A District's Approach to Support Teacher Agency through

Teacher-Led Professional Development

by

Cara C. Skaggs

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Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Heather Dillard, Chair

Dr. Kevin Krahenbuhl

Dr. Lando Carter

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ABSTRACT

School districts invest large amounts of time and budgetary costs to provide professional development to support the professional growth of teachers each year. Although districts are providing professional learning that is appropriate in both content and delivery, studies still show teachers do not experience professional learning to support their professional growth. One missing link to the puzzle may be teacher agency. Teachers who have agency take ownership of their learning to meet their goals and to help others also meet their goals. A mixed methods study was utilized to explore how teacher-led professional development provided by a local school district supports the professional growth of teachers with conditions that support teacher agency. The study found the district has conditions in place to support teacher agency but supporting teacher agency does not automatically remove all the challenges associated with professional learning. The results of the study also determined more research is needed to understand and support teacher agency as well as districts must hire leaders who believe in professional learning.

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LIST OF TERMS/ABBREVIATIONS

Andragogy- the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980)

Professional development- "those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might in turn, improve the learning of students" (Guskey, 2000, p.16).

Professional learning- "the product of both externally-provided and job-embedded activities that increase teachers' knowledge and change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning" (Wei et al., 2009, p. 1).

Teacher agency- Capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues (Calvert, 2016).

NCLB- The *No Child Left Behind Act* is a federal law that was passed in 2001 and signed into law in early 2002. NCLB was designed to close achievement gaps through standards-based reform, improving teacher quality, and a focus on accountability.

ESSA- Every Student Succeeds Act was signed into law in 2015. The prescriptive requirements of NCLB were not working for schools and educators so ESSA was passed to focus explicitly on preparing all students to be successful in college and careers (U.S. Department of Education).

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Overview

American public education entered an era of accountability through standards-based reform with the enactment of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) in 2001. This era has continued with the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965). In 2015, ESEA was renamed as *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). The impetus of the standards-based reform has been to increase student outcomes and continues to be the driving force for reform in the United States nearly two decades later. The key to increasing student learning is by ensuring students have access to highly effective teachers. Darling-Hammond (1998) states "what teachers know and do is one of the most important influences on what students learn" (p. 6). Educating students in the 21st century continues to evolve as students need to be problem solvers, able to work collaboratively, and think analytically (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Guskey, 2000; Smith & Desimone, 2003). The knowledge base for student learning grows exponentially every single day, and teachers must continue to grow professionally to keep up with the changing landscape of education (Guskey, 2000). As with any other professional field, professional development is the vehicle for continued growth and is vital to deepen teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge (Birman et al., 2000; Corcoran, 1995; Guskey, 2000; Guskey, 2003b).

Professional development has been a key component during the standards-based reform (Birman et al., 2000; Guskey, 2003; Hirsh, 2016; Odden et al., 2002; Smith & Desimone, 2003). Previously, NCLB outlined a list of activities that qualified as

professional development to improve teachers' content knowledge, improve instructional practices, and help teachers become highly qualified. These activities were to provide teachers and administrators with skills and knowledge to help students meet the challenging content standards. Under ESSA, professional development must be sustained, intensive, collaborative, data driven, derived from teacher input, and evaluated regularly (ASCD, 2015; Hirsh, 2016). Even prior to NCLB and ESSA, professional development has been utilized as an avenue to increase teacher effectiveness and ultimately increased student achievement (Birman et al., 2000; Colbert et al., 2008; Desimone, 2011; Guskey, 2003). Teacher quality has been identified as the factor that matters most for student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Understanding what makes professional development effective is a critical piece of being successful or failing in the current reform model. Previous studies on professional development focused more on teacher satisfaction and changes in attitudes or beliefs (Birman et al., 2000; Desimone, 2011; Guskey, 2000). It wasn't until the last three decades that research focused on what makes professional development effective and more importantly, studying professional development models that lead to increased student achievement (Guskey, 2003b; Kennedy, 1998; Wayne et al., 2008; Yoon et al., 2007).

Currently, school districts still wrestle with finding an effective professional development framework. Designed around research conducted in the United States (Desimone et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001), Desimone (2011) developed a conceptual framework centered around five core features that include content focus, active learning,

coherence, duration, and collective participation. This is just one of many frameworks based on research today. Moreover, a review of the literature by Guskey (2009a) yielded more than a dozen lists of characteristics claiming to be based on evidence of effective professional development. Determining what is "effective" professional development can be hard to determine with the multi-dimensional nature of education. Schools districts rarely deploy one innovation or implementation plan in isolation. It is then difficult to separate the effects of a new innovation and its professional development from everything else to determine the effectiveness (Guskey, 2009a).

There are also barriers that prevent school districts from implementing effective professional development such as lack of time, resources, or teacher buy-in. The rising costs of providing professional development is a major budgetary expense that not all districts believe is an investment or is easily cut when budgetary issues arise; although school districts and the federal government continue to invest large amounts each year towards professional development for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998). In 2014, $2.6 billion alone was budgeted for Title II at the federal level (Layton, 2015). Title II funding is provided by the federal government each year to increase student achievement by improving the quality of teachers and principals. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2008) reported public schools spent 20 billion a year on professional development. Furthermore, a report released in 2015 by The New Teacher Project (TNTP) reported it is estimated the districts studied spend an average of $18,000 yearly for each teacher's professional development, which is roughly 6-9% of the districts' total budget (TNTP, 2015). This is up from studies in the 1990's that estimated districts spend

on average 3% of their entire budget on PD (Killeen et al., 2002; Odden et al., 2002). Current estimates suggest most districts spend an average of 1 to 9% of their total budgets on professional development (Chambers et al., 2008; Miles et al., 2004). Furthermore, additional studies posit there are several different methods used to determine professional development costs (Odden et al., 2002). This makes it difficult to successfully capture true expenditures for professional development. Discrepancies in reporting the costs of professional development were found in several studies as some districts include the cost of salary increases earned from attending professional development as well as uncompensated time for teachers (Corcoran, 1995; Little et al., 1987; Moore & Hyde, 1981).

Calculating the professional development costs for the district in the present study is also difficult without using a framework. One framework from research suggests six cost elements should be included in capturing professional development costs. The six costs include: 1) teacher time, 2) training and coaching, 3) administration, 4) materials, equipment and facilities, 5) travel and transportation, and 6) tuition and conference fees (Odden et al., 2002). The district in this study does not capture professional development costs in this manner. Multiple departments provide professional development opportunities including the instruction department, career and technical education, special education, and the federal programs department. Moreover, there is not a professional development plan developed each year in conjunction with every departments' spending. District initiatives from year to year determine what percentage of the budget is spent on professional development, but currently there is not a reporting system for tracking those

expenditures. The district currently has an operating budget of approximately 103 million, and this does not include any grants. During the 2018-2019 school year, the largest single expenditure for professional development was approximately $65,000 for a partnership with a non-profit professional development firm. Regardless of the amount of yearly expenditures for professional development, districts must determine if they are getting a return on investment.

Return on Investment for Teachers

Many teachers do not believe the professional development provided is meeting their individual needs (Cohen & Hill, 2000; Colbert et al., 2008; Kennedy, 1998; TNTP, 2015). Teachers do not want a one-size-fits-all approach to professional development through one-time workshops (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Vaughan & McLaughlin, 2011). Teachers want to be able to collaborate with other teachers, learn new instructional strategies, and be able to apply what they have learned directly in the classroom (Blank et al., 2008; Compton, 2010).

In 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation commissioned a study with the Boston Consulting Group to determine barriers for implementing effective professional development. The study included more than 1,300 teachers, principals, professional development leaders at the district and state level, outside professional development providers, and other leaders through surveys and interviews. The study found only 34% of teachers think professional development has improved, and only 29% are highly satisfied with the professional development offered to them. Many teachers view professional development as compliance; as only 30% of teachers surveyed chose most of

their professional development, and 18% said they had no say in what professional development they attended. Many characterized the professional development as failing to meet the intended objectives and does not support teachers' continued growth. However, teachers who had more choice in what professional development they attended reported higher levels of satisfaction and were twice as satisfied than those who had less choice (Boston Consulting Group, 2014). Furthermore, 59% of teachers find content related professional development beneficial, but less than half of the teachers found professional development in other areas useful (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Teachers reported they want professional development that is teacher driven (TNTP, 2015). The return on investment for teachers' professional development is important, but the return on investment for school districts must also be taken into consideration.

Return on Investment for School Districts

The return on investment for districts also cannot be ignored. The New Teacher Project (TNTP) conducted a study in 2015 that included three large, public school districts and one midsize charter school network. The study included over 10,000 teachers and 500 school leaders. Through surveys and interviews, the study sought to determine what is successful in promoting teacher improvement on a large scale. The study looked specifically at three areas: investment, results, and teacher perspective. The districts studied spent an average of almost $18,000 per teacher each year on professional development. This included a range of resources and not just specific line item expenditures. These districts spent approximately 6 to 9% of their annual budgets on professional development as the more conservative estimates in other studies expend 1 to

3% of annual operating budgets (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Odden et al., 2002).

Regarding time, districts in the study also committed quite a bit of time for professional development. The teachers in the study spent approximately 150 hours a year for learning. "After a little over a decade in the classroom, the average teacher in the districts we studied would have spent the equivalent of more than an entire school year on professional development" (TNTP, 2015). However, when it came to results, most teachers were not improving in the study. The districts in the study were allocating the resources and time for professional development but were not getting the same return on investment in results. The study found that while there were small improvements; overall, teachers ended up in the same place each year on their evaluation and observation scores. Only 3 in 10 teachers improved substantially on performance evaluations. The study also found that many teachers plateaued on their evaluations before they mastered core instructional skills. Moreover, school districts did not convey to teachers how to improve or there was even a need to improve with 83% of teachers in the study receiving a score of 4 or 5 on their evaluations. With this large number of teachers *meeting expectations* or higher, this contributed to teachers not satisfied with the professional development they received. Less than half said they received professional development that was differentiated to their needs, and only half of the teachers surveyed felt most of the professional development activities provided new skills that would lead to long-term improvements in teaching. If districts want to see greater returns on teacher growth, they will need to determine how to improve the professional development process, both in delivery and content. Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2009) posit "when well

designed, these opportunities [professional development] help teachers master content, hone teaching skills, evaluate their own and their students' performance, and address changes needed in teaching and learning in their schools." (p. 7)

Statement of the Problem

American public education continues to be in a standards-based reform that expects increased student learning (ESSA, 2015). With every reform model and school improvement plan, professional development is at the forefront to help achieve those goals (Guskey, 2000). School districts are investing large amounts of time and budgetary costs to provide professional development to support teachers' professional growth (Odden et al., 2002; TNTP, 2015). Frameworks for highly effective professional development have been identified (Desimone, 2009) to help districts know what professional learning should look like, yet many of our teachers still report they don't experience professional learning that is beneficial to support their professional growth (Boston Consulting Group, 2014; TNTP, 2015). If districts are investing the money and providing professional learning that is appropriate in both content and delivery then what is the disconnect? What is the missing link to changing teacher practice and ultimately increasing student learning? Teacher agency is defined by Calvert (2016) as "capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues" (p. 2). Districts must take actionable steps to increase teacher agency through professional learning. However, it is ultimately a teacher and their inner desire to want to continue to learn (Kent, 2004). By building teacher

capacity and promoting agency to improve instructional practice, efforts to improve student learning outcomes will be more successful (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Purpose of Study

Providing effective professional development that meets the needs of teachers is a goal of school districts. However, it must not be the only goal. Another goal is to increase teacher agency. Teachers who have agency take ownership of their own learning to meet their goals (Calvert, 2016). Efforts should be coordinated for teachers and administrators to be a part of the professional development process to encourage a sense of agency (Kent, 2004). The purpose of this study is to explore how teacher-led professional development provided by a local school district supports the professional growth of teachers with conditions that support teacher agency. The goal of this study is to determine if these conditions for optional professional development led by teachers supports teacher agency.

Significance of Study

An effective teacher is still the most important factor in determining if a child ultimately learns in the classroom, and professional development is a systematic effort to bring about positive changes and improvement for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Guskey, 2000). Additionally, "professional development is the catalyst to transforming theory into current best teaching practices" (Kent, 2004; p. 429). Districts continue to spend upwards of 10% of their yearly budget to provide professional development (Chambers et al., 2008; Miles et al., 2004). For the 50 largest districts in the United States, this equates to collectively spending 8 billion dollars annually (TNTP, 2015), and

the return on investment is critical for teacher professional growth and student learning.

Many districts utilize professional development frameworks (Desimone, 2011) by

planning and delivering professional development opportunities based on core features:

content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. This

coupled with planning professional development that includes principles of andragogy or

adult learning theory (Knowles, 2005) has the potential to increase teacher agency

through teacher-led, differentiated professional development. However, there continues

to be a disconnect between what the district is providing the teachers, and how the

teachers perceive or experience the professional learning opportunities. Clark and

Hollingsworth (2002) postulate, "We must understand the process by which teachers

grow professionally and the conditions that support and promote that growth" (p. 947).

Understanding the relationship between adult learning and teacher agency may be a

missing link in the research for seeing the transfer of learning in professional

development to an increase in student learning.

Theoretical Framework

As school districts work on providing high quality professional development, how

adults learn cannot be ignored. Districts must focus on how to provide these opportunities

for teachers who have different needs and preferences (Drago-Severson, 2008). How

adults learn can play into whether teachers determine if a professional development

session was effective (Dwyer, 2004). Andragogy or adult education is defined as the art

and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980). Additionally, the claim has been

made there has been little overlap in looking at employee development and principles of

adult education (Dwyer 2004). As school districts design professional development, they should not only design using effective features of professional development but also design using adult education principles. The term andragogy was first coined in Germany and later introduced to the United States in the 1970's by Malcom Knowles and is the term used to describe adult learning. The original framework (Knowles, 1975) is based on a set of four assumptions about how adults learn and highlights the value of the process of learning. Two additional assumptions, *motivation to learn* was added in 1984 and the first assumption, *the need to know* was added later in 1989 (Knowles et al., 2015). Figure 1 shows the six assumptions of adult learning developed by Knowles and colleagues (1998).

Figure 1

Andragogy in Practice

Goals and Purposes for Learning

Individual and Situational Differences

Andragogy:
Core Adult Learning Principles

1 Learner's Need to Know
-why
-what
-how

2 Self-Concept of the Learner
-autonomous
-self-directing

3 Prior Experience of the Learner
-resource
-mental models

4 Readiness to Learn
- life related
- developmental task

5 Orientation to Learning
- problem centered
- contextual

6 Motivation to Learn
- intrinsic value
- personal payoff

Institutional Growth

Subject Matter Differences

Situational Differences

Societal Growth

Individual Learner Differences

Individual Growth

(Knowles et al., 1998)

1. *The learners' need to know*. Adult learners need to understand upfront why they need to learn something before they engage in the learning. Adults are motivated to learn when they know the "why" behind what they are going to learn or "why" it is important for them in their professional growth (Knowles et al., 2015).

2. *The learners' self-concept*. Most adults embrace a self-concept of being responsible for their own learning. Adults who embrace this want to be seen and

treated as capable of learning on their own. However, if the professional

development opportunity is labeled as "training" they typically will revert to the

days when they were in school and do not stay in control of their own learning

(Knowles et al., 2015).

3. *The role of the learners' experience.* Adults come to professional development

   opportunities with different experiences just as the students they teach come with

   different experiences. This comes with age and other experiences. (Knowles et al.,

   2015). When planning professional development, this can have a greater impact

   as there will be a broader range of differences among learners. When planning

   professional development, the facilitator must use strategies to bring out the

   experiences of the participants. It must also be acknowledged the participants

   bring biases and fixed mindsets, so it is important to always start with the "why."

4. *Readiness to learn.* An individual's readiness to learn is grounded on the need to

   learn something new due to a gap in knowledge. An individual's readiness to

   learn also is based when there is a problem to solve or a need to know.

   Furthermore, most learning is situational, and learners may exhibit different

   behaviors based on the context. While a learner might be self-confident and an

   independent learner for one context, other situations may find the learner

   dependent on others and not as confident (Knowles et al., 2015; Pratt, 1988).

   Adults become ready to learn things when, "they need to know and be able to do

   to cope effectively with their real-life situations" (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 45).

When planning professional development, the designer must consider what supports are needed regarding readiness to learn.

5. *Orientation to learning*. Adults' orientation to learning are centered on life, tasks, or problems. They learn best when the new knowledge is presented in ways that can be applied to real-life experiences.

6. *Motivation*. Adults are responsive to both internal and external factors. Although both factors contribute to motivation, there is more motivation for adults when the learning assists in problem solving or has internal payoffs (Knowles et al., 2015). Adults who understand the need to learn are motivated, but barriers can easily get in the way. Deterrents, as described in Tough's (1979) research may be "negative self-concept as a student, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, time constraints, and programs that violate principles of adult learning" (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 47). Professional development providers should keep in mind possible deterrents to motivation when designing professional development opportunities for teachers.

Practitioners or school districts can improve the effectiveness of professional development for teachers and help to increase teacher agency when planning professional development sessions with these assumptions in mind. If a session is based on these assumptions while also accounting for the individual needs of the learner, the district has the potential to increase teacher agency along the way.

Research Questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions of professional development?

    a. What are elementary teachers' perceptions of professional development?

    b. What are secondary teachers' perceptions of professional development?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of professional development in a district that provides teacher-led professional development with teacher choice?

3. What lessons can we learn from a district's approach to increase teacher agency through teacher-led professional development?

Summary

School districts, schools, and individual teachers feel more pressure than ever to meet the challenging demands of the current standards reform era to ultimately increase student learning. Teachers are in a continuous state of learning the new skills that are needed to effectively teach our students of the 21st century while unlearning the beliefs and practices that many of them have held to shape their teaching for much or all of their career (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Districts and schools are grappling to develop and provide the most effective professional development for teachers. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) claim "to serve teachers' needs, professional development must embrace a range of opportunities that allow teachers to share what they know and what they want to learn and to connect their learning to the contexts of their teaching" (p.84). Districts can improve the return on investment for both teachers and the district by taking the necessary steps to increase teacher agency. Using the principles based on andragogy or adult learning theory (Knowles, 2005) and employing

effective features of professional development (Desimone, 2011), one school district is providing teacher-led, differentiated professional development. This explanatory sequential mixed methods study seeks to explore the lessons learned from the district in their approach to support teacher agency.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

The changing landscape of education requires school districts to provide opportunities for teachers to continue to grow as professionals. Professional development must be offered at the school and district level that meets the individual needs of teachers just as teachers are expected to meet the needs of every student. The professional development offered must engage teachers in collaborative practice and allow them to be active learners (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Matherson & Windle (2017) state "professional development should be just as dynamic as the education its participants are expected to provide," (p. 30). Teachers are at the heart of standards-based reform, and it is imperative the professional development offered to them provide the necessary content and opportunities to facilitate learning and changes in practice (Birman et al., 2000). The American Federation of Teachers (1995) reported…

> Without professional development school reform will not happen…The nation can adopt rigorous standards, set forth a visionary scenario, compile the best research about how students learn, change the nature of textbooks and assessment, promote teaching strategies that have been successful with a wide range of students, and change all the other elements involved in systemic reform. But, unless the classroom teacher understands and is committed to the plan and knows how to make it happen, the dream will come to naught. (pp. 1-2)

Professional Development

Guskey (2000) posits "one constant finding in the research literature is that notable improvements in education almost never take place *in the absence* of professional development," (p. 4). Education is constantly evolving, new technologies are being added, and knowledge in our subjects are expanding. As with any other profession, teachers must be lifelong learners to grow and hone their skills (Guskey, 2000; Sullivan,

1999). While many teachers see professional development as an opportunity to learn, discuss, reflect on, and try out new practices or strategies; many still see professional development as a one-shot, one size fits all approach and is something done to educators a few days during the school year. (Sparks, 1994; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). The goal is for teachers to view professional development as a systematic effort to bring about change and improvement for both teachers and students (Guskey, 2000) but first, professional development must be defined.

Defining Professional Development

Defining what is professional development has also been subject to change over the course of time. Staff development, as it was called in the 1970s and 1980s, was defined as "processes that improve the job-related knowledge, skills, or attitudes of school employees" (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1990, p. 5). As the term moved toward professional development in the late 1980s, Little (1987) described professional development as "any activity that is intended partly or primarily to prepare paid staff members for improved performance in present or future roles in the school districts" (p. 491). Both definitions were focused on the teacher or other school employees and referred to specific activities like workshops. Definitions of professional development since then have been expanded to include student learning. Professional development is the processes and activities designed to improve or enhance knowledge of teachers, skills or practice of instruction, and improving learning for students (Guskey, 2000; Wei et al., 2009). Although districts have determined what constitutes as professional development, barriers still exist in both implementation and outcomes for professional development.

Barriers to Professional Development

Continued reform efforts and the desire to improve teacher practice through professional development has afforded teachers to choose from a myriad of professional development choices (Supovitz & Zief, 2000). However, it is difficult to get teacher buy-in in many instances. A Gates Foundation study by the Boston Consulting Group (2014) found most teachers do not view professional development as a learning activity but as a compliance activity. The study found teachers do not believe the professional development offerings are meeting their needs. In the study, only 29% of teachers were highly satisfied with the professional development they were offered, and 18% reported they have never gotten to choose what professional development they attend. School districts and schools must plan and provide professional development with regard to features that researchers have deemed effective while also attending to the needs of adult learners. To accomplish this daunting task, districts must be able to identify what is effective professional development.

Identifying Effective Professional Development

Professional development is the key to implementing educational reform effectively (Birman et al., 2000). Yet as school districts and individual schools remain focused on improving student outcomes, finding the optimal mix of professional development continues to be an elusive dream for many. Learning can take many pathways, and just like students, teachers also learn in a myriad of contexts and experiences. Students benefit from teachers' opportunities to learn, and school districts must ensure they are providing professional development that will lead to teacher and

student growth (Darling-Hammond, 1998). With the demand for teachers to be "highly qualified" when NCLB was enacted in 2001, several "lists" were published describing characteristics of highly effective professional development (Guskey, 2003). These lists were released around the same time the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) revised its *Standards for Staff Development* (2001). Guskey (2003) explored 13 different lists or studies that identified these characteristics including the NSDC *Standards.* Guskey did an analysis of the lists that bore three separate conclusions. The first was there was little consensus among researchers and practitioners about the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development. Second, professional development occurs in real-world contexts. The nuances of contextual differences greatly impact the effectiveness of professional development efforts. The third conclusion is it may be unlikely to believe one single list of effective professional development characteristic will ever exist no matter how extensive the research base becomes. However, Guskey (2003) suggests that school leaders can help improve the efforts of researchers if they reach consensus for the criteria to determine effectiveness and consider the different school contexts and learners, while always focusing on improving outcomes for students.

Though lists of characteristics are regularly shared in literature focused on effective professional development, there is still little direct evidence on the impact these characteristics have on teacher and student outcomes (Garet et al., 2001). Garet and his colleagues (1999) were some of the first to address professional development in a large-scale study that explored features of professional development and change in teaching

practice. The study was a national, cross-sectional study that included 1,027 teachers. This study identified six key features of professional development that could be effective in improving practice. Three features were considered structural: reform type, duration, and collective participation. The other three features were core features based on the activity itself: active learning, coherence, and content focus. The study determined most professional development provided at the district level do not have the six quality characteristics.

Garet and other researchers built on the previous study by designing a longitudinal study (Garet et al. 2001). This study spanned across 30 districts that had implemented varied approaches to professional development as well as traditional forms such as workshops. Results from the longitudinal study found professional development is more effective in changing teacher practice if there is collective participation of teachers from the same grade level, department, or school. Active learning also increases the effectiveness of changing teacher practice. Interestingly, there were no effects for duration of the professional development in the study as previously cited by several other studies (Birman et al, 2000; Guskey, 1999; Porter et al., 2000).

A study by the Regional Education Laboratory-Southwest (RELSW) and funded by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education set out to conduct one of the largest studies to date with a largescale synthesis of research conducted to date thus far. Results were analyzed from over 1,300 studies and found only nine of them met the standards of evidence set by the U.S Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (Yoon et al. 2007). This further warrants the need for more

rigorous studies on the impact of professional development on student achievement. Four implications arose from the study. The first is those in charge of the design and implementation of professional development must understand how to critically evaluate the effectiveness of their professional development. Second, schools must require better evidence from consultants and other sources of new instructional strategies and practices. The strategies must be backed up with reliable and replicable data that fits all contexts. The third implication is these new strategies or practices should be tried out in a controlled, small scale plot study to determine its effectiveness. The last implication is both practitioners and researchers alike, need to increase the rigor of studying professional development. Professional development is big business in not only the amount that is spent yearly, but the impact it has on both teacher and student learning (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Although it is important to identify effective features of professional development, the influence of contextual factors cannot be overlooked (Guskey, 2009b).

Core Features of Professional Development Based on Context

School contexts vary greatly across the country, and the impact of contextual influences cannot be dismissed when it comes to effective professional development practices. Core features can be adapted to specific contexts, but activities or strategies may not work for particular school settings (Guskey, 2009b). One study identified eight core features that allow teachers to develop as learners and to ultimately improve student learning (Patton et al., 2015). The study further explains that based on context, there are many different viewpoints on defining characteristics for effective professional

development (Patton et al., 2015). Depending on the context, effectiveness could relate to teacher engagement in the professional development, while in another context it might relate to the impact the professional development has on student learning, Furthermore, in a different context, effectiveness could relate to teacher development and the improved practice. The eight core features presented in Figure 2 can go across contexts and are linked to teacher engagement, teaching practice, and student learning.

Figure 2:

Professional Development Linked to Teacher Engagement

Source: Patton et al. 2015

Darling-Hammond (1998) states,

> We need to deepen our understanding of what good development opportunities look like in different contexts through concrete images, examples, and

experiences. We also need to identify and describe the kinds of school organizational and structural supports that are needed for these changes in teaching to be realized. (p. 13)

A way for school districts to approach this is by looking at teacher agency and whether system conditions support or hinder the development of teacher agency.

Teacher Agency

Agency is an overlooked concept in many of the discussions centered around professional learning in the field of education. To move beyond professional development to a culture of professional learning, teachers must exhibit agency (Lai et al., 2015). Priestly and colleagues (2015) refer to agency as an important combination of people's "sense of intentionality and their perceived possibilities and opportunities" (p.3). Teacher agency is further defined as "the capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues" (Calvert, 2016, p. 2). The extent to which a teacher acts with agency in professional learning is dependent on internal traits. This includes the desire or motivation to be engaged in professional learning.

Teacher agency is also dependent on a district's or school's structural conditions and culture (Calvert, 2016; Lai et al., 2015). Furthermore, how a system includes teachers in the decision-making process of determining professional learning impacts teacher agency. When districts approach professional learning as a top-down approach and teachers consider it as something being "done" to them, the district can impede or reduce agency (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997; Wilcox & Lawson, 2018; Wild et al., 2018). Professional development is twofold for teachers; it is a requirement and an avenue for change and to

confirm current practice (Patton et al., 2015). The key shift is one of agency (Clarke &

Hollingsworth, 2002) "from programs that change teachers to teachers as active learners

shaping their professional growth through reflective participation in professional

development programs and in practice" (p. 948). Calvert (2016) proposes in Table 1,

system conditions that either support or do not support teacher agency.

Table 1

Conditions That Do and Do Not Support Teacher Agency

System Conditions	Professional Development Lacking Teacher Agency	Professional Learning Supporting Teacher Agency
School approach to professional development	- Planned by administrators, often delivered by vendors; - Driven by constraints of current scheduling; - Doubts about whether professional development is working; - One-time workshops without follow up.	- Teachers plan and present professional learning; - Educators engage in learning communities based on mutual trust and expertise; - Professional learning happens during the school day and everyone engages in cycles of learning.
Reason for teacher participation	- Compliance: to earn credits or carry out existing policies - Compulsion of external pressure to achieve a score, satisfy someone else's objective, or to receive external rewards.	- Intrinsic desire to improve teaching and learning and connect with colleagues; - Internal motivation to master one's craft, to be accomplished, to prepare students for the future.
Source of solutions to learning challenges	Assumption is that the source of expertise and solutions comes from outside the school.	Look internally first for the source of expertise to solve problems.
Topics and skills addressed	- Little input from teachers; - Potpourri of topics chosen by system leaders and principals based on multiple, often competing, objectives; - Decisions about what teachers need to know are made by the central office and school administrators;	- Teacher-identified learning objectives; - Based on data (including observations); - Focused on teachers' and students' continuous growth; - Topics address specific challenges;

System Conditions	Professional Development Lacking Teacher Agency	Professional Learning Supporting Teacher Agency
	• Topics are often unrelated to teacher and student learning.	• Teachers decide what they need to learn.
Role of teachers	• Implementers, recipients of information, deliverers of content.	• Planners, designers, advisors, presenters, implementers, evaluators, decision makers.
Collaboration	• School leaders predetermine topics for collaboration; • Teachers do not choose which team(s) they will join; • Norms and protocols are set outside of the group and may or may not be accepted by group members; • Groups may include non-teachers whose primary role is to supervise the group's interaction.	• Teachers determine topics based on student's and teachers' needs; • Teachers may choose to join teams with common goals and interests; • Teams determine norms and protocols; • Teams are responsible for working within their established norms and protocols, though non-teachers may participate as team members without a supervisory function.
Format	• Form of learning is not personalized; • Sit and get; • Teacher watches presentations, listens, takes notes, sometimes engages in small group discussion.	• Format based on teachers' learning needs; • Grounded in adult learning research; • Collaborative, constructivist exchange.
Tone of learning activities	• Checking the boxes; passive, inauthentic interaction; • Unclear purpose; • Loses focus, gets off track, devolves into staff meetings or complaint sessions; • Evaluative.	• Goal-oriented; • Professional; • Clear agenda and meaningful protocols; • Interpretive, solutions oriented.
District plan and priorities for professional learning	• Driven by administrators and school board; • Plan executed by central office • Focus on state and district mandates and program implementation; • Excludes monitoring and feedback of effectiveness.	• Educators examine data and determine priorities; • District team comprises at least 50% practitioners; • Plan to monitor implementation and impact; • Established feedback loops.

Source: Calvert, 2016

School Approach to Professional Development

Instead of a top-down approach (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Guskey, 2000; Sullivan, 1999), teachers should be allowed to be a part of the planning for professional development and present the learning to colleagues. Calvert (2016) suggests at least 50% of school and district planning teams be comprised of teachers. Vaughan and McLaughlin (2011) found teachers who had ownership in the decision-making process of choosing their own professional development had higher levels of change. A bottom-up approach can be achieved by first deploying a needs assessment to understand what the teachers' professional learning needs are for the upcoming year. Teachers can then develop the professional learning opportunities, both for formal teacher-led professional learning and informally through learning communities.

Reason for Teacher Participation

A culture for continuous improvement is observable when teachers intrinsically want to improve. Districts that foster teacher improvement promote agency when they encourage participation and provide an environment that allows for natural collaboration (Guskey, 2000). Teachers want to be a part of professional development that includes active participation, modeling, and hands-on practice of the skills and strategies learned (Matherson & Windle, 2017).

Source of Solutions to Learning Challenges

Districts that promote teacher agency look to solve problems internally first and exist as learning organizations (Guskey, 2000). This is the heart of the work for learning communities (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; DuFour et al., 2010). Colleagues

work together to solve problems of practice to increase student learning and the

professional growth of colleagues (Calvert, 2016; Fullan, 1991; Hawley & Valli, 1995).

Topics and Skills Addressed

Professional development is a systematic, ongoing process that is based on data.

The data includes conducting a needs assessment to identify the individual and collective

needs of teachers. Other forms of data can inform professional development to be offered

including state assessment results and teacher evaluation or observation data (Guskey,

2000). The needs of the learners can require differentiated professional development. One

way to accomplish this is to offer several different opportunities in the form of sessions.

Teachers can self-select the topics or areas they are interested in. A second form is based

on teacher evaluation data, and teachers receive support such as mentoring or coaching to

help target their areas of strength or in need of improvement (Desimone & Garet, 2015).

Roles of Teachers

Districts promote teacher agency when they involve teachers throughout the entire

process. (Borko & Putnam, 1995; Gurney & Liyanage, 2016; Little, 1993; Matherson &

Windle, 2017). Professional development is a process that should be intentional, ongoing,

and systemic (Guskey, 2000). Teachers are active in the planning stages of deciding what

professional development to offer after analyzing the results from the needs assessment.

Teachers are the designers of the professional development with adult learning principles

in mind (Knowles et al., 2015). Moreover, they implement or provide the learning

through a variety of formats: teacher-led sessions, coaching, mentoring, lesson study,

collaborative groups, and professional learning communities (Calvert, 2016; Showers &

Joyce, 1996). Finally, the process has an evaluation to determine the impact or effects on the goals that were previously set. Lack of involvement through the professional development process can impede or diminish agency (Biesta et al., 2015; Wilcox & Lawson, 2018).

Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of professional development. "Collaboration focused on the improvement of teaching and learning is one of the highest yielding strategies to boost student, school, and system performance" (Fullan et al., 2015, p. 8). Professional development is an ongoing process that occurs every single day in a variety of formal and informal formats through collaboration. Teachers gain knowledge and expertise by working alongside other teachers as members of collaborative teams in job-embedded professional development (Borko, 2004). Collective participation has been identified as one of the core features of professional development (Desimone et al., 2002). Moreover, Birman and colleagues (2000) postulate, "professional development activities that include collective participation- that is, the participation of teachers from the same department, subject, or grade- are more likely to afford opportunities for active learning and are more likely to be coherent with teachers' other experiences" (p. 30).

Format

The format of professional development should be based on the learning needs of teachers and designed using principles of adult learning or the framework of adult learning assumptions that Knowles and colleagues (2005) developed. The activities in the professional development must allow teachers opportunities to be active participants in

experiences that allows for learning over time and reflection (Darling-Hammond &

McLaughlin, 1995; Matherson & Windle, 2017). The format of the sessions can be in

either formal or informal settings (Evans, 2014).

Tone of Learning Activities

Districts who provide the conditions to promote teacher agency have a clear goal

for every professional development that is offered and provided to teachers. Guskey

(2000) suggests there are three steps to ensure the intentionality of professional

development:

1. Begin with a clear statement of purposes and goals.

2. Ensure that the goals are worthwhile.

3. Determine how the goals can be assessed.

These steps coupled with a clear agenda and procedures will create a warm and inviting

professional culture for teachers growing together professionally in a learning

community.

District Plan and Priorities for Professional Learning

Districts that have system conditions to support teacher agency seek to understand

the process by which teachers grow professionally and how the district can create the

conditions to promote and support teacher growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002).

Districts should plan professional development that is aligned to state and district goals

and focused on the standards for student learning (Desimone, 2009).

Advancing Teacher Agency

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) contend "developing professional capital is about helping people [teachers] to help themselves and help their students more effectively; it is not about manipulating them into complying with externally imposed requirements or delivering someone else's vision" (p. 169). Research supports that successful districts place more emphasis on increasing both teacher and collective capacity [agency] (Fullan et al., 2015). Small steps can go a long way in advancing teacher agency. Calvert (2016) suggests the following:

- Tap into teacher leadership

- Support teacher engagement

- Balance loose and tight control with support

- Hire leaders who believe in professional learning

- Start small and go deep

Advancing teacher agency does not automatically remove all the challenges associated with professional learning. There will still be professional learning that does not meet the expectations for teachers, but when districts provide the conditions that support agency, teachers feel supported to grow as a professional (Calvert, 2016).

Teacher Leadership

Every school district has a vast amount of teacher expertise that is either untapped or unrecognized. This expertise could be utilized to improve professional learning (Calvert, 2016). Current trends include teacher-led professional development. Districts are now surveying teachers on their professional development needs and using peers to

lead those sessions (Macias, 2017). Research has shown that teachers do not prefer outside providers for professional development (Pritchard & Marshall, 2002). Instead, they want to be in a community of learners from within. (Macias, 2017; Patton et al., 2015). Teacher leadership recognizes teacher expertise in all content areas and in different methods of instruction (Danielson, 2006). Teacher leaders can influence other teachers to improve their practice and increase student learning, (Poekert, 2012) and one way this can be achieved is through teacher-led professional development.

Teacher-Led Professional Development. Many of the traditional professional development opportunities for teachers fail to provide follow through and support for teacher growth. A model of teacher-led professional development promotes engagement and a community of learners (Macias, 2017). Outside experts do not have the perspective that teachers have on the professional development needs of a school (Hickey & Harris, 2005). Teacher-led professional development leads to professional capital for teachers (Patton et al., 2015). This model of professional development can encourage engagement while also promoting communities of learners (Macias, 2017). The planning for professional development should include teachers to identify the needs of the teachers. Moreover, the teachers should also be included in the design of the learning opportunity (Guskey, 2000; Hawley & Valli, 1999). Allowing teachers to be in control of their own professional development and choice about the content is a different approach to professional development (Colbert et al., 2008).

Teacher Engagement

When teachers are given the opportunity to work together while exchanging ideas and sharing instructional strategies in a trusting environment, a sense of community is formed. Collaboration leads to reflective practice (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Guskey, 2003; Supovitz et al., 2000), and a model of collaboration, collegiality, and experimentation are schools where teachers learn continuously (Little, 1982). While informal collaboration at the school level exists, it is suggested teachers from the same school, grade level or department also attend professional development together (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Garet et al., 2001). Participation as a collective group may allow for discussion and further understanding that will increase both individual and collective capacity (Ball, 1996).

Support Structures

Professional development at the district level should be aligned to state and district goals for student achievement (Desimone, 2009). Although researchers have identified what types of professional development is effective for teachers, many districts see professional development as a one-size-fits-all model and is driven by a top-down approach to change. Teachers who demonstrate teacher agency engage in professional development for personal growth, but many are mandated by a school or district administrator (Dahlberg & Philpot, 2008). A study by Vaughan and McLaughlin (2011) found teachers who had ownership in the decision-making process of choosing their own professional development had higher levels of change. Districts can use a bottom up

structure to help bring about change. This approach is centered around doing things *with* teachers instead of doing things *to* teachers (Loughran, 2014).

Leadership Support

The role of the principal has expanded more than ever during this continued standards-based reform. Learning Forward's (2011) *Professional Learning Standards* includes leadership in their standards. One of these increasingly important roles is establishing a culture and climate that encourages a learning community within the school that is committed to continuous improvement (Bredeson, 2000; Deal & Peterson, 1994). Principals who are instructional leaders create a clear vision and direction while also setting high expectations and standards for teachers and students alike (Hallinger, 2005). A culture of continuous improvement requires principals to seek the connection between change and professional development for teachers (Hart & Bredeson, 1996). DuFour (2001) suggests "the most significant contribution a principal can make to developing others is creating an appropriate context for adult learning" (p.14). Moreover, principals should nurture and encourage teacher learning while also engaging in practices that supports teacher growth (Bredeson, 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 1995; Holland, 2009).

Teacher agency is dependent upon structural and cultural conditions (Wagner et al., 2019), and principals' beliefs about these conditions do impact professional development. School leaders can strengthen instructional quality when they create internal structures and conditions to promote professional learning (Youngs & King, 2002). One structural condition that has great impact on teacher agency and supporting

professional growth is teacher evaluation. School leaders should provide specific

feedback during the evaluation process and encourage professional development by

connecting areas for growth (Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001). Darling-Hammond

(2013) speaks to the importance of professional development to evaluation. She states:

> It is important to link both formal professional development and job-embedded learning opportunities to the evaluation system. Evaluation alone will not improve practice. Productive feedback must be accompanied by opportunities to learn. Evaluations should trigger continuous goal setting for areas teachers want to work on, specific professional development supports and coaching, and opportunities to share expertise, as part of recognizing teachers' strengths and needs. (p. 99)

School leaders have a substantial influence on building teacher capacity in taking

initiative for their own professional learning (Hilton et al., 2015). Creating an

environment where teachers feel supported to take risks while experimenting with new

ideas and strategies will support further growth of teachers (Bredeson, 2000). Principals

who provide the right context for learning will ultimately see the group's collective

capacity increase and the desire to achieve schoolwide goals will override the desire for

their own learning (Dufour, 2001).

Moving Beyond Professional Development to Professional Learning

Schools over the past four decades have seen the natural shift from staff

development to professional development and more recently, professional learning (Wei

et al., 2009). Although the term professional development may be used interchangeably

with professional learning, it is important for districts to understand the difference when

designing professional development opportunities for teachers. Wei and colleagues

(2009) "conceptualize professional learning as a product of both externally-provided and

job-embedded activities that increase teachers' knowledge and change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning" (p.1). Previous studies have shown although professional development may have occurred, no learning took place (Easton, 2008). As Wei and colleagues (2009) suggest, "developing is not enough" (p. 1). A culture of continuous learning must exist to transform schools and improve student achievement. It is more important than ever to design professional learning opportunities that will build the capacity of teachers to improve their practice and school systems' capacity to further teacher learning (Wei et al., 2009).

Designing Effective Professional Learning

The National Staff Development Council, now called Learning Forward, developed standards for professional learning in 1995 and most recently revised for a third iteration in 2011 (Learning Forward, 2011). This most recent revision was developed through a collaborative process that included input from stakeholder groups including teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members at both the local and state level as well as still focusing on effective components of professional development. Developing professional learning based on standards gives districts a clear focus on improving teacher growth. The goal of the standards is that professional learning increases the teachers' effectiveness and results for all students (Learning Forward, 2011). Table 2 shows how this is accomplished.

Table 2

Standards for Professional Learning

Learning Communities	Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment
Leadership	Requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning
Resources	Requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning
Data	Uses a variety of sources and types of student educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate profession learning
Learning Designs	Integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes
Implementation	Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change
Outcomes	Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards

Source: Quick Reference Guide Learning Forward (2011)

Learning Communities

Districts or schools that exist as a learning community have a collective responsibility for every student in the school or school system to learn. These learning communities are committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and accountability through goals (DuFour et al., 2010).

Leaders

Strong instructional leaders design professional learning to increase teacher agency and capacity. The leader is tasked with establishing a culture and climate that encourages a learning community within the school that is committed to continuous improvement (Bredeson, 2000; Deal & Peterson, 1994). The learning community is focused on developing the capacity of teachers to learn, and the capacity to lead others (Learning Forward, 2011).

Resources

Designing effective professional learning requires districts or schools to begin by prioritizing resources for the learning. Time is just one important resource in planning for professional learning. Districts may choose to allocate resources to provide job-embedded professional development so coaching, mentoring, or peer observations can occur. Resources may need to be prioritized based on budgetary need, and coordination of resources may occur if multiple funding streams work together to provide external professional learning (Archibald et al., 2011). As part of continuous improvement, districts monitor resources to determine effectiveness and evaluate if they should continue with them (Guskey, 2000).

Data

Designing highly effective professional learning begins with developing a list of intended outcomes and determining the goals to reach the outcomes. Professional learning is evaluated to determine the effectiveness or progress towards meeting the goals (Guskey, 2000).

Learning Designs

Professional learning should be based on the research that has identified effective core features (Blank & de las Alas, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001). Active learning or active participation is one feature that should be included in professional learning (Desimone, 2011). The learning design must also account for how adults learn. In planning the design of the professional learning, the assumptions of adult learning must also be a focus (Knowles, 2005).

Implementation

Guskey (2002) states schools or districts implement more than one innovation at a time which may force leaders to rush through the planning process to speed up the time for teachers to acquire new knowledge. Fullan (2001) claims "careful attention to a small number of key details during the change process can result in the experience of success, new commitments, and the excitement and energizing satisfaction of accomplishing something that is important" (p. 7-8). Districts must design implementation plans based on the goals identified from the needs assessment (Guskey, 2000; Patton et al., 2015). Implementation for professional learning to create change also includes ongoing support and continuous feedback to sustain the implementation (Archibald et al., 2011).

Outcomes

Professional learning should be designed with the end in mind and focused on increasing the effectiveness of teachers and ultimately increasing student learning (Desimone, 2011). All decisions in designing professional learning for teachers should be evaluated to determine its effectiveness in meeting the goals that were established prior to

the planning and implementation of the professional development (Archibald et al., 2011; Guskey, 2000).

Summary

The professional growth of teachers is a highly individualized and complex process that involves many factors (TNTP, 2015). Although districts can work to provide the most effective professional development built upon the empirical research provided, it still is ultimately up to the individual teacher whether to improve his or her practice to improve student learning. Archibald and colleagues (2011) state "these features are necessary but not sufficient for changes in teaching practice and student growth to occur" (p. 7). School districts who create conditions that support teacher agency operate to provide a higher return on investment for both teachers and the district. This study seeks to determine the following:

1) What are teachers' perceptions of professional development?

   a) What are elementary teachers' perceptions of professional development?

   b) What are secondary teachers' perceptions of professional development?

2) What are teachers' perceptions of professional development in a district that provides teacher-led professional development with teacher choice?

3) What lessons can we learn from a district's approach to increase teacher agency through teacher-led professional development?

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This purpose of this study was to explore how one local school district is providing professional development to meet the individual needs of its teachers and to determine if it has system conditions in place to increase teacher agency. This chapter describes the type of research design used, a mixed methods design. The research design includes a description of the population, participants in the sample, and the instruments used to collect the data. The chapter also provides an overview of the collection and analysis procedures for both sets of quantitative and qualitative data.

Restatement of the Problem

American public education continues to be in a standards-based reform that expects increased student learning (ESSA, 2015). With every reform model and school improvement plan, professional development is at the forefront to help achieve those goals (Guskey, 2000). School districts are investing large amounts of time and budgetary costs to provide professional development to support teachers' professional growth (TNTP, 2015; Odden et al., 2002). Frameworks for highly effective professional development have been identified (Desimone, 2009) to help districts know what professional learning should look like, yet many of our teachers still report they don't experience professional learning that is beneficial to support their professional growth (Boston Consulting Group, 2014; TNTP, 2015). If districts are investing the money and providing professional learning that is appropriate in both content and delivery then what is the disconnect? What is the missing link to changing teacher practice and ultimately increasing student learning? Teacher agency is defined by Calvert (2016) as "capacity of

teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues" (p. 2). Districts must take actionable steps to increase teacher agency through professional learning. However, it is ultimately a teacher and their inner desire to want to continue to learn (Kent, 2004). By building teacher capacity and promoting agency to improve instructional practice, efforts to improve student learning outcomes will be more successful (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Research Design and Procedures

The study utilized a mixed method design. Mixed methods design involves an integration of both quantitative and qualitative research data. Ivankova and colleagues (2006) suggest "the rationale for mixing both kinds of data within one study is grounded in the fact that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient, by themselves to capture the trends and details of a situation" (p. 3). Rossman and Wilson (1985) identified three reasons to combine quantitative and qualitative research. First, the ability to use the two methods to confirm or corroborate with the other method through triangulation. Second, using both quantitative and qualitative enable analysis to provide richer data. Third, using the two method designs develop new themes from the information that emerge from the two data sets (Johnson et al., 2007). The mixed methods design used in the present study consists of two separate phases. In the first phase, the researcher collected and analyzed quantitative data. The second phase consisted of the researcher collecting qualitative data to help explain or further elaborate on the results from the first phase.

Quantitative Design

The quantitative phase of this study utilized a cross-sectional survey design to determine overall perceptions of participants with regards to professional development. The responses from the surveys were used to determine the design of the questions employed during the qualitative phase of the study.

Qualitative Design

The qualitative phase of this study employed a case study design. A case study is used when addressing "how" or "why" questions or when the answers are too complex to be captured within quantitative measures such as a survey (Yazan, 2015). When combining methods, triangulation can strengthen the study (Patton, 2015). Denzin (1978) identified four basic types of triangulation: (1) *data triangulation*- use of a variety of sources in a study, (2) *investigator triangulation*- the use of several different researchers, (3) *theory triangulation*- use of multiple perspectives and theories to interpret the results, and (4) *methodological triangulation*- use of multiple methods to study a research problem. Denzin further distinguished *within-methods* triangulation which refers to either multiple quantitative or multiple qualitative approaches from *between-methods* triangulation. The use of *between-methods* triangulation uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Johnson et al., 2007). There are also two types of methodological triangulation: simultaneous and sequential (Morse, 1991). Sequential triangulation is employed when the results of one approach are essential for planning the next method (Johnson et al., 2007).

The present study employed sequential triangulation by using the results of the data collected in the quantitative phase to determine the approach used in identifying the interview questions during the qualitative phase.

Research Methodology

When using a mixed methods research design, it must be determined if qualitative or quantitative takes priority in the study. This study utilized a quan-QUAL approach to collect and analyze the data. The data was collected in an explanatory sequential design. An explanatory sequential design uses a two-phase data collection. The researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and uses the results to plan the second phase of qualitative data collection to elaborate or further explain the results of the quantitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ivankova et al., 2006). The rationale for this approach is the quantitative data and analysis provides a general understanding of the research problem. The collection of qualitative data and analysis further refine and explain the quantitative results by going more in depth with the views of participants (Ivankova et al., 2006). Collecting and analyzing survey data in the first phase and following up with qualitative interviews allows the researcher to further explain the responses from the survey (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Interviews in the qualitative phase can further explain any quantitative results that may have been confusing or needed further explanation. An explanatory sequential design is appropriate for this study to be able to gather overall perceptions about professional development and overall perceptions about the district's afterschool teacher-led professional development. The qualitative phase of the data collection allows for expansion or further clarification

about the perceptions the teachers may have about professional development in general or the district provided professional development.

Population and Sample

The population used for this study consisted of teachers in Middle Tennessee Public Schools (MTPS). The district is a mid-sized district and has developed a differentiated model of teacher-led professional development with teacher choice that is offered throughout the school year.

MTPS is nestled in a southern middle Tennessee county. The United States Census Bureau reported the county had an estimated population of 94,340 residents in 2018. This was a 16.6% increase since the official 2010 Census. The 2010 Census reported the population at 80,956. MTPS had an enrollment of 13,068 during the 2018-2019 school year in 21 schools and opened two additional schools in August 2019. MTPS is comprised of three high schools, an adult high school (overaged and under-credited students), five middle schools, eleven elementary schools, three K-12 schools, and an alternative school program. MTPS employed 1003 certified teachers during the 2018-2019 school year.

MTPS provides a mentoring program to teachers who have less than 3 years of teaching experience and any teacher new to the district regardless of experience. For several years, the district provided new teachers with a monthly mentoring meeting that covered one topic. Participation was encouraged but not required so attendance varied dependent on the topic of the meeting. Average attendance was 30 teachers, and this included lead mentors who also attended the meetings with their mentees. A classroom

management session in the fall of 2014 was the most attended meeting ever with 84 teachers. A district administrator realized both veteran and novice teachers were in attendance, and a new idea for providing professional development was developed.

During the 2015-2016 school year, MTPS began offering multiple sessions of professional development on a monthly basis. The idea was to offer a mini conference each month where teachers would have more choice in the sessions they attended. The first date in September provided three different sessions, and 52 teachers attended. The October meeting offered eight different sessions, and 83 teachers attended. Over the course of the 2015-16 school year, 218 teachers attended at least one session.

In 2016-17, MTPS rebranded the professional development offerings as the Middle Academy of Professionalism (MAP). MAP was offered biweekly beginning in late fall. Teachers had a choice of 8-20 sessions each date and could either attend two 40-minute sessions or a full-length 90-minute session. The last MAP of the year included one professional learning session followed by a celebratory session with free ice cream sundaes provided by a local vendor and gift card and door prize giveaways by local businesses. This MAP had an unusually high attendance rate, possibly due to the giveaways. Figure 3 shows the attendance rates from 2015-2016 to present. Although the 2015-2016 school year was before MAP was developed, it is important to include the data as that was the first-year multiple sessions were offered to teachers.

Figure 3:

Attendance Rates at MAP Sessions
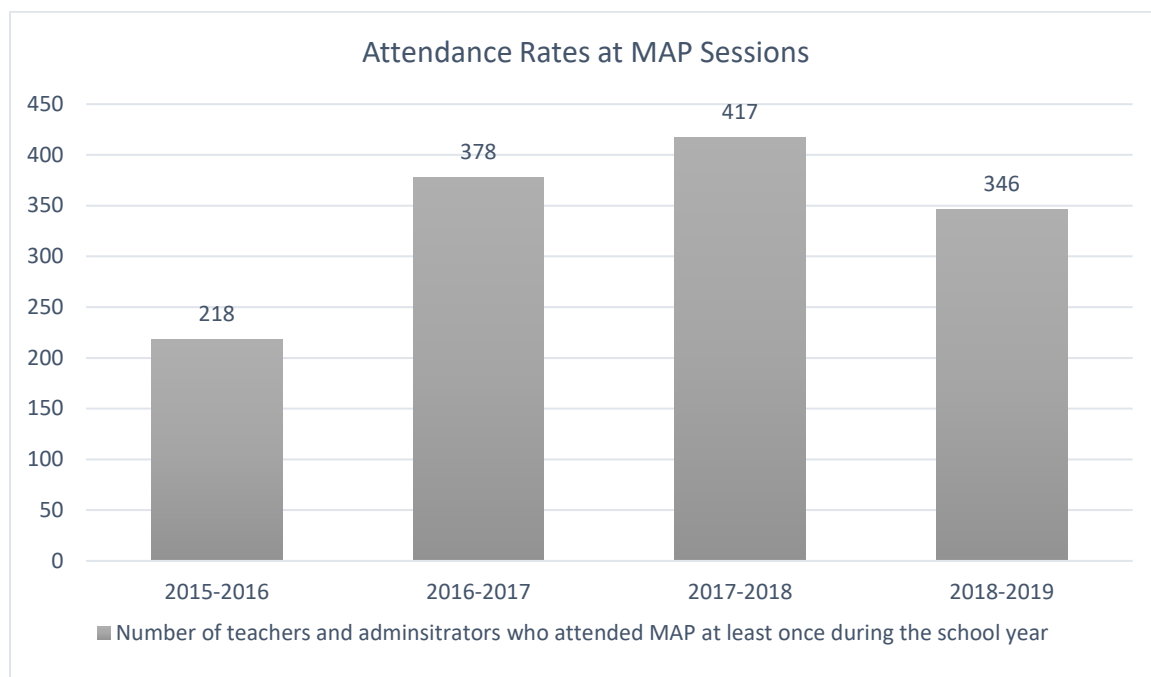
According to Figure 3, 2017-2018 had the highest attendance rate. The attendance rate for 2017-2018 included a session in April that was a make-up session for state required Erin's Law training. The session was attended by licensed teachers and classified staff. Figure 4 shows the attendance rates for each year by session date.

Figure 4

Attendance Rates at MAP by Session Date
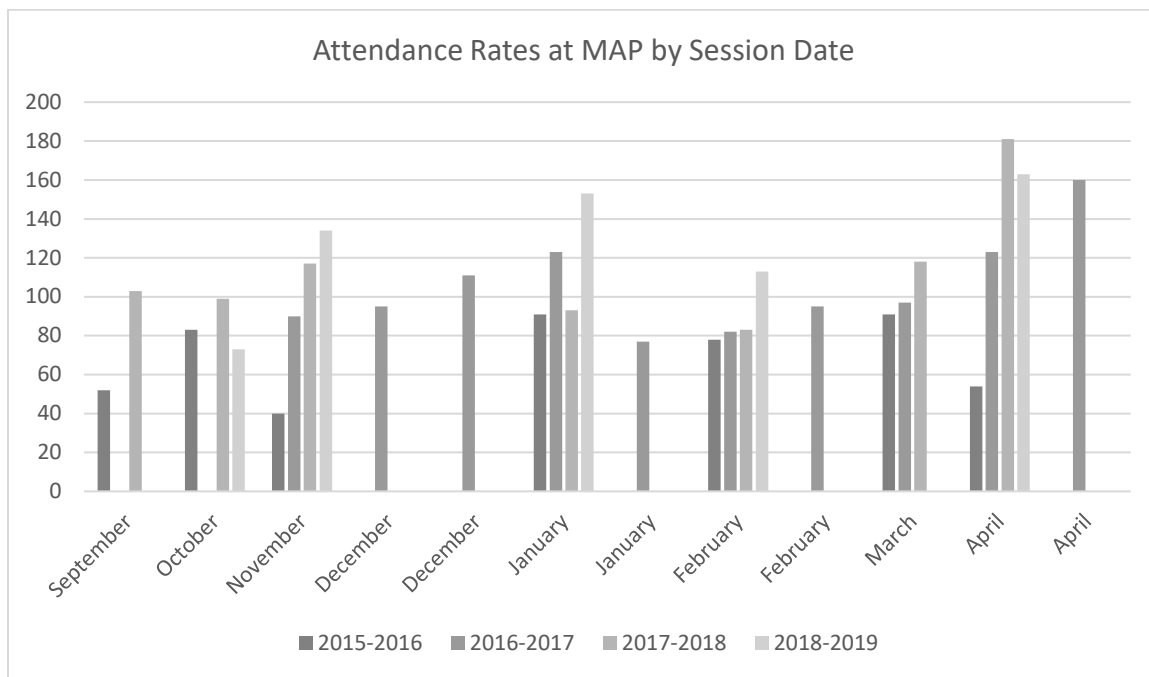
Seven different professional development dates were offered during the 2015-2016 school year. The largest attended meetings were January and March when 91 teachers attended sessions those days. When the professional development was rebranded in 2016-2017, 10 different professional development dates occurred, with one additional date in March canceled due to weather. Seven dates were offered in 2017-2018 including one in November where every session offered was led by students. In 2018-2019, the year had a kick-off MAP during the school day where all 1003 certified employees attended sessions. All were required to attend an ethics training, but they could attend other sessions based on their need. The regular MAP season had five additional dates with the March date canceled due to weather. In all, 242 unique sessions have been

offered to MTPS teachers led by teachers at the district's afterschool professional development.

The participants chosen for the qualitative phase of the study were teachers who attended a MAP professional development session over the course of the previous four years. During the first phase of the study, all teachers were sent an introductory email explaining why the study was being conducted with a link to an online survey using Qualtrics software. The beginning of the survey included an online consent form. The second phase of the study utilized purposeful sampling to identify participants to be interviewed.

Instrumentation

In this study a cross-sectional survey was employed to collect quantitative data. The researcher developed a survey to capture demographic data, overall perceptions of professional development, perceptions of the MAP sessions, and general questions to determine if the district has system conditions in place to increase teacher agency (Calvert, 2016). A mini pilot was conducted with a sample size of 38 participants prior to the study to determine reliability of the survey.

Validity and Reliability

A reliability analysis was carried out on the perceived task values scale comprising of 43 items. Cronbach's Alpha showed the survey reached a very high reliability, $\alpha = 0.939$. There was not any indication that any of the items needed to be removed to increase the reliability score.

Data Collection Procedures

The study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. For this type of study, data collection occurred in two phases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). During the first phase, the researcher employed a descriptive research design and collected quantitative data from an online survey (see Appendix A). The data from the survey was analyzed and used to determine the guiding questions for the second data collection phase. During the qualitative phase, the purposeful sample used included teachers who have attended several of the teacher-led professional development. The sample was purposefully identified to collect data from teachers who have established a pattern of attendance to conduct a program evaluation on the teacher-led professional development. Program evaluation is used to study how a program works and the results it achieves to determine its effectiveness (Patton, 2015). Figure 5 shows how an explanatory sequential design was utilized in a mixed methods research design.

Figure 5

Explanatory Sequential Design (Two-Phase Design)

Phase 1   Phase 2

| Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis | → | Identify results for Follow-Up | → | Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis | → | Interpret Results -- How Qualitative Explains Quantitative |
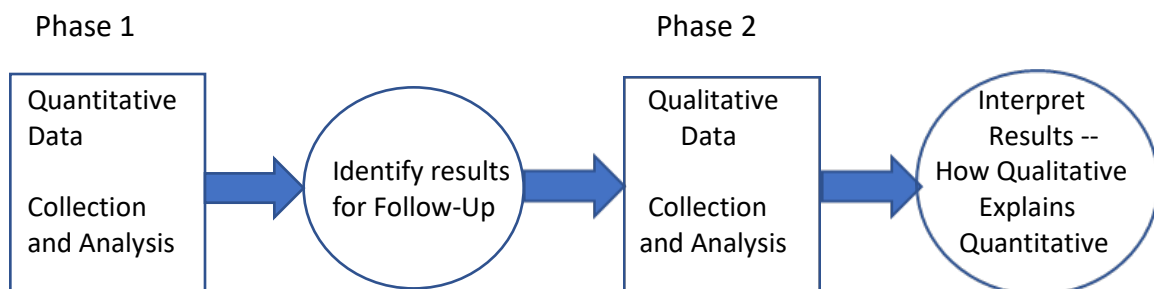
Source: Creswell & Creswell, 2018

Quantitative Data Collection Procedures

Upon receiving final approval and permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Middle Tennessee State University and Middle Tennessee Public Schools (MTPS), the researcher sent the superintendent of MTPS an email for survey participants. The superintendent forwarded the welcome email from the researcher to 990 teachers. The welcome email included the IRB approval letter and a link to a survey developed by the researcher in the program Qualtrics. The survey consisted of 43 items with most of the questions using Likert-scale responses. The initial welcome email with the survey link was emailed to the teachers during fall break and explained the nature of the research and how the results would be used in the district. The beginning of the online survey included the informed consent for the study. The researcher sent two additional follow up emails to teachers the week they returned from fall break and the following week. The survey was open for three weeks and had 277 responses.

Qualitative Data Collection Procedures

After the survey results were analyzed and themes emerged, the researcher began conducting interviews with each of the participants selected for the qualitative phase of the study. Interviews were conducted using the dictation option in Microsoft Word with a backup iPad using Voice Memo. The researcher developed guiding questions (also see Appendix B) listed below, but time and opportunity were allowed for interview participants to expand or elaborate as needed when answering the questions.

1. Why do you choose to attend MAP sessions?

2. What do you like about MAP sessions?

3. What do you not like about MAP sessions?

4. Have you ever been mandated to attend MAP? Please explain.

5. Has someone from your grade or school also attended a MAP session that you also attended? If yes, did you collaborate afterward or discuss what you learned or how you might try something new in your class?

6. Explain if teachers should plan and present their own professional learning or should be planned by administrators and delivered by external vendors?

7. What is your motivation for participating in professional development?

8. How should districts determine what topics or sessions to provide at professional development?

9. Why is it important for teachers to collaborate with peers during professional development?

10. What type of format should professional development be? (i.e. sit and get, watch presentation, small group discussion, collaborative)

11. How does goal setting impact professional development?

12. How should a district or school determine its professional development priorities?

13. How does MAP sessions tap into teacher leadership?

14. How does MAP support teacher engagement?

15. Should the district consider not mandating teacher participation at MAP? How do you think that will impact attendance?

16. How can the district improve the overall professional development for teachers?

17. How does the support of a building principal influence professional growth for

    teachers?

18. How does the professional support of a principal impact teachers wanting to try

    something new learned from professional development?

19. Does the administration help or hinder the implementation of new ideas?

20. Does your principal connect professional goals or SMART goals to professional

    development?

21. Does the score you receive on your evaluation give you an indication whether you

    need to improve in a certain area?

22. Does your principal ever suggest attending professional development to help

    improve your evaluation scores?

Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis within a mixed methods research design occurred during two distinct phases of the study. With an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the first phase included descriptive analysis of the survey results. Using Qualtrics, descriptive statistics and tables will be used to display the results in Chapter 4.

The second phase of the study was the qualitative analysis of the data collected from the interviews. After the completion of each interview, the researcher transcribed each interview. The transcriptions were analyzed through two rounds of coding to determine patterns and themes. The first cycle of coding used was initial or open coding as it is also referred to in coding. "Initial coding is breaking down qualitative data into discrete parts, closely examining them, and comparing them for similarities and

differences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). The second cycle of coding used was

pattern coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Pattern coding is used to determine major

themes from the data.

The first six questions of the survey were used to gather some demographic data

such as years of experience overall, years of experience in the district and at the school,

and whether they teach elementary, middle, or high. The table below demonstrates how

each research question was answered.

Table 3

Data Analysis Procedures

Research Question	Corresponding Source of Information	Corresponding Data Analysis/Reporting Procedures
RQ 1: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development?	Survey Questions 7-26	Descriptive Statistics
RQ 1a: What are elementary teachers' perceptions of professional development?	Survey Questions 7-26 filtered by elementary responses	Descriptive Statistics
RQ 1b: What are secondary teachers' perceptions of professional development?	Survey Questions 7-26 filtered by secondary responses	Descriptive Statistics
RQ 2: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development in a district that provides teacher-led professional development with teacher choice?	Survey Questions 27-43	Descriptive Statistics
RQ 3: What lessons can we learn from a district's approach to increase teacher agency through teacher-led professional development?	Interview Questions	Initial and Pattern Coding

Summary

This chapter described how a mixed methods study was needed to address the research questions. The chapter addressed how an explanatory sequential design would be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The chapter included a description of the population, participants in the sample, and the instruments used to collect the data. The chapter also provided an overview of the collection and analysis procedures for both sets of quantitative and qualitative data.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter includes an analysis of the data collected from a mixed-methods study to determine teachers' perceptions of professional development, teachers' perceptions of professional development in a district that provides teacher-led professional development with teacher choice, and to determine lessons that can be learned from a district's approach to increase teacher agency through teacher-led professional development. Quantitative data was collected and analyzed from a 43-question survey the researcher designed and administered. The Likert-scale survey used a 7-point scale with 1 = *strongly agree*; 2 = *agree*; 3 = *somewhat agree*; 4 = *neither agree/ nor disagree*; 5 = *somewhat disagree*; 6 = *disagree*; 7 = *strongly disagree*. The results of the survey were used to answer the first two research questions. The second phase of the study was qualitative data collection though the use of interviews with 6 teachers. The qualitative data collected was used to answer the third research question.

Demographic Information

The online survey generated a response rate of 28% with 277 of the 990 teachers partially or fully completing the survey. Elementary teachers comprised of 46.6% of the respondents, middle school teachers were 29.7% of the respondents, and the remaining 23.7% of respondents were high school teachers. The level of education varied among teachers. Teachers with a bachelor's degree were 39.7% of the respondents, 42% of respondents had a master's degree, 10.3% had a master's +30, 4.6% received an Ed.S, and 3.4% of the respondents had earned an Ed.D or Ph.D. The teachers indicated 12.2% of them were currently enrolled in a degree program.

Table 4

Highest Degree Earned

Degree	n
Bachelor's Degree	104
Master's Degree	110
Master's +30	27
Ed.S	12
Ed.D or Ph.D	9

Respondents of the survey had more years of experience overall than years of experience in the district or their current school. The respondents' total years of experience averaged 13.7 years. Respondents reported an average of 10.1 years in the district, and 6.8 years in their current school.

Analysis of Quantitative Findings

Descriptive statistics were utilized for the survey responses. The first part of the survey, questions 7-26, were about professional development in general. These questions were used to answer the first research question.

Results of Research Question One

For the purpose of this study, respondents were grouped into two categories based on the grade bands of schools in Middle Tennessee Public Schools (MTPS). Elementary respondents are comprised of teachers who teach pre-kindergarten through fourth grade, and secondary respondents are comprised of teachers who teach fifth through twelfth grade. Teachers agreed professional development contributes to the professional growth of teachers at school ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.05$). Broken down by level, elementary teachers agreed ($M = 1.79$, $SD = 0.93$) with the statement as well as secondary teachers ($M = 2.22$,

SD = 1.11). Overall, teachers believe professional development deepens and broadens

content knowledge for teachers (M = 2.15, SD = 1.17). Elementary teachers reached

greater consensus (M = 1.88, SD = 1.04) whereas secondary teachers had less consensus

with the statement (M = 2.42, SD = 1.23). Teachers agreed professional development

provides a strong foundation in the pedagogy of particular disciplines (M = 2.17, SD =

1.03). Elementary teachers concurred with this statement (M = 1.85, SD = 0.87) whereas

secondary teachers agreed less slightly with the statement (M = 2.47, SD = 1.09).

Teachers stated professional development helps me to become a better educator

(M = 2.13, SD = 1.19). While elementary teachers had agreement with the statement

(M = 1.80, SD = 0.90), secondary teachers had less agreement (M = 2.43, SD = 1.34). All

teachers somewhat concurred professional development should be required of all teachers

each year (M = 2.52, SD = 1.53). Elementary teachers responded to the statement

(M = 2.16, SD = 1.26) and secondary teachers somewhat agreed (M = 2.79, SD = 1.65).

Overall, teachers' responses were between agreed and somewhat agreed professional

development is a good use of time (M = 2.69, SD = 1.47). Furthermore, elementary

teachers had more agreement with the statement (M = 2.28, SD = 1.24) than secondary

teachers (M = 3.07, SD= 1.59). All teachers somewhat believe professional development

relates to my needs as a teacher (M = 2.81, SD = 1.44). By level, elementary teachers had

more consensus (M = 2.43, SD = 1.33) than secondary teachers (M = 3.14, SD = 1.47).

Figure 6 shows that secondary teachers responded to each of the survey questions with a

lower agreement to the statements than the elementary teachers.

Figure 6

Perceptions about Professional Development
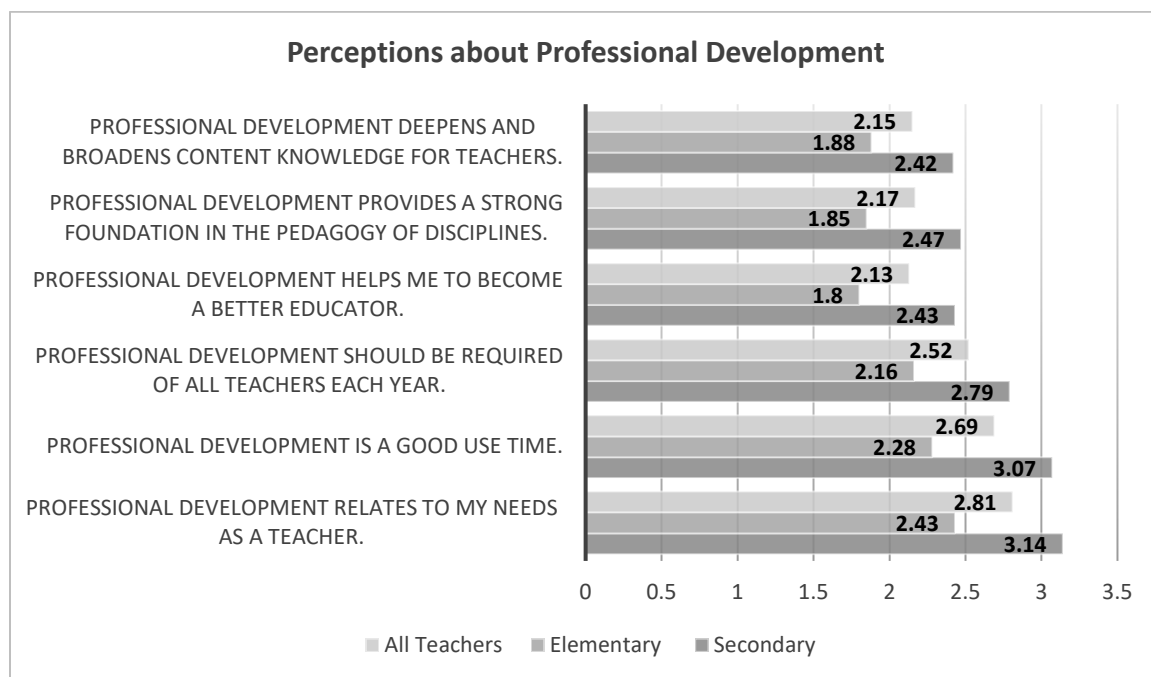
With regards to professional development and outcomes, teachers responded to the following statements. Teachers slightly agreed professional development pushes me to utilize student data to improve instruction ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 1.26$). Elementary teachers responded to the statement ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.13$) more favorably than secondary teachers ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 1.34$). Teachers concurred professional development for content contributes to measurable improvement in student achievement ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.19$). Elementary teachers reached greater consensus ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 0.99$) whereas secondary teachers slightly agreed ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.27$). Teachers agreed professional development for discipline specific pedagogy contributes to measurable improvement in student achievement ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.15$). Elementary teachers agreed with the

statement (M = 1.99, SD = 0.86) while secondary teachers somewhat agreed to the

statement (M = 2.59, SD = 1.31). Elementary teachers concurred with each of the

statements at a higher rate than the secondary teachers (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Professional Development and Outcomes
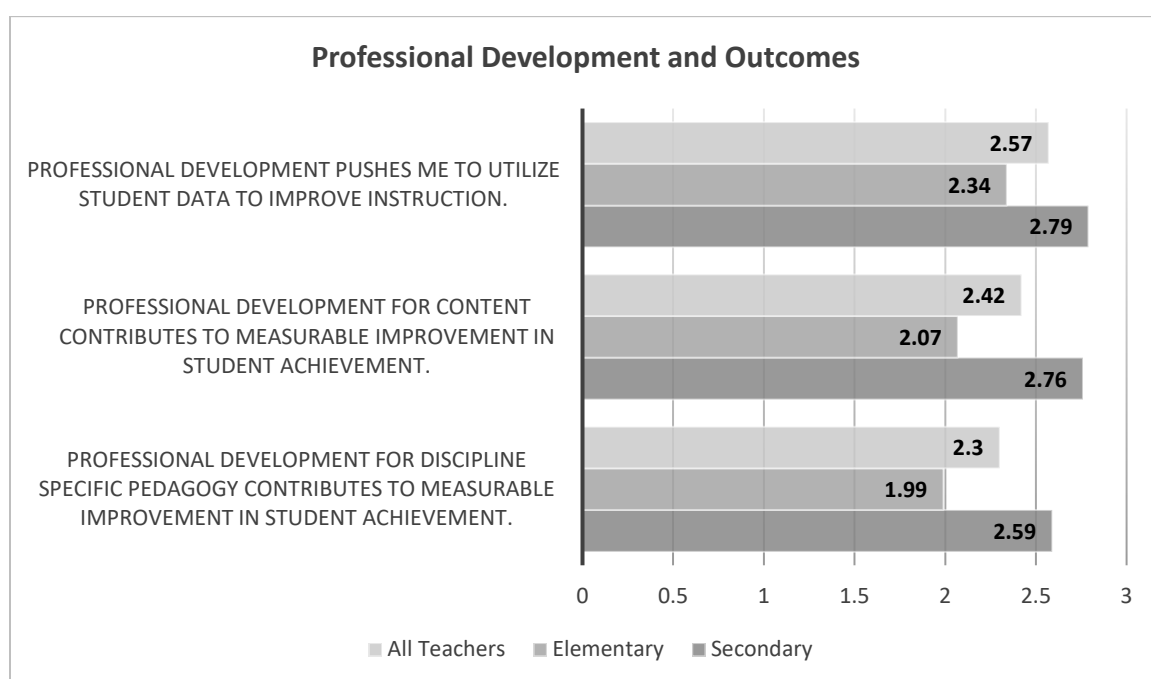
Survey questions that speak to culture had the following responses. All teachers

agreed collaboration among teachers is enhanced by professional development (M = 2.04,

SD = 1.11). Elementary teachers agreed with the statement (M = 1.81, SD = 0.90) as well

as secondary teachers (M = 2.25, SD = 1.23). Teachers overall believe professional

development motivates me to share resources with other teachers (M = 2.09, SD = 1.06).

By level, elementary teachers reached consensus with the statement (M = 1.80, SD =

0.83) as did secondary teachers (M = 2.35, SD = 1.18). All teachers agreed professional development creates an environment for me to support other teachers while implementing new teaching strategies (M = 2.15, SD = 1.03). Elementary teachers (M = 1.92, SD = 0.92) and secondary teachers (M = 2.36, SD = 1.09) both agreed with the statement. Teachers responded professional development motivates me to seek more training or further information on my own (M = 2.34, SD = 1.26). Elementary teachers responded to this statement with agreement (M = 1.95, SD = 1.00) and secondary teachers somewhat agreed (M = 2.70, SD = 1.37).

When looking at professional development and the classroom, teachers somewhat agreed professional development relates to my particular classroom (M = 2.84, SD = 1.42). Moreover, elementary teachers reached a higher rate of consensus (M = 2.43, SD = 1.26) while secondary teachers somewhat agreed (M = 3.15, SD = 1.50). Teachers agreed somewhat professional development relates to my professional responsibilities (M= 2.56, SD = 1.27). While elementary teachers concurred with the same statement (M = 2.26, SD = 1.24), secondary teachers were in less agreement (M = 2.80, SD = 1.26).

Figure 8

Professional Development and Culture
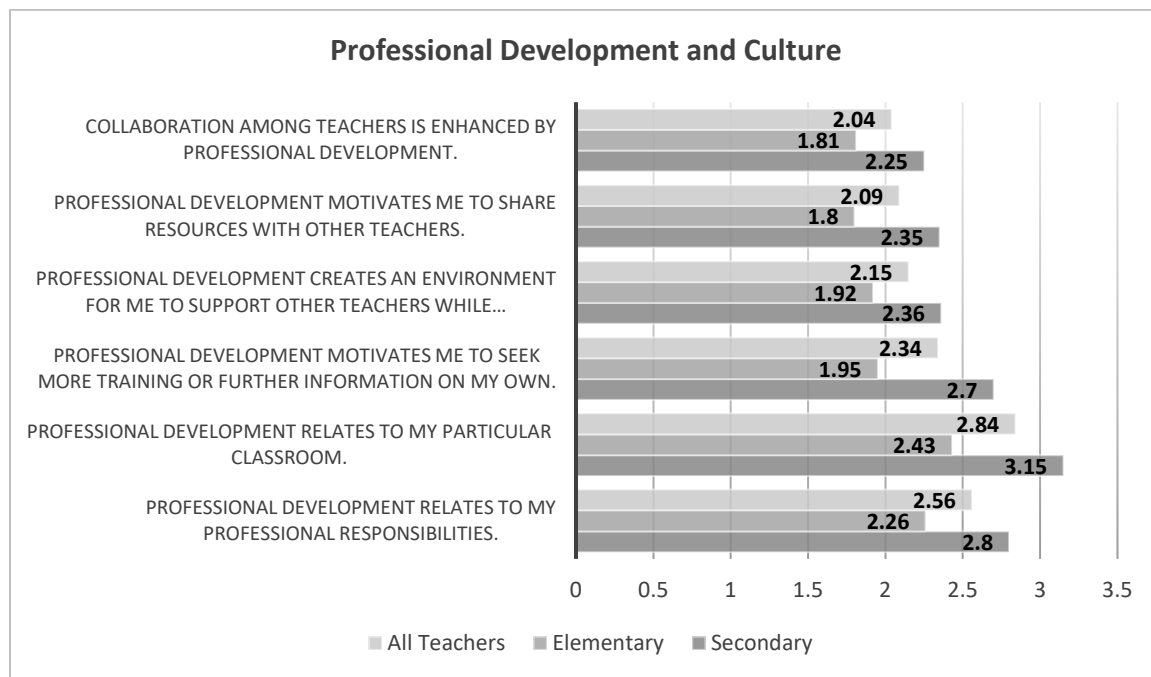
Three survey questions related to professional development and leadership. All teachers had some agreement with professional development improves my confidence to take on leadership opportunities (M = 2.75, SD = 1.33). Elementary teachers responded to the statement (M = 2.47, SD = 1.31) and secondary teachers responded to the statement (M = 2.99, SD = 1.33). Teachers had consensus professional development is encouraged by my administrator(s) (M = 1.87, SD = 0.99). Elementary teachers had a higher rate of consensus with the statement (M = 1.68, SD = 0.89), but secondary teachers also reached consensus (M = 2.06, SD = 1.04). Teachers were in agreement with my administration is supportive when I try to implement learning from professional development I attend (M =

1.88, SD = 0.99). By level, elementary teachers agreed at a higher rate (M = 1.62, SD = 0.76) than secondary teachers (M = 2.13, SD = 1.19).

Figure 9

Professional Development and Leadership
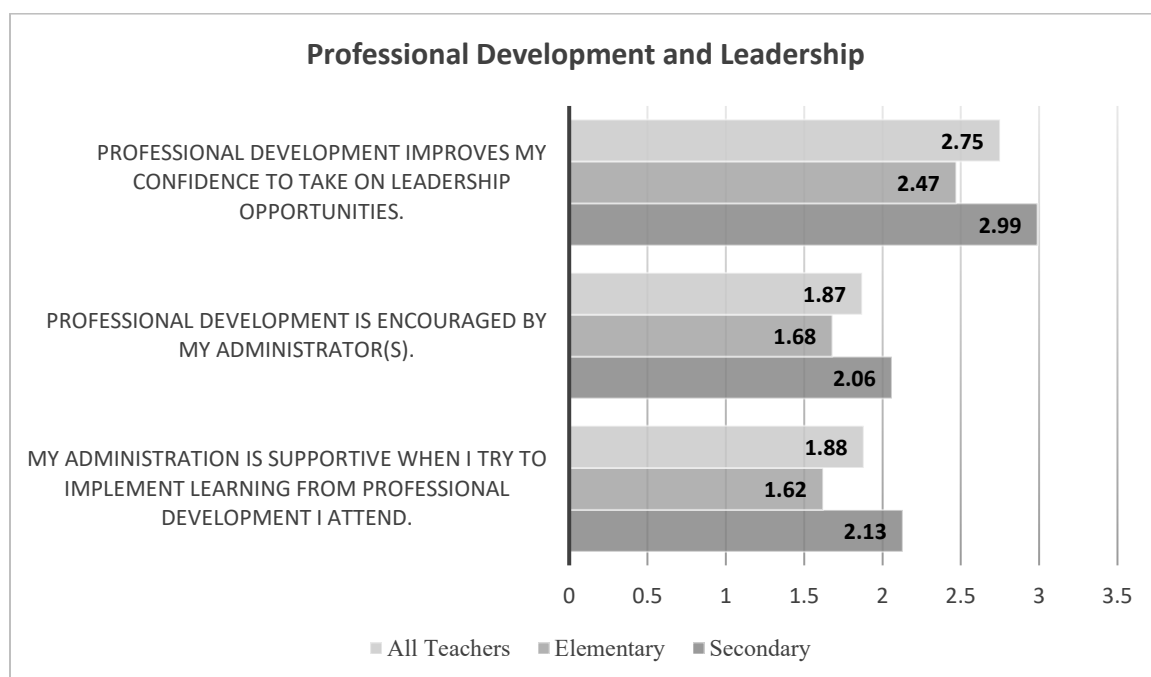
Teachers were asked to rank 10 quality professional development strategies that facilitate implementation of efforts and sustain change of practice in order of importance and/or effectiveness. The rank of importance and/or effectiveness of the strategies used in professional development varied by teacher level. Table 5 provides the rank order for each strategy by teaching level. Elementary teachers and secondary teachers both ranked the same strategy "provides a tangible activity or strategy to take back to the classroom immediately" as most important and/or effective. All other strategies varied in rank order

except for "active learning" ranked 3rd by both groups, "ongoing, over the course of time, in one area" ranked 7th by both elementary and secondary, and both groups ranked "peer study groups" as least important and/or effective.

Table 5

Quality Professional Development Strategies

Strategy	Rank Order All	Rank Order Elementary	Rank Order Secondary
Overgoing, over the course of time, in one area	7	7	7
Collaborative activities	6	6	4
Active learning	4	5	2
New skills are demonstrated/ modeled	3	2	5
Can be tied to real life experiences in the classroom	2	3	3
Helps solve problems of practice in the classroom	5	4	6
Provides a tangible activity or strategy to take back to the classroom immediately	1	1	1
Peer coaching/observation	8	9	8
Guided practice	9	8	9
Peer study groups	10	10	10

Results of Research Question Two

The second section of the online survey consisted of an additional seventeen questions. If respondents answered no to question 27, then the survey ended for them. If respondents answered yes, they continued with the survey. The seventeen questions consisted of yes/no questions, Likert scale questions, and four open-ended questions. For the purpose of this study, the open-ended questions were quantified for reporting of the results.

Demographic Information. The first question of this section of the survey asked if teachers have attended an after-school MAP session. 82.1% of teachers responded yes. The average number of sessions teachers self-reported they had attended since 2015-16 was 7.79 sessions. Teachers were asked if they had attended or if they did plan to attend MAP sessions during the 2019-2020 school year. 55% of responses were definitely yes, 19.5% were probably yes, 18.3 were might or might not, 5% were probably not, and 2.2% were definitely not had or definitely not going to attend MAP sessions. 30.9% of the teachers responded they are required to attend MAP sessions. Of the 30.9% who are required to attend, 58.2% would definitely or probably attend sessions even if they were not required, and 14.5% would definitely or probably not attend if they were not required. Teachers were asked if they have attended more than one MAP session in the same content area or focus area. Of the responses, 71% had attended more than one in the same content area or focus area.

Overall Perceptions of MAP Sessions. Teachers were asked an open-ended question why they attend MAP. Of the teachers who responded, the answers were

quantified. Of the survey respondents, 169 teachers responded to the open-ended question. The two most common responses cited for attending MAP sessions was to continue to grow/learn as an educator, and it was a requirement of the district. Each response garnered a response rate of 38.6%. Other reasons cited for attending MAP were the following:

- Interest in topic/strategy being presented

- License renewal/earn professional development points

- Learn from other educators

- Collaborate with fellow teachers

- To share with colleagues what was learned

- Look for new ideas

- Read to Be Ready/Ready Math

- Ability to have professional development without it being on a Saturday

- Relevant to my classroom and/or teaching

- Expected or needed representation from school

- Develop skills that are lacking

- Improve on area of weakness and/or focus on refinement area

- Lead mentor/lead by example

- Free professional development

Teachers agreed with the statement participating in content area professional development at MAP provided me with new knowledge and skills (M = 2.43, SD = 1.21).

Teachers agreed content area professional development at MAP positively influenced my instructional practices (M = 2.48, SD = 1.13). Respondents of the survey somewhat agreed participating in MAP sessions have caused me to change my instructional practices (M = 3.03, SD = 1.26). Teachers also somewhat agreed participating in MAP sessions met my professional needs (M = 2.85, SD = 1.26). All teachers somewhat agreed participating in MAP sessions have positively influenced my students' achievement (M = 3.15, SD = 1.28). Teachers agreed the MAP sessions I have attended allow for collaboration within the session (M = 2.37, SD = 1.11). Teachers responded they feel safe to try new things in my classroom learned at MAP (M = 2.02, SD = 0.96).

Figure 10

Overall Perceptions of MAP Sessions
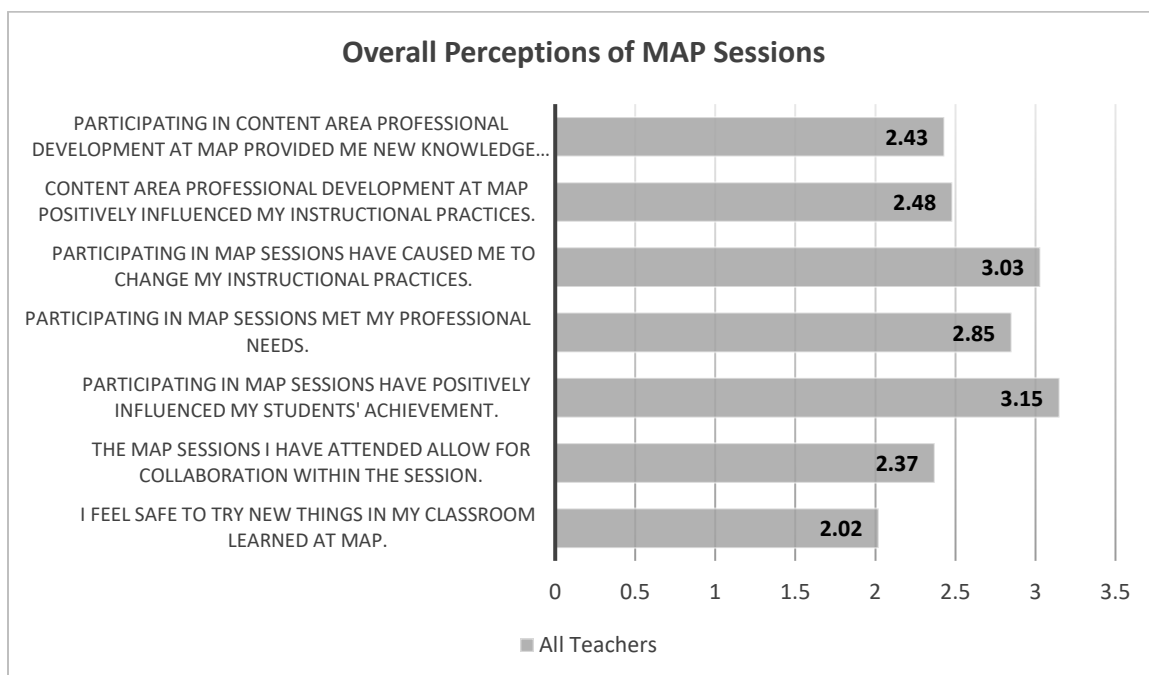
MAP Sessions and Leadership. Teachers were asked if their principal promotes MAP sessions when they are offered. Of the respondents, 21.3% strongly agreed, 39.1% agreed, 15.5% somewhat agreed, and 12.1 neither agreed nor disagreed. The remaining 12% of respondents somewhat disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. Teachers were also asked in an open-ended question, in what ways does your principal support teachers who attend MAP? The most cited response was "none" or "no support." This response was cited in 27.6% of the responses. The second most cited response was the principal reminds teachers of sessions through email predominately, announcements, or signs around the school. This response was cited in 23.3% of the responses. The third most frequent response was the principal encourages teachers to attend sessions with a response rate of 19.8%. The rest of the responses were less frequent and each garnered less than 1% of the responses. Those responses included:

- Allows teachers to leave early to attend sessions

- Encourages teachers to present at MAP

- Allows teachers to share with others after attending

- Allows teachers to count for professionalism

- Positive feedback

- Suggests specific sessions to attend based on teacher needs

Teachers were also asked an open-ended question, in what ways does your principal follow up with you after you have attended a MAP session. Of the 111 responses, 68 responses or 61.3% of the respondents stated there is no follow up with

their principal. The remainder of the responses each accounted for less than 1% of the

responses. Those responses included:

- Post-conference (Evaluation and/or Professionalism)

- Conversations

- Casual questioning

- Asks/allows participant to share with others

- Email

- Provide documentation and/or write a summary statement

Summary of Quantitative Findings

The survey responses from all teachers demonstrated the average teacher has an

overall positive perception of professional development. The average survey response for

each survey question was either agree or somewhat agree. Teachers somewhat agreed

professional development related to their needs as a teacher (M = 2.81, SD = 1.44),

professional development related to their particular classroom (M = 2.84, SD = 1.42), and

professional development improved their confidence to take on leadership opportunities

(M = 2.75, SD = 1.33).

Secondary teachers were not in as much agreement as elementary teachers with

each of the overall professional development questions. There was some difference

within the ranking of the professional development strategies importance and/or

effectiveness as shown in Table 6. Elementary teachers ranked "new skills are

demonstrated/modeled" second in the list of ten whereas secondary teachers ranked that

strategy fifth out of ten. Secondary teachers ranked "active learning" as second, and elementary teachers ranked that same strategy fifth. Elementary teachers ranked "helps solve problems of practice in the classroom" as the fourth most important and/or effective strategy, and the elementary teachers ranked "collaborative activities" as their sixth strategy. Secondary teachers ranked those two strategies inversely, with "collaborative activities" as their fourth ranked strategy, and "helps solve problems of practice in the classroom" as the sixth most important strategy.

Table 6

Quality Professional Development Strategies

Strategy	Rank Order All	Rank Order Elementary	Rank Order Secondary
Overgoing, over the course of time, in one area	7	7	7
Collaborative activities	6	6	4
Active learning	4	5	2
New skills are demonstrated/ modeled	3	2	5
Can be tied to real life experiences in the classroom	2	3	3
Helps solve problems of practice in the classroom	5	4	6
Provides a tangible activity or strategy to take back to the classroom immediately	1	1	1
Peer coaching/observation	8	9	8

Table 6 cont.

Quality Professional Development Strategies

Strategy	Rank Order All	Rank Order Elementary	Rank Order Secondary
Guided practice	9	8	9
Peer study groups	10	10	10

Teachers' perceptions of the MAP sessions were either in agreement or somewhat in agreement. Most teachers' primary reason for attending the teacher-led professional development with teacher choice was either it was a district requirement or to learn and/or grow as an educator. The teachers were asked if their principal promotes MAP sessions, and 60.4% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed. The teachers were asked an open-ended question to find out in what ways does the principal support those who attend MAP. 27.6% of the survey responses indicated no support is provided. Teachers were also asked how principals follow up with them after they have attended a MAP session(s), and 61.3% of the respondents indicated there in no follow-up.

Qualitative Data Collection

The third research question of the present study requires the use of qualitative measures. The research question seeks to identify what lessons can be learned from a district's approach to increase teacher agency through teacher-led professional development. The researcher identified 6 individual teachers who have attended MAP sessions on a regular basis to interview. Surveys were conducted over two weeks at a

time and location of the teachers' choosing. Four of the participants were elementary

teachers, one was a middle school teacher, and one high school counselor. The

breakdown of the grade bands for the six participants is representative of MAP

participants since most attendees are at the elementary level.

During each interview, the researcher followed a set of guiding questions (listed

in Chapter III under Qualitative Data Collection Procedures). The researcher used the

dictation feature in Microsoft Word to capture the interview as well as Voice Memo on

the researcher's iPad. The researcher utilized the audio recording of the interview within

24 hours of the interview to accurately transcribe each interview in Microsoft Word.

The researcher utilized initial coding or open coding as described by Strauss and

Corbin (1998). Initial coding was used to break down blocks of raw data into discrete

parts to identify individual codes. A total of 683 codes were identified after the first cycle

of initial coding was completed. A second cycle of coding identified as pattern coding

(Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used to determine major themes from the data.

Coding

Participant A – Trent. Initial coding of Trent's (pseudonym to protect

anonymity) twenty-three minute interview revealed 88 codes using initial coding. A

second cycle of pattern coding identified 35 categories. The 35 categories are displayed

in Figure 11.

Figure 11

Categories from Pattern Coding of Participant A - Interview – Trent

Categories from Collection of Codes – Trent		
1. different perspectives	13. teacher struggles	25. large group, no ownership
2. motivated to learn	14. smaller size groups	26. admin sets tone/culture
3. learn from others	15. collaboration	27. support to try new ideas
4. support system	16. teacher-led	28. frustrations
5. not alone in struggles	17. overcome obstacles	29. seek support
6. teacher choice	18. data-driven	30. disconnect of goal and PD
7. desire to be better educator	19. teacher empowerment	31. isolation of eval score
8. provide feedback	20. best practice	32 admin drives improvement
9. input from teachers	21. seek solutions	33 lack of feedback
10. based on interest	22. leadership support	34 reflective practitioners
11. based on need	23. teacher leaders	35 limited support
12. prevent burnout	24. provide opportunities	

Participant B – Lauren. Lauren's (pseudonym to protect anonymity) twenty-

nine minute interview revealed 117 codes during initial coding. During pattern coding, 32

categories were identified shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12

Categories from Pattern Coding of Participant B - Interview – Lauren

Categories from Collection of Codes – Lauren		
1. learn from others	13. best practice	25. expectations
2. informal	14. feedback	26. leadership support
3. different perspectives	15. interest of teachers	27. goals
4. format	16. seek solutions	28. evaluation scores
5. support system	17. implement new ideas	29. lack of feedback
6. collaboration	18. active learning	30. frustrations
7. share with others	19. meet student needs	31. wants to feel valued
8. motivated to learn	20. goal oriented	32. help others improve
9. street cred	21. confidence to present	
10. diverse choices	22. reflective practitioner	
11. teacher choice	23. teacher engagement	
12. lifelong learner	24. based on interest	

Participant C – Gloria. Gloria's (pseudonym to protect anonymity) interview lasted thirty minutes. The initial coding of the interview revealed 126 codes. A second cycle of pattern coding identified 31 categories shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13

Categories from Pattern Coding of Participant C - Interview – Gloria

Categories from Collection of Codes – Gloria		
1. best practice	13. teacher struggles	25. school level PD
2. meet student needs	14. support system	26. implement new ideas
3. motivated to learn	15. form	27. admin as learner
4. collaboration	16. smaller size groups	28. safe to try new ideas
5. teacher choice	17. personalized	29. admin provide feedback
6. requirement	18. goal oriented	30. make tweaks
7. share with others	19. focus area	31. help others improve
8. street cred	20. reflective practitioner	
9. relevant	21. feedback	
10. lifelong learner	22. area for growth	
11. teacher interests	23. teacher-led	
12. prevent burnout	24. share with others	

Participant D – Elizabeth. The interview conducted with Elizabeth (pseudonym to protect anonymity) lasted twenty-seven minutes. Initial coding revealed 86 codes, and a second cycle of pattern coding revealed 28 categories shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14

Categories from Pattern Coding of Participant D - Interview – Elizabeth

Categories from Collection of Codes – Elizabeth		
1. smaller size groups	13. goals	25. perseverance
2. collaboration	14. large group, no focus	26. support system
3. reflective practitioner	15. share with others	27. disconnect of goal and PD
4. different perspectives	16. active learning	28. focus area
5. requirement	17. safe to try new ideas	
6. teacher needs	18. feedback	
7. expectations	19. lack of feedback	
8. areas of strength	20. resources after feedback	
9. areas of need	21. admin not a learner	
10. support system	22. seek support	
11. not alone in struggles	23. implement new ideas	
12. format	24. make tweaks	

Participant E – Darlene. The interview conducted with Darlene (pseudonym to protect anonymity) lasted 47 minutes. Initial coding revealed 169 codes, and pattern coding during the second cycle identified 34 categories shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Categories from Pattern Coding of Participant E – Interview – Darlene

Categories from Collection of Codes – Darlene		
1. motivated to learn	13. feedback	25. smaller size groups
2. different perspectives	14. area for growth	26. large group, no focus
3. lifelong learner	15. collaboration	27. cohort
4. share with others	16. active learning	28. admin as learner
5. format	17. reflective practitioner	29. accountability
6. empowerment	18. connect to evaluation	30. leadership support
7. teacher choice	19. goal oriented	31. seek support
8. requirement	20. meet student needs	32. make tweaks
9. goals	21. go deeper not broad	33. disconnect of goal/PD
10. focus area	22. make tweaks	34. lack of feedback
11. opportunities	23. support system	
12. change	24. learn from others	

Participant F – Caroline. Caroline's (pseudonym to protect anonymity) interview lasted 28 minutes and initial coding revealed 103 codes. A second cycle of pattern coding identified 32 categories shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16

Categories from Pattern Coding of Participant F – Interview – Caroline

Categories from Collection of Codes – Caroline		
1. motivated to learn	13. learn from others	25. model
2. lifelong learner	14. meet student needs	26. accountability
3. share with others	15. reflective practitioner	27. network
4. format	16. seek support	28. leadership support
5. different perspectives	17. best practice	29. perseverance
6. relevant	18. support system	30. make tweaks
7. requirement	19. areas for growth	31. goals
8. collaboration	20. expectations	32. help others improve
9. feedback	21. encouragement	
10. teacher interests	22. teacher needs	
11. teacher-led	23. smaller size groups	
12. teacher choice	24. evaluation of PD	

Analysis of Qualitative Findings

Participant A – Trent

Trent has been in education for 13 years and has worked in two different states. He started his career as a special education assistant for two years before becoming a graduation coach. Trent has served in various positions throughout his career, most recently as a school counselor in a high school with MTPS since the fall of 2018. Trent has a master's degree in guidance and counseling. Trent works at a school that has low level of attendance at MAP sessions and is the only educator at his school to regularly attend sessions. Four other teachers have attended sessions this year, but they only attended a session presented by Trent or another educator at the school.

Reason for Participation.

Internal Motivation. Trent cut to the chase during his interview about his reason for participation at MAP sessions. Trent demonstrated teacher agency through his motivation for participating in professional development. Trent attends these sessions to receive enrichment in different areas and to learn from other's perspectives. He also attested there have been a lot of sessions that have benefitted him to grow professionally which is characteristic of a teacher with agency. Trent is also agentic in that he has also led several sessions to provide opportunities for other school counselors to attend sessions specifically for counselors. He also likes that childcare is offered at MAP sessions since both he and his wife attend these sessions, and they do not have any family in the area to help out with babysitting. Trent didn't have any negatives about MAP. He said for others it might be that they are after school, but most already have to do things after school anyway. He thinks MAP are beneficial. When asked specifically what his motivation is for participating in professional development, Trent said, "My motivation is to become a better educator, become a better school counselor." He went on to reference the last MAP that detoured from an academic focus and provided sessions centered around self-care for educators. Trent said he is also motivated to attend professional development to "build myself as an educator, learn how to prevent burnout."

Connect with Others. Trent mentioned in his interview several times how important it is to network with others. He went on to elaborate that just being at MAP allows teachers from all over the district to come together to interact, connect, and network. Trent has noticed teachers will network before and after the sessions. He said

that MAP allows that to happen when it normally would never happen. When asked what

he specifically likes about MAP sessions, Trent responded:

> Being a school counselor, sometimes we are alone in our work. I think the MAP
>
> sessions provide us with an opportunity to learn from someone else or grow more
>
> in our profession. I actually have someone to bounce off of versus just trying to
>
> go at it alone.

Loose/Tight Structure. The researcher asked Trent if he had ever been mandated

or required to attend MAP sessions. Trent responded he had been required to as an

educator new to MTPS but would still attend over the required number of sessions based

on topics that were covered. Teacher agency is dependent upon the interplay of structures

and the individual so the researcher probed a little deeper to ask if the district should

consider not requiring teacher participation at MAP. Trent responded by saying:

> I don't necessarily think so. I know maybe *some* [emphasis on some] new
>
> teachers…I think they're spread out so well that it is less stressful that way and
>
> there's so many opportunities. I think I kind of am for it because it does get them
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> to be in those opportunities that I think can help them more than what they realize.
>
> That it will help them once they are involved so I do think I see it as a good thing
>
> being required and cause it's just extra PD opportunities. It's not just you know,
>
> one way; you have multiple options.

Goal Setting. The researcher asked Trent how does goal setting impact

professional development. Trent spoke in general terms around if a teacher is struggling

in an area then professional development has helped with that. He did not ever mention if he sets his own personal goals.

Teacher Engagement.

Collaboration. The researcher began by asking Trent if someone from his school has attended a MAP session that he also attended. He responded by saying:

> One time in particular, I led a MAP session, and it was attended by two of our new teachers. We did get to have a follow up after that I guess in school about connections and relationships. So, I kind of get to see like what I presented at work and then kind of follow them over there, so I guess in a sense, yes, we have kind of collaborated on a certain MAP.

Trent demonstrated agency through the act of presenting at MAP sessions to help others' professional growth. The researcher asked later why it is important to collaborate with peers during professional development, another important condition that supports teacher agency. Trent responded by saying:

> It is very important to prevent, in my opinion, just to prevent burnout. I know for my wife who is a teacher as well in the county, like it's been great for her to connect; to realize she's not alone in some of her you know…what you would consider fails or where she feels like she is failing as a teacher. I think for her the collaboration is helping show that she's not alone; that there are other teachers that are struggling with the same situations or issues in the classroom and also outside of the classroom. So, I think just the collaboration piece has been truly beneficial to prevent burnout or to prevent teachers from feeling alone.

Teacher Choice. Trent talked about opportunity and choice throughout the interview. Teacher agency is impacted when teachers have involvement in identifying what professional development is needed and having choice whether to participate in a session. When discussed who should plan professional development, he talked about administration having one vision about professional development and teachers don't get a full perspective or a broad view. Trent talked about the choice teachers have in MAP sessions. He went on to say:

> I think this has a lot of variety versus having to sit in one big thing that you know half the people don't want to be in versus MAP where you have choices and if you're sitting in it, it's because you chose to not because you have to.

Teacher-Led. Another condition that supports teacher agency is professional development that is teacher-led. Trent enjoys the way MAP sessions are designed because teachers have the opportunity to present. The researcher asked Trent to explain how MAP sessions tap into teacher leadership. Trent responded by saying, "I think it does have an impact. It empowers teachers with what they learn." He went on to discuss in general terms how teachers know they aren't alone, and problem solve together. He also talked about teachers sharing out best practices. The researcher wanted to learn more about teacher-led sessions and followed up with another question to find out specifically how does teacher-led sessions impact teacher leadership. Trent answered this with:

> I think it is same. It's a similar situation just seeing a teacher take the lead. A lot of teachers kind of feel better about seeing someone that they can relate to. Even though a lot of administrators are former teachers, a lot of times they [teachers]

feel they are not boots on the ground, they are not hands on, they are not in the classroom. So, a lot of times you have an administrator speaking to you; you tend to automatically…If you are already frustrated to the point…they don't know what I am going through. They aren't in the classroom anymore; they are in the office, so I think a lot of times it is good to see teacher-led activities at MAP and other PD's because you are hearing it directly from someone with boots on the ground.

Format. Teacher agency is dependent on the district's structural conditions and format of professional development is one of those structural conditions. When asked about how the district should determine what topics or sessions to provide, Trent alluded to what the district is already doing "teacher surveys, feedback, which…our district has already done." Trent felt it was important to go to teachers directly to identify what is the interest and where is the need. He specifically mentioned the information cannot be portrayed as clearly if you have to communicate that information through administration or someone higher up.

The researcher questioned Trent about what type of format should professional development be at MAP. Trent followed up with the following statement:

I think most have been, you know, small group. So, I guess you know…a lot of collaboration, a lot of feedback from all parties, not just the leader or the person leading the MAP. So, I think, I enjoy the small group, open collaboration versus just strict lecture or one person presenting.

Trent connected district professional development in terms of format as well. He went on to say…

> District PD's…I know it's good to come together as a total group, but a lot of times we get that many people in one area, it's hard to get that smaller group participation, feedback, engagement, conversations. So large PD's, I understand their purpose, but I think larger groups tend to lose a lot of that personal part of or where you get that sense of taking something away of something you've been a part of or took ownership in.

Leadership Support.

Implementation of New Ideas. Trent believes administration can help or hinder the implementation of new ideas. He said they can either encourage it, support it, let you run with it. Trent spoke of administrators he has worked under have said, "You can do it until I see this not being productive or I don't see it being beneficial to the students." He also spoke of when the administration wants to implement new ideas, but it is the teachers who hinder the implementation because they are stuck on what they have been doing for the past 30 years.

The researcher wanted to know specifically how the support of the administrator impacts teachers wanting to try something new learned from attending professional development. Trent spoke with conviction with this statement:

> It's very important because if you don't feel like you have your principal's support then you're going to be like, what is the point of going to MAP? If I want to better my classroom, better my profession and if I'm not able to try new things

or have the support to try new things or implement new ideas; then you kind of

feel like you're stuck.

Trent also went on to say:

If you network with teachers who are saying this idea is working and my

administrator lets me do this, and you can't do the same thing in your classroom

within the same district, it can be kind of frustrating if you don't have that support

from your administrator to think outside the box.

The researcher could not determine if Trent was speaking in general terms or if this is

something that had happened to him or even his wife when wanting to try something

new.

Professional Growth. Trent stated the support of an administrator is huge in the

building because that sets the tone of your school culture. He also spoke of how teachers

feed off the administration so that can set the tone of expectations but also kind of the

mood in the school, the culture or vibe. He did not ever speak directly to how the support

of the building principal influences professional growth for teachers. He only concluded

with the following, "I think it's very important how they support and interact with their

teachers, and the feedback they give to kind of set the tone for the students."

There is not a high level of participation of MAP participants from Trent's school,

so it is difficult to determine if the principal's support [or lack thereof] influence the

professional growth of teachers. The principal has a history of not attending required

district professional development himself.

Trent also had a hard time verbalizing if his principal connects professional goals or SMART goals to professional development. He responded by saying:

Yes. I mean, he does encourage MAP, and then he does kind of circle it back to how you are implementing that in your classroom. So yes, I think to some degree. Yes, he does kind of go back to how is this benefitting you as a new teacher and where you have implemented in your day-to-day operations.

Trent also struggled when asked earlier in the interview how goal setting impacts professional development. He spoke of a teacher who might be struggling in an area and professional development helps them to get over an obstacle. He spoke of it being beneficial but did not speak specifically if he sets goals.

Continuous Improvement through Evaluation Process. The researcher wanted to know how Trent connected the evaluation process with continuous improvement. When asked does the score you receive on your evaluation give you an indication whether you need to improve in a certain area, Trent responded, "In some degrees it does but not necessarily." In context, Trent is not evaluated by the same rubric as classroom teachers. There could be some discrepancy in how he is scored since it is a different set of indicators. Trent did not say anything about being reflective of his scores and how he could improve. He did speak about his administrator in this area. He responded with…

My administrator does a good job of breaking it down of what the scores mean and what they want to see improvement in. So, I think it's more my administration has taken the scores to make it more of what area I need to grow in, which has been very good. But, as far as like when you look at the numbers

itself and evaluation form; I mean I wouldn't necessarily say…Sometimes it is too broad and not specific; but having the breakdown from the principal of why he chose that and the number has been beneficial.

When the researcher was more specific about if a teacher receives a 3, 4, or 5 on their evaluation, does that ever make them think they need to improve? Trent responded by saying…

I think sometimes and again it goes back to teachers sometimes feeling separation between them and administrators. Like if they see a 3 or 4, they might think that if there's no constructive criticism or any good feedback. I think a lot of them might see that as you know harsh grading versus not giving them why they had a 3 or 4, but yes; I do think if they do see a 3 or 4, a majority of them know they need to do better. I think they realize 3 is rock solid so as long as they aren't a 1 or 2, I think a lot of people are not happy but content with a 3 because they know it's very difficult to get a 5. I think if they score a 3 or a 4, they're just happy to still be at least in the right direction.

Finally, when asked about if the principal ever suggests attending professional development to improve evaluation scores, Trent personally said that has not occurred with him since there's not a lot of MAP sessions geared toward school counselors. Trent could not definitively say if this is a practice of the principal or not, but he felt the principal does talk one on one with teachers and encourages them to check out MAP sessions in certain areas that might be helpful in certain areas.

Participant B – Lauren

Lauren has been in MTPS her entire career. She completed two interims at the beginning of her 24-year career and has been at her current school since 1997. She has taught first grade 23 of the 24 years. Lauren earned her master's degree in administration and supervision and has held several leadership positions at her school. She is currently serving as lead mentor for her school, a position she has held for many years.

Reason for Participation.

Internal Motivation. Teacher agency is demonstrated through a teacher's identity as a teacher. When asked why she attends MAP, Lauren responded "because I'm an old-school teacher who likes new school ideas, or I like to see what new people are doing that's new and would make me work hard."

Lauren likes that MAP sessions are informal, relaxed, and people are excited to share. She went on to say:

> Teachers are excited to share what they're doing and working out in their
> classrooms. Different topics… some things I've never thought about before; and
> if there's an informative session, I like to hear what new things are going on.

Teacher agency is also exhibited through a teacher's reflection on their purpose as a teacher. Lauren expanded on this a little more later in the interview by saying:

> I'm always learning new things and finding ideas to teach and bring it back to my
> classroom. I think the kids are changing now so I have to be on my game and
> think of more ways to do things for the kids because they are different. I have to
> still teach the same material but come up with new ways because they're harder to

reach now than when I first started. I don't think we're ever done learning. I mean, there's always something I can read and take ideas from other people.

Connect with Others. Lauren likes to connect with teachers within her school as well as teachers across the district to get different perspectives which is demonstrative of having teacher agency. She stated:

> Every school is different, every classroom is different. Things that I don't think about, other people might bring up. Things that work for me might not work for them, but I just think everybody has ideas to share and situations that they've done and learn about. They could bring and share. I think you learn more from other people, specifically your grade level. You learn more from other people and what they're doing in the classroom and what they're doing with their school if it's good.

Loose/Tight Structures. Although Lauren is a lead mentor, she does not see it as a mandate to attend. She said, "I thought if we were leaders we needed to be there and show our support, but I never had to worry about that because I always do over and above the training anyway, so I just go."

The researcher asked Lauren about district requirements to attend MAP sessions. Lauren also felt there should be requirements in place. She said there has been more people in attendance, but there are more of the newer people than the veteran teachers. However, she went on to say:

> Veteran teachers are going because they're good. You can learn something from going to listen to somebody. Making it mandatory is not a bad thing for the first

few years because it makes them do professional development because if you

didn't, they wouldn't have any. That gives them time to collaborate with other

teachers that have been there for a long time too. I've seen new people, and think,

"Oh, I remember you at that MAP session."

Goal Setting. Goal setting is an important practice for teacher agency. The

researcher asked Lauren how goal setting impacts professional development. Lauren said:

It makes you grow. Makes you think about yourself as a professional, and I think

about my class. Have they grown, am I meeting their goals too? You have to have

an end goal. You have to have a beginning and an end goal. Where do I want to

be to make sure everybody is growing? I don't want to be growing and not

making a difference in them.

Teacher Engagement.

Collaboration. As Lauren mentioned earlier in her interview, she learns more

from other people who are in the classroom. She mentioned she chooses sessions that

specifically allow for collaboration with other teachers across the district. She followed

up with:

I chose ones that lean that way even though they are people that taught at

different schools, different kids, different climate; you know everything was

different. They still had ideas that I could change or tweak, and the sessions

include collaboration time at the end. They leave that time for people to share, and

I have also gone to one where you bring something to share, and that was fun too.

Lauren has also enjoyed attending sessions with others from her school. She has attended the reading cohort MAP sessions with 2nd grade. They went back to school and shared and learned more. They are working through the issues of implementing a new initiative with curriculum resources for reading instruction.

Teacher Choice. Lauren enjoys the aspect of teacher choice at MAP sessions. She spoke to this:

> I like the MAP sessions for diversity, and I can go to different things, maybe something I wouldn't think of, that would be on my radar. I think it is hard to put people in a box. Like what I think is important in my classroom is not what somebody next door would like to see or do, so I think the choice for people is easier because so many people don't want to do it anyway. They think it is a burden instead of always growing and learning so teacher choice helps them choose what they like.

Teacher-Led. Lauren spoke to the aspect of having teachers lead the sessions over outside presenters because teachers are in the classroom daily. It means more to her when it's a teacher that's "actually done what I've done and been in the classroom and had to deal with everything that we deal with." Lauren also spoke of teachers who have attended MAP sessions may not feel confident, but if they go and learn then they feel they have some more confidence and can lead some. She elaborated by saying:

> I think you have those that want to share because they think it's a good thing. Then you have people that go to the sessions who kind of get motivated and think, "Oh, I can do that. I can come share, or I've got another idea." Then it kind of just

builds because you see what others are doing and you're like I can do that too, or I

like that, or this works well in my classroom. Let me share about that if it's a

good thing.

Lauren also spoke about some teachers being better presenters than others, but you can

always work with other people and collaborate and do it together and share where it

wasn't one, just focus on one person. Although Lauren did not mention this in the

interview, she has co-presented sessions at MAP before which also is demonstrative of

teacher agency.

   Format. Lauren likes a variety of session formats but personally is more of a sit

and get type of learner although she has been signing up for online learning to continue to

grow professionally. She specifically mentioned doing online sessions due to technology

changing. She did say with regards to MAP specifically:

   I'm open to anything. Presenters will get you up doing something not just

   listening. Most are pretty good, so I like the variety. They know we've taught all

   day. They have slides and papers and share time, and I think the ones I've been to

   have been pretty good because they've given us things to think about, work on.

When asked how the district should determine what sessions or topics to provide, Lauren

mentioned to continue seeking feedback through the survey. Lauren also said MAP

sessions are not as broad as the district professional development days. She said, "MAP is

kind of your interest, and I think those are more engaging."

Leadership Support.

Implementation of New Ideas. Lauren has worked for several administrators during her career at the same school. When asked if the administrator helps or hinders the implementation of new ideas, there was not any mention of the administration until the end of the response. She spoke to this by saying:

> We just do it. I mean we've just tried new things and even for evaluations we've tried new things. We just try, if it works, it works. If it doesn't, we try to figure out what didn't work. Why wasn't it good or what can we do better?

She also spoke to her personal implementation of new ideas:

> I don't think I've ever implemented something that didn't work. Like I've only tried to…implement it slowly is the big thing for me, but they're [administration], I think they are open as long as things are going, your learning is taking place, and we're being professional.

The researcher wanted to know a little more and followed up by asking about the term "fail forward." If Lauren did fail at trying something new would she feel like she was supported to try again? She responded with:

> Yeah, because we well, the last thing we implemented, it's pretty hard. Just trying to stick with it and not try and throw it in the trash can; but to know that there will be good things that come out of it after you keep trying it. The one, *Read to be Ready* (state curriculum resource) it's been really hard and just sticking with it. Because nobody wants to, some people don't want to implement it. It's not a choice. You have to know that it's rigorous, and I think your expectations are only

what you can set for your kids. So, some of the things are…that was the hardest

thing I've had to implement, and we just take it slowly and see what did work and

what we could do better the next time for the next cycle.

There was still not a lot of mention of administration, only to say:

I mean they're willing to get whatever we need [resources] and give us time.

They're not elementary people [background] so they don't know how long things

take to implement. That's the only thing. Time is always how we have to start it,

but they're willing to get any supplies or materials that we need or get help from

central office if we need it.

Lauren mentioned their help in gathering resources for *Read to be Ready* so it was only

about their willingness to help with resources but not how the administrator supports

them with the implementation of new ideas which could be an unidentified hindrance.

Professional Growth. The researcher wanted to know how the support of a

building principal influences the professional growth for teachers, another condition to

support teacher agency. Lauren responded:

It totally does. Because if they see you, if you're viewed as a leader or

professional; that should be valued by them. I think it should be, they should be

the people being the cheerleaders for us to go and learn more. For us to come

back and show what we're doing. I've had both ways. I've had a couple

[administrators] that have been a real big cheerleader and asked what have you

learned, what can you share, how can you make it better, and then I've had some

that don't even know that we're doing professional development. So, it's

important for us, for them to know that we're learning and should be representing

our school and being a good model.

Lauren said, "I don't know." Then she went on to say, "yeah, it matters a lot, and if they're never at any professional development they don't know it." The researcher wanted to know a little more about professional growth and asked if the principal promotes MAP sessions. Lauren said, "I promote it more than they do because I tell them there's good things." Lauren reaches out to the more veteran faculty to encourage them to go and how they can use it on their professionalism evaluation rubric. She mentioned again, "Yeah, it definitely makes a difference if you have a cheerleader on your bench."

Continuous Improvement through Evaluation Process. Lauren sees the connection between the evaluation process and continuous improvement. She spoke about this with the following:

When I get my scores, I try to make my next one better. So, it does make me think

how I can improve, but sometimes the comments of the score don't reflect on

what…it's just a comment, but it didn't have anything to do with my evaluation.

It didn't matter. Like they'll [administrators] say "well that was just a score."

Well it is a score, but why? Or there's not a way to improve on it so that would

frustrate me.

Lauren's frustration was clear that the administrators do not see a relationship of the evaluation process to continuous improvement. She mentioned the administrators will say "well I have to write something down." She said she isn't growing if they are just writing something down. She hasn't always agreed with the scores she received because

they marked her down on something because she had to have something to work on or it is just the same comment on the next one. She continued by saying:

> I don't like the responses of the rubric or whatever they go from. It's not because they don't know elementary, they didn't know what to say to improve. I don't like the comments of the evaluation because I think they are too broad and not specific to what I was doing.

Lauren has never been suggested to attend professional development to improve evaluation scores, but as lead mentor, she has specifically worked with teachers to help improve theirs. The principal has Lauren work with them on classroom management and environment, but Lauren takes it a step forward and connects the teacher to a MAP session that would benefit them in their area of refinement. She finished by saying, "I try to help them."

> Lauren also makes a loose connection of goals with continuous improvement. She said they make goals when they do their professional conferences. She responded:

> We try to make them align with our goals of the school, what things we need to work on. I think the only thing we've talked about is our goals with what we're trying to do to be stronger at but have not tied them towards PD. Well, our school PD yes, but not our individual goals to PD.

Lauren could not speak as to whether the administrators had tied professional goals or SMART goals to professional learning since she does not have any goal directly connected to professional learning.

Participant C – Gloria

Gloria has taught in MTPS for 13 years. She has been at her present school for nine years. Gloria has taught from second to fifth grade and has been teaching 2nd grade since 2011. Gloria earned her master's degree in Education Theory and Practice and is currently working on her Education Specialist degree. Gloria also serves in multiple roles at her school including lead mentor.

Reason for Participation.

Internal Motivation. Gloria demonstrated a love of learning and teacher agency throughout the interview. Her motivation for attending MAP sessions were:

I like to be in the know. I like to make sure that my practices are best practices and what I'm doing is what's best for kids. I'm not an expert, nowhere near, but there are others [teachers] that have perfected in certain areas that I want to become stronger in.

When asked about her motivation for participating in professional development, she spoke of her professional learning overall and connected it back to the students in her classroom, also demonstrative of teacher agency. She responded:

Lifelong learner. I've always, I call myself a nerd. I've always just wanted to know more. My library at home of teacher books and studies and all the resources is huge. I spend a lot of time just delving into phonics and reading groups and just how to teach those kids that are struggling or have a diverse background, so that's how I like to learn. Because the more I take in, the more I can help every kid in the class.

The researcher asked if she has always been a learner with intrinsic motivation or had there been others to influence her or particular circumstances to make her want to continue to learn. She stated:

> I've always been that way, but I've had students that have challenged me. Just how to reach them, how to help them, how to teach them the way that they can learn, and so I take it upon myself to find ways because I mean that's ultimately my goal. My goal is to grow them and to make them learn.

Connect with Others. Gloria enjoys connecting with other teachers. She spoke about district PD days when she gets to meet with her entire grade level. She likes when they get to share out ideas and strategies, but she stressed the need for those days to have structure and an agenda, so it doesn't become a gripe session. She also spoke about connecting with other teachers while at MAP. She explained how schools are different across the district with different demographics, but she will still connect with them afterwards. She said:

> I'll go up afterwards, and I'll ask how do you do this, and what did you think about this, and how do you implement that? Then I will come back and try it myself. So, I think we're more likely to talk than if we weren't together.

Gloria also mentioned in her interview, "I like just talking to other teachers in the county and learning from them. I mean that's a resource at my fingertips."

Loose/Tight Structures. When asked if being a lead mentor required attendance at MAP sessions, Gloria replied:

Yes. As a lead mentor, I do think it is a requirement because typically when I go, I bring back what I've learned to the new teachers. Now, some of them, they go with me, so we are in the same session together, but when we have our monthly meetings, those are the things that we've talked about. What they've learned from the sessions they've gone to so we kind of collaborate and share on those.

The researcher asked if MAP sessions should not be required for teachers without a professional license or teachers new to the district. Gloria stated:

No. There's always room to grow no matter how long you've been in the profession. There's always more to learn. Things change. The pendulum swings the other way. I hate to say it, but as a requirement, they're going to go and maybe it'll spark, "Hey, I'm going to do this anyway not because I have to, because I want to." I mean, I don't have to do them. I do it because I just want to learn. I hope everybody has that same mentality We try to teach that in the kids too, so just wanting to learn.

Goal Setting. Goal setting is an important part of teacher agency, and Gloria was able to make a strong connection to how setting goals impacts professional development. She determines her goal for professional learning at the beginning of each year. She responded first with an example:

This year I'm going to focus on writing, and that's what I focus on. I hone in on it, and I want to perfect how I do writing in my classroom. I feel like if that's my goal then that's what I will be looking for when those MAP sessions come up. What kind of writing is offered or what kind of small group reading?

She went on further to discuss her personal goal for the year:

> I personally have one thing every year. This year's phonics. I've delved into
> phonics. I've researched it, I found something that works for whole group, small
> group, for intervention, and so that's what my focus has all been. Everything I
> read professional wise or I've gone to. I'm attending the structured literacy cohort
> now just because I want to soak it all in. So, when you set a goal that's what I'm
> looking for personally.

The researcher asked if Gloria thought other teachers set goals connected to professional
development. She said it depends on the teacher. She felt teachers newer to the profession
would set goals more than others.

Teacher Engagement.

Collaboration. Gloria enjoys when she can enjoy the same session as other people
from her school. She and another teacher participated in a cohort type MAP session
where they attended a series of sessions over Discovery Education resources. They would
connect after the sessions and discuss what they were going to try or how they are using
it in the classroom. They have even created resources to share with others in the teacher's
lounge. Gloria has also connected with her own grade level, showed them how to use a
resource, and they are all collectively working on the same resource with all the students
in second grade. When asked specifically why it is important to collaborate at MAP
sessions, she responded:

> I'm just saying, I mean why wouldn't you? To have somebody there that is with
> you. They understand what you're going through, they are doing the same thing

you're doing. I just like hearing from others. I don't know, knowing that I'm not

alone in this profession is a good thing.

Teacher Choice. Gloria was asked how the district should determine what topics

or sessions to provide at professional development. She stated:

I like the surveys that have come out that asked teachers what they would like to

see more of. We feel like we have more input that way and not that something is

being pushed upon. That we may not necessarily want to go to, but we have the

choice of different things to go to.

Teacher-Led. Gloria likes being able to attend teacher-led sessions at MAP. She

spoke about the following:

I like learning from my colleagues. Learning what they're doing in their actual

classrooms. Those teachers are in the trenches with me. They know the day in and

day out of teaching. How it is to have a classroom all day, so I feel like it's

relevant. What they experience is what I'm experiencing, and we can share that.

Format. Gloria was very adamant she prefers the smaller group size of

participants at MAP as opposed to the larger size sessions at district professional

development. She stated:

I prefer the small group; where it's more hands on, this is what we do. I like to be

shown what's been done. So, if you say that you've used this strategy, show me.

I'm very visual so I want to see you doing this strategy. That's what personally

works for me. I like the smaller setting. It's more personal, and I feel like you get

more out of it that way.

The researcher followed up by asking if Gloria preferred MAP sessions over district PD days when she gets to meet as an entire grade level. Gloria responded, "It depends on what the topic is, and it depends on what they're presenting on. You lose me in big crowds. It's easy to get distracted when there's a lot going on."

Leadership Support.

Implementation of New Ideas. Gloria was asked how the support of the principal impacts teachers wanting to try something new learned from professional development. She responded:

> I mean she's all about it if you go to her. She has listened to me tell her all about it, and she's researched it. She's looked into it herself, so I feel like if you come to her, she's open to trying new things. She's whatever is best for kids, and if you could show, "Hey, this is really working," and she's all in. That's the really big bonus, that's she's really all in.

The researcher followed up and asked about "fail forward" with Gloria. The researcher asked if the culture supported trying something, and it might not work the first time. Could they keep trying? Gloria said:

> For the most part, yes, I think so. I see a lot of well, if it doesn't work, you know make small tweaks to where it will work because what works for one group of kids may not work for next year's group of kids. So, I see where that's okay if it doesn't go right the first time. I think the biggest thing I understand from them is if it's not working, don't keep doing it. Don't keep beating your head against the

wall if it's not working. You need to do something different. Tweak it, alter it

somehow. Not being complacent…it keeps me on my toes.

The researcher also wanted to know if the administration helps or hinders the

implementation of new ideas. Gloria felt they help if you go to them. She spoke

specifically of the assistant principal who has classroom experience. Gloria said she

would give feedback and help where you need it. She followed up with, "I feel like it's a

support, but you have to seek it out because no one's a mind reader."

> *Professional Growth.* The researcher asked Gloria how the support of the

principal influences professional growth for teachers. Leaders who believe in

professional learning is a condition that supports teacher agency. Gloria replied:

> Just the encouragement of going and learning and doing more; and even seeing
>
> the principal go to the professional development as well. So that they are learning
>
> and growing and knowing what we are getting in the same turn. I think if they are
>
> participating in them, and then coming back and showing their excitement over
>
> what they've learned and things that they've seen, I think others would be like,
>
> "Oh, maybe I need to go and check that out." You know just having that
>
> encouragement of doing it.

The researcher asked Gloria how her principal supports MAP sessions. She went on to

say:

> She encourages it. She'll promote it. She'll make an announcement to check your
>
> email, an email came out today about MAP sessions. She allows us to leave a few

minutes early to get there as long as our kids are covered. That's a bonus just

because of the distance we're driving.

Gloria discussed how the principal is supportive of professional growth at the school

level as well. The principal has hosted optional school-based MAP sessions in the past

where teachers from other schools could also attend. The principal has also found funds

to be able to send teachers to professional development they have asked to attend. The

expectation is the team of teachers share what they learn with the other teachers.

Continuous Improvement through Evaluation Process. The researcher asked

Gloria about evaluation scores, specifically if the score indicated she needed to improve

in a certain area. Gloria said, "Yes, I think so." She did not connect it to being self-

reflective in what she needed to improve upon, but what the principal says. Gloria further

explained:

I usually use the areas that they identify. You could have done this or tried this,

this way or done that. I use that as okay, and I come back and I try what they said.

So, I try to tweak myself to fit that.

The researcher asked if there was ever a continuation of the refinement area or is it a one

and done. Gloria said it depends on who you are and what is your level [of effectiveness].

She elaborated:

One of the things that we did last year; the area that she saw with several of the

mentees was classroom management. So, she asked if I would focus on that in our

monthly meetings. She's asked me if I would invite other teachers in to do those

things not because they're new teachers just because they need some extra help.

The researcher also asked about the principal connecting professional goals or SMART goals to professional development. Gloria referenced a school level need for professional development but not necessarily teachers' individual professional goals. She said:

> I believe so. I mean, we had to submit some of our goals the year, and I feel like some of the things that she has heard us saying is 95% Group training. We didn't feel like we had adequate training, so she has sent a group in the fall, and she's sending another group this month. Then they bring it back to the rest of the faculty. So, she's trying to see what our need is, and then she tries to meet that however she can with the resources that she has.

Participant D – Elizabeth

Elizabeth has been in education for 25 years. She taught in a private school for 9 years before joining MTPS in 2002. She has taught at the same school in MTPS ranging in grades second through fifth grade. Elizabeth is in her seventh consecutive year of teaching 2nd grade. Elizabeth earned a master's degree in administration and supervision. Elizabeth serves in various leadership roles at her school including lead mentor, a position held for several years.

Reason for Participation.

Internal Motivation. Elizabeth based her motivation to attend MAP sessions more on the fact that she is a lead mentor, but she has also found quite a bit of it useful in the classroom. As a lead mentor she believes there is an expectation to attend. Elizabeth said, "I feel like I need to be there. You know when they see me there, you know as an example."

Elizabeth did not exhibit teacher agency through her motivation to attend MAP sessions. When asked about her motivation for attending professional development, she said, "I think I go more because I'm required to, so I think expectations aren't totally wrong or bad." Elizabeth went on to say:

> Most of the time it's because I have to do it. You know, I mean I don't mind doing it, but you know, I just kind of get wrapped up. Especially having taught a long time, you know so many years, I just think, you know I probably don't need that.

Connect with Others. Elizabeth shared that a couple of grade levels have attended MAP sessions together. The researcher asked if it's been helpful to connect with one another afterwards. Elizabeth replied:

> I do. I think it's important to you know talk about, "Hey, did you remember when they said this?" We're actually doing some of that or we haven't, and we need to. I think it does give us opportunities to reflect and then just talk about it a little more. Sometimes it can be a lot of information while you're there.

Loose/Tight Structures. The researcher wanted to know Elizabeth's views about teachers being required to attend MAP sessions. Although she speaks about being required to attend as a lead mentor and even attending required district professional development, she actually felt there could be additional requirements for MAP sessions. She believed everyone could benefit from being required to go, but you could lessen the requirements for more veteran teachers. She alluded if you knew what the needs were, you might draw more people into sessions.

Goal Setting. Elizabeth demonstrated some teacher agency with goal setting, but she was not specific in how she utilizes goal setting for herself. Elizabeth stated she felt setting goals is important, but she felt it was important to make sure it was attainable. She said, "I think we have to be real careful it's not just a goal out there that we feel like we never can get accomplished." Elizabeth also felt it was important to set short term goals and follow up. Elizabeth elaborated by saying:

> I think we just kind of go through the motions and set the goal and then we never see it again. I think it just needs to be something that if we set a goal, we ought to be able to follow up with it instead of just one more hoop to jump through.

Teacher Engagement.

Collaboration. Elizabeth felt it was important to have time to collaborate at MAP sessions. She thinks it gives teachers time to discuss any concerns. She said it helps to let others know you are struggling with something, to find if somebody has a good idea, but mostly to know you are not alone. She elaborated:

> I think it just kind of helps that feeling of security. That you know other people feel this way, and I'm not just crazy. I think that's important you know or how do
> `   you handle this happening at your school.

Elizabeth said MAP sessions do a better job of allowing collaboration than district professional development days. She said at those days there is more of people grouping off, and discuss things off topic like, "I haven't seen you in forever."

Elizabeth also feels there is overall more teacher engagement at MAP sessions. Teacher engagement supports teacher agency.

She said:

> I think it gets them more involved in you know trying new activities,
>
> collaborating with other people, and you know, maybe think outside the box as far
>
> as trying something new.

Teacher Choice. Teacher choice is one area that Elizabeth did not speak about during her interview.

Teacher-Led. Elizabeth was asked how MAP sessions tap into teacher leadership. She responded:

> I think it helps some people to get out of their comfort zone. I think it helps them
>
> know that they are really good at something, and they can pass their knowledge
>
> on to fellow teachers. You know it doesn't have to be just somebody that's higher
>
> up. It's just the regular people that you know are there and can present.

Format. Elizabeth prefers small group sessions. She mentioned a recent session that only had three teachers attend, including herself. She said, "I like to talk, I like to sit, and collaborate." She said they had some really good discussion on how to handle certain things. She likes a combination of formats. The presenter may give out some information and then have participants discuss and even provide feedback to the presenter. She likes sessions that include active learning. Her favorite sessions thus far have been the self-care sessions that included movement.

Districts can support teacher agency in how professional development is determined or who determines what sessions to offer. When asked how the district should plan professional development, she spoke about finding out what teacher needs are

through the use of a survey. Elizabeth said that information can be collected at the school

level and sent to the district office. The researcher followed up by asking Elizabeth if she

had completed the district's needs assessment for professional development conducted in

December/January. After giving a little more explanation, Elizabeth did say she had

completed the needs assessment.

Elizabeth did speak to how important it is to collect feedback on the sessions. She

said after school professional development can be a struggle. She said, "You have to

make it meaningful, mindful, and interesting."

Leadership Support.

Implementation of New Ideas. A condition that supports teacher agency is hiring

leaders who believe in professional learning. Elizabeth spoke about the lack of

administrators attending MAP sessions. The researcher asked how the support of the

principal impacts teachers wanting to try something new learned from professional

development. She responded:

> Maybe if they [administrators] attended and they said, "Hey, let me tell you what
>
> I learned. Let's talk about this." I think the more involved they are, the more they
>
> can come back and tell us or you know, "I'd like you to try this." You know,
>
> encourage them. Their involvement…I rarely see a principal at a MAP meeting,
>
> like one. You know it's hard to ask somebody to go do something [without doing
>
> it yourself]. That's just with anything: parenting, teaching, leadership, whatever.

Elizabeth also said administrators help with the implementation of new ideas. She said,

"If they know about them, if we take them back or if they're aware of them, I think

they're willing to help." The researcher followed up by asking if the teacher had to go to the administrators with the new ideas or did the administrators seek them out. She responded by saying, "Probably if I went back and said I learned this at MAP, and I think we ought to try it." The researcher also asked if Elizabeth felt she has a safe place to try things out and can stick with it if it doesn't work the first time or does she feel pressure to move on. Elizabeth said:

I would try it, definitely try to either tweak it or see if I can't make it work somehow. I don't like to totally abort you know until I know for sure. But yes, I think that somebody would give me a chance to try it or support me in that.

Professional Growth. Elizabeth was asked how the principal supports the professional growth of teachers. She connected it instantly to the evaluation process. Elizabeth spoke of immediate feedback. She explained:

More specific, immediate [feedback] instead of you know, sometimes they jot little things over to the side. If they would ask, "Have you tried this?" You know, just a little more intentional feedback or something like that helps you instead of generic [feedback].

Elizabeth spoke about if questioning was one of the lower scores on an evaluation then she would like the administration to help them know where to find resources, more specific type things.

The researcher also wanted to know how the principal connects professional goals or SMART goals to professional development. Elizabeth connected this back to setting SMART goals with the PLC process not professional development.

Continuous Improvement through Evaluation Process. Teacher agency plays an important role in professional growth. Elizabeth did make a connection of the evaluation score and the need for improvement.

She stated:

> If I see something, say mine is questioning or whatever. If I'm looking through the MAP sessions and I see they're going to address that, then I'll say I need to go to that one to help me and you know, maybe I can improve that way. I definitely do that.

Elizabeth could not really speak to whether her administrators suggest attending professional development to improve evaluation scores. She has suggested other teachers attend, not based on scores, but because they are new to the district. She concluded by saying, "I can't really speak for administration. Maybe, you know, I could maybe see them doing that."

Participant E – Darlene

Darlene entered education as a second career. She started her educational experience at a small private school and has been with MTPS for 8 years. She earned a master's degree in elementary education and has taught math in fifth grade (middle school). Darlene currently teaches ELA, science and social studies in the sixth grade.

Reason for Participation.

Internal Motivation. Darlene demonstrated an internal motivation to improve as a teacher throughout her interview and demonstrated teacher agency. When asked why she attends MAP sessions she responded:

I always feel like I can do better. I can find ways that might make me look at

things differently. Having come into education later in my… I want to say later in

my years; sometimes I don't have the confidence that other teachers have, having

taught longer so I'm always looking for ways to better myself in the profession.

When I see topics that look like that will help me in what I'm doing I attempt to

go to that. I enjoy going because I enjoy learning. People say it loosely that we're

lifelong learners, but I really believe that and any opportunity I can, I attend some

kind of session or I'm reading. I'm joining something [online] or looking at

videos. I do whatever I can to; I feel that would enhance my teaching ability as

well as my learning.

Darlene truly has the desire to become a better educator. She spoke about there will not

be a time where she can say, "I've arrived. I know everything. I'm implementing all the

things I can." Darlene spoke about always seeking and sometimes that is just needing a

different perspective.

Darlene spoke on the fact that she entered education in a time of great change so

change is something she has seen as a constant whereas teachers who have been teaching

for 20 years or more might not have experienced as much change until recently. She said:

I don't ever want to be a teacher that becomes where I'm just settled into my

profession. I don't want to be the teacher that says, "I'm going to do it this way

for the next 20 years. I don't care what you tell me." I don't want to be that. I

want to be pliable. I want to be moldable. I want to be changeable if I have to.

Because when I came in, there were changes going on in the curriculum. There

are still changes in the curriculum, and I kind of appreciate it and not get stifled

by it because there were changes when I came in. Because there have been

changes, I'm always looking for change. I just kind of expect it, and I feel like

when I go to MAP sessions that just helps me keep that fluidness in my teaching.

Connect with Others. Darlene likes being able to connect with other teachers

during MAP sessions. Darlene said:

I like that it's with other teachers within our county because I get to see that it's

not something that they read and they're just sharing, but it's something that they've

experienced, and I feel like I can learn from that because they're actively doing it. She

spoke of a particular session where the teacher presented on data. Because it was working

for him, she said why shouldn't it work for her.

Loose/Tight Structures. Darlene was asked if she had ever been required to

attend MAP sessions. She spoke about the year her school had a low growth score

overall. The principal required teachers to attend MAP sessions. She said:

That was no big issue for me because I always try to attend. So that was just one

or two extras that I had to go to, but it was still within the scope of my inquiry or

what I'd like to do.

Goal Setting. When Darlene was asked how goal setting impacts professional

development, she immediately connected it back to the evaluation process which is

demonstrative of teacher agency. She looks at what she is trying to achieve through the

evaluation process and will set a goal for herself. She said:

Sometimes it's having better questions, problem solving; so, in the back of my

mind that is kind of there. Sometimes when I see a MAP session that's on this, I

say, "Ooh, you know maybe that might help me with developing this side even

though it's long term and it's not like I have a definite plan," but I can see where

it could help me kind of get that going. So, my goals, I'm thinking how can I

make this work? How can I get the pacing in my class? How can I make all of that

roll in there together so I kind of think going to MAP is helping me with that

process.

Teacher Engagement.

Collaboration. Collaboration supports teacher agency. Darlene was asked to

discuss collaboration in a couple different aspects. The first was centered around why it is

important to collaborate with others during MAP sessions. Darlene replied:

I think it's important to collaborate because we're at different levels. I always get

excited when somebody, I run into somebody who's teaching something that I'm

teaching. I always want to know more like, "How are you handling this or what

are you doing here?" I feel like I also have things that I could share with other

teachers that worked with me that they may not have had an opportunity to look

into. So, having that portion where we can talk together or share what we've dealt

with in our classroom can help us with making decisions and learning more about

what we do in our profession.

The researcher also asked if teachers from Darlene's school have also attended MAP

sessions and had they collaborated afterward. She said there have been some other

teachers also attend but not the same sessions. Darlene talked about her collaborative meetings at school and how MAP sessions are always in the back of her mind. She said:

> So, if opportunity arise, I would say, "Oh when I went to this session, they showed us this," but you know everybody's at different levels. So what interests me, doesn't necessarily interest everybody else.

Teacher Choice. When asked if the district should stop requiring new teachers to attend MAP sessions. Darlene responded:

> No because I still feel like it's teacher choice. You're told to go, but then you get to pick what to go to. So, I don't see it as a mandate. It's more encouragement to expand your profession or your skills or get some insight. I think to not do it then people won't go, but I think to have it mandated, now they can make choices and go. I think choice is the big key. You have to go, but now you have a choice where to attend.

Teacher-Led. Darlene was asked how does MAP tap into teacher leadership. She responded, "Well I think leading a MAP session is that opportunity for leadership because you're showcasing what you've done and how it works for you." She went on to say due to lack of confidence she hasn't felt empowered enough to lead a session, but she did have this to add:

> However, somebody sharing…I feel comfortable enough to be in that environment to share something. So given that opportunity, I like being in there to be collaborative with it, but the leading out, that's where I would feel challenged,

but I feel like it's an opportunity for leadership because you're learning

something and then you could share something that could add to whatever that

person is leading out. You can add to what their presentation is.

Format. Darlene said the best way to find out what topics should be offered at

MAP is by using a survey. She did mention that not everyone is going to answer because

some people don't want to go, they don't want extra training. She did talk about

collecting feedback after the sessions to determine if sessions should be offered again.

As far as the type of format for the sessions, Darlene said:

> I think collaborative. Well let's just say in the perfect world, I think a little bit of
>
> everything. It might be a presentation, then how to use in our class, and then turn
>
> and talk with a neighbor to ask how they implement it.

She referenced a national speaker and how he presents. She followed up with:

> Present, let's try it out. Maybe you do a little part here, give me handout to go
>
> along with it. I feel like it's met all of our personality and learning types so we're
>
> all learning. Just like our students learn differently, we as adults learn differently
>
> so I think those presentations varied in that aspect is more realistic for us as
>
> educators to receive it the same way that we're expected to give it out.

Darlene also spoke to the smaller environment of MAP sessions as opposed to larger

groups at district professional development. The smaller environment allows participants

to ask questions and get better clarity instead of the larger groups where no one feels

comfortable raising their hand to get more information. She also likes the cohort model

used at MAP where there are a series of sessions on the same topic.

Leadership Support.

Implementation of New Ideas. With regards to teachers having the support to try something new learned at professional development, Darlene didn't think there's been any hold back. She said, "I think if they know we attended, it's all about evidence. Show that it helps or that it would work and what you changed."
The researcher also wanted to know if the principal supports or hinders the implementation of new ideas. She replied:

> I think they help because I know a lot of times the principal asks questions. She asks about ideas. We're given opportunity to try different things. If I've approached her, she would encourage or tell me how to do it or who I need to see to try to get it done. I've not been told I couldn't do something if I had an idea about something.

Darlene specifically referenced asking if she could bring community speakers into her classroom. The only thing the principal responded with was as long as it didn't interfere with the daily schedule.

Professional Growth. The researcher asked how the principal supports the professional growth of teachers. Darlene responded:

> I think showing the importance, the involvement. I think when administration is involved, it shows that there's some interest and importance to it. I think if we just put out their goal there's no accountability. I feel like that's what it creates…the administration creates that piece of accountability, and I think that's what needs to be there.

Darlene referenced a conference she attended and how she had to bring back learning. She said:

> It just shows that the administration supports the fact that we attended. It says, "I know that was a challenge for you, but I'm glad you went." You know it just kind of gives a positive support.

> ***Continuous Improvement through Evaluation Process.*** Darlene is a reflective practitioner that connects her evaluation score to improving as an educator. When she receives her scores, she thinks about how she can do it better. She said, "I think that's what really encouraged me to continue the MAP sessions. I do focus on that, but there's this part to me that I feel could be better, follow up."

Darlene feels the administrator should help the educator set a personal goal based on the evaluation score. She also stated she would like the administrator to provide specific feedback on "how" to improve not "what" to improve. She tries to set those goals for herself but then said:

> Who's going to come back and check in? When are you going to check because if it's going to be next year, things could spiral out before then, and I don't know whether I implemented it correctly between now and my next evaluation. That's the kind of things I look at when I think about evaluation. You're telling me you want me to be better, but then there needs to be a follow-up to tell me that. It may be you still need to work on this area. That's important to me as an educator, and I hope that's important to everyone else.

The researcher asked Darlene if her refinement area changes every time on her evaluation or a continuation. Darlene responded, "It seems like it changes, but I don't know what I did to make that change." Darlene mentioned again she wants to know "how" to improve not just told to improve.

Darlene was asked if the principal ever suggests professional development to improve evaluation scores. She responded not so much for evaluation scores but based on a checklist. If you have low scores on the state assessment then you have to do certain things like submit lesson plans, next plan of action, and attend MAP sessions.

The researcher also asked if the principal connects professional goals or SMART goals to professional development. Darlene spoke about teachers setting SMART goals for themselves and that is the basis for some of their professional development, but she then talked about SMART goals in the PLC process and not professional learning.

Participant F – Caroline

Caroline has worked in MTPS for her entire career. She is in her 27th year of teaching and has taught 4th grade at the same school during her career. Caroline earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Caroline has served in many leadership positions at her school including lead mentor for many years as she is the most senior teacher at her school.

Reason for Participation.

Internal Motivation. Caroline had a cheerful disposition the entire time during the interview and demonstrated teacher agency. She said:

I love going to MAP sessions. Because even as a veteran teacher I feel like I'm always learning, and I like to see what other schools are doing that is working that I may need to pick up and pass on to my comrades. I love them though. I don't have to go per se, but I enjoy going and learning, that's the biggest thing.

When asked about her motivation for attending professional development, Caroline had a strong feeling about veteran teachers needing to continue professional development. She began with:

To better my teaching for my kids because I know where my weaknesses are or I feel like I do, and I'm going to seek out people who are stronger and have better ideas and all those useful tools that I can hopefully bring back to the classroom. If you're not going to PD even as a veteran teacher, I'm not sure this is exactly what you need to be doing because there's always room for improvement. I don't know anybody that's made straight fives on evaluations or anything else similar to that. You're always striving to do better for the kids not just yourself.

Connect with Others. Caroline likes connecting with other teachers from the different schools. "I just like the learning and seeing what's working with them, and how we all can actually relate. A time that we don't get to share often." Caroline also likes to connect with the teachers that attend MAP sessions from her school. It starts in the hallway after the MAP sessions and carries back to either lunchtime or through email. Caroline said:

We talk about what we've tried and what we haven't. It's just kind of casual in our getting back together and talking about it. No pressure on them, but they will check in with me so to speak.

Loose/Tight Structures. When asked if she felt there was a requirement to attend MAP as being lead mentor of her school, Caroline replied:

I would think it would be, but I just enjoy going, and my boss knows that. So, I just say, "I'm on my way to MAP." He knows I like them, so I don't feel there's pressure because I'm lead mentor. I just enjoy them, that's it.

Caroline was also asked if the district should stop requiring new teachers to attend MAP. She responded by saying:

No. I honestly think they need it as all of us do, need all the help we can get. So, whether you're like a first year or not, anything that's going to help you with your children should be expected. That should be a given. It should be brought up in the interview process. If you receive this job, then you are required to attend these. Expect it. That's part of your job. You may not get paid for it, but that is part of your job. There are just some things that should just literally be expected, you're going to spell it out for others, but I think they should mandate them to go.

The researcher asked how to get more veteran teachers to attend MAP to which Caroline replied:

A million-dollar question, I don't know. At a certain point some are going to say I'm not getting paid for it so I'm not going. I understand that but I also understand

if your heart's where it's supposed to be in this profession, you are going to let go and do what you need to do to help your children.

Goal Setting. Caroline was asked how goal setting impacts professional development. She said:

That's going to be kind of an inner drive thing. Self-motivated and some people are lacking in that. They don't want to be told to go to something. You have to see where your weaknesses are and find it in yourself to say, "okay, I have to work on this." I don't know if administration does a good enough job on that end saying, "I would like for you to go do this. I see you're struggling, or the kids are struggling," and maybe more guided PD in that direction.

Teacher Engagement.

Collaboration. When asked why it is important to collaborate during MAP sessions, Caroline said:

Oh, my goodness. You have to know what's working and what's not. If you already know things are not working in your room, you have to talk to anybody and everybody. Beg, borrow, and steal to get it in a way your kids are going to learn it. You just have to pull out all the stops. You've got to…you can't be in a grade level and not rely on your peers to give you whatever they can to give you all the support. Even if it is maybe you know, "Hey, maybe try this instead." You can't do it without each other, and you've got to rely on each other.

Caroline also spoke about collaboration later in the interview. She stated, "I like collaborating with the others and discussing what we're trying. This is what we're seeing. We need to back up and punt or you know, we've scored."

Teacher Choice. Caroline likes having choice and variety at MAP sessions. She said, "We have such a wide variety of topics that you should have plenty to choose from. I try to pick some that are relevant to my classroom and my grade level that I can pass on to my team." She went on to say, "I like the teacher presenting and the teacher choice because there are ideas there that I might not have thought of, but I think that's what I could use or I need a refresher on it.

Teacher-Led. Caroline believes MAP sessions promote teacher leadership. She responded:

> If you've got somebody in your school that you know is talented and really good at presenting or not just presenting, but teaching a certain skill, strategy, subject, whatever. That's where I think you need to encourage that leadership to take place.

Caroline spoke of a particular teacher who's good with technology. Caroline has encouraged the teacher to present at MAP. Caroline told the teacher, "You need to go and do it. You know that is perfect for you. That's what you are strong in. You go share that, and you're going to help a lot of people." Caroline said the teacher is fairly new so that gets her in more of a leadership role even at school.

Format. Format of sessions is a condition that districts use to support teacher agency. Caroline said the district should get input from the teachers to determine what

topics to offer at MAP. The topics should be determined from the suggestions made by teachers based on their interests and continue to ask for feedback. Listen to the ones who are attending and make adjustments as needed. She enjoys having round table discussions and collaborative sessions.

Caroline did think the smaller number of participants allowed for more teacher engagement. She said, "I do think the smaller like the MAP sessions, smaller number helps tremendously just like in the classroom."

Leadership Support.

Implementation of New Ideas. When discussing how the support of the principal impacts teachers wanting to try something new learned from professional development, Caroline said recognition is important. She said acknowledging that someone went to the professional development and encouraging others to watch a lesson. Caroline also discussed all the principals sharing if they have something that works with the other principals or even something that doesn't work. She voiced it was important letting everybody be on the same communication page.

Caroline also discussed how the administrators can help or hinder the implementation of new ideas. She said:

Depends on the new idea, I guess. Sometimes they may encourage it they're thinking that is needed. We may put something out there that's different, and they may not be so giddy about letting you try it, but they will still let you try it. They just may not be as supportive as you need them to be or want them to be.

The researcher asked Caroline about "fail forward." Would teachers at her school feel supported to keep trying something new that didn't work the first time. Caroline responded:

> You know we tell the kids to persevere, and I would hope that's what the principal would want with us. If it didn't work the first time, okay, try again. Tweak it a little bit and see what happens. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. If it works, keep going. Try, you know, expand on it, but I would hope they would want us to keep trying. That's what I feel like with the new programs that we get. Here we go again. We're going to jump all in but let us keep working at it to see if it's going to make some successes. If it fails, it fails. That's fine. We learn from it but let us keep trying to see if we can make it work.

> ***Professional Growth.*** Caroline spoke about how the principal influences the professional growth of teachers. Caroline spoke of an underlying issue within the building on culture. She explained:

> I think a lot of that has to do with staff within the building. I mean veteran teachers versus newer teachers. If you don't go and establish your expectations for them, they're going to set their own, and they might not be what the district would want. You don't want teachers saying they already know how to do that or I don't have to go to that. No, everybody can learn something. Take one thing from it. I mean you've got to establish what your expectations are, what you want them to get out of it, whatever is offered. It's just like teaching a classroom. We are his students, so if my boss says do this, I'm going to do this. It carries over to

the classroom but knowing the expectations and not challenging him. Just do it, that is part of your career choice.

Continuous Improvement through Evaluation Process. Caroline is reflective of her evaluation scores and how she can improve. She referenced questioning as the area she always feels she can improve upon. She said:

I always say questioning. It to me is the hardest category to get those higher-level questions, and that's something I have to practice and make sure I'm asking. I make a little cheat sheet note here and there, but that tells me I have to do better at this.

The researcher wanted to know if the refinement area of the evaluation changes each time or is there a continuation of it since Caroline has recognized what she personally needs to work on. She replied:

Sometimes it does change because we may be dealing with something totally different; behavior, whatever may be going on during that particular evaluation. Sometimes it does change, but then it's always in the back of my mind. Did I do better on my questioning this time and sometimes that's something that as a teacher I need to address in that evaluation.

When asked if there is a formal follow up to the refinement area, she said there was not. The researcher also asked if the principal suggests attending professional development to improve evaluation scores. As lead mentor, Caroline said the principal will suggest other teachers come talk to her. He will tell them to observe her and find out something that she has learned from MAP.

Caroline said:

> It may be something as simple as attending a MAP meeting. We try to use what
> resources we have within the building too just so we don't take that much time
> out of the classroom, but he does do that. At times it's more relevant than other
> times depending on what's going on in the building.

There was not a clear indication that Caroline's principal connects professional goals or SMART goals to professional learning. She said they haven't talked much about SMART goals. She referenced being a Title I school, and the leadership team will discuss the school's goals and what professional development can be offered at the school level to help meet that goal. How well that gets communicated out depends on who serves for the grade level on the leadership team.

Interpretation of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative methodology used in this study indicated MTPS does have conditions in place that advance teacher agency. This is important for advancing teacher agency in novice teachers, but the lessons learned from the six teachers who regularly attend MAP is more about an internal motivation for professional growth than anything. All of the teachers except for Elizabeth spoke of a strong drive to improve for themselves. Lauren, Gloria, Darlene, and Caroline all made the connection of wanting to not only grow as a professional but connected it back to the students they teach.

Leadership support is also another area that must be considered in advancing teacher agency. Each of the participants said their principals were supportive overall of the implementation of new ideas, but they spoke about how this is supported if you seek

out the administrator. There was not any mention of the principal seeking out teachers to try new things. Many spoke about the disconnect of principals being seen as learners which may impact teacher agency for teachers who are less agentic. However, Gloria spoke about her principal attending a MAP session, and the excitement her principal exhibited afterward. There was also a disconnect overall of the principal connecting the evaluation process as continuous improvement.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Three themes "reason for participation," "teacher engagement," and "leadership support" emerged after using the coding process of the raw data collected from each participant. Sub-themes emerged within each of the three themes. "Internal motivation," "connect with others," "loose/tight structures," and "goal setting" were sub-themes of "reason for participation." "Teacher engagement" had four sub-themes from the coding process: "collaboration," "teacher choice," "teacher-led," and "format." The final theme "leadership support" had three sub-themes emerge from the coding process of participants' raw data. The sub-themes were "implementation of new ideas," "professional growth," and "continuous improvement through evaluation process."

Reason for Participation

A strong internal motivation was voiced in five of the six interviews as the primary reason for participation at MAP sessions. Teacher agency was illustrated throughout the interviews as evidenced by the teachers' intrinsic desire to improve their teaching and learning for students while also connecting with colleagues and other teachers across the district.

Trent being a school counselor doesn't have students in his classroom as such but does have an internal desire to grow in his craft. Trent said, "I think just being a school counselor, sometimes we're alone in our work. I think the MAP sessions provide us an opportunity to learn from someone else or grow more in our profession." The desire to grow professionally was echoed in each of the remaining interviews apart from Elizabeth. Elizabeth has been in education for 25 years and enjoys MAP sessions, but her primary reason for attending is she is the lead mentor of her school and perceives she is required to attend to be an example to the mentees in her school. However, Caroline, a 27-year veteran who is also a lead mentor for her school demonstrates agency with her outlook and reason for participation. Caroline said,

> I love going to MAP sessions because even as a veteran teacher I feel like I'm always learning, and I like to see what other schools are doing that is working that I may need to pick up and pass on to my comrades. I love them though. I don't have to go per se, but I enjoy going and learning, that's the biggest thing.

Caroline not only has a strong intrinsic reason for participation, but she also wants to connect with others which was evident in each of the interviews. Although Elizabeth was the only teacher who did not demonstrate a strong intrinsic motivation as reason for participation, all six interviewees enjoy the high levels of teacher engagement at MAP sessions.

Teacher Engagement

Each of the participants enjoy the teacher engagement that occurs at the MAP sessions, and the collaboration that is a natural byproduct of these sessions. The teachers

expressed they like to know they are not alone in the profession and attending MAP

sessions helps them engage and collaborate with teachers across the district. Regarding

the opportunity to collaborate, Gloria said:

> I mean, why wouldn't you? That somebody that is there with you, they
>
> understand what you're going through. They are doing the same thing as you're
>
> doing, and so I just like hearing from others. Knowing that I'm not alone in this
>
> profession is a good thing.

This theme was reiterated throughout each of the interviews. Trent connected teacher

engagement to teacher leadership as well as specifically speaking to teacher-led sessions.

Trent responded:

> A lot of teachers kind of feel better about seeing someone they can relate to. Even
>
> though a lot of administrators are former teachers, a lot of times they feel they
>
> [administrators] are not boots on the ground, they are not hands on, they are not in
>
> the classroom… a lot of times they are not hands on, they are not in the
>
> classroom. So, you have an administrator speaking to you, you tend to
>
> automatically get frustrated… they don't know what I'm going through.

The teachers spoke about the importance of their administrator as a learner and the

overall theme of leadership support.

Leadership Support

The overarching theme of leadership support was woven throughout each of the

six interviews. A discussion point that occurred in some of the interviews was centered

around the administrator being viewed as a learner. Elizabeth spoke about how hard it is

to ask others to do something if you don't do it yourself and said, "I rarely see a principal at a MAP meeting, like one." On the other hand, Gloria talked about her administrator attending professional development and how important it is for teachers to see the excitement of administrators learning. Lauren spoke about the importance of administrators' support. She said, "They should be the people being the cheerleaders for us to go and learn more; for us to come back and show what we're doing."

The teachers did not speak of the administrator as an active support system unless they seek the support themselves. There was a disconnect of some of the administrators not knowing their teachers attend MAP sessions unless it is discussed during the professionalism portion of the evaluation process. The evaluation process is only as strong as the feedback and professional learning tied to the refinement area as part of continuous improvement.

There were differences among participants' responses within each of the themes and sub-themes identified, but each of them spoke to the conditions that impact teacher agency. Figure 17 shows all the themes and sub-themes as conditions that support teacher agency.

Figure 17

Conditions that Support Teacher Agency

Conditions that Support Teacher Agency

Reason for Participation
•Internal Motivation
•Connect with Others
•Loose/Tight Structures
•Goal Setting

Leadership Support
•Implementation of New Ideas
•Professional Growth
•Continuous Improvement through Evaluation Process

Teacher Engagement
•Collaboration
•Teacher Choice
•Teacher-Led
•Format
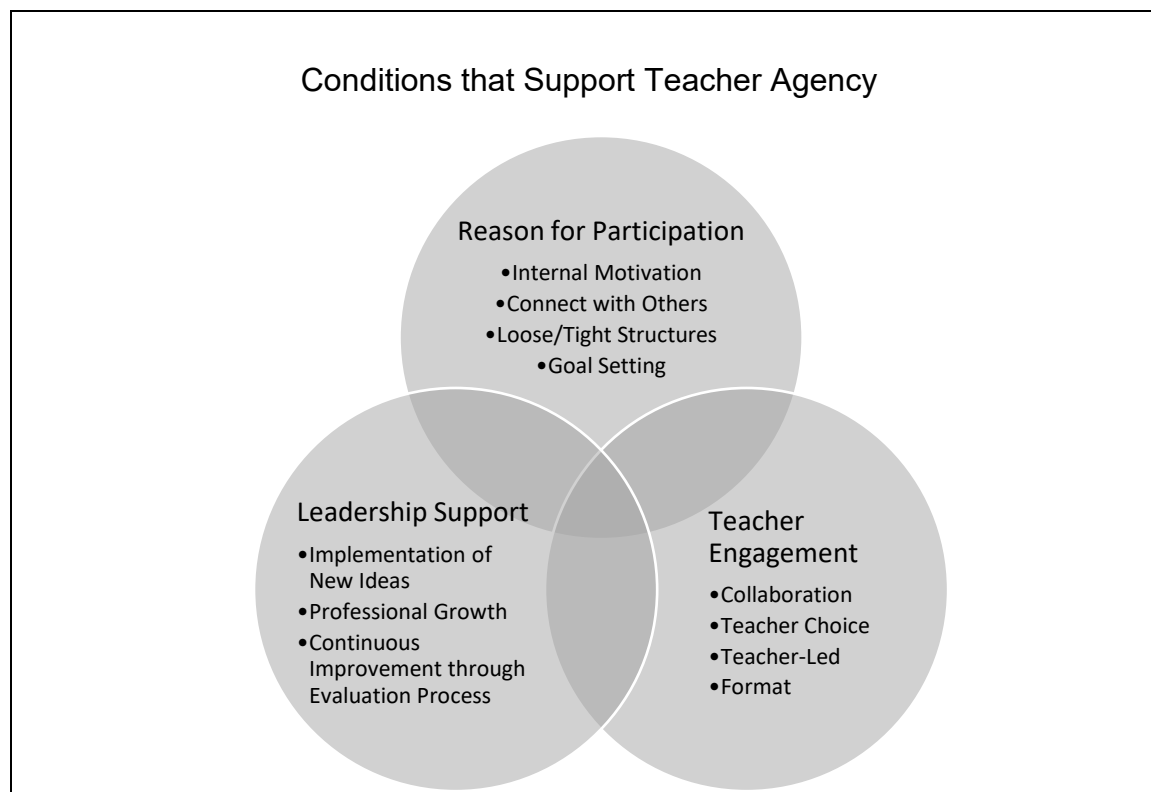
Overall Summary

The mixed methods procedures followed within this research revealed the district is providing conditions that support teacher agency. The district's teacher-led professional development does require certain groups of teachers, novice or new to the district to attend, but there is teacher choice in choosing the sessions. Although the conditions are provided, teacher agency goes beyond having the right conditions in place. The reason for participation including internal motivation, teacher engagement, and the leadership plays an important part regardless of the conditions the district provides with its teacher-led with teacher choice professional development. The implications of the

findings of this study are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 along with recommendations for future research.

Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

This mixed methods study sought to determine teachers' perceptions of professional development as well as perceptions of professional development that is teacher-led with teacher choice. Lastly, the study sought to determine what lessons can be learned from a district's approach to increase teacher agency through teacher-led professional development.

Discussion

Utilizing a sequential collection of data, the researcher gathered quantitative data through an online survey in Qualtrics. The survey was developed by the researcher and deployed to all teachers in Middle Tennessee Public Schools (MTPS) (pseudonym to protect anonymity).

The second phase of data collection was gathered from six educators in MTPS who regularly attended professional development (MAP) offered by the district. Each of the educators participated in a semi-structured interview.

Teacher Perceptions of Professional Development

The first research question in the study asked: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development? The research question was also broken into two sub-questions to find out elementary (PreK-4) teachers' perceptions of professional development and secondary (5-12) teachers' perceptions of professional development. Overall, teachers agreed professional development contributes to the professional growth of teachers at school ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.05$). Broken down by level, elementary teachers agreed ($M = 1.79$, $SD = 0.93$) with the statement as well as secondary teachers ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.11$).

The survey responses from all teachers demonstrated the average teacher has an overall positive perception of professional development. The average survey response for each survey question was either agreed or somewhat agreed. Secondary teachers were not in as much agreement as elementary teachers with each of the overall professional development questions. 74% of teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that professional development deepens and broadens content knowledge for teachers. When broken down by level, 81.8% of elementary teachers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, and 66.4% of the secondary teachers had the same level of agreement. The largest discrepancy with this statement, however, is within the percentage of strongly agreed among the teachers. 41.4% of elementary teachers strongly agreed as opposed to only 19% of secondary teachers strongly agreed.

Teachers were asked if professional development helps me to become a better educator, and 74.4% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed. By level, 85.9% of elementary teachers had the same level of agreement, and 63.8% of secondary teachers agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if professional development is a good use of time, only 54.2% of teachers overall agreed or strongly agreed. Elementary teachers had a 65.6% response rate of either agreed or strongly agreed whereas only 44.8% of secondary teachers had the same level of agreement. Teachers were also asked if professional development relates to my needs as a teacher. Overall, 48.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Elementary teachers had a higher level of agreement with 62.2% either agreed or strongly agreed while 35.3% of secondary teachers either

agreed or strongly agreed. Elementary teachers had a higher percentage of agreement for every survey question than secondary teachers as discussed in Chapter 4.

Teacher Perceptions of Teacher-Led Professional Development

The second research question in the study asked: What are teachers' perceptions of professional development in a district that provides teacher-led professional development with teacher choice? 30.9% of teachers indicated they were required to attend MAP sessions, but when asked why they attend MAP sessions in an open-ended question, responses were quantified and 38.6% stated it was required. 61.1% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed participating in content area professional development at MAP provided me with new knowledge and skills, and 59.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed content area professional development at MAP positively influenced my instructional practices. However, only 35.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed participating in MAP sessions have caused me to change my instructional practices. Moreover, 46.3% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed participating in MAP sessions met my professional needs. Another 31.4% of teachers somewhat agreed to the same statement.

63.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed the MAP sessions I have attended allow for collaboration within the session. 80.6% feel safe to try new things in their classroom learned at a MAP session. Although 60.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed their principal promotes MAP sessions when they are offered, only 23.3% of the responses in an open-ended question stated the principal reminds teachers of sessions, and 27.6% of respondents stated they do not receive support from their administrators

with regards to attending MAP. 61.3% of respondents also indicated in an open-ended question that the principal does not follow up with them after they attend a MAP session. During interviews, teachers also mentioned they are supported to try new ideas learned at MAP, but only if they seek support from the principal.

Approach to increasing Teacher Agency through Professional Development

The third and final research question asked: What lessons can we learn from a district's approach to increase teacher agency through teacher-led professional development? The researcher sought to answer this question through the qualitative phase of the study. Six participants were interviewed with a series of questions in semi-structured process.

Reason for Participation. Five of the six participants all communicated an explicit internal motivation for continued learning and professional growth. Elizabeth was the only participant who mentioned the motivating factor to attend MAP sessions was because of a requirement. She wavered somewhat back and forth between it was an expectation or it was required for her to attend as lead mentor. She also said, "Especially having taught a long time, you know so many years, I just think, you know I probably don't need that." Caroline was the teacher interviewed with the most years of teaching experience. She is completing her 27th year of teaching and said, "I love going to MAP sessions. Because even as a veteran teacher I feel like I'm always learning." Lauren, another veteran teacher with 24 years of experience said, "I don't think we're ever done learning."

Four of the six participants also indicated a desire to continue to learn to better meet the needs of the students. Trent did not explicitly state this since he is a school counselor, but he did communicate he attended MAP sessions to be a "better educator, better counselor." Gloria spoke of her professional learning overall and connected it back to the students in her classroom. She said, "the more I take in, the more I can help every kid in the class."

The district currently requires any teacher new to the system their first year regardless of years of experience and any teacher without a professional license to attend MAP sessions. Each participant was asked if that requirement should be lifted. All the participants felt the requirement should remain and some even felt there could be additional requirements. Gloria felt the requirement of attending might spark others to view it as, "I'm going to do this anyway not because I have to, because I want to." Caroline strongly felt the requirement should continue and said it should be a part of the interview process so that new teachers would know it was an expectation. She stated, "Expect it. That's part of your job. You may not get paid for it, but that is part of your job."

Teacher Engagement. Each of the participants enjoy the aspects of teacher engagement at MAP sessions. They all enjoy the collaboration that takes place naturally among session participants as well as the time that is built in many of the sessions to allow for collaboration and discussion at the end. Trent spoke on a different perspective of teacher burnout as well as helping teachers not feel alone. He said collaboration helps teachers understand, "there are other teachers that are struggling with the same situations

or issues in the classroom or outside of the classroom." Trent went on to say, "So, I think just the collaboration piece has been truly beneficial to prevent burnout or to prevent teachers from feeling alone." Lauren spoke about collaborating with teachers who teach at different schools who have a different type of climate and student. She said, "They still had ideas that I could change or tweak, and the sessions include collaboration time at the end."

Teacher choice was a theme discussed in five of the six interviews. Darlene said although some teachers are required to attend, they still have teacher choice. She said, "I think choice is the big key. You have to go, but now you have a choice where to attend." Gloria also echoed this by saying, "We may not necessarily want to go, but we have the choice of different things to go to." Lauren elaborated by saying, "They think it is a burden instead of always growing and learning so teacher choice helps them choose what they like." Caroline did not connect teacher choice with the attendance requirement and likes having choice and variety at MAP sessions. She said, "We have such a wide variety of topics that you should have plenty to choose from."

The participants like teacher-led sessions. Many spoke how teachers are in the trenches and know what it is like to be in the classroom. They also spoke on how MAP sessions tap into teacher leadership. Trent said, "It's good to see teacher-led activities at MAP because you are hearing it directly from someone with boots on the ground." Gloria said, "They know the day in and day out of teaching. How it is to have a classroom all day, so I feel like it's relevant." Darlene spoke about even though she lacks the

confidence to lead a session, she does feel comfortable enough to speak up and add to whatever the teacher leader is sharing.

Participants also believe there is more teacher engagement due to smaller sized groups at MAP sessions. Caroline said, "I do think smaller, like the MAP sessions, smaller helps tremendously just like in the classroom." Elizabeth prefers small group sessions and mentioned a recent session that only had three teachers in attendance. She said they had some good discussion on how to handle certain things. Gloria prefers the small groups. She said, "I like the smaller setting. It's more personal, and I feel like you get more out of it that way." Many also talked about how district professional development loses teacher engagement due to the size of the groups. Trent said, "District PD's…I know it's good to come together as a total group, but a lot of times we get that many people in one area, it's hard to get that smaller group participation, feedback, engagement, conversations."

Leadership Support. There was a lot of discussion centered around leadership. Participants talked about how the administrators at their school support the implementation of new ideas. Each participant discussed administrators are supportive of teachers trying new things, but most specifically mentioned it was only if the teacher seeks the support first. Lauren spoke of the importance for administrators to know what teachers are learning. She said, "They should be the people being the cheerleaders for us to go and learn more. For us to come back and show what we're doing." Darlene said, "I think if they know we attended, it's all about evidence. Show that it helps or that it would work and what you changed." Caroline said, "We may put something out there that's

different, and they may not be so giddy about letting you try it, but they will still let you try it. They just may not be as supportive as you need them to be or want them to be."

Another aspect of leadership support discussed was seeing the principal as a learner. Elizabeth spoke about if administrators attended the professional development they could follow up and discuss the learning with teachers afterward. "I think the more involved they are, the more they can come back and tell us, 'I'd like you to try this." She went on to say, "I rarely see a principal at a MAP meeting, like one. You know it's hard to ask somebody to go do something [without doing it yourself]." Darlene also spoke about the importance of the involvement of the principal in professional development. She stated, "I think showing the importance, the involvement. I think when administration is involved, it shows that there's some interest and importance to it. The administration creates that piece of accountability." On the other hand, Gloria talked about her administrators attending professional development. She said, "Even seeing the principal go to the professional development as well. So that they are learning and growing and knowing what we are getting in the same turn." She feels if teachers see their excitement for what they learned; others may feel more inclined to attend.

Furthermore, there is not a clear connection to goal setting and the evaluation process to professional development. Lauren connects her own goal setting back to student learning. Gloria sets a personal learning goal each year. Elizabeth spoke about having short term goals that are achievable. Darlene connected goal setting back to the evaluation process and how she will attend professional development to meet that goal. Caroline talked about goal setting being part of an inner drive. Although each of these

teachers could personally connect goal setting, they could not communicate how the administrator connects professional learning goals to improvement. The question may have been a little confusing due to the inclusion of SMART goals in the question. This prompted some of the participants to make a connection to SMART goals they set during the PLC process.

Also, there is not a clear connection to the evaluation process being used for continuous improvement. Lauren, Elizabeth, Darlene, and Caroline each are reflective practitioners throughout the evaluation process. Each are trying to figure out how to improve and what professional development can assist in improving as a teacher. Trent and Gloria rely more on the principal identifying areas of improvement for them. Lauren spoke about the lack of specific feedback and that sometimes a comment is written down just so the evaluator has something to record. She said she isn't growing if they are just writing something down. Elizabeth also spoke of this concern. She said, "just a little more intentional feedback or something like that helps you instead of generic [feedback]." Darlene also mentioned this and said she would like the administrator to provide specific feedback on "how" to improve not "what" to improve.

Some participants also spoke how their refinement area may change from one evaluation to the next, but there is not follow up from the previous evaluation. Darlene said, "It seems like it changes, but I don't know what I did to make that change." Caroline said, "Sometimes it does change, but then it's always in the back of my mind." None of the participants could specifically say if their administrator has ever suggested teachers attend professional development to improve evaluation scores because that had

not been suggested to them except for Darlene. However, Darlene said it was not based on evaluation scores, but a checklist her principal uses that includes test scores on the state assessment. Lauren, Gloria and Caroline each said in their work as lead mentors, they may be asked to work with specific teachers based on something identified on the evaluation but not necessarily provide professional development. Gloria did lead a book study for teachers on classroom management. Lauren and Caroline will take it a step forward and personally suggest MAP sessions to teachers. Lauren said, "I try to help them."

Conclusions

Middle Tennessee Public Schools (MTPS) has developed conditions that supports teacher agency. MTPS has developed a structure for providing after school professional development that is teacher-led and provides teacher choice. Teachers are surveyed to identify their professional development needs. Teachers provide input on what sessions and topics will be offered, and teachers design and lead the professional development. Although some teachers are required to attend MAP sessions, teachers have choice in which sessions to attend.

Teachers provide feedback after sessions to help district leaders improve sessions or how to support the teachers following the session. The district utilizes these sessions not only to provide opportunities for teachers to grow as professionals but also to provide solutions to problems that are occurring within the district. Two examples of this are an Algebra I collaborative where 8th grade Algebra I teachers meet at monthly MAP sessions as a professional learning community to address concerns they are having and to seek

solutions within. A second approach to this is providing ongoing sessions for the implementation of new math curriculum and implementation of high-quality resources for ELA. Teacher-led sessions are collaborative in nature and meet the learning needs of adults. The sessions vary in format and include modeling and active learning.

The conclusions for this study are as follows: (1) There is still more research needed to understand and support teacher agency. (2) Supporting teacher agency does not automatically remove all the challenges associated with professional learning. (3) Districts must hire leaders who believe in professional learning.

Understanding and Supporting Teacher Agency

Teacher agency is defined as "the capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues" (Calvert, 2016, p. 2). Teacher agency is the ability to act, it's not what teachers possess, it is what teachers do (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). Teachers with agency are willing to try new things in the classroom, and teachers with professional agency consider themselves lifelong learners. Teacher agency is dependent on personal qualities as well as professional knowledge and skills and can change based on their past, present and future experiences (Biesta et al., 2015).

Teachers actively make choices about the nature and scope of how they choose to participate in professional development (Wagner et al., 2019). Although teacher agency plays an important role in how educators approach professional development, more research is needed to understand the dynamic process of adult learning. Just like there is

not a one-size-fits-all approach to education, there is also not a one-size-fits-all approach to professional development.

Adults have unique learning needs, and there are several assumptions about the needs of learners. Supporting teacher agency relates to the assumptions of adult learning (Knowles et al., 2005). Knowles' first assumption was adults learn what they need to know. Teachers should be actively involved in planning professional development (Calvert, 2016; Clark & Hollingsworth, 2002). MTPS does involve teachers in this process to support teacher agency. The current needs assessment conducted in January of the current school year yielded a response rate of 56%. However, there is a disconnect in teachers providing feedback and input into professional development offerings, and their participation in the professional development. Participation at MAP has on average 12-15% of the teachers in the district attending sessions.

The second assumption (Knowles et al., 2005) is adults have their own concept of self which includes adults are responsible for their own learning. This is connected in teacher agency as teachers who exhibit agency intentionally act to guide their own professional growth as well as help others with their professional growth (Calvert, 2016). Gloria and Darlene not only attend MAP sessions, but they are purposeful in identifying any professional learning to help them achieve their professional learning goals. Lauren, Gloria, and Caroline also demonstrate agency through their desire or concept of self to help others grow professionally.

Other assumptions to consider when providing professional development for adult learners is the learners' experiences, a readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and

motivation (Knowles et al., 2005). MTPS seeks to address each of these assumptions with conditions to support agency through professional development. Format of sessions, active learning, teacher-led sessions with teacher choice, and collaboration all play a part in supporting teacher agency for adult learning (Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Wagner et al., 2019). The district seeks to provide external motivation but also uses conditions to support agency in attempts to also motivate teachers internally. Teacher-led sessions provide respectful environments where teachers engage collaboratively with one another through active learning, and feedback is solicited to improve future sessions. Although the district seeks to understand teacher agency as well as adult learning, challenges still exist when supporting teacher agency.

Challenges Still Exist when Supporting Teacher Agency

Districts like MTPS continue to struggle with teacher engagement and buy-in towards professional learning. More time and attention is being spent on creating conditions to support or even advance teacher agency (Calvert, 2016). MTPS is addressing many of those areas in how they provide after-school professional development by addressing the standards for professional learning (Learning Forward, 2011). They have provided: teacher-led sessions, promote teacher choice by offering several sessions each month, seek input from teachers to determine what sessions to offer, solicit feedback after sessions, format is based on teachers' needs, and sessions are based on adult learning research (Calvert, 2016; Knowles et al, 2005).

Teacher choice is a strong component of the professional development model MTPS uses for MAP sessions as some dates may offer up to 20 different sessions. One

challenge that might exist when supporting teacher agency might be too much choice. The number of selections may be overwhelming to teachers who are not as agentic as others, and they may not select sessions based on goals they have identified for themselves either individually or with the help of an administrator through the evaluation process. The district may need to explore a model of choice that includes some system control balanced with learner control (Corbalan et al., 2006). However, the most noticeable missing piece for MTPS is hiring leaders who believe in professional learning (Bredeson, 2000; Calvert, 2016; DuFour, 2001).

Hire Leaders Who Believe in Professional Learning

School leaders are tasked with creating and maintaining a culture that is rooted in continuous improvement and learning for all (Bredeson, 2000). Rick DuFour in a 2001 article went so far to say:

> The most significant contribution a principal can make to developing others is creating an appropriate context for adult learning. It is context – the programs, procedures, beliefs, expectations, and habits that constitute the norm for a given school – that plays the largest role in determining whether professional development efforts will have an impact on that school. (p. 14)

Principals must first understand school improvement and that school change cannot happen successfully unless there is a focus on teachers and professional development (Hart & Bredeson, 1996; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998). Principals' primary focus should include teachers and their needs. Knowing their needs, principals can create conditions for teachers to continue learning which will help the school achieve goals more effectively (Berkley & DuFour, 1995).

Administrators as Learners. Seeing the school leader as a learner is important for teachers. Whether principals recognize this or not, when they are seen as a learner, they have considerable influence on the teachers' personal attitudes about professional learning (Bredeson, 2000). Elizabeth spoke about this in her interview, "I rarely see a principal at a MAP meeting, like one. You know it's hard to ask somebody to go do something [without doing it yourself]." If principals want to encourage others to continue to learn and grow as professionals, they must model their commitment in growing as a professional. A principal's actions and openness to learning will impact teachers and their desire to grow as educators (DuFour, 2001). When principals are learners themselves, they will set their own personal learning goals as well as encourage their teachers to do the same (Bredeson, 2001).

Explicit Goal Setting. School leaders should engage teachers in short and long-term goal setting that connects to professional growth for teachers and staff (Manno, 2016). Leaders should work with teachers to understand professional development is a pathway to increased teacher learning and student achievement (Bredeson, 2001; DuFour, 2011). DuFour (2001) states "building the group's collective capacity to achieve school goals must become higher priority than the individual's independent learning" (p. 16).

"Evaluation as a stand-alone policy is unlikely to have much effect" (Smylie, 2014, p. 99). School leaders must explicitly make the connection of goal setting to continuous improvement through the evaluation process. The evaluation process is most effective when professional learning is tied to it for continuous improvement, and leaders

must model this through effective conferences during evaluations with teachers. Darling-Hammond (2013) expands on this by saying:

It is important to link both formal professional development and job-embedded learning opportunities to the evaluation system. Evaluation alone will not improve practice. Productive feedback must be accompanied by opportunities to learn. Evaluations should trigger continuous goal setting for areas teachers want to work on, specific professional development supports and coaching, and opportunities to share expertise, as part of recognizing teachers' strengths and needs. (p. 99)

Effective Feedback. Teachers who desire to become better educators must receive feedback that is specific. Robert Eaker (2020) shares comments made by Richard Dufour in his latest book, *A Summing Up: Teaching &Learning in Effective Schools & PLCs at Work.* Rick remarked:

That observations of teachers, even if done well and accurately recorded, are of little value if the person conducting the interview has little to offer when a teacher asks, "I see that I need to improve my instruction in certain areas, What do you suggest I do?" (p.53)

DuFour went on to say he would observe, and most would say:

Well, actually I don't have a clue about how you can improve your teaching or classroom management practices. You see, my skills are in observing and recording, not in the knowledge of effective teaching practices. Sorry. (p. 53)

Lauren spoke of her frustration when she has an administrator state, "well, I have to write something down." The lack of specific feedback sends a message that Lauren does not need to improve. Lauren is a reflective practitioner and continues to improve as an educator without the support of her principal. However, not all teachers feel confident to improve without the specific feedback. Darlene spoke about the importance of follow-up

after the feedback is provided. She said, "Who's going to check because if it's going to be next year, things could spiral out before then and I don't know whether I implemented it correctly between now and my next evaluation."

Professional evaluation of teachers is a tool for pedagogical improvement and has also been identified as a feedback tool (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003; Leiva et al., 2016). Professional conversations following an observation that includes feedback provides great promise in fostering reflective practices and improved teacher practice (Myung & Martinez, 2013; Westerberg, 2013). Teacher evaluation should not be seen as an isolated practice but as an ongoing practice of feedback communication among the instructional leader and teacher (Tuytens & Devos, 2017).

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study hold implications for practice. First, the school district needs to complete an assessment on the culture and climate of the district as well as the mission and vision. Does the district value professional growth of instructional leaders and teachers to improve learning for students? If the district is not already communicating learning for all, this also needs to be revisited. The district currently considers itself a professional learning community, and learning is an important component of a collaborative team. More attention should be focused on this part of the PLC process.

The district needs to develop a plan for continuous improvement which should also include a professional development plan. The plan needs to be developed by a

diverse group of educators including at least 50% of the representation being teachers. The plan should be communicated to all teachers several times throughout the year.

The district needs to define the role of an instructional leader including their role as a learner. Once the district defines the role, only potential candidates who demonstrate and/or have supporting evidence should be considered for employment. The role of the instructional leader must include the following: establishing a mission and vision focused on continuous improvement (DuFour et al., 2016), establishing a culture for learning including the adults (Bredeson, 2000; DuFour, 2001; Hallinger, 2005), and leveraging the evaluation process for professional growth (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Smylie, 2014).

Implications for Policy

Based on the results and conclusions of this research study, district leaders may want to consider establishing a policy related to professional development with clearly defined expectations for both administrators and teachers. Twenty-five years ago, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) discussed policies that support professional development, and in 2020, MTPS still lacks policy concerning professional development. "District leaders must encourage and sustain reflective communities of practice both within and among schools and make resources available for teachers to use according to their needs and preferences" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 85). Policy at the district level should include identifying what is considered professional development, how professional development is tied to teacher professional growth, how it impacts change in the classroom, structures for learning, goal setting and continuous improvement for all.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should extend from this study to include interviews with teachers who do not attend the teacher-led professional development to determine if those teachers also exhibit teacher agency. The district has several teacher leaders who attend outside professional development opportunities or lead sessions at MAP but do not attend MAP sessions as a learner. More research is needed to determine why they seek outside opportunities and if MAP is not meeting their needs for professional growth.

In addition, more consideration should be given to study the teachers who are required to attend the sessions to understand why many of those teachers will not continue to attend sessions once their requirement is fulfilled. More research is needed to determine why they may only view professional learning as a requirement and not an opportunity to grow as a teacher.

Research is needed to determine if a district can truly advance teacher agency or does a district just support the teachers who already have agency. Studies have focused on agency of teachers but not specifically how a district can truly help teachers become more agentic. Studies need to look specifically at the conditions that support agency to determine if they can improve or advance agency in teachers or collective agency among groups of teachers.

More research is needed to determine the impact of leadership support on professional learning for teachers and continuous improvement through the evaluation process. Studies need to focus on leaders who connect continuous improvement to

professional learning tied to the evaluation process as compared to leaders who treat them as separate entities.

More research is needed on principals who do not exhibit agency and their impact on teachers' agency and professional growth. Although the results of the study demonstrated teachers were agentic in professional learning regardless of the support of the principal, research is needed to explore how a principals' lack of agency supports or hinders the professional growth of teachers.

Limitations

This study was limited in scope. IRB approval for the study was received two days prior to the teachers' fall break. The researcher asked the superintendent to send an email out to teachers during fall break so that some teachers would go ahead and complete the survey while not pressed for time. Only 12 teachers took advantage of the extra time, but most teachers probably did not check their email during the break. The researcher followed up with two additional emails to have 277 of 990 teachers complete the survey. Of the 277 participants, 184 had attended MAP sessions so most respondents do attend the district's after-school teacher-led professional development. The teachers' perceptions of professional development will be limited with 72% of teachers choosing to not participate. The results may not be truly reflective of all teachers' perceptions due to the limited sample size. The researcher interviewed six teachers who regularly attend the district's professional development. Although lessons can be learned from these participants, all viewpoints were not considered for this study.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to one school district in the state of Tennessee. The researcher chose to limit the scope of the study to only teachers who had attended the optional professional development sessions to capture insight as to why they attend PD. Purposeful sampling from the survey was used to identify participants for interviews conducted during the qualitative phase of the study.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Professional Learning Research Study

Q1 How many total years have you been employed as an educator?

_____

Q2 How many years have you been employed in Middle Tennessee Public Schools?

_____

Q3 How many years have you been employed in your current school?

_____

Q4 What level do you currently teach?

☐   Elementary (1)

☐   Middle (2)

☐   High (3)

Q5 What is the highest degree you have earned?

○ Bachelor's Degree (1)

○ Master's (2)

○ Master's +30 (3)

○ Ed.S (4)

○ Ed.D. or Ph.D. (5)

Q6 Are you currently enrolled in a degree program?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Please read the following statements about professional development in general using the Likert scale.

Q7 Professional development contributes to the professional growth of teachers at school.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q8 Professional development deepens and broadens content knowledge for teachers.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q9 Professional development provides a strong foundation in the pedagogy of particular disciplines.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q10 Professional development for content contributes to measurable improvement in student achievement.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q11 Professional development for discipline specific pedagogy contributes to measurable improvement in student achievement.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q12 Collaboration among teachers is enhanced by professional development.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q13 Professional development motivates me to share resources with other teachers.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q14 Professional development creates an environment for me to support other teachers while implementing new teaching strategies.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q15 Professional development pushes me to utilize student data to improve instruction.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q16 Professional development helps me to become a better educator.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q17 Professional development motivates me to seek more training or further information on my own.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q18 Professional development improves my confidence to take on leadership opportunities.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q19 Professional development is encouraged by my administrator(s).

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q20 My administration is supportive when I try to implement learning from professional development I attend.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q21 Professional development should be required of all teachers each year.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q22 Professional development is a good use of time.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q23 Professional development relates to my needs as a teacher.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q24 Professional development relates to my particular classroom.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q25 Professional development relates to my professional responsibilities.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q26
Quality professional development strategies facilitate implementation of efforts and sustain change of practice.
Please rank the following in order of importance and/or effectiveness. 1=most/10=least.
_____ Ongoing, over the course of time, in one area (1)
_____ Collaborative activities (2)
_____ Active Learning (3)
_____ New skills are demonstrated/modeled (4)
_____ Can be tied to real life experiences in the classroom (5)
_____ Helps solve problems of practice in the classroom (6)
_____ Provides a tangible activity or strategy to take back to the classroom immediately (7)
_____ Peer coaching/observation (8)
_____ Guided Practice (9)
_____ Peer Study Groups (11)

Q27 Have you attended an after-school MAP session?

○ Yes (23)

○ No (24)

Q28 Why do you attend MAP sessions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q29 Roughly, how many MAP sessions have you attended since 2015-16?

_____

Q30 Have you attended or do you plan to attend MAP sessions during the 2019-2020 school year?

○ Definitely yes (1)

○ Probably yes (2)

○ Might or might not (3)

○ Probably not (4)

○ Definitely not (5)

Q31 Are you required to attend MAP sessions?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q32 If you answered yes to the previous question, would you attend MAP sessions even if you were not required?

○ Definitely yes (1)

○ Probably yes (2)

○ Might or might not (3)

○ Probably not (4)

○ Definitely not (5)

Q33 Have you attended more than one MAP session in the same content area or focus area? (i.e R2BR, tech integration)

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Please respond to the following questions about Maury Academy of Professionalism (MAP) using the Likert scale.

Q34 Participating in content area professional development at MAP provided me with new knowledge and skills.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q35 Content area professional development at MAP positively influenced my instructional practices.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q36 Participating in MAP sessions have caused me to change my instructional practices.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q37 Participating in MAP sessions met my professional needs.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q38 Participating in MAP sessions have positively influenced my students' achievement.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q39 My principal promotes MAP sessions when they are offered.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Q40 In what ways does your principal support teachers who attend MAP?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

- -

Q41 In what ways does your principal follow up with you after you have attended a MAP session?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

- -

Q42 The MAP sessions I have attended allow for collaboration within the session.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

- -

Q43 I feel safe to try new things in my classroom learned at MAP.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Somewhat agree (3)

○ Neither agree nor disagree (4)

○ Somewhat disagree (5)

○ Disagree (6)

○ Strongly disagree (7)

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Why do you choose to attend MAP sessions?

2. What do you like about MAP sessions?

3. What do you not like about MAP sessions?

4. Have you ever been mandated to attend MAP? Please explain.

5. Has someone from your grade or school also attended a MAP session that you also attended? If yes, did you collaborate afterward or discuss what you learned or how you might try something new in your class?

6. Explain if teachers should plan and present their own professional learning or should be planned by administrators and delivered by external vendors?

7. What is your motivation for participating in professional development?

8. How should districts determine what topics or sessions to provide at professional development?

9. Why is it important for teachers to collaborate with peers during professional development?

10. What type of format should professional development be? (i.e. sit and get, watch presentation, small group discussion, collaborative)

11. How does goal setting impact professional development?

12. How should a district or school determine its professional development priorities?

13. How does MAP sessions tap into teacher leadership?

14. How does MAP support teacher engagement?

15. Should the district consider not mandating teacher participation at MAP? How do you think that will impact attendance?

16. How can the district improve the overall professional development for teachers?

17. How does the support of a building principal influence professional growth for teachers?

18. How does the professional support of a principal impact teachers wanting to try something new learned from professional development?

19. Does the administration help or hinder the implementation of new ideas?

20. Does your principal connect professional goals or SMART goals to professional development?

21. Does the score you receive on your evaluation give you an indication whether you need to improve in a certain area?

22. Does your principal ever suggest attending professional development to help improve your evaluation scores?