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**EXAMINING AN OBSERVATION-BASED MODEL OF PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS**

by

Donna M. Marriott

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education**

University of San Diego

2003

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

Donna M. Marriott

Public education is undergoing a process of reculturation prompted by standards-based reform initiatives. Student content standards suggest fundamental changes in the way teachers, schools, and districts think about and do their work. These substantive reform efforts require a parallel reorganization in professional development processes. Traditional models that rely on episodic, large-scale workshops are insufficient to support teachers to meet the demands of a standards-driven system.

San Diego City Schools has developed an innovative approach to teacher training that is context and situation specific. The observation-based model of professional development utilizes a unique training environment and process. A fully functioning classroom is attached to a professional development center via a one-way mirror. Participants are able to see, hear, and study exemplary models of teaching and learning in real time.

This evaluation study examined the training model and its potential for impact on the practice of participants. Three research questions guided this investigation: (a) How do participants assess the observation-based model of professional development? (b) What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice? (c) What are the factors that act to support or impede participants' implementation of those instructional strategies demonstrated in the observation-based model of professional development?

Three research methodologies supported the study of these questions. A survey was administered to teachers and school leaders who participated in the observation-

based model of professional development. Focus groups were formed to investigate the themes that emerged from the survey results. And, a select number of site administrators were interviewed to elicit more detailed implementation data.

The findings suggested that: (a) participants assessed the training model as appropriate and relevant, (b) participants implemented or planned to implement some of the learnings into their classrooms and schools, and (c) a number of professional and political barriers posed real or perceived barriers to implementation.

San Diego City Schools is committed to offering an observation-based model of professional development for teachers to illustrate effective literacy instruction. This formative evaluation study provides a baseline of data that may be used to inform programmatic decisions and improvements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the members of my committee who helped shape this work at the conceptual level and who read and responded to multiple drafts of the text. Dr. Mary Scherr supported me throughout my tenure at the University of San Diego with wise advice, sound feedback, and critical questions. Dr. Ed DeRoche helped me envision myself as a researcher and writer. Dr. Bobbie Hansen urged me to find my voice. And Dr. Sally Bennett pressed me always toward precision and clarity.

Susie, Dave, and Frannie were enormously helpful in the cumbersome and time-consuming processes of data entry and data manipulation. They translated what appeared to be an insurmountable task into a manageable project.

Staci and Jennifer imagined a professional development format that would feature real-time observations of practice and then demonstrated the capacity and tenacity to translate this vision into a reality. I thank them for their extraordinary dedication to the teachers and students of San Diego City Schools.

Thank you to Maria, Peggy, Linda, Ann, and Lisa for showing us how to shape the observation-based training process, for taking your work public, and for your continued receptivity to feedback, growth, and change.

Many teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals gave their time and energy to provide the thoughtful feedback that provided substance for this work. Your contributions may serve to shape the future.

And, finally, I will forever love David, Noah, and Claire for their unwavering support of my work.

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Introduction

The K-12 education system is the subject of widespread concern and intensive public scrutiny. Educators, parents, citizen groups, business alliances, and politicians wonder: (a) Are all students prepared to succeed in and contribute to an increasingly complex, information-driven world? (b) Are there sufficient and appropriate programs, resources, and materials to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to acquire, process, and apply knowledge? (c) Are teachers adequately prepared and professionally supported to facilitate the learning needs of all students? While there are no easy answers to these difficult questions, one solution that has achieved national attention and support is standards-based education (O'Neil, 1993; Resnick, 2001).

A standards-based system of education is founded on the premise that increased learner achievement and system accountability can be driven by establishing clear, exacting, public descriptions of what students should know and be able to do (David & Shields, 1999; Hornbeck, 1992; Speck & Knipe, 2001; Sullivan, 1999). Since the late 1980s, every state but Iowa has designed content standards for the major academic disciplines including English/language arts, mathematics, history/social science and

science (Hoff, 2001). These standards describe the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities that teachers should teach and students should learn.

High academic standards for all students is a laudable goal; it is an important goal. Yet, it is doubtful that students will attain world-class standards any time soon unless and until there is a parallel emphasis on supporting world-class teachers (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Darling-Hammond and Falk (1997) concur: “Ultimately, raising standards for students so that they learn what they need to know requires raising standards for the system, so that it provides the kinds of teaching and school settings students need in order to learn” (as cited in Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2000, p. 51). Simply stated, to improve learning we must improve teaching (Cross & Applebaum, 1998; NBPTS, 1996; Shanker, 1996).

The professional literature acknowledges a clear and compelling correlation between teaching and learning (Alvarado, 1998; Artze, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ferguson, 1991; Haycock, 1998; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Renyi, 1996; Sykes, 1996; Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 1998). Darling-Hammond (1997) notes, “The single most important determinant of student achievement is the expertise and qualifications of teachers. What teachers know and can do makes the most difference in what children learn” (p. 38). This is not to say that resources, facilities, extra curricular events, or instructional programs have no impact on student achievement. Clearly, many factors must co-exist to create the optimal conditions for teaching and learning; yet schools and students can only be as good as their teachers (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1996) emphasizes this point in suggesting that the “most important action the nation can take to improve schools is to strengthen

teaching” (p. 7). The quality of this nation’s teachers may well be the most critical issue facing public education.

Teacher quality has been exacerbated by a series of profound changes within the field of education. The very face of the teaching force is undergoing a rapid and radical transformation. In California, for example, a wave of aging teachers has forecast the need to hire a quarter million new educators by the year 2005 (Ed-Data, 2001). Add to this startling statistic the demand for new teachers as a result of California’s class-size reduction law. In the first year of this legislation alone over 28,000 teachers were hired and it has been estimated that another 25,000 will be needed annually to fully implement class-size reduction at all targeted grade levels (EdSource, 1998). Nationally, the need for qualified teachers is similarly critical. The American Council on Education (1999) reports that 2.5 million teachers will be needed over the next decade to replace retiring teachers, meet increased student enrollment, reduce class size, and keep pace with teacher attrition rates.

Not only are our schools experiencing an unprecedented changing of the guard, the context for teaching and learning is being redefined within a fluid edu-political landscape and an increasingly heterogeneous society. Today’s teachers are responsible for educating the most diverse student body in history; diverse in terms of language, culture, religion, resources, experiences, and expectations (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Speck & Knipe, 2001). California’s 6,050,895 students speak more than 55 different languages and are broadly distributed across eight ethnic categories (California Department of Education, 2001). California’s 8,761 schools offer a multitude of learning options including magnet programs, continuation classes, independent study, community-

based courses, Gifted and Talented Education, and special education programs designed to accommodate more than a dozen recognized learning disabilities (California Department of Education, 2002). California's 1,048 school districts are governed by boards of elected trustees who vigilantly safeguard the concept of local control and who set a specific political tone that can range from liberal, to conservative, to moderate, to a mix of potentially incompatible ideologies (California Department of Education, 2002; Resnick, 2001). In spite of these intricate layers of social-political complexities, teachers are expected to support students in meeting or exceeding higher academic standards than ever before. This is not easy work.

Current efforts to raise the quality of the public education system by establishing academic content standards have enormous implications for teachers and teaching (Elmore, 2001; Gall & Vojtek, 1994; Sullivan, 1999). Traditionally, student achievement has been considered a variable. Some students got As, some got Cs, and some got Fs; mirroring the accepted bell-curve pattern. The advent of student academic standards reaches deep within the profession to challenge this conventional belief system. The expectation now is that all students will meet or exceed the standards. If student achievement is to be redefined as a constant rather than a variable, the teaching profession must re-examine an array of educational conditions, contexts, and beliefs. Again, this is not easy work. Professional study and support are essential in preparing teachers to operationalize content standards into effective practice for all students (Birman, Desimone, Porter & Garet, 2000; Sykes, 1996). Alvarado (1998) states, "The standards movement is, first and foremost, a challenge to the adults because it is what they do that will determine the quality of the work the kids do. What teachers do has to

be different and much more powerful” (p. 18). How we support teachers to do this work, too, will have to be different and much more powerful.

Ongoing learning opportunities play a key role in preparing teachers to meet the challenges and responsibilities of a standards-based reform initiative (Arbuckle, 1997; Birman et al., 2000; Dickson, 2001; Garet et al., 2001; Resnick & Harwell, 1998; Sharp, 1997). Various phrases are used to define these learning opportunities: professional development, staff development, workshops, in-service training, professional growth, continuing education, on-the-job training, and organizational development. Common to each term is a theoretical emphasis on job improvement. Given the context of a demanding standards-based system of education, a critical teacher shortage, a growing consensus that good teachers and good teaching matters, and the ever-increasing complexity of teaching and learning, any such theoretical emphasis on job improvement would appear insufficient. Teacher learning is not a peripheral issue; it is a pivotal issue in the quest to improve educational quality (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Haycock, 1998; NFIE, 2000; Sykes, 1996). Alvarado (1998) asserts, “The job *is* professional development, and professional development *is* the job. When we learn that – really learn it – we’ll be on our way” (p. 23).

Statement of the Problem

There is a critical mismatch between what professional development forums do and what they need to be able to do. For most teachers, professional development is a day off from school during which large groups of educators gather together in a school auditorium or hotel ballroom to hear about the latest hot topic, curricular package, classroom management strategy, or testing mandate. Much of this professional

development is offered in a one-size-fits-all format that disregards district or school priorities and is detached from teachers' daily concerns and practice. These one-shot sessions are typically delivered by educational consultants or inspirational speakers who do not work in classrooms and who may be out of touch with the rapidly changing experiences of students and teachers (Sykes, 1996). The results of such staff development processes are predictable: Many participants express negative attitudes, there is minimal impact on teachers' instructional practice, and there is no notable improvement in student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1996, 1997; David & Shields, 1999; Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller 1992; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Mizell, 2001; Renyi, 1996; Sparks, 2002; Stein, Smith & Silver, 1999; Thompson & Wood, 1993).

Current efforts to restructure the public education system through the implementation and evaluation of rigorous academic content standards suggest the need for fundamental changes in the paradigms, processes, and outcomes that describe professional development for teachers (Gall & Vojtek, 1994; Speck & Knipe, 2001). The conventional view of professional development as a transferable package of knowledge to be distributed wholesale is inadequate in supporting teachers to implement the essential changes necessitated by a standards-driven reform initiative (Lieberman & Miller, 1992). Professional development processes need to be reconceptualized in order to create learning opportunities that are responsive to the current challenges of and expectations for teachers and that lead to improved instructional practice (Birman et al., 2000; Lieberman, 1995; Sykes, 1996).

An Observation-Based Model of Professional Development

San Diego City Schools, a diverse, urban district serving 187 schools and 143,000 students, acknowledges the critical role professional development must play in supporting teaching and learning: “Professional development is the most effective tool the school district has for improving teaching, and improving teaching is the most direct way to improve student learning and achievement” (SDCS, 2000, p. 25). The Blueprint for Student Success in a Standards-Based System (SDCS, 2000), the seminal document outlining San Diego City School’s comprehensive reform initiative, positions professional development as a central component in an intensive system of ongoing support targeted at three primary constituencies: principals, staff developers, and teachers (Fullan, 2001). Site administrators are supported through monthly principal conferences, mentor principal relationships, and intensive coaching and feedback from an instructional leader. Highly trained staff developers are positioned at most schools and are responsible for providing site-based professional development for school faculties and individual coaching for teachers. Teachers have access to a broad range of job-embedded, site-delivered, and centrally-delivered training. Within this mosaic of support mechanisms is an innovative training environment and process that links professional development directly to exemplary classroom instruction by offering a observational window on practice.

This observation-based model of professional development rests on the premise that when educators observe accomplished teaching and powerful learning in the context of a real classroom they will reflect on and refine their instructional practice. Such systematic observation has the potential to bring teaching approaches to life by providing

real-time examples of instructional contexts, interactions, and decision-making processes (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Alvarado (1998) expands on this concept in noting that observation is “one way of stimulating teachers’ professional growth. What it generates, at its highest level of practice, is what business calls ‘benchmarking.’ By comparing what they do with the work of other teachers, teachers become prolific creators of good practice” (p. 21).

The observation-based model of professional development is dependent on a unique training environment that allows participants to study instruction in an authentic setting without disrupting the classroom teacher or her students. San Diego City Schools designed and constructed a prototype training facility in 2001 in which a fully functioning classroom is physically conjoined with a professional development center via a one-way mirror. On one side of the mirror is a classroom of children and on the other side is a classroom of teachers. Broadcast-quality video and audio technologies enhance participants’ access to the classroom in a seamless, non-intrusive manner. Participants are able to see and hear instruction in real time, study selected aspects of instruction with a trained facilitator, and discuss the intent, impact, and perceived next steps with the classroom teacher during crafted breaks in her teaching day. The observation-based model of professional development is grounded in the actual practice of teaching, it involves structured reflections about practice, and it is carefully constructed to mirror the District’s standards-based literacy initiative and vision of accomplished teaching and powerful learning.

Two observation-based professional development centers were operational during the 2001-2002 school year. The Zamorano Professional Development Center, San Diego

City School's flagship facility, is housed in a manufactured relocatable building of approximately 2,400 square feet and is configured to accommodate 90 occupants in a training area of approximately 1,440 square feet (San Diego City Schools, 2000). The 960 square foot viewing window spans one entire wall of the classroom. Cromwell (2002) estimates construction and equipment costs for this facility at approximately \$700,000. The Fulton Learning Center offers a similar training environment though on a smaller scale. Fulton Elementary School converted two existing structures into an observation-based training facility by breaking down the outside walls of a pair of bungalows and installing a shared wall with a viewing window. While originally intended as a study venue for this school staff, the District negotiated a partnership with the site, sharing the \$80,000 construction and equipment costs, in order to offer all kindergarten teachers access to this learning environment (Cromwell, 2002). The Fulton Learning Center encompasses 1,600 square feet with a 52 square foot viewing window and can accommodate up to 40 participants.

Both training facilities are equipped with state-of-the-art audio technologies using a series of drop microphones suspended from the classroom ceiling and lavalier microphones that allow participants to hear whole group, small group, and individual instruction. Participants can opt to study the classroom by looking through the observation window or by focusing on camera-directed images projected onto video monitors or a viewing screen. Ceiling-mounted, rotational cameras provide a variety of viewing opportunities that are unavailable through the observation window. These cameras can afford a wide-angle view of the classroom, frame individual teacher-student

interactions, and can zoom down allowing participants to observe the actual text an individual student is reading or writing.

Approximately 1,800 teachers, staff developers, and site administrators were provided opportunities to study classroom instruction at these demonstration facilities in the 2001-2002 school year. The Zamorano Professional Development Center hosted trainings for all first and second grade teachers while the Fulton Learning Center hosted trainings for the District's kindergarten teachers. Teachers were scheduled to attend trainings with their grade level teams in study groups organized by Learning Communities. Staff developers, vice principals, and principals were encouraged to attend with their school teams in order to provide leadership for the continued study of the observed instructional practices at their sites.

The instructional content for each of the observation-based trainings was crafted to mirror strategic aspects of the District's Literacy Framework. In 2001-2002, all kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers studied readers' workshop and writers' workshop. Second grade teachers had the opportunity to attend an additional session focused on guided reading. These directed observations of practice were augmented with and supported by large and small group discussions of practice, relevant professional readings, and video study. All observed lessons were videotaped to allow opportunities for participants to study a precise pedagogical element, to review a specific teacher-student interaction, or to analyze the overall architecture of an instructional sequence within the context of the training session.

A trained facilitator supports teachers' learning in a number of strategic ways. Prior to the directed observation of practice, this literacy expert explains the rationale,

purpose, and context of the highlighted lesson or instructional experience. During the actual observation the facilitator serves as a “tour guide” noting important teaching processes, learner responses, and instructional implications. Following the observation the trainer leads focused discussions intended to deepen participants’ understanding of and capacity to act on the featured instructional strategies. The classroom teacher shares in the facilitation process by offering a contextualized rationale for the lesson based on students’ needs and instructional goals, reflecting on the perceived impact of the lesson on individual and groups of students, and by suggesting the range of potential next steps. This public reflection on practice is deemed essential as it allows participants access to the thinking of the classroom teacher.

Purpose of the Study

Supporting teachers’ professional growth involves more than merely hearing about new pedagogical ideas in the abstract. Educational theorists have suggested that reformed processes for professional development should be embedded within the context of authentic practice, focused on student learning, and directed by and for teachers (Boyd, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Renyi, 1996; Robb, 2000; Speck & Knipe, 2001; Sykes, 1996). San Diego City Schools has invested considerable time, effort, and money in developing an observation-based model of professional development that is responsive to these calls for change. Yet, to date, no formal evaluation has been conducted to determine this model’s potential to impact teachers’ instructional practice. The purpose of this study is to conduct a programmatic evaluation

of the observation-based model of professional development to consider its potential to support teacher learning.

Research Questions

The observation-based model of professional development rests on the premise that when teachers examine and reflect on exemplary teaching and learning within an authentic instructional context, they will improve their pedagogical practice. The overarching question framing this research asks, is this premise true? Do teachers change their practice as a result of studying accomplished teaching and powerful learning? To this end, three research questions have been designed to gain broad insight into the design, supports, and potential implications of an observation-based model of professional development:

1. How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?
2. What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?
3. What are the factors that act to support or impede participating teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?

The initial question was designed to consider the observation-based model of professional development as a training mechanism for teachers. Based on Patton's (1997) improvement-oriented evaluation process, this question seeks to elicit a clearer understanding of the perceived strengths and areas for improvement as reported by participants and was intended to yield a range of formative data that could be used to

evaluate the structural design, study processes, and subject matter content of the observation-based model of professional development.

The second research question was designed to provide data on the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on the instructional practice of participating teachers. The data was anticipated to range from specific environmental constructs such as the organization and presentation of teachers' classroom libraries; to relational practices like teacher-to-student talk and grouping strategies; to specific pedagogical approaches including readers' workshop mini-lessons, independent reading with conferring, and diagnostic instruction.

The final question was intended to provide data on the potential and limitations of the observation-based model of professional development at an implementation level by examining the range of factors that act to facilitate or obstruct teachers' application at the site and classroom level. This question was prompted by an organizational view of professional development which conceptualizes instructional capacity as the result of institutional supports or barriers rather than the competence level of individual teachers (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Limitations of the Study

This examination of the quality of and potential for a new model of professional development for teachers is admittedly context specific. San Diego City Schools has embarked on an ambitious, large-scale reform initiative in which the premiere strategy for student success is staff development. Fullan (2001) reports, "Major investments and procedures have been established that provide literacy and mathematics materials and professional development for all school leaders, staff developers, and teachers" (p. 58). A

system-wide and systematic commitment to staff development is somewhat unique; thus the results of this investigation may not apply to districts exploring different solution paths in their quest to improve student achievement. This study was not designed to look broadly at professional development for teachers nor is it intended to suggest a course of action for other school districts. The evaluative research was designed specifically to strategically analyze an innovative model of professional development within the current context of San Diego City Schools.

The observation-based model of professional development is nested within a *mélange* of related support strategies raising a number of interesting and relevant questions: Would the results of this investigation be the same without the feedback and accountability mechanisms that exist for site administrators? Would the results be the same without supports offered by school-based literacy staff developers? In what ways are these results dependent upon or independent of the array of centrally-designed professional development opportunities that encourage continuous learning for all teachers? These questions clearly extend the boundaries of inquiry beyond the scope of the current study. No attempt is made to isolate the results of the observation-based model of professional development from the context in which it exists. This decision respects the authenticity of this model as a component part of San Diego City School's comprehensive professional development program.

Three methodological strategies served to investigate the stated research questions: a large-scale survey, focus group interviews, and site administrator interviews. These methodological strategies impose certain limitations on the strength and generalizability of the data. The surveys, focus group interviews, and individual

interviews are dependent upon participants' self-analysis and self-reporting; potentially problematic response modes. Kovaleski (2001) cautions that self-reporting strategies may be impacted by any number of personal, professional, political, and environmental variables. While the response mechanisms are problematic, so too are the sampling populations.

The interviews depended on nonprobability samplings. This procedure raises concerns about which subgroups of teachers and staff developers elected to become part of the assessment process and which subgroups chose not to participate. Salant and Dillman (1994) warn, "We have no way of knowing the accuracy of a nonprobability sampling. It might be accurate, but then again, it might not. Hence, whatever new information is gained through the research applies only to the sample itself" (p. 64). It is recognized that selection bias strictly limits the generalizability of all assessment data.

The time constraints imposed by this study are incongruous with the change process. Change often takes time to translate into practice (Fullan, 1994). Participants were surveyed on their final visit to the demonstration facilities in the spring of 2002 strictly limiting the time for participants to reflect on the training, consider the implications of their learning for classroom application, and to practice new or refined instructional approaches. The focus group interviews were scheduled in the summer of 2002 to allow this subset of participants additional time to consider, internalize, and apply their learning. Yet even this time lag is considered insufficient to fairly assess the long-range potential and implications of the observation-based model of professional development to promote teacher change.

Researcher bias may act as a further limitation to this study. Although ongoing attempts were made to bracket prior experiences and maintain an impartial perspective in order to view the responses of teachers, staff developers, and site administrators in an dispassionate manner, it remains possible that bias impacted the examples that were selected for inclusion, the themes that were identified and investigated, and the way in which the data were synthesized and analyzed. To limit the potential for researcher bias the survey was constructed with input from a variety of informed sources, the focus group interviews and site administrator interviews were meticulously transcribed, and all data were carefully triangulated.

This research is further limited by a set of programmatic constructs. The observation-based model of professional development was limited to: (a) kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers, (b) the study of specific literacy strategies, and (c) a particular educational philosophy of teaching and learning. These constructs impacted the purpose, design, and results of this study and, yet, represent the authentic context in which the research was conducted.

Definition of Terms

Academic Performance Index (API): The API is the cornerstone of California's Public Schools Accountability Act. The purpose of the API is to measure the academic performance and growth of California's schools. It is a numeric index that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1,000. A school's API score is an indicator of its students' achievement levels on the state tests (California Department of Education, 2002).

Content standards: Statements of what students should know and be able to demonstrate in various subjects and domains at designated junctures in their educational experience (Bennett, 1997).

Diagnostic instruction: Instruction informed by ongoing formative assessments and summative evaluations.

Guided reading: An instructional approach that provides an opportunity for small groups of similarly skilled students to develop and practice reading strategies necessary to read independently (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996).

Independent reading with conferring: An instructional approach that provides sustained opportunities for students to apply an array of reading strategies to texts that are slightly easier than their current instructional level with the teachers' ongoing support and monitoring (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996).

Instructional practice: A teacher's pedagogical approach.

Instructional share-out: A short, focused review of the mini-lesson at the end of the readers' or writers' workshop that is designed to re-emphasize a focused aspect of reading or writing often through the words and work of students (Hagerty, 1992).

Interactive writing: A writing process in which the teacher and students collaborate compose and construct a piece of text (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000).

Mini-lesson: A short, focused lesson, often at the beginning of the readers' or writers' workshop, designed to teach or model some aspect of reading or writing relevant to the needs of a specific group of students (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001).

Observation-based model of professional development: A professional development environment in which a training facility for teachers is attached to a fully functioning classroom via a one-way mirror.

Pedagogical content knowledge: Teaching practices in specific content domains (Garet et al., 2001).

Professional development: Organized study opportunities for certificated teachers.

Readers' workshop: An instructional context that provides students time, choice, response, community, and structure to practice the skills and strategies of independent reading. Readers' workshop is often structured with a mini-lesson, independent reading time with conferring, and an instructional share-out (Hagerty, 1992).

Staff developers: Certified literacy coaches who use a variety of strategies to support teachers in their classrooms including: co-teaching, demonstrations, observations, videotaping, and discussions of student work (San Diego City Schools, 2000).

Writers' workshop: An instructional context that provides students choices about content, time for writing, a peer community, and a structure to practice the skills and strategies of independent writing. Writers' workshop is often structure with a mini-lesson, independent writing time with conferring, and an instructional share-out (Ray & Laminack, 2001).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This critical review of the literature serves to describe a discrete body of knowledge on professional development practices for teachers. Three inclusion criteria were used to delineate a specific body of literature for analysis: date, subject, and context. The selected literature was limited to 1990-2003 in order to align the study of professional development for teachers with the national response to, interest in, and implications of student academic content standards. Subject-specific professional development foci such as mathematics, science, and the visual and performing arts as well as explicit pedagogical strategies including cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, and direct instruction were intentionally excluded from this examination. Instead, content-free discussions were used in order to permit the broadest possible consideration of the prevailing issues and questions. The literature search was further narrowed to teacher training processes linked to large school districts and state or national efforts. These boundaries were imposed to yield a generalizable summary of the paradigms, contexts, and implementation models descriptive of current teacher training practices.

This review of the literature has been organized to afford a systematic examination of: (a) traditional professional development processes for teachers, (b) the beliefs, conditions, and dynamics that have acted in concert to define the structure and presentation of professional development for teachers; (c) the emerging redefinition of the content and process of professional development implied by standards for teaching and learning, adult learning theory, and criteria for change; (d) selected examples of innovative professional development practices that suggest the range and potential of current restructuring efforts; and (e) evaluation findings. This critical analysis is intended to yield a studied rationale to support recommendations for and implications of improved models of professional development. But, before we look to what might be, let us consider what has been.

Descriptions of Professional Development Practices

Gall and Vojtek (1994) delineate five models of professional development for teachers. Representing a continuum of learning opportunities ranging from direct instruction to practices that involve interactive learning embedded within a school context, these models include: expert presentation, clinical supervision, skills training, action research, and organization development.

Expert Presentation

The expert presentation model is the most prevalent prototype of professional development (Garet et al., 2001; Gall & Vojtek, 1994; Lieberman, 1995). This structured training format is designed to host a sizable group of teachers who are assembled to listen to a recognized education expert in a curricular, pedagogical, or theoretical field. Participants typically attend scheduled sessions after school, on weekends, or during the

summer or intersession hiatus. The expert presentation model is intended to efficiently facilitate the large-scale acquisition of new attitudes, skills, or knowledge and is exemplified by keynote addresses at professional conferences, inspirational speakers often employed during district orientation days to motivate teachers, and professional consultants who are hired to promote a commercial product or program (Thompson & Wood, 1993).

Clinical Supervision

The clinical supervision model was developed by preservice teacher education programs in the early 1960s but has come to be used in various ways for certificated teachers. Gall and Vojtek (1994) describe three characteristics that distinguish the clinical supervision model: It involves a tutorial relationship between the classroom teacher and the supervisor or mentor; it is structured to cohere to repeated feedback cycles through processes of pre-conference, direct observation, and post-conference; and, supervisors or mentors serve in this capacity based on their broad and specific understandings of teaching and teacher development, interpersonal skills, and classroom observation strategies.

The clinical supervision model extends beyond a preservice context to include practicing teachers through induction and peer mentoring programs. In California, for example, the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program provides intensive one-on-one assistance to novice teachers (CDE, 1992, 1998). First- and second-year teachers are supported through coaching relationships with an experienced teacher in cyclical processes of observation, feedback, and reflection. Mentoring programs, like BTSA, are grounded in a view of teacher learning that is both individualized and

longitudinal. The Connecticut Department of Education (1990) describes this description of peer mentoring:

An excellent experienced teacher engages in *reflection*, possesses a *repertoire* of skills, and accepts professional *responsibilities* beyond the classroom. Becoming a reflective practitioner, while at the same time expanding one's repertoire, is a developmental process that begins during one's teacher preparation and continues through one's professional career. (as cited in Fraser, 1998, p. 4)

The clinical supervision model provides multiple opportunities for teachers to practice a range of instructional skills in the authentic context of their workday and to receive explicit response and individual support in structured feedback loops. Speck (1996) suggests that consistent feedback is the most compelling feature of the clinical supervision model: "Transfer of learning for adults is not automatic and must be facilitated. Coaching and other kinds of follow-up support are needed to help adult learners transfer learning into daily practice so that it is sustained" (p. 37).

Skills Training

A commitment to the continual deepening of knowledge and skills is an essential attribute for any professional (NBPTS, 1996). Teachers are no exception. Effective teaching is dependent on the acquisition, examination, refinement, and application of an evolving set of knowledge, skills, and abilities (Fullan, 1994; Prawat, 1992; Schenkat & Tyser, 1997). Garet et al. (2001) note that "teachers must be immersed in the subjects they teach and have the ability both to communicate basic knowledge and to develop advanced thinking and problem-solving" (p. 916). The skills training model is designed

to facilitate these capacities by supporting teachers in developing specific instructional knowledge and proficiencies.

The skills training model rests on the assumption that the depth of teachers' content understanding has a direct relationship to student learning (Prawat, 1992). Schenkat and Tyser (1997) assert that content knowledge "is the key to teaching and learning" (p. 116). In spite of the sensibility of this assumption there is little empirical or anecdotal evidence on the effectiveness of the skills training model of professional development (Garet et al., 2001; Little 1993). Killion (2000a) warns that this skill-based view misrepresents the complexity of both teaching and learning and suggests that the body of knowledge needed by teachers is extensive encompassing content knowledge, content-specific instructional strategies, and knowledge of student developmental needs. Lyons and Pinnell (2001) echo the need for a balanced approach to professional development for teachers: "Content without process is not dynamic; learners are not engaged, and they do not learn how to support one another. But process without content is empty; learning becomes a group exercise, and participants walk away hungry for specific information" (p. 184).

Action Research

The action research model is descriptive of inquiry projects conducted by individual or small groups of teachers within the context of their immediate work setting (Sagor, 1992). These self-directed research efforts allow teachers to test new strategies, curricula, or answer specific questions they have posed about teaching and learning. The action research model parallels those processes and methods used in structured educational research though at a decidedly less formal level. Gall and Vojtek (1994) note

that the primary goal of action research is to inform a teacher's professional development whereas educational research is designed to produce a more broadly generalizable body of knowledge with the potential to inform and advance the field.

Action research is consistent with the constructivist philosophy in education that presumes individuals learn best when they are given responsibility for constructing their own knowledge and understanding (Brandt, 2000). Learning and organizational theorists mirror this perspective in suggesting that learning is facilitated through active involvement, reflection, and both formal and informal processes of articulation (Lieberman, 1995). Gall and Vojtek (1994) add that the analytic processes embedded within the action research model of professional development have the capacity to encourage teachers to become more reflective about their instructional skills, procedures, strategies, dispositions, and outcomes. Through action research, teachers are supported to try out their own ideas and develop their own understandings, thus assuring the closest possible link among context, content, need, and interest (Shanker, 1996; Sagor, 1992).

Organization Development

The organization development model of professional development grows out of the assumption that many educational problems are caused by institutional barriers rather than the competence level of individual teachers (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Organization development has been defined by Gall and Vojtek (1994) as "a coherent, systematically planned, sustained effort at system self-study and improvement focusing explicitly on changing formal and informal procedures, processes, norms, or structures using concepts of behavioral science" (p. 34). The goals of organization development models are directed at improving the function and performance of teachers, schools, school districts,

and institutional systems. This model typically involves four phases: diagnosis of an organization's strengths and weaknesses, development of a plan of action, implementation of the action plan, and evaluation of the processes and impact of implementation (Gall & Vojtek, 1994).

The organization development model is used for systemic innovations that are dependent upon large-scale changes within an education system. Gall and Vojtek (1994) delineate three stages in this model of professional development. In the initial stage administrators, staff developers, and teachers engage in decision-making processes related to the adoption or rejection of the proposed innovation. In this initiation phase participants are provided multiple opportunities to learn about the innovation, ask questions, and engage in discussions with colleagues. The second phase involves the actual implementation in which the innovation is put into action within a school or organizational setting. During implementation, staff development is directed at unanticipated problems, new concerns, and defining and acquiring necessary skills. Gall and Vojtek (1994) describe effective staff development at this stage as involving a "combination of concrete, teacher-specific training activities, ongoing continuous assistance and support, and regular meetings with peers and others" (p. 36). The final phase is institutionalization during which a decision to continue to use or reject the innovation is formalized through consensus-building procedures.

The organization development process is the most complex and protracted of all the professional development models and is dependent upon a strategic combination of long-term planning and effective leadership (Gall & Vojtek, 1994). Orlich (1991) is an advocate of such thoughtful, longitudinal planning: "If staff development directors relied

on an explicit planning paradigm they would increase the probability that their in-service efforts would be successful” (p. 2).

Summary

The five examined models of professional development: expert presentation, clinical supervision, skills training, action research, and organization development represent the range of teacher training approaches descriptive of the field. These formats vary from large-scale, sit-and-get workshops to one-on-one coaching; from compliance-driven, formulaic agendas to teacher-directed, problem-based inquiry; from training formats designed for quick-fix solutions to consensus-building procedures directed at systematic, systemic change over time. Yet, this described range of and variation in teacher training processes is somewhat misleading. While diverse models are found in the professional discourse, a single professional development methodology, the expert presentation model, continues to dominate the field.

The expert presentation model of professional development is recognized as both inadequate and ineffective in promoting the magnitude of change implied by a standards-based system of education (Arbuckle, 1997; Brandt, 2000; Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1996; David & Shields, 1999; Haycock, 1998; Hirsh, 2002; Hughes, Cash, Ahwee & Klinger, 2002; Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1992; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Mizell, 2001; Robb, 2000; Stein et al., 1999; Thompson & Wood, 1993). The expert presentation model is designed for efficiency rather than instructional improvement that leads to increased student achievement (Sykes, 1996). Isolated trainings organized into one-size-fits-all packages disregard the great variety of knowledge, abilities, and experiences that characterize teachers and the similarly great

variety of contexts, cultures, and politics that define schools and school districts (Robb, 2000). According to Lieberman (1995) these one-day training events are nothing more than technical tinkering. They lack the structured follow-up and support processes that are essential for significant teacher change (Hughes et al., 2002).

Sustained, in-depth teacher learning connects directly with student results. These links depend, however, on teachers' ability to apply their learning to their teaching assignment. When teachers' choices for learning connect closely with teaching assignments and school programs, students flourish. One-shot, short-term programs have little effect on either teachers' or students' growth. (Renyi, 1996, p. 7)

In spite of these widespread concerns, the field tenaciously clings to a much maligned out-of classroom, out-of-school, and often out-of-district model as the premiere strategy for professional development for teachers (Gall & Vojtek, 1994; Garet et al., 2001; Lieberman, 1995; Renyi, 1996; Sykes, 1996). How is this possible?

Institutional Barriers to Change

The expert presentation model for teacher training continues to endure in response to deeply institutionalized patterns of time, organization, leadership, and resource allocation within school systems (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Sykes, 1996). These systemic constructs act as formidable barriers to change and require further elaboration.

Time

Time presents a powerful institutional challenge for educators (Arbuckle, 1997; Birman et al., 2000; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Renyi, 1996; Sparks, 1999; Sullivan, 1999). Rigid organizational patterns of time strictly limit the

availability of and accessibility to professional development. Teachers, unlike some professionals, have little or no time built into their work schedules for ongoing professional study (Schenk & Tyser, 1997). Most teachers spend their entire workday with students, leaving insufficient time for observation, reflection, refinement, discussion, or planning with their colleagues or other professionals. Decision-makers have responded to this scarcity of time by continuing to organize large-scale, one-day workshops.

The absence of ongoing support is integrally related to institutional time constraints (Hughes et al., 2002). Traditional teacher training sessions are organized as singular events after which participants are left on their own to try to understand, practice, and refine the studied concepts and strategies. While this factory model is cost and time efficient, it does not provide teachers the necessary time to construct, internalize, apply, or generalize knowledge with reference to their classroom practice (Lieberman, 1995; Robb, 2000; Thompson, 1997). Without sufficient time for formal follow-up, ongoing site-level collaboration, or sustained support these professional development forums have little chance for impact leaving teachers ill-prepared to meet the every-increasing demands placed upon them (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Sullivan, 1999; Thompson, 1997). Short-term training yields short-term results.

The National Staff Development Council has suggested that at least 25% of educators' work time be devoted to professional learning and collaboration with colleagues (Mizell, 2001). Robb (2000) emphasizes that, "Support for teachers embarking on a journey that examines their present practices and introduces new, research-based ideas must be available over a time period of several years" (p. 19). Thompson (1997) continues this line of thinking: "Barring some catastrophic or

revolutionary impact from outside the system, school improvement can only evolve over time.” (p. 15). Yet, most school districts take a minimalist approach to staff development offering their teachers as little as three to five paid days annually for the purpose of professional study (Schenk & Tyser, 1997). Institutionalizing sustained opportunities for staff development will require a fundamental reconceptualization of the ways in which teachers, schools, and school districts organize and use time (Arbuckle, 1997; Fullan, 1997; Sparks, 1999). As Robb notes, “Professional development takes time. There are no instant remedies” (p. 9).

Organization

The organizational culture of schools is steeped in isolationism (Arbuckle, 1997). Teachers work alone in self-contained, segregated classrooms seldom interacting with their colleagues (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Teachers rarely observe each other’s practice, rarely work together to analyze student work, and rarely reflect on the impact and implication of their individual and collective teaching. Fullan (1991) observes, “The problem of isolation is a deep-seated one. Architecture often supports it. The timetable reinforces it. Overload sustains it. History legitimates it” (p. 6).

Schools are structured in response to discrete organizational units that legitimize and protect isolationism through individual classrooms, grade level teams, subject-specific departments, and the distinctive roles of educational specialists (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Each of these operational structures maintains and protects a unique set of needs, interests, and experiences. Kindergarten teachers have different needs than do advanced placement calculus teachers. Speech and language pathologists have different needs than music resource teachers. A first-year teacher has a different set of needs than

does a twenty-year veteran. Bilingual teachers work in ways that are distinct from their English-only colleagues. And, while these differences are deeply ingrained in the minds of teachers and the structure of schools, all teachers, regardless of their role or assignment, share the same primary responsibility – student achievement.

Establishing a shared sense of purpose, direction, and vision is not an easy task, yet moving away from isolationism toward a culture of collaboration is a necessary precondition for improving professional development for teachers.

A key arena of work for professional development leaders is the building of structures within school systems that explicitly promote, protect, and set the expectation of learning for all people in schools, with a particular focus on teachers and other adults. These leaders also work hard to reduce structures which serve as barriers to professional learning. Explicit attention to structures which promote professional development is usually necessary in a culture such as ours which tends not to value it. (Arbuckle, 1997, p. 175)

In reculturing schools from isolationism to collaboration the goal will be to create organizational norms in which teachers work together, learn from each other, and study together as members of a learning community (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Sparks, 1999).

Leadership

School leadership structures act to distance professional development processes from teachers. Leadership in school systems is hierarchical and unidirectional with superintendents at one end of the line of authority and teachers at the opposite end (Archer, 2001; Barker, 1998). From this position of institutional powerlessness teachers exert little influence over the context and content of their own professional learning

(Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Renyi, 1996; Sykes, 1996). Professional development processes are typically conceptualized by publishers or state agencies, organized by central office personnel, and delivered by a cottage industry of educational consultants. Traditional models of mandated trainings marginalize the voice of teachers and lead to a culture of compliance, passivity, and resistance (Fullan, 1994).

Teachers are most likely to invest the necessary personal commitment for professional growth when they have input into their learning agendas (Fullan, 1997; LaPlant, 1997; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Robb, 2000).

If reform plans are to be made operational – thus enabling teachers to really change the way they work – then teachers must have opportunities to discuss, think about, try out, and hone new practice. This means that they must be involved in learning about, developing, and using new ideas. (Lieberman, 1995, p. 593)

Any and all changes in the functioning of a school, including professional development, are dependent upon teacher participation, teacher desire, and teacher control (Fullan, 1994; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Sullivan, 1999).

Resource Allocation

Perhaps the greatest institutional barrier to change is the bottom line – money (Alvarado, 1998; Guskey, 1997; Hirsh, 2002; Hughes et al., 2002). Teacher training programs entail substantial costs including teacher release time, consultant fees, facilities, and materials. Most school districts budget insufficient funds for professional development processes (Boser, 2001). Sykes (1996) reports, “The resources devoted to professional development are too meager and their deployment too ineffective to matter”

(p. 465). The National Staff Development Council has recommended that school systems dedicate no less than 10% of their annual budget to staff development (Mizell, 2001). While this is certain to cause consternation among administrators and budget analysts, the National Staff Development Council recommendation clearly acknowledges the need for an institutional commitment to the ongoing training of teachers.

Funding summarily limits professional development and defines it. The expert presentation model persists because it is cost effective. Arbuckle (1997) relates a comment made by a state commissioner of education who suggested that regional districts pool their resources as part of his vision for professional development “so instead of only 50 teachers listening to a speaker, 250 would be able to” (p. 171). Yet continuing to invest money into ineffective professional development processes is not the solution.

In order to provide useful and effective professional development that has a meaningful effect on teacher learning and fosters improvements in classroom practice, funds should be focused on providing high-quality professional development experiences. This would require schools and districts either to focus resources on fewer teachers, or to invest sufficient resources so that more teachers can benefit from high-quality professional development. (Garet et al., 2001, p. 937)

Summary

The expert presentation model continues to thrive in a system that legitimizes its existence through institutional constructs including time, organization, leadership, and resource allocation. It is simultaneously the most common format for teacher training and

the model most criticized in the professional literature. Educators recognize the limitations of the expert presentation model yet grapple with viable options.

It is clear that most schools and teachers cannot produce the kinds of learning demanded by the new reforms – not because they do not want to, but because they do not know how, and the systems they work in do not support their efforts to do so. (Darling-Hammond, 1996, p. 194)

Without appropriate changes in professional development contexts, structures, and processes, standards will fail to make any enduring impact in the quality of education and standards-based education will be added to the ever-growing list of failed initiatives (Hoff, 2001). If we are serious about improving education by creating a fundamental shift in what our children learn we must be equally serious about creating a fundamental shift in how our children are taught. Restructuring professional development for teachers lies at the very center of the standards-based reform agenda (Alvarado, 1998; Boser, 2001; Elmore & Burney, 1997; Hirsh, 2001; NFIE, 2000; Renyi, 1996; Sparks, 2002; Sykes, 1996).

The Role of Standards in Professional Development

Standards have become a central focus in the national debate about educational quality (Boser, 2001; Elmore, 2001; Hoff, 2001). States have invested considerable energy and political capital creating and promoting academic standards. Districts have begun the arduous process of aligning curricula, assessments, and reporting mechanisms with content standards. Schools are being held increasingly responsible for student achievement. As the response to academic standards reverberates across and throughout the education system, it raises complex questions about the nature of teaching and

learning; questions that challenge deeply embedded institutional and instructional practices, beliefs, and values (Stein et al., 1999).

Assuring that all students meet or exceed standards is dependent upon immensely skillful teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Hirsh, 2001; Hughes et al., 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Classroom teachers are the only real agents of school reform (Garet et al., 2001; Sykes, 1996). It is teachers who translate policy into action; who integrate the complex components of standards, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment into a comprehensible and pragmatic whole; and who daily balance an ever-changing array of political, economic, social, and educative factors with the individual needs of children. There is considerable agreement that good teachers and good teaching matter (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Haycock, 1998; Hirsh, 2001; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; NBPTS, 1994; Sparks, 2002). But, does the system have a shared understanding of “good” teachers and “good” teaching?

Darling-Hammond (1996) suggests that teacher training processes would be well-served if they were grounded within a professional definition of good teaching; a definition that is clear, rigorous, and farsighted. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has published a set of standards with the capacity to: identify, measure, and promote exemplary teaching; improve student learning through processes of reflective analysis; and introduce a new and challenging conversation about practice within professional development contexts (Shapiro, 1995). The National Board standards are based on five core propositions that provide a consistent framework for each of the thirty certification areas: (a) Teachers are committed to students and their learning, (b) teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students, (c)

teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning, (d) teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience, and (e) teachers are members of learning communities (NBPTS, 1994). These standards, the profession's own vision of excellence, can act as a conduit to improved student learning when integrated within teacher training and support programs (NBPTS, 1996).

While standards for teachers and teaching are foundational to a restructured professional development framework, they cannot stand outside the pragmatic lens of student academic content standards. These academic standards challenge teachers to think in fundamentally new ways (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Haycock, 1998; Hoff, 2001; Sykes, 1996). Teachers must have a thorough command of content and content-specific pedagogy to maximally facilitate learning (Garet et al., 2001; Schenkat & Tyser, 1997). They must be able to integrate curricular programs, instructional materials, and assessment results into daily instruction that is facilitative and generative (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Teachers must be able to differentiate their instructional programs to allow each child to meet or exceed the standards (Gregory & Chapman, 2002; Tomlinson, 1999). In preparing teachers to think and work in new ways, professional development forums need to provide specific support in benchmarking best practices, analyzing student work, and using student achievement data to inform and monitor instruction (Schmoker, 1996; Tucker & Coddling, 1998).

While teaching and learning standards will assume the centerpiece of a responsive professional development program, they do not form a complete or comprehensive agenda. A vast array of topics are necessary for teachers' ongoing training. Darling-Hammond (1998) offers the following list to suggest the range, scope, and magnitude of

professional development content: (a) learning theory; (b) specific subject matter and interdisciplinary content knowledge; (c) child and adolescent development; (d) social, cognitive, physical, emotional, and motivational constructs; (e) diverse cultures and family experiences; (f) language acquisition; (g) special learning needs; (h) analysis, assessment, and evaluation strategies; (i) curricular, technological, and human resources; (j) collaboration and communication; and (k) reflective practice. This formidable inventory of sophisticated domains of knowledge serves as a reminder that learning to teach is a complex, career-long process; a process that requires systematic training, ongoing support, and time. Yet any discussion of what teachers need to know would be incomplete without a parallel discussion of how teachers learn.

The Role of Learning Theory in Professional Development

Few would argue that classroom teachers should know the theories, principles, characteristics, and implications of how, why, and when children and adolescents learn. Knowledge of learning is a keystone concept for teachers and the teaching profession. Paradoxically, this emphasis on learning process has been conspicuously absent from most professional development practices (Boyd, 1993; Lieberman, 1995).

Adult learning characteristics are more similar to the ways in which students learn than has been previously recognized (Lieberman, 1995; Sharp, 1997). Learning and organizational theorists suggest that adult learners share several essential characteristics with their younger counterparts: (a) All learners bring prior knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions to new experiences, (b) all learners must be motivated to acquire new skills, knowledge, abilities, or dispositions, (c) all learners must be actively engaged in the learning process, and (d) all learners construct meaning within social contexts (Boyd,

1993; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Each of these characteristics requires elaboration in order to establish the implications for professional development structures and processes.

Prior Knowledge

It is widely recognized that prior knowledge, including misinformation and misconceptions, impacts new learning (Costa, Lipton & Wellman, 1997). Robb (2000) notes, “Adult learners reinvent, reorganize, and construct knowledge by actively linking new information to what they already know” (p. 14). Teachers bring a wide range of interests and competencies to bear on learning based on their specific classroom contexts and career stage (Robb, 2000; Speck, 1996). Teachers also bring a vast repertoire of acquired ideas, beliefs, values, and passions about education that can either enhance or impede their learning (Sharp, 1993). This is not to suggest that adults are resistant to new learning. In fact, Lyons and Pinnell (2001) suggest that teachers are likely to be flexible learners as a result of their experiences with differing learning contexts and teaching approaches.

While the diverse experiences of adult learners can provide a rich resource for staff developers and participants it can also present significant design and facilitation challenges. The variant nature of learners and learning suggests the need for differentiated instructional formats that allow teachers greater control over what, how, when, why, and where they will learn (Robb, 2000). Staff development facilitators must skillfully identify and support the learning needs of adult learners by: (a) drawing on teachers’ body of knowledge; (b) validating the range of teachers’ experiences; and (c) systematically observing group dynamics to determine individual strengths, limitations, needs, and interests (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Motivation

Adult motivation is integrally linked to the perceived value and relevance of the learning agenda (Robb, 2000). Staff development goals, school improvement plans, and professional change objectives are best accomplished when teachers understand the underlying rationale and significance (Fullan, 1997). Speck (1996) reports that, “Adults will commit to learning only when the goals and objectives are considered realistic and important to them. Application in the ‘real world’ is important and relevant to the adult learner’s personal and professional needs” (p. 36). In aligning theory directly to purpose, teachers are better able to move beyond simplistic formulas and cookie-cutter strategies toward a deeper understanding of complex situations and pragmatic solutions (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Motivation is further enhanced when teachers have control over the form and substance of their learning (Boyd, 1993; Costa et al., 1997; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Teachers are all too often the unwitting targets of professional development. “Many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done to teachers rather than with them, still less by them” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, p. 17). Lieberman (1995) reminds us that any and all changes in the functioning of a school, including professional development, are dependent upon teacher participation, teacher desire, and teacher control. Ownership is the key to motivation (Hughes et al., 2002).

Active Engagement

Learning is enhanced when teachers can apply new strategies and concepts directly to their classroom practice (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Boyd (1993) suggests that concrete links between prior knowledge, need, and application are dependent on

opportunities for teachers to develop materials, lesson plans, and methods. “Adult learners need direct, concrete experiences in which they can apply the learning to their real work. [They] need to see that the professional development learning and their day-to-day activities and problems are related and relevant” (Speck, 1996, p. 36).

Adult learning is promoted when participants have opportunities to become actively engaged through strategies such as: simulations, role-playing, skill-practice exercises, and by observing expert teachers (Boyd, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1997). Garet et al. (2001) acknowledge the critical role of observation in promoting learner engagement:

One element of active learning is the opportunity for teachers to observe expert teachers, be observed teaching in their own classroom, and obtain feedback.

These opportunities can take a variety of forms, including providing feedback on videotaped lessons, having teachers visit each others’ classrooms to observe lessons, and having activity leaders, lead teachers, mentors, and coaches observe classroom teachers and engage in reflective discussions about the goals of a lesson, the tasks employed, teaching strategies, and student learning. (p. 925)

Such dynamic learning opportunities allow adults to move surface understandings toward application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Speck, 1996).

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) sum up the need for interactive learning:

“Teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting – just as students do” (p. 598).

Social Learning

“True learning requires social support” (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001, p. 57).

Professional development structures, thus, should include repeated opportunities for:

collaborative research and inquiry; collegial processes for observing and debriefing, thinking and discussing, trying and testing; and for talking about and evaluating the results of teaching and learning (Boyd, 1993; Costa et al., 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1998). A culture of social support is particularly vital to teachers who work in environments that are steeped in traditions of isolationism and territorialism (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). Lyons and Pinnell (2001) report, “Where collegiality among members of the group are strong, communities of learners and practice grow. Where it is weak, the community falters” (p. 6).

Attending to the social-emotional growth of teachers may be as important as strengthening their technical competencies (Boyd, 1992; Costa et al., 1997). Speck (1996) elaborates, “Adult learning has ego involved. Professional development must be structured to provide support from peers and to reduce the fear of judgment during learning activities” (p. 37). Lyons and Pinnell (2001) add that the social foundation of teacher learning is enhanced when: (a) an atmosphere of trust has been established, (b) it is clear that everyone is learning and no one is expected to be perfect, (c) the group shares a common vision for student achievement, (d) group members make a mutual commitment to ask for, receive, and act upon feedback, (e) challenge and professional reflection are shared expectations, and (f) teachers in the group are actively listening and talking to one another in addition to the facilitator. According to Schmoker (1996), “Teamwork is perhaps the most effective form of staff development” (p. 12).

Summary

The professional literature includes discussions of how and why adults learn within four essential strands: prior knowledge, motivation, active engagement, and social

learning. These comprehensive categories allow for both broad and specific insights into the application of adult learning principles within professional development processes for teachers. Another schema for understanding learning as a dynamic process is presented by Cambourne (1988) and Robb (2000). Cambourne's conditions for learning were originally cast with reference to the ways in which young children acquire language yet, as Robb makes clear, this work is integral to an analysis of adult learning. While there are some obvious points of overlap with the previous discussions of prior knowledge, motivation, active engagement, and social learning, the conditions for learning suggest some interesting points of departure, important elaborations, and a provocative lens through which to more fully consider the needs of adult learners.

The Role of the Conditions for Learning in Professional Development

Cambourne (1995) conceptualized a set of eight social-environmental conditions that promote natural language acquisition for young children: immersion, demonstration, engagement, expectation, responsibility, use, approximation, and response. Cambourne recognized the interdependence and recursive nature of these conditions noting that all must be present and in balance in order for learning to occur. Robb (2000) studied these conditions for learning in order to suggest their relevance to adult learning. A closer examination of Cambourne's conditions serves to augment this analysis of the contexts and processes that support teachers as learners.

Immersion

Children are immersed directly and indirectly in the language they are expected to learn beginning in their infancy (Cambourne, 1995). This language saturation is presented in contexts that are purposeful, natural, and authentic. Children acquire

progressively sophisticated language competencies as they hear the sounds, rhythms, words, and nuances of language while observing the impact of this language on the behaviors of others.

Robb (2000) suggests that immersion in the language and artifacts of accomplished instruction are a necessary condition for teacher learning. An array of professional books, journal articles, and relevant research must be readily accessible for teachers to support their practice, promote professional dialogue, and to suggest arenas for short- and long-term inquiry.

Demonstration

Cambourne (1995) observed that children are regularly inundated with ongoing demonstrations of what spoken language means, does, sounds like, and can be used for. He recognized the criticality of repeated and authentic modeling in the learning lives of children: “These authentic demonstrations are the raw materials of nearly all learning, not only language learning” (Cambourne, p. 34).

Robb (2000) cites the need for and value of demonstrations of practice within professional development processes as teachers regularly model effective practice for one another through classroom visitations, side-by-side teaching, videotapes of practice, and formal presentations. These demonstrations of practice allow teachers to observe contextualized, authentic exemplars and to establish personal, professional, and pragmatic links of understanding.

Engagement

Demonstration is dependent upon engagement. Children are exposed to a virtual flood of language demonstrations on a daily basis. Yet, many of these demonstrations lie

outside a child's need, experience, or level of receptivity. Cambourne (1995) cites three conditions that must be present for a learner to engage in and benefit from any demonstration.

First, learners must perceive their own capacity to repeat the demonstration. For example, children must envision themselves as potential language users if they are to benefit from demonstrations of and invitations to talk. In extending this concept to adults, Robb (2000) notes that teachers must envision their individual capacity for professional growth if they are to benefit from a demonstration of teaching. They must be able to see themselves within the demonstration.

The second criterion for engagement suggests that learners must be convinced that the demonstration is relevant and important (Cambourne, 1995). Young children learn to utter the word 'cookie' because it leads to a desirable result. Adult learning is similarly pragmatic. Teachers will engage in workshops and training sessions only when they have a need for or interest in the demonstrated knowledge, skills, processes, or strategies (Boyd, 1993; Calkins, 2001; Speck, 1996).

Finally, Cambourne (1995) contends that learners, young and old, must feel physically and emotionally safe in order to learn from a demonstration. Learning implies an array of risks including misunderstanding, partial success, and failure. Both children and adults require a safe emotional and physical environment that minimizes or eliminates the stigma of disagreeable consequences (Robb, 2000).

Expectation

"Expectations are subtle and powerful coercers of behaviors" (Cambourne, 1995, p. 35). Expectations are conveyed through the words and actions of the adults and peers

who interact directly and indirectly with children. Parents and caregivers universally set unambiguous expectations that young children can and will learn to talk. In the arena of professional development, Robb (2000) suggests that teachers' sense of potential and motivation is facilitated when value is placed on the individual and collective expectation that they will successfully acquire, use, and benefit from the learning.

Responsibility

Cambourne (1995) notes that children learn best and most naturally when they make decisions about when, what, and how to learn. Young children assume full responsibility for trying out words, combining words into phrases, and deciding which conventions to attend to as they learn to talk. Parents and caregivers typically do not structure language learning into discrete, sequential, or planned units of study. Rather, they continually provide the language-rich demonstrations and appropriate expectations that become the child's impetus for self-directed action. The child assumes responsibility for selecting, interpreting, and integrating language demonstrations into practice.

Teachers, too, need to feel empowered to either control or share the responsibility for negotiating their learning agenda (Robb, 2000). In assigning teachers a more active role in the content, pace, and processes of learning, professional development forums have the potential to yield a climate that is conducive to and respectful of the learning process.

Use

Learning is an active process. Children need time and opportunity to practice, use, and refine their new knowledge in realistic and natural ways (Cambourne, 1995). Adult learning is also contingent upon use. Teachers need to use, practice, and analyze

strategies within their specific instructional context and for their own, unique purposes (Calkins, 2001; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Robb, 2000). This focus on use implies something more than role-playing and simulations. It suggests a professional development context that models the rigorous cognitive processes that teachers will need to meet the challenges and expectations of a standards-driven system (Darling-Hammond, 1996).

Approximation

Mistakes are a necessary and expected part of the learning process (Calkins, 2001). Children are not expected to wait until they have a fully developed understanding of the language system before they are allowed to talk. Rather, they are expected to mispronounce words, confuse syntax, and experiment with word combinations as part of the natural learning process. Children's approximations of language are most often well received and considered legitimate (Cambourne, 1995).

Adults, too, initially approximate the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of new learning. Strategies introduced during professional development forums will not always work during the initial phases of implementation. Professional development designers and facilitators should anticipate teachers' approximations by providing the context and format for giving and receiving feedback designed to validate early attempts and promote increasingly more sophisticated practice over time (Robb, 2000).

Response

Cambourne's (1995) final condition for natural language learning honors the need for and value of ongoing response. For young children learning to talk, response moments have certain necessary characteristics: (a) Response is a by-product of authentic

and purposeful language exchanges, (b) response is related to the meaning of the child's talk rather than the accuracy or form of that talk, (c) response is non-evaluative and non-threatening, and (d) response takes the form of an immediate demonstration of what the child attempted to say. These interactions with a more knowledgeable learner help children refine their understanding and use of language.

Adult learners are similarly dependent upon formal and informal feedback structures that validate the use of a skill or strategy, clarify new ideas, and that provide timely support and suggestions for refinement (Robb, 2000). Lyons (2002) suggests that while response for adults can assume various forms including constructive feedback, critical dialogue, and formal evaluation, the intent of feedback should be to validate and refine the learner's knowledge and application.

Summary

Traditional professional development processes have largely ignored or underestimated how and why adults learn by failing to acknowledge variations in teachers' prior knowledge, experience, beliefs, needs, or challenges (Robb, 2000). One-day teacher workshops do not yield sustainable motivation, authentic ownership, or a shared sense of purpose. Large group settings serve to promote didactic models of direct teaching rather than hands-on, activity-based processes that compel learners' engagement. Episodic trainings in which an educational consultant blows in, blows up, and then blows out of town cannot build or monitor networks of professional support that nourish and propel learning as a social process. While the principles of and conditions for adult learning may be difficult to measure, objectify, or standardize the absence of these criteria is palpable for learners.

Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

Theory often precedes practice. While much professional development continues to involve isolated workshops, some compelling concepts about improved practice are beginning to emerge. Educational theorists envision teacher learning as a career-long, inquiry-based, collegial endeavor that is integral to and indistinguishable from the work of schools (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Renyi, 1996; Robb, 2000; Sparks, 1997; Sykes, 1996). Such school-based and classroom-based learning venues will involve strategies and mechanisms that are long-range, responsive to issues of collaboration and collegiality for faculties and staffs, and that are unique to the context and culture of individual school sites (Costa et al., 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Garet et al., 2001; LaPlant, 1997; Lieberman, 1995; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Speck & Knipe, 2001; Sykes, 1996; Thompson, 1997). This vision of teacher learning suggests a set of essential characteristics descriptive of restructured professional development practices: purpose, context, process, duration, coherence, participatory leadership, and standards for staff development.

Purpose

The explicit goal for all professional development should be to improve teacher performance and student achievement (Alvarado, 1998; Arbuckle, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Garet et al., 2001; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; NFIE, 2000; NSCD, 2001; Sparks, 2002; Sykes, 1996; Thompson, 1997). This objective is simultaneously simple and complex. In order to support teachers in improving their practice, professional development must be connected to and derived from the conceptual framework of student content standards. That seems

straightforward enough. The complexity of this task lies in the great diversity descriptive of students' social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and physical experiences (Ed-Data, 2001). To assure student success relative to academic content standards, teachers will need to know more about their subject matter and more about their students than ever before (Lieberman & Miller, 2000).

Teachers' content knowledge will play a pivotal role in ensuring that students meet or exceed content standards (Arbuckle, 1997; Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1998; LaPlant, 1997; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Renyi, 1996). Content expertise involves much more, however, than merely knowing the facts and traditions of an academic domain.

Teachers in command of their subject understand its substance (factual information as well as its central organizing concepts) and the way in which new knowledge is created, including the forms of creative investigations that characterize the work of scholars and artists. (Schenk & Tyser, 1997, p. 118)

Content knowledge is key to learning what to teach and pedagogical content knowledge is key to learning how to teach subject matter; yet knowledge of children, their ideas, their ways of thinking is crucial to teaching for understanding (Lieberman & Miller, 2000).

While it is easy to suggest that all students will meet or exceed agreed upon standards of achievement, this is clearly not an easy task. Students defy standardization in complex and confounding ways (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Students learn in different ways, at different rates, and for different reasons. An explicit focus on student achievement suggests a fundamental change in the way teachers think and work.

When teachers direct their attention away from the technology of teaching and toward the construction of learning, they approach their charge in a very different way. They situate student work at the center of the educational enterprise, and they craft learning opportunities that respond to particular contexts. (Lieberman & Miller, 2000, p. 6)

An explicit focus on improved instructional practice and student achievements has provocative implications for teachers and teaching. Teachers will need to develop new ways of doing business, of viewing themselves, their profession, and their students. Professional development forums need to respond to these new ways of working by providing teachers with enhanced understandings of learners, learning, content, curricula, and pedagogy (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 2000; Renyi, 1996).

Context

Just as students display different learning profiles, so do individual teachers, staffs, schools, and school districts. Effective professional development must be responsive to the content of the curriculum, the context of the classroom, and the broader culture of the school (Renyi, 1996). Lieberman (1995) advocates that schools and school systems transition away from commercially produced workshops to job-embedded professional development formats. Darling Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) concur:

Detailed solutions imported from afar or mandated from above will predictably disappoint; effective practices evolve from and respond to specific instructional settings. The situation-specific nature of the kind of teaching and learning

envisioned by reformers is the key challenge for teachers' professional development. (p. 603)

The National Staff Development Council (2001) promotes a job-embedded approach to professional development. For teachers, going to school must be as much about their learning as it is about their teaching. They must have time each day to learn, plan lessons, and examine student work as members of learning teams (Garet et al, 2001). Staff development cannot be something educators do only on specified days in the school calendar. It must be part of every educator's daily work schedule (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Killion, 2000b). Renyi (1996) agrees: "To improve student achievement, public schools must weave continuous learning for teachers into the fabric of the teaching job" (p. 1).

Garet et al. (2001) note a number of advantages in bringing professional development directly to the school site. Teachers who work together are likely to: (a) share common goals, curricula, assessments, and schedules; (b) take advantage of professional development opportunities to discuss those concepts, skills, and problems that are relevant to their needs and the needs of their students; and (c) analyze student's needs across classes and grade levels. Joyce and Showers (2002) expand on the advantages of context-specific professional development in noting that teachers from the same school who study together around a shared goal can contribute to a culture of inquiry in which the school becomes the unit of change.

Process

Gone are the days of "sit-and-get" workshops. Educational theorists recommend that the processes of reformed professional development center around and resemble the

authentic activities of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Professional development processes should be experiential, engaging participants in concrete tasks of assessment, inquiry, observation, and reflection that elucidate and enhance teachers' knowledge and beliefs about content, pedagogy, and learners (Sykes, 1996).

Processes of sustained professional study may include a range of job-embedded practices: study groups, observations of practice, cases studies, classroom-based action research, professional dialogue, reflective feedback, in-class coaching, and collective problem-solving (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Sagor, 1992; Schmoker, 1996; Sparks, 1999). Robb (2000) offers the following insight into the value of reconceptualizing professional development as an ongoing process of inquiry:

You might wonder why I use the phrase professional study instead of staff development. Teachers who engage in professional study expand their knowledge of teaching practices and how children learn by integrating reading, reflecting, and collaborating into school life. Staff development, the foil to professional study, is often presented as one experience in time when an authority on a topic crams information into teachers' minds with little to no knowledge of the school's culture and varied needs. Such presentations deter inquiry because one-time staff development programs do not respond to teachers' questions, nor do they provide the follow-up necessary to create change. (p. 2)

Duration

Learning is not an event: It is a process during which participants reinvent, reorganize, and construct knowledge. A preponderance of the recent literature on teacher

learning calls for professional development processes that are sustained over time (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Garet et al., 2001; Pinnell, 2002; Thompson, 1997; Wold, 2002). Internalizing new practices and behaviors is a complex process that cannot be conducted in haste. Thompson (1997) suggests that while superficial behaviors or practices can be changed quickly, significant improvement that leads to systemic change is the result of focused, long-term efforts. Protracted professional development formats allow teachers opportunities for in-depth discussions of content, pedagogical strategies, and student learning. A culture of continuous learning is dependent upon the availability of ongoing opportunities and sufficient time to observe, think about, discuss, practice, and refine new practices collaboratively and individually (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Garet, et al, 2001; Lieberman, 1995; Robb, 2000).

Lieberman (1995) emphasizes that continuous learning is contingent upon “creating a culture of inquiry wherein professional learning is expected, sought after, and an ongoing part of teaching and school life” (p. 593). Improved instruction is dependent upon a lifetime of study and a workplace that supports continuous learning as an integral part of the daily, weekly, and yearlong job (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995).

When we perceive improvement as a goal or an event, our efforts are devoted to finding the one best choice, a choice that does not exist. When improvement is seen as a way of life, learning is continuous and progress is success. The greatest pitfall on our path is the illusion that a ‘solution’ awaits us at the end of the journey. In fact, the journey to excellence is never-ending. (Thompson, 1997, p. 25)

Coherence

Lasting change is promoted when professional study is situated within a coherent, thoughtful, well-organized learning design that is connected to and derived from teachers' work with students (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). A professional development session is most likely to be effective in improving teachers' instructional practice if it is clearly situated within a broader set of synchronous opportunities for teacher learning and development that builds on earlier learnings and is followed-up with increasingly more advanced work (Garet et al., 2001). Two examples of professional development planning models are provided to illustrate these design features.

The RPLIM Model

Thompson (1997) offers a professional development model that has shown to be successful in planning for site-based school improvement. The Readiness, Planning, Learning, Implementation, Maintenance (RPLIM) model was synthesized from the literature on organizational development, adult learning, school change, leadership behavior, and staff development. This systematic approach includes five stages for facilitating site-based improvement.

The first stage involves a careful assessment of the climate, skills, relationships, and values of the school. This needs assessment is followed by more specific planning during which the vision for improvement becomes focused and specific practices or innovations are identified for study. In the third stage, participants learn new skills, knowledge, roles, and behaviors suggested by and necessary to the planned innovation. The fourth stage involves the actual implementation of the innovation. A variety of

supports are available during this phase including: inter- and intra-school visitations, coaching, peer observation cycles, and access to support materials and resources. The final phase, maintenance and monitoring, is designed to nurture, promote, and monitor the innovation.

The Learning Spiral

Lyons and Pinnell (2001) offer a conceptual framework that serves to further elucidate the need for and vision of a coherent professional development plan. The learning spiral proceeds from “specific how-to-do-it direction to the kind of sophisticated analysis and reflection required to perform an instructional procedure or approach powerfully and efficiently” (Lyons & Pinnell, p. 13). Ten sequential stages are defined within a spiraling, recursive process that can be used both in professional development sessions and in-class coaching contexts:

1. *Assessing the Context*, the initial stage in the learning spiral, involves the thoughtful analyses of student achievement, teacher practice, and school culture.
2. *Providing the Basics* assures that teachers have the necessary instructional materials and a clear understanding of how to organize and apply these materials in service of the instructional innovation.
3. *Demonstrating the Process* involves explicit examples of the instructional innovation. These demonstrations may include videotapes of exemplary practice or observations of teachers or coaches who are using the instructional innovation successfully.
4. *Establishing the Rationale* provides the theoretical framework that supports the studied innovation.

5. *Engaging the Learners* is intended to help teachers visualize the approach through interactive contexts such as discussions of professional literature, examinations of practice, and analyses of student work.
6. During the *Trying It Out* stage teachers use, analyze, and share the results of the studied innovation.
7. *Establishing Routines and Procedures* provides focused time to refine and polish sets of teaching behaviors related to the instructional approach.
8. *Coaching for Shifts in Behavior* is designed to afford teachers structured opportunities to analyze practice by studying the impact of instruction on student learning.
9. *Coaching for Reflection* supports teachers in the ongoing analysis and reflection of instructional practice.
10. The final stage, *Extending Learning*, provides the opportunity and structure for teachers to generalize their learning to new arenas for application and study.

Professional development for teachers cannot be standardized into a lock-step sequence of events or processes. Support strategies that make a difference for teachers and students must be responsive to the specific strengths, needs, and contexts of participants. Yet, process strategies such as the RPLIM model and the Learning Spiral can be used to guide and facilitate a coherent approach to change. The value of any such planning model lies in its capacity to provide a structure and process for sustained professional study (Garet et al., 2001).

Participatory Leadership

Increased attention to professional development brings with it an emerging consensus about the need for participant-driven processes. To move away from a model

of external workshops, which may be unrelated to the needs and culture of individual schools, toward learning opportunities that are intrinsic to the work of improving schools, Lieberman (1995) advises that professional development be designed, implemented, and evaluated by teachers. Boyd (1993) agrees: "The dominant theme in staff development literature is that programs for teachers should be developed by teachers" (p. 6). A participant-driven model is dependent on teachers to make individual and collective decisions about the substance, process, and organizational support for learning in schools (Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Robb, 2000).

Participant-driven professional development does not preclude the use of educational consultants or subject matter experts. In fact, participatory professional development may be dependent on establishing strategic links to a larger learning community with the capacity to contribute expertise and ideas that complement and enhance the site work (Fullan, 1997; Killion, 2000a; Renyi, 1996; Rogers & Pinnell 2002). This extended learning, collaborative community provides opportunities for an exchange of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' communities of practice (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

If teacher learning takes place within the context of a professional community that is nurtured and developed both within and outside the school then the effects may be more than just an expanded conception of teachers' development. Indeed, such teacher learning can bring about significant and lasting school change.

(Lieberman, 1995, p. 596)

Standards for Staff Development

Any discussion of improved professional development for teachers would be incomplete without explicit reference to the Standards for Staff Development developed by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2002). These standards are intended to act as guideposts for schools and school districts as they begin the arduous but necessary process of recasting professional development to result in higher levels of learning for teachers and students (Mizell, 2001).

The Standards for Staff Development are the product of extensive research, discussion, and debate by a select task force including representatives from more than 15 nationally recognized professional associations. These educators concluded that to improve the quality and results of public education it is necessary to push the boundaries of normative staff development (Hirsh, 2001). This new vision requires that staff development be results-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded.

The NSDC standards are organized into three overarching strands: context standards, process standards, and content standards. Context standards focus on the site of implementation: the organization, school, and community. This set of standards poses a vision of professional development that is dependent on collaborative professional learning, administrative leadership, and the alignment of district and school goals for student learning (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Process standards are directed toward how the system organizes learning opportunities to provide teachers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to maximally affect student learning. These processes are envisioned as data-driven, research-based, and collaborative. Content standards address what educators must understand and be able to do to assure that all students learn successfully.

The shifts in practice described in the Standards for Staff Development are significant and powerful (Sparks, 1997). This new vision portends professional development forums and processes with the capacity to influence the knowledge, attitudes, and practice of individual teachers, administrators, and entire faculties and have the potential to alter the cultures and structures of the organizations in which those individuals work (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). It is a grand vision of what may lie ahead.

Summary

Reconceptualizing professional development to meet the expectations and promise of student academic content standards will be dependent on significant changes in purpose, context, process, duration, coherence, and participatory leadership. “These ‘deep changes’ demand not only the acquisition of new knowledge and skills on the part of educators but ‘transformative learning’ that affects their beliefs and assumptions about learning, teaching, and leadership” (Sparks, 2002, p. 2-1). Educational theorists have suggested that a new vision for professional development must be directed at student learning, embedded within the context of practice, realized through sustained inquiry, and directed by and for teachers (Arbuckle, 1997; Boyd, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Renyi, 1996; Robb, 2000; Sykes, 1996). While these criteria appear both sensible and admirable they beg the question: What does a new vision of professional development for teachers look like in practice?

Promising Practices in Teacher Learning

Three models have been judiciously selected to suggest the range of innovative practice within the professional development arena. While these models meet the

theoretical criteria previously discussed, they offer contrasting solutions to the challenges of implementation. The National Board Certification process is a voluntary, teacher-initiated process of advanced certification; the peer coaching model is a relatively inexpensive, school-based format; and, professional development centers are high cost, centrally-administered models.

National Board Certification

The Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession issued a pivotal report in the late 1980s titled, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century. In response to the wide-spread perception that the American education system was faltering, members of the task force recommended a system of advanced certification designed to retain, reward, and promote accomplished teachers (NBPTS, 1994). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) emerged in response to these recommendations.

The NBPTS is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan, and non-governmental organization supervised by a 63-member board of directors, the majority of whom are practicing classroom teachers. The three-part mission of the NBPTS is to: (a) establish high and rigorous standards that describe what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do; (b) develop and operate a national, voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards; and (c) advance related education reforms for the purpose of improving student learning in American schools (NBPTS, 1996).

National Board certification complements but does not replace state licensing. While state licensure agencies set entry-level standards for novice teachers, the NBPTS offers advanced standards for experienced teachers. NBPTS standards provide exacting

descriptions of accomplished teaching in every subject area and for students at all stages of development: Generalist, English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies-History, Math, Exceptional Needs Specialist, Music, Library-Media, World Languages Other than English, Art, English as a New Language, Career and Technical Education, and Physical Education.

Standards for accomplished teaching are developed by committees of practicing teachers, teacher educators, child development experts, and leaders within the disciplinary fields (NBPTS, 2002). These standards are then distributed nationally for a rigorous review process before final approval by the NBPTS Board of Directors. For individual teachers, the NBPTS standards provide a career-long learning curriculum for accomplished teaching. For the nation, these standards may act as guideposts to improve teaching and thereby improve student learning (NBPTS, 2002).

NBPTS candidates are required to document their knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions through a rigorous two-part assessment process that may span several months to several years. Initially, candidates compile a professional portfolio that provides evidence of meeting the NBPTS standards through written analyses and reflections of their instructional practice. A typical portfolio has four entries: (a) examples of students' work and a reflective commentary about student learning, (b) videotaped evidence of teaching with a reflective commentary, (c) evidence of involvement with students' families; and (d) contributions to the teaching profession. Candidates demonstrate their content and pedagogical content knowledge of the subjects they teach through a second assessment process. This assessment center examination involves a three-hour written exercise in response to six standardized prompts.

National Board certified teachers report that while the assessments are challenging and time consuming they provide a unique form of professional development that improves their teaching practice (NBPTS, 2002). Because candidates internalize the NBPTS standards, analyze their teaching in relation to these standards, and provide reflective commentaries about the impact of these teaching strategies on student learning many teachers have characterized the certification process as the most valuable form of professional development (NBPTS, 1996). National Board certification, born out of a belief that the single most important action this country can take to improve schools and student learning is to strengthen teaching, is becoming a symbol of professional teaching excellence (NBPTS, 2002).

Peer Coaching

A growing number of schools and school districts have expanded their professional development programs to include job-embedded teacher support processes through peer coaching and peer assistance models (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Goettesman and Jennings (1994) offer this definition: “Peer coaching is a staff development model that provides a safe, structured framework for a professional to observe another professional and provide feedback” (p. 85). This model offers on-site advisement and demonstrations for teachers (Lieberman & Miller, 1991).

Central to the peer coaching model is a trained staff developer. The staff developer may be a teacher selected from the school faculty, a district-based resource teacher who is assigned to a small set of schools, or a private consultant who is hired for an extended period of time to support the work of teachers within the context of schools (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). The specific role of the staff developer is to provide ongoing

instructional demonstrations of exemplary practice (Garet et al., 2001; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Alvarado (1998) notes the importance and value of such peer modeling: “Teachers need other teachers whose practice has reached a very high level of standing there with them; observing, giving them feedback, modeling the right way to do things” (p. 22).

Staff developers work with a cohort of teachers who are actively seeking coaching and advice on their professional practice or who have been urged to seek such assistance on the counsel of their administrator. These coaches observe teachers at work, gather information about teaching behaviors and student learning, and offer non-evaluative feedback directed at continual growth (Goettesman & Jennings, 1994). Structured opportunities to observe and analyze teaching highlight the relationship between reflection and practice and assure that the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by teachers are transferred to and realized within the context of the classroom where they will make a difference for students (Lieberman & Miller, 1991).

The intent of coaching, over time, is to support teachers’ capacity to self-monitor, self-analyze, and self-evaluate through professional conversations and critical dialogue (Lyons, 2002). Successful peer coaches engage teachers in processes of reflection and metacognition through crafted cycles of questioning, listening, and response. Costa et al. (1997) assert, “The ultimate purpose of coaching is to modify another person’s capacity to modify themselves” (p. 98). This balance between action and reflection assures that teacher learning is relevant, systematic, and directed at student achievement (Killion & Harrison, 1997; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Peer coaching offers a series of potential advantages for schools and teachers. Coaching is not only embedded within the work of a school, it is by definition and intent

embedded within the intimate context of actual instruction. This integrative format allows teaching and learning to be maximally pragmatic as teachers actively practice an instructional strategy within their own classroom setting. Killion and Harrison (1997) report, “Coaching is essential to increase the transfer of learning” (p. 4). The peer coach serves to support teachers in translating new concepts and strategies into classroom practice. This emphasis on adaptation and internalization guards against superficial replication of studied processes and moves teachers toward deeper understandings and more effective instructional practices based on their needs and the needs of their students. Coaching is directed at supporting real change inside real classrooms.

Peer coaches act as catalysts for change by suggesting new ideas and modifying existing practices (Killion & Harrison, 1997). With this role comes important responsibilities and promising possibilities. Coaches must keep their ‘ears to the ground,’ exploring new programs and instructional strategies. They must read voraciously within and outside the field of education to search for applicable ideas and new perspectives. They must be comfortable challenging current practices in a constructive yet tenacious manner. They must be skillful in observation, evaluation, resource acquisition, data analysis, group facilitation, forecasting, and action planning (Pinnell, 2002). And the peer coach must realize that, ultimately, it is the responsibility of others to implement the change. “Creating potent conditions for growth by cultivating and mediating the learning environment is the work of peer coaches” (Costa et al., 1997, p. 110).

Professional Development Centers

The National Education Association (NEA) has recommended professional development centers as a potent infrastructure for centralized teacher support.

Professional development centers provide an array of direct services, information, and assistance to teachers (National Foundation for the Improvement of Education [NFIE], 2000). These physical or virtual centers are designed to facilitate teachers' growth at all career stages and include: assistance for new teachers; discussions of standards and assessments; innovations in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; curriculum development; leadership development; peer assistance; subject-matter knowledge; support and assistance with National Board Certification; and opportunities to conduct and study teacher research. Professional development centers at the local level seek to provide direct services and programs for teachers. State level centers focus their efforts on facilitating, brokering, building capacity, and serving as a clearinghouse for activities with services generally available on-line rather than in person.

The North Carolina Teacher Academy offers a successful and compelling example of a professional development center. The governor, speaker of the house, and president of the senate are appointed members of the board of trustees. Policy mandates that at least half of the board be practicing teachers. The remaining members represent groups with a direct interest or role in professional development for teachers. The board oversees a \$4.5 million dollar annual budget and boasts a current constituency of over 20,000 participants throughout the state.

The academy, physically located at the University of North Carolina, trains 3,000 teachers annually who study technology, literacy, curriculum development, or mentoring in school teams during weeklong summer institutes. Principals are required to join these study teams.

The inclusion of the principals is critical to their ability to lead instructional change in the school and to support the implementation of work that teachers will want to undertake as a result of the professional development they receive at the academy. (NFIE, 2000, p. 6)

These intensive institutes are followed-up during the subsequent school year as trainers facilitate continued learning at school sites with whole faculties. Participating teachers are compensated for their time and are treated professionally

All professional development centers share the following characteristics: (a) some stability from legislation and inclusion as a line item in the district or state budget, (b) direction by teachers and a teacher-majority governing board that is also inclusive of other major stakeholders and partners, (c) equal contributions from teachers and university faculties in a collaborative setting, and (d) a focus on subject matter. Professional development centers offer teachers needed resources and supports to promote, enhance, and extend their learning (NFIE, 2000).

Evaluation of Professional Development

Which of these models is better? Why? And, what would we use as evidence to support this analysis? While no attempt to answer these questions with specific reference to the described professional development models will be attempted, some discussion of general evaluation strategies is deemed both prudent and appropriate.

Renyi (1996) suggests that the goal of any professional development process should be the observable evidence of changed or changing classroom practices that impact student achievement. This emphasis on student achievement is key. Professional development processes should lead directly to improved student learning as evidenced

through student learning artifacts and a variety of test results (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Yet this direct correlation is difficult to establish for at least two reasons: time and complexity.

Lyons and Pinnell (2001) suggest that it “can take several years of professional development to create powerful instruction” (p. 54). Impatient politicians and administrators may be reluctant to allow sufficient time for professional development to impact student achievement expecting, instead, instant and dramatic results. Add to this ‘quick fix’ mentality the complexities suggested by student mobility, individual teacher capacity, changing leadership, competing educational-political agendas, and institutional inertia and the difficulties in evaluating professional development structures increase exponentially.

In the absence of evaluation processes that can clearly juxtapose student achievement with professional development, the field relies on assessments of process. Birman et al. (2000) surveyed more than 1,000 teachers who had participated in a teacher-training project sponsored, in part, by the Eisenhower Professional Development Program. This Title II program of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was funded at \$335 million in 1999 and was designed to support teachers in the implementation of math and science curricula. Surveys were designed to offer teachers the opportunity to share their perceptions of the professional development process. Birman et al. (2000) also conducted six exploratory case studies and ten in-depth case studies across five states. When all was said and done the researchers noted three structural features that appear to set a successful context for professional development: form, participation, and content.

Birman et al. (2000) note that the studied reform activities, including teacher networks, mentoring relationships, study groups, and teacher resource centers appear more effective than traditional, external professional development processes. The researchers caution, however, that these results may be somewhat confounded by issues of duration. The examined reform activities took place over longer periods of time allowing opportunities for more intensive content foci, active learning experiences, and training coherence. Interestingly, when traditional forms of professional development such as workshops and conferences are sustained over longer periods of time, they appear to be just as effective as the reform structures suggesting that it is “the characteristics of the activities not the form that matter” (p. 29).

Birman et al. (2000) cite a series of advantages related to collective participation: (a) It enables teachers to discuss concepts and problems that arise during the professional development; (b) it provides teachers with opportunities to integrate what they learn with other aspects of their instructional content since their colleagues are likely to share common materials, requirements, and goals; and (c) it may contribute to a shared professional culture as teachers develop common understandings of instructional goals, methods, problems, and solutions. The researchers further note that collective participation allows for more active learning formats (e.g., observations, writing, and videotaping) that result in the increased knowledge and skills of participants.

Finally, the evaluative work of Birman et al. (2000) suggests that content focus has more impact on participant satisfaction than grouping, learning environment, or support in planning. The results imply that content must be designed as a coherent, integrated program of teacher learning; aligned with standards, assessment, and the real

work of teachers; responsive to teachers' prior learning; and supportive of teachers' next steps.

Garet et al. (2001) conducted a large-scale, empirical comparison of the effects of different characteristics of professional development on teachers' learning. The researchers surveyed a nationally representative sample of teachers who had attended a variety of Eisenhower-assisted professional development programs over a six-month time frame. While the Eisenhower program provides funding for professional development for teachers it does not advocate or promote a specific approach to professional development. Rather, this program supports a variety of forms and processes including: workshops, conferences, study groups, professional networks, collaboratives, task force work, and peer coaching. It is also important to note that Eisenhower programs are frequently subsidized through additional federal, state, and local funding sources. The results of this study, thus, are broadly generalizable across settings, contexts, and structures.

Garet et al. (2002) describe three core features of professional development processes that appear to have a positive impact on teachers' self-reported change in knowledge, skills, and instructional practice: (a) a focus on content knowledge; (b) active learning processes; and (c) coherence with previous learnings, reform initiatives, and the day-to-day work of teachers. It is through these core features that the following structural features appear to impact teacher learning: (a) the duration of the professional development activity; (b) collective participation of teachers; and (c) the form of the activity.

The standards-based reform initiative places considerable emphasis on subject matter expertise: Teachers must know the subjects they teach and understand how

students learn these subjects. The results of the Eisenhower study clearly position content knowledge as a central consideration: “Much of the literature on professional development focuses on the process and delivery system; our results give renewed emphasis to the profound importance of subject-matter focus in designing high-quality professional development” (Garet et al., 2001, p. 936). Content knowledge provides the conceptual focus through which teachers can engage in active, ‘hands-on’ learning; it provides a coherent link between what teachers know and what they need to know to do their work effectively, and; a clear, rigorous focus on subject matter appears to produce an enhanced understanding of content knowledge and skills.

The work of Garet et al. (2001) further indicate that sustained and intensive professional development is more likely to have an impact on teacher practice than are shorter, more episodic professional development formats. Interestingly, duration appears to trump the distinction between traditional and reformed formats of professional development:

Traditional and reform activities of the same duration tend to have the same effect on reported outcomes. Thus, to improve professional development, it is more important to focus on the duration, collective participation, and the core features (i.e., content, active learning, and coherence) than type. (Garet et al., 2001, p. 936)

In other words, a traditional workshop format may have a positive impact on teachers’ instructional practice if it is designed to engage connected groups of teachers over time through engaging processes that resemble authentic and meaningful teaching and learning processes.

Garet et al. (2001) also note the importance of a coherent design and collective participation. Professional development emphasizes and processes that are strategically linked to teachers' prior experiences, aligned with standards and adopted reform initiatives, and which support professional communication among and between teachers appear to support positive change in instructional practice. The data provides empirical support that the collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school, subject, or grade-level is related both to coherence and active learning. Teachers reported the importance of attending professional development sessions with colleagues who experience similar needs and working contexts. For example, a team of five kindergarten teachers who attend a learning activity together are more likely to identify the relevance and links with their classroom work and are better able to sustain the study through site-based dialogue, collaboration, and resource sharing.

While these results confirm some important concepts about high-quality professional development design, Garet et al. (2001) acknowledge the need for additional, longitudinal research that is focused directly on the "relationships among professional development, teacher learning, teacher change, and ultimately, student learning" (p. 967). Lists of characteristics, such as those generated through this research project, commonly appear in the literature on effective professional development, yet there is little direct evidence on the extent to which these characteristics relate to positive outcomes for teachers and students.

Research studies are needed to determine the efficacy of various types of professional development activities, including pre-service and in-service seminars, workshops, and summer institutes. Studies should include professional

development activities that are extended over time and across broad teacher learning communities in order to identify the processes and mechanisms that contribute to the development of teachers' learning communities. (Bransford, Brow & Cocking, 1999, p. 240)

Staff development can have numerous benefits for teachers that do not immediately translate into improved achievement for students. Yet, in the end, educators need to be able to assert that staff development efforts affect what and how children learn (Lieberman & Miller, 1991). Hughes et al. (2002) note that "most professional development programs do not utilize student performance measurements as part of the evaluation process when assessing the effectiveness of their programs" (p. 26). This is due, in part, to the complexity in determining causal relationships between professional development and student achievement because of an array of intervening variables. Mizell (2001) encourages us to maintain a goal-oriented approach to professional development: "Evaluation [of staff development] must focus on teachers' acquisition of new knowledge and skills, how that learning affects teachers, and in turn how those changes in practice affect student learning" (Mizell, 2001, p 3). Clearly, there is much work to be done.

Conclusions

Theorists and practitioners largely agree that professional development is a critical issue. Sykes (1996) asserts that "teacher learning must be at the heart of any effort to reform education as better teaching ultimately relies on better teachers" (p. 465). Educators further agree that professional study is a career-long effort: "There are no instant remedies" (Robb, 2000, p. 9). Teachers need time to: study learning and learners;

reflect on and refine teaching; effectively analyze student work as the central axis for professional discourse and disciplined inquiry; build ownership; and establish purposeful learning networks designed to improve individual and collective instructional programs (Darling Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). There is a growing recognition that change cannot be imposed from the outside. Meaningful reform is dependent on a comprehensive design that embeds professional development within the context of schools and classrooms (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Finally, it is becoming increasingly clear that the voices of teachers must compel any successful reform in order to create a culture in which professional learning is expected, sought, valued, and institutionalized (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Lieberman and Miller, 1999).

Professional development for teachers is an arena ripe for investigation and experimentation; one with the potential to catapult teaching to a truly professional level. This review of the literature has revealed a clear need for teacher training processes that reflect the authentic setting, tasks, and expectations of teaching and learning. The observation-based model of professional development forms a tight link between professional study and classroom practice by conjoining teacher training to effective instruction. It is an innovative and potentially consequential alternative to traditional models of professional development; one that warrants closer examination.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to conduct a programmatic evaluation of the observation-based model of professional development to consider its potential to support teacher learning. Three research questions guided the overall research design and specific methodologies:

1. How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?
2. What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?
3. What are the factors that act to support or impede participating teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?

Three interrelated research methodologies were used to examine participants' perceptions, assessments, and applications of the observation-based model of professional development. This nested set of investigative processes elicited multiple voices, multiple perspectives, and multiple sources of evidence by providing a variety of processes through which to collect, analyze, and synthesize data. The methodological

construct afforded both a wide-angle lens to describe the comprehensive landscape for inquiry and a zoom lens to detail the more subtle nuances of participants' experiences and perceptions.

Three inquiry structures were designed to provide an appropriately variegated data pool: participant surveys, focus group interviews, and site administrator interviews. A large-scale, evaluative survey was administered to document the breadth of experiences and range of reactions of all teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals who participated in the observation-based model of professional development. This survey provided a foundational base of quantitative data that directed and shaped the qualitative interview processes. Three focus group interviews were convened following a preliminary analysis of the survey data in order to probe identified themes and response patterns. These group interviews provided opportunities for substantive conversations during which purposive subsets of the participant pool reflected on the structures, outcomes, and implications of the training model. Finally, individual interviews with selected site administrators were conducted to yield specific insights and evidence of the impact of the observation-based training model on the instructional practice of participating teachers.

Methodological Framework

The methodological structure provided for both quantitative and qualitative data through which to explore the cited research questions. The participant surveys produced a body of quantitative data that allowed the researcher to note areas of agreement, disagreement, and confusion among and between respondents. An analysis of these data prompted a set of follow-up questions that were explored through focus group interviews

and site administrator interviews during which participants were asked to clarify, expand, and reflect on the survey data. These interviews yielded a set of qualitative data that contextualized and detailed participants' experiences and permitted informed interpretations across the three data streams.

The theoretical basis for combining qualitative and quantitative methods has been well articulated. Patton (1997) reports, "A consensus has emerged in the profession that evaluators need to know and use a variety of methods in order to be responsive to the nuances of particular evaluation questions and the idiosyncrasies of specific stakeholder needs" (p. 267). Methodological flexibility allows the researcher to use qualitative data to better understand quantitative findings and quantitative data to contextualize qualitative interpretations (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987).

Quantitative or experimental research explores questions of quantity: Which one? How many? How often? This methodological strategy strives for precision by focusing on phenomena that can be measured, counted, and subjected to statistical analyses (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987; Patton, 1997). Qualitative or naturalistic research poses questions of substance: Why? How? So what? This methodology is designed for investigations into the process, meaning, and significance of human behavior through descriptive narratives and context-specific interpretations (Best, 1981). These methodologies often serve different purposes and yield different data forms.

Quantitative investigations rely on fixed, controlled design structures and inanimate assessment tools such as surveys, standardized observation instruments, program records, tests, evaluations, or questionnaires (Best, 1981). This research strategy produces objective, numerical data that is conducive to statistical manipulation and

analysis (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research is situationally responsive and relies on more flexible, open-ended inquiry processes including interviews, observations, and case studies. Patton (1997) notes, “Qualitative data consists of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories” (p. 273).

Neither of these methodological paradigms is intrinsically better. While quantitative data are precise, clinical, and objective; qualitative descriptions are detailed, illustrative, and idiosyncratic (Merriam, 1998). While statistical data allow for straightforward comparisons and reasoned predictions, narrative descriptions document variations between cases and lead to interpretative insights (Best, 1981). While quantitative inquiries systematically distance the researcher from the process, qualitative strategies acknowledge the researcher as an integral part of the process (Eisner, 1991). While quantitative methodologies are designed to study independent and dependent variables of a phenomenon, qualitative studies portray a holistic, contextualized perspective (Merriam 1998; Patton, 1997). A qualitative methodology permits the researcher to move beyond a deductive, linear approach to one that sees multiple realities within a phenomenon.

“The field has come to recognize that, where possible, using multiple methods – both quantitative and qualitative – can be valuable, since each has strengths and one approach can often overcome weaknesses of the other” (Patton, 1997, p. 266). Best (1981) continues this line of thinking:

There is probably too much dependence upon single methods of inquiry. Because each data-gathering procedure or device has its own particular weakness or bias, there is merit in using multiple methods, supplementing one with others to counteract bias and generate more adequate data. (p. 153)

For the purposes of this study, the researcher has sought a blend of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to create a pool of objective data to compare and contrast participants' experiences and then to use these data to pose and investigate themes and patterns to gain insight into and interpretations of the impact of the observation-based model of professional development for teachers.

Research Design

The overall research design afforded an increasingly detailed inquiry into the observation-based model of professional development. The initial analysis of the survey data provided broad and tentative answers to the research questions and was essential in informing the content of the focus group interviews. The focus group data provided additional details and prompted new questions that were subsequently explored in the site administrator interviews. With all three layers of data in place, it was possible to provide reasoned answers to the stated research questions. Figure 1 illustrates the overall research design structure. From this sense of the overall research design we can now detail the structures and processes of the component pieces: the participant surveys, the focus group interviews, and the site administrator interviews.

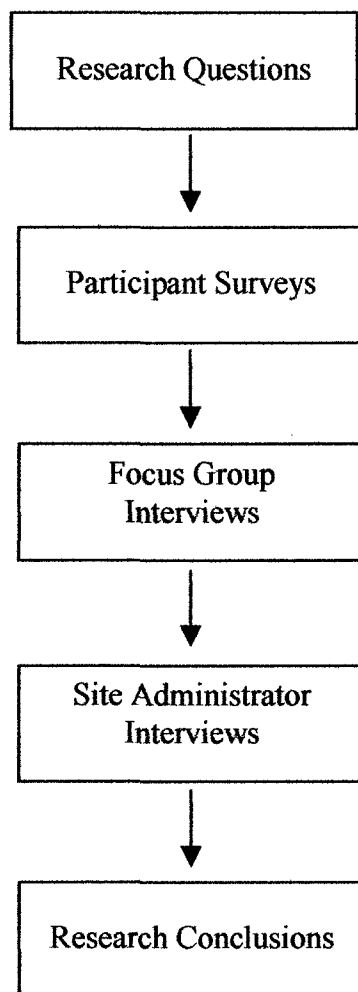


Figure 1. The Overall Research Design Structure.

Participant Surveys

Two evaluative survey instruments elicited relevant information on each of the three research questions (see Appendices A and B for samples of the participant surveys). One survey was constructed specifically for participating kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers. The second survey was designed for staff developers, vice principals, and

principals. While it retained the overall form and substance of the teacher survey to allow for cross-role comparisons and both aggregate and disaggregated statistical analysis, the leadership survey was reworded to more accurately represent the roles, responsibilities, and experiences of this population. The purpose of both surveys was to gather an abundance of quantitative information about participants' perceptions and assessments of the observation-based model of professional development.

The surveys were crafted through a three-stage developmental process. An initial field test of the draft surveys was conducted on a representative sampling of 42 participants including site administrators, staff developers, and teachers. Respondents were urged to circle phrases and words on their individual survey forms that lacked clarity, add suggestions for revisions, and share questions, confusions, and recommendations during a directed, whole-group debriefing session. This pilot test shaped the overall design, directions, questions, and response modes. A second iteration of the surveys was further refined through a series of cognitive interviews with selected members of the field test cohort. This process involved one-on-one interviews during which respondents were asked to "think aloud" as they worked through the entire survey instrument. Subjects were encouraged to reveal their thoughts as they read each question, considered each response option, and selected their answers. This review process was used to refine the specific wording and order of response items to assure user-clarity and accuracy of answers. Finally, staff members from San Diego City School's Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Department reviewed the third draft instrument for final recommendations and approval.

The three-page survey instruments were organized into six, succinct sections: (a) Participant Profile, (b) Content Evaluation: District Demonstration Classroom, (c) Site Implementation, (d) Impact on Instructional Practice/Staff Development, (e) Site-Based Support, and (f) Program Evaluation. The first section was crafted to yield a range of demographic information that would allow the data to be disaggregated using a variety of criteria including participants' experience, professional credentials and certifications, instructional roles, and school Academic Performance Index ranking. The five remaining sections were designed to correspond with the stated research questions. Figure 2 illustrates the direct relationships between the research questions and the survey design.

A variety of question structures were included within the survey instruments. Close-ended questions with ordered choices offer a complete range of available responses (Salant & Dillman, 1994). In responding to these questions participants select the single most appropriate response from a structured continuum. For example: The amount of time devoted to classroom observation was appropriate for my own professional growth. Please check one box: (a) yes, (b) no, (c) somewhat, (d) not at all, or (d) not applicable. Close-ended questions with ordered answer choices tend to be quite specific. Hence, they are less demanding for the respondent and relatively easy for the researcher to code and analyze.

Partially closed-questions allow participants to select multiple answers from a set of responses. For example: I observed some aspects(s) of readers' workshop in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to improve my instructional practice. Please check all that apply: (a) shared reading, (b) read aloud, (c) mini-lesson, (d) independent reading, (e) conferring, (f) sharing, (g) record-keeping, (h) logistics (e.g.,

book storage), (i) assessment, (j) other. This question structure has the advantage of not forcing participants into single responses that may not fit their situation and has the potential to generate unanticipated information.

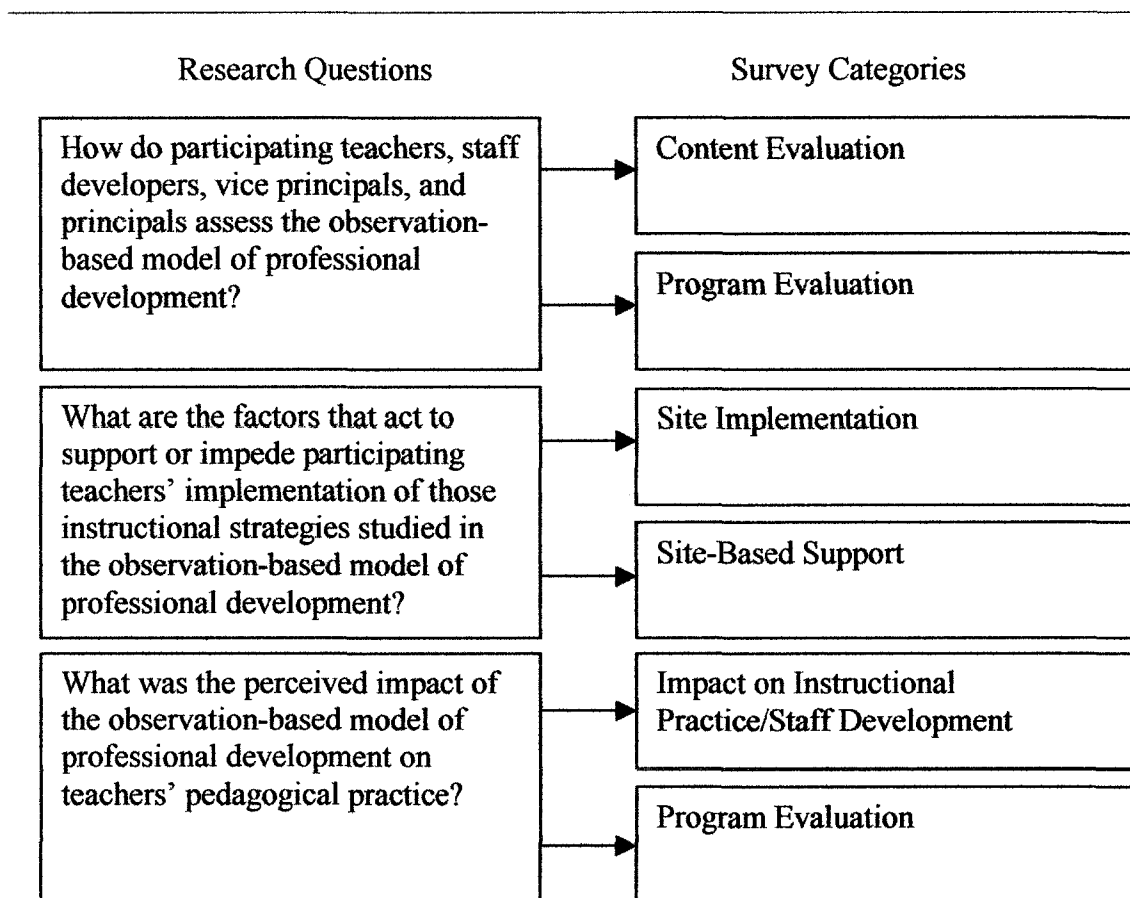


Figure 2. Corresponding Relationships between the Research Questions and the Survey Categories.

A small set of open-ended questions was included in the survey instrument. This question structure does not provide any prefabricated responses. Rather, respondents have the opportunity to formulate narrative responses using their own words. This format

requires more effort as respondents may be asked to recall and relate prior experiences, synthesize information, or summarize professional issues. While the complexities of open-ended responses are acknowledged, so too are the advantages. Open-ended questions allow participants to respond in unanticipated ways, state strong opinions, and reveal unrecognized dimensions or qualities of a phenomenon. In addition to two open-ended questions positioned at the end of the survey, many closed-form questions included a category labeled "other" thereby allowing respondents additional opportunities for brief narrative responses.

None of these question structures is inherently best. Each has merits and is suited to providing a particular kind of information. In designing the survey instruments the researcher sought a strategic balance of question structures to provide a rich set of data relevant to the core research questions. All questions were crafted for a particular population and purpose and in the context of other questions in the survey.

Best (1981) suggests several characteristics descriptive of a good survey. These criteria served to help shape the overall and specific design of the survey instruments:

1. *A good survey deals with a significant topic.* Teacher training is a critical issue in the professional discourse and in the professional lives of educators. Professional development serves to suggest paths toward improved practice and demands the time and effort of participating teachers. The language in the surveys and the directions for completion were designed to heighten the significance of this topic.

2. *A good survey seeks information that cannot be obtained from other sources.* The surveys were crafted to maximize the expertise of respondents. No superfluous, extraneous, or redundant information was sought.

3. *A good survey is as short as possible.* The three-page surveys were designed to be completed within a 10 to 15 minute timeframe. Teachers typically complete an evaluation form at the end of a professional development session, and while the participant survey was longer than a workshop evaluation, time was included within the context of the training session to complete the survey instruments in order to minimize user-burden and maximize the return rate.

4. *A good survey is attractive in appearance, neatly arranged, and clearly duplicated.* The researcher studied a number of forms and presentations including several offered by San Diego City School's Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Department. Draft versions of the surveys were modified in response to field test feedback to yield a product that participants acknowledged as clear, precise, and user-friendly. The final products employed a set of bold boxes used to segment the presentation into six, clearly labeled sections; no more than two sections were included on any page; no sections were interrupted with page breaks; columns and response boxes were used to maximize and delineate the limited space; font size, style, and format were designed for clarity and ease of reading.

5. *A good survey provides directions that are clear and complete.* Shaded boxes contained explicit directions for every section. The language was appropriate for the targeted population as determined through a field test and a series of cognitive interviews.

6. *A good survey uses questions that are objective with no leading suggestions or biased language.* All questions and response options were phrased in clear, unambiguous language. Emotional, biased, and critical words and phrases were screened out through multiple drafts and layers of feedback. While the survey instruments included educational

jargon, these terms are considered part of the professional lexicon of San Diego City Schools and served to add clarity and consistency to the survey language.

7. Questions are presented in good psychological order. Best (1981) recommends that surveys proceed from general to more specific responses as this order helps respondents organize their thinking. For the purposes of this study the survey questions were aligned with the order of the core research questions to assure the tightest possible links between the overall research purpose and the specific inquiry tools.

Focus Group Interviews

There are multiple advantages in administering a survey: Surveys can elicit comparative data from a large number of participants, they are fast, they reduce interviewer bias, and they provide hard, quantitative data (Best, 1981). Yet, surveys cannot replicate the richness of more intimate, qualitative interviews. At best, surveys can produce a close estimate of what people think or do (Dillman & Salant, 1994). With this limitation in mind, three focus group interviews were added to the research design to investigate the research questions in greater depth.

Focus groups offer a mode of evaluation in which a select group of invested participants are interviewed together to debrief and consider a shared experience. Group interviews are organized discussions led by a moderator and typically involve eight to ten participants. The purpose of a focus group is to stimulate participants' thinking and elicit shared ideas, explanations, and descriptions of a specific topic or process (Salant & Dillman, 1994). Rubin and Rubin (1995) stress the value of this group dynamic as members are able to "spark off of one another, suggesting dimensions and nuances that any one individual might not have thought of" (p. 140). The interactive nature of focus

group interviews can lead to new and different understandings of a problem, process, or event.

The focus group interviews were structured through a succinct set of open-ended questions intended to elicit qualitative data about the assessment, implementation, and impact of the observation-based model of professional development. These questions functioned as prompts for discussion and reflection and served to connect the research questions, participant survey, and focus group interviews (see Figure 3). The primary questions were designed to be bias free, jargon free, brief, and invitational: (a) Talk about your experiences in the observation-based model of professional development; (b) What pedagogical practices have you changed or will you change as a result of your experience in the observation-based model of professional development? (c) What site structures support or impede your implementation of the observed pedagogical strategies? (d) What are your suggestions for future observation-based professional development trainings? (e) Is there anything else you would like to add or expand on?

The prepared questions were not dependent on a linear or sequential presentation. Rather, it was anticipated that the questions would be adapted to fit the conversational needs of and lines of thinking explored by each focus group. The five primary questions were supported by a series of secondary probes that could be used to guide the participants toward depth, clarity, specificity, and/or elaboration (see Appendix C for a complete set of questions). In no case were these probes used in their entirety and in some cases unanticipated prompts were added.

Research Questions	Survey Categories	Focus Group Questions
How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?	Content Evaluation	Talk about your experiences in the training model.
	Program Evaluation	What are your suggestions for improvement?
What are the factors that act to support or impede teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?	Site Implementation	What site structures support or impede your implementation of the observed pedagogical strategies?
	Site-Based Support	
What was the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?	Impact on Instructional Practice/Staff Development	What pedagogical practices have you changed or will you change as a result of your experience in the observation-based model of professional development?
	Program Evaluation	

Figure 3. Corresponding Relationships between and among the Research Questions, Survey Categories, and Focus Group Questions.

Site Administrator Interviews

The interview is an oral questionnaire. Instead of a written response, the participant answers an array of questions verbally in a face-to-face exchange. Best (1981)

suggests that the interview may be superior to other data-gathering devices for a variety of reasons. First, participants are often more willing to engage in dialogue than to formalize their thoughts in a more exacting written venue. Secondly, assuming the interviewer is able to establish a safe, amiable rapport with the subject, certain types of seemingly confidential information may be obtained; information that an individual might be reticent to put in writing. Finally, through thoughtful follow-up questions and strategic probing the researcher may nudge the interviewee toward greater insight and elucidation.

The three site administrator interviews served a strategic role in this study of the observation-based model of professional development for teachers. The interviews were intended to provide substantive data related to the final research question: What was the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice? Site administrators are ultimately responsible for the performance of their staff. It is their job to regularly assess teachers through ongoing observations of practice. San Diego City School's site administrators are expected to observe, analyze, and support teaching and learning for a minimum of three hours daily. From this vantage point principals have multiple opportunities to recognize refinements in teachers' practice. The site administrator interviews were structured to seek evidence of change related to teachers' experiences in the observation-based model of professional development.

Five open-form questions were designed to initiate, sustain, and deepen these individual interviews: (a) What changes have you noted in the literacy instruction of those teachers from your school who attended the observation-based model of

professional development? (b) What evidence supports your observation of pedagogical change or lack of pedagogical change? (c) What are the events or contexts that appear to facilitate or impede teachers' change process? (d) How would you change the observation-based model of professional development to maximally impact your teachers' pedagogical practices? (e) Is there anything else you would like to add or expand on? (See Appendix D for a complete set of interview questions.)

While the site administrator interviews were designed as a strategy for data collection related to the impact of the observation-based model of professional development for teachers it was recognized that these interviews offered an important point of triangulation in the overall research design. Figure 4 illustrates the links among the research questions, participant survey, focus group interviews, and the site administrator interviews.

Subject Population

Participant Survey

All kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers participated in San Diego City School's *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series* during the 2001-2002 school year. These sessions utilized an observation-based model of professional development and were explicitly designed to deepen teachers' understanding of and capacity to effectively implement specific instructional strategies as outlined in the District's Literacy Framework.

Approximately 600 teachers from each of the three targeted grade levels participated in this training series. Kindergarten and first grade teachers attended two sessions while second grade teachers attended three sessions.

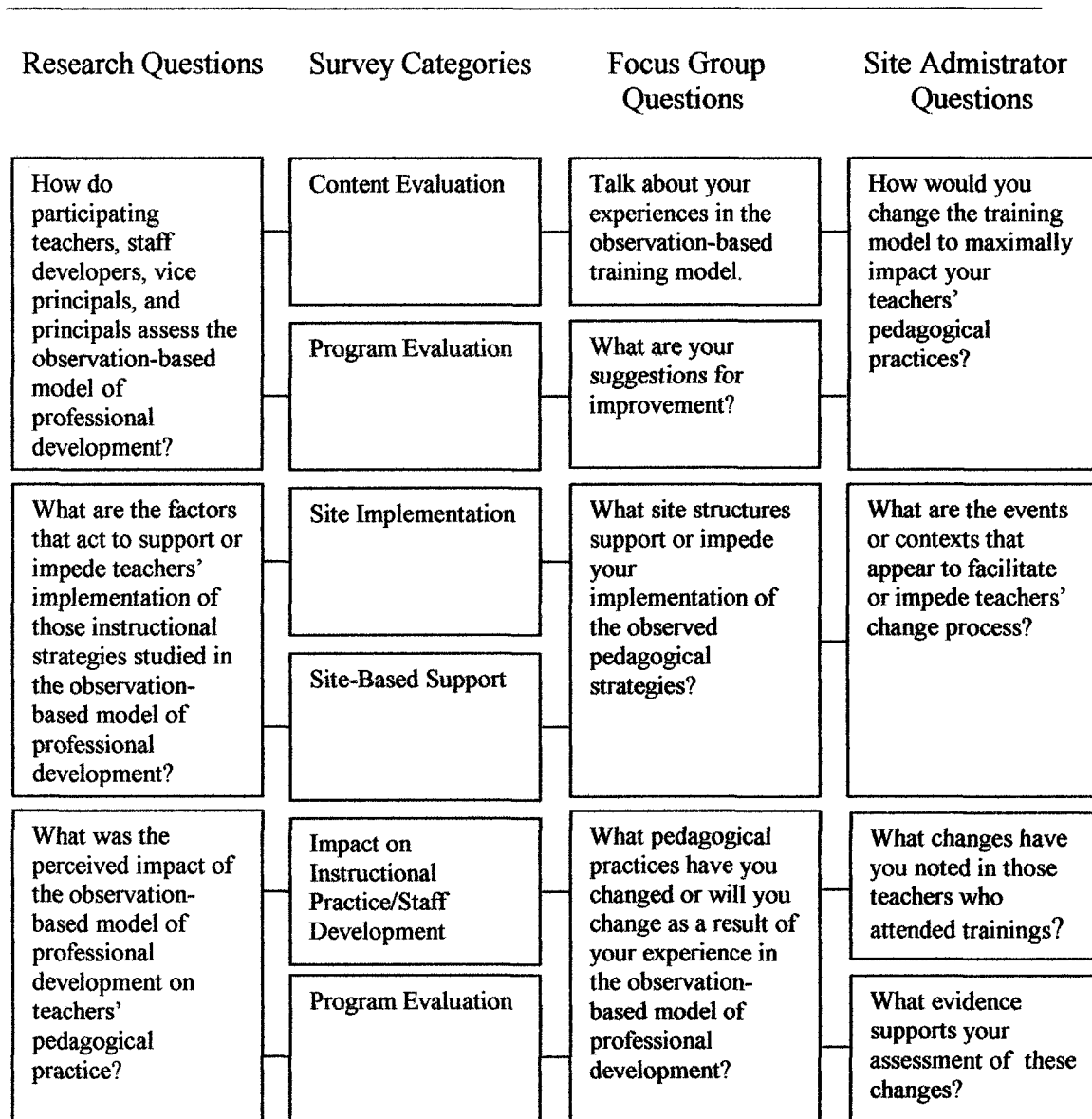


Figure 4. Corresponding Relationships between and among the Research Questions, Survey Categories, Focus Group Questions, and Site Administrator Questions.

Grade-level teams attended the *Enhanced* training sessions with their staff developers, vice principals, and/or principals. These school-based leaders play an important role in supporting district literacy goals at the classroom and building level.

Every school has an on-site staff developer whose responsibilities include supporting teachers to embed professional development learnings into the context of their jobs (Strategies for School System Leaders, 2001). Site administrators, too, assume a key instructional role as they are responsible for the overall performance of both teachers and students. Staff developers, vice principals, and principals from all 114 elementary schools were urged to attend the observation-based training sessions with their grade level teams in order to extend and enhance the learning objectives within the specific instructional context of each school site.

The entire population of participating teachers, staff developers, and site administrators had the opportunity to complete the evaluative surveys during the final segment of the *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series* in the spring of 2002. The training structure provided the time, context, and opportunity to involve the entire population under study, rendering sampling a non-issue. The survey results yielded quantitative data from a large, diverse population of teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals.

Focus Group Interviews

The focus groups were organized into the following three cohorts: (a) kindergarten teachers, (b) first and second grade teachers, and (c) staff developers. This organizational strategy was designed to allow facilitated conversations among participants from each of the two training facilities, the Fulton Learning Center (kindergarten) and the Zamorano Professional Development Center (first and second grade), and staff developers who participated in trainings at both instructional venues.

All teachers and staff developers participating in the *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series* were invited to volunteer to join a focus group during their final visit to the training facility. Sign-up sheets were distributed to school teams at the end of the training session (see Appendix E for a sample sign-up form). A script was developed to standardize the focus group information across training venues and training dates. The training facilitator read the following text to each training group:

On your table is a sign-up sheet to participate in a university-organized focus group. If you would be interested in discussing the kind of training available at the District Demonstration Classroom with eight to ten colleagues in a format that guarantees your confidentiality, please provide your contact information on this form. The focus group will meet once in July in the late afternoon for no more than 90 minutes. If you are selected to participate you will be notified by phone before the end of the school year.

This sign-up process yielded a sufficiently large number of kindergarten teachers and staff developers from which to select the focus group participants. The volunteer pool was inadequate, however, for first and second grade teachers attending trainings at the Zamorano Professional Development Center. A second sign-up opportunity was offered to this set of teachers through an informational memo delivered to every school site (see Appendix F for a sample of this memo). Twenty-one teachers responded to this memo to create a volunteer pool from which to select a set of focus group participants.

Volunteers were screened for selection using the following standardized criteria:

(a) Subjects must be kindergarten teachers, first grade teachers, second grade teachers, or

staff developers; (b) subjects must have participated in the entire *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series* as determined through enrollment records; (c) subjects must be representative of the District's diversity as defined by school Academic Performance Index rankings; and (d) subjects must be willing to share their opinions in the context of an audio-taped focus group. A sampling of participants was formed from those volunteers who met the selection criteria.

Site Administrator Interviews

Three site administrators were invited to participate in an individualized interview to discuss the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on the literacy practices of their participating kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers. These principals represented the range and diversity of the District as determined by their school's Academic Performance Index ranking. This ranking system stratifies schools based on achievement indicators. These rankings proceed from a low of one to a maximum of ten. The selected principals represented schools ranked API 2, API 4, and API 8.

A purposive sampling strategy was used to assure honest and relevant feedback. The political climate in San Diego City Schools is somewhat volatile. Site administrators are faced with professional challenges that may lead to fear and mistrust. Clearly, three principals cannot represent the leadership voice that resounds across a vast and demographically diverse district, yet it was anticipated that a select group of site administrators with whom the researcher had established a professional working rapport would feel secure enough to share their insights and suggestions honestly and openly. For this study, the researcher determined that a small set of valid data was preferable to a

larger set of guarded or even tainted data. Merriam (1988) concurs in noting that a purposive sample is “based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, and gain insights; therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (p. 48).

Protection of Participants

This research study received approval by the University of San Diego’s Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects and San Diego City School’s Research Proposal Review Panel. Both committees required evidence of substantive risk-management procedures. A number of protection processes serve to safeguard participants’ rights to safety and privacy.

The participant surveys were designed to assure respondents’ anonymity. While certain demographic information was sought as part of the data collection process these results were not used to identify individuals or school teams. All surveys were collected in undated, unlabeled folders which were sent to the researcher weekly as schools completed the *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series*.

Focus group and interview participants were guaranteed their confidentiality orally and in writing before any formal discussion ensued. Participants were assured that no identifying information, including any participant’s name, school, or physical appearance would be used. All focus group and interview participants signed a written consent form prior to their session detailing the risk management procedures afforded by the researcher (see Appendices G and H).

Participants were informed that the interviews would be tape-recorded and that a confidential transcript would be created. All audiotapes and written transcripts were securely stored away from any District location. The researcher was the only person with access to these tapes and transcripts. Following the conclusion of this study all tapes and supporting documents were destroyed.

Data Collection Processes

Participant Surveys

The evaluative surveys were administered during the final segment of the *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series* in the spring of 2002. Administering the surveys within the context of the professional development series was intended to maximize the response rate of and ease of use by respondents. To standardize the survey process between the two training venues and across the participant population a brief script was provided to the session facilitator to provide the rationale, context, and overall directions for completion:

A researcher from the University of San Diego is studying innovative professional development formats for teachers. The kind of training currently available in the District Demonstration Classrooms at Fulton and Zamorano, is being investigated for its potential and implications. Your responses will be used to understand how teachers feel about this new form of professional development.

Please take the next 15 minutes or so to carefully complete the three-page surveys. These surveys require no identifying information and your responses will be strictly anonymous. Teachers are asked to complete the white survey. Staff developers, vice principals, principals are asked to complete the yellow survey. If

a question does not apply to your experience in the demonstration facility leave it blank or mark “not applicable.” This survey will take the place of the usual end-of-day evaluation form.

The surveys were administered as participants returned from the scheduled lunch break at the Fulton Learning Center. Many teachers had to leave the training early to teach the Extended Day Reading Program, an after-school program designed to accelerated the learning of those students performing below or substantially below grade level expectations. In positioning the survey early in the afternoon, the response rate was maximized and sampling error was minimized. The survey was administered in the final 15 minutes at the Zamorano Professional Development Center. While recognizing the need for some teachers to leave early the facilitator was unable to reconstruct the training session to afford a block of time earlier in the day during which participants might complete the survey. This disparity in implementation time impacted the number of completed surveys.

Participants completed the surveys individually and silently. The facilitator was available to answer questions. Upon completion respondents placed their surveys inside an unmarked envelope. All surveys were sent to the researcher on a weekly basis.

Focus Group Interviews

An interview protocol was developed to provide a predictable level of standardization across the three focus group settings. While the protocol design provided sufficient consistency to allow for cross-group comparisons, it was elastic enough to offer a high-level of flexibility for each group (see Appendix C for a complete focus group protocol). Included in the focus group protocol were a series of primary and secondary

questions used to steer though not constrain the discussion. To minimize user-burden the researcher scheduled a single meeting with each of the three focus groups. In light of the limited contact time it was imperative that a list of specific questions be available to assure the group's productivity and the researcher's access to the needed information.

Each focus group met once in July 2002 at the Instructional Media Center, a centrally located facility familiar to most teachers and staff developers. These meetings were scheduled after school for a 90-minute time period. The data collection purpose and process were carefully explained and participants' confidentiality was assured. Group members were told that they could chose to withdraw from the interview process at any time before, during, or after the session. Participants were further informed that the session would be audiotaped to permit a verbatim transcription of the discussion for later analysis. After this information was presented orally, participants were asked to carefully read and sign the informed consent form (see Appendix G for a sample of the focus group consent form).

In most cases the focus group members were unknown to each other or to the researcher. The researcher therefore sought to establish rapport with and among participants through some conversational exchanges around summer school and summer vacations. This brief exchange was intended to put individuals at ease so they would feel comfortable talking in front of each other. Participants were urged to speak openly and honestly and a group norm was set that the content of the conversation and names of the participants would not leave the room.

All focus group discussions were audiotaped to eliminate the need for field notes and to allow the facilitator to actively listen to the content and flow of the discussion and

to observe the distribution of participation. In a focus group interview, the facilitator needs to be directive enough to assure that participants adhere to the topic and yet say as little as possible in order to listen intently. The facilitator sought to elicit the widest range of voices by consciously guarding against participant dominance and by inviting more passive participants into the conversation.

Site Administrator Interviews

The site administrator interviews were intended to be conducted as telephone conversations for expediency and efficiency. The schedule of school principals is unforgiving. Any attempt to establish an interview away from the site was deemed potentially problematic. Conducting a telephone interview at the convenience of the site administrator in the context of his or her office was offered to each invited participant in order to expedite the data-collection process. However, two of the three principals preferred to engage in a face-to-face interview.

An interview protocol was developed for the site administrator interviews (see Appendix D). Principals were contacted by the researcher to schedule a time and location for the conversation as well as to preview the primary questions in order to maximize the allotted interview time. Participating principals were assured that the interview process would not exceed 30 minutes.

The interview protocol was similar to that developed for the focus group interviews. Participants were told about the purpose of and planned process for the interview. Each site administrator was informed of the privacy protections, the volunteer nature of the process, and the intended use of the tape recorder. All participants signed a

consent form that reiterated the explicated processes and protections (see Appendix H for a sample consent form).

The site administrator interviews were less directed than the focus group interviews. In a one-on-one setting with a known participant the researcher was able to pose a question and allow the site administrators considerable breadth to explore and describe their reflections, insights, and wonderings.

Data Analysis

The survey data was tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics to convey participants' perceptions of the observation-based model of professional development. Demographic variables were cross-tabulated with the survey data to compare a variety of subgroups' responses and to seek relational patterns. The survey data provide the substance and direction for further investigation within the context of the interview processes.

Focus group discussions and site administrator interviews were audio-taped, transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed to permit greater insight into participants' perceptions and applications of the observation-based model of professional development. The data was synthesized to discern common themes related to changes in instructional practice and participants' assessments of the observation-based model of professional development in order to provide a broad description of and operational theory for improved professional development practice (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Spradley, 1979).

Reliability and Validity

All data collection processes are subject to both methodological and measurement error. The task of the researcher is to minimize, not eliminate the potential for methodological flaws (Patton, 1997). Five processes were integrated within the research design to address issues of reliability and validity:

1. The survey and interview questions were field tested on subjects who closely matched the intended subjects and anticipated implementation conditions. Participants were urged to share their interpretations of the terminology in the questions and the distinctions between the response options to assure face validity (Best, 1981). In addition to these processes, an expert panel reviewed the survey and interview questions to consider and assure content validity.
2. The large sampling of teachers, staff developers, and site administrators who completed the evaluation surveys was intended to minimize the potential for measurement error (Patton, 1997; Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987).
3. An indicator of reliability is the extent to which a measure gives the same or very similar results each time it is used. Katzer, Cook, and Crouch (1991) note that reliability is a matter of degree: "Measurement procedures are not simply 'reliable' or 'not reliable.' There is an infinite gradation of degrees of reliability and what might be acceptable to researchers may not be acceptable to you as a potential user of the research" (p. 105). Multiple survey responses, multiple focus groups interviews, and multiple site administrator interviews provided an informed estimate of the consistency of responses (Best, 1981).

4. The triangulation of three data sources (i.e., participant surveys, focus group interviews, and site administrator interviews) was intended to increase the reliability and internal validity of this study by offering multiple sources of data and multiple points of data comparison (Merriam, 1998).
5. “Validity is achieved to a greater degree when the interview is based upon a carefully designed structure to ensure that the significant information is elicited” (Best, 1981, p. 167). Care was taken throughout the research design process to assure the tightest possible links between the information sought and the inquiry strategies employed.

Summary

The purpose of this study was not to reveal the “truth” in some absolute sense of the word. Merriam (1998) notes that any such search for the truth may not be possible within the context of social science as human behaviors are neither static nor wholly predictable. Teachers’ responses can be affected by a great variety of conditions: health, interest, fatigue, hunger, political orientation, educational philosophy, or any number of personal concerns. Measuring perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes is admittedly difficult work. Best (1981) suggests that while researchers can speculate about ways to improve the validity and reliability of such qualitative procedures as focus groups and interviews, “the precise determination of the degree to which they are achieved is elusive” (p. 154).

While acknowledging this inherent complexity, this study mitigated these design concerns by focusing on the formative, not summative use of these data. The overarching purpose of the research project was directed at providing an improvement-oriented evaluation that could be employed by the primary intended users to inform program development. The intent lies in reaching conclusions that are reasonable, justifiable,

plausible, warranted, and useful within the context of San Diego City Schools. Any attempt to extrapolate findings to new or expanded settings must be based on grounded speculation rather than empirical data.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Linked methodologies guided the study of San Diego City School's observation-based model of professional development. This three-tiered methodological process served to systematically explore the following research questions:

1. How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?
2. What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?
3. What are the factors that act to support or impede participating teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?

A large-scale survey provided foundational, quantitative data that was analyzed, synthesized, and prioritized to discern participants' perceptions and overall assessment of the training model. It produced findings that broadly answer the research questions: findings regarding participants' reactions to the observation-based model of professional development; implementation data that suggests participants' intentions to integrate the observed strategies into their instructional practice; and a set of four themes that suggest a

range of factors that support or impede teachers' implementation of the observed instructional contexts and strategies. Focus group interviews allowed the researcher to probe these emerging answers to more clearly understand participants' perceptions, applications, challenges, and implications of the observation-based model of professional development. The final layer of inquiry, the site administrator interviews, provided a narrow range of specific data on the critical question of application: Did the observation-based model of professional development impact teachers' instructional practice? Why or why not?

This discussion proceeds from the participant surveys to the focus group interviews to the site administrator interviews to allow a systematic and thorough critique of the findings in order to understand what the data describes and what the data implies. Taken together these data streams address the three research questions, raise additional questions, and provide an expanded understanding of the observation-based model of professional development for teachers.

Participant Surveys

Overview

The survey data was collected anonymously in a structure consisting of closed-form questions and open-ended narrative responses. These responses were sorted, tabulated, and systematically analyzed to describe participants' perceptions, assessments, and applications of the observation-based model of professional development. Descriptive statistics economically and accurately condensed the large number of responses into summary figures to facilitate exploratory comparisons across a variety of demographic variables, to discern patterns and trends, and to provide the substance and

direction for further investigations within the ensuing qualitative components of this research study.

San Diego City School's Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Program Studies Office undertook the tasks of data entry, statistical manipulation, and preliminary presentation using criteria delineated by the researcher. All numerical data were processed using the SPSS program to conduct a frequency count for values related to each survey response item. This procedure served to display the frequency, range, and distribution of participant responses and to identify possible outliers or bogus information. The data was then cross-tabulated using Wincross to permit comparisons between and across demographic subcategories. Data entry accuracy was determined by comparing a random sampling of 5% of the surveys to the database revealing an error rate of less than 1%.

The survey included a small set of open-ended questions that provided opportunities for brief written responses. The researcher entered and coded all narrative responses. These qualitative data were then integrated into the existing database and realigned with each participant's numerical data using a sequential coding system. This compilation allowed both the numerical and narrative data sets to be aggregated and disaggregated according to identified demographic variables. These procedures were consistent with the criteria for survey data entry and processing as established by San Diego City Schools. With this operational overview in place, let us consider sampling size and response rates.

Sampling Size and Response Rates

The validity of the participant survey findings was dependent, in part, on a high response rate. Best (1981) cautions that unless the number of responses is reasonably large, summary percentages suggest unreliable and misleading generalizations. In order to maximize the potential for a high return rate, the participant surveys were administered within the context of the training sessions. Every participating teacher, staff developer, vice principal, and principal had the opportunity to complete an evaluative survey at the end of the *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series*.

Response frequencies were computed based on the participation of 114 elementary schools and three atypical or charter schools. The 2001-2002 enrollment data for these schools was determined to be 615 kindergarten classrooms, 577 first grade classrooms, and 586 second grade classrooms (CDE, 2002). The response rates varied between grade levels and training facilities. As indicated in Table 1, a sum total of 452 kindergarten teachers completed the participant survey yielding a return rate of approximately 73%. The total number of first grade teachers was lower; 282 teachers or 49% of the available population responded to the survey. Teachers assigned to combination grades were urged to attend training sessions representative of their highest grade-level cohort. Therefore, 61 teachers assigned to K-1 combination classrooms were included in the first grade data pool elevating the number of respondents to 343 or 59% of the available population. Second grade teachers had the lowest completion rate with 229 responses representing 39% of the population. Fifty-eight teachers assigned to 1-2 or

2-3 combination classrooms were added to the second grade data pool increasing the total number of respondents to 287 or 49% of the population.

Table 1

Session Attendance and Survey Response Rates for Teachers

	Grade level assignment		
	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
Total population of teachers	615 (100)	577 (100)	586 (100)
Teachers responding to the survey	452 (73)	343 (59)	287 (49)

Notes. Numbers are expressed frequencies of response. Numbers in parentheses are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number.

The discrepancy in response rates may be understood, in part, by the manner and timing in which the surveys were administered. Kindergarten teachers attending the Fulton Learning Center were asked to complete the surveys at the beginning of the afternoon session in order to maximize the completion rate. Facilitators at the Zamorano Professional Training Center elected to distribute the surveys at the close of the afternoon session. Anecdotal data provided by the training center facilitators suggested that many participants were unable to or elected not to stay for the complete session due to an array of personal and professional obligations. Teachers who left the trainings early are absent from the data pool. The Zamorano facilitators also reported that there were occasions when they were unable to distribute the survey at all due to lack of time at the end of the training day. While the response rates for first and second grade teachers attending the

Zamorano Professional Development Center are disappointing and clearly limit the potential for generalizability, the data is included for analysis as it represents the responses of more than 600 teachers.

The leadership survey designed for staff developers, vice principals, and principals yielded a total of 127 responses. Of this population 101 respondents were staff developers, eight were vice principals, and eight were principals. The non-response incidence for vice principals and principals may be misleading. The professional development facilitators reported a notably higher number of site administrators in attendance across the two training facilities, across all three grade levels, and throughout the prescribed course of study. Site leaders were less likely, however, to participate in a full-day training. The survey implementation process did not accommodate the schedules of part-time attendees thus the voices of many vice principals and principals are missing from the data pool. This low response rate for site leaders strictly limits the generalizability of these data.

Description and Analysis

Two distinct processes frame this review of the survey data: (a) description and analysis, and (b) interpretation. The first process involved organizing the raw data into a form that was comprehensive, comprehensible, and meaningful. To accomplish this end, the data was analyzed, synthesized, and prioritized to discern recurring patterns and themes. In the interpretive phase the researcher sought to “add context, determine meaning, and tease out substantive significance based on deduction or inference” (Patton, 1997, p. 307). These interpretations were fueled by a series of questions: What do these results mean in light of the context and focus of the study? Which of these results are

meaningful and why? What are the possible situational, programmatic, or professional explanations for these results?

The description and analysis discussion is organized to replicate the six-part sequence of the participant surveys: (a) Participant Profile, (b) Content Evaluation, (c) Site Implementation, (d) Impact on Practice, (e) Site-Based Support, and (f) Program Evaluation (see Appendices A and B for samples of the participant surveys).

Participant Profile

The introductory section of the surveys yielded a variety of demographic information that was correlated with the assessment data to compare subgroup responses and to seek relational patterns. Participants provided input on the total number of years teaching, total number of years at the current grade level or leadership role, achievement profile of the school, credential and certification information, and a variety of attendance details. Following an initial analysis of the data, this menu of options was narrowed to four demographic variables based on their potential significance to this study: (a) grade level assignment, (b) total number of years teaching (c) school API ranking, and (d) current professional position. A brief discussion of the inclusion rationale will serve to clarify the individual and collective role of these variables.

Information about participants' present grade-level assignment permitted comparisons across training facilities. Kindergarten teachers attended the Fulton Learning Center; first and second grade teachers attended the Zamorano Professional Development Center. While there were numerous points of alignment between the two facilities such as real-time demonstrations of practice, reflections of practice offered by the classroom teachers, and professional dialogue; there were also notable points of distinction

including resources, curricula, and personnel. Disaggregating the data by grade level permitted an exploration into the individual strengths and challenges of the two training facilities.

The model of professional development under investigation was intended to meet the needs of both novice and experienced teachers; therefore examining the data with respect to participants' total number of years teaching was essential to discern the potential differences in teachers' perceptions between and among service records. To support this analysis the data findings were organized into four duration categories suggested by the frequency distribution: (a) 0-4 years, (b) 5-10 years, (c) 11-20 years, and (d) 21 or more years.

The participant data for total number of service years indicated a relatively even distribution. Each of the designated duration categories included approximately one-fourth of the teacher respondents: 0-4 years (27%), 5-10 years (26%), 11-20 years (23%), and 21 or more years (25%). Interestingly, the distribution of service years was also relatively homogeneous across grade levels with similar numbers of beginning and veteran teachers assigned to kindergarten, first grade, and second grade classrooms. Of greater interest than the total number of years in isolation is the correlation of service experience with school API rankings. Teachers with the least seniority were most consistently employed at the lowest performing schools while teachers with the most seniority reported working in the highest performing schools. This uneven distribution parallels a well-documented trend in California schools in which novice teachers are routinely assigned to work in the hardest-to-staff schools (CDE, 2001, 2002). Table 2 indicates that of the assessed population 12% of the District's most experienced educators

reported teaching in the lowest-performing schools and 13% of novice teachers reported working in the highest-performing schools.

Table 2

How Many Total Years Teaching Experience Do You Have?

Number of service years	School API ranking				
	API 1-2	API 3-4	API 5-6	API 7-8	API 9-10
0-4 years	39	30	25	20	13
5-10 years	30	33	22	29	22
11-20 years	18	16	24	27	32
21+ years	12	21	29	31	33

Notes. Frequency counts were converted into percentages and indicate the number-per-hundred compared. This process permitted the meaningful comparison of subgroups of unequal size (Best, 1981). Percentages were rounded off to the nearest whole number.

The Academic Performance Index (API) ranking is an indicator of a school's relative achievement level among schools across the state. The California Department of Education assigns each school a numerical ranking based on the results of the Standardized Testing and Report (STAR) program. API scores are distributed along a 10-point continuum in which a value of one represents the lowest performing schools. The researcher sought to investigate the impact of school achievement on participants' perceptions, assessments, and applications of the observation-based model of

professional development by disaggregating the data into the following six categories: (a) API 1-2, (b) API 3-4, (c) API 5-6, (d) API 7-8, (e) API 9-10, and (f) unsure.

The distribution of API rankings reported by respondents did not precisely mirror the 2001 base API data available from the California Department of Education (2002). Eight percent of teachers and 10% of school leaders reported their school performance at API 5-6; a figure that is 5% to 7% below the state-provided statistics for this ranking (see Table 3). This inconsistency limits the generalizability of data from API 5-6 schools throughout this discussion of findings.

Table 3

What is Your Current School's API Ranking?

API ranking	Teachers	School leaders	2000-2001 distribution
API 1-2	20	18	20
API 3-4	16	20	19
API 5-6	8	10	15
API 7-8	28	31	28
API 9-10	18	20	19
Unsure	10	2	--

Notes. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number.

As a result, some percentages may not add up to 100. School leaders include staff developers, vice principals, and principals.

The final demographic variable used to sort the data was the instructional role of respondents. Two versions of the survey were designed for this purpose: one for teachers and one for staff developers, vice principals, and principals. While the surveys were carefully worded to reflect the different institutional responsibilities of respondents the content and sequence were similarly structured. This parallel construction allowed the researcher to compare the assessments of the observation-based model of professional development among classroom teachers, school-based staff developers, and site leaders.

San Diego City Schools recognizes the critical role site leadership must play in linking centrally-delivered professional development opportunities to the ongoing, authentic work of schools. Staff developers, vice principals, and/or principals were urged to attend the observation-based model of professional development with their grade level teams in the 2001-2002 school year in order to provide the necessary leadership before, during, and beyond the training sessions. Table 4 indicates a disparity between the responses of teachers and those of school leaders regarding these attendance patterns. For example, while 67% of teachers reported that they attended the writers' workshop session with their staff developer, vice principal, and/or principal, 99% of school leaders reported having attended this session with their teachers. To a certain degree, these data are situational. School leaders who completed the participant surveys were those who, in fact, did attend this training session with their teachers. However, the persistence of these data across all three training sessions warrants continued attention.

The participant profile segment provided attendance data indicating that approximately 90% of all participating teachers attended the observation-based model of professional development in grade-level teams. This finding was consistent across school

Table 4

What Demonstration Classroom Trainings Did You Attend With Your Staff Developer, Vice Principal, or Principal?

Session	Teachers	School leaders
Session 1: Readers' Workshop	76	90
Session 2: Guided Reading	27	67
Session 3: Writers' Workshop	67	99
None	10	1

Notes. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number.

The question was reworded on the leadership survey: What Demonstration Classroom Trainings Did You Attend With Your Teachers?

API rankings, number of service years, and training facilities. This is important to note as team attendance is recognized and promoted by San Diego City Schools as an important strategy for embedding professional development learnings within the unique context of each school and for strengthening the potential for impact beyond the specific training episode.

The profile data holds a certain amount of interest in and of itself. However, its primary use is to permit greater clarity into participants' perceptions, assessments, and applications of the observation-based model of professional development. These data act as a lens through which we may now access and understand specific content and

programmatic features by examining relationships between and among these demographic variables.

Content Evaluation

Eight survey questions served to provide information on the content, design, and instructional processes offered in the observation-based model of professional development. All kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers had the opportunity to attend two training sessions: one that focused on readers' workshop and a second session that focused on writers' workshop. Respondents were asked to assess the degree to which the content of these sessions was appropriate for their professional growth. Approximately 99% of teachers and school leaders indicated that the instructional focus for readers' workshop was appropriate or somewhat appropriate for their professional growth; 98% of participants responded similarly for writers' workshop.

Disaggregating this content data for writers' workshop serves to illustrate three patterns that are echoed throughout the survey results: (a) Teachers from API 9-10 schools provided less positive feedback than did teachers from lower-performing schools; (b) teachers with more than 20 years experience provided less positive feedback than did teachers with fewer service years; and (c) teachers across demographic variables provided less positive feedback than did staff developers, vice principals, and principals (see Table 5).

Second grade teachers had an additional learning opportunity devoted to the study of guided reading. While the guided reading data is less robust, with only 172 respondents, it bears attention as the results are lower than those for both readers' and writers' workshop. Sixty-four percent of second grade teachers reported that the

Table 5

The Instructional Focus for Writers' Workshop was Appropriate for my Professional Growth

Variables	Teachers			School leaders		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all
API 1-2	90	10	0	90	10	0
API 3-4	86	12	1	92	4	4
API 5-6	90	11	0	92	8	0
API 7-8	87	13	0	97	0	0
API 9-10	78	20	2	87	13	0
0-4 years	87	10	2			
5-10 years	84	16	1			
11-20 years	85	15	1			
21+ years	78	20	2			
Kindergarten	84	15	1			
Grade 1	82	18	0			
Grade 2	89	8	3			

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, some percentages may not add up to 100.

instructional focus for guided reading was appropriate for their professional growth, 26% assessed the session as somewhat appropriate, and 4% indicated that the session was not

at all appropriate. This content disparity warrants further consideration and inquiry. Why did teachers report guided reading as less appropriate than readers' and writers' workshop? Is some content less suitable for an observation-based study?

Several consistent instructional processes were employed at the demonstration facilities. The content evaluation segment of the survey probed the impact of these shared processes. Participants were asked to assess the: (a) amount of time devoted to classroom observation, (b) debriefs offered by the classroom teacher, (c) professional readings and group discussions, and (d) the overall effectiveness of the observation-based model of professional development.

Demonstrations of practice lie at the heart of the observation-based model of professional development. The training model is built from and wrapped around real-time observations of practice. Participants were asked to assess whether the amount of time devoted to these classroom observations was appropriate for their professional growth. Of the participating teachers, 67% responded yes, 30% responded somewhat, and 4% indicated that the amount of time was not appropriate. The results for leaders exceeded those of teachers: 84% of school leaders responded yes, 14% responded somewhat, and 1% reported that the time devoted to observation was not appropriate. What these figures do not reveal is whether the training model invested too much or too little time to the observation of practice.

The survey offered respondents an opportunity to provide suggestions for program improvement. The issue of observation time was addressed in dozens of written commentaries. While a clear majority of teachers and school leaders recommended

additional time for classroom observation, the range of responses is suggestive of the complexity of pacing and focus within this professional development forum:

1. "The training would be improved if there were no readings, discussions, or lectures. I just want to watch the teacher for the whole day."
2. "We need more time to observe. Let us watch for the entire three-hour literacy block. We need to see how the whole block flows together."
3. "I'd like to have a video tape of the observation to study with my team back at school. It would be helpful to have tapes of the classroom throughout the year so we can study how the program starts and how it changes over time."
4. "It was hard to observe the classroom for so long. It would be better if you could break the observation up into smaller sections."
5. "Observing another teacher was a waste of my time. Just tell me what I am supposed to do."

The weight of these data suggests an arena ripe for further inquiry. Was the allocated time for classroom observation inflated or lacking? How much observation time is appropriate? What is the most authentic way to determine answers to these questions?

Every training session included a live demonstration of practice during which time participants studied teaching and learning through the observation window or video monitors. After this observation the classroom teacher joined participants to discuss her lesson modeling reflective thinking, decision-making processes, and assessment-based planning. Though the session facilitator was charged with setting a context for the observation and noting important teaching/learning incidents during the course of the demonstration, the professional development designers postulated that even these studied

insights on instruction would lack the depth of knowledge that the classroom teacher could provide. The aggregate survey data confirmed the perceived value of the classroom teachers' debrief. Ninety-nine percent of teachers and school leaders indicated that the reflections offered by the demonstration teachers were appropriate or somewhat appropriate for their professional growth.

The instructional examples modeled in the demonstration classrooms were grounded in San Diego City School's vision of best practice. Relevant readings were included as an integral component of each training session to provide the time, context, and resources deemed necessary for critical study and professional dialogue. Articles and book excerpts by distinguished educators were selected for their capacity to offer theoretical and pragmatic links to the District's image of effective literacy instruction. The majority of respondents reported that the readings were appropriate or somewhat appropriate for their professional growth. These data are displayed in Table 6 in order to highlight: (a) 15% to 30% of respondents across demographic variables reported that the readings were only somewhat appropriate for their professional growth; an indication that this training component could be strengthened; (b) the teacher data and the school leadership data differed by as much as 16%; an indication that teachers may have held a different perception of value of reading in the context of professional development than did staff developers, vice principals, and principals; and (c) kindergarten teachers provided feedback that was less positive than either grade one or grade two participants.

A limited number of respondents, approximately 3%, offered written comments about the professional readings in their suggestions for programmatic improvement. While this response rate is small, the intensity of the narratives is noted:

Table 6

The Readings Were Appropriate for my Professional Growth

Variables	Teachers			School leaders		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all
API 1-2	84	15	1	100	0	0
API 3-4	78	22	1	96	4	0
API 5-6	76	22	1	78	22	0
API 7-8	66	30	3	87	11	0
API 9-10	70	29	2	71	29	0
Kindergarten	69	28	3			
Grade 1	76	23	2			
Grade 2	74	24	1			

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, some percentages may not add up to 100.

1. "I do not want to spend my professional development time reading. I can read on my own. Let us use our time here to observe the classroom, pick the teacher's brain, and plan with our school team."
2. "The readings had nothing to do with my experience or interest."
3. "Get rid of the readings and discussions. It was not a good use of anybody's time."

Ninety-five percent of these negative comments were offered by kindergarten teachers. This grade-specific response raises questions about the impact of the selection of professional readings on the perceived value of these readings. As reported by one teacher, “It doesn’t help me to read about examples from a third grade classroom. Find some good kindergarten examples.”

Finally, respondents were asked to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the observation-based model of professional development. Approximately 97% of all respondents indicated that this model was effective or somewhat effective for their professional growth. As indicated in Table 7, teachers from lower-performing schools rated their experiences in the observation-based model of professional development higher than their colleagues from API 7-10 schools. This recurring discrepancy raises a set of programmatic and conceptual questions: How can centrally-designed trainings be differentiated to meet the needs of teachers from differently performing schools? Is a school’s API ranking an appropriate criterion for differentiating professional development processes and curricula? Are high-performing schools indicative of high-quality teaching or are there other factors, such as socio-economic profiles, that contribute to school achievement?

Kindergarten teachers responded more positively to the observation-based model of professional development than did their first and second grade colleagues (see Table 7). Narrative and anecdotal feedback from this cohort suggested a potential explanation. Kindergarten teachers face, or perceive that they face, a unique set of instructional challenges and opportunities. Trainings designed specifically for this population may serve to acknowledge these specialized needs and dismantle the sense of marginalization

perceived, or imposed, by many kindergarten teachers. One respondent wrote, “Finally, kindergarten teachers are getting the kind of training we need. How nice it is to see a real kindergarten teacher working with real kindergarten children.”

Table 7

The Demonstration Classroom is an Effective Learning Format for my own Professional Growth

Variables	Teachers			School leaders		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all
API 1-2	83	17	0	100	0	0
API 3-4	81	18	1	100	0	0
API 5-6	82	17	1	92	8	0
API 7-8	76	22	2	95	4	0
API 9-10	78	21	2	88	13	0
Kindergarten	84	15	1			
Grade 1	71	27	2			
Grade 2	78	20	2			

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, some percentages may not add up to 100.

Site Implementation

A set of questions provided access to and understanding of those factors that may act to support or impede teachers in their implementation of the instructional strategies

modeled in the observation-based model of professional development. This segment of the survey offered a limited array of discrete, closed-form response items. Teachers and school leaders were instructed to consider each item and select all that accurately described their work setting. The following analysis will point to three patterns of need: materials, consistency, and time.

Participants considered the availability of materials that would support the implementation of the observed instructional strategies within the context of their own classrooms and schools. As noted in Table 8, 61% of teachers from the lowest-performing schools reported that they had sufficient materials to implement a literacy program comparable to the program observed in the training facility while 77% of teachers from the highest-performing schools reported sufficient access to instructional materials. This 16% difference stands in sharp contrast to the responses from school leaders who reported access to materials as a support mechanism across API rankings (see Table 9).

A persistent point of contention for San Diego City School's teachers is the perceived lack of consistency across leadership cohorts. Teachers complain that the instructional leaders, principals, literacy department, and educational consultants offer differing and sometimes conflicting information about literacy instruction. One of the site implementation survey items yielded data on the level of perceived coherence between the instructional practices modeled in the observation-based model of professional development and the instructional practices supported by the school's site leadership. As indicated in Item 2, Table 8, the summative data varied between and across school API rankings by as much as 14%. Teachers from the highest-performing schools reported a

Table 8

What Factors Support Your Implementation of the Observed Instructional Strategies?

Response items	Teachers				
	API 1-2	API 3-4	API 5-6	API 7-8	API 9-10
1. I have access to the necessary instructional materials.	61	70	69	68	77
2. My principal's literacy emphasis matches the observed instructional models.	63	69	68	68	77
3. I have sufficient time to reflect on my instructional practice at school.	20	18	22	17	23

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number.

greater degree of consistency between their schools' literacy emphasis and the observed instructional models than did teachers from lower-performing schools. Site leaders, again, held a notably different point of view. One hundred percent of all leadership respondents reported a match between the literacy practices modeled in the demonstration classrooms and the literacy practices advocated at their school sites (see Table 9). This discrepancy suggests a rich arena for further study. Staff developers, vice

principals, and principals say their vision of effective literacy instruction in the demonstration classrooms; many teachers did not. Why?

Table 9

What Support Structures are Available to Your K-2 Teachers?

Response items	School leaders				
	API 1-2	API 3-4	API 5-6	API 7-8	API 9-10
1. My teachers have access to the necessary instructional materials.	100	92	100	100	100
2. My school's literacy emphasis matches the observed instructional models.	100	100	100	100	100
3. My teachers have sufficient time to reflect on their instructional practice at school.	90	83	75	97	87

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Time was reported as a shared area of need by most teachers with less than one-fourth of respondents indicating sufficient time for professional reflection (see Item 3, Table 8). This data comes as no surprise. The theme of insufficient time reverberates across the district, the state, and, in fact, across the teaching profession. The surprise was

in the inverse leadership data. As indicated in Table 9, more than three-fourths of the responding school leaders indicated that teachers had adequate time to reflect on their practice.

The surveys provided participants an opportunity to report conditions that may act to limit or impede the implementation of those instructional strategies demonstrated in the observation-based model of professional development. This discussion of findings is limited to those factors with programmatic implications and includes feedback on the achievement level of the children in the demonstration classroom and the sophistication level of the demonstration teacher's instructional program.

The students in both demonstration classrooms represented the ethnic, linguistic, economic, and achievement diversity of their schools. Care was taken to assure that the classroom make-up was both heterogeneous and authentic and that this information was conveyed to participants in the observation-based model of professional development. In both training facilities the children performed at high levels of achievement due, in whole or in part, to the impact of accomplished teaching and high standards for student learning. Interestingly, the accomplishments of these students may have acted as a programmatic barrier. Teachers reported a perceived difference between the performance of the demonstration classroom students and that of their own students. The following subsets of teachers indicated that their students were academically lower than those in the demonstration classrooms: (a) approximately 30% of all teachers from API 1-6 schools, (b) 20% of all kindergarten teachers, and (c) 30% of all first and second grade teachers. The potential impact of these perceptions is heightened by teachers' narrative responses:

1. "You need to show low kids."

2. "I can't do this work with my kids. They're too low."
3. "These students must be hand-picked. Come on – show us a real classroom."

These data may be implicative of teachers' low expectations and deserves further examination.

Additional survey data suggested that teachers may prefer instructional demonstrations that mirror their own instructional contexts. Special education teachers asked for training experiences in a special education classroom. Biliteracy teachers asked for experiences in a biliteracy demonstration classroom. Teachers of high-performing students asked for experiences in a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) classroom. These responses lead to several important questions: How might the observation-based model of professional development be restructured to focus on effective literacy that is generalizable across student populations and teaching contexts? How and why might the observation-based model of professional development be differentiated to meet the diverse needs of teachers and their students? And to what extent are these diverse needs real or perceived?

The demonstration teachers were selected based on their sophisticated understanding and implementation of effective literacy instruction. Both teachers read widely, actively seek feedback on their teaching, study their students' learning with insight and intensity, and practice professional reflection as a habit of mind. Participants were asked to respond to the level of instructional sophistication modeled by the demonstration teachers. Approximately 15% of all teachers and school leaders reported that the observed approaches were too advanced. Table 10 denotes the persistence of these data across API rankings, service years, and grade level assignments.

Table 10

The Featured Literacy Strategies Were Too Advanced

Variables	Teachers	Leaders
API 1-2	15	30
API 3-4	16	10
API 5-6	17	11
API 7-8	24	3
API 9-10	9	10
0-4 years	16	
5-10 years	16	
11-20 years	20	
21+ years	18	
Kindergarten	12	
Grade 1	23	
Grade 2	16	

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Impact on Instructional Practice

The overarching goal of the observation-based model of professional development was to provide teachers with demonstrations of effective literacy instruction in order to build individual and collective capacity. Several survey questions were developed to gain insight into the impact or potential impact of these trainings on the

work of teachers. This section of the survey asked respondents to indicate which of the observed aspects of teaching and learning they would use to improve their instructional practice. The training sessions emphasized four instructional components of readers' and writers' workshop: mini-lesson, independent reading/writing, conferring, and the instructional share-out. A mini-lesson is a short, focused lesson often at the beginning of the readers' or writers' workshop used to teach or model some aspect of reading or writing relevant to the needs of a specific group of students (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). After the mini-lesson, students read or write independently while the teacher confers with selected individuals to support learning in a one-on-one context. During the instructional share-out the focus of the mini-lesson is revisited, often through the work and voices of students. The results for readers' and writers' workshop were similarly positive (see Table 11). Teachers indicated that the trainings would make an impact on their instructional practice.

Table 11

I Observed Some Aspects of Readers'/Writers' Workshop in the District Demonstration Classroom That I Will Use to Improve my Instructional Practice

Variables	Teachers			
	Mini-lesson	Ind. reading	Conferring	Sharing
Readers' workshop	81	67	88	60
Writers' workshop	81	77	88	63

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number.

An open-ended response option further probed the potential impact of the observation-based model of professional development to influence classroom practice. Forty-seven percent of teachers wrote responses to the following prompt: I will make some changes in my instructional practice as a result of my experiences in the district demonstration classroom. These narratives were coded, sorted, tabulated, and converted to percentages. Four percent of teachers reported planned or actual changes in their implementation of readers' workshop while 78% reported planned changes in their implementation of writers' workshop. This discrepancy may be due to timing, the survey language, and/or the actual impact of the sessions. The participant survey was completed during participants' final visit to the training facility: a session devoted specifically to writers' workshop. Respondents may have limited their thinking to the most current training experience in answering this question. If this survey item had directed teachers to indicate the potential impact of both readers' and writers' workshop the results may have evened out.

The narrative responses for the writing session were categorized into strands suggested by the actual comments: (a) interactive writing, (b) mini-lessons, (c), logistics (d) conferring, and (e) writers' workshop. Five percent of respondents indicated that they would begin to implement interactive writing or change some aspect of this instructional approach as a result of their experience in the observation-based model of professional development. Interactive writing, a strategy for modeling the skills and craft of writing, was studied only at the kindergarten facility. Nine percent of teachers indicated that they would change how they structure mini-lessons. Eighteen percent of responses were clustered into a category labeled "logistics" and included comments on scheduling, short-

and long-term planning, record keeping, and organizational strategies such as paper storage, writing folders, writers' notebooks, and peer conferences. Nineteen percent of teachers recorded their intent to change some aspect of how, why, or when they confer with students. For example:

1. "I am going to confer every day."
2. "I am going to talk a lot less during my conferences. I need to hear my students' voices – not mine."
3. "I am going to use conferring to push my students to go deeper."

Twenty-seven percent of teachers' said they would implement or refine their understanding of the structure and/or purpose of writers' workshop:

1. "I need to let my students choose their own writing topics and not spend so much time editing their work for mechanics."
2. "I'll be reading about writers' workshop this summer to get ready for next year."
3. "I am going to completely change the way I do writers' workshop."

These strength of these impact data are noteworthy yet it is clear that participants' stated intent to incorporate studied aspects of instruction into the fabric of their work may not translate into measurable or recognizable action. Rather, teachers' intentions may be colored by the intensity of the training; a sort of "end-of-session euphoria." The real test may lie in the actual changes that occur in teachers' practice over time and in the context of their individual classrooms.

Site-Based Support

San Diego City Schools has moved from a reliance on centrally-administered professional development processes toward a site-based model of teacher support. Staff

developers, in collaboration with site administrators, are charged with facilitating the work of teachers at the building level through a variety of strategies including: coaching, side-by-side teaching, demonstration lessons, grade level meetings, study groups, and whole staff inquiries. Centralized trainings, including the observation-based model of professional development, are thought to be most meaningful when the content links with and supports the work of schools. This section of the survey provided information about the content of school-based staff development as a mechanism for system coherence.

Table 12 shows the level of coherence between the content of observation-based model of professional development and the work of schools, and repeats the pattern of incongruity between the perceptions of teachers and school leaders. For example, while 62% of teachers reported receiving weekly or monthly site-based support on guided reading, 90% of staff developers, vice principals, and principals reported this as an ongoing emphasis. This dissimilarity may be explained in the delivery of school support. A staff developer may decide to work with a small, specific cohort of teachers: amenable teachers, accomplished teachers, or at-risk teachers. Staff developers have been urged to transition away from whole-school training toward a cohort-specific approach as a more efficient and effective strategy for promoting change. Due to the individualized manner in which staff developers have been encouraged to do their work, this section of the survey does not permit a clean or meaningful comparison between subgroups. What these data do reveal is a certain level of coherence between the content of the observation-based model of professional development and the availability of site-specific support. The data confirm guided reading and readers' workshop as widely shared areas of emphases and writers' workshop as a relatively new focus for literacy instruction.

Table 12

How Often Have you Typically Worked With Your Staff Developer, Principal, or Teachers on the Following Instructional Practices?

Instructional Practice	Teachers			Leaders		
	Weekly	Monthly	Less	Weekly	Monthly	Less
Guided reading	13	49	34	48	42	6
Readers' workshop	12	45	36	37	46	8
Writers' workshop	4	19	62	10	29	44

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Program Evaluation

The program evaluation segment restated specific survey items deemed critical to this study in order to provide a certain level of internal validity. These questions focused on the impact of the demonstration lesson and the demonstration teachers' debrief on the instructional practice of participants. Table 13 shows that 99% of teachers and school leaders reported that the key processes employed in the observation-based model of professional development have led or would lead to improved instructional practices. While this data is positive, we must remember that teachers' intent to apply new learnings within their instructional context may not translate into actual practice. Further investigation is needed to explore what aspects of the observed literacy strategies were incorporated into the working repertoire of teachers. Given this caution, the high

percentage of respondents who indicated the potential for impact on practice may suggest the promise of this innovative training model for teachers.

Table 13

What is the Perceived Impact of the Observation-Based Model of Professional Development on Instructional Practice?

Response items	Teachers			Leaders		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all
1. Observing the demonstration lesson will help/has helped improved my instructional practice.	74	25	1	77	23	1
2. Listening to the demonstration teacher will help/has helped improve my instructional practice.	74	24	1	86	13	1

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, some percentages may not add up to 100.

Interpretation of Findings

Statistical processes remain the servant of logic. The summary examination of the aggregate and disaggregate results of a large-scale survey is a means, not an end, to this inquiry into the observation-based model of professional development for teachers. The numerical data must now be filtered through context and infused with reasoned interpretations to move the analysis toward meaning and significance. Why did the

findings turn out this way? What are the possible explanations for these results? What questions do these findings resolve and what questions do these findings suggest?

The aggregated results appear to support San Diego City School's observation-based model of professional development for teachers. Participants reported that observing demonstration lessons in the context of a real classroom with a real teacher was an effective and potentially consequential professional development strategy. Yet, this analysis cannot remain at the aggregate level. It is through an investigation of the nuances expressed by subgroups of teachers and school leaders that we may begin to more clearly understand participants' perceptions, assessments, and applications of this training model.

Four themes emerged from this analysis of the survey data: (a) Teachers representing lower-performing schools generally provided more positive feedback than did teachers from higher-performing schools; (b) teachers differed in their response to specific design features including professional readings, literacy content, and observational time; (c) teachers across demographic variables reported that their classrooms and instructional contexts were not comparable with the demonstration classroom; and (d) school leaders across demographic variables provided more positive responses than did teachers. Each of these themes requires further consideration.

Theme One: The Impact of Schools' Academic Performance on Participants' Responses

The academic performance of schools influenced participants' perception of the observation-based model of professional development. Teachers from API 1-4 schools offered more positive responses to all survey items than did teachers from higher-performing schools. The training facilitators and demonstration teachers confirmed this trend through anecdotal, informal conversations. For example, one facilitator remarked:

I really look forward to working with teachers from focus schools [API 1 schools]. They pay attention. They ask smart questions. It is clear that they're here to learn. Teachers from high-end schools seem to come with an attitude – like they already know everything they need to know.

Several teachers from API 7-10 schools validated this perception in their suggestions for programmatic improvement. One teacher wrote, “My students are already reading above grade-level standards. I didn't need to be here today.” Another teacher said, “I've been doing this work for 25 years. Amp it up!”

The link between teachers' perception of the training model and school API ranking is confounded by a conjoined variable: The largest numbers of veteran teachers work in higher-performing schools. This raises some questions about the relationship between and among years of service, API ranking, and professional development. Are veteran teachers more resistant to learning through instructional demonstrations than novice teachers? And, are teachers working in API 7-10 schools more effective than those teachers working in API 1-4 schools? The participant survey was not directed at this level of specificity thus we must search for answers through both context and inference.

Accountability is a high-stakes issue. Standardized test scores carry enormous weight at the school, district, state, and national level. Teachers in the highest-scoring schools receive accolades and rewards while those in the lowest-performing schools get extra support in the form of tightened supervision and monitoring, added instructional days, and mandatory professional development. Within this political climate it is not surprising to discover a certain level of complacency from teachers in API 9-10 schools.

While we might argue that student performance has much to do with non-instructional conditions such as socio-economic status and the educational level of parents, it does not change the fact that these teachers may feel a different level of urgency around accountability issues than do their colleagues from low-performing schools. It would be tempting for teachers to assume that if their students are doing well then they must be doing a good job. It would be similarly tempting for teachers to assume that if they are doing a good job they don't need professional development.

Teachers at API 1-2 schools in San Diego City Schools receive additional resources directed at improving student achievement. Educational consultants are clustered at the lowest-performing schools to support the work of teachers. Most focus schools have two full-time, site-based staff developers to support the work of teachers and students. Twenty-four additional workdays are added to the instructional calendars of API 1 schools accompanied by extra professional development opportunities. With these support structures comes a clear expectation for improved test scores. Teachers from the lowest-performing schools may have a heightened sense of motivation and responsibility with regard to strengthening instructional practice and improving student achievement.

Theme Two: The Impact of Program Design on Participants' Responses

The analysis of the survey data suggested a second theme around programmatic design issues. While the collective responses from teachers and school leaders regarding the structures, processes, and content of the observation-based model of professional development were positive, a meaningful analysis of findings requires the examination of discrete areas of disagreement. In understanding these components we may better discern the possible implications for change. Three programmatic elements are highlighted for

further consideration: (a) the role and purpose of professional readings, (b) guided reading as an instructional focus, and (c) the amount of time allocated for observation.

Professional Readings

Kindergarten teachers reported that the professional readings were less appropriate to their professional growth than did first and second grade teachers. Earlier discussions of this data suggested that these teachers may have been guarded in their response due to their perception that the needs and experiences of kindergarten teachers are highly specialized. Kindergarten teachers suggested that professional readings aimed at the mainstream teaching population disregard or minimize their unique needs.

The Fulton Learning Center facilitator became aware of kindergarten teachers' response to the professional readings early in the course of study and employed a variety of adaptational strategies. The time devoted to in-session reading was progressively shortened from 30 minutes, to 20 minutes, to 10 minutes. The readings were previewed and debriefed to make explicit links with the work of kindergarten teachers. And, selected readings were replaced in favor of materials deemed more practical for this target population. In spite of these adjustments kindergarten teachers continued to voice their dissatisfaction with the professional readings.

To more clearly understand these data we may consider the disparate roles of theory and pragmatics in their working lives of teachers. The professional development designers placed value on assuring that the discussions and observations of literacy instruction were grounded in and supported by theory, research, and discourse on best practice. Professional readings were offered as part of each professional development session to make these connections explicit. This emphasis may be out of alignment with

the actual work of teachers who must be concerned with the practical aspects of instruction. Many teachers reported this need for pragmatics in their narrative responses:

1. “Give us more black line masters [reproducibles].”
2. “Provide teachers with an outline of a year’s planning, units of study, and a daily schedule.”
3. “Let’s talk about behavior management. How can I teach writing craft to the kid who continually throws his pencil at the kid across the table? I need strategies that get at the nitty-gritty of teaching.”
4. “I need more second language strategies.”
5. “Give us more practical ideas – less theory.”

These comments and reactions do not preclude the use of professional readings within the observation-based training model yet they do suggest a need for further inquiry and consideration. If there is value in providing teachers with the theoretical constructs that support effective literacy instruction how is this incorporated most productively and efficiently into the professional development design?

Guided Reading

Second grade teachers were provided an added learning opportunity in the observation-based model of professional development to study guided reading in response to grade-level support strategies delineated in the Blueprint for Student Success in a Standards-Based System: Supporting Student Achievement in an Integrated Learning Environment (SDCS, 2000). Guided reading is an instructional approach that provides opportunities for small groups of similarly skilled students to develop and practice reading strategies necessary to reading independently (New Zealand Ministry of

Education, 1996). It is a critical approach to teaching and learning that all San Diego City Schools teachers are expected to use in their literacy program. Yet second grade teachers across demographic variables reported this content focus as less appropriate than that of readers' and writers' workshop (see Table 14). What might cause this discrepancy?

Table 14

The Instructional Focus for Readers' Workshop/Guided Reading/Writers'

Workshop was Appropriate for my Own Professional Growth

Training session	Second grade teachers		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all
Readers' workshop	79	19	2
Guided reading	64	32	2
Writers' workshop	89	8	3

Note. Numbers are expressed as percentages rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, some percentages may not add up to 100.

Guided reading is an instructional strategy that is dependent on a sophisticated and strategic knowledge of the reading process and how students take on this process. Teachers must be skillful at making instructional decisions in-the-moment, in response to individual student's needs, strengths, and interests. Key understandings for guided reading include assessment, diagnosis, and decision-making processes; processes that are, perhaps, not readily amenable to observation. In contrast, the instructional structures for many aspects of readers' and writers' workshop are highly visible. In these sessions,

teachers examined the architecture of the workshop model through facilitated observations of the component pieces (i.e., mini-lesson, independent reading/writing, conferring, instructional share-out) and by studying the planning and decision-making processes through the debrief offered by the classroom teachers. As guided reading is dependent on in-the-head decisions based on students demonstrated needs it may be less suitable as a focus for study in the context of an observation-based model of professional development.

Observation Time

Ninety-nine percent of teachers indicated that observing demonstrations of instructional practice was an appropriate strategy for their professional growth. However, there were varied and strong reactions to the length of these observations. Teachers' responses ranged from "let us observe a full day of instruction" to "you need to dole out much smaller chunks of information – it's way too much to absorb in one sitting." The observation time across facilities and throughout the course of study was approximately 60 minutes. Most typically teachers observed 30 to 45 minutes of real-time instruction and 15 to 30 minutes of videotaped instruction at a later time in the session. The duration of these observations was content-driven. For example, sessions devoted to the study of readers' workshop depended on the observation of readers' workshop; an instructional context that may last 30 to 45 minutes in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. In order to respond to teachers' request for additional observation time, the sessions would need to expand their content focus or rely on additional video footage of practice.

This discussion of observational time must be balanced with the anecdotal feedback provided by the training facilitators who noted participants' limited capacity for

sustained observation. One facilitator remarked, “Truth be told, most teachers can only sustain their observation for about 10 minutes. After that time they start to talk to their neighbors, look through the handout, doodle, freshen their coffee, or copy the charts in the classroom.” Sustained, studied observation is a difficult skill that lies beyond the experience of many teachers. In their daily practice teachers seldom have the opportunity to observe learning for more than a few minutes at a time. Intra- and inter-school visitations provide occasions for longer periods of uninterrupted observations of practice yet most teachers have limited access to these visitation processes. Two lingering questions invite further consideration: What is an appropriate time frame for studied observation of practice and how are these observations best facilitated to assure engagement and understanding?

Theme Three: The Impact of Context on Participants’ Responses

The analysis of findings suggested further consideration of the impact of context on teachers’ responses. Teachers across API rankings, years of service, and grade level assignment perceived varying points and levels of disconnection between their working contexts and those of the demonstration classrooms. Teachers from low-performing schools reported that their students were academically lower than those in the demonstration classrooms. Teachers from high-performing schools reported that their students were academically higher. Novice teachers across grade levels indicated that they did not have similar instructional resources as those observed in the demonstration rooms. Teachers of special populations (e.g., biliteracy, special education, and gifted) reported that their students were different than those in the demonstration classrooms. These points of departure ranged from substantive, to petty, to incredulity:

1. "I have to teach every lesson in Spanish and English with limited resources. The demo room is not my reality. We need a biliteracy demo room."
2. "It sure would be nice if all teachers had round tables and new carpeting like this."
3. "Show us a real classroom!"

There is no reason to doubt that teachers found many points of distinction between their instructional resources, teaching styles, classroom configurations, and working contexts with those of the demonstration classrooms. San Diego City Schools supports approximately 1,800 kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers at 114 schools. Diversity is the norm, not the exception. These data offer an opportunity to consider the impact of system diversity on the overall and specific structure of the observation-based model of professional development.

Care was taken at each of the demonstration facilities to select students who represented the social, cultural, racial, linguistic, and academic diversity of the school. This was done intentionally to offer a realistic and heterogeneous classroom for studied observations of practice. Clearly, two demonstration classrooms cannot represent the incredible diversity that defines San Diego City Schools. Do teachers need to see a mirror image of their own classrooms in order to learn? The aggregate survey data would seem to indicate that this is not the case. Teachers reported that the instructional demonstrations were, in fact, appropriate or somewhat appropriate for their professional growth. The challenge imposed by system diversity may lie in offering generative content, content that transfers to multiple and diverse contexts, and/or differentiated learning opportunities for teachers.

While the cast of characters, stage sets, and scripts may change from classroom to classroom and from school to school, the essential stage directions remain remarkably similar. These represent the essential elements of teaching and learning shared by teachers across the system. For example, all teachers are expected to assess their students in order to understand their learning strengths, needs, and interests. All teachers are expected to know the grade-level content standards and be able to plan lessons and units of study that support students to meet these expectations over time. All teachers are expected to know their available resources in order to match students' needs and the academic content standards with learning opportunities. In planning professional development for large numbers of teachers working in diverse contexts it would appear important to focus on and explicitly reference those aspects of teaching and learning that are impervious to setting.

Theme Four: The Impact of Institutional Role on Participants' Responses

A final theme suggested by the data analysis is the difference in perceptions as expressed by participating teachers and school leaders. Staff developers, vice principals, and principals across all demographic variables consistently provided more positive responses to the survey questions than did teachers. Three possible explanations bear further discussion: (a) The sample size and makeup of these respondents may have skewed the data; (b) the training available to and required of school leaders may impact their perception of the observation-based model of professional development, and (c) school leaders may be more guarded in their responses than teachers.

We must be cautious in drawing even tentative conclusions from the leadership data as it represents the voices of 101 staff developers, eight vice principals, and eight

principals. This relatively small sampling represents the perspectives of those individuals who elected to attend the training with their teachers, who elected to stay for the entire session, and who elected to respond to the participant survey. These respondents may have a particularly supportive point of view as evidenced by their attendance and level of involvement. And while noting that these data may represent the voices of the District's most enthusiastic leaders, we would be remiss to ignore other possible explanations.

San Diego City Schools has invested considerable time, effort, and resources in training school leaders. Monthly conferences and ongoing study groups are used to support principals and vice principals in developing specific literacy content knowledge and leadership skills. Instructional leaders supervise site administrators throughout the school year to assure that these learnings are translated into improved models of teaching and learning in classrooms. Mentor principals are available to support less experienced site administrators with both operational and instructional concerns. Staff developers, too, are trained extensively. These school-based coaches meet weekly over the course of the school year to study literacy content, content-specific pedagogy, and coaching processes. In addition to these required trainings, staff developers have access to study groups, book clubs, and support networks.

The observation-based model of professional development relies on the observation of practice as the premiere focus and study process. Observation is a strategy that requires skill and benefits from experience. As previously noted, teachers have limited formal training and authentic opportunities to practice observing, analyzing, and synthesizing instruction to identify key areas for consideration and action. Staff developers, vice principals, and principals on the other hand, have more extensive

training and ongoing experiences in observing instruction. These observational experiences combined with their content training may provide school leaders with the knowledge, strategies, skills, and dispositions necessary to maximize the potential for learning in the observation-based model of professional development. But that's not all.

The availability of ongoing training and support mechanisms may further serve to provide school leaders with a sense of systemic and systematic coherence. One hundred percent of staff developers, vice principals, and principals reported that their school literacy emphasis matched the instructional models observed in the demonstration classrooms. Yet fully 20% of all teachers reported that the instructional models studied in the training facilities did not match the instructional practices advocated by their principals. How is this discrepancy possible?

The ongoing training available to and expected of school leaders has been carefully crafted through the leadership voice of the instructional leaders. The training offered to teachers has been more sporadic and involves multiple sources including principals, staff developers, literacy department staff, and educational consultants. This chain of voices may be analogous to the children's game of telephone in which a message is altered through consecutive iterations that sometimes renders it unrecognizable at the end. Teachers, who are farther away from the leadership voice, may receive confusing and conflicting messages about instructional practices. Another possible explanation, however, is the honesty of participants' responses.

The political climate in San Diego City Schools is volatile. The San Diego Education Association, the collective bargaining agency, has taken a bold position against the current administration's reform agenda citing poor communication, disrespect

of teachers, and a heavy-handed, top-down management style. Teachers' responses cannot be neatly separated out from this political context; we cannot determine which responses reflect union rhetoric and which reflect a non-political perspective. Conversely, the leadership data cannot be neatly separated out from the pressure administrators may feel to tow the party line. Does the leadership data reveal the truth or their sense of a politically expedient response? These concerns cannot be resolved through an analysis of the survey data yet represent potential filters and important considerations in planning and conducting the focus group interviews and site administrator interviews.

Summary

Descriptive statistical analysis confines any generalization to the particular group of individuals assessed. No conclusions can be extended beyond this group. The data and analysis of findings is limited to the self-reported perceptions of kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers and those school site leaders who participated in this assessment of the observation-based model of professional development. Fitz-Gibbon and Morris (1987) add a further note of caution in applying statistical processes to behavioral science saying that, "Science is about trying to improve our attempts to describe and to predict and to understand: It is not about being absolutely right" (p. 9). With this methodological limitation in mind, drawing any conclusions based on the survey data is necessarily tenuous and tentative. The survey was not intended to act alone nor was it intended to fuel extensive or complete conclusions. Yet, the survey provides a broad body of data on which we may begin to form answers to the stated research questions.

1. *How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?*

Participants were positive in their assessment of the observation-based model of professional development. Ninety-eight percent of teachers and 99% of school leaders reported that the demonstration classrooms were an effective or somewhat effective learning format for their professional growth. The survey data is compelling and convincing; participants across all demographic variables voiced their approval of the format and processes of the observation-based model of professional development.

2. *What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?*

Here too, the survey data is compelling. Ninety-eight percent of participating teachers reported that observing a demonstration lesson helped or would help them construct a more effective learning environment. Ninety-eight percent reported that listening to the demonstration teacher share her thinking, planning, and reflections helped or would help improve instructional practice. Ninety-eight percent of teachers reported that observing a demonstration lesson helped or would help them improve their instructional practice. While the majority of teachers indicated that the training sessions would lead to improved practice, we are left to wonder: What is the relationship between intent and action? Did teachers act on their intentions for improved practice? The survey data does not allow us to see beyond teachers' intentions; to see inside their classrooms and identify or measure actual changes in instructional practice.

3. *What are the factors that act to support or impede participating teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?*

It appears that there is a set of barriers, real or perceived, that may act to impede teachers' capacity to take on the work; to incorporate the observed literacy strategies into the context of their classrooms and schools. These barriers include the academic performance of schools; specific programmatic elements of the training sessions; the diversity of teachers, students, schools, and classrooms; and participants' instructional roles. These identified themes require further consideration to determine what role, if any, they play in the dance between intention and implementation.

The participant surveys provided a rich base of knowledge on which to search for patterns, identify emerging themes, ask questions, and begin to form tentative responses to the research questions. The survey is the first of three methodological processes that are structured to progressively move toward clarity, insight, and ultimately more informed conclusions. These preliminary analyses are in the service of the qualitative processes that follow.

Focus Group Interviews

Introduction

Focus groups were used to elicit the voices and elaborate on the perspectives of teachers and staff developers who participated in the observation-based model of professional development. A focus group is a multi-person interview in which the interviewer becomes a group leader charged with facilitating the discussion, asking questions, listening to the answers, and seeking meaning in the collective responses of the group (Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This data collection process allowed participants to consider the observation-based model of professional development in

greater depth and with a greater degree of latitude than was possible in the structure of a closed-form survey.

Three focus groups were convened during July 2002 in response to selection criteria described in Chapter Three. Table 15 displays the demographic profile for each of the focus groups. These variables were suggested by an analysis of the survey data: lower-performing schools (API 1-4) and higher-performing school (API 5-10); novice teachers (0-4 years experience) and more experienced teachers (5+ years experience). Two kindergarten teachers and one first grade teacher were unable to attend their assigned focus group interview. Each of these teachers contacted the researcher to express their continued interest and to provide unsolicited feedback. Their responses have

Table 15

Demographic Profile of the Three Focus Groups

Variables	Focus groups		
	Kindergarten teachers	Grade 1-2 teachers	Staff developers
API 1-4	3	5	6
API 5-10	5	4	4
< 4 years teaching	3	5	0
> 4 years teaching	5	4	10
Total participants	8	9	10

Note: These figures represent the actual number of participants.

been omitted from this analysis as the data collection process did not conform to the stated parameters of the focus group interviews.

Five primary questions were developed to parallel the research questions: (a) Talk about your experiences in the observation-based model of professional development; (b) What pedagogical practices have you changed or will you change as a result of your experiences in the observation-based model of professional development? (c) What site structures support or impede your implementation of the observed pedagogical strategies? (d) What are your suggestions for future observation-based professional development trainings? (e) Is there anything else you would like to add or expand on? No explicit questions or prompts were directed at the four themes identified in the analysis of the survey data. Rather, it was decided to rely on open-ended questions in order to maintain a bias-free discussion. In this way, any connections to the four themes would be constructed by the group rather than suggested or directed by the researcher (see Appendix C for a complete list of questions and an overview of the focus group interview protocol).

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded using domains suggested by the focus group data. The following five themes guide this discussion of findings: (a) schools' academic performance, (b) program design, (c) diverse teaching and learning contexts, (d) the instructional role of participants, and (e) assessment and application. Figure 5 illustrates the links between the survey themes and the focus group themes.

Theme One: The Impact of Schools' Academic Performance on Participants' Responses

The focus group data echoed a persistent pattern in the survey data: teachers from lower-performing schools were more enthusiastic in their assessment of the observation-

Survey Findings	Focus Group Findings
<p><u>Theme One</u> The Impact of Schools' Academic Performance on Participants' Responses</p>	<p><u>Theme One</u> The Impact of Schools' Academic Performance on Participants' Responses</p>
<p><u>Theme Two</u> The Impact of Program Design on Participants' Responses: Professional Readings, Guided Reading, Observation Time</p>	<p><u>Theme Two</u> The Impact of Program Design on Participants' Responses: Professional Readings, Observation Time</p>
<p><u>Theme Three</u> The Impact of Context on Participants' Responses</p>	<p><u>Theme Three</u> The Impact of Context on Participants' Responses</p>
<p><u>Theme Four</u> The Impact of Institutional Role on Participants' Responses</p>	<p><u>Theme Four</u> The Impact of Institutional Role on Participants' Responses</p>
	<p><u>Theme Five</u> Assessment and Application</p>

Figure 5. Juxtaposition of the Survey Themes and Focus Group Themes

based model of professional development than their colleagues from higher-performing schools. Participants in all three groups discussed the impact of socio-economics,

community support, and students' academic achievement in their training experience and in their work in schools. The following exchange illustrates the intensity of the incongruity based on school academic performance:

Teachers at my school, we're an API 10 school you know, we've been doing this work successfully for a long time. A lot of my kids came to me in September already reading so this training didn't really meet my needs. While I think there is value in watching another teacher work, huge value, it would have been more helpful for me personally to do this kind of study at a higher-end school. That would have pushed my learning more.

Well, I don't work in an API 10 school but I want to tell you that I was really impressed with the training, with the teacher, with her classroom, and with her kids. I teach in a focus school [API 1] and our kids *don't* come in the door reading or writing or even speaking English. They don't have a lot of the advantages that your kids do: They don't have a room full of books and parents that read to them every night. Watching the demo teacher was a real eye-opener for me and for my team. We were looking at the work the students had done and we were pretty impressed and we thought that if these kids could do that quality of work, our kids could too.

There is considerable overlap between schools' API ranking and teachers' service years. As previously noted, many novice teachers are placed in API 1-4 schools. Thus we must integrate the perspectives of novice and veteran teachers within this thematic construct. Each of the focus groups discussed the distinctive needs of beginning teachers:

Beginning teachers need more support in classroom management skills, pacing, and room environment. One teacher said:

I'm a first year teacher so it was really powerful to have the chance to observe another teacher. I saw how she managed a lot of the procedural stuff that I've been working on. You know, how she organized her book baskets and how she had her kids file away their own writing folders. It was really helpful to see how she set up her classroom and how she got her kids to be responsible for a lot of the procedural stuff.

Veteran teachers held a different viewpoint. One staff developer noted, "Our staff has a ton of veteran teachers. They thought the training was a bit remedial. They all came back with ideas, but if the training had been targeted for higher kids it would've been more meaningful for my teachers." Interestingly, when this staff developer was asked about her teachers' level of understanding and capacity to use effective literacy practices she said, "They have a long way to go." This presents an interesting paradox: veteran teachers found the trainings "a bit remedial" yet have a "long way to go."

Let us consider the use of observation as a learning mechanism in supporting the work of novice and veteran teachers. Beginning teachers often grapple with organizational and managerial issues. These are aspects of instructional practice that are easily observed. We can see how the tables are arranged, we can see how the classroom library is organized, and we can see how the teacher transitions students from one activity or one location to the next. Experienced teachers grapple with a variety of complex issues that may require a different and more sophisticated observational lens. Observing differentiated instructional supports for students is dependent on deep understandings of

teaching and learning. Observing how a teacher adjusts her questioning to nudge students toward independent problem-solving requires knowledge of the role of talk, learning theory, and the facilitative role of teachers. Observing the ways in which a teacher designs and delivers a mini-lesson around authors' craft is dependent on being a skillful and experienced teacher of writing. Veteran teachers of successful learners may need additional supports if they are to see beyond the broad observational landscape into the critical nuances of accomplished teaching and powerful learning. Looking does not necessarily translate into seeing.

Theme Two: The Impact of Program Design on Participants' Responses

The design feedback is organized to correspond with and elaborate on two programmatic elements identified in the analysis of the survey data: (a) the role and purpose of professional readings and (b) the amount of time allocated for observations of practice.

Professional Readings

The kindergarten focus group adamantly and unanimously objected to including professional readings within the context of the observation-based model of professional development. Participants explored this viewpoint through a discussion of function, "Maybe if you connected the reading closer to what we were observing so we could see the value of reading the article or the chapter or whatever"; to a discussion of scheduling, "Maybe it was a problem with the flow – you know where the reading part fit in the flow of the day"; to a discussion of priorities, "We'd rather sit and talk about what we're doing in the classroom than read about what's been successful in someone else's class"; to a discussion of pragmatics, "We struggle with things like keeping kids in their seats and

teaching them to raise their hands and such – its not about the theory for me”; to a discussion of purpose, “We came to observe the class – not to read some book.” At the end of this meandering discussion one teacher stated, “I don’t know why I didn’t like the reading. I just didn’t.”

Interestingly, reading was not raised as an area of concern by either of the other focus groups. The first and second grade teachers appeared tolerant of the reading: “It was okay. I highlighted a lot of passages and I hope to be able to do a closer read of the articles over the summer.” The staff developers acknowledged the readings as appropriate and valuable: “The articles and discussions definitely matched the professional development focus. Reading is a professional responsibility and I appreciate that the trainings emphasized this for my teachers.” The kindergarten teachers stood alone in suggesting “the readings were a waste of our time.” Why?

Kindergarten teachers were unable to agree on a rationale, thus we must rely on speculation in exploring possible explanations. It could be that the text selections were inappropriate. The selected articles and chapters were not targeted directly at kindergarten teachers. They addressed literacy instruction for primary teachers working with a range of emergent to early readers and writers. Yet, teachers appear to believe that “it’s different in kindergarten.” These teachers may be more responsive to text selections that focus specifically on kindergarten texts and examples. It could be that the readings were too theoretical. Perhaps kindergarten teachers would respond more positively to readings directed at the how rather than the why of effective instruction. And, it could be that kindergarten teachers do not yet perceive themselves to be instructors of reading and writing. For many years kindergarten was considered a time of play, socialization, and

school preparedness (Rog, 2001). San Diego City Schools advocates quite a different vision. Kindergarten teachers are now expected to teach their students to read, write, and compute at what were previously considered to be unimaginable levels of achievement. Perhaps these teachers will respond more positively to professional readings as the culture of kindergarten changes from play school to real school.

Improving the design of the training model for kindergarten teachers may require further inquiry into the appropriate use of professional readings. However, the readings remain somewhat peripheral to the design and function of the observation-based model of professional development. The issue of whether “to read or not to read” did not impact teachers’ overall reaction to the observation-based model of professional development.

Observation Time

All focus group participants recommended additional observational time at the training facilities. Teachers and staff developers recognized the difficulty in sustaining observations over a long time-frame and suggested that short observations of practice be peppered throughout the training day rather than concentrated into a single segment. This format would necessarily change the focus of the observation-based model of professional development from the study of a single instructional approach (e.g., readers’ workshop, writers’ workshop, or guided reading) to a broader study spanning multiple instructional approaches. As one staff developer noted:

Looking at instructional segments in isolation gets in the way of the bigger picture – how you weave the approaches together. Studying one lesson doesn’t reflect the real work of teachers who must teach many, many lessons every day. Teachers

need to leave these training sessions with some way to see how the various approaches work together to make a coherent teaching day.

Focus group participants also explored ways to expand the observational time beyond the confines of the training day through the use of videotapes. Teachers across grade levels wanted to be able to observe the work of the demonstration teachers at the beginning of the year and to see how their students progressed over time:

I think the training in the demo facility is really good, but I need to see a bigger picture than these one-day, one-lesson shots. I need to see how she gets her groups going and how she develops her units of study. It would be good if we could get a monthly video to study at our schools.

Staff developers, too, discussed the role of videotapes in extending and enhancing the observations of practice:

I understand why we focused on just one part of the day, but I'd like to leave the session with a videotape of the whole morning. That way I could use the video to show my teachers how that one lesson fit into the whole literacy block and how all the literacy approaches support each other.

We must be somewhat cautious in this discussion of videotapes. Real-time observations of practice are considered the instructional heart of the observation-based model of professional development. Videotapes of effective practice have been commercially available for a long time. Yet, teachers have, for an equally long time, criticized these professionally produced videotapes as being both scripted and staged. Consider this teacher's perspective: "Don't give me any videotapes. I need to see it with

my own eyes. I've seen those videotapes of perfect teachers doing perfect lessons with perfect children. Been there – done that. I prefer to see the real McCoy.”

We must be equally cautious in this discussion of additional observation time. While both the survey and focus group data suggested a consideration of increased time for observation these findings also suggested the difficulty of releasing teachers for professional development. Nine percent of the surveyed teachers indicated that they would not benefit from additional sessions in the demonstration classrooms because of the challenges of imposed by substitute teachers. Focus group respondents added, “I'd like to spend more time observing instruction when I come to the training facility, but I don't want to come more often. Having a substitute in my classroom is pretty much a lost instructional day for my kids.” The design challenge may lie in considering the best use of observation within the existing time frame for professional development.

Two questions emanate from this discussion: (a) How can teachers be supported to learn and practice observational skills in the context of the demonstration facilities? (b) What is the appropriate balance between direct instruction, observations of practice, and professional readings/dialogue in the context of the observation-based model of professional development?

Theme Three: The Impact of Context on Participants' Responses

The survey findings revealed teachers' persistent desire to see *their* students and *their* instructional contexts within the observation-based model of professional development. This issue was reiterated and reinforced in each of the focus group interviews:

1. "I'm a new teacher and I don't have a lot of books yet. In fact my library is a little bit pathetic. It was great to see the demo teacher and she was doing really great work and her kids were doing really great work but bottom line, I don't have the kind of library she has. I'm just not there yet."
2. "The students in the demo room are atypical. My kids don't act like that. You need to put a kid in there who has to be pulled out from under the table every day by the principal. Sure the demo teacher is doing good work. I would be too if I didn't have so many disruptive kids."
3. "I didn't see any second language learners in her class. The kids in my class speak five different languages. It would help me a lot to see a classroom model where there are lots of ELLs [English Language Learners]; to see how the teacher handles those kids."

Teachers asked to see demonstrations of practice in API 1 schools, API 10 schools, biliteracy classrooms, special education classrooms, GATE classrooms, combination classrooms: configurations that matched their current teaching assignment. While the focus group participants did not articulate why teachers need to see a mirror image of their own classrooms to maximize learning, they were uniformly convinced of its importance.

Teachers and staff developers discussed a variety of ways to differentiate the observation-based model of professional development to better match the diverse needs of participating teachers. One group suggested that the District provide additional training facilities: "You need to have more demo rooms – you know, like one for focus schools

and one for biliteracy teachers.” The staff developers suggested that the existing training facilities offer a menu of leveled workshops:

Take writers’ workshop for example. You could have a training just for beginning teachers – how to set up the workshop. And you could have a training for teachers who have been doing it for a while and need more information about some part of the workshop like conferring, or assessment, or mini-lessons. Maybe you could have a training for really experienced writing teachers, like a seminar situation, where teachers could co-facilitate the session.

Differentiated trainings and site-selected options would clearly offer teachers expanded ways in which to study instruction. Yet, it may also serve to further isolate teachers and compartmentalize instruction. A staff developer summarized this concern: “We need to work harder at helping teachers understand the core elements of teaching. We need to move away from trainings for this group and that group and move toward trainings for the profession of teaching.”

Theme Four: The Impact of Institutional Role on Participants’ Responses

There was a clear distinction in tone between the teacher focus groups and the staff developer group. Teachers talked openly about their fears, challenges, and concerns. Staff developers were more guarded on implementation issues and focused their discussions around the content and processes of the observation-based model of professional development. These differences may help to explain why school leaders provided consistently more positive responses than did teachers in the participant survey.

Teachers had much to say about the District’s literacy reform initiative in the course of the ninety-minute focus group interviews, both positive and negative. While

some respondents embraced the emphasis of the reform, “I think it’s absolutely the right way to go. My kids are reading better than ever before,” others expressed mistrust, “We’re being told we have to do this and we have to do that and we don’t have the freedom any more to make our own decisions.” Teachers collectively worried about “getting it right.” One teacher said, “My principal tells me one thing and my staff developer tells me something else. And then I come to these trainings and they tell me something else still. We want to do it right but, what *is* the right way?” And, teachers expressed their shared concern about the pace of the reform: “There’s just way too much being thrown at us. We need time to plan, and apply, and practice but my principal keeps telling me to hurry up – get this or that going in your room right now.” These shared concerns may act to frame and temper teachers’ assessment of the observation-based model of professional development.

Staff developers focused their talk on the content and processes of the training model and avoided political and implementation issues. One participant started to discuss the complexities of her job, “When you are a staff developer with 40 teachers and we’re being told to get our teachers on board, to raise the test scores ... ”; but her thought trailed off and this line of thinking was not picked up for conversation even when the facilitator prompted the group. Why were these staff developers reticent to discuss their actual work at schools? And, in what ways does this reticence impact their assessment of the observation-based model of professional development?

Lacking a clear rationale from the participants we are, again, left with conjecture. Three explanations are explored for their potential to contextualize the responses of staff developers: (a) isolation, (b) job security, and (c) job advancement. Staff developers are

teachers yet their role is mistrusted by many of their peers and by the collective bargaining unit. In many important ways, staff developers are isolated in their daily work. Lacking widespread support, it would not be surprising for staff developers to develop a quiet stance on political and implementation issues.

The School Site Governance Team votes on staff developers each year; a process initiated and endorsed by the San Diego Education Association. This team of teachers, parents, community members, and the site administrator review the staff developer's work and decide whether or not to extend the contract for another year. Lacking long-term job security, it would not be surprising for staff developers to develop a quiet stance on political and implementation issues.

The staff developer position is envisioned by some as a stepping stone on the path toward an administrative position. We might assume that staff developers with aspirations of becoming administrative interns, vice principals, or principals would publicly promote the District's reform agenda and, again, develop a quiet stance on political and implementation issues.

It must be stressed that this search for answers is based on speculation, not fact. The survey and focus group data indicated that while participants were positive in their assessment of the observation-based model of professional development, school leaders consistently rated all aspects of the training model higher than did teachers. Contrasting political contexts may help explain this discrepancy.

Theme Five: Assessment and Application

Participants across grade levels, instructional roles, school API rankings, and service years were positive in their overall assessment of the observation-based model of

professional development. They valued observing another teacher's work, they valued hearing another teacher's reflections of her work, and they valued the authenticity of the observational experience. Teachers talked about the power in "getting to watch one of *our* teachers using *our* curriculum with *our* kids." This is not new information. The survey findings disclosed a similar level of support for the training model. The new information may lie in participants' stated rationale.

The focus group teachers consistently connected their assessment of the observation-based model of professional development to the potential for application: They liked it because they could use it. One teacher said:

It was such an eye-opener for me to see it actually work; to see how she did writers' workshop and to see how I could do that myself in my own classroom. I was able to go back to my classroom and immediately apply what I learned.

While this emphasis on meaning, internalization, and implementation is heartening, it raises an important question: What did teachers value enough in these observations of practice to apply in the context of their own classrooms?

Teachers' discussions of application varied from logistics, to room environment, to management strategies, to instructional strategies:

1. "I changed my schedule so I could have more time for writers' workshop."
2. "I use round tables now and I don't have assigned seats any more."
3. "I am trying to focus more on intrinsic motivation in dealing with my kids."
4. "Seeing how she set up her writers' workshop was the most significant thing that I learned this whole year. I started using writing folders and letting my kids choose their own writing topics and it made a huge difference."

The focus group interviews confirmed that participants looked and learned but they may have looked at and learned an unintended, unanticipated curriculum. Seating arrangement, for example, was not an instructional focus for any of the professional development sessions.

Observation evokes many ways of seeing. Room environment cannot be separated out from the observational landscape. We cannot look inside a teacher's classroom without noticing furniture, bulletin boards, instructional charts, book displays, and more. Participants valued "getting stuff that we could use immediately." But what was this "stuff"? The observation-based model of professional development may be too costly if the payoff in classrooms is limited to cosmetic adaptations such as schedules, round tables, and writing folders.

Staff developers also linked their assessment of the observation-based model of professional development to the potential for application. Staff developers, in partnership with their principals, are charged with supporting teachers in a number of ways: coaching, team teaching, observation, grade-level meetings, and professional development sessions. Those staff developers who participated in the focus group interview valued the content, processes, and models of facilitation that supported their work with teachers and staffs:

1. "We are working on conferring at my school, so I'll be able to refer back to the work we did at the training facility when I plan my next professional development session."

2. “I appreciated the demo teacher’s insight on how she plans her mini-lessons. I will definitely incorporate this kind of talk around planning with the teachers I am coaching.”
3. “I got some great ideas on how to improve my facilitation and debriefing techniques.”

The observation-based model of professional appears to have the potential to support staff developers in designing and leading professional development at their schools; professional development that may serve to integrate the District’s learning agenda within the work of schools.

Summary

The focus group findings provide an additional layer of qualitative data through which we may extend and qualify emerging answers to the three research questions:

1. *How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?*

Participants across demographic variables were positive in their assessments of the observation-based model of professional development. However, the disaggregate survey data showed a persistent trend: Across survey items, staff developers, vice principals, and principals were more positive in their responses than were teachers. The focus group interviews suggested a possible rationale. Teachers and school leaders in San Diego City Schools operate within different political contexts, spheres of influence, and performance expectations that may serve to frame and impact their responses. Teachers displayed a certain level of rawness or vulnerability as a result of their front-line position. They are charged with implementing the content-specific pedagogies and curricula

advanced in the District's literacy initiative and modeled in the demonstration facilities. Staff developers, on the other hand, are one step removed from the implementation process. They may perceive their role as messengers charged with carrying the leadership voice to their schools and teachers. The context and dynamics of their work may compel staff developers to publicly support the District's training model more enthusiastically than teachers who must face the complexities of implementation.

2. *What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?*

Ninety-nine percent of participating teachers reported that the observation-based model of professional development helped or would help them improve their instructional practice. The focus group data verified that teachers did indeed apply some learnings from the observations of practice in their classrooms. Teachers talked about making discrete and sometimes superficial changes in practice after their visits to the training facilities: changing from rectangular tables to round tables, trading in book baskets for book bags, adding 10 minutes to writers' workshop. While every focus group participant cited examples of how the guided observations of practice had changed their instructional practice, we are left with nagging questions about the nature, depth, quality, and durability these changes.

3. *What are the factors that act to support or impede participating teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?*

The focus group data confirmed a set of barriers noted in the survey data that may act individually or collectively to impede teachers' capacity to implement the observed

literacy strategies in the context of their classrooms and their schools. Some of these barriers can be dismantled through a redesign of the observation-based model of professional development. For example, offering differentiated levels and content in the training model may provide teachers with more coherent and systematic support. Expanding the observation time may provide teachers with additional and more contextualized models of literacy instruction. The more difficult barriers are those that may be endemic to the culture of teaching: a sense that teaching and learning are rigidly context-specific; a lack of coherence across classrooms, schools, and leadership voices; and a pervading culture of “us against them.”

These answers to the research questions remain tentative as we have not yet added the critical voices of site administrators. Principals, the instructional leaders of their schools, will bring specific knowledge of their teachers’ reactions to and applications of the observation-based model of professional development to this discussion of findings.

Site Administrator Interviews

The final inquiry process involved individual interviews with strategically selected principals. This selection process was based on relational criteria and produced a clearly biased sampling. As has been previously noted, the current political climate in San Diego City Schools ranges from wary to disputatious. The interviews were limited to a small set of principals who shared a trusting professional rapport with the researcher to assure a maximally honest exchange of ideas and insights. Clearly, three site administrators cannot convey the complexity of teacher change within a large, urban school district. Yet, a small set of sincere feedback about the early results of this training

process on the performance and thinking of teachers was deemed more useful than a larger set of guarded, reactive, or politically correct responses.

The selected principals represented a range of schools, communities, and a shared breadth of experience. The academic rankings of participants' schools included API 2, API 4, and API 8: a low, middle, and high-performing school. Two of these schools are located in ethnically diverse communities with low- to middle-income levels, and one school is in an affluent, ethnically homogenous community. All three principals had been in school-based leadership positions in San Diego City Schools before the advent of the current reform initiative and had attended at least one observation-based model of professional development with their kindergarten, first, or second grade team.

Five questions were developed to guide the site administrator interviews: (a) What changes have you noted in the literacy instruction of those teachers from your school who attended the observation-based model of professional development? (b) What evidence supports your observation of pedagogical change or lack of pedagogical change? (c) What are the events or contexts that appear to facilitate or impede teachers' change process? (d) How would you change the observation-based model of professional development to maximally impact your teachers' pedagogical practices? (e) Is there anything else you would like to add or expand on? These questions were used to guide, not constrain the interviews. Principals were allowed to develop lines of thinking not anticipated in the overall design of the questions. Some standardization of questions across the interviews was necessary, however, to permit cross-interview comparisons (see Appendix D for a complete list of questions and an overview of the site administrator interview protocol).

All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded using domains suggested by the data. The following three themes guide this discussion of findings: (a) assessment and application, (b) school-based support, and (c) institutional and cultural barriers. Figure 6 illustrates the relationship between and among the thematic findings of the survey, the focus group interviews, and the site administration interviews.

Theme One: Assessment and Application

Participating site administrators applauded the observation-based model of professional development as a powerful instructional tool and learning experience. One principal affirmed the value of a teacher-led model of professional development:

It was much better than having a consultant come in to work with our teachers.

People outside our district don't know the politics: They don't know what we're dealing with and what we're being asked to do. Using our own teachers as models is a much more credible format.

Another principal acknowledged the authenticity of the training model: "Seeing a real teacher, with real kids, dealing with real problems, and then talking with the teacher about what she did and why she did it was very worthwhile for my teachers." All three principals confirmed the power of observation as a professional development strategy: "The model is definitely useful. Seeing is believing."

These findings support the analysis of the survey and focus group data. Teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals agreed that the observation-based model of professional development was a valuable training experience. However, the value of any professional development process lies not in the satisfaction data but in the user-application data. What did teachers learn and how did they apply these learnings?

Survey Findings	Focus Group Interview Findings	Site Administrator Interview Findings
<p><u>Theme One</u> The Impact of Schools' Academic Performance on Participants' Responses</p>	<p><u>Theme One</u> The Impact of Schools' Academic Performance on Participants' Responses</p>	<p><u>Theme One</u> Assessment and Application: Intentions, Approximations, and Long-Term Change</p>
<p><u>Theme Two</u> The Impact of Program Design on Participants' Responses: Reading, Guided Reading, and Observation Times</p>	<p><u>Theme Two</u> The Impact of Program Design on Participants' Responses: Reading and Observation Times</p>	<p><u>Theme Two:</u> School-Based Support</p>
<p><u>Theme Three</u> The Impact of Context on Participants' Responses</p>	<p><u>Theme Three</u> The Impact of Context on Participants' Responses</p>	<p><u>Theme Three</u> Institutional and Cultural Barriers: Cultural Norms, System Coherence, and Systematic Resistance</p>
<p><u>Theme Four</u> The Impact of Institutional Role on Participants' Responses</p>	<p><u>Theme Four</u> The Impact of Institutional Role on Participants' Responses</p>	
	<p><u>Theme Five</u> Assessment and Application</p>	

Figure 6. The Juxtaposition of the Survey Themes, Focus Group Themes, and the Site Administrator Themes

Principals talked extensively about the impact of the observation-based model of professional development on their teachers. This discussion is framed through an implementation time-line suggested by the interview data: a timeline that moves from stated intentions, to initial approximations, to long-term changes.

Stated Intentions

Principals noted that their teachers experienced a certain level of end-of-session euphoria after their experience in the observation-based model of professional development. This temporary feeling of excitement may be related to a sense of professional renewal as teachers studied, observed, and discussed current, powerful models of literacy instruction. It may be the result of professional networking. A typical training session involved grade-level teams from 8 to 12 schools. Discussing instructional challenges, strategies, and successes with an extended group of colleagues may have led to a temporary sense of connectedness. And, this phenomenon may be the direct result of observing accomplished teaching and powerful learning. If seeing is truly believing, participants may have left the training sessions holding images of instruction that they were eager to try-on in the context of their own schools and classrooms.

End-of-session euphoria appears to have fueled teachers' widespread, stated intentions for change. As reported by an interviewed principal, "My teachers always had a good feeling when they came back from the trainings. They felt that it was worthwhile and they were really excited about trying out some of the things they had learned." Did these intentions translate into action? And, if so, what was the quality and substance of teachers' initial approximations of the strategies modeled in the observation-based model of professional development?

Initial Approximations

Principals noticed variation in teachers' initial approximations of the literacy strategies modeled in the demonstration facilities: approximations that ranged from trivial, to inappropriate, to substantive. Teachers appear to have focused on the most obvious and tangible aspects of instruction as cited in numerous examples:

1. "We've been working on conferring – especially keeping careful records. My first grade teachers are trying the form used by the demo teacher."
2. "Some of my kinder [kindergarten] teachers are trying individual white boards during their interactive writing."
3. "One of my teachers came back from the training and totally redesigned her room to open up her meeting area."

All of these initial approximations are cosmetic and procedural in nature.

While some teachers' demonstrated superficial understandings, others demonstrated consequential misunderstandings. Consider this example: "One of my most resistant teachers came back really excited about charting. She saw some charts in the demo room that she thought 'looked good' so she copied them and hung them up in her classroom." While this teacher is approximating an important instructional strategy she misunderstood the underlying rationale and purpose. Charting is most useful when it connects to instruction. A teacher may, for example, create a chart with her students as they study the criteria for choosing an appropriate independent reading text. Students refer to this chart as they review, practice, and begin to internalize these selection criteria. Co-created charts emerge over time and in response to the specific needs of the students and the instructional objectives of the teacher; they reflect the authentic instructional

language of the classroom; and they are used by the teacher and her students for reference and documentation. Displaying another teacher's charts relegates them to classroom decorations rather than instructional tools. Copying instructional charts from the demonstration classroom is considered a misguided approximation.

Some teachers applied their learning with a greater sense of urgency. A principal described the "career changing" experience of one such teacher:

It made a huge difference for one of our kindergarten teachers who had a pretty serious management issue. We worked with her during the training to pay close attention to how the demo teacher talked to her students, how she set her expectations for student behavior, and how she quickly redirected inappropriate behaviors so that it didn't get in the way of her teaching and her students' learning. With our help she was able to use a lot of these strategies in her own classroom and, frankly, it may well have saved her job.

While this teacher's application is substantive it is only obliquely related to the observation-based model of professional development. Classroom management was not an explicit instructional focus for any of the training sessions. If we are to link application with instructional objectives we must say that this teacher did not learn the intended curriculum. If we are to link application with instructional need we must say that this teacher learned what she needed.

As we have seen, many teachers' initial approximations appear to lack substance or depth of understanding. However, we need to consider the nature of this analysis of findings. Real change, change that makes a difference for teachers and students, requires time for reflection, consideration, and ongoing study.

Long-Term Change

The interviewed principals realized that more complex aspects of change may not immediately translate into visible or measurable action. Meaningful change requires a period of thoughtful deliberation. Consider this principal's insight:

After the writing session one of my teachers told me that she went out and bought five different books on writers' workshop with her own money and signed up for a workshop through the County Office of Education. She didn't come back from the training and dive right into writers' workshop but I know she's thinking about it for next year.

Searching for impact within the short time-line defined by this study disregards the nature of long-term change. One principal spoke to this issue directly:

The kind of change we're working on in the district, in our school, in our professional development is not something you're going to see in a matter of days, or weeks, or even months. Our teachers need time and support to put these sophisticated literacy strategies in place.

Another principal was even more pointed: "This is not about quick-fix solutions. Our teachers are not going to go see a model teacher once or twice and change how they do their business. No way."

Theme Two: Site-Based Support

Principals agreed that centralized professional development does not work in isolation of site-based support: "We've got to do a much better job of supporting this work at our school through careful set-ups and follow-ups. We have to give our teachers the time, support, and structures they need to improve practice." Principals talked

about the observation-based model of professional development as a “nested experience” in which, ideally, the training is nested within and supported by the work of schools. One principal operationalized this concept by establishing a professional development planning process with her teachers:

I ask my teachers to be accountable for their learning by telling me ahead of time, ‘What is your learning plan? What do you need to accomplish?’ And when they get back from the training they need to come up with an action plan, ‘Based on what you have learned, what are your next steps?’

The interviewed principals relied on their staff developers to continue the work initiated in the observation-based model of professional development: “I set the expectation for my teachers’ learning but my staff developer has to go out there and do the modeling and coaching.”

The survey data revealed low attendance patterns for principals due, in part or in whole, to their multifarious responsibilities and unforgiving schedules. In spite of these complexities the interviewed principals cited the value in attending training sessions with their teachers whenever possible. As one principal said, “I could only go to the training with one team. I chose the first grade team because they’re my toughest teachers. I was able to keep them on track and redirect ‘can’t do’ conversations into ‘can do’ conversations.” Another principal reported, “My attendance was absolutely necessary. I needed to be able to hear and see what my teachers saw and heard so I could support their work at school.”

The interviewed principals acknowledged and acted upon their leadership role in supporting teachers’ before, during, and after the training sessions. Yet each of these

principals also recognized the complexity of the change process: “Change isn’t sequential or predictable and it certainly isn’t easy. Good trainings and good support structures don’t necessarily lead to change. A lot of factors can get in the way.” Let us examine some of the factors that “get in the way.”

Theme Three: Institutional and Cultural Barriers

The interviewed site administrators were somewhat more thorough in their discussions of barriers than were the teachers or staff developers citing generative examples and providing thoughtful rationale. These findings are organized in categories authentically suggested by the interview data: (a) cultural norms, (b) system coherence, and (c) systematic resistance.

Cultural Norms

The observation-based model of professional development elevates the demonstration teacher to a position of “expert teacher.” This role challenges a pervasive egalitarian culture that “consistently encourages teachers to maintain the status quo – to be wary of anyone who steps out of the norm, who differentiates themselves in any way” (Barker, 1998, p. 35). One principal elaborated on this culture-defying aspect of the observation-based model of professional development:

Putting a classroom teacher up a pedestal was hard for my teachers at first. They made a lot of excuses like, ‘She has a better library than we do’; ‘She has better students than we do’; ‘She has more freedom to make professional judgements than we do’; ‘She’s been to more trainings than we have.’ I think, though, they are just not used to learning from a colleague in this way. It was easier for them to

find reasons to distance themselves from the demonstration teacher than to learn from her.

We have seen this level of disassociation in both the survey data and the focus group data. Yet, this principal suggested a possible underlying rationale: “Teachers don’t usually set themselves apart from their colleagues. It’s that old crab bucket thing. You don’t need to put a lid on a crab bucket. If one crab climbs too high the others will pull it back down.”

Teachers most often work in isolation. They do not observe other teachers at work nor do they make their own work public. One principal said:

We are used to working alone and we don’t make it a habit to talk about the state of our practice. Teachers walk into the demo room and they see these wonderful lessons and the room looks magnificent and the students are doing so well and the demo teacher can talk about her practice at such a sophisticated level. It was a new experience for my teachers and they were a bit intimidated.

In spite of cultural taboos and existing traditions this principal acknowledged the importance of keeping real teachers at the center of professional development:

The training works in a couple of ways. First of all, teachers are seeing good models of instruction. Second, they get to see a teacher open up her classroom and share her thinking. I think, over time, it will help our teachers break out of their isolation cells and crab bucket mentalities. It can set a precedent for helping teachers share their work; to collaborate more.

The observation-based model of professional development offers a window on the practice and thinking of an accomplished teacher. It is a format that defines and

celebrates expertise. It is a model that invites teachers to learn with and from each other. And while each of these elements presents certain challenges for teachers, they also present potent opportunities. As one principal reported, “A picture is worth a thousand words. This model helped my teachers see what is considered good practice.”

System Coherence

Assuring clarity and consistency across schools can be challenging. Assuring clarity and consistency across a large, diverse, urban school district can be positively daunting. As part of the current reform effort, San Diego City Schools subdivided its mammoth organization into discrete “learning communities.” Each of these learning communities is supervised by an instructional leader whose charge includes conveying the leadership message of the Superintendent and the Chancellor of Instruction to the 15 to 25 site administrators. These messages, however, are “refined” by each instructional leader’s understanding, interest, experience, and educational point of view. These individualized leadership messages are further diluted through the words and actions of principals, vice principals, staff developers, educational consultants, the literacy department staff, the collective bargaining agency, and sundry community and advocacy groups. Classroom teachers are on the receiving end of this formidable list of messengers. One principal summed up the dilemma: “My teachers feel like they’re caught in a virtual cross-fire of confusing and conflicting messages.”

The site administrators reported that the instructional strategies highlighted in the observation-based model of professional development sometimes appeared to collide with the leadership message and compound teachers’ confusions:

1. "I've been telling my teachers to keep their mini-lessons short and focused. When they went to the demo room they saw a mini-lesson that lasted at least 20 minutes. I had to go back and help my teachers untangle this information. We had a really good discussion and my teachers grew in their understanding, but it took some time and effort on my part."
2. "The demonstration teacher talked about letting her kids have a couple of challenge books in their independent reading baskets. We had a consultant at our school just last week who told us that every book should be at the child's instructional level. It can be confusing when we hear different things from different people."
3. "One of the first things my IL [instructional leader] looks for when she walks-through classrooms is the word wall. We didn't see a word wall in the demonstration classroom."

The difficulty lies in balancing the system's need for consistency and coherence with the non-prescriptive nature of teaching and learning. While effective teaching has certain shared elements, it must remain pliable to the professional judgements of the teacher and the assessed needs of her students. The demonstration teachers, no doubt, had a clear and compelling rationale for each of the cited examples of "mixed messages." Yet participating teachers and principals were left with visual images that did not match their emerging understandings of literacy instruction. This presents an interesting and important design challenge: How are the shared elements of effective practice best conveyed in a realistic context that respects and maintains teaching as a dynamic, responsive, interactive process?

Systematic Resistance

Many teachers in San Diego City Schools openly oppose the current reform initiative. Participating site administrators reported that these resisters have the potential to undermine the change process for individual teachers, grade-level teams, and whole school faculties:

I only have a few resisters at my school but I have colleagues who work at heavy union schools who simply cannot get the work done. Some of their teachers may go to trainings and be willing to take on some aspect of the work, but then they get in the lounge with these tough union teachers and they back down. In a strong union school there's just a lot of pressure to stand together against the administration. It's a very difficult environment to work in.

All three principals had some level of resistance at their schools though these were most typically confined to one or two grade-level teams. Each of the interviewed principals had acquired some strategies for working with or working around these difficult teachers. One interviewee said:

My first grade team is tough, tough, tough. I make it a priority to attend trainings with them, to sit with them during their collaborative planning time, and to spend as much time as I can in their classrooms. I do it for the kids. I just can't have politics getting in the way of giving these kids the best education possible.

Another principal expressed a very different tactic: "I've got two of them. I've got my staff developer practically living in one teacher's classroom and I'm documenting the other one."

Interestingly, the site administrator data echoes the us-against-them sentiment raised by the focus group teachers, but with a substantive twist. Whereas the focus groups referred to ideological differences between teachers and the administration, the site administrator data points to the ideological differences between “teachers who want to learn and grow and teachers who hide behind union rhetoric.” Strong words that reveal strong emotions.

Conclusions

A more conclusive discussion of the research questions ensues from this multi-layered analysis of findings. However, these conclusions are necessarily limited by the very structures that inform them. The survey data involved a large sampling of teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals who participated in the observation-based model of professional development, yet it remains nothing more than a sampling of a much larger population. The survey instrument, while designed with care and precision, conveys a point of view. The questions that were asked and the questions that were not asked affect the range and quality of responses. The focus groups interviews were designed to represent participants’ authentic point of view, yet the voices of 27 volunteers cannot extend to those teachers and school leaders who chose not to make their voices heard. And while the site administrator interview data offered, perhaps, the most perspicacious feedback it is also the most restrictive as it represents the thinking of three principals: three individuals from a cast of hundreds.

These constraints strictly limit any conclusions to the specific contexts, experiences, perspectives, and perceptions of the actual participants. All conclusions lie in the shadow of these limitations:

1. *How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?*

All available data points verified that participants perceived the observation-based model of professional development as an effective training mechanism. Teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals noted the power and potential of studying the instructional practice of an accomplished teacher. And while this study has acknowledged and explored a data pattern in which school leaders rated the training model higher than did teachers, the significance of this pattern must not be overrated. Fully 98% of teachers and 99% of school leaders assessed the observation-based model of professional development as an effective or somewhat effective learning strategy for their professional growth.

This level of consensus is nothing less than astonishing yet we must ask: What is the relationship between satisfaction data and program effectiveness? Participants liked the model. They liked observing a teacher at work. They liked hearing the teacher's reflections on her work. They thought the content of the trainings was appropriate and relevant. Does this mean that the observation-based model of professional development was a success? Fullerton and Quinn (2002) contend, "One of the primary goals of professional development is change – change in teacher knowledge, change in instruction, change in student learning, and eventual change in school and district progress" (as cited in Rodgers & Pinnell, 2002, p. 134). Did the observation-based model of professional development lead to any of these changes?

2. *What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?*

Cause and effect are notoriously difficult to measure in education. Teacher practice emerges in response to multiple factors including educational background, school culture, student needs, site-support, materials, funding, and professional development. Changes in instructional practice cannot be neatly isolated from the array of conditions and contexts in which teachers work (Elmore, 2001). For the purposes of this study, all discussions of causality were reliant on the perceptions of participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals. Participants were asked: Did this training make a difference in your instructional practice?

The data revealed that the program indeed had some impact on the instructional practice of participants. However, many of these changes appeared to be procedural or superficial in nature. Does this mean that the observation-based model of professional development failed? What level of impact is necessary to determine the success of a training model? And what is an acceptable time-line for change? The literature is clear that substantive change is dependent upon time for teachers to observe, consider, discuss, practice, and refine new practices (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Garet, et al, 2001; Lieberman, 1995; Robb, 2000 Thompson, 1997). Perhaps these superficial changes are sufficient for the short time-line imposed by this study. Perhaps these early indicators of change coupled with the satisfaction data serve to suggest the potential of the observation-based model of professional development. Perhaps these superficial adjustments are the precursors to deeper, more meaningful change.

3. *What are the factors that act to support or impede participating teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?*

Participants readily discussed a variety of conditions and contexts that pose barriers to change. These barriers included programmatic considerations (e.g., the amount of observation time), cultural norms and traditions (e.g., an egalitarian culture; a perception that teaching and learning are context-specific), and institutional constructs (e.g., communication, system coherence, and politics). Participants also referred to a set of conditions that appear to support the observation-based model of professional development: including school leaders in the training process, organizing trainings around learning communities and grade-level teams, and positioning site-developers at all schools. Through all of this, we are reminded of the complexities of change.

Davis, Sumara, and Luce-Kaplar (2000) argue that research is moving away from statistical analyses, causal logic, and a reductionist focus on linear relationships toward a realization that the universe is better described through complexity theory. According to this worldview, complex systems cannot be understood by examining their separate parts; the parts are not as complex as the whole. The observation-based model of professional development does not exist outside the complexities, contradictions, and idiosyncrasies that define the teaching profession. As this study moves from an analysis of what is to a discussion of what could be it will be necessary to examine the ways in which this model of professional development fits within the more complex frame of educational change.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Professional development has long been peripheral to the work of teachers, schools, and school systems (Darling-Hammond, 1997; David & Shields, 1999; Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller 1992; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Mizell, 2001; Renyi, 1996; Sparks, 2002; Speck & Knipe, 2001; Stein et al., 1999; Thompson & Wood, 1993). Most typically, professional development has been directed at large groups of teachers gathered together for a day to hear about new content, assessments, or instructional strategies. It is a popular approach known by many unflattering names: hit-and-run inservices, sit-and-get workshops, and spray-and-pray approaches. By whatever name, this didactic, episodic practice is a carry-over “from the days when teachers were considered ‘trained’ when they entered the profession and from that time forward needed only cursory looks at specific materials in order to know how to use them” (Rodgers & Pinnell, 2002, p. 1).

Renewed attention has been cast on professional development for teachers as the nation searches for ways to realize the promise and potential of a standards-based system of education; a system in which all students are expected to meet or exceed high levels of academic achievement. It is abundantly clear that the success of the standards-based

reform initiative is dependent upon the preparedness, quality, and determination of teachers (Alvarado, 1998; Artze, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ferguson, 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Haycock, 1998; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; NBPTS, 1996; Renyi, 1996; Sykes, 1996; Zemelman et al., 1998). In fact, the quality of this nation's teachers may well be the most critical issue facing public education.

Professional development is not a peripheral issue: Ongoing, high-quality learning opportunities are essential in providing teachers with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions they will need to educate all students well (Arbuckle, 1997; Birman et al., 2000; Dickson, 2001; Garet et al., 2001; Resnick & Harwell, 1998; Sharp, 1997). If students are to meet world-class standards there must be a parallel emphasis on supporting world-class teachers. And world-class teachers will require access to world-class professional development practices (Alvarado, 1998; Boser, 2001; Elmore & Burney, 1997; Hirsh, 2001; NFIE, 2000; Renyi, 1996; Sparks, 2002; Sykes, 1996).

Summary of the Study

Purpose and Rationale

This study examined participants' perceptions of an innovative model of professional development designed by San Diego City Schools. The observation-based model of professional development links teacher learning to demonstrations of accomplished teaching in training centers that provide a direct window on practice. Participants are able to study instruction through a one-way mirror and video technologies that allow non-intrusive access to the sights and sounds of classroom instruction. These real-time demonstrations of practice are "narrated" by a trained facilitator who details relevant aspects of teaching and learning during the observation.

The demonstration teacher then debriefs the lesson highlighting her rationale, her learnings, her students' learnings, and the range of potential next steps. This professional development forum reflects the authentic setting, tasks, and expectations for literacy instruction in San Diego City Schools.

This study was designed to strategically and systematically examine the observation-based model of professional development through three research questions:

1. How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?
2. What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?
3. What are the factors that act to support or impede participating teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?

Essentially, these questions ask, is this a good model of professional development? Does it make a difference in teachers' practice? Why or why not?

The observation-based model of professional development rests on the premise that when teachers study demonstrations of effective instruction they are likely to incorporate these strategies into their own pedagogical practice. While this is a provocative assumption, no formal evaluation has been conducted to determine the actual or perceived impact of the training model. This study fills this void through a multi-layered research design that provides a set of findings descriptive of the challenges and implications of the current model and a series of recommendations that may inform future models.

Methodology

The methodological structure included a large-scale survey, three focus group interviews, and three site administrator interviews. Each layer of inquiry added detail and dimension to the data pool, analyses, and findings. The survey defined the overall landscape and provided a conceptual backdrop through which to determine patterns and potential themes. The focus group interviews added texture and color as participants discussed their reactions, insights, and recommendations. The site administrator interviews provided clarity through explicit examples and grounded rationale. These multiple levels of inquiry afforded a richly variegated data pool through which to understand participants' perceptions of the observation-based model of professional development.

The number of subjects and the quality of their feedback mirrored the broad-to-specific or whole-to-part structure of the overall research design. The survey included the largest number of participants yielding a sampling of more than 1,200 teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals. It was administered within the context of the observation-based model of professional development to elicit the highest possible response rate. Yet, participants' voices were limited by a preponderance of closed and partially closed questions. The survey involved large numbers of respondents who produced a limited range of responses (see Figure 7 for a graphic representation of this structure).

The focus group sampling relied on a diverse subset of teachers and staff developers. Participants were selected from a volunteer pool to form three focus groups: a group of eight kindergarten teachers, a group of nine first grade teachers, and a group of

10 staff developers. The nature of this conversational inquiry allowed participants to explain their answers, build on the thinking of others, and provide unanticipated responses. The focus groups involved a smaller number of respondents who produced a larger range of responses.

The site administrator interviews included three principals who had an established, professional relationship with the researcher. This criterion assured a certain level of honesty from politically vulnerable participants. In these one-on-one interviews principals were able to construct, explore, and illustrate lines of thinking with minimal direction or redirection from the researcher. The site administrator interviews involved the smallest number of respondents yet produced the most detailed level of response.

The research design integrated three inquiry processes: a quantitative survey, qualitative focus groups, and qualitative site administrator interviews. This methodological triangulation strengthened the reliability and the internal validity of the study by offering strategic points of comparison across and within inquiry strategies and populations (Best, 1981). The strongest data were those that reverberated throughout the research layers. Merriam (1998) suggests that integrative methodologies allow a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon than is possible with a single research strategy. For this study, triangulated or verified data points permitted reasoned conclusions about the role, purpose, and possible implications of the observation-based model of professional development for teachers.

Key Findings

Tentative answers to the research questions began to emerge in Chapter Four as each layer of data was analyzed, synthesized, and cross-referenced. It is now possible to

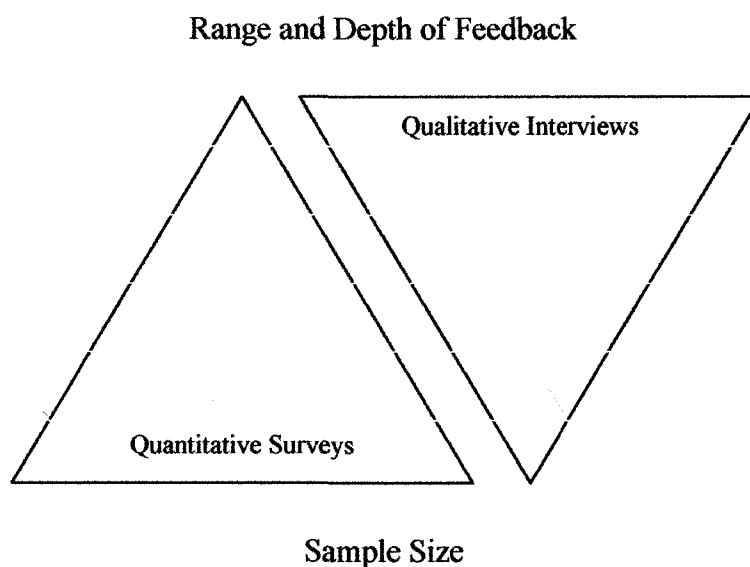


Figure 7. The Relationship of Size and Quality of Feedback between the Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies.

move toward more definitive responses by carefully considering a set of key findings that were threaded through the survey, focus group, and site administrator data.

Seeing is Believing – Or Is It?

Most participants applauded the observation-based model of professional development for its authenticity and credibility. For far too long, traditional models of professional development have been disconnected from the real work and real concerns of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Lieberman, 1995; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Speck, 1996). The observation-based model of professional development eliminates this sense of disconnection by situating teacher learning within the physical context of a fully-functioning classroom. Teachers acknowledged, “There’s something very powerful about seeing it – not just hearing someone talk about it, but actually seeing it in action.” This

notion that “seeing is believing” was repeated by participants across training venues, grade levels, service years, school API rankings, and instructional roles. Yet, for some, “seeing” was not commensurate with “believing.”

Many teachers reported that the demonstration classrooms did not match their own workplace reality. The classroom teachers were too skilled, too reflective, too successful. The students were too high, too independent, too well-behaved. The classroom had too many books, too many instructional resources, and furniture that was too new. Let us examine each of these areas of disbelief in more detail.

San Diego City Schools chose demonstration teachers of the highest caliber: Teachers with the capacity to model effective literacy instruction. Both demonstration teachers are experienced, self-motivated, life-long learners with the highest level of professional integrity. Selecting accomplished teachers was an intentional response to the discourse suggesting that professional development forums need to provide models of best practice to prepare teachers to think and work in new ways (Alvarado, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Tucker & Coddling, 1998; Schmoker, 1996). However, many participants were not able to see themselves in the practice of a highly accomplished teacher. One participant reported, “You should select a teacher who reflects the overall district.” But, should this teacher reflect what has been, what is, or what could be? San Diego City Schools decided to employ demonstration teachers who represented models of what could be. Yet, for some teachers, the sophistication of the demonstration teachers was cause for disbelief, “We can’t do what she’s doing. She’s miles ahead of us.”

The students in the demonstration classrooms were selected to mirror the authentic range of abilities, social contexts, and languages of the school. The kindergarten classroom, for example, included four English learners, two students living with grandparents, six students living with single, young mothers, one student with identified special needs, and of the 20 children assigned to this classroom only two had any preschool experience. In the hands of a highly accomplished teacher, however, these diverse children quickly became a community of readers, writers, thinkers, and doers. Many participants credited this success to elitism rather than the result of effective teaching. As one teacher remarked, “These kids must be hand-picked.” For some teachers, the achievement level of the student in the demonstration classrooms was cause for disbelief.

The classrooms were intentionally furnished with bountiful libraries. This was consistent with San Diego City School’s literacy initiative that emphasizes the need for a rich and varied library in every classroom. The professional development designers considered it important to provide District models of print-rich classrooms for teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals. This decision was consistent with a support strategy detailed in the Blueprint for Student Success in a Standards-Based System: Supporting Student Achievement in an Integrated Learning Environment which allocated \$5,000 to every kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teacher for the purchase of text materials (SDCS, 2000). The demonstration classrooms provided an opportunity to model the organization, accessibility, and effective use of a classroom library.

Participants' focus on the quantity of books in these classrooms disregards the role that a text-rich environment plays in the learning lives of students. As related by one principal:

I heard some talk about how many books the demo teacher had, but really it's not about how many books you have. It's about how you use the books you *do* have to support student learning. I think when teachers say 'oh, but she has more books than we do,' they're missing the point. It's not about the quantity of the books; it's about the quality of the instruction.

Yet, for some teachers, the organization of the demonstration classrooms was cause for disbelief. As one teachers said, "Show us a real classroom!"

It would seem that "seeing is believing" is only true to a point. Seeing a real teacher with real students in a real classroom is clearly preferable to decontextualized trainings housed in school auditoriums or hotel ballrooms. However, seeing a successful teacher supporting successful students was problematic for many participants. This theme of professional skepticism suggests the need for additional supports in the ways teachers observe, debrief, and study instructional practice in the observation-based model of professional development.

Observation is Hard Work

Studying instruction in the context of the observation-based model of professional development was a difficult task for many teachers. While staff developers, vice principals, and principals routinely examine classroom practice as an integral part of their jobs, pervasive professional norms of isolationism and egalitarianism strictly limit teachers' access to and experiences with formal and informal observations of practice

(Arbuckle, 1997; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Sparks, 1999).

Teachers lack the opportunity, training, and professional expectation to examine peer practice, yet the observation-based model of professional development is dependent on teachers' capacity to observe, discern, analyze, synthesize, and critically discuss teaching and learning. This presents an interesting paradox: Teachers have little if any experience with peer observation yet they are expected to effectively use observation as the primary learning tool in the context of the demonstration facilities.

Teachers' inexperience with observation as a tool for inquiry echoed throughout the data. Some teachers openly acknowledged the difficulty of sustaining observations of practice in the demonstration facilities: "In my classroom I'm on the run all the time. It was hard to just sit and watch." Other teachers asked for additional observation time yet their comments indicated a lack of depth or focus:

1. "Four students were off-task during their independent writing time."
2. "Her mini-lesson was kind of long."
3. "Are we supposed to use that conferring form?"

Some teachers recognized their lack of skill, "These weren't our kids. We didn't know them; who they were or what they were working on. It was hard to watch kids we didn't know. I didn't really have a handle on how to do it." Observation is hard work. While this insight may impact the ways in which teachers are supported in their observations of practice, it may also impact what teachers are asked to observe.

The data indicated that some aspects of instruction "showed" better than others. The content focus for readers' workshop was considered appropriate by approximately 79% of all participating second grade teachers. The content for the writers' workshop

session was considered appropriate by 89% of second grade teachers. However, only 64% of these same teachers assessed the guided reading session as appropriate for their professional growth. Guided reading is a sophisticated strategy that involves in-the-moment decisions and is highly specific to a teacher's diagnostic assessment of a small group of students. Much of what is critical to the success of a guided reading lesson is invisible except to the most astute observer. While this does not mean that the training facilities should focus on easy-to-see, easy-to-model, easy-to-talk about aspects of teaching and learning, it does imply that some instructional approaches, like guided reading, may require more supportive layers of facilitation and different ways of viewing and re-viewing.

The data suggested that teachers may need both explicit instruction and facilitated practice to use observation as an effective inquiry tool. This conclusion raises a number of conceptual and planning considerations relevant to the observation-based model of professional development: What is the purpose, power, and application of studied observations of teaching and learning and how are these rationale best conveyed to participants? What are the strategies, skills, and dispositions required for meaningful observations of teaching and learning? And, how can observational skills be taught, scaffolded, and monitored in the context of the training model?

You Saw What?

Each observation-based model of professional development was driven by clear, purposeful objectives. For example, the objectives for the kindergarten session on writers' workshop stated: (a) Participants will examine the architectural structure of writers' workshop in order to understand the sequence and pacing of the component

elements; and (b) participants will examine the instructional relationships between and among the mini-lesson, independent writing with conferring, and the share-out in order to understand the interdependence of the component elements. The classroom observations provided vivid, real-life examples of these instructional components to make the learnings concrete and transferable. The data suggested, however, that what participants were supposed to see and what they actually saw were not always the same.

Some participants looked at the room environment, “I liked the way she had her room set up.” Others observed classroom procedures, “I noticed that she lets her kids keep their writing folders at their tables.” Some teachers adjusted their viewing to meet their own learning needs, “I’ve been struggling with whether to let my children use crayons or not. I might let them try those sketching pens.” Others concentrated on petty classroom problems, “Four students were off-task during their independent writing time.”

Offering a defined window on practice, even with clear directions and skillful facilitation, does preclude “off-task” observations. Yet, it is recognized that off-task is a relative term. A participant’s need to learn may not be synchronous with the District’s need to teach. A teacher struggling with logistical issues around the use of writing folders, for example, is probably well-served to study these strategies in the demonstration facility. It makes sense for teachers working to construct effective learning environments to closely observe the classroom organization of an accomplished teacher. But, what about the session objectives? Are they secondary to the professional needs of individual teachers?

We are left with lingering questions of balance and purpose. How can observations of practice be structured to provide participants with a wide-angle lens

through which they can study aspects of teaching and learning relevant to their immediate needs? Does it make sense, for example, to offer an observational “free time” during which teachers might look broadly at areas of interest before they are asked to engage in a more focused observational experience? And, how can observations of practice be structured to provide participants with a zoom lens through which they can study specific areas of teaching and learning: areas that may support teachers’ individual and collective understandings of effective literacy instruction?

Some Liked it More than Others

The data indicated that teachers from lower-performing schools were generally more positive in their assessment of the training model than their colleagues from higher-performing schools. The data also revealed that staff developers, vice principals, and principals across API rankings consistently rated the training model higher than did teachers. This begs the question, what do teachers from lower-performing schools and school leaders have in common?

Each of these cohorts has access to various and intensive site-based support mechanisms. Teachers from the lowest-performing schools typically have two staff developers, additional professional development days at their schools, extended planning time, and frequent support from literacy consultants. Staff developers, vice principals, and principals have monthly instructional conferences, participate in ongoing study groups, and have access to on-site coaching provided by instructional leaders, mentor principals, and literacy department staff. These may well be the most highly trained group of educators in San Diego City Schools. But, with knowledge comes responsibility.

Teachers from API 1-2 schools receive additional support for the explicit purpose of improving student achievement. API 1-2 schools are the lowest performing schools in California and, as such, are considered to be at-risk of failure. These teachers operate under the very real threat of a state take-over if student achievement does not meet designated growth targets within a designated timeframe. School leaders operate under a similar sense of urgency. In a political climate driven by a desire to hastily improve the educational system, there is palpable pressure for site administrators to ever increase student achievement. This level of motivation, coupled with ongoing and intensive training, may better prepare learners' to study teaching and learning in the observation-based model of professional development. As one training center facilitator noted:

I really look forward to working with teachers from focus schools [API 1 schools]. They pay attention. They ask smart questions. It is clear that they're here to learn. Teachers from high-end schools seem to come with an attitude – like they already know everything they need to know.

Teachers from the District's highest-performing schools are largely veteran teachers who work in middle- to upper-class communities. Many seasoned teachers carry with them a rich background of experiences, a storehouse of resources, well-established ways of working with students, and they enjoy the support of parents, caregivers, and the community at large. Experienced teachers of successful students harbor a certain sense of complacency about professional change: complacency that may lead to inertia and/or active resistance (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Kozol, 1991). As one teacher said, "My students are doing great. Obviously what I'm doing is working so why should I change?" This is quite a different sensibility than that expressed by this

teacher from a focus school, “I’ve got to be a learner if I am going to be a good teacher for my kids. I’ve got to take my learning seriously.”

The data indicated a disparity in teachers’ assessment of the observation-based model of professional development; a disparity linked to the academic achievement of students and the instructional role of participants. This search to understand why “some liked it more than others” leads to questions of motivation. Are teachers who hold a sense of urgency to improve student achievement more responsive learners? Are teachers of historically successful students less amenable to the difficult tasks of observational inquiry, critical dialogue, and instructional change? And what, if any, are the implications of teacher motivation on the overall and specific design of the observation-based model of professional development?

Hey, What About Me?

Many teachers perceived their instructional roles as highly isolated and context specific. Teachers from API 9-10 schools wanted to watch a teacher work with “high kids.” Biliteracy teachers thought their learning would be enhanced if they observed a biliteracy teacher. Special education teachers asked to see instruction in a special education classroom. Do teachers need to see exemplars of their specific instructional context in order to maximize the potential for learning? Probably not. But teachers probably do need more control over the content, context, and level of instruction to maximize their learning.

The observation-based model of professional development relied on a single criterion to differentiate learning – grade level. Kindergarten teachers studied instruction at one facility and first and second grade teachers studied instruction at a second facility.

This structure enabled participants to observe teaching and learning in classrooms that matched their current grade-level assignment. Kindergarten teachers were appreciative of this design element, “Thank you for finally giving us what we need. I am sick and tired of going to workshops and always having to adapt the ideas down to my grade level. It was nice to finally see how it works at kindergarten.” The data suggested, however, that differentiating trainings by grade-level alone was insufficient to meet the multifarious needs of participants.

Teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals voiced the need for differentiated instruction based on service years. The educational discourse confirms the impact of experience on instructional practice:

The literature on teacher learning says that there are powerful, observable differences between novices and experts in teaching, that these differences have to do mainly with the automaticity and fluency with which experts are able to combine content and pedagogy so as to simplify and focus their practice. (Elmore, 2001, p. 9)

One staff developer summarized this perspective in saying, “Beginning teachers would benefit from sessions designed just for them. You know, sessions around classroom management, planning, and pacing.”

Just as some novice teachers have specific needs, so too do experienced teachers.

Feedback from veteran teachers included such remarks as:

1. “Some of us have been doing this work for 15-20 years already. We need experiences that will take us to the next place in our learning.”
2. “The training seemed remedial.”

3. “Please, amp it up!”

These calls for leveled trainings raise a set of difficult issues and questions. Teacher quality is not necessarily commensurate with years of experience. Novice teachers sometimes exhibit extraordinary talent while the work of 20-year veterans can be redundant, tired, and worn. How can teacher quality be determined fairly and accurately? Who would make these determinations and with what criteria? Is there a consensus understanding of the teachers’ needs at different career stages? And, in what ways do leveled trainings support teacher growth and in what ways might such trainings promote increased fragmentation and teacher isolation?

A final consideration in the “hey, what about me?” dilemma is the role and purpose of centralized professional development for teachers. It is unlikely that San Diego City Schools will provide demonstration classrooms specific to the needs of every grade level, every school API ranking, every specialist, and every career stage. This would be logistically impossible and fiscally irresponsible. More important, this response would be incongruent with the growing body of research that denotes the importance of site-determined, site-delivered professional development.

Educational theorists recommend that professional development be embedded within the context of practice, realized through sustained inquiry, and directed by and for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Darling Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Garet et al., 2001; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Killion, 2000b; NSDC, 2001; Renyi, 1996; Robb, 2000; Rodgers et al., 2002; Sagor, 1992; Schmoker, 1996; Sparks, 1999). San Diego City Schools has demonstrated a commitment to job-embedded professional development by emphasizing the instructional role of site leaders and by

positioning a certified, staff developer at every school. If, in fact, teachers need to study a mirror image of their instructional context, this work may be best realized at the site level rather than the central level.

You Need to Get Everyone on the Same Page

Many teachers identified a lack of system coherence as a barrier in implementing the instructional strategies demonstrated in the observation-based model of professional development. Teachers complained that their principals told them one thing, their instructional leaders told them something else, educational consultants had their own unique twists on a idea, and teachers saw yet another way of working when they came to the training centers. Participants were confused and frustrated by this lack of consistency, “First we hear this and then we hear that. It’s hard to know what we’re supposed to do. You need to get everyone on the same page.” But, getting everyone “on the same page” is not as easy as it may sound. System coherence is exacerbated by a variety of complex factors: (a) the District’s size and diversity, (b) the intensity and pacing of a comprehensive reform initiative, (c) competing edu-political agendas, and (d) the system’s deepening understanding of literacy.

San Diego City Schools is a large and diverse urban school district.

Approximately 7,318 certificated staff in 187 schools work to support the learning of more than 140,000 students representing seven major ethnic groups (SDCS, 2003). Of these students 86,958 (62%) receive free or reduced price meals and 39,491 (28%) are English learners (CDE, 2002). The District encompasses a geographic area of 210-square miles and plays host to expensive beachfront mansions, middle-class tract homes, and inner-city apartments. Coherence is dependent upon a shared vision, effective lines of

communication, and congruous instructional agendas across and within systems (Fullan, 2001; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Garet et al., 2001). This is no easy task within the organizational structure of a single school. Coherence becomes a formidable challenge in a diversified system the size of San Diego City Schools. And large-scale, system change increases the complexity of coherence exponentially.

San Diego City Schools has been engaged in an aggressive reform initiative since 1998. This back-to-basics emphasis is designed to improve student achievement with a focus on literacy and mathematics. The overall plan is conveyed in the Blueprint for Student Success in a Standards-Based System: Supporting Student Achievement in an Integrated Learning Environment (SDSC, 2000). The reform initiative includes:

a number of prevention and intervention strategies designed to identify and correct learning problems early in a child's schooling. Major investments and procedures have been established that provide literacy and mathematics materials, and professional development for all school leaders and staff developers. (Fullan, 2001, p. 58)

The District's change process evoked strong reactions from many teachers. While some were supportive, "My kids are reading better than ever before"; others were fearful and frustrated, "We're being told we have to do this and we have to do that and we don't have the freedom any more to make our own decisions." In a study conducted by The Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy at Stanford University during the 1999-2000 school year, fully one-third of San Diego City School's teachers indicated that they disagreed with the reform (Fullan, 2001). This resistance is fueled by the collective bargaining unit.

The San Diego Education Association has been a vocal opponent of many aspects of the reform initiative including: (a) extended blocks of instruction for students reading below or significantly below grade level in middle and senior high school; (b) an unwavering focus on essential skills, such as reading, for all students; and (c) the superintendent's leadership style. Note the incendiary tone in the following passage written by the Executive Director of the San Diego Education Association:

Hours and hours spent in remedial blocks are not effective educational tools.

Teachers could have told the administration that. Forcing every child into a one-size-fits all program that takes away their exposure to art, music, physical activity, and other programs, does not work. Teachers could have told the administration that. And leaving parents and the community completely out of the process when making decisions about the future of our children is NEVER a good idea.

Everyone could have told the administration that. (Whitlow, 2002).

It's no wonder that teachers feel a lack of coherence. Competing edu-political agendas position teachers against the very change processes that they are responsible for and accountable to. Getting everyone "on the same page" may first require getting diverse stakeholders to agree to read the same book.

Finally, we must consider the challenges of coherence in a learning organization that is gaining knowledge and experience. The Literacy Framework (see Appendix I) was designed to shape the District's shared understanding of a set of literacy approaches. These descriptions are purposefully brief, broad, and non-prescriptive to allow for teacher judgement and growth of understanding over time. These very qualities may result in a sense of incoherence as illustrated in the following example.

The literacy initiative focused on reading aloud in the first year of implementation. The District provided intensive professional development to teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals on the role of reading aloud in a balanced literacy program, the role of talk during the read aloud, and the important considerations of text selection. By the third and fourth year of the reform initiative, the District's understanding of this literacy approach had grown and deepened. Teachers were encouraged to use the read aloud to develop comprehension strategies and critical discourse skills in a highly interactive format. Some teachers, rather than recognizing these changes as the natural by-product of intensive study and practice over time, saw it as a fundamental change in "the message." And, to some, such refinements in the instructional message were perceived as evidence of indecision and incoherence. One teacher wondered, "Why can't the District just decide once and for all what it wants us to do?"

Participants in the observation-based model of professional development voiced a clear and persistent desire for coherence:

1. "Be sure the trainings align with what we're supposed to do."
2. "Principals need to be here so that we're all hearing the same thing at the same time."
3. You need to do this training for the ILs [instructional leaders] so that we are all on the same page."

There is little doubt that system coherence is a deserving and consequential goal (Fullan, 2001; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Yet, getting everyone on the same page is a hugely complex process.

Cutting to the Chase

The observation-based model of professional development rests on the premise that when educators observe examples of accomplished teaching and powerful learning in an authentic context they will reflect on and refine their instructional practice. As we “cut to the chase” it is important to ask, is this premise true? Did teachers change their instructional practice as a result of the training model? How? Why? Or, why not?

Ninety-eight percent of participating teachers reported that observing a demonstration lesson helped or would help them construct a more effective learning environment. Ninety-eight percent reported that listening to the demonstration teacher share her thinking, planning, and reflections helped or would help them improve instructional practice. Ninety-eight percent of teachers reported that observing a demonstration lesson helped or would help them improve their instructional practice. Teachers’ written narratives further strengthened the survey data. These responses were characterized by clear intent: “I will ... ”; “I’m planning to ... ”; “Tomorrow, I’m going to ... ”; “I need to ... ”; “I want to ... ”; and “I can hardly wait to” Based on the available data it would be tempting to surmise that the observation-based model of professional development was a resounding success. But, what happened after the end-of-session euphoria wore off? Did teachers act on these intentions for change when they returned to the day-to-day realities of their own classrooms or was it business as usual?

The focus group and site administrator data suggested that teachers did make changes in their instructional practice, yet these changes appeared to lack substance. Many teachers’ initial approximations included environmental adaptations, “I use round tables now and I don’t have assigned seats any more”; structural adaptations, “I changed

my schedule so I could have more time for writers' workshop"; and procedural adaptations, "We've been working on conferring – especially keeping careful records. My first grade teachers are trying the form used by the demo teacher." However, the data are largely silent on the depth, duration, or pervasiveness of these changes.

The short timeline imposed by the research design limits our capacity to document instructional change. The survey asked teachers to consider the impact of the training model on their instructional practice during their final visit to the training facilities. Clearly, participants did not yet have sufficient time to internalize their study or fully consider potential arenas for implementation. The focus group interviews were held in July, 1-3 months after the completion of the *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series*. Yet participants still did not have sufficient time or opportunity to apply their learning. Some of the focus group teachers were on their summer hiatus and those who had elected to teach summer school were limited to an instructional schedule of 19 days. The site administrator interviews were conducted in September to provide an additional window of time to examine the impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' practice. Yet, teachers often use the first month of school to establish their room environment and classroom procedures. In the end, we must question whether the 3-5 month research window was appropriate to a study of change. Robb (2000) suggests that "support for teachers embarking on a journey that examines their present practices and introduces new, research-based ideas must be available over a time period of several years" (p. 19).

The early results of the observation-based model of professional development, rather than being skewed by a rigid timeline, may be descriptive of a normal,

developmental continuum of change. Pinnell (2002) reports that when teachers implement a new approach they typically start by focusing on concrete issues of management and materials.

As the approach becomes more familiar and automatic, techniques and routines actually become transparent. Moving easily through these routines, teachers are able to give more attention to student's behavior. They can notice evidence of learning or confusion and make the subtle adjustments that maximize learning on the part of individuals. They not only learn the ins and outs of a set of teaching procedures; they learn how to make sure the instruction works for *all* students.

(Pinnell, 2002, p. 66)

But it takes time, practice, and support for teaching approaches to become familiar and automatic. A longitudinal study may have permitted a more appropriate context to trace the implementation process from intentions, to initial approximations, to long-term impact. However, any such study of cause and effect is confounded by the complexity of change.

The observation-based model of professional development was not intended to function as an isolated or singular change mechanism for teachers. The educational discourse is clear that meaningful reform is dependent on a comprehensive design that embeds professional development within the context of schools and classrooms and provides systematic, ongoing follow-up (Darling Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Garet et al., 2001; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Effective professional development is embedded in the daily work of educators; offers choices, and levels of learning; builds on collaborative, shared knowledge; employs effective teaching and assessment strategies; expands teacher knowledge of learning and development; and informs teachers' daily work. It is sustained and intensive, with opportunities for practice, collaborative applications through problem-solving and action research, mastery, coaching, and leadership. (Knipe & Speck, 2001, p. 4)

The observation-based model of professional development may serve an important role in the overall design of a teacher learning system but it is unlikely that teacher change can ever be attributed to a single professional development practice.

Conclusions

With these discussions of the key findings in place, it is now possible to offer more reasoned and complete responses to the stated research questions.

1. *How do participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assess the observation-based model of professional development?*

The observation-based model of professional development was constructed on two innovative design elements: observations of practice and reflections of practice. These essential features were highly rated by participating teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals. Ninety-nine percent of all respondents indicated that the observation-based model of professional development was effective or somewhat effective for their professional growth and 99% indicated that the reflections offered by the demonstration teachers were appropriate or somewhat appropriate for their professional growth. That's quite a success story.

The researcher was careful to probe the nuances of this satisfaction data: Who liked it the most? What part did they like the most? Why? Who liked it the least? What part did least like? Why? What would make it better? A range of contexts and conditions were examined to more fully understand these nuances: service years, instructional role, school API ranking, content knowledge, observation experience, motivation, site support, and politics. Yet, in the final analysis we must return to the aggregate data. The majority of participants, across demographic variables, assessed the observation-based model of professional development as an effective training mechanism that was appropriate for and relevant to their professional growth.

The value in this study does not lie in simply validating what appears to be a promising model of professional development; the value lies in looking beneath this veneer of approval to questions of application: What did teachers learn and how did they apply these learnings in their working contexts?

2. *What is the perceived impact of the observation-based model of professional development on teachers' pedagogical practice?*

Here too, the data is compelling. Ninety-eight percent of participating teachers reported that observing a demonstration lesson helped or would help them construct a more effective learning environment. Ninety-eight percent reported that observing a demonstration lesson and listening to the demonstration teacher share her thinking, planning, and reflections helped or would help them improve their instructional practice. However, teachers' intentions for change were considered an insufficient response to the research question. It became important to consider the ways in which participants acted on these intentions.

The focus group data and the site administrator data verified that teachers made discrete changes in practice after their study in the training facilities. Yet, these changes were often limited to environmental, structural, or procedural adaptations. The superficiality of the application data raised numerous questions about the substance, quality, rate, and duration of change over time: questions that remain unanswered and unanswerable in the context of this study.

The data indicated that teachers left the training sessions eager to try-on their learnings. The data indicated that teachers' initial approximations were tentative and concrete as is appropriate in this stage of the change process (Robb, 2000; Pinnell, 2002). What the data could not reveal was what happened next? Did these early approximations become familiar and automatic? Did they lead to other more substantive changes? And, most important, did these changes make a difference in the learning lives of students?

3. *What are the factors that act to support or impede participating teachers' implementation of those instructional strategies studied in the observation-based model of professional development?*

A number of barriers were identified that may act individually or collectively to impede teachers' capacity to implement the observed literacy strategies in the context of their classrooms and schools. Some of these barriers were programmatic in nature and can be readily dismantled through a redesign of the observation-based model of professional development. Offering differentiated levels of instruction and a range of content may provide teachers with trainings that are more closely aligned with their needs, strengths, and interests. Expanding the in-session observation time may provide teachers with additional and more contextualized models of literacy instruction.

Providing direct instruction in the purpose, rationale, and potential of observation as an inquiry tool may provide teachers with the knowledge, strategies, skills, and dispositions necessary to engage in informed observations of practice. This is the easy work.

The more difficult barriers were those suggestive of institutional constructs and pervasive cultural norms and traditions. We have seen that system complexity, lack of coherence, competing ideologies and political agendas, and an aggressive reform initiative pose real and perceived barriers to change. We have seen that isolation, a fear of leading, rigid organizational patterns, and a paralyzing lack of time pose real and perceived barriers to change. And, we have seen that the change process is complicated by shifting educational platforms and the ever-increasing expectancies for teaching and learning. This is the hard work.

Implications and Recommendations

The observation-based model of professional development provided participants with vivid portraits of practice illustrative of San Diego City School's image of effective literacy instruction. This training model is embedded within and dependent upon a comprehensive system of supports that include extensive training for school leaders, site-based staff developers at all schools, summer and intersession institutes for teachers, literacy consultants, and a deluge of professional and instructional resources. No attempt was made to separate the studied professional development practice from the context in which it operates or the instructional vision that it represents. The findings, thus, cannot be generalized or extrapolated to other settings. Within these clear boundaries the results of this study offer a set of programmatic implications and recommendations for the observation-based model of professional development including a need to study: (a) the

process of observation, (b) the value of differentiated learning, (c) the role and purpose of centralized staff development, and (d) the need for system coherence.

A Study of Observation

Teachers struggled with how and what to observe. Many teachers were unable to sustain their observations of specific aspects of practice or to use these observations to engage in critical dialogue of teaching and learning. This is a formidable problem in a professional development forum that features observation as the primary inquiry tool. San Diego City Schools would be well-advised to conduct a careful and thorough study of the knowledge, strategies, skills, and dispositions required for astute observations of practice.

Improved knowledge of the mechanics of viewing will require a parallel study of the role of deliberate facilitation before, during, and after each observation. Several questions may serve to guide this inquiry: How can participants be efficiently prepared to observe instruction in the context of the training facilities? What information do participants need before an observation to inform and frame their viewing and how is this information best conveyed? What are expectations of and processes for accountability that may serve to narrow and deepen participants' observation during the lesson? And, how can observations of practice be processed to maximally strengthen participants' understanding of specific and broad issues around teaching and learning?

The session facilitator must be much more than a narrator. This trainer must: (a) have an intimate and longitudinal knowledge of teaching and learning within the demonstration classroom; (b) control a sophisticated understanding of the reading and writing process, the literacy approaches, and the philosophical foundations that shape San Diego City School's vision of teaching and learning; (c) be an accomplished teacher of

adults; (d) understand how to support participants in all aspects of the observation process; and (e) be able to facilitate objective-driven conversations. San Diego City Schools would be well-advised to carefully study the multifarious roles of the session facilitators and establish a system of ongoing support and feedback that is commensurate with the critical role these key personnel play in the observation-based model of professional development.

The data further suggested that different instructional approaches may require specific ways of and supports for viewing and re-viewing practice. While some literacy approaches or instructional contexts may be appropriate for real-time observations of practice, others may be better suited for videotapes that permit stop-and-go viewing. Some instructional formats may be best studied in their entirety, while others may be better viewed by analyzing the component parts. Some instructional strategies may stand alone while others may be better viewed together to demonstrate relationships between and among approaches. San Diego City Schools would be well-advised to consider the variable links among instructional approaches, observation strategies, facilitation techniques, and participant outcomes.

Consider Differentiated Learning

The findings suggested a need to carefully consider the role, purpose, and impact of differentiated professional development to accommodate the variant nature of learners and learning. Participants offered a variety of suggestions for differentiation based on interest, content, level, and context:

1. “Offer a menu of options for school teams to choose from. That way we can sign up for the professional development we want.”

2. “Our grade-level team would like to come to the demonstration facility with our staff developer and observe the instruction that we are studying at our school.”
3. “Please offer some opportunities for beginning teachers. My beginning teachers would really benefit from a study of classroom management and scheduling.”
4. “I have to teach every lesson in Spanish and English with limited resources. The demo room is not my reality. We need a biliteracy demo room.”

Differentiated instruction is not a new topic. Teachers have been urged to consider grouping, materials, and purpose in designing instructional strategies specific to the needs of individual students (Gregory & Chapman, 2002; Tomlinson, 1999). While it makes sense to translate this model into professional development for teachers, differentiated professional development raises many difficult questions. How is content best layered or sequenced to meet the range of skills in a large system and what are the criteria for determining teachers’ placement within these layers? What are the expectations for action and accountability to assure that teachers are proceeding appropriately through a layered system of support? What is the role and purpose of centralized professional development within a differentiated support system? Are school sites better positioned to offer differentiated trainings and, if so, do schools have the capacity to do this work? These complex questions challenge many of the concepts and procedures that currently define professional development practices yet they warrant serious consideration if we are to truly meet the individual and diverse needs of teachers. As noted by Speck and Knipe (2001), “The failure by most schools and districts to recognize the importance and need for continuous, aligned, needs-based professional

development condemns school reform efforts to ultimate failure” (p. 4). Differentiated instruction is a recommendation that deserves further study.

While San Diego City Schools would be well-advised to consider these widespread and repeated calls for differentiated instruction, this may be a short-term solution to a far more complex problem. Teachers are operating in ways that are both cellular and isolative (Arbuckle, 1997; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Sparks, 1999; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Differentiated instruction may serve to validate system fragmentation. Offering a course of study for beginning teachers insulates them from the voices and experiences of veteran teachers. Providing separate trainings for special education teachers may serve to further dissociate these teachers and their students from mainstream education. Categorizing teachers based on the student populations they serve may result in heightened levels of separate and unequal education. The short-term goal may lie in sorting and classifying teachers by interest, service years, school API rankings, and instructional contexts. The long-term goal may lie in developing a culture of professionalism in which teachers, staff developers, vice principals, and principals assume responsibility for their learning and the learning of others by recognizing and building upon the generative, shared aspects of teaching and learning that serve all students. San Diego City Schools would be well-advised to consider the role of differentiation within the larger context of building a community of learners.

Define the Role and Purpose of Centralized Training

While great care was taken to build authenticity into the observation-based model of professional development, the model remains external to the work of teachers and schools. Teachers still have to leave the context of their students and their schools to

attend a daylong, centrally-designed, and centrally-administered session. Episodic trainings, even when well-crafted, cannot provide teachers with the ongoing, systematic support descriptive of effective professional development practices (Boyd, 1993; Gall & Vojtek, 1994; Hughes et al., 2002; Lieberman, 1995; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Mizell, 2001; Robb, 2000; Schenkat & Tyser, 1997). Staff developers and site administrators must offer these support structures in the context of schools and classrooms.

San Diego City Schools urged staff developers, vice principals, and principals to attend the *Enhanced Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade Professional Development Series* with their grade-level teams to provide sustained leadership in achieving the session objectives. However the inconsistent attendance of school leaders and the individual learning agendas of schools weakened the leadership links between the observation-based model of professional development and schools. The follow-up support provided by staff developers ranged from thoughtful, to haphazard, to nonexistent:

1. "I will use these models of practice as benchmark experiences for my teachers during our staff development days."
2. "We went back to our school as a grade level and talked and did some group planning and stuff."
3. My staff developer did a little bit with writers' workshop, but mostly she worked with a couple of my low kids."
4. "We were told to ignore parts of demos."

The educational discourse suggests that professional development practices have little chance for impact unless they are accompanied by systematic opportunities for

formal follow-up, ongoing site-level collaboration, and sustained support (Hughes et al., 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Sullivan, 1999; Thompson, 1997). If the observation-based model of professional development is to improve the instructional practice of teachers, San Diego City Schools would be well-advised to consider the ways in which staff developers and site administrators can be supported to lead this work at their school sites.

San Diego City Schools is moving away from a dependence on centrally-administered professional development toward school-based, job-embedded models facilitated by staff developers in partnership with their site administrators. We are left to wonder what role, if any, the observation-based model of professional development may assume during and beyond this transition?

Centrally-provided trainings may serve to launch a new district focus efficiently and effectively by providing benchmark examples of practice. The observation-based model of professional development may provide a range of temporary supports to teachers new to the system or new to a grade level. And the training facilities may be used to mediate the array of external demands with internal needs (e.g., compulsory trainings). However, if these centrally-administered trainings are to be effective they must be clearly defined and tightly linked to the work of schools. San Diego City Schools would be well-advised to carefully consider the role of centralized trainings in a system that is increasingly supported to provide site-based professional development.

Strive for Coherence

The data suggested that teachers want more coherence in their work. Garet et al. (2001) report that professional development programs must be balanced between meeting the needs of individual teachers and advancing the organizational goals of the school and

the system. The content and pedagogical foci for professional development practices must align with national, state, and local frameworks, standards, and assessments and make logical and clear connections to educational research, discourse, and practice (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Fullan (1997) more fully describes the intricate relationships necessary for system coherence:

Integration with schoolwide and districtwide priorities, and mechanisms including leadership of school principals, collective actions by the majority of teachers, community development, school improvement plans under district auspices, growth-oriented performance appraisal schemes, and teacher union interests in professional development. (as cited in Caldwell, 1997, p, 39)

Achieving systemwide coherence clearly lies beyond the scope and purpose of the observation-based model of professional development. Yet there are some important aspects of system coordination that may be realized through the design of the training model. In aligning the content focus for the demonstrations of practice to the work of schools, teachers may be afforded a greater degree of continuity. Assuring the inclusion and strategic support of staff developers, vice principals, and principals may serve to strengthen coherence and communication across leadership levels and school sites.

Linking the training of staff developers and site administrators through the work of the demonstration teachers may provide a consistent and shared vision of accomplished teaching and powerful learning. San Diego City Schools would be well-advised to seek ways to assure greater coherence along two axis: the vertical leadership structure defined by clear communication along the lines of authority, and the horizontal structure defined by an integrated professional development design.

Suggestions for Further Study

Professional development is first and foremost about making a difference for teachers and the students they serve (Alvarado, 1998; Arbuckle, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Garet et al., 2001; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; NFIE, 2000; NSCD, 2001; Rodgers & Pinnell, 2002; Sparks, 2002; Speck & Knipe, 2001; Sykes, 1996; Thompson, 1997). Unfortunately, evaluation processes are seldom linked to application and impact. Professional development evaluations often focus on the entertainment value of the presenter, the freshness of the breakfast pastries, and the comfort of the room environment. It is no longer sufficient to determine the value of professional development processes by assessing participants' perceived level of satisfaction. But how do we get beyond the happiness quotient?

Relatively little systematic research has been conducted on the impact of professional development on teacher practice or student outcomes (Garet et al., 2001). This may be due, in part, to the complexity of establishing a one-to-one correspondence between teacher training, teacher practice, and student achievement. Hughes et al. (2000) report, "Determining causal relationships regarding professional development programs and improvements in student learning is difficult because of the complexities associated with the intervening variables" (p. 10). While some of these variables are concrete and measurable (e.g., student attendance, teacher retention rates, leadership stability), others are vague and vulnerable to interpretation (e.g., teacher motivation, quality support, school climate). Moving from a dependence on satisfaction data toward implementation and impact data will be difficult, yet necessary work.

We have a professional responsibility to measure the long-term impact of professional development on teachers' practice and student achievement (Mizell, 2001; Sparks, 1999; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). Speck and Knipe (2001) suggest, "If we are to dramatically improve schools and schooling, we must insist on professional development designs and practices that make a difference in teacher learning and student success" (p. 3). And, if we are to dramatically improve professional development designs and practices we must establish norms, expectations, and procedures for recognizing, measuring, and reporting these changes. Ultimately, professional development efforts must be judged by their contribution to student learning (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

Two recommendations for further research emerge from this discussion. A longitudinal study may serve to document teachers' change process over time and across contexts. In this way, we may be able to more fully describe the stages of change, the level and nature of support needed at these various stages, and the durability of instructional change over time. Secondly, research efforts directed at the links between professional development and student achievement may serve to redefine the purpose, process, and success of teacher training programs. Professional development for teachers could become a catalyst for change if it is directed at and held accountable to student achievement.

Concluding Remarks

This study was designed to carefully and systematically examine an innovative professional development practice that features observations of practice as the premiere instructional strategy. The findings suggested that (a) participants perceived the model as an effective and relevant training mechanism; (b) participants implemented or planned to

implement procedural, structural, and environmental changes in response to their experiences in the demonstration facilities; and (c) participants noted a set of cultural conditions and design features that may serve to impede instructional change. While these findings appear straightforward, that would be a misleading and inaccurate assumption. This study revealed a series of contradictions that point beyond the observation-based model of professional development to the prodigious complexities of teaching, learning, and change:

1. Teachers talked about the value of observing a “real teacher working with real kids” yet found a variety of reasons to discount the reality of these observations: (a) “But she has a perfect class”; (b) “She has more books than I do”; (c) “These kids must be hand-picked.”
2. Teachers talked about the value of teacher-led professional development, “It’s about time you got rid of the consultants and let our teachers lead this work”; yet they were unable to see themselves in this teacher’s experience: (a) “Show us a biliteracy teacher”; (b) “I need to see a special ed teacher”; (c) “How about using a API 10 school for these trainings?”
3. Teachers talked about wanting the freedom to teach “what I want, when I want, and how I want to”; yet often asked for prescriptions and recipes: (a) “I’d like to have a copy of her units of study”; (b) “It would be easier if all first grade teachers put the same words on our word walls”; and (c) “What does the District want me to do?”
4. Teachers talked about wanting additional time to observe in the demonstration facilities yet the training facilitators reported that teachers were often unable to

sustain their observations beyond 10 to 15 minutes after which time they engaged in a great variety of off-task behaviors.

5. Teachers talked about wanting to be treated as professionals yet often acted unprofessionally by coming late, leaving early, and taking and making phone calls during the training.
6. Teachers talked about a political context in which they are “hammered by the administration”; yet site administrators talked about a political context plagued by “resistors who are never going to change.”
7. Teachers talked about the need for time, “We need time to digest all this information”; yet school leaders talked about their sense of urgency to accelerate the pace of the reform initiative in order to make an immediate and palpable difference for students.

In the end we are left to ponder the enormity and complexity of educational change. It is clear that change is anything but straightforward. It involves ambiguities, unforeseen problems, novel solutions, and is dependent on time, tenacity, vision, and courageous leadership.

Where does the observation-based model of professional development lie in this sea of complexity? This researcher would conclude that the studied training model offers a compelling window on practice that may help educators hold a shared vision of effective instruction. It has the potential to add authenticity and credibility to centralized professional development processes by relying on the observation, study, and critical dialogue of instructional practice as the centerpiece for teacher learning. And yet, the model will face formidable challenges imposed by professional norms of isolationism, a

persistent sense of cynicism, and system fragmentation. In the final analysis, it appears that the observation-based model of professional development has enormous potential to provide potent visual images of what could be. It is a model that deserves thoughtful refinement and continued examination.

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APPENDIX A

Teacher Survey

Please answer the following questions by checking the appropriate box(es) and writing comments in the spaces provided. Your responses will be used to evaluate the overall and specific effectiveness of the district demonstration classroom as a training format. All responses will be anonymous.

Teacher Profile	
1. How many total years of teaching experience do you have? <input type="text"/>	6. What credentials/certifications do you currently hold? Check (✓) all that apply. <input type="checkbox"/> CLAD <input type="checkbox"/> BCLAD <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> GATE <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Recovery <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Developer Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Resource Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Credential <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
2. What grade level or combination of grade levels do you currently teach? <input type="text"/>	
3. How many years of teaching experience do you have at your current grade level? <input type="text"/>	
4. What is your current school's API ranking? <input type="checkbox"/> API 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> API 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> API 5-6 <input type="checkbox"/> API 7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> API 9-10 <input type="checkbox"/> unsure	7. Which demonstration room training sessions did you attend with your grade-level team this year? <input type="checkbox"/> Readers' Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Guided Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Writers' Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> None
5. How many times have you visited the district demonstration classroom? 2000-2001 <input type="text"/> 2001-2002 <input type="text"/>	8. Which demonstration classroom training sessions did your administrator(s) and/or staff developer attend with your grade-level team this year? <input type="checkbox"/> Readers' Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Guided Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Writers' Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> None

Content Evaluation: District Demonstration Classroom				
Please respond to the following questions as they relate to your experience in the district demonstration classroom.	Please check (✓) only one box per row.			
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all	N/A
The instructional focus for Reader's Workshop was appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The instructional focus for Writers' Workshop was appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The instructional focus for Guided Reading was appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The amount of time devoted to classroom observation was appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The reflections offered by the demonstration teacher were appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The readings were appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The group discussions were appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The demonstration classroom is an effective learning format for my own professional development.				

Site Implementation	
<p>Which factors serve to support your implementation of the instructional strategies observed in the demonstration classroom? <i>Check (✓) all that apply.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have access to the necessary instructional materials (e.g., books) at my school.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My principal's literacy emphasis matches the observed instructional models.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My staff developer's literacy emphasis matches the observed instructional models.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My grade-level team's literacy emphasis matches the observed instructional models.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have sufficient time to reflect on my instructional practice at school.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I receive appropriate feedback from my principal and/or staff developer to support my professional growth.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The staff development available at my school site supports my professional growth.</p>	<p>Which factors serve to impede your implementation of the instructional strategies observed in the demonstration classroom? <i>Check (✓) all that apply.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I do not have access to the necessary instructional materials (e.g., books) at my school.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am a biliteracy teacher.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am a special education teacher.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The modeled classroom management strategies do not match my style of teaching.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My principal and/or staff developer supports a different instructional model.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The featured literacy strategies were too advanced/too easy (circle one).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My students are academically higher/lower (circle one) than those in the demonstration classroom.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My students are more/less diverse (circle one) than those in the demonstration classroom.</p>

Impact on Instructional Practice	
<p>I observed some aspect(s) of Readers' Workshop in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to improve my instructional practice. <i>Please check (✓) all that apply.</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Shared reading</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Read aloud</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mini-lesson</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Independent reading</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conferring</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Record keeping</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Logistics (e.g., book storage)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assessment</p> <p>Other:</p>
<p>I observed some aspect(s) of Guided Reading instruction in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to improve my instructional practice. <i>Please check (✓) all that apply.</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Book selection</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grouping strategy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Book introduction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Instruction during the reading</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group debrief</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Record keeping</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Logistics (e.g., placement of readers)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Independent learning/Literacy stations</p> <p>Other:</p>
<p>I observed some aspect(s) of Writers' Workshop in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to improve my instructional practice. <i>Please check (✓) all that apply.</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Modeled writing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Interactive writing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mini-lesson</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Independent writing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conferring</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Record keeping</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Logistics (e.g., writing folders)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assessment</p> <p>Other:</p>
<p>I observed some other aspect(s) of teaching and learning in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to improve my instructional practice. <i>Please check (✓) all that apply.</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Room environment (e.g., room set-up, seating)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental print (e.g., co-constructed charts)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Learning centers</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom library</p> <p>Other:</p>

Site-Based Support			
How often have you typically worked with your site staff developer or principal on the following instructional practices this school year?	<i>Please check (✓) only one box per row.</i>		
	Weekly	Monthly	Less Often
Read Aloud			
Shared Reading			
Guided Reading			
Independent Reading			
Modeled Writing			
Shared Writing			
Interactive Writing			
Guided Writing			
Independent Writing			
Word Study			
Assessment			
Planning			
Language Study (English language instruction)			
Readers' Workshop			
Writers' Workshop			
Mini-lessons			
Conferring			
Other:			

Program Evaluation			
Please respond to the following questions as they relate to your experience in the district demonstration classroom:	<i>Please check (✓) only one box per row.</i>		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all
Observing a demonstration lesson will help/has helped me construct a more effective learning environment.			
Observing the demonstration lessons will help/has helped me improve my instructional practice.			
Listening to the demonstration teacher share her planning, thinking, and reflections will help/has helped me improve my instructional practice.			
Studying selected video clips of practice at the demonstration classroom will help/has helped me improve my instructional practice.			
Discussing the demonstration classroom observations with my grade-level team will help/has helped me improve my instructional practice.			
I would like to attend additional sessions in the district demonstration classroom.			
I will make some changes in my instructional practice as a result of my experience in the district demonstration classroom such as:			
Suggestions for improving the district demonstration classroom training format: (Use the back of this page if necessary):			

APPENDIX B

Principal, Vice Principal, and Staff Developer Survey

Please answer the following questions by checking the appropriate box(es) and writing comments in the spaces provided. Your responses will be used to evaluate the overall and specific effectiveness of the district demonstration classroom as a training format. All responses will be strictly anonymous.

Participant Profile	
1. What is your current leadership position? <input type="checkbox"/> Principal <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Developer <input type="checkbox"/> Vice Principal	5. What credentials/certifications do you currently hold? <i>Check (✓) all that apply.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> CLAD <input type="checkbox"/> BCLAD <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> GATE <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Recovery <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Developer Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Resource Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Credential <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
2. How many total years have you served as a principal, vice principal, and/or staff developer? <input type="text"/>	6. How many times have you visited the district demonstration classroom for an Enhanced Training? 2000-2001 <input type="text"/> 2001-2002 <input type="text"/>
3. How many years have you served in your current position as a principal, vice principal, or staff developer? <input type="text"/>	
4. What is your current school's API ranking? <input type="checkbox"/> API 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> API 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> API 5-6 <input type="checkbox"/> API 7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> API 9-10 <input type="checkbox"/> unsure	7. Which demonstration classroom trainings did you attend with your teachers this year? <input type="checkbox"/> Readers' Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Guided Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Writers' Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> None

Content Evaluation: District Demonstration Classroom				
Please respond to the following questions as they relate to your experience in the district demonstration classroom.	Please check (✓) only one box per row.			
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all	N/A
The instructional focus for Reader's Workshop was appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The instructional focus for Writers' Workshop was appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The instructional focus for Guided Reading was appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The amount of time devoted to classroom observation was appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The reflections offered by the demonstration teacher were appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The readings were appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The group discussions were appropriate for my own professional growth.				
The demonstration classroom is an effective learning format for my own professional growth.				

Site Implementation				
What support structures are available to your K-2 teachers?	<i>Please check (✓) only one box per row.</i>			
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all	N/A
My teachers have access to the necessary instructional materials (e.g., books).				
My school's literacy emphasis matches the instructional models observed in the district demonstration classroom.				
My teachers have sufficient time to reflect on their instructional practice.				
Our students are academically higher/lower (circle one) than those in the district demonstration room. This affected my teachers' learning in the demonstration classroom. (Check (✓) one box)				
Our students are more/less diverse (circle one) than those in the demonstration room. This affected my teachers' learning in the district demonstration classroom. (Check (✓) one box)				
The featured literacy strategies were too advanced/too easy (circle one). This affected my teachers' learning in the district demonstration classroom. (Check (✓) one box)				

Impact on Staff Development	
I observed some aspect(s) of Readers' Workshop in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to support staff development at my school. Please check (✓) all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared reading <input type="checkbox"/> Read aloud <input type="checkbox"/> Mini-lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Independent reading <input type="checkbox"/> Conferring	<input type="checkbox"/> Sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Record keeping <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics (e.g., book storage) <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment Other:
I observed some aspect(s) of Guided Reading instruction in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to support staff development at my school. Please check (✓) all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Book selection <input type="checkbox"/> Grouping strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Book introduction <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction during the reading <input type="checkbox"/> Group debrief	<input type="checkbox"/> Record keeping <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics (e.g., placement of readers) <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Learning/Learning Stations Other:
I observed some aspect(s) of Writers' Workshop in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to support staff development at my school. Please check (✓) all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Modeled writing <input type="checkbox"/> Interactive writing <input type="checkbox"/> Mini-lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Independent writing <input type="checkbox"/> Conferring	<input type="checkbox"/> Sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics (e.g., writing folders) <input type="checkbox"/> Record keeping Other:
I observed some other aspect(s) of teaching and learning in the district demonstration classroom that I will use to support staff development at my school. Please check (✓) all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Room environment (e.g., room set-up, seating) <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental print (e.g., co-constructed charts) <input type="checkbox"/> Learning centers	<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom library Other:

Site-Based Support			
How often have you worked with your K-2 teachers on the following instructional practices this school year?	Please check(<i>/</i>) only one box per row.		
	Weekly	Monthly	Less Often
Read Aloud			
Shared Reading			
Guided Reading			
Independent Reading			
Modeled Writing			
Shared Writing			
Interactive Writing			
Guided Writing			
Independent Writing			
Word Study			
Assessment			
Planning			
Language Study (English language instruction)			
Readers' Workshop			
Writers' Workshop			
Mini-lessons			
Conferring			
Other:			

Program Evaluation			
Please respond to the following questions as they relate to your teachers' experience in the district demonstration classroom.	Please check(<i>/</i>) only one box per row.		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not at all
Observing the demonstration classroom will help/has helped my teachers construct a more effective learning environment.			
Observing the demonstration classroom will help/has helped my teachers improve their instructional practice.			
Listening to the demonstration classroom teacher share her planning, thinking, and reflections will help/has helped my teachers improve their instructional practice.			
Studying selected video clips of practice at the demonstration classroom will help/has helped my teachers improve their instructional practice.			
Discussing the demonstration classroom observations with my teachers will help/has helped them improve their instructional practice.			
My teachers would benefit from additional sessions in the district demonstration classroom.			
I will make some changes in my leadership/coaching practice as a result of my experience in the demonstration room such as:			
Suggestions for improving the district demonstration classroom training format: (Use the back of this page if necessary.)			

APPENDIX C

Protocol and Questions for Focus Group Interviews

I. Stakeholder Groups

- A. Kindergarten teachers
- B. First and second grade teachers
- C. Staff developers

II. Structural Protocol

- A. Each focus group will be comprised of 8 - 10 participants selected from a participant pool solicited through a voluntary sign-up process
- B. Participants will be selected through a set of screening criteria
 - 1. Participants must be K-2 teachers or staff developers
 - 2. Participants must have attended all offered observation-based professional development trainings
 - 3. Participants must be willing to speak honestly in an audiotaped group interview
 - 4. Participants must represent the diversity of San Diego City Schools as indicated through school Academic Performance Index rankings
 - 5. Participants will be invited to participate through a personal phone call
- C. An overview of the process and purpose will be carefully explained.
 - 1. Participation is completely voluntary
 - 2. Each focus group interview will last a maximum of 90 minutes
 - 3. Participants may withdraw at any point during or after the interview process
 - 4. Interviews will be audiotaped for later transcription and analysis
- D. Focus group interviews will be conducted at the Instructional Media Center

III. Pre-Interview Protocol

- A. The researcher will build rapport through introductions and conversational questions (i.e., How is summer school going for you? How is summer vacation going for you?)
- B. The researcher will explain the purpose and context of the interview
 - 1. Qualitative research of participants' perceptions of the observation-based model of professional development
 - 2. Confidentiality is assured
- C. The researcher will explain the purpose of tape recorder
 - 1. No direct quotes or descriptions will be used that can identify participants
 - 2. Honesty is valued
 - 3. Privacy is respected
- D. The researcher will review and clarify the participant consent form
- E. Participants will have multiple opportunities to ask questions

IV. Interview Questions and Follow-up Probes

- A. Talk about your experiences in the observation-based model of professional development
 - 1. Which content pieces were/were not relevant to your learning needs? Why?
 - 2. Which study processes were/were not relevant to your learning needs? Why?
 - 3. What was your overall impression of embedding observations of practice into the context of a training workshop?
- B. What pedagogical practices have you changed or will you change as a result of your experience in the observation-based model of professional development?
 - 1. What was the impact of this training model on your implementation of readers' workshop?
 - 2. What was the impact of this training model on your implementation of writers' workshop?

3. What was the impact of this training model on your implementation of guided reading?
- C. What site structures support or impede your implementation of the observed pedagogical strategies?
1. How does your work with your staff developer match or challenge the teaching/learning you observed in the training facility?
 2. How does your work with your principal match or challenge the teaching/learning you observed in the training facility?
 3. How does your work with your grade level team match or challenge the teaching/learning you observed in the training facility?
 4. How does your work with your school staff match or challenge the teaching/learning you observed in the training facility?
- D. What are your suggestions for future observation-based professional development trainings?
1. How does this model of professional development compare with other models you have experienced?
 2. In what ways did this model support your learning?
 3. In what ways did this model fall short of supporting your learning?
- E. Is there anything else you would like to add or expand on?

APPENDIX D

Protocol and Questions for Site Administrator Interviews

I. Stakeholder Group

A. Site Administrators

II. Structural Protocol

A. Three to five site administrators will be selected to participate in the individual interview process

B. Participants will be selected in advance through a set of screening criteria

1. Participants must have a professional rapport with the researcher
2. Participants must have attended at least one observation-based professional development training with their teachers
3. Participants must be willing to speak honestly in an audiotaped interview
4. Participants must represent the diversity of San Diego City Schools as indicated through school Academic Performance Index rankings
5. Participants will be invited to participate through a personal phone call

C. Participants will be invited to participate through a personal phone call at which time an overview of the process and purpose will be carefully explained.

1. Participation is completely voluntary
2. Participants will be interviewed by phone at a time suggested by each site administrator to assure user-convenience
3. Each interview will last a maximum of 30 minutes
4. Participants may withdraw at any point during or after the interview process
5. Interviews will be audiotaped for later transcription and analysis

III. Pre-Interview Protocol:

A. The researcher will explain the purpose and context of the interview (i.e., qualitative research of site administrators' perceptions of the impact of the

observation-based model of professional development on the work of teachers; confidentiality; purpose of tape recorder; no direct quotes or descriptions will be used than can identify participants; honesty is valued; privacy is respected)

- B. Participants will be given multiple opportunities to ask questions
- D. The researcher will review and clarify the participant consent form
- E. Participants will have multiple opportunities to ask questions

IV. Interview Questions

- A. What changes have you noted in the literacy instruction of those teachers from your school who attended the observation-based model of professional development?
- B. What evidence supports your observation of pedagogical change or lack of pedagogical change?
- C. What are the events of contexts that appear to facilitate or impede teachers' change process?
- D. How would you change the observation-based model of professional development to maximally impact your teachers' pedagogical practices?
- E. Is there anything else you would like to add or expand on?

APPENDIX E

Focus Group Sign-Up Form

Please sign-up below if you are interested in being part of a focus group discussion about the professional development format available through the district demonstration classrooms at the Fulton Learning Center and/or the Zamorano Professional Development Center.

Volunteers selected to participate in this university-based research project will be notified by phone. Participants will meet once in July 2002 (date to be determined) from 3:00 to 4:30.

Yes! I'd like my voice to be heard. Please add my name to the potential list of focus group participants.

Name (please print)	School	Current Grade Level	Contact Number (include area code)

APPENDIX F

Focus Group Memo for First and Second Grade Teachers

MEMORANDUM

TO: First and Second Grade Teachers

FROM: Donna Marriott

DATE: June 28, 2002

SUBJECT: ENHANCED FIRST AND SECOND GRADE FOCUS GROUPS

Would you like to discuss your training experience at the Zamorano Professional Development Center? Here's your chance! A researcher from the University of San Diego is examining new professional development models for teachers. If you would be interested in sharing your thoughts about the training process available in the district demonstration classroom in a volunteer focus group format, please provide your contact information on this form. Participants will be notified by phone in mid-July. The focus groups will meet once in late July for no more than 90 minutes. All focus group interviews will be strictly confidential.

If you have any questions please call Donna Marriott at (619) 725-7253.

Yes! I'd like my voice to be heard. Please add my name to the potential list of volunteer focus group participants

Name (please print): _____

School: _____ Grade Level (2001-02) _____

Contact Number (include area code): _____

Fold and return via school mail or fax to (619) 725-7257

"The mission of San Diego City Schools is to improve student achievement by supporting teaching and learning in the classroom."

APPENDIX G

Focus Group Participant Consent Form

1. The purpose of this project is to conduct a tape-recorded interview to be used in collecting research data.
2. There is no anticipated risk and/or discomfort associated with this process beyond mild fatigue.
3. The opportunity to engage in reflective thinking and evaluative feedback, as a result of this process, may be personally or professionally beneficial.
4. Participation is voluntary. Participants may withdraw at any time.
5. There will be opportunities to ask questions about the process and these questions will be appropriately answered.
6. The maximum duration of the interview will be 90 minutes.
7. All identities shall remain strictly confidential.
8. There is no written or verbal agreement beyond that expressed on this consent form.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

 Signature of Subject

 Date

 Location

 Signature of Principal Researcher

 Date

Principal Researcher
 Donna M. Marriott
 (619) 698-7223
Dmarriott1@aol.com

Dissertation Committee Chairperson
 Dr. Mary Scherr
 (619) 260-2274
maryscherr@aol.com

APPENDIX H

Site Administrator Interview Consent Form

1. The purpose of this project is to conduct a tape-recorded interview to be used in collecting research data.
2. There is no anticipated risk and/or discomfort associated with this process beyond mild fatigue.
3. The opportunity to engage in reflective thinking and evaluative feedback, as a result of this process, may be personally or professionally beneficial.
4. Participation is voluntary. Participants may withdraw at any time.
5. There will be opportunities to ask questions about the process and these questions will be appropriately answered.
6. The maximum duration of the interview will be 45 minutes.
7. All identities shall remain strictly confidential.
8. There is no written or verbal agreement beyond that expressed on this consent form.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

 Signature of Subject

 Date

 Location

 Signature of Principal Researcher

 Date

Principal Researcher
 Donna M. Marriott
 (619) 698-7223
Dmarriott1@aol.com

Dissertation Committee Chairperson
 Dr. Mary Scherr
 (619) 260-2274
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APPENDIX I

The Literacy Framework

Students learn to read, write and speak successfully when a variety of instructional approaches are provided. The following approaches provide the framework for the implementation of San Diego City Schools' literacy program. The approaches align with the California Reading Task Force Report, "Every Child a Reader", the California Reading Program Advisory, "Teaching Reading" and the San Diego City School's Language Arts Standards.

Literacy Approaches

Reading Aloud

Reading aloud introduces students to the joys of reading and the art of listening. Reading aloud provides opportunities to model reading strategies. Through reading aloud students understand that the language of books is different from spoken language, develop understanding of the patterns and structures of written language, learn new words and ideas, and learn about and locate models of particular genres or forms of writing.

Independent Reading

Independent reading by students gives them opportunities to practice the strategies they have learned in shared reading, guided reading, read aloud and word study. Teachers provide guidance with book choices, tailor teaching to meet individual needs and meet with individuals to monitor progress. Books from a range of levels are available in the classroom. Students become proficient at selecting books that match their interests and reading level.

Word Study

Word study provides students with the opportunity to become aware of sounds in words and how they relate to symbols in written language. Word study prepares students to become familiar with both the visual aspects of letters and words and the phonological pattern of words. Beginning readers are taught the alphabet, the relationship between sounds and letters, blending of sound-letter links, high frequency words as well as regular patterns.

Observation and Assessment

Systematic assessment, which is recorded, builds a profile of the progress a child is making in literacy. Ongoing assessment informs teaching, tells teachers what students can do and what they need to do next. Teachers assess students in a variety of ways and focus on individual students. Running records, informal comprehension assessments, observations and writing samples are all critical components of purposeful assessing. In addition to ongoing assessment, students participate in assessments such as standardized testing and district assessment portfolios.

Shared Reading

Shared reading with an enlarged text or a text everyone can see provides an opportunity for all students to successfully participate in reading. Each student, regardless of reading level, can be engaged in the reading process. Teachers demonstrate the reading process and strategies that successful readers use. Students and teachers share the task of reading, supported by a safe environment in which the entire class reads text (with the assistance of the teacher) which might otherwise prove to be too difficult. Students learn to interpret illustrations, diagrams, and charts. Teachers identify and discuss with students the conventions, structures, and language features of written texts.

Guided Reading

Guided reading provides an opportunity for students to practice reading strategies and take responsibility for their reading. Students practice for themselves the strategies that have been introduced in shared reading. The text that is selected must match the needs of the group of readers. Teachers using this approach must be able to identify the supports and challenges in the reading material. With some guidance, students read for themselves within the group setting. Teachers listen in and make decisions on the instructional needs of each student.

Modeled Writing

Modeled writing introduces students to the joys of writing. Teachers demonstrate strategies as a proficient adult writer. Teachers model the writing process and through the process adds, revises, asks questions and clarifies purpose of the writing.

Shared Writing

Shared writing provides an opportunity for all students to successfully participate in the writing process. The students and teachers share the task of writing. The writing comes from the students' thoughts and ideas. Teachers identify and discuss with students the conventions, structures and language features of written text.

Guided Writing

Guided writing provides an opportunity to work with groups of students or an individual student on effective writing strategies as determined through teacher observation of student behaviors and work. The needed strategies and skills are demonstrated within the context of authentic writing tasks. This is an opportunity to develop a student's independence and ability to self-monitor own learning of writing strategies and skills.

Independent Writing

Independent writing provides an opportunity for students to practice using the writing strategies they have learned during modeled writing, shared writing and guided writing. Students are encouraged to write for authentic purposes and use a variety of styles. Teachers conference with students and encourage them to publish their work.