THE SEARCH FOR THE ROLE OF AN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

By

Dawn Rattay Nicolaus

Bachelor of Science in Education, University of Pittsburgh, 1991

Masters of Arts in Curriculum & Instruction, University of Maryland, 1993

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By

Dawn Rattay Nicolaus

It was defended on

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And approved by

Dr. Sean Hughes, Professor   Committee Member

Dr. Sue Goodwin, Professor   Committee Member

Dr. Thomas Meade, Professor   Committee Member

Advisor, Joseph S. Werlinich, Professor   Committee Member

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Dawn Rattay-Nicolaus, Ed.D

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The dissertation examines how elementary principals provide and evaluate professional development in regard to instruction. The nature of this study is descriptive; the methodology used is qualitative. The research is guided by the themes of narrative inquiry. The primary method of obtaining information is the interview process. The major findings and conclusions discovered are that the role of the principal has evolved since the first elementary school programs were established, and during the past decade, reform efforts have focused on setting high standards. The principal's style of leadership influences the elementary school. This study also revealed that most districts do not set aside a budget for professional development. Another interesting finding was that the evaluation of effective professional development was not discussed at length with any of the elementary principals interviewed. All of the literature researched focused heavily on the evaluation being a major part of effective professional development programs. As the study unfolds, it is discovered that the role of the principal is abundant. Most districts rely on the building principal to meet all of the demands set by state regulations and by community. The final results of the study showed that the five elementary principals interviewed believe that the principal's role has changed and has moved more toward an instructional leader. Many educational reforms require teachers and administrators to transform their roles and take on new responsibilities.

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INTRODUCTION

"Education. . . is the mainspring of our economic and social
progress. . . it is the highest expression of achievement in our
society, ennobling and enriching human life."
John F. Kennedy

Since the early 1960s American public schools have undergone national criticism, calling for drastic reform in the public schools. Reports such as A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), A Nation Prepared (Carnegie Task Force, 1986), and more recently, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which became law in 1994, reflected serious concerns about student performance. Public schools were now forced with the criticism of failing to prepare children to "deal" with the nation's future needs.

A Nation At Risk reports that the next generation of children would not exceed their parents academically. Improving student performance was of the essence. This report suggested various ways of addressing the goal of improving student performance, standardizing curricula, lengthening the school year, requiring that school personnel be evaluated on a regular basis, improving teacher preparation programs, and adopting more stringent licensing standards for teachers and other school personnel (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

In the 1990s, the reform movement called for major changes in the design and implementation of educational programs within the nation's schools (Knapp & Shields, 1991). Schools were expected to identify strategies that would work for all types of learners. Another area of continuous concern in the reform movement was the importance of the position of the principalship and its impact on student achievement.

In 1998, National Association of School Principals (NAESP) conducted a study of K-8 principals. The findings suggest that the principal's role has become increasing diverse and complex, and that 42% turnover in the principalship during the last ten years is likely to continue

into the next decade (NAESP, 1998). Although this is good news for aspiring principal candidates, there is a need to develop a pool of well-qualified candidates to fill positions as they arise.

In the aforementioned study, two of every three principals who responded to the questions, "Are you concerned about the ability of public education to attract quality people to the principalship?" expressed concern that education does not appear to be attracting such candidates at this time. Several actions are needed to prevent this situation from becoming a serious problem:

- Today's principals must accept greater responsibility for encouraging and developing their replacements. It is important for them to nurture the leadership talent of others, and to help identify, encourage, and mentor aspiring school leaders.

- School districts, state principals' associations, and universities involved in the preparation of school administrators need to work collaboratively to develop programs that will attract good candidates and provide them with both quality coursework and practical experience.

- State legislators need to address the development of programs designed to motivate qualified teacher leaders to enter academic programs in school administration. This would include such actions as funding recruitment of underrepresented groups, examining the adequacy of principals' compensation, and minimizing conditions contributing to unnecessary stress on principals.

- School systems or states that have previously attempted to reduce their administrative expenditures by encouraging experienced principals to retire early through various

"buyout" options need to devise incentives to keep retirement-eligible principals from leaving (NAESP, 1998).

On October 23, 2002, The Education Department sent a warning to school commissioners across the country calling educators who try to sidestep the intent of President Bush's signature education act, No Child Left Behind, "enemies of equal justice and equal opportunity," and vowing, "they will not succeed" (Anthes, 2002, pg.2). The letter commended those who were trying to carry out the law. No Child Left Behind sets ambitious goals for recruiting qualified teachers in the neediest schools and eliminating disparities in achievement among whites, blacks and Hispanics while giving children in chronically failing schools the option of transferring.

Instructional leadership clearly emerges as an important role of the K-8 principal. The successful principal of the future will need to possess visionary insight into what schools should become. Along with visionary insight, the message from research is clear; principals must provide effective professional development. It must be intensive and sustained; it occurs through collaboratively planning and implementation; and it engages teachers in opportunities that promote continuous inquiry and improvement that are relevant and appropriate to local sites.

CHAPTER I

"The great tragedy of Science – the slaying of a beautiful
hypothesis by an ugly fact."
Thomas Henry Huxley

Introduction

In the late 1980s in Edmonds, Washington, the educators of the Edmonds School District were picking up pieces from a brutal strike. They found themselves walking a difficult and unfamiliar path. In addition to the adjustment to decentralization, teachers were being whisked into the technology revolution and the standards movement. They faced the steady onslaught of new concepts, strategies, and skills upon which teachers must stay abreast, while providing continuity in their classrooms. How then did this school district receive the 1999 National Awards Program for Model Professional Development? The answer lies within the implementation of professional development via the instructional teachers, the principals.

Edmonds, one of only seven winners, was recognized for outstanding efforts to improve teachers' knowledge and skills, and raise student achievement. Sally Harrison, an Edmonds instructional leader, believes that principals must provide on-site professional development, keeping sight of what is important, which is "providing high-quality instruction for kids." What needs to be included in learning opportunities for teachers keep evolving. The objective is to increase individual and team or collaborative wisdom, and that can be accomplished in a lot of ways (Linik, 2002, p.3). Edmonds' approach is a heuristic one in which learning takes place through investigations and discoveries. At the heart of this approach is a deep-seated respect for teachers and an emphasis on building a strong relationship and solid, straightforward communication. Site visits have evolved from obligatory drop-bys with little communication, to

visitations that include all stakeholders, including parents and students, and candid discussions regarding both progress and challenges. Harrison is in constant communication with educators throughout the district and spends her two-hour commute listening and responding to voicemail messages. She is constantly asking teachers, "What do you want to learn and how do you want to learn it, and "How did you learn that and how do we replicate it?" A principal's journey for success is one that is never fully accomplished, as in the case with Harrison, who continuously searches for answers to be more successful. What is success? What is a successful principal? These are the questions that have put me on the path of this research.

<u>Description of the Problem</u>

The critical role played by professional development to attain the goals of educational reform has been recognized and advocated at the national level. President Bush and the nation's governors cited professional development for teachers as one of the original six educational goals adopted in 1989 (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory [NWREL], 1994.) Goal four states that, "By the year 2000, the nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continuous improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century" (NWREL, 1994). To further delineate actions in support of this goal, the U.S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team identified 10 principles of high-quality professional development to serve as guidelines to both professional development providers and recipients. With so much importance placed upon professional development, the role of the principal continues to change.

Researchers and practitioners have long studied the role of the school principal for creating and maintaining effective educational environments. Effective school research has shown that strong principal leadership influences student achievement (Edmonds, 1979). While the principal plays an important role in effective schools, this role must be understood within the context of the school and should be viewed as a complex interaction between environmental, personal, and in-school relationships that influence outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Today, as schools experience great change, the role of the principal must continue to be examined and described.

As principals continually set higher standards for their schools, they also must set higher expectations for themselves. School leadership positions come with many responsibilities. According to the Blue Ribbon report, "The principal plays a major role in transforming the values and beliefs of the school into a vision. This is accomplished through both symbolic and expressive leadership behaviors" (Lashway, 2002, p.2). From the symbolic perspective, the principal models and focuses on what has been determined to be most important. From the expressive side of leadership, principals, talking about the vision, help to crystallize and communicate the vision. The principal is the tool that shapes a school culture. The principal establishes a forum for defining a vision of what needs to be accomplished and then works on how to do it. Undoubtedly, the principal is important to the success of a school or school system.

<u>Statement of Intent</u>

Over 15 years ago, the effective schools research (Purkey & Smith, 1983) documented that in schools where students performed better than expected, based on poverty and other demographic characteristics, a "dynamic" principal was at the helm. In

more recent years, strong leaders remain key to turning around poorly performing schools, implementing reforms, and motivating teachers and students.

The intent of this research is to strengthen the existing body of knowledge concerning the leadership role of the principal in creating and maintaining effective educational environments for students and to identify qualities of an effective principal. By describing the leadership role of principals within the context of what is effective, important information concerning the role and qualities of the principal will emerge.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate and describe the role of the principal in creating and maintaining effective educational programs that add to the success of the whole school environment. This study will also investigate the commonalities of qualities among elementary school principals.

Statement of the Problem

How do elementary principals provide and evaluate professional development in regard to instruction?

Research Questions

The primary research question is, "How does the elementary principal's leadership role promote professional development?" This question suggests additional investigations including:

- What does the literature say about the role of the principal?

- What are the characteristics of effective professional development?

- What does the literature say are the reasons why elementary principals provide professional development?

- How do elementary principals find time to incorporate professional development?

- What are the ways elementary principals evaluate the effectiveness of professional development?

<u>Importance of the Study: The Audience</u>

The results of this study are important to the field of elementary education, principal preparation programs, and school districts. Principals are increasingly being confronted with added responsibilities. It is important to describe and understand the leadership skills and qualities that practicing principals demonstrate which promote effective educational programs that create successful schools.

<u>The Need for Knowledge</u>

These findings will provide guidance to principal preparation programs and assist school districts in developing and supporting effective principals.

These research questions will be addressed through reviewing discourses of and analyzing completed surveys from five selected principals and observations of their schools, respectively.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined to provide clarity and specificity:

Behavior – the observable conduct or action of an individual or a group to a stimulus, such as an internal thought or impulse or an external intrusion (Shafritz, Koeppe, Soper, 1988, Hawes, Hawes, 1982).

Change - to make different; alter; to give a totally different form or appearance to; transform (Webster's II, 1984).

Context – programs, procedures, beliefs, expectations, and habits of the school (Dufour, 2002).

Effective – the ability to lead a school in the process of implementing a reform program with success in academic achievement, professional development, and learning communities (Trail, 2000).

Organizational climate – structural changes as in routine, values, and procedures of the organization (Silins, 12993).

Vision – the mission that is seen as a guidepost driven by clear, consistent, and strong leadership (Myers & Sobehart, 1994, 1995).

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."
Proverbs 29:18

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the changes in the role of elementary principals and research bodies of literature that discuss and analyze the elementary principal's role in regard to professional development. This chapter is divided into four major sections. The first section will explore how educational reform has dictated a change in the role of elementary principals. Next, characteristics of effective professional development will be analyzed. The last two sections will examine the literature on why elementary principals take an active role in providing professional development and how the elementary principal implements professional development and evaluates the effects of professional development on instruction.

The Ever Changing Role of the Elementary Principal

In the 1830's the first public elementary school programs were established in the United States. Up until the 1900's the elementary school programs witnessed many changes (Button and Provenzo, 1989). By the mid 1950's waves of educational reform had been implemented to change the educational system.

One new concept recognized the interrelationship between the structural characteristics and personal characteristics of individuals in an organization. Studies revealed that leadership within the organization is described in terms of behaviors that give structure to the work of the group. Many researchers began studying this concept. In 1965, Matthew Miles used his organizational health metaphor to examine the

properties of schools while, Halpin (1963) defined organizational climate as the indicator and measure of schools' internal environment structure.

The principal is the tool that shapes a school culture. The principal establishes a forum for defining a clear vision of what needs to be accomplished and then works on how to do it (Lashway, 2002). Changes in the climate are not the only changes which existed in the public elementary school programs. American public elementary schools programs have seen many other changes.

The ways in which instruction is delivered changed from year to year. During the past decade, reform efforts have focused on setting high standards for what students learn and designing tools to measure their progress. The focus is shifting to classroom teachers as the critical link between setting goals and helping students reach them. James W. Stigler and James Hiebert explain in The Teaching Gap, published in 1999, "Teaching is the next frontier in the continuing struggle to improve schools. Standards set the course, and assessments provide the benchmarks, but it is teaching that must be improved to push us along the path to success" (Hiebert and Stigler, 1999, p.4). Success is defined mostly in terms of student achievement.

Clearly, the United States is one of the industrial nations concerned about strengthening student achievement. Prompted by the many reports expressing alarm about the state of education, beginning with A Nation At Risk in 1983, President Bush convened all fifty governors for a summit on education in 1989. They agreed to set educational goals for the nation. The elected leadership placed this clear target to encourage the focusing of resources on common agenda. Even before the political action, a multitude of reports endorsed the need for change. Ann Lieberman studied the

emerging educational reform networks which offer the guidance and support suggested by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Calling them "intentional learning communities," she notes what fosters a culture of continuous inquiry, flexible activities, and responsible structures. She emphasizes that one of the most important, yet least understood, aspects is the role of leadership in the building.

For principals, there are many opportunities for leadership behavior to influence the organizational climate of the school. It is important for principals to note that the climate is not related to how a principal sees his behaviors, but according to how the teachers perceive his behaviors (Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp, 1991). Climate alone may not be enough if school reform is desired.

In order for change to occur in a school, principals must focus their attention on their facilitative powers to promote the desired change. Transformational leadership provides such a focus. In 1978, James McGregor Burns proposed the idea of transformational leadership. He described the leader as a group facilitator who maintained a sense of group over individual self-interest. Bass extended this into other contexts in 1987. Neither Burns nor Bass studied schools but rather based their work on political leaders, Army officers, or business executives. Although the definition of transformational leadership is still vague, evidence shows that there are similarities in transformational leadership whether it is in a school setting or a business environment (Hoover, 1991, Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990). Transformational leadership has been described as "value added" (Avolio & Bass, 1988, Leithwood, 1994). Transformational leadership is defined as an incentive based process that encourages staff to improve their practices/teachings. The transformational leader paves the way for individual

contributors to do their best work, driving value to the bottom line through outstanding products and services that benefit customers (students). Bass and Avolio argue that transformational leadership is represented by contingent reward and management-by-exception, management of a willingness of both the leader and follower to adjust to the demands of each exchange opportunity. Principals serve to empower their teachers when they "broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance for the purpose and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group" (Bass, 1990, p.21). The role of the transformational leader as defined by Silins (1993) was that the leader and teacher bond within a collaborative change process. By doing so, Silins believes the performance of the entire organization will be impacted. Richard Sagor would also contend that the leader and teacher must work collaboratively; "The issue is more than simply who makes which decisions, rather it is finding a way to be successful in collaboratively defining the essential purpose of teaching and learning and then empowering the entire school community to become energized and focused" (Sagor, 1992, p.13).

Transformational theory emphasizes emotions and values over rational processes (Boas, 1999). This approach helps explain why leaders can influence others to make sacrifices, commit to difficult objectives, and achieve more than anticipated, all of which are needed in order to make change occur within the school setting.

There is considerable evidence that transformational leadership is effective. Most studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership is positively related to

indicators of leadership effectiveness including motivation, performance, and follower satisfaction.

Follower satisfaction, Foster (1990) advocated, is the result from leaders including followers in the change process. The entire organization having the same values, purposes, and goals, creates change successfully. Tucker-Ladd, Merchang, and Thurston (1992) described reform leaders for change as transformational in nature, engaging others to inspire and accomplish goals beyond their own self-interest. They go on to say that leaders must evaluate the effects of improvement efforts in terms of variety of student outcomes.

Leithwood and others have studied transformational leadership within the content of school reform. Leithwood (1992, 1994) has advocated for a move from instructional leadership to transformational leadership within the challenge of school restructuring. He argues that commitment to change rather than "control" over the instruction is at the heart of school change. Leithwood's findings suggest that transformational school leaders be in constant pursuit of three fundamental goals:

1. Assisting staff in developing and maintaining a collaborative and professional school culture.

2. Fostering the development of staff skills and knowledge.

3. Helping staff solve problems together effectively (Leithwood, 1992).

Leithwood (1994) found, in reviewing seven qualitative studies looking at the effects of transformational leadership using large numbers of schools, that transformational leadership practices had significant direct and indirect effects on the

progress school experiences. He, along with other researchers, believes that instructional leadership was no longer the focal point of principals. Leithwood continues to say that instructional leadership is actually imbedded into transformational leadership. Terry (1996) also gives insight into transformational and instructional leadership.

Terry (1996) hypothesized that the transformational leader's job is to integrate both the management and the instructional leadership domains, which would lead to transforming the principalship and the school itself. He suggests that the principalship reflect management strategies only. Terry adds that the transformational leader is one who transforms the principalship and the organization by integrating the management and instructional leadership domain. The management domain is, as previously stated, left up to the principal, while the instructional domain is left to the district curriculum specialist to carry out. The principal, district curriculum specialists, and head/lead teachers would provide staff development opportunities to the remaining staff members. This, then, would empower teachers.

Transformational leaders use specific strategies as outlined by Sagor, Leithwood, Leithwood and Jantzi, Poplin:

- Visit each classroom daily, assist in classrooms; encourage teachers to visit one another's classes.

- Involve the whole staff in deliberating on school goals, beliefs, and visions at the beginning of the year.

- Help teachers work smarter by actively seeking different interpretations and checking out assumptions; place individual problems in the larger perspective of the whole school; avoid commitment to preconceived solutions; clarify and

summarize at key points during meetings; and keep the group on task but do not impose your own perspective.

- Use action research teams or school improvement teams as a way of sharing power. Give everyone responsibilities and involve staff in governance functions. For those not participating, ask them to be in charge of a committee.

- Find the good things that are happening and publicly recognize the work of staff and students who have contributed to school improvement. Write private notes to teachers expressing appreciation of special efforts.

- Survey the staff often about their wants and needs. Be receptive to teacher's attitudes and philosophies. Use active listening and show people you truly care about them.

- Let teachers experiment with new ideas. Share and discuss research with them. Propose questions for people to think about.

- Bring workshops to your school where it's comfortable for staff to participate. Get teachers to share their talents with one another. Give a workshop yourself and share information with staff on conferences that you attend.

- When hiring new staff, let them know you want them actively involved in school decision-making; hire teachers with a commitment to collaboration. Give teachers the option to transfer if they can't wholly commit themselves to the school's purpose.

- Have high expectation for teachers and students, but don't expect 100 percent if you aren't also willing to give the same. Tell teachers you want them to be the best teachers they can be.

- Use bureaucratic mechanisms to support teachers, such as finding money for a project or providing time for collaborative planning during the workday. Protect teachers from the problems of limited time, excessive paperwork, and demands from other agencies.

- Let teachers know they are responsible for all students, not just their own classes (Sagor, Leithwood, Leithwood and Jantzi, Poplin, 1992).

From the behavioral standpoint, transformational leadership begins with self-development and extends to the coaching and developing of others. It is about making sure that the people around you have the tools and resources they require to do their best work. It is about taking personal responsibility to remove the barriers that inhibit the optimal sustainable performance of people who follow you. This kind of leadership is about recognizing the explicit and implicit values of individuals, networks, and relationships and providing energy and inspiration for others to achieve the mutual aim of the enterprise. Transformational leadership encompasses shared decision-making and redistribution of responsibilities among all, while instructional leadership moves the school toward academic success with the principal as lead teacher.

Too often, however, instructional leadership is easier said than done. Michael Fullan, Dean of Education Studies, University of Toronto, examines the daily accountability of principals in What's Worth Fighting for in the Principalship. His thesis is this: To do everything is impossible. True school leaders will reframe their role to

design continuous learning for everyone in the school organization. The personal experience of DuFour supports this thesis.

"Eventually, after years as principal, I realized that even though my efforts had been well-intentioned, and even though I had devoted countless hours each school year to those [instructional leadership] efforts, I had been focusing on the wrong questions. I had focused on the questions, what are teachers teaching, and how can I help them teach it more effectively? Instead, my efforts should have been driven by the questions, to what extent are the students learning the intended outcomes of each course, and what steps can I take to give both students and teachers the additional time and support they need to improve learning?" (DuFour, 2002, p.13). This shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, DuFour believes, is more than semantics. When learning becomes the preoccupation of the school, when all the school's educators examine the efforts and initiatives of the school through learning that is taking place, the structure and culture of the school begins to change in substantive ways. The principal fosters this structural and cultural transformation when shifting the emphasis from helping individual teachers improve instruction to helping teams of teachers ensure that students achieve the intended outcomes of their schooling. More succinctly, teachers and students benefit when principals function as learning leaders rather than instructional leaders.

DuFour and Fullan believe that principals who want to become better leaders need to be a learning leader and lead by example: "as designed and role model for maximum teaching and learning, every day of the school year . . . that job is what's worth fighting for" (Fullan, 1997, p.27). In his book, Fullan describes ten guidelines for individual action:

- Avoid "if only" statements, externalizing the blame and other forms of wishful thinking.

- Start small, think big.

- Don't over plan or over manage.

- Focus on fundamentals: curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, professional culture.

- Practice fearlessness and other positive forms of risk taking.

- Embrace diversity and resistance while empowering others.

- Build a vision in relation to both goals and change processes. Decide what you are **not** going to do.

- Build allies.

- Know when to be cautious.

- Give up the search for the "silver bullet" (Fullen, 1997, pp. 26-27).

He believes they need training, resources, and support to overcome difficulties they encounter while developing common outcomes, writing common assessments, and analyzing student achievement data. They need access to relevant, timely information on their own students' performance, help in writing specific goals that focus on student learning rather than on their team activities. They need encouragement, recognition, and celebration as they progress. All of these tasks fall on the principal. DuFour is convinced that "a school cannot make the transition to the collaborative, results-oriented culture of a professional learning community without a principal who focuses on learning" (DuFour, 2002, pp. 14-15).

Today's successful schools have increasingly become centers of shared inquiry decision- making. In such schools, instructional leadership is shared with teachers, and in its most progressive forms is being cast as coaching, reflection, collegial investigation, study teams, explorations into uncertain matters, and problem solving (Glanz & Neville, 1997). Discussions of alternatives, not directives or criticism, are the focus, and administrators and teachers are working together as communities of learners engaged in professional and moral service to students. By making this happen, principals have a direct effect on teachers and classroom instruction (Sheppard, 1996).

Researchers, such as Ash and Persall, believe that successful schools are organized around student learning, and the instructional leadership ability of the principal. Based on their studies, Ash and Persall (2000) designed a professional development program, "Leadership for High Performing Organizations," which they are currently providing to principals of schools placed on alert by the Alabama State Department of Education and to all principals in Montgomery County, Alabama. The goal is to help principals become well-prepared instructional leaders who understand teaching and learning, curriculum and assessment, and who have the ability to engage in shared leadership.

Traditional leadership centers on control and top-down management. Administrators are often seen as the "owners" of important knowledge and as rationing that knowledge only when the situation demands. This approach to leadership impedes school improvement and creates a static environment. Ash and Persall's leadership program is divided into five modules, each of which has its own handbook and web-based activities. The content, based on processes that research indicates, leads to

effective schools, is tied to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation process and the Alabama professional educator personnel evaluation (PEPE).

Many principals find themselves spending most of their time simply managing the building and not having enough time for teaching and learning. The purpose of the "Leadership for High-Performing Organizations" program is to help principals become instructional leaders. To better understand effective instructional leadership, Ash and Persall examined the traits of seven outstanding school principals. The principals shared the following characteristics: They model behavior they want to see in others; talk about learning, attend seminars, read, and continuously reexamine the effectiveness of their efforts. They lead the faculty in discussions of school improvement by sharing research articles, and they require faculty and staff to share knowledge gained from workshops, visits, and seminars. They build a culture of innovation where everyone is involved in action research, working to improve student learning, and they view teacher's resistance to change as their primary challenge. Many principals would agree that managing all of the above is not an easy task when principals are more accountable than ever for how well teachers teach and students learn. The schools of yesterday and today are not the kind of schools needed for tomorrow. New strategies, new processes, and a new mindset are needed, in effect, a new paradigm of instructional leadership.

The principal's need to focus more on the learning opportunities provided students and on the work students do, and less on the teaching process and the work teachers do. Direct supervision of the work of the teacher, although still a necessary part of the instructional improvement process, is of less importance than working

collaboratively with teachers in planning, scheduling, and leading students in academic work. To be successful, the principal must become adept at managing by wandering around (MBWA), which is really the art and practice of listening and learning. "It is the quintessential practice for building relationships and establishing trust. MBWA gets the leader out of the office, increasing visibility and contact with the people doing the work" (Ash & Persall, 1999, p.20).

Ash and Persall believe that the principal's direct customer is the teacher. Thus, the work of the principal begins with spending time with teachers. It is through this process that teacher leadership is likely to emerge. Teacher leadership is best served when the principal understands and values the instructional leadership role. In this role, specific value-added activities both inform and drive the school improvement process. The shifting roles of the school principalship and the need to build successful learning communities within schools is vital given the many demands on the principalship and the influences of restructuring, reform, and change in schools (Speck, 1995). The principal plays a pivotal role in building a school learning community (Barth, 1990; Glickman, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1996, 1994; Sizer, 1996). In a school learning community, learning is promoted and valued as an ongoing, actively collaborative, collegial process that includes dynamic dialogues that get at the heart of schooling and learning to improve the quality of learning (Speck, 1999).

Martha Speck (1995) developed "The Principal Model" which provides an overview of the principalship. It suggests the balance of roles which deal with the first role, the instructional role. This role provides the principal with "the focus and the ability to understand his or her students and school and provide, with the focus and the ability to

understand curriculum, instruction, and assessments that will help every student in the school succeed to his or her full potential" (Speck, 1995, p.42). Another role represented in Speck's model is the leader role, which encompasses being able to appraise the present, anticipate the future, and help develop a school vision in collaboration with various stake holders. The role of manager, Speck's third component, includes preparing, planning, organizing, carrying out and directing improvement. Finally, Speck identifies the last role as the inner person role. This role describes the personal beliefs and internal balance that the principal needs to successfully carry out duties and responsibilities on a daily basis. Focusing on role number one as described by Speck, the instructional aspect role must encompass professional development. "The principalship is a position that is absolutely critical to educational change and improvement. A good principal can create a climate that can foster excellence in teaching and learning, while an ineffective one can quickly thwart the progress of the most dedicated reformers" (Richard Riley, Secretary, U. S. Department of Education, 1999).

Secretary Riley's words, spoken during one of the Department of Education's Town Meetings in June, 1999, relayed the sentiments of educators and policy makers throughout the country. And yet, meaningful, ongoing professional development for the nation's instructional leaders has been the exception, not the rule. An example of making this more of a rule as opposed to an exception of the rule is what occurred in its 2001 budget, the Clinton administration proposed allocating $40 million toward its School Leadership Initiative, a plan to establish regional training centers for principals. Throughout the country, many private foundations also earmarked significant dollars to programs and research related to professional development for principals.

Many reformers identify one of the most important characteristics of an effective school leader as the ability to provide strong instructional leadership. Instructional leadership includes the design of instructional strategies, supervision and evaluation of programs, and the development of curriculum and graduation requirements. Principals must have a deep understanding of the processes of teaching and learning, including knowledge of new teaching methods as well as student construction of knowledge and skills in problem solving. Instructional leadership looks different in different districts. Principals may take on varying levels of direct involvement in classrooms and other instructional activities. Some may spend considerable time in classrooms, while others may create teams of teachers or teacher-leaders to carry out their goals for instructional improvement. The key elements of good instructional leadership are an ability to provide informed feedback, guidance, support, and professional development (Heck, 1992). The need for quality professional development for principals has become more crucial than ever so that teachers to gain professional growth.

"Unfortunately, principal development, which has traditionally been given an even lower priority by school systems than teacher development, too often turns participants into passive recipients of information rather than active participants in solving important educational problems" (NSDC Executive Director Sparks, 2000, p.4). Sparks suggests there are four crucial components of quality learning programs for principals: standards-focused, intellectually rigorous, job-embedded, and sustained.

Standards -focused:

Principals and teachers jointly develop school improvement plan and a year-long professional development plan for their building. Principals are the leaders in providing professional development, as well as being active learners.

Intellectually rigorous/Focused learning:

Principals in one school district meet for a full day once a month with the day divided into two learning pieces. Time spent on policies, discipline codes, etc., is dramatically reduced. During the morning, principals share a common learning period. This common learning period could be the focus on an assessed state skill, such as writing. With this example, the principals would need to acquire knowledge on writing standards before analyzing samples of writing by their own students. The principals would then spend time studying these samples and compare them to state writing standards. The expected result is to help the principals develop their skills as instructional leaders in writing.

Job-embedded/Cohort groups:

The afternoon portion of the principals' monthly meeting is the component that Sparks believes is most unique. The principals are divided into groups according to their interests. For example, group topics could range from three to five different areas, depending on the size of the district. Topics could include integrating technology into instruction, developing leadership skills, knowledge work. A coach guides the work of each cohort and stays with them over time. Coaches should be former district principals or educators with some knowledge about the topic. The coaches also should have their own professional development for this role.

<u>Sustained/Assessment</u>

A smaller component of the principals' professional development program is their tri-annual evaluation. An evaluation team should be established. The evaluation team should include a central office administrator and 2-3 principals. At the start of each school year, in consultation with the evaluation team, each principal creates an individual growth plan. Each year, one of the three principals in the group has a summative evaluation. During the mid-year, the 2-3 principals meet at the principal's school for at least 90 minutes to talk in detail about the principal's growth. Principals can provide artifacts, create a portfolio, lead a walkthrough of their building, whatever they believe will demonstrate how they've met their goals. Although the central office administrator signs off on the evaluation, each of the other principals must sign the evaluation.

Once a successful principal professional development program has been established in the district, Speck believes that professional development for teachers is easily accomplished. The principal is a key player in ensuring the success of any professional development program designed to improve teacher efficacy and student achievement. While classroom teachers are the Practitioners who ultimately deliver instructional and curricular innovations, the principal is at the heart of the effort as the visionary, organizer, and evaluator. The principal's leadership promotes and ensures the success of the professional development program.

<u>Characteristics of Effective Professional Development</u>

The research base on professional development is extensive. For the most part, however, this research has documented the inadequacies of professional development and proposed solutions (Epstein, Lockard & Dauber, 1988; Griffin, 1983; Guskey, 1986;

Joyce & Showers, 1988; Liebman & Miller, 1979; Orlich, 1989; Wood & Thompson, 1980, 1993). Some researchers suggest that professional development efforts designed to facilitate change must be practitioner specific and focus principally on day to day activities at the classroom level (McLaughlin, 1990; Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977; Wise, 1991). While others indicate that individuals are detrimental to progress and more systemic or organizational approaches are needed (Tye & Tye, 1984; Waugh & Punch, 1987). McNair, Joyce, Diza & McKibbin believe that reforms in professional development must be initiated and carried out by teachers and school personnel. Others emphasize the most successful programs are those guided by a vision that sees beyond the walls of classrooms and schools (Barth, 1991; Clue, 1991; Mann, 1986; Wade). Some argue the most effective professional development efforts approach change in a gradual and incremental fashion, not expecting too much at one time (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Fullan, 1985; Mann, 1978; Sparks, 1983). Berman and McLaughlin and McLaughlin and March (1978) insist the broader the scope of a professional development program, the more effort is required of teachers; and the greater the overall change in teaching style attempted, the more likely the program is to elicit the enthusiasm of teachers and to be implemented well. Executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), Dr. Vincent L. Ferrandino, notes that the most effective professional development program for principals include:

- Self-assessment tools for strategies.

- Cohort groups for support and the exchange of information.

- Mentoring relationships to assist new principals.

The research base on professional development has grown significantly in the past 20 years. In 1957, approximately 50 studies on the topic were cited by the authors of the 56th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE). A current search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database since 1978 produced more than 5,600 citations containing professional development as a subject heading. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley describe a variety of effective models of professional development practices for the instructional leader:

- Activities are conducted in school settings and linked to other school-wide improvement efforts.

- Teachers are actively involved in planning, setting goals, and selecting activities.

- Self-instruction is emphasized as well as a variety of differentiated training opportunities.

- Ongoing support and resources are provided.

- Training is concrete and includes ongoing feedback, supervised trials, and assistance upon request.

- Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) identify characteristics of organizations where professional development is most successful: Staff members have a common, coherent set of goals and objectives that they have helped formulate, reflecting high expectations of themselves and their students.

- Administrators exercise strong leadership by promoting a norm of collegiality, minimizing status differences between their staff members and themselves,

promoting informal communication, and reducing their own need to use formal controls to achieve coordination.

- Administrators and teachers place high priority on staff development and continuous improvement of personal skills, promoting formal training programs, informal sharing of job knowledge, and a norm of continuous improvement applicable to all.

- Administrators and teachers make heavy use of a variety of formal and informal processes for monitoring progress toward goals, using them to identify obstacles to such progress and ways of overcoming these obstacles, rather than using them to make summary judgments regarding the competence of particular staff members (Conley and Bacharach, 1987).

- Knowledge, expertise, and resources, including time, are drawn on appropriately, yet liberally, to initiate and support the pursuit of staff development goals.

A considerable body of research now exists which examines the characteristics of an effective professional development program. This research base includes teacher in-service experiments; basic skills instruction; teacher effects research; implementation research; descriptive survey research on teachers' preferences and attitudes; and research on teacher expectations, principals and achievement testing (Gall and Renchler, 1985). These studies show that there are identifiable characteristics which contribute to the success of professional development programs.

Gall and Renchler believe an overall effective professional development program reflects clear program goals and the operational objectives define what participants will

learn and how they will be able to use the new learning. Content builds on their prior experiences, clearly relates to their home situations and prepares them to apply what they have learned. Research support for the selected program content is clear, providing the rationale for applications. Both knowledge and skills are included in an effective professional development program. They further believe that participant evaluation and accountability are integrated into the program to increase incentives for learning and application. Gall and Renchler's research provides the following characteristics of effective content for professional development programs:

- Programs are planned in response to assessed needs of the participants, and content matches the current development programs (Wood, et al. 1981; Griffin, 1982).

- The focus is school improvement rather than personal professional development (Gall and Renchler, 1985).

- Content is concrete and aimed at developing specific skills rather than just introducing new concepts. Theoretical basis or rationale is part of the content about new skills (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975; Joyce and Showers, 1980).

- Professional development focuses on job or program related tasks faced by teachers (Fullan, 1982; Purkey and Smith, 1983).

- There are clear, specific goals and objectives related to implementation (Wood, et al. 1981; Griffin, 1983; Orlich, 1984).

- Content is research based and is tied to student performance (Sparks, 1983; Gall and Renchler, 1985).

Smylie contends that the best professional development programs are ones that create a culture that promotes distributed leadership; "principals must assist teachers in becoming leaders in their schools" (Smylie, 1992, p. 63). Providing opportunities to serve on governance committees, mentor less experienced staff, coach peers, and support colleagues who want to seek certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are a few examples of how to begin creating a climate of professional development. Characteristics of effective professional development promotes teachers teaching teachers. Teachers who lead their peers through participation in lesson study and by working with principals to develop school improvement plans and further ideas for professional development exemplify components of effective professional development.

Little (1985) identifies two major characteristics of schools that contribute to successful professional development programs. First, these schools exhibit a norm of collegiality, wherein there is the expectation for shared work in a cooperative atmosphere for all teachers. Second, there is a school-wide norm of continuous improvement with high experimentation. Teachers work together with the understanding that the school will continue to improve.

Fullan cites Little's two norms when outlining features of characteristics of effective professional development. In addition, Fullan cites a shared purpose and a set of structures that supports school improvements. Those structures include organizational arrangements, roles and formal policies that explicitly create working conditions to support and inspire work toward school improvement; joint teaching and planning, professional development policies, new roles, and others are suggested as contributing to

school improvement. These factors, and the general climate produced in the school, contribute to the success of professional development efforts.

Why Principals Take a Role in Professional Development

Historically, state policy makers have paid little attention to the form, content or quality of professional development. Local school boards of education handle matters of professional development. In virtually every state, reform efforts are raising expectations for students and for teachers. Educators are being asked to master new skills and responsibilities in response to these reforms and to change their practice. In order to meet these new expectations, educators need to deepen their content knowledge and learn new methods of teaching. They need more planning time with colleagues to critically examine the new standards being proposed, and to revise curriculum (Corcoran, 1995). Corcoran further states that "they need opportunities to develop, master and reflect on new approaches to working with children. All of these activities fall under the general heading of professional development" (Corcoran, 1995, p.61).

A report released in December, 2001, by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) reveals that school districts spend less than 1 percent of their budgets on teacher training. NSDC urges districts to increase their professional development budgets to 7%, comparable to profits businesses invest in training their employees. Further, NSDC recommends that 25% of teachers' time, two hours out of every eight, should be devoted to their own learning (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2002). With these astounding percentages, it is no wonder principals must take a part in the professional development of their building. There are other reasons why principals take a role in professional development. Student achievement tops this list.

In the 1950s, principals were viewed as administrators who simply managed the schools. In the 1960s, with the urbanization of education, principals began to be viewed as street-level bureaucrats, that is, people who had to get things done on the ground level even as large scale policies were being developed and implemented by government agencies. The significant federal efforts focused on curriculum in the 1960s and early 1970s. The school effectiveness literature of the early 1980s, the classroom effectiveness literature, and the publication of A Nation At Risk, with its dire broadcast of the grim condition of American education, all synergized into a powerful spotlight focused on the principal.

A Nation At Risk created a context in which there was a heightened perception of need for school improvement (Hallinger, 1997). Both the school effectiveness research and the classroom effectiveness research identified principals as keys to schools' ability to implement the kinds of changes that would meet this need. Hallinger believes that "principals were now viewed as key to creating conditions in the school as a whole that would support improvement in student achievement" (Hallinger, 1997, p.31). This raised the instructional leadership role of the principal from the background to the foreground. In contrast to the prior era, when principals were talked about as change agents, that role focused on managing the policy change process in the school, and not exerting a leadership function over instruction. This shift from change agent to instructional leader was significant. Principals began to be overwhelmed by the volume and diversity of their responsibilities coupled with high public expectations. In the early 1980s, school systems, counties, and state departments of education geared up to try to provide principals with the knowledge that was thought to be important at that time. Unfortunately, the efforts of

state departments of education and leadership academies took the school and classroom effectiveness research far past its findings and ended up institutionalizing unrealistic expectations of principals as prime movers in effecting student achievement. Regardless of unrealistic or realistic expectations, principal are prime movers in effecting student achievement.

Nearly $3 billion will be made available to states through formula grants to prepare, train and recruit high quality teachers. This program has three goals: (1) to increase student academic achievement through the use of strategies based on scientifically based research in what works to improve teacher and principal quality; (2) to increase the number of highly qualified teachers and principals; and (3) to hold educational agencies and schools accountable for improvements in teacher quality and student academic achievement.

The "No Child Left Behind Act" that President Bush signed into law consolidates several smaller Federal programs into one comprehensive grant program for States, giving them flexibility to meet their teacher training, recruiting, and retention needs. This change will help to improve children's education by assisting States and districts to ensure that every classroom is lead by a highly qualified teacher. President Bush signed legislation for this program that appropriated a total of $2.85 billion to States, local educational agencies, and partnerships for 2002. This amount represents a 35% increase in teacher quality funds, as compared with 2001 (Katy, 2002).

In this era of accountability and high stakes testing, raising achievement scores is just one of the challenges confronting today's "super principals." According to a 1998 report published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP),

the typical elementary school principal, a decade ago, was a 45 year old white male who worked 40 hours a week with most of the summer off, had authority for 17 percent of his budget, and belonged to a principal's association or union. He spent little time in the classroom, functioning more as a manager, and aspired to ascend the career ladder. Today's principal works longer hours, is less appreciated, has greater accountability, and has little time to learn or think about how to manage competing demands and constituencies, according to the NAESP report (NAESP, 1998).

While still white and male, the typical principal is now 50 years old, with an annual salary of $61,000. He works ten hours a day at school and another eight hours on weekends or evenings. He controls 26% of the school's budget. Most of his time is spent in three areas: (1) staff supervision, (2) interaction with students, and (3) discipline/student management. The principal can retire at age 57 and eager to be relieved of work that was once rewarding (NAESP, 1998). The widespread demand to improve student performance is at a high. Forty-nine states now have mandated curriculum standards. Charter school, home schooling, vouchers, and other alternatives to traditional public schools have provoked new pressures no principal could have anticipated 15 years ago. According to the NAESP report, principals are now responsible for teacher involvement in instructional improvement, and for structuring opportunities for creative scheduling, teaming and project-based learning, so that teachers can work together during the school day to improve instruction to improve academic achievement. Therefore, the hiring of quality teachers is an important component.

Fullan contends that many principals do not have a say in which teachers get hired. In too many cases, the administrative office is solely responsible for hiring. In

urban school districts where teacher selection could play a significant role in student achievement, principals have far less authority than their suburban and rural counterparts. Since a majority of principals have the responsibility for supervision and evaluation, it is reasonable to expect that they have a choice in who will deliver the services they must evaluate. "Principals welcome the opportunity to select faculty for their school" (Fullan, 1998, p.8).

In Fullan's book, Change Forces – The Seuqel, 1999, the importance of professional learning communities are studied. Such communities, which he calls collaborative schools, are essential for success. There is a documented relationship between schools as professional communities and student achievement. Fullan outlines the characteristics of the staff as having a clear purpose for student learning, engaging in collaborative activity, and taking collaborative responsibility or student learning. Professional development must be supported with adequate resources, including time during the day, and must be based on the needs of the whole staff. It should also include specific targeted curriculum and assessment implementation days during the regular school year. These would form the basis of a cyclical review of all curriculum and assessment policy. Obviously, Fullan believes that professional development has a strong effect on improving student achievement.

Standardized tests have been used to measure school success in the United States, but these tests only allow a snapshot of student progress to be seen. Fullan believes that standardized test results correlate most strongly with socio-economic status, not with student learning. Leithwood and Aitken would agree; "Only a small range of the outcomes that educators wish for students can actually be measured. . ." (Leithwood and

Aitken, 1995, p.17). Accountability must play a part in student achievement. Testing doesn't create real accountability; accountability is a means by which individuals or organizations take responsibility for their actions so that those who depend on them can be assured that there are safeguards in place to encourage good practices and prevent bad practices. This is the role of the principal.

Research soundly demonstrates that when principals break down inequities and employ inclusive curriculum, and conflict resolution strategies, and address diverse student learning styles, student achievement improves.

Student achievement may be the primary reason why principals take a role in the professional development of their building, however, it is not the only reason. Districts, schools, administrators and teachers initiate, select and pursue professional development programs to gain personal professional development: a self-directed approach based on individual needs and choice, credentialing: successful completion of a program as a requirement for licensing or certification, and induction: supplementing skills and knowledge for the newly hired (Lanier and Little, 1986). Lanier and Little also note that principals take a role in the professional development programs to serve teachers as individual members of a profession, adding knowledge, skills, and intellectual vigor to professional life, satisfy bureaucratic and career advancement purposes, and to involve teachers as responsible members of an institution. They also agree with the research that primarily principals take a role in professional development for the purposes of improving academic successes in their schools. Since student achievement would involve all in the school, the principal-administrator's role would be to support that effort. Teamwork is vital. Mike Schmoker's research supports this concept.

How Principals Implement and Evaluate Professional Development Programs

In Results, the Key to Continuous School Improvement, Mike Schmoker identifies the three concepts that constitute the foundation for implementing positive improvement results as meaningful teamwork, clear measurable goals, and the regular collection and analysis of performance data. Principals must lead their school "through the goal-setting process in which student achievement data is analyzed, improvement areas are identified and actions for change are initiated" (Schmoker, 1999, p.16). He believes that this involves working collaboratively with staff and school community to identify discrepancies between current and desired outcomes, to set and prioritize goals to help close the gap, to develop improvement and monitoring strategies aimed at accomplishing the goals, and to communicate goals and change efforts to the entire school community. Principals must also ensure that professional development needs are identified in alignment with school improvement priorities and that these needs are addressed with appropriate professional learning opportunities. Educators continually search for these opportunities.

When speaking of professional development, Corcoran believes you must address context and its impact. DuFour would agree. DuFour believes that the most significant contribution a principal can make to develop others is creating an appropriate context for adult learning. "It is context that constitutes the norm for a given school that plays the largest role in determining whether professional development efforts will have an impact on that school" (DuFour, 2000, p.19). Once the importance of context to the effectiveness of professional development is recognized, principals will see important shifts. Professional development moves from the workshop to the workplace. Emphasis

shifts from finding the right trainers or guest speakers to the principal creating opportunities for staff to work together, engage in collective inquiry, and learn from one another. DuFour believes that the single most effective way principals can function as professional development leaders is to provide a school context that fosters job-embedded professional development. For most principals, the question then would be, "How do principals understand the context to which their school should strive?" DuFour would answer by saying that it is the "collaborative culture of a professional learning community" (DuFour, 2000, p.20). Creating a collaborative culture has been described as "the single most important factor" for successful school improvement initiatives, "the first order of business" for those seeking to enhance their schools' effectiveness, an essential requirement of improving schools, the critical element in reform efforts, and the most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement (Eastwood and Louis, 1992; Fullan, 1993; Newmann and Wehlage, 1995; and McLaughlin, 1995).

If principals are to create this context of collaborative culture in their schools, they must do more than encourage teachers to work together. Collaboration by invitation never works. Principals who function as professional development leaders create collaboration in the structure and culture of their schools. Principals must do more than organize teacher teams and hope for the best. They must provide the focus, parameters, and support to help teams function effectively. DuFour identifies five areas of professional development for principals:

1. Provide time for collaboration in the school day and school year.

2. Identify critical questions to guide the work of collaborative teams.

3. Ask teams to create products as a result of their collaboration.

4. Insist that teams identify and pursue specific student achievement goals.

5. Provide teams with relevant data and information.

Providing time for collaboration:

Providing time for teachers to work together does not require keeping students at home and /or an infusion of new resources. Principals as professional development leaders work with staff to identify no-cost strategies that enable teachers to work together on a regular basis while students are at school.

Guiding the collaborative teams:

The impact of providing time for teachers to engage in collective inquiry will be determined to a great extent by the nature of the questions teachers are considering. Principals must help teams frame questions that focus on critical issues of teaching and learning.

Creating products:

The best way to help teachers use their collaborative time productively is to ask them to produce and present artifacts in response to the critical questions they are considering. Examples might include statements of student outcomes by units of instruction, development of new units to address gaps between state standards and local curriculum, creation of common assessments and rubrics, articulation of team protocols or norms to guide the interactions of team members, or formulation of improvement plans based on analysis of student achievement data.

Identifying student achievement goals:

The driving force behind the effort to create a collaborative culture must be improved results. Principals foster improved results when they ask teaching teams to identify and pursue specific, measurable student achievement goals.

Data and information:

When every teacher has access to information on his or her students' performance in meeting agreed upon standards, on valid assessments in comparison to other students trying to achieve the same standards, both individual teachers and teams improve their effectiveness (Dufour, 2000).

In other words, when teachers operate within the context of a learning community, they are more likely to develop professional competence. And it is principals who play the critical role in forging conditions that give rise to the growth of professional communities in schools (Louis, Kruse, and Raywid, 1996). Thus, principals who function as professional development leaders recognize that professional development impacts improved student achievement. When thinking of what a staff needs to grow, principals, in collaboration with teachers, should identify the specific competencies that the students need to improve. Principals design purposeful, goal-oriented strategies and programs to develop those competencies; and they sustain the commitment to those strategies and programs until staff acquire and use the intended knowledge and skills. They assess the impacts of professional development not on the basis of the number of offerings or initial enthusiasm, but on the basis of improved results.

Principals, as professional development leaders, must model a commitment to their own ongoing professional development by demonstrating openness to new

experiences and ideas and a willingness to pose questions and engage in action research. By modeling this, they increase the likelihood that others on the staff will make similar commitments. Principals must identify areas for their own professional development that offer the most powerful steps for advancing the school toward its goals.

DuFour believes that principals need certain skills to advance toward school goals. These skills include developing powerful strategies for communicating effectively, becoming proficient in gathering and reporting data in ways that are meaningful to teachers, and learning how to encourage the hearts of those with whom they work. How can principals develop these aforementioned skills?

DuFour suggests that the principal should read voraciously, secure a mentor, participate in a principal network, create a guiding coalition within the school to help generate, assess, and refine improvement strategies, and look continuously for experiences that offer an opportunity for professional growth. Schools need strong, effective leadership from principals more than ever; "The nature of that leadership is not the autocratic 'my way or the highway' model of the past" as DuFour believes (Dufour, 2000, p.22). "The servant-leader first. . . it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. . . .The best test, and the most difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (Greenleaf, 1990, p.7). When principals focus on creating an environment for people to work toward a shared vision and honoring collective commitments to one another, an environment in which all staff are provided with structures and supports that foster collaborative efforts and continuous professional growth, an environment in which

each teacher has someone to turn to and talk to when confronted with challenges, they address one of the deepest yearnings in the hearts of most teachers: To make a positive difference in the lives of their students. In helping teachers address that fundamental need, they increase the likelihood that teachers will themselves become servant-leaders to their students. However, even programs that share a common vision and seek to attain comparable goals may need to follow very different ways to succeed.

The best that can be offered are procedural guidelines that appear to be critical to the professional development process. These guidelines are derived from research on professional development specifically, and the change process generally (Crandall, et.al., 1982; Fullan, 1991; Guskey, 1986; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Prochaska, DiCelemente & Norcross, 1992; McLaughlin, 1990).

As schools continue to move into different phases of educational reform, one factor that is consistent in each state, district, and school plan is the need for professional development. Every school improvement effort hinges on the smallest unit; in education, that is the classroom (McLaughlin, 1991). Professional development helps teachers learn new roles and teaching strategies that will improve student achievement. Educators have access to an expanding body of knowledge in regard to their content area, teaching techniques, and meaningful, engaged learning for all students. This information along with the current focus on educational standards has made it imperative that teachers be prepared to implement change in classrooms. Guskey states, "If improvement results from change, there must be something to initiate that change. And what's going to initiate it other than staff development?" (Guskey, 1991, p. 24). To demonstrate its commitment to professional development, the U.S. Department of Education has

developed a National Awards Program for Model Professional Development to evaluate and reward schools that have effective professional development programs.

Along with the demand for quality professional development comes the need to be accountable. Professional development programs must be assessed to document their value to the school organization, individual educator, and ultimately the students. To ensure the effectiveness of each professional development effort, the National Staff Development Council recommends that "evaluation must be seen as an ongoing process that is initiated in the earliest stages of program planning and continued beyond program completion" (Mullins, 1994, p.7). Mullins believes that the development of the evaluation strategy should commence at the beginning of the planning process for each professional development program. Mullins states: "identifying the purposes of the evaluation makes it possible to formulate the questions that will have to be answered as part of the evaluation..." (Mullins, 1994, p.6).

An evaluation team, as Mullins says, is a must in evaluating professional development. Members of an evaluation team are chosen and charged with the responsibility for evaluating each program. The team members must be appointed by the principal or superintendent. Since the results of an evaluation can have a major impact on the school, those appointed to the evaluation team should appreciate the importance of the task. Mullins states that the "team should be composed of dedicated, responsible professionals who are knowledgeable about staff development programs and practices" (Mullins, 1994, p.6). Principals who form the team need to stress the seriousness of the group's responsibilities. He adds that the evaluation team is responsible for "defining the scope of the project, selecting or creating data collection instruments or forms, analyzing

the data, and presenting the results" (Mullins, 1994, p.6).   As a preliminary step, evaluators determine the purposes of the evaluation; "the evaluation team should begin to formulate these questions by talking with as many of the stakeholders of the staff development program as possible" (Mullins, 1994, p.6).

The evaluation should be based on the intended outcomes of the school-improved effort. Mullins notes, that what is to be evaluated is guided by why the evaluation is being done and how the results are going to be used. Therefore, the evaluation team can ensure the quality of the professional development program by asking questions that focus on the value of the program in achieving school improvement goals.

Questions that focus on the value of the program have been outlined by Guskey and Sparks:

- Is the staff development program driven by clearly stated, measurable district or school objectives?

- Is a systemic view of the change process expressed in the program's plans? That is, is it recognized that change in one part of the system affects all other parts?

- Is the professional development program's content sufficiently grounded in research to ensure that, if properly implemented, it will produce the desired change in student outcomes? (Guskey & Sparks, 1991, pp. 17-18)

Evaluation of a professional development program has two important goals: to improve the quality of the program and to determine its overall effectiveness. Evaluation that is used to modify or improve a professional development program is called formative evaluation.   Formative evaluation helps ensure that each professional development

program meets the participants' needs and expectations, is a meaningful experience, and can be translated into action in the classroom. Some staff developers use formative evaluation on a daily basis during their programs.

Evaluation to determine the overall effectiveness of a professional development program is called summative evaluation. Summative evaluation is done at the conclusion of the program. It is collected at three levels: educator, practices, organizational changes, and student outcomes.

The first level of summative evaluation is to assess the changes in the educators as a result of participating in the professional development program. Participants are asked to describe changes in how they think, what they believe, and what they do in the classroom (Guskey & Sparks, 1991). They describe their own professional growth and evaluate the program in meeting their personal and professional goals. Such changes in participants can be determined through questionnaires, observations, interviews, self-assessment instruments, and analysis of records.

The second level of summative evaluation is to assess the ways in which the school organization has changed. This assessment is critical because research shows that organizational climate and culture strongly influence both initial and continued use of innovation (Joyce, 1990). Change in the school organization can be determined through interviews, questionnaires, observations, analysis of documents such as budgets and policies, and minutes of meetings (Guskey & Sparks, 1991). To assess this level of change, evaluators can look for increased collaboration, an improved relationship between administration and teachers, and general changes in the culture of the school. Evaluation of a professional development program does not always produce positive

results. A summative evaluation process, if poorly designed or implemented, can result in less positive results.

Implementation of evaluating the effectiveness of professional development programs may have pitfalls. Fine (1995) believes that evaluations of professional development programs often focus on superficial issues (sometimes called the "happiness quotient") rather than on the substantive impact on teacher practice and student learning (Fine, 1995). He believes planning for the evaluation of professional development programs sometimes is done as an afterthought. It is important to think about and design the evaluation process at the beginning of an initiative rather than to tag it on later. From the beginning, the evaluation plan is critical to determine the evaluation's audience (for example, teachers, school board members, and parents) and the questions that will be of interest to each. The audience and their interests should drive both the approach and the tools used in the evaluation.

Evaluation of a professional development activity often consists of an evaluation form filled out at the end of the activity. Such timing does not allow for corrections to be made or concerns to be addressed during the activity. To ensure that programs are useful and relevant, the participants' feedback and comments should be collected at intervals during the program and used to modify and improve it.

Failure to consider how data will be used is another pitfall. All too often, after the evaluation has been completed, the data may be set aside and forgotten. Thorough evaluations planning should consider how the data will be used. The evaluation process should be designed so that the data can be used to inform and adjust, not merely to summarize and be set aside. To ensure that evaluation efforts are put to good use, the

evaluation team would use the collective data to make recommendations for the implementation of future professional development programs.

A third pitfall could be, if the evaluation team fails, to allocate sufficient resources for collection and analysis of data. The evaluation process and instruments should be designed to mesh with available resources. Short checklists commonly are used as evaluation tools because they quickly gather data; however, they may not gather any useful information. On the other hand, long surveys or interviews may yield minimal results if no resources for analysis are available.

Staff developers commonly ask for feedback immediately following a professional development program, but that response rarely accounts for the long-term impact of the experience. A follow-up evaluation, completed after teachers have had time to understand and implement what they learned in a professional development activity, is more useful in assessing changes in teacher practice and student learning.

Evaluation may seem like a time-consuming process that requires technical skills beyond those possessed by most teachers and administrators. Early in the school improvement process, staff members may feel a strong desire to solve problems by quickly moving to some type of action. The discussion of the evaluation process at this time may seem like an unwelcome and unnecessary intrusion into their work. In addition, evaluation questions related to measurable outcomes and indicators of success may seem difficult to answer, especially if the staff members are not accustomed to thinking in those terms.

The evaluation process must be stressed and clearly explained so that all members involved with professional development programs understand and embrace the value of this process.

If not embraced and implemented throughout development, an accountable, quantifiable, and effective professional development program will be nigh impossible and will eventually negatively impact on any school system's efforts at cultivating a collaborative culture of a professional learning community (DuFour, 2000).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

"Education is what survives when what has been learned is forgotten."
E.F. Skinner

Introduction

The search for the role of an elementary principal in educational reform is at the forefront of our nation's education agenda. Since the 1960s American schools have undergone criticism for educational reform, which called for major changes in ways teachers teach to ways principals lead. A study and analysis of a selection of principals from the Western Pennsylvania Academy of Principals and those principals who have been involved in the elementary reform movement, is essential to ensuring effective principalship.

Statement of the Problem

How do elementary principals provide and evaluate professional development in regard to instruction?

Research Questions

The primary research question is, "How does the elementary principal's leadership role promote professional development?" This question suggests additional investigations including:

- What does the literature say about the role of the principal?

- What are the characteristics of effective professional development?

- What does the literature say are the reasons why elementary principals provide professional development?

- How do elementary principals find time to incorporate professional development?

person being interviewed, without interference from the perspective of the person being interviewed, without interference from the interviewer's preconceived notions (Patton, 1980).

Sampling

The sampling of this study will be made from a selection from the Principals Academy of Western Pennsylvania, which is a part of the Cohort 10, and those principals who have been involved in elementary reform. Merriam believes that "in the final analysis, a good informant is one who can express thoughts, feelings, opinions, and perspective on the topic being studied" (Merriam, 1988, p. 76).

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews will be used to collect data regarding experiences and perceptions of five elementary principals of the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy and those principals who have been involved in elementary reform.

Interviews gather information regarding individual's experiences and knowledge, opinions, beliefs, and feelings. Interviews reveal demographic data that may be a variable in some research topics.

According to Patton, interviews such as these can be most effective since philosophies, feelings, and attitudes are revealed through personal responses, have advantages as a data gathering technique. "In areas where human motivation is revealed through actions, feelings, and attitudes, the interview can be most effective" (Patton, 1980, p. 278).

Interview Questions

During the interview, the researcher wants to discover what is " in and on someone else's mind" (Patton, 1980, p. 278). It is suggested that some types of questions should be avoided in an interview. For example, a series of single questions that does not allow the

respondent to answer one by one should be avoided as well as close-ended questions as they provide no information to the interviewer.

The following interview questions were developed to guide the direction of the interview. They were shaped by the review of literature as well as through consultation with the researcher's advisor.

The following questions served as the basis from which the specific interview ensued. They provided structure for the interviewer.

1. Please tell me about your current position in the (identified) school district and how long you have held this position; include experiential and educational background.

2. How would you characterize the climate of your school? What obstacles did you face and overcome in order to obtain the climate you desired?

3. Describe your philosophy regarding professional development and explain the role you play in the professional development of your staff?

4. What characteristics define an effective professional development?

5. How do you find time to incorporate professional development programs, and how do you incorporate professional development programs?

6. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of professional development programs?

7. What percentage of the budget is designated for professional development?

Additional comments that the principals share will also be pursued through reflective listening and follow up questions.

Interviewer and Respondent Interaction

According to Merriam, good respondents are those who can express thoughts, feelings, and opinions on the topic being studied. Participants usually enjoy sharing expertise with an interested and sympathetic listener. Merriam states that "the interviewer-respondent interaction is a complex phenomenon. Both parties bring biases, predispositions, attitudes, and physical characteristics that color the interaction and the data elicited. A skilled interviewer accounts for these factors in order to evaluate the data being obtained. Taking a stance that is non-judgmental, sensitive, and respectful of the respondent is but a beginning point in the process" (Merriam, 1988, p. 87).

Recording the Data

There are three basic ways to record the interview data: to tape record the interview, to take notes during the interview, and to write down as much as can be remembered as soon after the interview as possible. Using a tape recorder ensures that everything said is preserved for analysis. Taking notes is recommended only when mechanical recording is not feasible. Writing down as much as can be remembered as soon after the interview is a possible method. Post interview notes allow the investigator to monitor the process of data collection as well as to begin analysis of the information itself. (Merriam, 1988).

For this study, the researcher will use all three methods to record the data, with the permission of the participants.

Data Analysis

A meaningful analysis of the data will not be possible if analysis is begun after all data are collected. According to Merriam, getting started in data analysis involved the recognition that it is best done in conjunction with data collection.

Piantanida and Garman suggest that after the data collection, the researcher should organize the gathered information. In this study, the data will be organized according to individual respondents to each question.

The second stage in analyzing the data according to Piantanida and Garman involves description. This analysis will involve sorting and categorizing the data. Categories will come from the literature review, specifically, the role of the principals in the reform process, and themes of professional development and academic achievement.

The next step would be to search through the data for patterns of similarities and to transcribe the information into a data file. Reviewing the patterns in the data file and developing a coding system based on this information will be completed.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In this chapter, the statement of the problem and interview questions were restated. The theoretical framework, methodology, and sampling selections were established. Data collection procedures and analytical methods were described. Issues related to the validity, reliability, and analysis of the results were presented.

CHAPTER IV

Interpretation

"Union gives strength."
Aesop

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the role of the principal in finding ways to provide professional development throughout the school year and evaluating the effects of professional development in regard to instruction. This study will also investigate the commonalities of qualities among elementary school principals in regard to professional development. This chapter includes a profile of each school district, as provided by the respective elementary principals in a structured interview. A discussion of each research question and a report of major and minor themes follow.

Profile of the School Districts

The five elementary principals who were the focus of this study are similarly situated in elementary schools that are suburban-like communities that are relatively financially stable. All five elementary buildings studies have less than 10% minority students and between 2% and 5% are from low income families. One of the elementary buildings is relatively small, serving 350 students, while two elementary buildings serve between 550 and 600 students.

Elementary Principal A:

Tenure of Elementary Principal: 17 years

Community Type: Suburban like

Student Population: 626; 4th-6th grades

Racial Make-up: 90% Caucasion; 9% Oriental; 1% African-American

Annual Average Income: $75,000

Elementary Principal A described his school as one that is located in a community that is above average income area. When asked to describe the climate of his school, the response was positive. Principal A described the organizational climate as being creative, motivated, and energetic. He believes that his teachers demonstrate leadership abilities that express their intense focus on continuous improvement of student achievement. In enhancing student achievement, Principal A believes that his role includes being an instructional leader and guiding teams and committees in the use of achievement and performance data. He believes setting high expectations for quality instruction and student performance contributes to the positive organizational climate.

Elementary Principal B:

Tenure of Elementary Principal: 11 years

Community Type: Suburban like

Student Population: 550; K-6th grades

Racial Make-up: 96% Caucasian; 3% Oriental; 1% African-American

Annual Average Income: $60,000

Elementary Principal B described her school as one that is located in a community that is in above average income area with a growing population. Her organizational climate is described as being a team like approach with routines established by the staff with her supervision. She believes strongly in being a facilitator and believes that student achievement should be a priority for all staff. The physical environment was described as being reflective of school-wide themes and philosophies.

The parent community is involved in Parent Teacher Association and many volunteers are used

in the classrooms.

Elementary Principal C:

Tenure of Elementary Principal: 5 years

Community Type: Suburban like

Student Population: 345; K-4th grades

Racial Make-up: 90% Caucasian; 6% Hispanic; 2% Oriental; 2% African-

                                       American

Annual Average Income: $42,000

This building has undergone many changes in the past 9 years. Elementary Principal C explained that prior to her principalship at this particular building, this building had 4 different principals in the past 5 years. This principal described her staff welcoming with resistance. She explained that many of the teachers made comments like "I wonder if she is going to stay..." and because of these comments, Elementary Principal C believes that most of their resistance was due to this belief. Although, it has taken four years for her to create an organizational climate, she now describes the result as one that was collaborative and based on a team collaboration of ideas and philosophies. She made reference to a belief statement that the staff came up with after two years into her principalship. The belief statement is indicative of the organizational climate as described above.

Elementary Principal D

Tenure of Elementary Principal: 4 years

Community Type: Suburban like

Student Population: 309; K-4th grades

Racial Make-up: 97% Caucasion; 1% Oriental; 2% African-American

Annual Average Income: $40,000

The organizational climate in this building is one that is described as child- centered with a heavy focus on a standards-based classroom. Obstacles that this principal had to face in order to obtain this type of climate were low test scores, dissension among the staff and resistance to change. His first year and a half he served as an administrative intern. He believes that perhaps some of the resistance to change was because of his title. Once he was named Principal, he says, "things changed for the betterment of our building." Additionally, a change in parental support was evident once named principal.

Elementary Principal E

Tenure of Elementary Principal: 2 years

Community Type: Suburban like

Student Population: 220; K-4th grades

Racial Make-up: 80% Caucasion; 2% Hispanic; 8% African-American

Annual Average Income: $32,000

In Elementary Principal E's building, the climate has been set by the physical environment. This principal believes that this building, which is the oldest in her district, should be closed for renovations. It is not handicapped accessible and has many physical problems that exist daily. Entering this building seems to pose problems. Elementary Principal E explains that the front entrance pf the building faces a busy intersection. When visitors arrive they must park in the back. There are no sidewalks for visitors to walk on to gain entrance to the front of the building where the office is located. Therefore, the visitors ring the bell in the back and, once let in, actually could walk throughout the building freely before following the district policy and signing in at the office. Elementary Principal E believes that this is a potential safety problem

and continues to look at alternative visiting procedures.

Secondly, the building is dark inside with dark, old, brown carpeting. The walls are covered with some type of wallpaper that looks more like shelving contact paper. The top of the walls is a cream color but badly stained. The bottom portion of the wall is dark yellow. She claims that this building is truly in need of a "face lift". Although the student body comes from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, the majority of the students reside in either one of the two low-income homes. Elementary Principal E believes that low income plays some part in their low test scores. At this time, student achievement is the biggest problem this building faces. This building has been on the Warning List by Pennsylvania Department of Education for not meeting the standards outlined for schools in the 2002-2003 school year. She believes the physical environment has set the tone for the teachers and students. In the past two years she focused on changing the organizational climate of her building in hopes that this combined with professional development ideas, would increase student achievement.

Interview Questions

1. Describe your philosophy regarding professional development and explain the role you play in the professional development of your staff?

Elementary Principal A:

The major philosophy regarding professional development as described by Elementary Principal A focuses on specific building initiatives. The following building initiatives have been worked on in Elementary Principal A's building for the past 5 years:

*Student Achievement

*Character Education

*Student Assessment

*Student Technology

Elementary Principal A stated, "I believed in personalized staff development coupled with a thematic approach to move district or building initiatives forward. Decisions regarding professional development should be made with collaboration between and among all stakeholders." He further explains his role as the facilitator in guiding all stakeholders to meet the building and district goals. Elementary Principal A firmly believes that success is measured by student achievement. Therefore, one of his major building goals is centered around continuously improving test scores. Through professional development, he believes, teachers learn how to raise test scores. There is a variety of professional development that he advocates for raising test scores: instruction on differentiated learning, cooperative learning techniques, and reading strategies, to name a few.

Elementary Principal B:

When describing her philosophy regarding professional development, Elementary Principal B states that "all educators must be life long learners." It is evident that Elementary Principal B places high priority on research: "...research in the field provides valuable information about how students learn and teachers should make every effort to be informed of current research." Although Elementary Principal B believes that teachers should seek out professional development, she believes that districts should provide professional development to address school district initiatives.

In describing her role in professional development, she stresses the planning and presenting staff development in content area reading strategies. She also believes that her role in professional development is to help teachers reach goals set individually and as a building and district. Additionally, she states that it is her job in obtaining knowledge in the areas that her

teachers show interest. Elementary Principal B believes that her own professional development must be ongoing. Perhaps, as she states, "this is the most important role."

Elementary Principal C:

Elementary Principal C regards professional development as the major reason why Elementary School C's test scores are above the state's average. She goes on to say, "professional development means everyone teaching and everyone learning." The principal's role, as seen by Elementary Principal C, is to develop improvement plans and set academic goals with teachers for building and district goals. This principal believes that principals "are the instructional leaders and should model expectations and continual professional growth." Through professional development, Elementary Principal C believes, staff members work collaboratively toward solving a problem or working toward a common goal(s) that are predetermined by all teachers and the principal. An example given by Elementary Principal C was that her faculty meetings are set up in a way in which every teacher has a turn throughout the school year to "teach" each other a teaching strategy, an assessment technique, etc. that could be used to read a common goal or solve a problem.

Elementary Principal D:

Professional development as a vital component of a successful staff and building includes the main philosophy of Elementary Principal D. He believes that "this is one way to keep teachers updated on the most current trends in education and provide teachers with more tools to help meet the needs of all of their students". He further expresses his belief that professional development should be provided at both the district and building level. Additionally, his role in professional development includes organizing and facilitating the building level professional development. Another way in which he provides professional development is through the

distribution of materials to the staff. Continuous learning for the staff is a continuous role he believes he must play in the professional development process.

Elementary Principal E:

Elementary Principal E states, "My philosophy regarding professional development is that it is a continual; and ongoing process for everyone from the superintendency to the novice teacher. Professional development is a grassroots effort that is to be guided by the building level principal as the instructional leader. I also see professional development as an effort that needs to be a focus of central office administration, again addressing the needs and concerns of the students in an ever-changing society through the professional development of all faculty and staff members". She goes on to identify professional development as an area where the depth and breadth of relevant and applicable topic material is critical. She believes that far too many people view professional development as a one-time deal of introducing new or hot topic material. "I believe that professional development is more than that simplified approach to learning. It is an ongoing continuum of learning where new ideas, topics, or strategies are most certainly introduced. However, the follow through on the execution of those ideas or strategies, and the practicality and feedback of efforts are considered and revised to accommodate the best interest of students as needed." She also believes that professional development is more that learning via lectures and books and conferences. Professional development is learning that takes place by many different modalities, similarly to the approach that teachers of excellence take in their own classrooms. Elementary Principal E sees her role as the instructional leader and should provide varied means of professional development to staff. "Leadership by example is the main idea behind my philosophical approach to instructional leadership development."

2. What characteristics do you define as effective professional development?

Elementary Principal A:

The Elementary Principal A outlines 3 components as effective professional development. The first component discussed was the notion of all stakeholders having a "say in professional development". He further goes on to say that it is vital that administrators and teachers work hand in hand in educating parents in school wide expectations. In Elementary School A, the principal meets monthly with parents. On several occasions, teachers present ideas. It is common to see parents give input and it is common to see the principal accepting and discussing the input given.

A second characteristic that Elementary Principal A defines as effective professional development is the amount of support and resources provided to teachers by the administration. Elementary Principal A believes that good teaching deserves good resources. Additionally, he believes that teachers need "to feel they are supported" by both parents and administrators.

The third characteristic that he talked about was the importance of continuity in school wide programs/activities. This would tie into his thinking with his first component. "If everyone is on the same page...then the same goals are worked on by the whole school." Elementary Principal A believes that test scores aren't based on one grade, but based on the spiral effect of learning.

"I play a leadership role by guiding teams and committees in the use of achievement and performance data and setting high expectations for quality instruction and student performance." He goes on to say, "Each school year, we analyze our data and develop action plans". Principal A believes that his involvement in professional development has enhanced his school's student achievement; "we focus on particular areas relevant to improving instruction such as differentiation, questioning strategies, assessment or using technology." This principal

highlighted all areas of the past three year's professional development that he participated in with his staff. They include differentiated instruction, use of the smartboard, jigsaw cooperative learning technique, diagnostic assessment, literature circles and math manipulatives.

Elementary Principal B:

The number one characteristic that Elementary Principal B defines as effective professional development is having a team leader. She believes "most teachers want to be successful and have a great concern for students." Providing professional development that is a response to their needs and requests is one example of working as a team leader and building on an effective professional development. Once, a team leader is identified (the principal) she believes that common goals need to be addressed as a school wide project. She further states that, "good assessment is then needed to evaluate the overall effectiveness of professional development programs."

Lastly, Elementary Principal B believes that effective professional development must take into account budgetary factors. She believes that there is not enough money set aside in her district for professional development and often find this impacting how often programs are out there for the teachers.

Elementary Principal C:

This principal believes that the principal plays the most important role in the effectiveness of professional development. By modeling leadership and instructional strategies for the teachers, she stresses that this is the key to effective professional development programs. Additionally, she encourages the involvement of all teachers during faculty meetings. For example, when a teacher has learned about a new strategy or idea he/she "hosts" the next faculty meeting and demonstrates the strategy/idea in a teaching and learning environment.

When asked how often does this occur, the principal states matter-of-factly, " once a month...if I'm not presenting then one of our teachers are sharing ideas or teaching us all something new...sometimes it is even a review of something we already knew".

Elementary Principal D:

Professional development needs to be current, relative, and practical. These descriptors are the ones used by Elementary Principal D in defining effective professional development programs. He believes effective professional development must meet the staff members and students. Teachers and staff members need "to be able to take what they learn and use it in their classroom with their students". Elementary Principal D believes that material covered during professional development should include current information explained in a manner that teachers can easily translate and use to meet the needs of students.

Elementary Principal E:

Elementary Principal E states, "Effective is the key word in this question. The characteristic of effective professional development is simply addressing the needs of the student population. It is what faculty and staff members need to learn about increasing student achievement and providing equitable opportunities for all learners in the classroom setting."

3. How do you find time to incorporate professional development programs and how do you incorporate professional development programs?

Elementary Principal A:

Elementary Principal A believes that since it is the role of the principal to bring professional development programs to his staff, then it is his responsibility to find time to incorporate professional development programs in his building. The ways in which he does this are through his faculty meetings and assisting the district during Act 80 days (in-services). "By

bringing outside people whom I have connected with through professional workshops and graduate courses I have been able to have experts in a particular teaching strategy come in and in-service our people".

He continues, "The ways I incorporate professional development programs with my teachers is pretty much set by our schedule...Faculty meetings are once a month. Prior to faculty meetings, I provide time for teachers to collaborate and respond to my "INPUT! INPUT! INPUT!" sheet for faculty meetings." This principal leaves the professional development topic up to his teachers.

Elementary Principal B:

Elementary Principal B took a different approach than Elementary Principal A. Whereas, this principal focused on in-service time set aside by the district. She believes that it is hard to find time to incorporate professional development programs because of time restraints: "...too often we are overwhelmed with other things that we need to work on with our staff directed by our superintendent, that often there is not enough time for our own school wide professional development." However, she does point out that any "extra" time that she is given she uses for school wide professional development.

Elementary Principal C:

Combining both district in-service time set aside and Principal C's school faculty meetings time, Elementary Principal C approached this question using this as the answer. She described her role in the district as part of the professional development team for K-8 teachers, district wide. Creativity is the key: "I usually offer a professional development "topic" and the one or two teachers that are my "experts" will come with me to our district's schools to provide professional development to them." She further explains that this is a volunteer sign up by the

other schools since contractually all schools in this particular district can only have two faculty meetings a month. Therefore, it is left up to each building principal if they want to use one of their faculty meetings as designated for professional development. It is important to note that out of nine elementary buildings and one middle school building, only the middle school and three other elementary (not including Elementary Principal C's building) buildings usually ask for her assistance in providing professional development programs.

Secondly, she addressed the fact that every faculty meeting in her school is used for professional development. Therefore, her school receives professional development at least twice a month. She has already mentioned that each topic has been brainstormed and set as a goal by her faculty and staff. Additionally, this principal has team meetings once a month where specific grade level ideas and strategies are discussed. This type of discourse, she describes, aides in furthering professional growth.

Elementary Principal D:

By using morning time and allotted contractual time for professional development, Elementary Principal D accomplishes his professional development programs. He also provides time during faculty meeting for teachers to present knowledge that they have gained from workshops or from attending conferences.

Elementary Principal E:

"The time incorporating and implementing professional development programs is not adequate due to contractual restraints. When time is available, professional development programming should be incorporated in an efficient and structured manner. The scope and sequence of the presentation and implementation of material needs to be outlined according to a practical timeline to help ensure success. Presenting too much diversified information within a

short amount of time rarely is the way to achieve solid and reliable results." Elementary Principal E goes on to say that, "although all of the above holds true in her district/building, she makes time throughout the year for professional development to occur by incorporating it into her faculty meetings.

4. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of professional development programs?

Elementary Principal A:

"Evaluation of any type of program must be completed." This principal places priority in evaluating programs and then making adjustments where needed. How he evaluates professional development programs is done in two different ways. District wide professional development programs are done through a 3-1 point survey; 3 being the highest. He then tallies the results and reports them to the Assistant Superintendent who then decides if further programming in a particular professional development program area is needed.

Secondly, he uses a variety of assessments when evaluating his school wide professional development programs. He recognizes that assessing professional development should be "an ongoing process." He also said he uses a survey with his staff, but it is then discussed at a faculty meeting and they then "brainstorm as a team to see how a particular program can be made better".

Elementary Principal B:

"All professional development programs must be evaluated" is the philosophy of Elementary Principal B. The manner in which a professional development program is evaluated is left up to the district central administration, as is the case in Elementary Principal B's district. However, Elementary Principal B does not necessarily agree with this; "...although I would like to evaluate my own professional development program I'm in a district where micromanaging is

held as the philosophy." The types of district evaluation of effective professional development are similar to the district of Elementary Principal A's district wide evaluation. In Elementary Principal B's district, surveys are always used.

Elementary Principal C:

As pointed out in Elementary Principal C's last response, team meetings are held. In asking for her to elaborate on team meetings, it was discovered that every team/grade level has at least 2 days a week of common team planning time. Only one team has 2 common team plan times, while the other grades all have 3 common team plan times. She explains how having the teachers plan together, they are able to better commit to school wide goals and work toward them as a team. Secondly, more planning can be done across and within grade levels.

When it comes time to evaluate, team meetings discuss the proposed goal and the outcome of the professional development programming that occurred to meet that goal. Therefore, time to collaborate is essential for Elementary Principal C when responding to this question. She goes on to say, "It is important always to keep in mind the goal(s) and/or expectations when evaluating the effectiveness of programs...having meaningful opportunities and experiences for the teachers go hand in hand in setting up professional development and evaluating the effectiveness of it."

Elementary Principal D:

Professional development is deemed effective when Elementary Principal D witnesses teachers and staff members using what is presented to them in order to benefit students. He also believes that it could be reflected in increased test scores if the professional development included information such as strategies to improve student achievement. A sign of effective professional development, he believes, is "when teachers buy into what is presented or shared

with them...you may hear teachers talking about the subject or sharing ideas with one another in terms of implementing new strategies in the classroom". In evaluating the overall program, Elementary Principal D looks at the whole picture. In elaborating on what the whole picture looks like, a variety of items were mentioned. They ranged from test scores to student discipline to teacher rapport with one another.

Elementary Principal E:

"The effectiveness of professional development programming is a very simple. If the goal of professional development is to increase student achievement and provide equitable opportunities for all learners in all classrooms, then the measure by which the programming is evaluated is the success of the students. This is just one example Elementary Principal E cited. When asked to give a general thought on evaluation process of an effective professional development program, Elementary Principal E stated that "it's all about the proposed goals and have they been met."

5. What percentage of the budget is designated for professional development?

Elementary Principal A:

"Percent is not available considering number of days allocated (salaries, fees, resources, etc.)" as stated by Elementary Principal A.

Elementary Principal B:

"A very small percentage, I'm sure...not enough!" was the response given by Elementary Principal B.

Elementary Principal C:

"District wide budget designated for professional development is not available but is used for district wide purposes. In my own budget there is none that is set aside, but being creative

and calling items "resources" or using my "Principal's budget" assists me in providing my own professional development if expenses occur."   This was the response given by Elementary Principal C.

Elementary Principal D:

"There is no set percentage of our district budget for professional development. I use a portion of my building budget for professional development," stated Elementary Principal D.

Elementary Principal E:

Elementary Principal E states, "There is no designated amount of monies for professional development in the building level budget, with the exception of the traditional monies set aside for conferences. In estimation, I would assume that a low percentage (under 10%) of the building budget is allotted to professional development. Therefore yet again, it is up to the instructional leader to pull monies together as needed for professional development endeavors. And this is exactly what I do. I look at my budget and transfer a little from here to there and use what I feel necessary for professional development."

<u>Summary and Analysis</u>

1. Describe your philosophy regarding professional development and explain the role you play in the professional development of your staff?

Two out of the four elementary principals identified specific building initiatives as the focus in regarding professional development. Whereas, the other principal responded to the question of professional development philosophy with a general response and quoted research. In answering part two of question one, major themes are identified as below, followed by the number of elementary principals who identified each response.

Major Themes

Guiding teachers to reach building goals/initiatives (4)

Guiding teachers to reach district goals/initiatives   (4)

Minor Themes

Guiding teachers to reach individual goals/initiative (2)

Being an instructional leader   (2)

2. What characteristics do you define as effective professional development?

Major and minor themes are identified as below, followed by the number of elementary

principals who identified each response.

Major Themes

Principals modeling professional development   (5)

Minor Themes

Stakeholders participate in decisions in professional development   (2)

Administrators and teachers collaborating   (2)

Continuity throughout the school   (1)

Practical and current topics   (2)

3. How do you find time to incorporate professional development programs and how do you incorporate professional development programs?

Major Themes

District allotted time   (5)

School building allotted time   (5)

Part B:

Major Themes

Collaboration with teachers for input (3)

Teachers presenting   (3)

There were no minor themes presented for question three.

4. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of professional development programs?

Minor Themes

School-wide/district surveys   (2)

Discourse among faculty   (2)

Principal reviews goals and outcomes (2)

5. What percentage of the budget is designated for professional development?

All elementary principals responded with similar responses by saying that no district wide

budget is designated for professional development.

However, all principals have used the following major theme:

Major Theme

School allotted budget   (5)

Summary

In this chapter, the interview process, data collection, and analysis were reviewed. A

summary of the interviews and data analysis was reviewed. A summary of the interviews and

data   analysis   was   presented.   The   major   and   minor   themes   were   identified.

CHAPTER V

"I am not a teacher but an awakener."

Robert Frost

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the role of the principal in finding ways to provide professional development throughout the school year and evaluating the effects of professional development in regard to instruction. This study also investigated the commonalities of qualities among elementary school principals in regard to professional development.

The researcher pursued an understanding of an elementary principal's role through utilizing a qualitative method. The primary method for obtaining information was the use of a semi-structured interview. According to Patton, interviews such as these can be most effective since philosophies, feelings, and attitudes are revealed through each personal response. The interview data collected, were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for primary themes.

A list of open-ended questions were developed to guide the direction of the interview and to assist in gathering descriptive data. The interviews lasted between sixty and eighty minutes, depending on each respondent's elaboration. In general, all of the participants responded openly and positively to the interview process. Throughout the interview, the researcher used active listening, careful prompting, non-judgmental conversation, and thought-provoking phrasing to gather information and clarify meaning, when necessary

The individual interviews were conducted over a nine-week period, tape recorded and transcribed. The transcribed information and data were organized according to the

research questions, and then analyzed into two parts; major and minor themes. Major themes were those that were identified by three or more respondents. Minor themes were those mentioned by one or two participants. The researcher also kept a journal to write down as much information after each interview. According to Piantanda and Garman (1999) by recording valuable data in a journal, the researcher is creating a record of insights and questions. Post interview notes were then monitored.

The following addresses each research question with regard to the elementary principal interviews and related literature.

<u>Addressing the First Research Question:</u> What does the literature say about the role of the principal?

All of the literature supports the concept that a principal is a leader, with different theories of leadership style described. It is evident that throughout time, the role of the principal has changed. Plenty of evidence supports the notion that principals had to change because of educational reform. Since the 1900's elementary school programs have undergone reform (Button and Provenzo, 1989). To understand the role of the principal, the literature addresses the organizational climate. Many researchers began studying the organizational climate in order to understand the role of the principal.

The climate, as supported by Lashway, Halpin, and Miles, of the school environment needs to be shaped by the principal. This is a very important role for the principal. The principal must establish a culture with clear vision (Lashway, 2002) and define goals or outcomes that are achievable. All five elementary principals interviewed agree with this idea. The literature also supports that once these outcomes or goals are defined, the organization must develop a plan on how to accomplish these outcomes.

Elementary Principal A defined his school's four outcomes: student achievement, character education, student assessment, and student technology as the literature supports. As Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp reports, climate alone may not be enough to have successful schools.

Consistently, the literature reports that educational reform centers around student achievement. Therefore, the principal is forced to take a role in improving student achievement. Elementary Principal A actually outlines student achievement as one of his building initiatives. Hiebert and Stigler (1999) report that in order to improve schools, instruction must improve. Improving instruction means good teaching. Good teaching means good supervision. Supervision depends upon the way in which the elementary principal sees him/herself. Most of the literature described the primary role of the principal to be the instructional leader. Lieberman emphasizes that the role of leadership in the building is one of the most important roles. Elementary Principal E stressed the importance of strong leadership and how it affects not only the climate but the building initiatives. It is agreed by many researchers that climate needs to be set by the building principal first. Next, there is a logical procedure in working toward goals. This too, is a role of the elementary principal; setting up the procedures in obtaining goals. However, the primary role, that researchers have discussed and analyzed, is the principal's role as the instructional leader. It was interesting to see that two forerunners in educational reform, Bass and Burns, never studied schools but rather based their work on political leaders.

The analogies made were between school settings and business environments. They found that if principals empowered the teachers in the classroom then the desired outcome would be achieved. Empower is the exact word that Elementary Principal D uses when discussing his philosophies in regard to professional development. Elementary Principal C and E also would agree. Leithwood (1992) also investigated this way of thinking and found three fundamental

goals to achieve the aforementioned thought, which are also Elementary Principal C's active ideas:

1. Assisting staff in developing and maintaining a collaborative and professional school culture.

2. Fostering the development of staff skills and knowledge.

3. Helping staff solve problems together effectively.

Leithwood's fundamental goal number one supports what the literature has said about climate and what has been reported in the first section of this chapter. Focusing on fundamental goal number two supports that being the instructional leader is the principal's responsibility. Fostering the development of staff skills and knowledge is the role of the principal. The manner in which the principal does this may vary. Leithwood, Jantzi, and Poplin believe that the best way to develop skills and knowledge in a building is visiting each classroom daily, assisting in the classrooms, and having discourse in faculty meetings. All three elements are important components in providing professional development. As the literature reveals professional development can bring about change in culture, student achievement, and classroom instruction. Within the context of school reform, Leithwood (1992, 1994) and others studied transformational leadership and advocated a move from instructional leadership to transformational leadership. He argues that commitment to change rather than control over instruction is at the heart of school change. His findings suggest that transformational school leaders be in constant pursuit of the three fundamental goals discussed.

This places the responsibility of learning onto the teacher with the principal as a conduit to learning as opposed to having the principal as the lead instructor and the teachers as recipients. While the literature supports the transformational leadership paradigm as a prime model, local

data supports the fact that four out of the five elementary principals interviewed predominantly practice instructional leadership. However, Elementary Principal A and Elementary Principal C practice both instructional and transformation leadership. For example, Elementary Principal A states, "I believe in personalized staff development coupled with a thematic approach…decisions regarding professional development should be made with collaboration between and among all stakeholders." Elementary Principal C also demonstrated a side of transformational leadership when saying, "faculty meetings are set up in a way in which every teacher has a turn throughout the school year to "teach" each other a teaching strategy, an assessment techniques, etc. that could be used to reach a common goal or solve a problem."

DuFour and Fullan agree that providing professional development and/or establishing professional development procedures for a building must be the role of the elementary principal. Although, they both have defined this type of leader as learning leader rather than instructional leader, the ideas behind it are similar. They believe that principals who want to become better leaders will lead by example and be role models by teaching and learning for their staff (Fullan, 1997). "Principals are the instructional leaders and should model expectations" as stated by Elementary Principal C. When learning becomes the focus of the entire school and not just for students, the culture of the building changes. This leads the organization of the literature in this exposition to discuss the role of the principal in professional development.

Speck believes that successful professional development for teachers can be achieved when the principal is the key player. All elementary principals interviewed would agree with Speck. Elementary Principals A through E all stated that they are a key player in planning from stage one to providing professional development programs for their buildings.

In summary, the role of a principal has evolved since the first elementary school

programs were established in the United States in the 1830's. Specifically, during the past decade, reform efforts have focused on setting high standards for what students learn and designing tools to measure their progress. Stigler and Hiebert explain in The Teaching Gap, published in 1999, "Teaching is the next frontier in the continuing struggle to improve schools. Standards set the course, and assessments provide the benchmarks, but it is teaching that must be improved to push us along the path to success" (Hiebert and Stigler, 1999, p.4). This shift during the reform does not only include the teachers but also their leaders, and in the schools, the leader is the principal.

Specifically, the principal's style of leadership will influence the organizational climate of the school as well as the level of commitment to professional development demonstrated by the teaching faculty. Two examples of leadership described in the literature are instructional leadership and transformational leadership.

Instructional leadership is a style that places the principal at the heart of learning, where the principal role models and demands that learning is not only for the students, but also the teachers. Ash and Persall believe that successful schools are organized around student learning and the instructional leadership ability of the principal. They designed a professional development program, "Leadership for High Performing Organizations" in 2000 to support well-prepared instructional leaders.

This style of leadership promotes principals demonstrating certain characteristics: modeling of desired behavior (continuing education, reading, discussions about learning, and a continuous re-examination of the effectiveness of their efforts), serving as leader for discussions regarding research, requiring faculty/staff to share knowledge with colleagues, and building a culture of innovation where everyone is involved in action research.

Elementary Principal C demonstrates many of these characteristics. For example, she states that "staff members work collaboratively toward solving a problem or working toward a common goal(s) that are predetermined by all teachers and the principal".

Others describe the role of the principal needing to focus on the principal's facilitative powers to promote desired change. In 1978, James McGregor Burns described this type of leadership style, transformational leadership, as a person who serves as a group facilitator who maintains a sense of group over individual self-interest.

This transformational role of principal was expounded upon in 1990 by Bass who stated that principals serve to empower their teachers when the "broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance for the purpose and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interests for the good of the group" (Bass, 1990, p.21).

Addressing the Second Research Questions: What are the characteristics of effective professional development?

Effective professional development programs as described by Gall and Renchler should reflect clear program goals and have operational objectives that define what participants will learn and how they will be able to use the new learning. Gall and Renchler's research provides the specific characteristics of effective content for professional development programs that include programs that are planned in response to assessed needs of the participants, with a focus of school improvement rather than personal professional development. The programs should be concrete and skill specific, with clear, specific goals and objectives related to implementation. Elementary Principal A believes that goals need to be clear with specificity that allows all participants to know the goals. He states, "it is vital that administrators and teachers work hand

in hand in educating parents in school-wide expectations."

A slightly different model of professional development involves creating a culture that promotes distributed leadership whereby the principals help teachers become leaders in their schools (Smylie, 1992, p. 63). The characteristics of this approach to professional development promote teachers leading their peers through the educational process. While slightly different, both Little and Fullan also support a norm of continuous improvement in the school organization.

Elementary Principals C and Elementary Principals D demonstrate this idea. Elementary Principal C believes that "when a teacher has learned about a new strategy or idea he/she 'hosts' the next faculty meeting…" She continues to demonstrate this idea of distributed leadership when saying, "…faculty meetings are set up in a way in which every teacher has a turn throughout the school year to 'teach' each other…" Elementary Principal D also demonstrates his philosophy that leadership is shared when it comes to professional development; "teachers and staff members need to be able to take what they learn and use it in their classroom with their students."

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) describe effective models specifically for instructional leaders. The exhaustive list includes:

Activities that are conducted in school settings and are linked to other school-wide improvement efforts;

- Teachers are actively involved in planning, setting goals, and selecting activities;

- Self- instruction is emphasized as well as a variety of differentiated training opportunities;

- Ongoing support and resources are provided;

- Training is concrete and includes ongoing feedback, supervised trials and assistance upon request;

- Administrators exercise strong leadership by promoting a norm of collegiality that promotes informal communication and reduces their own need to use formal controls to achieve coordination;

- Monitoring progress which includes development of a process to improve performance rather than judging competence;

- Adequate use of resources to support the pursuit of staff development goals.

All five elementary principals identified with the first characteristic of effective professional development. All elementary principals stated that at a building level they all work toward school wide improvements. Elementary Principals A, C, D, and E all agree that teachers are actively involve in planning, setting goals and selecting activities as outlined in number two by Sparks and Loucks-Horsley. Elementary Principals A, C, D, and E all believe that monitoring of progress is a vital component to the effectiveness of professional development. For example, Elementary Principal A says that assessing professional development is "an ongoing process" and his faculty then will "discuss at a faculty meeting and then brainstorm as a team to see how a particular program can be made better." Elementary Principal C believes that keeping the goals in mind when evaluating the effectiveness of professional development is important. Elementary Principal D also places emphasis on the monitoring of progress of professional development as being a characteristic of effective professional development. By looking at the whole picture, he monitors the progress. Elementary Principal E states, "If the goal of professional development is to increase student achievement and provide equitable opportunities for all learners in all

classrooms, then the measure by which the programming is evaluated is the success of the students."

Guskey also believes that an important characteristic of effective professional development is the way principals evaluate professional development. "Seldom is the professional development component thoroughly described or evaluated in sufficient detail to offer practical guidance for those wishing to understand the complexities of the improvement process" (Guskey, 2000, p. 5).

Addressing the Third Research Question: **What does the literature say are the reasons why elementary principals provide professional development?**

With significant efforts aimed at analyzing the needs of the educational system in the United States during the last fifty years, and with none of that analysis pointing to a strong system that needs no reform, it is clear that as leaders, principals would naturally be involved in the professional development of the teachers they lead with the ultimate goal of student achievement. The ultimate goal of student achievement has not disappeared, just the means by which to achieve this goal.

The publication, A Nation At Risk, along with the school effectiveness literature of the early 1980s and the classroom effectiveness literature, all synergized into a powerful spotlight that focused on the role of the principal as key to a school's ability to implementing the kinds of changes that would meet the needs for school improvement (Hallinger, 1997). This shifted the principal from change agent (focusing mostly on managing policy change process in the school) to that of instructional leader.

The shift from principal as supervisor, discipline manager, and a person who interacts with students to a principal who, according to the National Association of Elementary School

Principals report published in 1998, must be responsible for teacher involvement in instructional improvement, structuring opportunities for creative scheduling, supervision and evaluation of teachers, as well as teaming and project-based learning has proven to be a challenge.

To help the schools and principals adjust to this need, grant funds were designated to support school systems to 1) increase student academic achievement through the use of strategies based on scientifically based research in what works to improve teacher and principal quality; 2) increase the number of highly qualified teachers and principals; and, 3) hold educational agencies and schools accountable for improvements in teacher quality and student academic achievement.

To provide further guidance and standardization across our nation, the "No Child Left Behind Act" consolidated several smaller federal programs into one comprehensive grant program for the states, giving them flexibility to meet their teacher recruitment, training, and retention needs as well as setting standards to support student achievement of national standards. Along with this federal guidance delineating a means of achieving student achievement, current literature soundly demonstrates that when principals break down barriers and reduce inequities, employ inclusive curriculum and conflict resolution strategies, and address diverse student learning styles, student achievement improves. All of the elementary principals interviewed discussed the notion of implementing professional development programs in regard to raising student achievement. For example, Elementary Principal A believes that his role includes "being an instructional leader and guiding teams and committees in the use of achievement and performance data."

Principals no longer simply provide professional development to directly impact on student achievement, they also provide it to serve teachers as individual members of a

profession, adding knowledge, skills, and intellectual vigor to professional life, satisfy bureaucratic and career advancement purposes, and to involve teachers as responsible members of an institution (Lanier and Little, 1986).

Elementary principals demonstrate the shift from past models of achieving student achievement to current models of principals as instructional leaders to achieve student achievement.

None of the principals interviewed stressed meeting individual professional development goals over district or school building professional development goals for student achievement.

<u>Addressing the Fourth Investigational Question:</u> How do Elementary principals find time to incorporate professional development?

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) describe ways to incorporate professional development into the school environment. Specific to this question, they report that activities would be conducted in school settings and linked to other school-wide improvement efforts, and the teachers be actively involved in planning, setting goals, and selecting activities.

It is also essential that principals *actively* work towards incorporating professional development in various manners. For example, DuFour reports that principals must do more than encourage teachers to work together. Collaboration by invitation never works. They must provide the focus, parameters, and support to help teams function effectively. Elementary Principals C and D provide the focus at a building level. Elementary Principal C actually offers a "topic" of professional development. Elementary Principal D provides focus by bringing back ideas from workshops.

While budgetary constraints oftentimes impinge on a principal's ability to bring in outside professional development trainers, examples from literature and data collected during the

interview process demonstrates that principals can and often do seek innovative ways during the school day to support teachers in working together to learn about new teaching strategies and share new information learned with colleagues. Elementary Principals C, D, and E show their creative side when using their budget for implementation of professional development.

All Elementary principals attest to the importance of professional development, although some are more pro-active then others. Elementary Principal B believes that administrators at the district level seriously affect the building level.

Addressing the Fifth Research Question: What are the ways principals evaluate the effectiveness of professional development?

Clearly supported by literature is the importance of evaluation in the arena of professional development in the educational community. The National Staff Development Council recommends that "evaluation must be seen as an ongoing process that is initiated in the earliest stages of program planning and continued beyond program completion" (Mullins, 1994, p. 7). Mullins believes that the development of an evaluation strategy should commence at the beginning of the planning process for each professional development program and that it be based on the intended outcomes of the school-improvement effort.

Mike Schmoker developed In Results, the Key to Continuous School Improvement which identifies three concepts that constitute the foundation for implementing positive improvement results: meaningful teamwork, clear and measurable goals, and the regular collection and analysis of performance data (Schmoker, 1999, p. 16).
Elementary principal C describes how these three concepts are connected to the professional development programs implemented in her school…

Specific to the value of the program, Guskey and Sparks outline specific questions to assist the evaluation of professional development programs:

Is the staff development program driven by clearly stated, measurable district or school objectives?

Is a systemic view of the change process expressed in the program's plans? That is, is it recognized that change in one part of the system affects all other parts?

Is the professional development program's content sufficiently grounded in research to ensure that, if properly implemented, it will produce the desired change in student outcomes? (Guskey & Sparks, 1991, pp. 17-18).

Summative evaluation is commonly used to determine the overall effectiveness of a professional development program. This type of evaluation is done at the conclusion of the program and collected at three levels: educator practices, organizational changes, and student outcomes.

Assessing changes in educator practices involves asking participants to describe changes in how they think, what they believe, and what they do in the classroom (Guskey & Sparks, 1991). Some tools used to determine these changes involve questionnaires, interviews, self-assessment instruments, and analysis of records.

Elementary principal D vividly described a means of evaluating educational practices and utilizes a strategy to observe and conducts a form of follow up evaluation.

An evaluation of a change in the school organization involves looking for increased collaboration, an improved relationship between administration and teachers, and general changes in the culture of the school. This assessment piece is critical because research

demonstrates that organizational climate and culture strongly influence both initial and continued use of innovation (Joyce, 1990).

Elementary Principal C also emphasizes the evaluation process of professional development. For example, Elementary Principal C makes the building schedule around the philosophy that team planning for discourse, evaluation of teaching strategies, etc. Therefore, common plan time is important. She states, "When it comes time to evaluate, team meetings discuss the proposed goal and the outcome of the professional development programming…"

Finally, the evaluation of overall student achievement remains the primary indicator for effective professional development programs. Following the national standards outlined under the "No Child Left Behind" Act, a professional development program can be evaluated based on defined 'acceptable' student outcomes.

Addressing the Primary Research Question: How does the elementary principal's leadership role promote professional development?

Literature clearly links the principal's modeling of professional development for self, practice in collaborative learning, and practice of professional development behaviors to the commitment and success of building-wide professional development programs.

To be able to model professional development for self, the principal must also invest in self-improvement. This has not been easy in the past. The NSDC Executive Director Sparks (2000) commented, "Unfortunately, principal development, which has traditionally been given an even lower priority by school systems than teacher development, too often turns participants into passive recipients of information rather than active participants in solving important educational problems". The Director also suggested that there are four crucial components of

quality learning programs for principals: standards-focused, intellectually rigorous, job-embedded, and sustained.

None of the Elementary principals interviewed clearly commented on their individual practices for professional development in their own role. All of them did indicate though that professional development plans for their buildings were done in collaboration with the teachers, implying they are active learners. Speck believes that once a successful principal professional development program has been established in a district then professional development for teachers is easily accomplished.

McNair, Joyce, Diza, and McKibbin believe that reforms in professional development must be initiated and carried out by teachers and school personnel. Collaboration and input by teachers is critical for success (Sparks and Loucks-Hoursley, 1990).

DuFour describes five areas of professional development for principals:

Provide time for collaboration in the school day and school year.

Identify critical questions to guide the work of collaborative teams.

Ask teams to create products as a result of their collaboration.

Insist that teams identify and pursue specific student achievement goals.

Provide teams with relevant data and information.

All of the elementary principals interviewed described a collaborative approach to professional development programs.

A slightly different model of professional development involves creating a culture that promotes distributed leadership whereby the principals help teachers become leaders in their schools (Smylie, 1992, p. 63). The characteristics of this approach to professional development promote teachers leading their peers through the educational process. While slightly different,

both Little and Fullan also support a norm of continuous improvement in the school organization.

Concluding Remarks

The results of the study showed that the five elementary principals interviewed believe that the principal's role has changed over the years and have moved more toward an instructional leader. Many educational reforms require teachers and administrators to transform their roles and take on new responsibilities. Structural changes in schools require educators to change the way they do their jobs.

All of the principals interviewed talked about the urgent pressure that many of them feel to improve student achievement. Two of the principals stressed the importance of focusing professional development programs on how to raise test scores.

All of the principals interviewed would agree that building initiatives center on student achievement encouraged by state and local testing. The manner in which the principals raise student achievement was demonstrated in a variety of ways. Two of the elementary principals believe that collaboration between the principal and teachers is important in professional development. It is interesting to note that these two principals also have high test scores.

The study also showed that all five elementary principals identify more with characteristics of instructional leaders. The literature supports that today's principal should move from instructional leader to transformational. Perhaps, some of the principals interviewed or even all would move to being a transformational leader if they had their own professional development provided for them. As the literature indicates, principals do not have enough administrative professional development.

Although, one elementary principal did not share many of the ideas that most of the other

four elementary principals, she was the only one that did mention that "her own professional development must be ongoing…this is the most important role". This is interesting to reread since her responses were not as impressive as the other principals. She identifies what the literature is saying. Principals need to have their own professional development.

The study also revealed that the districts do not have a set budget for professional development deemed for each building. Two out of the five elementary principals use their own principal's account to bring resources, experts, etc. to the building level, whereas, the other three wait for the district to spend money on professional development people. However, two out of the three who were just mentioned, will provide professional development training around building initiatives on their own which does not cost them anything.

Another interesting finding was that the evaluation of effective professional development was not discussed at length with any of the elementary principals interviewed. All of the literature researched focused heavily on the evaluation being a major part of effective professional development programs.

One of the elementary principal's description of evaluation comes close to that of summative evaluation that is described in the review of literature. This elementary principal believes that professional development is "more than that simplified approach to learning. It is an ongoing continuum of learning where new ideas, topics, or strategies are most certainly introduced. However, the follow-through on the execution of those ideas or strategies, and the practicality and feedback of efforts are considered and revised to accommodate…"

To be truly useful, evaluations must be able to report information about the effects of professional development at various levels. None of the principals discussed this idea.

<u>Personal Reflections</u>

The previous section addressed the findings of this study, specific to the elementary principals' interviews and the related literature. The following portrays my own personal reflections that were recorded in a journal throughout the course of this study.

As the study unfolded, it was evident that the role of the principal was abundant. Most districts rely on the building principal to meet all of the demands set by state regulations and by community. All of the principals interviewed expressed this concern. When talking with each elementary principal I began to reflect on my own leadership style.

It was not apparent at first the attitudinal difference between Elementary Principal B and the others in this study. While the other four elementary principals share common philosophies and work ethic characteristics, I felt that Elementary Principal B was frustrated and felt that her hands were tied when it came to professional development. She also felt that her district micromanaged everything. Interesting to note is that she is the veteran principal out of the five principals.

Elementary Principal B also felt that the district should provide professional development for everyone. She did not see herself as being a part of this role as much as the other principals did. Oddly, enough her test scores are low and discipline problems run rampant as she pointed out to me in our pre interview session.

On the other hand, I found it refreshing to see that the two least experienced principals are willing to try anything. They both seem very positive and support building and district initiatives. Although these two principals are not in the same place as Elementary Principals A and C, I believe that they are on the right path.

Elementary Principals A and C both exhibit similar characteristics and shared common

philosophies. Both of these principals demonstrated what Terry would call a mixture of instructional and transformational which is needed in today's schools. They both are more instructional but have many transformational qualities.

Perhaps, that is why Elementary Principal A and Elementary Principal C both had wonderful test scores. Both told me that this was not always the case. Elementary Principals A and C support the idea that professional development works in raising test scores. However, I must mention that raising test scores was not the only focus in professional development for these principals, which I found interesting. Both of these principals excitedly reported their building initiatives. Elementary A gave me a tour while he narrated their successes. Elementary C could not commend her staff enough in all of their shared knowledge and their success in the walkthrough process. Seeing this excitement made me excited to learn more about my own profession.

As an elementary principal in a school district that has a growing population of a variety of students, I have an interest in learning from school districts that face similar challenges. This whole process was vitally important to my professional development and growth as an instructional leader and as a transformational leader.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Conduct a qualitative, in-depth study of Elementary Principal A building and Elementary Principal C building as a model for the search for the role of an elementary principal.

2. Conduct a qualitative study of schools working to meet the challenges of NCLB.

3. Conduct an in-depth study of the "Teacher of Excellence" or "Teacher of the Year" recipients' school.

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