3	5	40	4.0	fourth
Enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery	1	3	4	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	19	1.9	first
Staff movement toward collaboration	6	6	3	5	5	4	3	5	1	6	44	4.4	sixth

4.1.10 Administrator Responses: Background Questions

4.1.10.1 Background Question #2

What do you perceive is the vision for the school as teachers see it?

Responses from both administrators were similar to visions expressed by the teachers. The emphasis on creating a nurturing environment where students learn and prosper was described as the essence of all endeavors. An increased emphasis on student academics was sought through establishing initiatives that positively affected school improvement and helped students attain AYP. Administrator #1, as principal of Steel City Middle School, introduced the collegial coaching model to the building. His vision for the school was to:

> Create an atmosphere where kids want to come to school and teachers understood their professional responsibilities to the kids. Once we got the atmosphere where people wanted to be there, we needed to create a culture that allowed us to move to where we focused on academics and not so much on discipline.

Discipline problems had been an issue in prior years. Teachers have felt the pressure of devoting much of their class time to extinguishing inappropriate behaviors. Current emphasis is to create a climate for learning.

The vision of Administrator #2 placed an emphasis on academics and increasing scores of the PSSA. His vision statement has been to, "Concentrate on areas of obvious weaknesses identified in the PSSA's and get teachers on-line in the direction to improve our students for the PSSA."

Responses from both administrators were similar to visions identified by the teachers. Both groups described an increased emphasis to create a nurturing environment where students learn and prosper.

4.1.10.2　　Background Question #3

How has the school's culture changed the three years that content coaches provided professional development to the staff?

The administrators maintained the culture has moved in a positive direction during the last three years. Their responses were similar in nature to many of the teacher responses. Neither administrator observed the negativity spoken about by Teacher #2.

Administrator #1 saw the change as a "slow change". "Content coaches did change instruction, but we still need to change the mind set of the staff." Reference to his vision for the building emerged when he spoke:

> Our emphasis or focus is on academics. Because of the persistence with the content coaches, meeting weekly and meeting in faculty meetings, I think that our continued focus, our goals within the building, started to take root within the building and people saw what we represent and what we need to do.

Administrator #2 spoke of a change similar to the new direction spoken about by

Administrator #1. He believed teachers were headed in the same direction:

> I believe that focus was the biggest benefit of the staff development. They [teachers] were no longer on their own or traveling in their own direction. They had a direction to go, there was a focus, and a structure that wasn't there in the past was now established.

4.1.10.3 Background Question #4

What do you think the connection is between a school's culture and student achievement?

Consensus by administrators spoke to the strong connection that existed between

a school's culture and student achievement. Administrator #1 stated, "If teachers don't

have a focus, they don't want to work together, then the culture won't change." He

believed that if the culture did not change, student achievement would not progress.

Administrator #2 believed it is necessary to create an environment for learning.

> If students are nurtured, comfortable, and safe, students will do better on state tests and in classroom academics.

Responses of the administrators paralleled responses of the teachers. All teacher

and administrator interviewees believed culture and student achievement go "hand in

hand". "If the school's culture is positive, nurturing students to value education,

emphasizing academic success, a growth in student achievement and success can be

realized" (Teacher #1).

4.1.11   Administrator Responses: Research and Survey Questions

4.1.11.1   Interview Question #1

What are the top three responsibilities of classroom teachers?

Administrators were asked to relate what they believed to be the top three responsibilities of classroom teachers. *Unanimous themes* were mentioned by both administrators *and individual themes* were mentioned by only one.

Table 4.22:   Interview Question #1

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
	Provide a safe, nurturing environment
	Develop relationships with students
	Organization of material
	Students have clear picture of class objectives
	Development of information for students in various ways
	Develop quality instruction with a variety of instructional techniques

Although responses were listed as individual themes, all six responsibilities cited have been essential if instruction was to become relevant for students.   The six individual themes quoted by the administrators spoke to the vision each perceived for the middle school.   Their responses of providing a safe environment and developing quality instruction were concurrent with the recurring themes mentioned by the teachers.   The administrators did not mention *discipline*, a recurring theme in the teacher group, as a responsibility of classroom teachers.

4.1.11.2   Survey Question #1 - Teacher Responsibilities

How influential are the following in creation of a competent teacher?

Administrators were asked to respond if the following influences created competent teachers: proficiency in delivery of instruction; classroom management; collaboration with colleagues; dedication to student achievement; restructuring activities for all students; and use of best practices. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column. Each line item was deemed to be a strong influence except *collaboration with colleagues,* receiving a low influence level.

Table 4.23: Survey Question #1

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Proficiency in delivery of instruction	3	3	6	3	S
Classroom management	3	3	6	3	S
Collaboration with colleagues	2	2	4	2	L
Dedication to teacher achievement	3	3	6	3	S
Restructuring activities for all students	3	3	6	3	S
Use of best practices	3	3	6	3	S
TOTAL SECTION				2.83	S

4.1.11.3　　Interview Question #2

Is reflection on teaching practice useful? In what ways?

Administrators agreed it was essential for teachers to reflect on teaching practices so techniques could be improved upon. Administrator #1 expanded his thinking to explain, "Reflection is useful in any practice. Reflection makes you think about what you've done that was successful, and things that were not successful. Reflection is a way to better yourself."

Administrator #1 explained the need for administrators and students to reflect as well, so they, too, could better themselves.

Administrator #2 explained further with the statement:

> Reflection is the only way to improve and recognize weaknesses, see what is working, because if the kids are failing you did not reach them. Something you did is not correct. You need to reflect on how you delivered the information to better reach the children. If kids don't get the information, we as an educator are doing something wrong, and we need to change how we deliver the information.

Table 4.24: Interview Question #2

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
Recognition of strengths	Keeps you current
Recognition of weaknesses that need to be improved upon	Professional readings encourages teachers to reflect about their teaching on their own

4.1.11.4   Survey Question #2 - Reflection on Teaching

How much influence has personal reflection of the following impacted a change in instruction delivery?

The survey asked administrators to determine if teacher reflection of the following influenced a change in instructional delivery: change in teaching philosophy/ willingness to change; restructuring daily repertoire to include best practices; increased focus on student achievement; making accommodations for varying student abilities; proficiency in delivering quality instruction; and recognition of the urgency to change. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

The administrators responded that reflection had a strong influence on each item in the survey. Administrator #1, who observed teachers formally, did not witness an overall *restructuring of instructional activities to include best practices*. As stated, "It's

been a slow process, but more and more people were beginning to utilize the skills given to them. I can only hope that more people will get on board."

Table 4.25: Survey Question #2

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Change in teaching philosophy / willingness to change	3	3	6	3	S
Restructuring daily repertoire to include best practices	2	3	5	2.5	M
Increased focus on student achievement	3	3	6	3	S
Making accommodations for varying student abilities	3	3	6	3	S
Proficiency in delivering quality instruction	3	3	6	3	S
Recognition of the urgency to change	3	3	6	3	S
TOTAL SECTION				2.92	S

4.1.11.5   Interview Question #3

Has professional development been helpful? In what ways?

Each administrator lamented on the usefulness of professional development for themselves and staff at the middle school.   Both administrators agreed that the professional development they personally participated in helped to structure and mold initiatives at the middle school.

When speaking about professional development for the middle school staff, Administrator #1 stated, "The collaboration necessary to move the building forward is beginning to develop." However, the conversation continued with an explanation:

> The faculty has not developed to the full expectations of the content coach initiative and more work needs to be accomplished. There were bumps in the road at the beginning to overcome with the staff's acceptance of the model. Coaches need to feel less hesitant and recognize their own capabilities and capacity to make a difference.

Administrator #1 saw evidence that, "Things have changed and it's [the culture] more instructionally driven." Evidence of usefulness witnessed by Administrator #1 has been classroom lessons, e-mail correspondence, expanded use of technology, and increased hands-on activities and interdisciplinary projects.

The administrators agreed that professional development in the middle school resulted in positive results. Administrator #2 stated, "On a personal level, I can tell students and parents what we expect and where we are going." *Unanimous themes* mentioned by both administrators combined the vision of the school with creating a better student, teacher, or administrator.

Table 4.26: Interview Question #3

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
See evidence that professional development has been helpful in vision for student achievement	Helps me understand different theories of education
Makes a better educator	Helps with communication with parents and students
	Staff working collaboratively
	See evidence of utilization of teaching techniques in the classroom

4.1.11.6   Survey Question #3 - Professional Development

How much of an influence has participation in professional development activities impacted the following?

Administrators remarked if teacher participation in professional development activities impacted: delivery of instructional skills; adaptability of lessons to a challenging student body; willingness to change classroom procedures; rejuvenation of self and development of a positive attitude; development of interactive lessons for students; collaboration with colleagues; and increased use of technology in the classroom. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no*

175

influence was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Administrators' answers about the impact professional development had on *collaboration between teachers* was not recognized to have the strong influence level identified by the teacher group. The average score of 2 placed this item at the bottom of the list. The highest scores were obtained in *delivery of instructional skills* and the *development of interactive lessons*. Each administrator witnessed an increase in the number of cross-curricular activities taking place in the building along with an increase in communication. Administrator #1 remarked, "It was wonderful to walk into a team plan and see teachers sharing ideas and working on technology together. They are helping each other."

The result of survey question #3 was the second lowest of the ten survey questions completed by administration. Administrator #2 was not a direct supervisor of the teachers and stated many of his responses were from what he has heard from teachers and the few things he has seen. Administrator #1, a direct supervisor, was more cognizant of activities occurring in the classroom. Direct and indirect observation of teachers might account for the differences in scores between the two administrators.

Table 4.27: Survey Question #3

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Delivery of instructional skills	3	3	6	3	S
Adaptability of lessons to challenging student body	2	3	5	2.5	M
Willingness to change classroom procedures	2	3	5	2.5	M
Rejuvenation of self and development of a positive attitude	3	2	5	2.5	M
Development of interactive lessons for students	3	3	6	3	S
Collaboration with colleagues	2	2	4	2	L
Increased use of technology in the classroom	2	3	5	2.5	M
TOTAL SECTION				2.57	M / S

4.1.11.7 Interview Question #4

Has accountability and school improvement played a role in structuring professional development activities? In what ways?

Administrator #1 believed accountability has been the driving force that has changed about 80% of what is being done in schools today. "The role of administrators and teachers has changed, and I think that a lot of that is because of accountability." Administrator #1 explained, "The focus is on student development and testing and structuring activities to individual weaknesses. Data allow us to focus on group weaknesses."

Administrator #2 agreed that accountability has made educators more responsible than in prior years. "Accountability has had a positive effect because there is a focus on student development and testing and structuring activities to individual weaknesses."

Responses from administrators paralleled teachers' responses concerning the influence of accountability and school improvement in the structuring of professional development activities. Accountability has caused schools to not look like the traditional schools many individuals have been subjected to in prior years. Administrators saw an emphasis on the use of data to identify strengths and weaknesses and to make changes where necessary. Teachers identified the use of data as a supported theme, not one that was mentioned by half the group. Teachers believed accountability referred to increased focus for students to pass the PSSA test.

Table 4.28: Interview Question #4

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
Use of new strategies an techniques	Changing the mind set of the staff toward change
Use of data	Identify weaknesses of the group
Makes educators responsible for success in the building	More focus on PSSA testing

4.1.11.8   Survey Question #4 - Accountability and School Improvement

What influence has the following had on an increased emphasis on professional development for teachers?

Administrators reflected on the influence the follow has on professional development: national accountability; district/building accountability; emphasis on increased PSSA scores; and the middle school's position on the state warning list. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

A significant difference emerged between administrators' and teachers' responses. Teachers stated that an *emphasis on increased PSSA scores* was a stronger influence, receiving a value of 2.8. The administrators' average for this item was 2.5, indicating a moderate influence. Administrator #1 believed, "Accountability and school improvement influences everything we were doing. I hoped PSSA scores would increase. It was because of accountability that we did what we did."

Table 4.29: Survey Question #4

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
National accountability	3	3	6	3	S
District / building accountability	3	3	6	3	S
Emphasis on increased PSSA scores	2	3	5	2.5	M
Middle school on state warning list	3	3	6	3	S
TOTAL SECTION				2.88	S

4.1.11.9   Interview Question #5

What contributed to your professional development?

Each administrator identified the "need to know" as a personal motivator to engage in any professional development activities. A unanimous theme for administrators, internal motivation, was only discussed by two of the ten teachers interviewed and was listed as an individual theme. Teacher #2 showed internal motivation through the statement, "I continually read and participate in graduate classes to expand my knowledge."

Administrator #1 commented, "I lacked a structure for professional development while in the classroom and this was my motivator." Both administrators participated in graduate classes, but Administrator #1 expanded himself further in doctoral studies.

Because Administrator #2 had not recently been involved in graduate classes and relied on colleagues to supply information essential to his position, he has found the work of the content coaches very beneficial in regard to expectations for students and communicating the goals of the middle school to parents. He related, "I place myself in the role of the teacher in the classroom and decide what it is I need in order to make my students successful. That's the information and activities I look for."

Table 4.30: Interview Question #5

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
Need to know: intrinsic desire to learn	Graduate classes and doctoral studies
Attendance at conferences	Lack of personal professional development
	Responses of teachers
	Activities demonstrated by coaches
	Working alongside teachers in staff development
	Placed myself in the role of a teacher in the classroom
	Reflection of individual performance in the classroom

4.1.11.10   Survey Question #5 - Contributions to Professional Development

What influence has the following had on personal professional development?

Administrators indicated if **teacher** participation in the following impacts professional development: collegial coaching; team plans; professional meetings/collaboration with colleagues outside the district; college courses; individually sought after resources; and establishment of learning communities in the building. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Personal "need to know" drove the administrators to seek out professional development and to continue their quest to learn. Administrators' responses to *collegial coaching* and *team plans* were their perceptions about the impact the two have on the teaching staff.

Question #5 obtained the lowest total average score from the administrators when comparing results of all ten survey questions.

Table 4.31: Survey Question #5

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Collegial coaching	2	2	4	2	L
Team plans	3	2	5	2.5	M
Professional meetings / collaboration with colleagues outside district	2	3	5	2.5	M
College courses	3	2	5	2.5	M
Individually sought after resources	3	3	6	3	S
Establishment of learning communities in the building	2	2	4	2	L
TOTAL SECTION				2.42	M

4.1.11.11   Interview Question #6

Has professional development activities demonstrated by colleagues been an influence on your teaching? In what ways?

This question was rephrased for the administrators to read: Have you noticed any changes in the instructional delivery of the teaching staff as a result of the work done by the content coaches?

Both administrators stated there have been changes in the staff, but the level of intensity and acceptance has varied from teacher to teacher. Administrator #2 did not directly observe teachers but stated he, ". . .has heard about the positive things being done in the classroom by both teachers and the administrators I work with."

Administrator #1, as an observer of the teachers, has witnessed many of the activities demonstrated by the coaches used in the classroom. Graphic organizers, KWL charts, enhanced vocabulary, word walls, writing prompts, mobiles, and increased use of technology are a few initiatives cited by Administrator #1. He believed:

> Lack of open-mindedness has made some teachers reluctant to implement some of the strategies into their daily routine. I hope that the positive things I have seen flood out those folks who are negative, either outwardly or inwardly. This is part of the process. But, I do see progress being made.

Many staff members stated they would have attained more from the faculty [content coaches] meetings had they been departmentalized rather than generalized for the staff. When Administrator #1 was questioned about their responses, he stated:

> Although there is merit to both ways, I did not see enough "bang for the buck" when done departmentally as I would have liked. By providing professional development building wide, everybody was getting the same information and there was something a person can use and fit it to their content area after each time they

met. As a professional it is a professional's obligation to be able to generalize things and break it down for one's particular content area.

When the individualized grouping process employed by technology coaches was explained to Administrator #1, he was glad to hear technology coaches progressed to this point and made the model more functional. "Change takes three to five years to impact a culture. I'm glad to hear they are looking at it structurally in order to get more benefit from it [coaching model]."

Table 4.32: Interview Question #6

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
Some reluctant individuals hesitant to use techniques demonstrated	Progressively more people got on board, outwardly or inwardly
Influenced the majority of the staff	Lack of open-mindedness
	Saw evidence of techniques used in the classroom
	Teachers' responses to me about what they were doing in the classroom with techniques they were shown

4.1.11.12   Survey Question #6 - Influence of Peer Coaching

How influential has peer coaching been on a change in classroom instructional delivery?

Administrators were asked to respond to the influence peer coaching had on: a change in teaching style; willingness to implement best practices; learning to adapt to a challenging student body; move from isolationism to collaboration; and integration of technology in instructional delivery. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

The administrators have witnessed *an increase in technology use* in the classroom as promethean boards were installed in the teachers' rooms. The device has aided in

instruction and delivery of instructional skills and has kept students engaged in the lesson. As previously mentioned, Administrator #1has been the direct observer of classroom techniques during formal observations. This administrator has witnessed a change in instruction, but not to the level desired. Of the five items surveyed, a *change in teaching style* received a moderate influence. Overall, the total average results of survey question #6 ranked as one of the top two indicators for change.

Table 4.33: Survey Question #6

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Change teaching style	2	3	5	2.5	M
Willingness to implement best practices	3	3	6	3	S
Learning to adapt to a challenging student body	3	3	6	3	S
Move from isolationism to collaboration	3	3	6	3	S
Integration of technology in instructional delivery	3	3	6	3	S
TOTAL SECTION				2.9	S

4.1.11.13   Interview Question #7

What do you believe are the advantages or disadvantages of peer coaching?

There was agreement between both administrators that peer coaching prompted positive change toward student achievement. "Peer coaching is a non-threatening way to provide information by individuals who are not administrators" (Administrator #2). Administrator #1 added, "There are other staff members who see them [coaches] as a quasi-administrator and are cynical toward the process." Teachers and administrators are unanimous that an advantage to a peer coaching model is colleagues' knowledge of students and conditions of the district or school.

> Using staff members in the building can be an advantage and disadvantage depending on the personalities of the coaches

183

themselves. Jealousy and resentment toward the process appears
if coaches develop an elitist attitude.

This statement made by Administrator #1, a recurring theme from the teacher group, spoke to the animosity and resentment that might emerge concerning peer coaches. As Teacher #9 mentioned, "They were not open-minded, would not take others into consideration, and felt their way was the only and best way." Administrator #2 recognized, "Staff members may say, 'I'm better qualified. What can they possibly teach me?' "

The administrators did not have any unanimous themes in the disadvantages listed; however, their responses were found in all three themes of the teachers' responses.

Table 4.34a: Advantages of Peer Coaching

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
Colleagues are in the building	Non-threatening
Peers do not evaluate you: they are not an administrator	Majority of staff uses the same techniques
	Sharing and learning same techniques for use in all classrooms in the building
	Peers sharing same classroom difficulties
	Informal atmosphere
	More communication among staff
	Similar types of students
	People are going through it with you

Table 4.34b: Disadvantages of Peer Coaching

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
	Elitist group: quasi-administrative role
	Dissension if not handled appropriately
	Jealousy
	Resentment
	How peer coaches present themselves
	Coaches who do not elicit trust, respect, and trustworthiness
	People are in the building with the coaches

4.1.11.14   Survey Question #7 - Effects of Peer Coaching

How influential has peer coaching been on the staff's perceptions?

Administrators were asked to respond if peer coaching influenced the perceptions

of staff in regard to the following: networking and collaboration; learning best practices;

obtaining Act 48 credit; enhancement of instructional delivery; communication with

colleagues who instruct similar students; colleagues familiar with conditions of

district/building; accessibility/not a one time occurrence; and attitude of the staff. *Strong*

influence was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no*

influence was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was

indicated in the last column.

Table 4.35: Survey Question #7

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Networking and collaboration	3	3	6	3	S
Learning best practices	3	3	6	3	S
Obtaining Act 48 credit	3	2	5	2.5	M
Enhancement of instructional delivery	3	3	6	3	S
Communication with colleagues who instruct similar students	3	2	5	2.5	M
Colleagues familiar with conditions of district / building	3	3	6	3	S
Accessibility / not a one time occurrence	3	3	6	3	S
Attitude of staff	2	3	5	2.5	M
TOTAL SECTION				2.81	S

Obtaining Act 48 credit, communication with colleagues who instruct similar

students and *attitude of staff* were the only three areas where teachers and administrators

concurred that a moderate influence existed for a coaching model. Each administrator

ranked many items in the survey as having a strong influence in relation to the coaching

model than did the teaching staff. Teachers ranked *enhancement of instructional delivery*

(2.1 average) and *colleagues familiar with conditions of the district and building* (2.2

average) as having a low to moderate influence. In comparison, the administrators rank both of these items as possessing a strong influence.

4.1.11.15   Interview Question #8

What is the importance of including peers in the teaching process?

A reference was made by both administrators to the advantages of a peer coaching model cited in the previous research question. Administrator #2 referenced his response about reflection in the teaching processes. He maintained:

> Working with peers gives you the opportunity to reflect with others on your teaching style in a non-threatening way and bounce things off each other. You can talk to someone who is not a supervisor and see what has worked for that individual in the past, or currently, and make the changes necessary for change.

Administrator #1 recognized, "Some people find administrators non-approachable and if they have the ability to communicate with those going through it with you, people are more willing to share and talk about areas of difficulty and concern."

Expanded communication and sharing of ideas were themes mentioned frequently by teachers and administrators.

Table 4.36: Interview Question #8

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
Non-threatening	People going through it with you
Not an administrator	They know the kind of students you teach
Opens communication and sharing of ideas	Gives an opportunity to reflect on one's classroom practices
	Ability to make changes to daily routine
	Younger teachers more enthusiastic, veteran teachers more reluctant to get on board

4.1.11.16   Survey Question #8 - Importance of Peer Coaching

How has the impact of including peers in the teaching process influenced elements of school reform?

Administrators were asked to indicate how including peers in the teaching process influenced the following elements of school reform: familiarity with students/conditions; collaboration among staff; collegial support; accessibility to resources; sense of urgency for change; and common vision for the school. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

This survey question attained the highest average score of the ten survey questions completed by administration. Their results were a stark comparison to the average score of 2.35 from teacher participants. Administrators' responses demonstrated their belief that the elements listed have been more influential in school reform than the teachers believe. Teachers ranked the majority of these line items in the moderate range; where as, administrators ranked the items as having a strong influence.

Statements made by participants in regard to the school's vision demonstrated a common theme, even with a difference in the influence level. The number of individuals participating from each group might have influenced the difference in average scores.

Table 4.37: Survey Question #8

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Familiarity with students / conditions	3	3	6	3	S
Collaboration among staff	3	3	6	3	S
Collegial support	3	3	6	3	S
Accessibility to resources	3	3	6	3	S
Sense of urgency for change	2	3	5	2.5	M
Common vision for the school	3	3	6	3	S
TOTAL SECTION				2.92	S

4.1.11.17   Interview Question #9

What do you believe is the influence of professional development activities on instruction?

The influence of professional development activities on instruction was described as a "tremendous effect" by both administrators. Administrator #1 believed:

> When professional development activities are demonstrated to the staff, it validates what they as teachers do and makes them feel good about themselves. It's a mind-set, thinking about instruction and the activities.

Each administrator remarked on the individual reflection that occurred when teachers witness procedures and strategies new to them, or when they have been reminded of ones forgotten. "Professional development helps you make adjustments to your daily routine" (Administrator #1).

Each administrator believes everyone can take something from a professional development session. Some strategies may be used as is, while others need to be "tweaked" to meet the needs of individual students. "You're not working in isolation; you're working in combination" (Administrator #1).

An administrative consensus existed in the belief that what teachers do and learn in the classroom affects students and influences better results on the PSSA test. Administrator #1 felt:

> As kids use highlighting, note taking techniques, and other techniques, they begin   to feel better about themselves. If they didn't have good comprehension, they were   given   tools   to organize, make a little more sense of the material. If they see success, they are more motivated to do a little bit more.

Administrator #2 stated, "I would hope we better met the needs of our students. . ."
by providing teachers with new ways to delivery skills; however, he, ". . . can't say
definitely."

Table 4.38: Interview Question #9

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
Tremendous influence	Students feel more confident of individual skills
Results in reflection of teaching practices	Makes teacher feel good about themselves
Increase in PSSA scores	Validates what a teacher does
Organization	Saw effective tools used in the classroom
Understand the culture of our students	Better met the needs of varied student abilities
	Strengthen areas of weakness in classroom delivery

4.1.11.18   Survey Question #9 - Influence on Instruction

What influence has professional development activities had on a school in reform?

Survey results from administrators indicated the influence professional
development has had on: enhancing student learning; adaptability for all learners;
learning best practices/research based practices; change in student expectations; increased
use of technology in the classroom; and requirement of accountability and school
improvement. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the
value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an
influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.39: Survey Question #9

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Enhancing student learning	3	3	6	3	S
Adaptability for all learners	2	3	5	2.5	M
Learning best practices / research based practices	3	3	6	3	S
Change in student expectations	2	2	4	2	L
Increased use of technology in the classroom	3	3	6	3	S
Requirement of accountability and school improvement	2	3	5	2.5	M
TOTAL SECTION				2.67	M / S

Change in student expectations scored the lowest in both the teacher and administrator group when contemplating the impact professional development had on school reform. Administrators noted the impact a teacher's professional development had on instruction influences changed. Administrator #1 remarked:

> Slowly teachers have been changing and utilizing the activities presented to them, but teachers need to reach a comfort level to establish these activities into their daily instruction. Many teachers have adopted the techniques shown to them over the course of the three years, but change is slow.

The highest numeric indicator from both groups was the line item *increased use of technology in the classroom.* Teachers and administrators embraced the value of utilizing technology for instructional purposes and holding students' interest.

4.1.11.19   Interview Question #10

> *What to you would indicate that teachers have moved away from isolationism toward a collaborative effort for school improvement and establishment of a professional learning community?*

Administrators #1 and #2 believed establishment of the team plan, along with faculty meetings twice a month, helped to expand communication among the staff, resulting in a more collaborative effort between teachers to share ideas and resources. The team plan initiative was cited as a recurring theme from the teachers. As a group, teachers found the team plan extremely useful to share activities and resources between the team and within the department. Administrator #2 recognized that:

> Team plans gave five individuals the opportunity to work collectively in education and in the control of difficult students. A team of teachers attacked problems as a group and gave the

means to meet with parents collectively to deliver useful and non-biased information to the parent. Everyone is on the same page.

Administrator #1 saw the team plan as an initial step to sharing and collaborating. Collaboration among the staff was beginning to emerge and communication was extending to all areas of the building. Administrator #1 added:

I heard the discussions. Now people are talking about individual students and classroom strategies and techniques. They are looking to create cross-curricular activities. These are things that never happened before in the school.

Both administrators related that there was a calmer atmosphere in the building which focuses on student achievement and success and not on discipline as it had been in the past.

Table 4.40: Interview Question #10

Unanimous Themes	Individual Themes
Team plans effectively used	Cross-curricular activities
Communication among staff	Atmosphere changed
Working collaboratively	Saw teachers watching their colleagues
Meeting with parents as a team to discuss student issues	Everyone on the same page about a student or situation
	Heard discussions among teachers
	Sharing of resources and ideas among departmental staff
	Sharing of promethean board and activities between individuals on and not on the same team

4.1.11.20   Survey Question #10 - Move from Isolationism to Collaboration

What has been the impact of the following activities to move a staff from isolationism to one of collaboration and establishing professional learning communities?

Administrators responded to the influence they believed the following had on moving teachers toward collaboration: sharing of ideas and resources; discussing current professional journals/articles; working collaboratively with colleagues on student projects; curriculum changes/development; focus on student/building achievement; and utilizing activities demonstrated by coaches in classroom. *Strong influence* was given the value 3, *moderate influence* was given the value 2, and *no influence* was given the value 1. An average was calculated and an influence level was indicated in the last column.

Table 4.41: Survey Question #10

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Influence
Sharing of ideas and resources	3	2	5	2.5	M
Discussing current professional journals / articles	2	3	5	2.5	M
Working collaboratively with colleagues on student projects	3	2	5	2.5	M
Curriculum changes / development	2	3	5	2.5	M
Focus on student / building achievement	3	3	6	3	S
Utilizing activities demonstrated by coaches in classroom	3	3	6	3	S
TOTAL SECTION				2.67	M / S

The only area teachers and administrators were in agreement was the *focus on student and building achievement,* established as a strong influence for a move from isolationism to collaboration. Elements of consensus emerged through administrators' and teachers' unanimous themes of team plans, expanded communication, and collaborative work.

The biggest contrast between administrators and teachers lay in the *utilization of activities demonstrated by coaches in the classroom.* Administrators viewed this element as a strong influence; teachers cited it as a low to moderate influence. The second difference occurred in the statement *sharing of ideas and resources*. The teachers ranked this element with a 2.9 average, indicating a strong influence; where as,

administrators saw this item as a moderate influence. The difference in administrator responses might be contributed to the direct and indirect observations on the part of each administrator.

4.1.11.21   Ranking Six Elements for School Improvement

Administrators ranked the following identified indicators from most influential (1) to least influential (6) to elicit a cultural change for school improvement: *accountability measures; school improvement; professional development; collegial coaching; enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery;* and *staff movement toward collaboration.*

Responses from two administrators have created a tie between the top three elements and the bottom two elements.   A comparison of the numbers showed a contrast in several of the areas. The only item both administrators ranked similarly was the influence of content coaches on school improvement.

The basis of this research, a *coaching model*, was ranked fifth out of six elements that might impact school improvement. A collegial coaching model was determined to be fourth according to the teachers. Responses from each group encompassing collegial coaching were comparably similar and ranked coaching as possessing limited influence on school improvement.

The only element both groups perceived as having the least influence on a school in reform was *staff movement toward collaboration.* Teachers and administrators ranked this element at the bottom of the list with the numerical value of six.

Table 4.42: Ranking Six Elements for School Improvement

Administrator #	1	2	Total	Avg.	Ranking
Accountability measures	3	2	5	2.5	Tied 1, 2, 3
School improvement	6	1	7	3.5	fourth
Professional development	2	3	5	2.5	Tied 1, 2, 3
Collegial coaching	5	5	10	5	Tied 5, 6
Enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery	1	4	5	2.5	Tied 1, 2, 3
Staff movement toward collaboration	4	6	10	5	Tied 5, 6

4.1.12 Summary

Responses from ten teachers and two administrators interviewed in the study illustrated individual beliefs and acceptance of a coaching model at Steel Town Middle School. The ten teachers were representative of thirty-five academic educators who instructed mathematics, reading, social studies, science, and language. An analysis of interviewees' responses assisted to construct a generalization of the teachers' acceptance of a coaching model in regard to the entire staff.

The background questions provided information on the school's vision, accountability measures, and school improvement endeavors. It was noted that minimal success in student achievement acted as a motivator for change. Questioning further confirmed the necessity for individuals to reflect on teaching practices to positively impact student achievement.

The responsive interview process with flexible questioning design allowed for open discussion between the researcher and interviewees. Qualitative inquiry via the interviews combined with quantitative data through survey completion identified the

impact a coaching model has had on providing professional development to staff and an educator's willingness to change classroom instruction. There was recognition by all interviewees that a coaching model was an effective method to provide professional development to colleagues; however, positive and negative outcomes emerge dependent upon acceptance of the coaches. Responses showed that the influence a coaching model had on change was influenced by the mindset and willingness of staff to accept change. Participants' responses demonstrated that the influence of the technology coaches appeared to be more influential on instruction than skills demonstrated by the academic coaches.

The data collected provide the researcher with validation of the school's initiative for a coaching model. Positive aspects of the model demonstrated the influence professional development provided by colleagues had on a change in instructional delivery and teaching strategies. Collaboration and the sharing of ideas, skills, and strategies, calculated to be a strong motivator for change, were repeatedly mentioned by interviewees as a benefit derived from a coaching model.

Negative comments addressed deficiencies in the model which needed to be corrected if sustainable change in the school's culture was to be realized. Data surrounding the overall success of the academic coaching model at the middle school was shown to have a low to moderate influence on a cultural change in the staff.

Interviewees stated they found it difficult to rank the identified change elements, for they believed all were important in school improvement. The researcher assumed that pressure and implications of accountability at the national, state and local levels would be

a major influence for opening the door for change. Administrators placed this element near the top of the ranking list; however, teachers placed this element at the bottom.

At the top of the ranking of elements for change from both teachers and administrators was the influence enhancement of classroom activities and instructional strategies has on student achievement and school improvement, followed closely behind by the influence of professional development. The participants in this study collectively placed a collegial coaching model, the basis for this research, near the bottom of the one through six ranking of elements that influence school improvement.

Results from the interviews and survey data began to create a clearer picture of the staffs' perceptions, surrounding the coaching model at the middle school. Data provided evidence concerning elements viewed as influential in school improvement and those that were in need of restructuring. Analysis of responses placed teachers at Steel Town Middle School in Barth's (1990) second descriptor of educators: teachers who are quite able and willing to continuously scrutinize and reflect on what they do and make use of their insights to effect periodic change. Interviewees' responses demonstrated staff were bordering on the third descriptor and were able and willing to make their practices accessible to other adults. From an analysis of responses given, the teachers' willingness to share was currently situated with members of their team or department. The academic coaches have not fostered a willingness to share at faculty meetings, where as, it was noted that the technology coaches have been.

5. CHAPTER

5.1 Discussion, Recommendation and Reflection

5.1.1 Overview of the Research

"Culture" is loosely defined as "how we do things around here". It consists of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that both describe and guide the ways in which people interact (Crane, 2002, p. 206).

Changing the culture of a school could be a daunting task for any organization as it challenges the foundation of what has always been or what has become comfortable to members of the organization. The foundation of NCLB has challenged educators to look and work outside the comfort zone they have known for years when designated as "in need of improvement". Change becomes a necessity for the betterment of the organization when a school has been placed on the warning list. Initial steps to create a sense of urgency and vision of what the future could be supplied the groundwork for restructuring. Leadership has been altered from a top-down to a bottom-up configuration as teachers are asked to take on more responsibilities for building improvement and success. Sarason (1996) claimed, " The evidence is clear that although it is true that the principal is the gatekeeper in regard to the change effort, the ultimate outcome depends on when and how teachers become part of the decision to initiate change" (p. 5).

Senge (1999) and Fullan (1998) are among authors that have linked a culture that supports and encourages reform to successful teaching and learning. The works of

Showers (1985) and Showers and Bruce (1996) have shown that utilizing the expertise of staff has elicited development of a cultural change that allowed co-workers to feel they were stakeholders in the process. The *Five Pillars of Change* identified by Schawn and Spady (1998, p. 22-23) – purpose, vision, ownership, capacity, and support - are essential for effective professional development activities to be established in the building culture. The review of literature from various authors cited the components of professional development necessary if a bottom-up reform utilizing a coaching model was to be successful and effective.

Initiatives might be provided to educators; however, whether skills and strategies were actually implemented in the classroom was dependent upon where individuals were in their acknowledgement and acceptance of change. Barth (1990, pp. 53, 54) characterized three groups of educators a school possesses for professional development to impact school improvement:

1. Teachers who are unable and unwilling to critically examine their teaching practice, and unable to have other adults – teachers, principals, and adults – examine what and how they are teaching.

2. Teachers who are quite able and willing to continually scrutinize and reflect on what they do and make use of their insights to effect periodic change.

3. Teachers who are able and willing to critically scrutinize their practice and who are quite and able and willing, even desirous, of making their practice accessible to other adults.

Teachers admitted that constructive collaboration led to improved instruction rather than working in isolation (Schmoker, 2006, p. 25). The establishment of a collegial coaching model at the middle school was designed to allow collaboration and extend avenues for the sharing of ideas, strategies, and knowledge. Constructing a team of teachers to provide professional development to the staff was the foundation for the

creation of learning communities. Schmoker (2006, p. 109) states that, "Learning communities encourage teachers to recognize and share the best of what they already know."

The six elements that drove the study and review of literature have been identified by participants as possessing some measure of influence on change at the middle school; the move from isolationism toward collaboration. The effectiveness of the coaching model toward establishment of learning communities was discussed in the interview and survey questions. The data showed some indicators were more influential than others for eliciting a cultural change and expanding the sharing of techniques. The value derived from a collegial model when a cultural change was desired was revealed through participants' responses. Analysis of interview and survey data identified the effectiveness of collegial coaching at the middle school and teachers' acceptance of the model. Respondents' answers determined which of Barth's three descriptors of educators staff at the middle school were situated.

5.1.2 Purpose of the Study

> Lifelong learners actively solicit opinions and ideas from others. They don't make the assumption that they know it all or that most other people have little to contribute. Just the opposite, they believe that with the right approach, they can learn from anyone under almost any circumstance. (Kotter, 1996, p. 182)

The purpose of the study was to explore the transformation of an isolated culture to a collaborative culture through use of a collegial coaching model as the initiator of change. Showers and Bruce (1996) indicated that empowering staff members in the delivery of professional development, an element identified as essential to eliciting

cultural change, established ownership in a school-wide reform movement and created more collaborative efforts among teachers. Kotter (1996, p. 183) believed that to support lifelong learning, an individual must establish:

- *Risk taking*: Willingness to push oneself out of comfort zones

- *Humble self-reflection*: Honest assessment of successes and failures, especially the latter

- *Solicitation of opinions*: Aggressive collection of information and ideas from others

- *Careful listening*: Propensity to listen to others

- *Openness to new ideas*: Willingness to view life with open mind

Steel Town Middle School was placed on the warning list because low PSSA scores did not illustrate adequate yearly progress in student achievement. Central and building administrators acknowledged that change was a necessity. Supplying staff with support and additional ideas, teaching strategies, and techniques, professional development was the impetus for change. Utilizing a coaching model was novel to the district and building. The effectiveness of a coaching model to change teachers' instructional delivery was explored by analyzing quantitative and qualitative data obtained through survey completion and interviews. Research subsequently unveiled if teacher participants personalized Kotter's (1996) five descriptors of life-long learners and categorized individuals interviewed into one of the groups of educators described by Barth (1990).

5.1.3   Overview of the Methodology and Procedures

A combination of two sources was utilized to collect quantitative and qualitative data on six elements for school improvement highlighted in the literature review and identified by the researcher as a framework for change at the middle school: *accountability measures, school improvement, professional development, collegial coaching, enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery,* and *staff movement toward collaboration.* Participants' responses to interview and survey questions highlighted each element.

The semi-structure interview process known as the Responsive interviewing Model (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 36) allowed for flexibility in questioning and the ability to ask additional questions for clarification. Survey completion permitted the addition of 70 items to validate interviewees' responses. The survey data was used in conjunction with the qualitative data to formulate more solid conclusions about the six identified elements for school improvement. The combination of oral and written responses also helped to identify receptive teachers willing to change and incorporate demonstrated ideas and strategies into their daily repertoire of instructional delivery.

The ten teachers chosen to be interviewed for the study were at the building during the three years the coaching model was established. All ten teachers interviewed were Level II teachers and were regarded by staff as being proficient in their subject area. Teachers represented the academic areas of Reading, Language, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Two of the teachers interviewed are presently content coaches, two were part of the group but resigned for personal reasons, and two have taken on the role of technology coaches. The building administrators interviewed worked at the middle

school throughout the length of the coaching initiative. The Principal served as an assistant principal at the building previously and introduced the coaching model as lead instructional leader. The Dean of Students served at several buildings and witnessed a change in the district and building throughout his career.

The researcher was permitted to conduct the interviews personally since the researcher was no longer a supervisor of the teachers interviewed. The interview process took 45 to 60 minutes dependent upon questioning and was audio-taped as the researcher took notes. Interviewees were assured that audio-taped responses would remain confidential and only the researcher would have access to the tapes. With this assurance, conversation was open and genuine, thus creating an atmosphere conducive to the free sharing of thoughts and concerns. A review of responses was conducted at the conclusion of each interview for accuracy and clarification. Interviewees were asked if any additional responses were warranted. The researcher reviewed tapes and notes in a timely manner after each interview to provide accuracy in data collection.

Data obtained through questioning was categorized according to three themes that emerged: *unanimous themes,* mentioned by five or more teacher interviewees; *supported themes,* mentioned by three or four teacher interviewees; and *individual themes,* mentioned by only one or two teacher interviewees (adapted from Del Greco, 2000). Administrator themes were categorized into; *unanimous themes* (mentioned by both administrators); and *individual themes* (mentioned by one administrator).

Following the analysis, survey data and rank order data were used to validate interviewees' responses. Participants categorized 70 items in the survey as having a *strong influence* (given the value 3)*, moderate influence (*given the value 2)*, or *no*

influence (given the value 1) on professional development. Survey responses were placed in a frequency table, and an average consensus view was tabulated from participants' answers.

The final section of the survey was a 1 through 6 ranking of elements identified by the researcher as having an effect on school improvement. Participants' responses were placed in a table and an average was calculated to establish a consensus of the elements. Teacher and administrator survey responses were illustrated in separate charts. This mixed form of qualitative and quantitative data collection in naturalistic inquiry validates responses and ensures that results of the study are dependable.

5.1.4   Discussion of Background Questions

5.1.4.1   Addressing the Second Background Question

What do you perceive is the vision for the school as teachers see it?

It was necessary to restate the vision of Administrator #1, the building principal, to determine if teachers internalized a similar building vision. The six elements identified by the researcher and highlighted in the review of literature encompassed the principal's vision and were documented in responses to the interview questions.

> Create an atmosphere where kids want to come to school and teachers understood their professional responsibilities to the kids. Once we got the atmosphere where people wanted to be there, we needed to create a culture that allowed us to move to where we focused on academics and not so much on discipline.

The variety of responses from the teacher group alluded to the importance of educating *all* students and creating an atmosphere where students could learn and prosper. Teachers suggested this could be accomplished through an increased emphasis

in math, reading, and writing across *all* content areas. "The notion of the one room school house is gone. We need to bring it all back together again" (Teacher #7).

Teacher #3 established her vision by, "Providing the best education possible and produce students able to score proficient on the PSSA." Every teacher interviewed concurred with this statement and cited the increased emphasis to improve PSSA scores as the motivator to change instructional strategies and skills delivery. Teacher #5 stated, "Through the content coaches, we can learn how to teach kids skills, not so much content, on how to solve problems for themselves in school and in regular life." Administrator #2 agreed with his statement. "We need to concentrate on areas of obvious weakness identified in the PSSA's and get teachers on-line in the direction to improve our students for the PSSA."

Statements made by eleven participants highlighted PSSA scores as the focal point of the school's vision. Although the principal alluded to academics, his focus did not concentrate solely on increased PSSA scores as the building vision.

5.1.4.2 Addressing the Third Background Question

How has the school's culture changed the three years that content coaches provided professional development to the staff?

> Systemic and cultural change in school as workplaces and in teaching as a profession is intimately linked; and these links represent a powerful route to educational reform. (Fullan, Bennett, & Rolheiser-Bennett, 1990, p. 13)

Respondents commented on the worthiness of a coaching model to provide professional development to staff members. An awareness and element of change has been observed in the culture of the building; however, "The change has been slow"

204

(Adminstrator#1). "The coaches helped to change the instruction, but not the mindset of the people," explains Administrator #1.

Group consensus supported an increased awareness of academics than was present in previous years. Teacher #5, who was a content coach stated, "There is more collaboration among the staff. The majority of the teachers bought in and utilized techniques, others did not and don't care." As a summary, "Staff members are less isolated and more collaborative," (Teacher #7). "The coaches made awareness come alive" (Teacher #8).

Teachers were more accepting of change. An increase in communication and the sharing of techniques was witnessed; however, the reality was that several teachers became disenchanted and cynical of the coaching process toward the end of the third year. Indicated as weaknesses in the process was the loss of credibility and respect for the coaches, their lack of preparedness and working together, and not utilizing activities they demonstrated in their classrooms. "Teachers are now more accepting of change and more willing to try different things," (Teacher #1); however, expanded communication and sharing appeared to be more prevalent among team or department members than among the entire staff.

5.1.4.3   Addressing the Fourth Background Question

What do you think the connection is between a school's culture and student achievement?

All interviewees in the study believed there was a 100% connection between a school's culture and student achievement. Participants suggested that a teacher's expectations toward students influenced how students reacted to instruction. Teachers

remarked that if students recognized teachers had high expectations, and teachers continually demonstrated high expectations to students, students would recognize the importance of what is being taught.

The coaching model introduced at the middle school was to elicit change for betterment of the students. Efforts of a coaching model to enhance instruction, and thus positively impact student achievement, were supported by Fullan and Hargreaves (1996):

> By empowering teachers and reducing the uncertainties of the job that must otherwise be faced in isolation, collaborative cultures also raise student achievement. Collaborative cultures facilitate commitment to change and improvement. They also create communities of teachers who no longer have the dependent relationships to externally imposed change that isolation and uncertainty tend to encourage. (p. 49)

5.1.5 Discussion of Interview and Survey Questions

Specific survey line items and elements of change presented by the researcher are noted by italics in the text.

5.1.5.1   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #1

What are the top three responsibilities of classroom teachers?

How influential are the following in creation of a competent teacher?

Teacher responses surrounding three responsibilities of teachers were addressed by administrators in some manner. Both groups emphasized a focus on designing a challenging curriculum, utilizing a variety of instructional techniques, providing a safe environment, and creating student interest in learning. Six of the ten teachers cited control of classroom discipline and inappropriate behaviors as a responsibility of a

teacher. Administrators did not view classroom discipline as a responsibility, but a requirement.

Individual themes from seven teachers referenced student achievement; however, teachers' responses did not suggest any recurring theme that encompassed student achievement. Activities cited as responsibilities to students were: creating student interest in subject area; understanding student situations; providing a need for lifelong learning in students; developing students' self-confidence; assuring students succeed; keeping students engaged; and, teaching to strengths and weaknesses of the child referenced responsibilities teachers have toward students.

The following table illustrates similarities and differences in teacher and administrator responses to Survey Question #1.

Table 5.1: Survey Question #1; Creating a Competent Teacher

	Teacher Average	Teacher Influence	Admin. Average	Admin. Influence
Proficiency in delivery of instruction	3.0	S	3	S
Classroom management	2.7	M / S	3	S
Collaboration with colleagues	2.6	M / S	2	L
Dedication to Teacher achievement	2.8	S	3	S
Restructuring activities for all students	2.3	M	3	S
Use of best practices	2.7	M / S	3	S
TOTAL SECTION	2.68	M / S	2.83	S

The influence level of the survey line item *proficiency in delivery of instruction* attained the value 3 from both groups, indicating this item has a strong influence on teacher competency. This numerical rating validated an emphasis on curriculum and instructional techniques addressed during interview sessions. The strong influence level of this item paralleled the teachers' ranking of *enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery* as the essence of school improvement. Administrators ranked this same indicator in the top three of the survey ranking.

Dedication to teacher achievement was recognized as possessing a strong influence on teacher competency from both groups. Activities teachers have participated to attain individual professional development were highlighted in Interview Question #5.

Survey completion of Question #1 revealed that teachers and administrators found all survey items but one to have a strong to moderate influence in creation of a competent teacher. *Collaboration with colleagues*, receiving an average influence level of 2.6 from teachers, was viewed as a moderate to strong influence on teacher competency. Each administrator suggested a moderate influence level for this same item, placing collaboration with the average score of two.

5.1.5.2   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #2

Is reflection on teaching practices useful? In what ways?

How much influence has personal reflection of the following impacted a change in instructional delivery?

While Teacher #9 asserted, "I think every teacher critiques their lesson after they taught it," Teacher #10 stated, "Reflection gives you the opportunity to think about what you did right, what you did wrong, and how you can change it for the next class, day, or lesson."

These two remarks illustrated agreement by all teachers on the necessity to reflect on teaching practices to make lessons more educationally sound and instructionally relevant for students. Reflection on instructional activities helped to create competent teachers. Administrators suggested identifying individual weaknesses and strengths, a result of reflection, was a means to grow professionally. As Teacher #7 pointed out, "I can't grow as a teacher if I don't look back."

Reflection prompted an increased focus on student achievement. Teachers reflected to improve lessons, possibly from class to class, to accommodate the needs of the students. Teacher #4 commented, "I reflect to restructure lessons. My lessons evolve all the time." Recurring themes teachers cited as reasons to reflect were: making improvements for lessons and future plans, all 10 teachers in agreement; producing more meaningful lessons, six teachers in agreement; and, changing to meet the needs of the students, eight teachers in agreement.

Similarities in responses to line items in Survey Question #2 illustrate tha6 both teachers and administrators recognize the value of reflection to impact instructional delivery.

Table 5.2: Survey Question #2; Reflection

	Teacher Average	Teacher Influence	Admin. Average	Admin. Influence
Change in teaching philosophy / willingness to change	2.7	M / S	3	S
Restructuring daily repertoire to include best practices	2.6	M / S	2.5	M
Increased focus on student achievement	2.9	S	3	S
Making accommodations for varying student abilities	2.5	M	3	S
Proficiency in delivering quality instruction	2.7	M / S	3	S
Recognition of the urgency to change	2.6	M / S	3	S
TOTAL SECTION	2.67	M / S	2.92	S

Item analysis of the survey coincided with statements made by respondents and validated the value of the line item *increased focus on student achievement.* This particular item of the survey attained the value 3 from both administrators, indicating a strong influence; a 2.9 average from the teacher group also indicating a strong influence.

Overall results to Survey Question #2 were relatively high, demonstrating the strong influence reflection had on instruction. Administrators' responses to Survey

Question #2 elicited an average of 2.92, the highest numeric value of all ten survey questions. The teacher group rated the survey question on reflection with a 2.67 average, also the highest average score of the ten survey questions.

5.1.5.3   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #3

How has professional development been helpful?

How much of an influence has participation in professional development activities impacted the following?
More (2000) contended:

> Staff development provides a catalyst for professional growth, staying current in best practices, and overall improvement in the quality of your program. It sparks curiosity, motivation, and new ways of thinking; it empowers each of us with problem-solving skills. (p. 14)

The educators were in agreement that professional development was helpful and essential if one wanted to improve personal skills. Teachers #2 and #8 pointed out that the world was always changing, and educators needed to keep up with the change. "Some people can't do what our kids can do so we need to constantly learn or we will fall behind" (Teacher #2). Teacher #10 responded:

> Professional development has helped me to look at what I'm doing and try different things to reach my classes. Professional development has helped me to see the bigger picture outside my classroom and has helped me to communicate more and ask more questions of my colleagues.

All respondents noted that professional development activities opened the door to expanded communication and collaboration among the staff. Survey responses from teachers validated the strong influence professional development had on sharing of ideas

and strategies through *collaboration with colleagues* aided to restructure daily activities and *create more hands-on activities to engage students.* An *increase in technology usage* in classroom lessons was also noted as strongly influenced by professional development. All three line items attained an average value of 2.8 by the teacher group.

Survey responses from administrators suggested that *frequent use of interactive lessons* and a *change in delivery of instructional skills* was impacted by professional development. In contrast, administrators noted *collaboration with colleagues* and *technology use* was moderately influenced.

Five of the ten teachers and one of the two administrators suggested that professional development aided in a teachers' *willingness to change classroom procedures* in survey completion. Both groups acknowledged that *adapting lessons to aid a challenging student body* was also moderately affected by teacher participation in professional development activities.

Teachers commented that there were times when professional development was not useful, ranking it as a supported theme from interview sessions. Teacher #7 stated, "Internal professional development is better than going outside the district. I don't mind seeing what is being done in other places and tweak it to fit our kids."

5.1.5.4   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #4

Has accountability and school improvement played a role in structuring professional development activities? In what ways?

What influence has the following had on an increased emphasis on professional development for teachers?

Little similarity in responses was provided by interviewees in regard to accountability and an increased emphasis on PSSA scores. In an effort to make educators, ". . . more accountable for the success of students than in past years" (Administrator #2), both administrators agreed accountability has been the driving force behind the change in professional development activities Administrator #1 personally believed, "Accountability makes us more responsible, more so than in past years, for the scores of our students."

Administrator #1 stated, "It was because of accountability that we did what we did." The teachers' view differed, and they did not see accountability, national, district, or building, as possessing a strong influence on professional development activities. Administrators' average on the survey for *national and district accountability* received the value 3, representing a strong influence. In contrast, teachers found *national accountability* to have a low to moderate influence with an average of 2.2, and *district accountability* possessing a moderate influence with a 2.5 average. Administrators ranked the *middle school on the warning list* as a strong motivator for professional development. The teacher group ranked this survey item as having a moderate influence on professional development with an average of 2.5. The following table represents responses to survey question #4 from the two participant groups.

Table 5.3: Survey Question #4; Accountability

	Teacher Average	Teacher Influence	Admin. Average	Admin. Influence
National accountability	2.2	M	3	S
District / building accountability	2.5	M	3	S
Emphasis on increased PSSA score	2.8	S	2.5	M
Middle school on state warning list	2.5	M	3	S
TOTAL SECTION	2.5	M	2.88	S

Several educators related how accountability forced teachers to teach to the PSSA test, cited as a recurring theme among half of the ten teachers. Only one of the two administrators believed accountability has stressed proficiency on the PSSA. Teacher #7 stated, "We are driven by NCLB and the PSSA. It [NCLB and PSSA] is driving what we do. We are now teaching to the test, and we need to create all kinds of professional development to get us to change our teaching style."

Teacher #10 agreed that accountability has forced teachers to change. "Professional development needs to be geared toward that change." Analysis of the teachers' survey data illustrated *emphasis on increased PSSA scores* was having a strong influence on professional development; but, administrators viewed this same item as possessing a moderate influence.

5.1.5.5   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #5

What contributed to your professional development?

What influence has the following had on personal professional development?

Participants identified activities they personally engaged in when responding to this question. A difference emerged in responses made between the teacher and administrator groups during the interview process. Both administrators cited a personal "need to know" as their motivator for engaging in professional development activities. Obtaining knowledge and skills for individually sought after resources were represented in administrators' responses, illustrating a strong influence for professional development. A "need to know" was not listed specifically by any of the teachers during the interviews.

However, Teacher #2 alluded to his quest for knowledge through attendance at graduate school during Interview Question #3.

Both groups cited attendance at conferences as a means to acquire professional development. Administrator #1 encouraged teachers to attend conferences, which accounted for the numerous conferences listed by teachers. In contrast, however, attendance at conferences and *professional meetings outside the district* had only a moderate influence on professional development, according to an item analysis of responses to the survey question. Teachers' responses categorized attendance at meetings outside the district as having a low to moderate influence with an average score of 2.2. Administrators were comparable in influence level with a 2.5 average, representing a moderate level of influence.

Recurring teacher themes for obtaining professional development that emerged through discussion were; college courses, team plans, and activities demonstrated by the academic and technology coaches. Survey responses to the influence of *team plans* was indicated as possessing the strongest level of influence from teachers with a 2.9 average, validating responses made during the interviews. Administrator #1 as a direct supervisor of teachers saw more constructive sharing of knowledge during team plans than Administrator #2 who is not a direct supervisor of the teachers. The difference in supervision might account for the difference in survey completion to this line item.

Professional development meetings presented by building coaches were cited as a recurring theme during teacher interviews; however, *collegial coaching* received a 2.3 averaged in survey completion, indicating a moderate influence on teachers for attaining professional development. Many of the teachers spoke of the differences between the

academic and technology coaches and discussed the amount and quality of skills and information obtained from the two groups. Teacher # 7 commented, "If the academic coaches were listed separately from the technology coaches, the technology coaches would show much more of an influence on instruction." Similar sentiments were expressed by other teachers interviewed.

Administrators were asked to determine if participation in the items listed in the survey had an influence on professional development for teachers. Neither administrator indicated that collegial coaching had the strong influence desired. The establishment of learning communities in the school was also not seen as a contributor for professional development. Both *collegial coaching* and *establishment of learning communities* received a moderate level of influence, with an average of 2 (a low influence indicator on the administrator's chart). These same two items were perceived to have a moderate level of influence from the teacher group, represented by the numerical value of 2.3.

5.1.5.6   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #6

Has professional development activities demonstrated by colleagues been an influence on your teaching? In what ways?

How influential has peer coaching been on a change in classroom instructional delivery?

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) declared:

> Most teachers, even the most experienced, believed that teaching was inherently difficult. They believed that teachers never stopped learning to teach. Since most teachers acknowledge that teaching was difficult, almost everyone recognized they sometimes needed help. Giving and receiving help did not therefore imply incompetence. It was part of the common quest for continuous improvement. Having their colleagues show support and communicating more with them about what they did

led these teachers to have more confidence, more certainty about what they were trying to achieve and how well they were achieving it. (p. 44)

Interviewees supported Fullan and Hargreave's statement that people need to continually learn and attain information and skills to grow professionally. The ways teachers attained professional development was highlighted in Interview Question #5. Teacher responses established that they gained much information through team plans and the collaboration that precipitated through expanded communication.

A mixed review emerged, however, when discussion centered on the work of the content coaches. The skills and strategies demonstrated by the coaches to the staff were new to some teachers, while others stated the coaches validated what they already did in the classroom. Demonstrated activities did develop some consistency in instructional delivery at the middle school as a greater number of teachers had students utilize skills such as graphic organizers, KWL charts, and highlighting techniques.

The following table represents similarities and differences between teacher and administrator groups when asked to respond to the influence professional development delivered by colleagues had on changing teaching styles. Administrators were asked to respond on the influence level they believed collegial coaching had on the teachers.

Table 5.4: Survey Question #6; Collegial Coaching

	Teacher Average	Teacher Influence	Admin. Average	Admin. Influence
Change teaching style	2.1	L / M	2.5	M
Willingness to implement best practices	2.2	L / M	3	S
Learning to adapt to a challenging student body	2.5	M	3	S
Move from isolationism to collaboration	2.1	L / M	3	S
Integration of technology in instructional delivery	2.6	M / S	3	S
TOTAL SECTION	2.3	M	2.9	S

The collegial model was highlighted separately in Survey Question #6, and teachers once more responded that peer coaching had a moderate influence on teaching skills, represented by a 2.3 group average, the survey question receiving the lowest score. Teachers indicated that collegial coaching had little influence in *changing teaching style*, *willingness to implement best practices*, or *moving from isolationism to collaboration*. Low averages of 2.1 and 2.2 were represented by teachers' comments made during questioning.

Teachers indicated that the *integration of technology into instruction* had the highest influence level of the items listed in Survey Question #6, receiving a 2.6 average. The high score substantiated remarks made by teachers during the interviews in regard to work done by the newly formed technology coaching group. Remarks such as, "I love the technology coaches," (Teacher #3), and "Technology coaches are more of an influence," (Teacher #2) were representative of the high regard placed on their work.

In comparison, administrators believed these same elements had a strong influence on altering a teachers' instructional delivery. Each line item in the survey received a numerical score of 3 except for change in teaching style, which averaged to a 2.5, indicating a moderate level of influence. An average of 2.9 for Survey Question #6 from administrators, one of the highest of the ten survey questions, demonstrated the administrators' belief that the coaching model influenced teaching practices of the middle school staff. This difference between the teacher and administrator group might appear because of what individuals hoped would be achieved and what was actually accomplished.

5.1.5.7   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #7

What do you believe are the advantages or disadvantages of peer coaching?

How influential has peer coaching been on the staff's perceptions?

Crane (2002) argued:

> A coach acts as a guide by challenging and supporting people in achieving their personal and organizational performance objectives. If this is done as a trusted learning partner, people feel helped by the coach and the process. As they say, help is only help if it's perceived as help. (p. 31)

All ten teachers agreed that the coaching model helped to enhance communication and the sharing of ideas, strategies, and techniques among the staff. Coaches in the building allowed personnel the opportunity to connect with an individual familiar with conditions of the district and building. Administrators and teachers stated the coaching model created a non-threatening, informal atmosphere that provided personnel an avenue to interact with each other. Advantages listed by teachers and administrators encompass the new trend in staff development recognized by Lambert (1989, p. 81):

- Inquire into and reflect upon practice
- Elicit and share craft knowledge
- Identify and create options for learning
- Allow teachers to lead and work collaboratively
- Learn about new developments in the profession
- Design school and district systems that open opportunities and encourage participation

The following table represents recurring advantages and disadvantages spoken about by teachers and administrators in regard to a coaching model. Responses of research participants are similar to advantages and disadvantages highlighted in the review of literature.

Table 5.5: Recurring Themes of a Coaching Model

Advantages to a Coaching Model	Disadvantages to a coaching Model
Colleagues in building / not a one time occurrence	Animosity
Sharing of ideas, strategies, and techniques	Dissention
Expanded communication in the building	Resentment
Familiarity with district and students	Lack of trust and respect
Non-threatening / comfort level with peers	
Collaboration	

The design of the coaching model encouraged teachers to share more and reflect on their practices as discussed in previous research questions. Teachers moved toward a more collaborative environment than previously seen in the building as they discussed and shared knowledge of teaching. Coaches gave insight to skills and strategies to which some teachers were not accustomed, while for others, the activities validated their personal expertise.

Teachers commented that cynicism toward the model emerged because animosity and resentment grew toward the coaches. Some teachers felt the coaches were not prepared and lacked the accountability necessary to make a difference in the school's culture. Lack of training in working with people and providing worthwhile and sound professional development training sessions were also identified to their subsequent lack of trust and respect during the third year. Sentiments similar to Teacher #9 explained the breakdown of the structure. "A feeling of superiority from some coaches did not permit other staff members to share their expertise with staff members." Administrator #1 shared, "Because of the way coaches present themselves, they are sometimes seen to be in a quasi-administrative role." Responses from teachers concerning the way the group presented themselves alluded to the statement made by Administrator #1.

The following table illustrates the differences in responses between to the line items in Survey Question #7.

Table 5.6: Survey Question #7; Influence of Peer Coaching

	Teacher Average	Teacher Influence	Admin. Average	Admin. Influence
Networking and collaboration	2.4	M	3	S
Learning best practices	2.3	M	3	S
Obtaining Act 48 credit	2.4	M	2.5	M
Enhancement of instructional delivery	2.1	L / M	3	S
Communication with colleagues who instruct similar students	2.3	M	2.5	M
Colleagues familiar with conditions of district / building	2.2	L / M	3	S
Accessibility / not a one time occurrence	2.5	M	3	S
Attitude of staff	2.3	M	2.5	M
TOTAL SECTION	2.31	M	2.81	S

Showers (1985, p. 44) stated, "Coaching develops the shared language and set of common understandings necessary for the collegial study of new knowledge and skills." Teacher responses from completion of Survey Question #7 indicated that peer coaching had a moderate influence on *networking and collaboration, learning best practices,* and *communication with colleagues.* The average group score for teachers of 2.31 for Survey Question #7 was second lowest to Survey Question #6 which asked teachers what the influence peer coaching had on a change in delivery of classroom skills.

Administrators' responses to five of the eight line items in Survey Question #7 demonstrated their beliefs that peer coaching had a high level of influence on the staffs' perceptions. The average of 2.81 from administrators for Survey Question #7 was comparably high in comparison to the 2.31 average from teachers.

5.1.5.8   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #8

What is the importance of including peers in the teaching process?

How has the impact of including peers in the teaching process influenced elements of school reform?

"The benefit of collaboration is that it can reduce teachers' sense of powerlessness and increase their sense of efficacy," (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 45). This sentiment was echoed in the statement made by Teacher #7, "When you talk with other people, you are willing to change. There is communication and sharing of ideas. With peers there is a comfort level". The Administrators agreed that educators found it easier to converse with colleagues because of a non-threatening atmosphere. Teachers were speaking with peers in similar situations, not with someone who might have been out of the classroom for a few to many years.

Results to Survey Question #8 varied between the two groups when asked to decide if the inclusion of peers in the teaching process influences school reform. The following table illustrates similarities and differences in survey responses between the teacher and administrator groups.

Table 5.7: Survey Question #8; Including Peers

	Teacher Average	Teacher Influence	Admin. Average	Admin. Influence
Familiarity with students / conditions	2.2	L / M	3	S
Collaboration among staff	2.6	M / S	3	S
Collegial support	2.2	L / M	3	S
Accessibility to resources	2.3	M	3	S
Sense of urgency for change	2.4	M	2.5	M
Common vision for the school	2.4	M	2	S
TOTAL SECTION	2.35	M	2.92	S

A distinction appeared between the two groups when analyzing the line items and overall average to Survey Question #8. Administrators ranked all items as having a

221

strong influence except the line item *sense of urgency for change*. A split decision between the two administrators averaged this element to a 2.5 average, representing a moderate influence. The overall ranking of Survey Question #8 received a 2.92 average from administrators. This high influence level of the elements listed in Survey Question #8 ranked this survey question the highest numerically of all ten survey questions.

Teachers differed in their thoughts to Survey Question #8.   The value for this survey question received a 2.35 average from teachers. The low average was comparable to results of Survey Questions # 6 and #7 which asked teachers to reflect on the influence peer coaching had on a change in classroom practices and staff's perceptions of coaching.

5.1.5.9   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #9

What do you believe is the influence of professional development activities on instruction?

What influence has professional development activities had on a school in reform?

Research studies have validated that students' scores on standardized tests were more closely related to the academic ability of their teacher than to any other teacher characteristic (Berry, Johnson & Montgomery, 2005; Murphy & Miller, 1996; Hanushek, 1981; Smith, 2001). Barth (1990) stated that professional development activities, when meaningful, were meant to aid instruction and provide teachers with added skills and strategies to utilize in the classroom. Barth acknowledged that professional development is one way to improve schools.

The teacher group agreed with the research surrounding the influence professional development had on instruction. Teacher #3 supported researchers with the statement,

"Professional development has impacted student achievement and taught them to learn in different ways." Teacher #6 added, "It gives you more variety to use with the kids." Teacher #1 believes, "Professional development gives teachers the ability to discover methods to hold the students' interest." Values seen to teacher participation in professional development were highlighted throughout the interview questions.

The wide variety of ideas, strategies and techniques obtained through professional development was cited as a recurring theme from the teacher group. It was believed that professional development helped to elicit a cultural change as lesson designs were tailored to meet the varying needs of students. The line item in Survey Question #9, *enhancing student learning,* was cited as a strong influence from administrators with a 3.0 average and as a moderate to strong influence from teachers with a 2.6 average. In contrast the survey line item *learning best practices*, which would enhance student learning, attained a low to moderate influence level from teachers with a 2.2 average. Administrators ranked this same element as possessing a strong influence with a 3.0 average. An analysis of teacher responses showed that teachers believed it is important to enhance lessons; but, an educator did not need to learn best practices to accomplish this task.

The teacher group expanded their conversation about professional development to include, "If people don't find anything that is useful, you're just wasting your time," (Teacher #5). This thought was substantiated with comments about allowing educators to select activities of interest and considered useful for personal growth. The individualization of technology activities established by the technology coaches, which permits staff members to choose their professional development activity, attained more

223

praise than the generalization of activities demonstrated by the academic coaches. The line item in the survey *increased of technology in the classroom* was viewed as a strong influence for school improvement from both groups with a 3.0 average from administrators and a 2.7 average from teachers. Additional positive references were made about the expertise of educators within the district who were familiar with the students, their needs and weaknesses, rather than having presenters unfamiliar with local conditions.

One element in Survey Question #9 that both teachers and administrators thought professional development would have minimal influence was a *change in teachers' expectations of students.* Teacher average for this line item was 2.2, reflecting a low to moderate level of influence. Administrators similarly ranked this element as possessing a low level of influence on school improvement with a 2.0 average.

5.1.5.10   Addressing Interview and Survey Question #10

What to you would indicate that teachers have moved away from   isolationism toward a collaborative effort for school improvement and   establishment   of   a professional learning community?

What has been the impact of the following activities to move a staff from isolationism to one of collaboration and establishing professional learning communities?

The sharing of ideas, strategies, and resources was continually addressed by teachers during the interview process, regardless of the question asked. "Teachers are not as segregated, and they are trying to bring it all together,"(Teacher #6). Teacher consensus of sharing was evidenced in the value of line item *sharing of ideas and resources* from Survey Question #10. Teachers ranked this item as the highest of all

elements of any survey question with a 2.9 average, indicating a very strong influence on the establishment of professional learning communities. It was indicated that *team plans*, a recurring theme discussed by seven of the teachers, had tremendous influence for expanding communication, developing cross-curricular activities, and sharing with colleagues on the team.

Administrators also indicated establishing team plans in the schedule elicited the above mentioned advantages as a recurring theme. Administrators ranked team plans as having a moderate impact on expanding collaboration with a 2.5 average. Administrator #1 believed team plans have a high level of influence on collaboration and assigned the value 3.   Administrator #2 saw this item as possessing a moderate influence on collaboration with the numeric value 2. The difference in administrators' responses might be attributed to the direct and indirect observations of teachers.

The following table illustrates similarities and differences between the teacher and administrator group in regard to Survey Question #10.

Table 5.8: Survey Question #10; Isolation to Collaboration

	Teacher Average	Teacher Influence	Admin. Average	Admin. Influence
Sharing of ideas and resources	2.9	S	2.5	M
Discussing current professional journals / articles	2.0	L	2.5	M
Working collectively with colleagues on student projects	2.4	M	2.5	M
Curriculum changes / development	2.3	M	2.5	M
Focus on student / building achievement	2.9	S	3	S
Utilizing activities demonstrated by coaches in classroom	2.1	L / M	3	S
TOTAL SECTION	2.43	M	2.67	M / S

A disparity between the groups in answers was seen in the line item *utilizing activities demonstrated by coaches in the classroom*.   The teacher group ranked this item as possessing a very low to moderate influence for the establishment of professional

learning communities. The low rating substantiates remarks made about coaches in Research Questions #7, #8, and #9. The 2.1 average differed drastically from the 3.0 administrators' average. The difference of opinion in this item might be attributed to the hopes of the administrators concerning the effectiveness of a coaching model versus the realities of the teachers' perceptions.

5.1.5.11   Addressing the Six Elements for School improvement

Six elements of school improvement were identified by the researcher as elements of NCLB and became the basis of the research study. The elements for school improvement identified by the researcher as a component of the study were: *accountability measures, school improvement, professional development, collegial coaching, enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery,* and *staff movement toward collaboration*. All were highlighted in the review of literature and addressed in the interview and survey questions. The following table reveals the similarities and differences between the teacher and administrator group in relation to the above named six elements.

Table 5.9: Ranking Six Elements for School Improvement

	Teacher ranking	Administrator ranking
Accountability measures	Fifth	Tied 1, 2, 3
School improvement	Third	Fourth
Professional development	Second	Tied 1, 2, 3
Collegial coaching	Fourth	Tied 5, 6
Enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery	First	Tied 1. 2. 3
Staff movement toward collaboration	sixth	Tied 5, 6

Two elements were identified by teachers and administrators as influential for change in school improvement from both groups. *Enhancement of classroom activities*

226

and instructional delivery was ranked first, and *professional development* was ranked second by the teachers. These same two elements attained a first, second, and third place tie with *accountability measures* from the administrators.

Collegial coaching, the basis for the research, was ranked fourth in influence level from teachers and tied for fifth and sixth place with *staff movement toward collaboration* from administrators. Responses about collegial coaching and staff movement toward collaboration during the interviews and from the analysis of survey data coincided with the low ranking from both groups. Teachers acknowledged benefits derived from a coaching model; but, cynicism toward a coaching model emerged as well. The low ranking of the identified element was supported by teachers' responses to Survey Questions #6 and #7.

5.1.6 Summary

Literature demonstrated that numerous initiatives might be introduced in a building during school reform. Some might be beneficial, and others not, dependent upon the needs, strengths, and weaknesses of staff and students. Steel Town Middle School had to establish a change as a result of guidelines from NCLB and a school in warning status. One component of accountability, an increased emphasis on professional development of the educator, was visualized as the impetus to bring about enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery and move staff from isolationism toward collaboration and the establishment of professional learning communities.

Literature established that the education and knowledge of teachers affected the achievement level of students (Berry, Johnson & Montgomery, 2005; Murphy & Miller,

227

1996; Hanushek, 1981; Smith, 2001). The administrator at Steel Town Middle School established the coaching model as an avenue for cultural change during school improvement efforts. Use of the coaching model at Steel Town Middle School was to provide teachers with similar skills and strategies to positively impact student achievement.

The interview process, the method of collecting data, the process for recording the data, and an analysis of the data were outlined. Responses from participants established that a coaching model helped teachers become more collaborative and expand their daily instructional activities with new ideas and strategies. Interviewees' responses indicated if the infusion of professional development activities influenced student achievement and aided in the transformation of a school in crisis toward a more positive and productive organization.

The collection of qualitative data through interviews and quantitative data through survey completion showed individual perceptions of the coaching model at Steel Town Middle School. Described by participants as an effective method to provide professional development and to elicit a change in the culture, collegial coaching opened the doors for teachers to expand communication and sharing, benefits not previously seen in the building. Analyzing the interviewees' responses, it is recognized that changes are necessary for continued success. The newly established technology coaches have listened to suggestions of the staff in regard to academic coaches and tailored their activities to meet the needs of the teachers.

This study, along with the research, validated that a coaching model was a viable method for a change in the instructional delivery of teachers. The school should not give

up on the coaching model; rather, identify and alter the weaknesses identified by the staff

so the initiative might continue to prosper at Steel Town Middle School.

5.1.7 Recommendations for Further Research

- Conduct a similar study at a later date using the same questions and include ten different teachers from the ones previously interviewed who were present at the school over the three years the coaching model was in effect. Compare and contrast responses between the two groups of teachers interviewed identifying similarities and differences.

- With new administration in place, replicate the study two years from now and compare the results to help determine if the results remain consistent or if indicators toward school improvement and the model have changed with the administrative change.
- Replicate the study two years from now, interviewing teachers who were not at the building during the original initiative and are currently receiving professional development through the coaching model. Compare the results to uncover if staff perception has remained constant or changed.

- Since the tech coaches seemed to be more acceptable to teachers, conduct a similar study on the technology coaches; however, pose questions to interviewees that would ask them to distinguish similarities and/or differences that identify successes or failures of the technology coaches in relation to the academic coaches.

- Conduct this study in a school that has incorporated a collegial coaching model as a means to provide professional development to staff. Compare and contrast the results of Steel Town Middle School to the school outside the district.

- Since high schools are more complex organizations than Elementary or Middle Schools, institute a collegial coaching at the high school then conduct a similar study to determine if there are any benefits to introducing a coaching model at the secondary level.

5.1.8 Reflection

Accountability has created the need to explore what educators must do to educate

all children. The intended purpose of this study was to identify the effectiveness of a

collegial coaching model as a means to elicit a change in instructional delivery among teachers, increase focus on student achievement, and move staff from a culture of isolation to one of collaboration. Responses made it apparent that staff members were moving away from issues of discipline and focusing more energy on collaboration and the promotion of student achievement. As I progressed through the stages of the research study, valuable points and lessons emerged.

The most difficult element of school improvement is to change the culture and beliefs of individuals in an educational institution. The process of change affects people within the same organization at different levels and at different time. A change in individual beliefs does not come easily or quickly. Change requires buy-in from all stakeholders, and credible leaders are essential to establish a change considered worthwhile for the organization. It is important that leaders establish a vision for the educational community that is known to students, parents, and teachers. Recognition of a common vision allows all to work toward the desired goal, and the ability to adapt or alter the course of action toward the vision helps to achieve sustainability.

A coaching model is a sound way to provide professional development to educators. However, it is essential to have the correct individuals in leadership positions to have a positive effect. If teacher leadership causes a flaw in the system, it is important to find teacher leaders who can close the gap and reestablish the vision and urgency for change. Cynicism in any effort continues to grow unless it is acted upon. It is a building leader's responsibility to recognize defaults in a program and correct weaknesses by working closely with teacher leaders before discontent expands among the remaining

staff. A building leader should use the constructive criticism of the staff to "tweak" the model to make it more effective for a greater number of staff members.

Responses from the teachers and administrators reminded me of how powerful and personal the educational experience is for individuals involved in education. The teachers at the middle school are dedicated individuals, working diligently with children recognized as low achievers by other districts. The teachers have not given up on the students and are fully dedicated to their success. There is a desire to grow professionally, and the coaching model has created excitement and enthusiasm in the teaching practices.

However, every individual in an organization likes to contribute to a building goal, and this idea emerged in the interview process. It is essential to include as many individuals in a coaching model as would like to participate. Ownership and acceptance of a new initiative may be established more easily without discontent from the stakeholders.

Recognition of a cultural change was realized through the expanded communication, sharing, and collaboration. The researcher believes that even negative comments forces individuals to reflect and decide how situations could be improved upon. Even cynicism created informal professional development because individuals reflected on how "they can do it better".

Completion of the dissertation affected the way I look at educational issues. The challenges I experienced during this process gives me the confidence and fortitude to accept challenges for the future. The networking and open communication I experienced as part of this process will help me grow as a leader as I continue in my professional role.

It is my hope that this study becomes a resource for others interested in adopting a coaching model. It is critical to take teachers' responses and consider their comments when establishing a similar model. Learning from the mistakes of groundbreakers in this new adventure is sure to make future endeavors at collegial coaching model even stronger and more attractive to teachers for the success of students.

APPENDIX

Background Questions

1. What is your educational background and what position(s) have you held?

2. What do you perceive is the vision for the school as teachers see it?

3. How has the school's culture changed during the three years content coaches provided professional development to the staff?

4. What do you think the connection is between a school's culture and student achievement?

Interview Questions

1. What are the top three responsibilities of classroom teachers?

2. Is reflection on teaching practices useful? In what ways?

3. Has professional development been helpful? In what ways?

4. Has accountability and school improvement played a role in structuring professional development activities. In what ways?

5. What contributed to your professional development?

6. Has professional development activities demonstrated by colleagues been an influence on your teaching? In what ways/

7. What do you believe are the advantages or disadvantages of peer coaching?

8. What is the importance of including peers in the teaching process?

9. What do you believe is the influence of professional development activities on instruction?

10. What to you would indicate that teachers have moved away from isolationism toward a collaborative effort for school improvement and establishment of a professional learning community?

Interviewees are asked to complete the following survey. Approximately 10 minutes will be needed. Place a mark [x] on the line that you believe best describes how the following elements have influenced professional development and impacted a change in instructional delivery.

1. **What are the top three responsibilities of classroom teachers?**

   How influential are the following in creation of a competent teacher?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. proficiency in delivery of instruction	_____	_____	_____
B. classroom management	_____	_____	_____
C. collaboration with colleagues	_____	_____	_____
D. dedication to student achievement	_____	_____	_____
E. restructuring activities for ALL students	_____	_____	_____
F. use of best practices	_____	_____	_____

2. **Is reflection on teaching practices useful? In what ways?**

   How much influence has personal reflection of the following impacted a change in instructional delivery?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. change in teaching philosophy / willingness to change	_____	_____	_____
B. restructuring daily repertoire to include best practices	_____	_____	_____
C. increased focus on student achievement	_____	_____	_____
D. making accommodations for varying student abilities	_____	_____	_____
E. proficiency in delivering quality instruction	_____	_____	_____
F. recognition of the urgency to change	_____	_____	_____

3. Has professional development been helpful? In what ways?

How much of an influence has participation in professional development activities impacted the following?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. delivery of instructional skills	_____	_____	_____
B. adaptability of lessons to challenging student body	_____	_____	_____
C. willingness to change classroom procedures	_____	_____	_____
D. rejuvenation of self and development of a positive attitude	_____	_____	_____
E. development of interactive lessons for students	_____	_____	_____
F. collaboration with colleagues	_____	_____	_____
G. increased use of technology in the classroom	_____	_____	_____

4. Has accountability and school improvement played a role in structuring professional development activities? In what ways?

What influence has the following had on an increased emphasis on professional development for teachers?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. national accountability	_____	_____	_____
B. district / building accountability	_____	_____	_____
C. emphasis on increased PSSA scores	_____	_____	_____
D. middle school on state warning list	_____	_____	_____

5. What contributed to your professional development?

What influence has the following had on personal professional development?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. collegial coaching	_____	_____	_____
B. team plans	_____	_____	_____
C. professional meetings / collaboration with colleagues outside district	_____	_____	_____
D. college courses	_____	_____	_____
E. individually sought after resources	_____	_____	_____
F. establishment of learning communities in the building	_____	_____	_____

6. Has professional development activities demonstrated by colleagues been an influence on your teaching? In what ways?

How influential has peer coaching been on a change in classroom instructional delivery?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. change teaching style	_____	_____	_____
B. willingness to implement best practices	_____	_____	_____
C. learning to adapt to a challenging student body	_____	_____	_____
D. move from isolationism to collaboration	_____	_____	_____
E. integration of technology in instructional delivery	_____	_____	_____

7. What do you believe are the advantages or disadvantages of peer coaching?

How influential has peer coaching been on the staff's perceptions?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. networking and collaboration	_____	_____	_____
B. learning best practices	_____	_____	_____
C. obtaining Act 48 credit	_____	_____	_____
D. enhancement of instructional delivery	_____	_____	_____
E. communication with colleagues who instruct similar students	_____	_____	_____
F. colleagues familiar with conditions of district / building	_____	_____	_____
G. accessibility / not a one time occurrence	_____	_____	_____
H. attitude of staff	_____	_____	_____

8. What is the importance of including peers in the teaching process?

How has the impact of including peers in the teaching process influenced elements of school reform?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. familiarity with students / conditions	_____	_____	_____
B. collaboration among staff	_____	_____	_____
C. collegial support	_____	_____	_____
D. accessibility to resources	_____	_____	_____
E. sense of urgency for change	_____	_____	_____
F. common vision for the school	_____	_____	_____

9. **What do you believe is the influence of professional development activities on instruction?**

What influence has professional development activities had on a school in reform?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. enhancing student learning	_____	_____	_____
B. adaptability for all learners	_____	_____	_____
C. learning best practices / research based practices	_____	_____	_____
D. change in student expectations	_____	_____	_____
E. increased use of technology in the classroom	_____	_____	_____
F. requirement of accountability and school improvement	_____	_____	_____

10. **What to you would indicate that teachers have moved away from isolationism toward a collaborative effort for school improvement and establishment of a professional learning community?**

What has been the impact of the following activities to move a staff from isolationism to one of collaboration and establishing professional learning communities?

	strong influence	moderate influence	no influence
A. sharing of ideas and resources	_____	_____	_____
B. discussing current professional journals / articles	_____	_____	_____
C. working collaboratively with colleagues on student projects	_____	_____	_____
D. curriculum changes / development	_____	_____	_____
E. focus on student / building achievement	_____	_____	_____
F. utilizing activities demonstrated by coaches in classroom	_____	_____	_____

Six elements have been identified in the study as change indicators for a positive influence on a change in student expectations and outcomes. Rank the six elements in order with **1** being the ***most influentia*l** to **6** being the ***least influential***.

_____	accountability measures
_____	school improvement
_____	professional development
_____	collegial coaching
_____	enhancement of classroom activities and instructional delivery
_____	staff movement toward collaboration

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