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VETERAN TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF
THE GROSSMONT MODEL OF PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW.
IS IT A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL TEACHER EVALUATION?

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Edwin L. Basilio

The University of San Diego

April 15, 2002

ABSTRACT

VETERAN TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE GROSSMONT MODEL OF PEER ASSISTANCE AND REVIEW (PAR). IS IT A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL TEACHER EVALUATION?

A Case Study of First-Phase Implementation of Assembly Bill IX in one California School District.

BASILIO, EDWIN L., Ed.D. University of San Diego, 2002
pp. 122

Chair: Robert Donmoyer, Ph.D.

This study looked at factors that influenced veteran teacher perceptions of the newly implemented Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program in the Grossmont Union High School District. More specifically, the study explored (1) reasons why teachers with at least five years of successful teaching experience voluntarily chose to forfeit their regularly scheduled traditional evaluation and substitute it with a peer review, (2) factors that contributed to positive perceptions of the PAR program, (3) factors that contributed to negative perceptions of the PAR program, and (4) perceived differences between the traditional and PAR methods of teacher evaluation. This study incorporated multiple traditions of qualitative research and used guided interviews as data for the interpretive analysis.

The study's findings suggest that respondents' views of the traditional approach to teacher evaluation played a critical role in their decision to volunteer for the PAR alternative, as did a simple desire to try something new. The evidence from the study provides tentative support for the premise that respondents view the PAR experience as the preferred method of evaluation. Respondents indicate experiencing (1) an ownership of their professional growth activity, (2) a desire to continue improvements, (3) changes in their classroom practice, (4) an ability to focus on a specific area in their teaching practice, and (5) freedom to take risks without fear of reprisal should efforts to improve result in failure. However, respondents also indicate that the Grossmont Model of PAR

(1) requires more time than that normally involved with traditional evaluation, (2) is incorrectly identified as a remediation tool for ineffective teachers, and (3) requires participants to critically assess their teaching practice - a process, according to respondents, that many veteran teachers are unable to honestly perform.

Additional research is needed to investigate whether or not PAR will remain the preferred method of evaluation over a longer period of time. This research would involve identifying if increased professional growth opportunities (as a result of PAR activities) favorably affects student achievement.

DEDICATION

To My Wife

Rebecca

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, and foremost, I wish to thank my father, Toribio Tercela Basilio. Although he came to the United States with a fourth-grade education from the Philippines, he instilled in me a desire, respect, and appreciation for education. Although no longer living, the inspiration he demonstrated continues to motivate me.

I wish to acknowledge my deep appreciation for the dedication, encouragement, and infinite patience demonstrated by my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Robert Donmoyer. I am confident that without his guidance and insight I would not have seen the completion of this dissertation. I was indeed fortunate that he became a member of the teaching staff when I began my doctoral graduate program at the University of San Diego.

I thank Dr. Fred Galloway, a member my dissertation committee, who gave freely of his time and expressed heartfelt concern on my behalf when I had emotionally reached the lowest point during my graduate program. I was, indeed, very close to dropping out of the program. In addition, Dr. Jennifer Jeffries (the third member of the dissertation committee), helped me maintain a healthy perspective when events didn't work as well as I had hoped. She restored my faith in more ways than I can tell. My thanks to Greg Stump and Howard Twomey for being good friends and comrades. They enriched my experience at USD more than they'll ever know.

I do, indeed, stand on the shoulders of giants.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The increasing interest in educational accountability, not surprisingly, has led to a renewed interest in teacher evaluation. Bloom and Goldstein (2000) describe how teacher evaluations have traditionally been conducted. They write:

Evaluation typically follows a common, predictable, and not very effective format: The teacher is observed teaching for brief periods, generally no more than 30 to 45 minutes, on a predetermined day at a pre-announced time, by the principal or other administrative supervisor. Observation results are recorded on a form often organized as a kind of checklist. The evaluator assesses overall teaching performance on a rating scale from "outstanding" to "unsatisfactory." Following the observation, the teacher and evaluator confer, and the teacher has the opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the evaluation results.

(p. 21)

There is widespread agreement in the literature that the traditional approach described by Bloom and Goldstein is less than effective, especially if the goal for conducting teacher evaluation is improving instruction. The literature, in fact, suggests that this practice has done little if anything to improve teaching quality (e.g., Millman & Darling-Hammond, 1981; Gitlin & Smyth, 1989; Rogers & Badham, 1992; Duke, 1995; Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995; Cornet, 1995; Burns, 1998). A study conducted by Millman & Darling-Hammond (1990) for instance, indicates that "traditional evaluation practices were generally poor, inaccurate, and provided limited feedback; most school systems created a conflicting role for the principal as both supporter and judge; and, formative and summative evaluations were performed at the same time by the same

person" (Millman & Darling-Hammond, 1990 p. 127). Similarly, Gitlin & Smith (1989) conclude that this model of teacher evaluation is ineffective because administrators have no real sense of a teacher's psychological and physical workspace and are merely making superficial evaluations in an attempt to justify teacher accountability.

In recent years, in part as a response to the sorts of criticisms alluded to above, alternative approaches to teacher evaluation have begun to be developed. One approach that has been judged promising has been peer assisted review. In essence, this approach involves freeing up veteran teachers who are considered to be exemplary to observe and provide formative feedback to other teachers. At times, the teachers receiving assistance are either beginning teachers or teachers who have been identified as needing extra assistance. In recent years, however, there also has been a movement to replace traditional approaches to teacher evaluation with approaches built around peer assistance for experienced teachers who are not considered to be performing at an inadequate and unacceptable level.

The first documented peer assistance review program was in Toledo, Ohio (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000, p. 6). According to Bloom and Goldstein, the Toledo program was developed to address a shortage of teachers entering and remaining in the profession. The Toledo program was developed in 1981; since then many other peer assistance and review approaches have been developed by school districts and also by states. For example, the Mentor Teacher Program was initiated by the California State Legislature in the 1983-1984 school year.

The expressed purpose of establishing peer review programs was to stem the number of beginning teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of their career (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000). The California Education Code expressed the concern as follows:

The Legislature recognizes that the classroom is the center of teaching reward and satisfaction. However, the Legislature finds that many potentially effective

teachers leave the teaching profession because it does not offer them support, assistance, recognition, and career opportunities that they need.

It is the intent of the Legislature in the enactment of this article to encourage teachers currently employed in the public school system to continue to pursue excellence within their profession, to provide incentives to teachers of demonstrated ability and expertise to remain in the public school system, and to restore the teaching profession to its position of primary importance within the structure of the state educational system. (California Education Code 44490)

The Mentor Teacher Program provided support for new teachers by involving veteran teachers in the process of admitting novices to their profession (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000, p. 9). California Education Code 44496 defined the role of mentor teachers as follows:

The primary function of a mentor teacher shall be to provide assistance and guidance to new teachers. A mentor teacher may also provide assistance and guidance to more experienced teachers. Mentor teachers may provide staff development for teachers, and may develop special curriculum. A mentor teacher shall not participate in the evaluation of teachers.

The California Mentor Teacher Program allowed exemplary teachers the freedom to decide what activities or support was most important. Unstructured meetings between Mentor Teachers and beginning or re-located teachers were conducted to provide novices or teachers new to a school site the option of working with a mentor.

To further address the need to provide new teacher support, in 1997 the State of California instituted the Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance Program (BTSA). California Education Code 44279.1 established the BTSA program for the following reasons:

The Legislature finds and declares that the beginning years of a teacher's career are a critical time in which it is necessary that intensive professional development

and assessment occur. The Legislature recognizes that the public invests heavily in the preparation of prospective teachers, and that more than half of all new teachers leave some California school districts after one or two years in the classroom. Intensive professional development and assessment are necessary to build on the preparation that precedes initial certification, to transform academic preparation into practical success in the classroom, to retain greater numbers of capable beginning teachers, and to remove novices who show little promise as teachers. It is the intent of the Legislature that the commission and the superintendent develop and implement policies to govern the support and assessment of beginning teachers, as a condition for the professional certification of those teachers in the future. (California Education Code 44279.1)

BTSA was initiated as a program that provided support and assistance to beginning teachers by pairing beginning teachers with veteran teachers who functioned as support providers. BTSA is more structured than the Mentor Teacher Program and in recent years has expanded to provide all of California's beginning teachers with support for two years in a systematic program model that combines intensive coaching with confidential formative assessment (Bloom & Golstein, 2000, p. 7). During the 2001-2002 fiscal year, BTSA was funded with nearly 100 million dollars and served every first and second-year teacher in the state (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000, p. 2).

Although both the BTSA and California Mentor Teacher programs addressed the needs of beginning teachers and both, in fact, coexisted for four years, the Mentor Teacher program will be terminated on July 1 of 2002. It is being replaced by the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program which will not focus on beginning teachers, but on tenured veteran teachers with at least five years of successful teaching experience.

On April 6, 1999, the Governor of California signed Assembly Bill 1X (AB 1X) establishing the PAR program. That program, in effect, expanded earlier peer assistance programs in California--i.e., programs that were designed to serve only beginning

teachers and teachers identified as needing serious remediation—to cover virtually all teachers who wish to participate in a peer assistance review program for purposes of professional growth. AB 1X, in fact, mandated that all school districts in the state implement a locally developed Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program to serve teachers not covered by BTSA on or before July 1, 2001, and guaranteed that, over time, all teachers would be able to opt for a form of peer-based evaluation. Committees can even permit PAR evaluations to substitute for traditional evaluation approaches.

As a result of these changes in the California Education Code, the California State Legislature has established two distinct teacher support programs: BTSA, which supports and assists beginning teachers and PAR, which supports and assists veteran teachers with at least five years of successful teaching experience. The specifics of the support and assistance provided varies from district to district since both programs are to be designed by district level committees composed of a majority of teachers and a minority of administrators. Common to both the BTSA and PAR programs is a provision indicating that ineffective veteran or novice teachers who fail to improve are to be counseled out of the profession.

Statement of the Problem

To date, despite the widespread popularity of the peer review strategy, there have been few attempts to document its effectiveness. The Rand study, conducted by Wise, Darling-Hammond, and Bernstein (1984), did look at the previously discussed Toledo program, along with other innovative approaches to teacher evaluation found in the following communities: Salt Lake City, Utah; Lake Washington, Washington; and Greenwich, Connecticut. They judged the Toledo program, along with those of other identified school districts, to be improvements over the traditional approach. However, the evidence on which they based this judgement was somewhat limited. Basically, the study was performed to find teacher evaluation processes that produced information school districts could use to help teachers improve or to aid in making personnel

decisions. The study concluded that the four previously identified school districts had elevated evaluation from a traditionally meaningless task to a process that produced useful results. However, the actual utilization of this information in the form of improved teaching or improved personnel decision making was never assessed or validated.

There have been a few other studies of peer review programs (e.g., Millman, 1981; Hutchings, 1996; Burns, 1998; Mann, 1999), but they do not include research focusing on peer review programs specifically designed to address the needs of veteran teachers with at least five years of successful teaching experience. Additionally, none of these pilot peer review programs permit teachers to voluntarily select a peer review in lieu of traditional evaluation performed by an administrator. These pilot programs, and the vast majority of school districts currently developing programs, limit participation in peer review to teachers who are in dire need of assistance or remediation, or teachers identified as being at risk of losing their job should improvement not occur during their mandatory participation in peer review.

While there has been very little systematic study of peer assistance based evaluation programs in general, there, as yet, have been no studies of California's PAR program which is not scheduled to be fully implemented until the 2001-2002 school year. Obviously, the legislature and Governor assume that PAR programs are effective (possibly because the traditional approach to evaluation has been judged to be so ineffective); however, it is not axiomatic that PAR evaluators will not confront problems analogous to principals playing the evaluator role. For example, principals were once teachers and, hence, should have had some knowledge of the teaching process that presumably should have been helpful to the teachers principals evaluated. Furthermore, it is not clear that a secondary music teacher, for example, will be any more helpful to an English teacher than the English teacher's principal has been (or vice versa), yet few if any districts are large enough to only assign a teacher a peer reviewer who teaches the

same subject as the participating teacher does. In addition, it is possible that peers playing the evaluator role might confront unique problems of their own. PAR programs, for example, seem to undermine the traditional norm of teacher autonomy, a norm that sociologists since Lortie (1975) first wrote the book, *Schoolteacher*, suggest is virtually sacrosanct in American schools. Clearly there is a need to systematically study the impact of the new alternative to teacher evaluation in which the State of California has made a substantial investment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to begin to respond to the need articulated at the end of the previous section. The focus was on a PAR program designed by and implemented in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD)—with special pilot funding from the State of California—during the year prior to the time the program was to be implemented statewide. Specifically, this study examined the perceptions of experienced teachers who chose to participate in peer assisted review in lieu of traditional evaluation. Teachers were asked (a) why they chose to substitute their traditional evaluation with a peer review, (b) what types of things contributed to positive impressions of the PAR program, (c) what types of things contributed to negative impressions of the PAR program, and (d) what differences they experienced between PAR and a traditional evaluation.

Research Questions

The findings of the study are organized around the following research questions:

- (1) What prompted teachers to voluntarily select PAR in lieu of traditional evaluation?
- (2) What factors contributed to positive perceptions of the Grossmont Model of PAR?
- (3) What factors contributed to negative perceptions of the Grossmont Model of PAR?

- (4) What differences did participants observe between the traditional approach to teacher evaluation and peer assisted review?

Methodology

The research involved a case-study of a bounded system. The system was the GUHSD, and, more specifically, the PAR program established in that district. The GUHSD was selected in part as a matter of convenience since I work in the district, but also because it was one of a handful of districts in the state to pilot the program prior to the statewide mandated implementation date of July 1, 2001.

Qualitative interviews with twelve randomly selected PAR participants in the GUHSD were conducted and served as the primary source of data. Because this study addresses the perceptions of the teachers with first-hand experience with the Grossmont Model of PAR, accuracy was established by allowing respondents opportunity to review their transcripts as well as the findings and conclusions derived from the data and the interpretive analysis.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because there are no existing studies of PAR or its use in lieu of traditional evaluation, yet the State of California has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to enable school districts to develop local versions of PAR. Because PAR programs are being implemented even as I undertake the write-up of this study, leaders in the educational community both locally and at the state level, have expressed interest in this study. The study, in short, represents much-needed empirical research in an unexplored area and may be of value to districts faced with fast-track implementation. In addition, the findings may encourage joint panels of other districts to include or exclude PAR contractual language permitting teachers to voluntarily participate in peer review in lieu of traditional evaluations performed by administrators.

The study also should have significance for decision makers in the school district in which the study was conducted. Ultimately, this study attempts to gather and analyze

data related to the following fundamental question: Will the Grossmont Model of PAR be perceived as not only a viable alternative to traditional evaluation, but the preferred choice for veteran teachers who wish to improve their teaching practice? In a practical and modest sense, it was my hope that the findings of the study might prove useful to the Joint Panel of the GUHSD charged with PAR program implementation, improvement, and evaluation and possibly to groups in other districts engaged in similar tasks.

Findings from this single case of PAR and the perception of the program by voluntarily participating veteran teachers in the GUHSD may not be generalizable in the traditional social science sense of the word, however, ideas generated by the study of this single case may have applicability to other educational organizations.

The Grossmont Model of PAR has the potential of improving teaching quality on a broad scale only if teachers in the future voluntarily participate in greater numbers than current levels (thirty-six out of one thousand teachers). When one considers that all beginning teachers are supported and assisted via BTSA, the PAR program represents available support and assistance for literally all other members of a teaching staff not covered by BTSA. Furthermore, since teachers are permitted to volunteer for PAR even during years they are not scheduled for formal evaluation, it is disturbing that more teachers *did not participate during first-phase implementation*. Should this study suggest that Participating Teachers perceive the Grossmont Model of PAR as a valuable professional growth activity and preferred to traditional evaluations performed by an administrator, other teachers will likely perceive PAR as a viable alternative to traditional evaluation and voluntarily participate in greater numbers in the future. Conversely, if the PAR experience is judged negatively—or at least as being less positive or no better than traditional evaluation—the model's desirability and utility for others would be called into question.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Delimitations

The study was delimited by what was studied, who was studied, and where the study took place. What was studied was perceptions; given the newness of the program, it was not possible to gather data to triangulate these perceptions. The "who" in the study were teachers who volunteered to participate; consequently it was not possible to generalize findings to teachers required to participate. Finally, the study took place in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). Since each district implementing Assembly Bill I X (AB IX) must design its own program, the specifics of the Grossmont Model of PAR (which are discussed in detail in Chapter 3) must be taken into account before deciding whether the findings are likely to be transferable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to other districts, even other California districts, implementing state-mandated PAR programs.

Limitations

Because of the delimitations outlined above, the study's results cannot be generalized to other school districts in cookie-cutter fashion; nor can the findings be generalized to experienced teachers who do not volunteer to participate in PAR. Furthermore, because the study examined a program only during its first year of implementation, the focus was limited to an examination of teacher perceptions. Positive teacher perceptions cannot guarantee a positive impact on teaching or student learning.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, I will first briefly review the literature on the traditional approach to teacher evaluation. Second, I will review the literature that discusses alternatives to the traditional approach—other than peer assistance and review programs—as well as the literature that is critical of these approaches. Third, I will provide the history of the development of the practice of peer review at the elementary and secondary levels of education as described in the literature. Fourth, I will review early peer assistance and review programs in the State of California and then review current California Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) programs documented in the literature.

One body of literature I will not review is the extensive literature on peer review at the college and university levels of education (See, for example, Millman, 1981; Doyle, 1982; Hutchings, 1996; Lieberman, 1998; Chism, 1999). As practiced at the college and university levels of education, peer review is the procedure by which a faculty member's work is judged by peers in all matters of academic and disciplinary decisions (French-Lazovik as cited in Millman, 1981). The form and function of peer review in college and university settings differs markedly from the form and function of peer review in elementary, middle, and secondary school settings. Consequently, although I have reviewed the relatively voluminous literature on peer review in higher education, its relevance to this study is questionable and, hence, it will not be discussed here.

Traditional Approach to Teacher Evaluation

The literature on traditional teacher evaluations indicates that the practice has limited utility for both beginning and veteran teachers. Gitlin & Smyth (1989) indicate

that traditional evaluations usually involve an administrator merely making an "appearance" in a classroom and going through a check list. They state that the administrator's primary goal is to promote the illusion of accountability in an effort to convince the public that education dollars are not being wasted. Additionally, Gitlin and Smyth suggest that traditional evaluation was deliberately constructed to shape schools, teachers, and teaching in ways which reflected national interests. Although not altogether an unworthy pursuit, this goal, according to Gitlin and Smyth, has led to fake reforms that smother critical thinking and produce docility.

Additionally, critics charge that the traditional approach is a "got ya" process for weeding out incompetent teachers (Duke, 1995) but (a) does little, if anything to improve teaching (Ellett, as cited in Stronge, 1997), (b) is inaccurate and provides limited feedback (Millman & Darling-Hammond, 1990), and (c) is a procedure that serves to promote hierarchical and submissive relations between administrators and teachers (Gitlin & Smyth, 1989). Schmoker (as quoted in Marshall, 1996) states that "conventional evaluation, the kind the overwhelming majority of American teachers undergo, does not have any measurable impact on the quality of student learning. In most cases, it's a waste of time" (p. 336).

I could find no one defending the traditional approach to teacher evaluation in the literature. Criticism abounded, however, Daniel Beerens; in his book, *"Evaluating Teachers for Professional Growth"* (2000), identifies three main reasons for evaluating teachers. They are (1) to improve teacher effectiveness, (2) to encourage professional growth, and (3) to remediate or eliminate weak teachers. However, Beerens notes that traditional evaluation is problematic because it is used for two antithetical purposes: (1) helping the teacher improve (formative evaluation) and at the same time (2) determining the future employment status of the teacher (summative evaluation). The problem, according to Beerens, is created because "the principal usually carries out both functions: coaching, encouraging, developing, and assisting the teacher throughout the year and

then, at the end of the year, making a summative judgment about the competence of the teacher" (Beerens, 2000, p. 9). The resulting conflict of interest promotes a lack of trust between the teacher and the administrator.

Millman & Darling-Hammond (1990) make much the same point. They argue that having a single person perform both formative and summative evaluation results in a conflicting role for the principal as both supporter and judge.

Alternative Approaches to Teacher Evaluation

A number of alternatives to the traditional way of evaluating teachers can be found in the literature. Alternative approaches include such practices as (a) student ratings, (b) teaching circles, (c) collaborative assessment, (d) reflective practice and self reflection, (e) portfolios, and (f) peer coaching and peer evaluation. Each of these is discussed below.

Student Ratings

Although formal student ratings of teachers mostly began at the college level in the latter half of 1900's, the debate over whether students' judgements about the work of a teacher are, in fact, valid dates back at least to Socrates (Millman, 1981). The debate has often been polarized. In recent years, for example, proponents of having students evaluate teachers have argued that: (a) students are the main source of information about what happens in the classroom; (b) students are the most logical evaluators of the quality and effectiveness of and satisfaction with effective/ineffective instruction; and (c) student ratings provide a means of communicating between students and instructor (Aleamoni, as cited in Millman, 1981).

Opponents, according to Aleamoni, have argued that: (a) students cannot make consistent judgments about instructors or instruction because of their immaturity, lack of experience and capriciousness; (b) only colleagues with excellent publication records and expertise are qualified to teach and evaluate their peers' instruction; (c) most student rating schemes are nothing more than a popularity contest, with the warm, friendly,

humorous instructor emerging as the winner every time; (d) students are not able to make accurate judgments until they have been away from the course, and possibly away from the university, for several years; (e) student rating forms are both unreliable and invalid; (f) extraneous variables or conditions can affect student ratings; (g) the grades or marks students receive in the course are highly correlated with their ratings of the course and the instructor, and (h) student ratings can not possibly be used to improve instruction. The fact that both sides of the argument seldom cite empirical studies to support these antithetical points of view only complicates the situation.

Scriven and Doyle (as cited in Millman, 1981) suggest a way out of this morass when they suggest that student ratings of teachers can be valid if students are asked to assess only what they reasonably can be expected to know and make judgements about. Scriven and Doyle offer a teacher evaluation model consistent with this thinking. They consider the inclusion of student questionnaires a key component of the teacher evaluation process and suggest that the practice begin at about grade six. They caution, however, that the questionnaire is only part of the story and that the students need to be prepared so that they are able to provide accurate information. The authors recommend that teacher evaluations include the input of all individuals who have had the opportunity to observe the process, materials, or results of teaching and that this group may include the instructor, current and recent students, and the instructor's colleagues. In short, under ideal circumstances, the evaluation of a teacher would include input from the teacher's superiors (those above in command), colleagues (those equal to the teacher), and students (those with less authority).

Although student ratings of teachers could conceivably be incorporated as a data source within peer assisted review, this, to my knowledge, has not been done. It certainly was not done in the program studied for this dissertation.

Teaching Circles

Another alternative to traditional teacher evaluations is based on the establishment of teaching circles. Hutchings (1996) defines a teaching circle as a small group of faculty where members make a commitment to work together over a period of at least one semester to address questions and concerns about the particulars of their teaching and their students' learning. Hutchings considers teaching circles to be an effective practice because they: (a) rely on reciprocal visits and observations between circle members, (b) open classroom doors rather than isolate members, (c) allow teachers to mentor other teachers, and (d) focus on student learning by developing strategies for peer collaboration and review without the inclusion of the results of teaching in terms of student learning.

Although I could find no empirical studies of teaching circles, the function and purpose of teaching circles is somewhat consistent with peer review evaluation in that both methods utilize collaboration among peers for the purpose of improving teaching practice and student learning. Furthermore, since most school districts are not able to match peer teachers according to subject area, the use of teaching circles within discipline areas appears to be a potentially viable component of a peer assistance and review program that a district could design. Teaching circles, however, were not a component of the Grossmont PAR program.

The Collaborative Teacher Growth Model

The work of Mertler and Peterson (1997), presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association, examined the purposes of teacher evaluation and provided a description of a Collaborative Teacher Growth Model as well as an argument for its utilization-focused benefits. When compared to the limited benefits they believe traditional approaches to evaluation provide, the authors conclude that teacher evaluations should be designed to help teachers improve their teaching according to the needs of their students. They recommend a collaborative teacher growth

model that relies on feedback from peers and the evaluated teacher's own self-assessment. In addition, because students are identified as the only individuals constantly exposed to the various elements of a course (e.g., instructor, textbook, homework, course content, method of instruction, etc.), they are not only included in the evaluation process, they are considered the most logical evaluators of the effectiveness of those elements.

According to the authors, the key to successful formative evaluation lies in the evaluator's ability to collect information in an environment that is not judgmental or punitive. The atmosphere is to be: (a) supportive of growth, (b) teacher directed, and (c) non-threatening to the receiving teacher. Mertler and Peterson (1997) define a well functioning formative system of evaluation as one that: (a) encourages continual teacher self-evaluation and reflection, (b) encourages professional growth in areas of interest to the teacher, (c) improves teacher morale by treating teachers as professionals in charge of their own growth, (d) encourages teacher collegiality and discussion among the staff of a school, and (e) supports teachers as they try new instructional approaches.

Hennessy (1997) conducted a qualitative empirical study examining the perceptions of beginning teachers involved in collaborative assessment. In this study, novice teachers were evaluated through a process utilizing Collaborative Assessment Procedures (CAP). The CAP evaluation entails the pairing of a beginning or newly hired teacher with a teacher-consultant who spends numerous hours in direct classroom observations and conferences with the teacher throughout one full year. On average, most beginning teachers were observed fifteen to twenty times over the course of the academic year. The research attempted to establish a link between the new teacher performance evaluation process and the beginning teacher's sense of efficacy with respect to students and other teachers.

Thirteen out of twenty-one novice teachers reported that the CAP evaluation process affirmed and nurtured their professional development. Five out of twenty

reported feelings of being under surveillance and two reported feelings of both affirmation and surveillance.

The work of Mertler and Peterson (1997) combined with the research of Hennessey (1997) makes a strong case supporting the use of the Collaborative Assessment Procedure (CAP) for teacher evaluation. CAP is similar to peer review in several respects. First, the primary purpose of both programs is to improve teacher performance. Second, both programs rely on input from peers as well as the evaluated teacher's own self-assessment. Finally, the collaborative environment outlined above mirrors the environment desired during peer assistance and review.

There were also some differences between the CAP and the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program studied for this dissertation. Specifically, the program studied in this research differs from Hennessey's study in that this study included only veteran teachers with at least five years of successful teaching experience. Additionally, unlike teachers in Hennessey's research, teachers involved with PAR in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD) were observed just once or twice over the course of one semester. Furthermore, the teachers in this study voluntarily chose to participate in lieu of their regularly scheduled traditional evaluation. Finally, unlike teachers involved in CAP evaluation, teachers involved in this study did not receive input from their superiors or their students.

Reflective Practice and Self-Assessment

Schlechty (1990) states that self-assessment is the most powerful form of evaluation (p. 115). Airasian and Gullickson (1997) list four steps that teachers go through during self-evaluation:

- (1) **Problem Identification:** Teachers identify a problem or question about their practice that they are motivated to address.
- (2) **Information Gathering:** They collect data to inform the area of practice.

- (3) **Reflection and Decision Making:** After reflection and analysis of the data, teachers make meaning from them.
 - (4) **Application and Change:** Plans are made to carry out changes in practice.
- Additionally, Airasian & Gullickson (1997) list eight reasons why self-evaluation is an important process to use in formative evaluation:

- (1) It is a professional responsibility.
- (2) It focuses professional development and improvement on the classroom or school level where teachers have their greatest expertise and effect.
- (3) It recognizes that organizational change is usually the result of individuals changing themselves and their personal practices, not of "top-down" mandates.
- (4) It gives teachers voice - that is, a stake in and control over their own practice,
- (5) It makes teachers aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their practice; it grows from the immediacy and complexity of the classroom, as do teachers' motives and incentives.
- (6) It encourages ongoing teacher development and discourages unchanging classroom beliefs, routines, and methods.
- (7) It treats the teacher as a professional and can improve teacher morale and motivation.
- (8) It encourages collegial interactions and discussions about teaching. (Airasian & Gullickson, 1994; McCloskey & Egelson, 1993)

There are certain weaknesses inherent in teacher self-assessment. These weaknesses include: (1) the degree of teacher autonomy provided during self-assessment, (2) the ability to self-assess varies from teacher to teacher depending on emotional intelligence, objectivity, self-image, (3) level of efficacy, and (4) accurate self-assessment can be illusive due to self-interest, lack of time, lack of external evidence, reliance on simplistic explanations, overgeneralization, and inaccurate inferences (Airasian & Gullickson, 1997).

Reflective practice and self-assessment is a fundamental component of Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). In light of the shortcomings of reflective practice, it would seem prudent for individuals responsible for PAR program implementation to adopt peer assistance policies and methods that minimize the weaknesses that Airasian & Gullickson talk about, however.

Portfolios

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of materials and artifacts that attempts to demonstrate teacher understanding of subject matter and students and that highlights best teaching practices (Beerens, 2000, p. 43). Harrington-Leuker (1996) suggests that portfolios include documentation of a teacher's growth over time and reflective statements about their practice. Portfolios, among other things, permit teachers to reflect on teaching practice with colleagues. Additionally, they provide examples of successful practice which can then be, at least in theory, adapted into other classrooms (Wolf, 1996). Ven Wagenen & Hubbard (1998) report that portfolios have more value when they are limited in scope so that they meet the professional development needs of specific teachers.

As is true of other evaluation alternatives, there are drawbacks to adopting portfolios as an evaluation method. These shortcomings, as identified by Doolittle (1994), are that teachers see them as time-consuming and are reluctant to get involved with them. If they are to be of benefit, they must be more than a collection of good-looking pictures and "pretty scrapbook" designs. Doolittle (as cited in Beerens, 2000) recommends that the portfolio be considered as only one piece of the total picture of a teacher's evaluation. Doolittle states:

The criteria for what is contained in the portfolio as well as the purpose it serves must be made clear. A lack of consensus as to what a teacher should know and be able to do makes construction standards difficult, and because it is a

personalized document, the lack of standardization makes evaluation difficult (Doolittle, 1994).

The PAR program in the GUHSD does not currently include an official teacher portfolio. Consequently, a purposeful collection of materials and artifacts documenting Participating Teachers activities during PAR would be an improvement—albeit a potentially time consuming one—over current program summarization. Currently, Participating Teacher activity concludes with a Growth Plan Summary. This summary is a single sheet of paper on which the Participating Teacher identifies, usually in a paragraph or less, what he or she did during their PAR activity. A modified portfolio could be adopted as a single element of the larger evaluation process of PAR. In fact, if implemented correctly, a PAR portfolio could eliminate the shortcomings cited by Doolittle (1994) by requiring less time than portfolio-exclusive evaluations. Furthermore, because PAR growth activities target specific teacher needs, the scope and purpose of this modified PAR portfolio, according to Ven Wagenen & Hubbard (1998), would have more value than is normally associated with traditional portfolios.

Peer Assistance and Review

Many of the models discussed above have peer assistance components; peer assisted review, however, also appears in the literature as a distinct alternative model of teacher evaluation. In general, peer assistance and review programs typically involve the identification of outstanding teachers who are released from classroom duties for part or all of the school day so that they can provide assistance and review to new teachers in a district, help struggling veteran teachers, and support veteran teachers who request assistance for a variety of reasons (Bloom and Goldstein, 2000).

Peterson and Ward (1980) indicate that formative peer review is a more intelligent and meaningful method of assessing teacher performance than the traditional evaluation approach. They note that, although many teacher evaluations still contain criteria like appearance, grooming, and aspects of an individual's personal life, peer

review represents a move toward criteria that have a clear and direct link to not only improving a teacher's ability to teach, but also improving student learning. Lezotte (1993) suggests that: "Teacher evaluation should include teacher self-evaluation, peer observations, and peer coaching (p.3).

Krovetz & Cohick (1993) report that using a peer coaching program for teachers, in place of a traditional evaluation system had many positive benefits. The findings of Krovetz & Cohick were obtained during a study of an experimental evaluation program termed the Prime Teacher Appraisal Program (Krovetz & Cohick, 1993). The program utilized peer coaching for experienced teachers in place of a traditional evaluation system. Respondents included in the study reported many positive benefits such as: increased collegiality, reduced isolation, presumed gains from each other's feedback and expertise, and continued support to implement new ideas so that performance could continue to improve.

The findings of Krovitz and Cohick seem especially germane to this study because they represent data obtained from experienced teachers during a model of evaluation that included peer coaching for experienced teachers. However, the program developed by Krovitz & Cohick differs from the Grossmont Model of PAR in that the Krovitz and Cohick model utilized professional development support teams who observed and coached each other rather than a single support provider in the form of a Consulting Teacher. Additionally, teachers involved in the Grossmont Model of PAR did not conduct reciprocal observations. In other words, only the Participating Teacher is receiving review and assistance. The Consulting Teacher is to facilitate the assistance.

Lieberman, (1998) indicates that peer review at elementary and secondary levels of education is utilized for three different purposes. He states:

First, it is a procedure culminating in decisions to renew or not renew the contracts of first-year teachers. Peer review is also a procedure leading up to decisions about tenured teachers who are not performing adequately for one

reason or another. A third purpose is to provide assistance to teachers without any implication of adverse action; a teacher wants help and peer review is the process used to provide it. (p.3)

Lieberman (1998) cautions:

These differences are very important, legally and practically. When a school district is said to be using peer review, it is essential to specify the purpose(s) for which it is utilized. Otherwise, the conclusions reached are likely to be applied erroneously to other modes of peer review. (p.3)

It is important to note that, in this study, the focus is on a peer review program with the third purpose articulated by Lieberman.

In spite of the many beneficial qualities of peer review--in California or elsewhere--peer coaching and evaluation, warns Beerens (2000), can be very time-consuming because the process needs to take place above and beyond traditional teaching responsibilities. He states:

It is sometimes difficult to arrange time logistically in the everyday school schedule. It requires a lot of trust between the participants and the need for confidentiality. When peer coaching is done by teachers with a previous friendship relationship, it may induce some bias or lack of total honesty. The possibility also exists that peer coaching may damage relationships and create tension among the faculty. (p. 45)

A Brief History of Peer Assistance and Review Programs

In July of 1997, the National Education Association (NEA) voted to allow the creation of peer assistance and review structures through its local affiliates (Chase, 1997). Programs have been developed in Toledo, Columbus, and Cincinnati, Ohio, as well as in Rochester, New York (Beerens, 2000, p. 44). The School Board of the Cincinnati Public Schools approved a peer review process in which teachers evaluate each other (Miller, 1998).

The Toledo Model

The first identified school district to utilize peer review as an evaluation practice at the elementary and secondary levels of education was that of Toledo, Ohio (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin & Bernstein, 1984; Lieberman, 1998). The Toledo program was developed to address a shortage of teachers entering and remaining in the profession (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000, p.6). In their study of the Toledo initiative and other innovative approaches to teacher evaluation, Wise, Darling-Hammond et al., (1984) concluded that evaluation, as performed in Toledo, elevated teacher evaluation from a traditionally meaningless task to a process that produced useful results and ultimately benefited kids. Although their study focussed on peer review from the perspective of the administrator/principal and beginning teachers, it brought to light a teacher evaluation system that clearly addressed the goal of diagnosing and improving teaching as the primary function. However, the study concludes that no single recipe or template for teacher evaluations exists and that what may work in one district may fall flat in another setting with different organizational traditions, management principles, and governing values or practices.

The Toledo program is governed by a nine-member Board of Review that is responsible for selecting and monitoring the work of the consulting teachers who assist and evaluate first-year teachers and tenured teachers who have been notified that their teaching is, for various reasons, unsatisfactory (Lieberman, 1998). The board makes recommendations to the Superintendent of Schools regarding the future employment status of teachers undergoing peer review. The board is made up of five members who are appointed by the union (teachers); the other four are district level administrators.

Consulting teachers are selected from among Toledo's regular teaching staff through an application process consisting of an application form and references attesting to their qualifications from a union representative, their principal, and three other teachers. Consulting teachers are relieved of their regular teaching duties so that they

can devote their time to assisting interns or veteran teachers in the intervention program who have been identified as having to improve or be terminated. Whenever possible, consulting teachers are assigned interns who teach the same subject and/or grade level. The average load of consulting teachers in Toledo is nine interns, fewer if the consultant is also responsible for an experienced teacher in the intervention program (Lieberman, 1998).

In 1997, the Toledo Federation of Teachers asserted:

Toledo's peer review system has been the model and standard for evaluation reform efforts not only in Ohio, but throughout the nation. Within the past month, North Carolina, with Governor Hunt in the Lead, California, and Florida have asked Toledo for help in setting up peer evaluation systems. (Lieberman, 1998, p. 89)

The Toledo model of peer review is important because it was the first program established and is the prototype for programs in other states, however, most important for this study are the pilot peer review programs currently functioning in California. Due to the freedom granted each school district, these peer review programs differ not only from peer review in Toledo, but also from district to district within the State of California. These differences will be discussed in the next section.

Peer Assistance and Review in California

California currently has a well-funded and well-conceived new-teacher induction program, The Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance Program (BTSA), that began operation in 1988. BTSA currently provides all beginning teachers in the State of California with two years of confidential formative assessment by mentors while simultaneously allowing administrators to conduct summative assessments (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000 p. 7). On April 6, 1999, the Legislature instituted the first statewide peer review program in the nation (Johnston, 1999).

Assembly Bill IX (AB IX), signed on April 6, 1999, provides specific PAR program criteria and delineates the freedom allowed each school district to implement its own locally developed version of PAR. Among other criteria, the bill requires a joint teacher/administrator peer review panel to select Consulting Teachers and to annually evaluate the impact of the district's PAR program in order to improve the program. It requires the governing board to evaluate and assess certificated employee performance and to incorporate the results of an employee's participation in the PAR program into this evaluation. Furthermore, although not a component of first-year PAR implementation in the GUHSD, the bill authorizes a school district to require (previously "allow") a certificated employee who receives an unsatisfactory rating during a traditional evaluation to participate in its PAR program.

Unlike the peer review programs in other states, the PAR program in California does not include the participation of new teachers or probationary teachers unless the locally negotiated contractual agreement elects to include these members of the teaching staff in their PAR program. The focus of the PAR program, however, is formative assessment for veteran teachers choosing this option in lieu of traditional evaluation.

Bloom and Goldstein (2000) summarize the California Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program as follows:

Peer Assistance and Review programs provide an opportunity for school districts and their teachers to reshape professional development and make evaluation meaningful. PAR offers the prospect of changing teacher appraisal from a halfhearted pro forma effort to a system of professional growth in which meeting high professional standards is an expected outcome. In sum, PAR paves the way for districts and their unions, teachers, and administrators to work together to improve the quality of teaching--and the quality of students' learning--in California's public schools. (p. 31)

Most models of teacher evaluation and peer review utilize pre-established standards as a basis for quality evaluation. They may include those developed at the national level by the Joint Committee on Standards in 1981, that are defined as "principles agreed to by people engaged in the professional practice of evaluation for the measurement of the value or the quality of an evaluation" (Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995, p. 37).

Policy-makers in the State of California, for the purposes of PAR, established the broadly worded California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) as the pre-established basis for peer review from which growth areas are to be selected by reviewed teachers (See Appendix 1). However, each school district has the freedom to either (1) utilize all or part of the CSTPs or (2) adopt their own standards to be used as its basis for peer review.

Differing models of peer review surfaced in a handful of school districts across California prior to the state-mandated PAR program. Although the purpose and scope of these early PAR programs varied widely, these programs will be discussed in the next section so that variations of PAR programs within the State of California are identified.

Examples of California Peer Assistance and Review Programs

Programs Developed Prior to AB IX

The Santa Clara Model

In the 1980's, the Santa Clara Unified School District developed a peer assistance program designed to provide remediation for teachers judged to be at-risk—or in dire need of assistance (McLaughlin & Pfeifer, 1988). In the Santa Clara program, peers worked with teachers for a period of sixty days in an attempt to improve teacher performance or counsel them out of the profession. The school administrator was not involved in this process. Although the Santa Clara Model was developed in the 1980's, McLaughlin & Pfeifer (1988) provide no evidence suggesting that this peer based

remediation process did indeed improve teacher performance or that ineffective teachers were counseled out of the profession.

The Scott's Valley Model

Mann (1999) examines the collaborative peer review process as it is practiced in Scott's Valley, California. In this model, the teachers set their own agenda for their evaluation. Each chooses an area of instructional practice in which he/she wishes to gather more information. Teachers take responsibility for defining the observational process and they decide what their peers are to look for in their teaching.

In Mann's study, teachers in Scott's Valley evaluated each other and identified each other's ability to effectively use a newly adopted textbook. Evaluation observations in Scott's Valley took place both before and after observation conferences. The administrators in the Scott's Valley School District had limited involvement in the peer review program and primarily functioned to hire substitutes so that the teachers could observe one another.

The model implemented in Scott's Valley began with a post-observation conference in which the objective was self-reflection. The peer doing the assisting/reviewing was not the main communicator; it was the observed teacher's responsibility to identify his/her own strengths and honestly self-assess areas in need of improvement. According to the collaborating teachers in Scott's Valley, assisted teachers felt empowered by the process because they were all working together (Mann, 1999). It is important to note, however, that the views of collaborating teachers were not the result of a systematic study. Furthermore, the literature is void of any research addressing the viability of the Scott's Valley Model in terms of improved teaching practice or increased student learning.

Post AB IX Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) in California

As noted previously, there is a void of models of peer review in the literature, however, the few programs that are documented will now be addressed.

The Mt. Diablo & Poway Models

The PAR program of Mt. Diablo, as identified by Bloom and Goldstein (2000), uses the California Standards for the Teaching Profession as the basis for their evaluation system while the standards in Poway's PAR program are derived from the California New Teacher Standards, the Educational Testing Service's Praxis III Classroom Performance Assessment, and the work of the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000, p. 26). The standards used help program participants determine what good teaching is and what it is not. This understanding allows the evaluator and evaluatee to enter the peer review process with common expectations of acceptable practice (Bloom and Goldstein, 2000). As is true of California models of peer review, due to the relative infancy of these programs, there are no studies of either the Mt. Diablo or the Poway Models that would help us determine whether either of these peer review programs improves teaching practice and student achievement .

The Lompoc Model

In Lompoc, California, a peer review program was established in 1989 that was modeled after the program created in Toledo, Ohio (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000. p. 140). As such, it relies on a "trust agreement" rather than bargained contractual language between administrative personnel and the teachers' union. Within a trust agreement, the purpose and goals become the focus and address issues of professionalism, improved teacher performance, and, as was the case in Lompoc, led to greater retention rates of good teachers who might otherwise have departed teaching (Bloom & Goldstein, 2000). In other words, the Lompoc model addressed the needs of beginning teachers in an effort to keep them in the profession.

Summary

In this chapter I have briefly reviewed the literature addressing the function and limitations of the traditional approach to teacher evaluation. Second, I have reviewed the alternatives to the traditional approach and critiqued these approaches which included

(1) The use of student ratings, (2) Teaching Circles, (3) Collaborative Assessment, (4) Reflective Practice and Self-Assessment, (5) Peer Assisted Review, and (6) Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) in California. Third, I provided a history of the development of peer review at the elementary and secondary levels of education. Finally, I reviewed the limited number of California peer assisted review programs that were implemented prior to AB 130 as well as existing Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) programs currently cited in the literature.

There is a void of empirical research in the literature addressing peer review in general, much less any studies of peer review programs limited to veteran teacher participation in elementary and secondary levels of education.¹ These limitations are also indicative of the fact that while previously identified peer review programs have great relevance to PAR programs currently in the developmental stage in California, there are no existing data indicating peer review has a positive impact on student learning. Lieberman (1998) acknowledges the absence of any empirical studies providing evidence to support the notion that peer review does indeed improve student learning. He states:

In Toledo, most of the regular teachers have come through the peer review process. At no time, however, has anyone, including peer review's strongest supporters, demonstrated that pupil achievement has gone up as a result of peer review. The claim has been that peer review results in better support for new teachers and a more effective procedure for terminating incompetent tenured teachers; presumably, pupil achievement will improve as a result. Nevertheless, no one has demonstrated the relationship between these allegedly better personnel

¹ Advanced academic on-line searches were conducted in addition to phone conversations with staff at The New Teacher Center at UC Santa Cruz and staff at The California Department of Education. None of these sources produced empirical literature on peer assistance and review in this dissertation.

practices, and pupil achievement. The relationship is merely assumed, without any evidence whatsoever of its magnitude. And if this is true for the model peer review district, we can hardly expect better results in districts that are just beginning to adopt peer review plans. (p. 95)

While this research does not attempt to provide data in terms of increased student performance, it does examine one PAR program during first-phase implementation in one California school district. More specifically, this study attempts to determine the perceptions of voluntarily participating teachers having first hand experience with the Grossmont Model of PAR.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The research involved a single case study analysis of a bounded system; the study utilized qualitative methods of inquiry. Sections in this chapter discuss the research site and respondents for the study, access to the research site, the researcher's role in the study, the data collection and analysis methods, the timeline for the research, and finally, the limitations of the study. Before I begin describing the specific processes utilized to complete the research, however, I will first provide a brief account of my reasons for using a qualitative design for this study and also a brief discussion of my need to revise the initial research questions.

The Choice of Qualitative Research and the Specific Qualitative Traditions Selected

As I embarked on this research, I wanted to understand participants' perspectives of their experiences; I also hoped to do two other things: First, I hoped that the data could be used to begin to construct theory about factors that lead to positive and negative perceptions of the newly established PAR program and peer assisted review in general. Second, I hoped that my study might serve a formative evaluation function for those in charge of modifying Grossmont's PAR program for its second year of implementation and possibly for those in charge of PAR programs and programs built around peer assisted review in other school districts.

As I began the data collection process, however, I observed that participants responded in ways that I did not anticipate. These unanticipated responses resulted in data that allowed me to "test" (albeit informally) existing theory pertaining to established limitations of traditional teacher evaluation. As a result, a fourth element was included in this study as I began to empirically "test" assumptions about traditional evaluation.

Although each of the goals listed above is not logically incompatible with the others, each seems to be associated with different qualitative research traditions. Each of the traditions--and the relationship of each tradition to this study--will be discussed below.

The Phenomenological and Case Study Traditions of Qualitative Research

One tradition often associated with the notion of qualitative research is the phenomenological tradition. The phenomenological tradition's primary goal is to allow the reader to share the first-hand experiences of respondents and the meanings respondents construct from these experiences (Merriam, 1998).

At times, the phenomenological tradition is associated with another qualitative tradition: the qualitative case study tradition. Guba and Lincoln (1981), for instance, conclude that case study is the best reporting form for evaluations because it provides thick description, is grounded in actual events and perceptions of these events, is holistic and lifelike, is simple enough for readers to understand, is focussed in illuminating meanings by those involved with what is being evaluated, and can communicate tacit knowledge.

Others define case studies even more broadly. According to Cresswell (1998), "a case-study is an exploration of a bounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (p.61). This bounded system, Cresswell argues, "is bounded by time and place, and it is the case being studied--a program, an event, an activity, or individuals" (Cresswell, 1998, p. 61).

This study is a case study in the sense that it looks at a program (PAR) and individuals (veteran teachers participating in PAR) within a bounded place (the Grossmont Unified High School District) and time (the first year of implementation). Also, to the extent that it attempts to explicate the perspectives of the veteran teachers who participated in the program, it can also be seen as tapping the phenomenological

tradition that Merriam talks about and that Guba and Lincoln associate with case study research.

The study, however, does not provide the sort of "thick description" Lincoln and Guba associated with phenomenologically-oriented case studies; nor does it have the sort of contextual richness Creswell talks about. There are reasons for this.

One reason involves confidentiality concerns: I was studying a small sample of subjects (12) from a relatively small population (36) in the school district in which I worked. Had my descriptions been too "thick" or had I said too much about the particular contexts of participants, their identities almost certainly would have been revealed, at least to others within the district. Because of this, I was virtually forced to opt for a thinner sort of description and less contextual richness than one normally might expect in a case study geared toward explicating the meanings participants have made of their experiences in a particular place during a particular period of time.

Modifications in what is traditionally done in phenomenologically-oriented case studies were also the result of my desire to pursue two other goals associated with two other qualitative traditions. First, as noted above, I wanted to empirically "test," at least informally, assumptions about traditional evaluation reported in the literature (normally without much empirical evidence). Second, I wanted to begin to construct theory about factors that lead to positive and negative judgements about the peer assisted review program as implemented in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). The first goal is associated with what some (See, for example, Miles and Huberman, 1994) call the positivist tradition of qualitative research; the second goal is associated with the grounded theory tradition. These two traditions are discussed briefly in the next section.

The Positivist Tradition of Qualitative Research

Although some have suggested that the positivist tradition is more or less antithetical to qualitative research (See, for example, Lincoln and Guba, 1985), others have argued that the term positivist qualitative research is not an oxymoron (Miles and

Huberman, 1994). Recently, Donmoyer (2002, 1999) has argued that differing research orientations are not rooted in the sort of incommensurable paradigms people like Lincoln and Guba have assumed them to be; rather different research orientations such as the positivist and phenomenological orientations simply reflect different purposes. Furthermore, one can pursue multiple purposes within a single study, Donmoyer argues. That is the case here. In addition to wanting to explicate the meanings participants made of their experiences—a phenomenological purpose—I wanted to empirically test (albeit informally) the literature's assumptions about traditional evaluation. This interest in "theory testing" can be classified as fitting within the positivist tradition.

Grounded Theory Tradition of Qualitative Research

In addition to testing existing theory, I also wanted to begin to construct theory about factors that make evaluation programs built around peer assistance and review appealing and unappealing to teachers. This goal is symptomatic of another tradition of qualitative research, the grounded theory tradition. Merriam (1998) states the following about grounded theory forms of qualitative research:

As is true in other forms of qualitative research, the investigator as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis assumes an inductive stance and strives to derive meaning from the data. The end result of this type of qualitative research is a theory that emerges from, or is "grounded" in, the data—hence, grounded theory. Rich description is also important but is not the primary focus of this type of study." (p.17)

The Evaluation Tradition Within Qualitative Research

As suggested above, this study can be associated with one additional qualitative research tradition, the tradition that uses qualitative methods for evaluation purposes. Much of the initial impetus to use qualitative methods in the field of education came from evaluation projects that exposed the fact the most meaningful aspects of a program often were the most difficult to measure and what was measured often was relatively

meaningless (See, for example, Stake, 1975; Eisner, 1979; Hamilton, MacDonald, King, Jenkins, & Parlett, 1977).

Patton (1997) indicates that the distinctive feature of evaluative case study is that evaluative case study "weighs information to produce judgement. Judging is the final and ultimate act of evaluation" (Patton, 1997 p. 375). This concern with making judgements that would be relevant to the Grossmont Union High School District's Joint Panel as it modifies its PAR program for subsequent years is indicative of the fact that this study is classified as an evaluation as well as a phenomenologically-oriented case study, a "positivist" attempt at theory testing and an attempt to construct a kind of grounded theory.

Because of my role as employee of the Grossmont Union High School District who served as a Consulting Teacher in that district's PAR program, this study also can be categorized as a particular type of evaluation: an internal as opposed to an external type. Patton (1997) also differentiates between the utilization of external versus internal evaluators in the following excerpt:

Unlike most external evaluators, who encounter a program at a particular point in time, make their contribution, and leave, perhaps never to have contact with the program again, internal evaluators are there for the long haul. They need to be particularly sensitive to how evaluation can serve different needs over time, including both program design and accountability functions. In this way internal evaluators help build an institutional memory for a program or organization, a memory made up of lessons learned, ideas cultivated, and skills developed over time. (pp. 229-232)

Clearly, in this study, to the extent that I functioned as an evaluator to accomplish one of the four purposes articulated above, I functioned as an internal rather than an external evaluator.

Summary

The study, in short, required a research design that relied on four separate traditions of qualitative research. As noted previously, this study tested existing theories about traditional evaluation practices while simultaneously remaining open to new meanings and perspectives constructed by participants. The goal of this second strategy was twofold: to understand the meaning respondents made from their experiences and to generate new theory regarding the PAR program as currently implemented in the GUHSD and peer assistance of veteran teachers in general. An overarching goal was to utilize the generated information for program improvement. To accomplish these multiple objectives it was necessary to tap into the qualitative traditions of (1) phenomenology and case study research, (2) positivist research (3) grounded theory, and (4) program evaluation.

Revising Initial Research Questions

As suggested above, my hope, at the outset of the study, was that the answers would result in meaningful empirical data that would assist the Joint Panel of the GUHSD--and possibly groups in other schools implementing the PAR legislation--identify costs and benefits associated with voluntary participation in the program and assess if volunteers viewed costs as minimal when compared to professional growth rewards unobtainable via traditional evaluation performed by an administrator. However, when responding to questions, respondents identified categories and themes in ways that I did not expect. As a result, my initial research questions were modified in the course of the study. In the beginning, the following questions were used to guide the study:

- (1) Based on first-hand experience with PAR, would participating teachers once again choose to do peer review in lieu of traditional evaluations? If so, why? If not, why not?

- 2) What experiences encourage participating teachers to recommend PAR to their tenured colleagues?
- 3) What would cause tenured teachers to refrain from participating in PAR, or prohibit them from recommending PAR to a tenured colleague?
- 4) How would the volunteer teachers compare their experience with PAR to traditional administrator evaluations?

I found that my initial research questions were not very clear nor as direct as I initially thought and, as a result, did not operate in the way I had planned. In many ways, the questions may have expressed unintentional biases on the part of this researcher. Furthermore, my assumption that the interview protocol would provide the answers to the initial research questions was naive. After analyzing data obtained from just three interviews, I revamped the research questions based upon themes that emerged during the interviews. The initial research questions were changed to:

- (1) What prompted teachers to voluntarily select PAR in lieu of traditional evaluation?
- (2) What factors contributed to positive perceptions of the Grossmont Model of PAR?
- (3) What factors contributed to negative perceptions of the Grossmont Model of PAR?
- (4) What differences did participants observe between the traditional approach to teacher evaluation and peer assisted review?

This shift of research questions is not unusual in qualitative research. Merriam, (1998) indicates that tentative hypotheses should be utilized to direct initial data collection, which in turn leads to the refinement or reformulation of questions (p. 150). Similarly, other researchers (See, for example, Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987) prefer to let ideas emerge from interviews rather than categorize

answers according to preexisting categories; these authors recommend beginning with a rough and tentative design that is flexible, iterative, and continuous.

Site and Respondent Information

Site Selection

The study was conducted in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). The GUHSD, founded in 1921, is located in the eastern portion of San Diego County. The district, originally a single-high school district, now comprises eleven comprehensive high schools (one of which is a charter school), one continuation school, and seven adult education schools. The district's PAR program, which is the focus of this study and is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, was implemented in ten of the district's traditional high schools and the continuation school (a school for students who, for various reasons, require non-traditional forms of instruction) representing total populations of nine-hundred certificated teaching staff, and twenty-one thousand high school students. The charter school and the adult education schools did not have PAR programs and, therefore, were not part of this study.

No two schools within the district share identical schedules with respect to class start and end times. Furthermore, three of the eleven schools are on a quarter system with a four period, block-scheduled day. For these schools, classes are held for eighty-five to ninety minutes. The continuation school has eight forty-eight minute periods Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, the periods are thirty-five minutes long and the school day ends two hours earlier than during the rest of the week. One of the schools observes a minimum day for students every other Wednesday. On regular school days at this individual site, school starts at 7:15 AM and ends at 2:48 PM. On minimum days teachers attend school-wide, departmental, and special program meetings. Additionally, on minimum days, the first period (normally beginning at 7:15 AM) begins at 7:30 AM and the last period (normally ending at 2:48 PM) ends at 12:18 PM. This differentiated beginning and ending times ensures that all periods are equally shortened.

The GUHSD was selected as the research site in part because of convenience (I work in the district) but also because, following a mutual agreement between district office personnel and the Grossmont Education Association (GEA/teachers union), the PAR program was implemented in this district one year prior to the state mandated implementation date of July 1, 2001.

Respondent Selection

I decided that the case-load of seven voluntarily Participating Teachers that I carried in my role as a Consulting Teacher should be excluded from the study in an attempt to minimize bias. Therefore, the respondents for the study were drawn from the case-loads of the remaining three consultants. All respondents met criteria delineated in Assembly Bill IX (AB IX). Essentially, all respondents had at least five years of successful previous teaching experience and all had voluntarily chosen to participate in the PAR program. As a result of their extensive personal experience with traditional evaluations and first-hand knowledge of the Grossmont Model of PAR, each of the respondents represented a unique source of information about the PAR program and constituted an "information-rich," or intensive case (Patton, 1990, p.171) within the larger case that was the focus of the inquiry: Grossmont's PAR program.

In selecting respondents for the study, I took precautions to ensure balanced representation from each of the remaining Consulting Teachers. Since two consultants had two class periods of release time to review a case-load of eight teachers each, and one consultant had four periods of release time to review eleven teachers, three participants were randomly selected from each of the two Consulting Teachers with eight participants while six were randomly selected from the Consulting Teacher with four release periods and a case load of eleven.

Thus a total of twelve Participating Teachers were identified, via stratified random selection procedures, for interview purposes. The sample that was selected mirrored the population in terms of gender distribution and no other sample bias was

detected. Some schools, however, were not represented in the sample. The random selection process, in fact, produced respondents from only eight of the eleven high schools. Since Consulting Teachers provided assistance and review at multiple school sites, the fact that a few schools were not included in the research does not appear to be significant; the PAR experience was, for the most part, uniformly delivered at all eleven high schools. Also, and purely by accident, the sample did not contain representation from non-academic/elective subject areas; this omission is potentially more significant, but was discovered too late in the study to attempt to rectify the situation.

Safeguarding Confidentiality

Before I began the write-up of the study, I consulted respondents regarding their preferences on the style of the write-up. Although a few of the respondents indicated a desire to be identified via subject area, name, school site, or near-retirement status, this view was not universal. Consequently, I decided to refer to all participating teachers in the study as "respondents" and forego any reference to specific school site or subject area. Furthermore, because the majority of the respondents were female, I decided to refer to all respondents by the feminine pronoun "she" throughout the study. (The random sampling inexplicably produced few males and, as a result, a significant risk related to confidentiality would have occurred had a universal pronoun not been used.)

Access and Role of Researcher

Access

My fifteen year affiliation with the GUHSD helped me gain access and get permission to conduct the study. As an insider I obtained written consent from the Joint Panel of the GUHSD to conduct the study and interview faculty members who participated in first-phase PAR implementation (See Appendix 2). Because of the formal authority that had been given the Joint Panel, additional district-level consent was not required.

As previously stated, prior to beginning the research, I applied and was selected to serve as a Consulting Teacher. This factor further contributed to gaining access since it made me an insider not only within the GUHSD but also in the PAR program itself. In addition, I believe my position and perceived reputation in the GUHSD assisted me in establishing a rapport with respondents.

Role of Researcher

My role in the study evolved over time. Initially, I expected to function as an observer-participant, but, since my own case-load of participating teachers was excluded from the study, there was no opportunity for me to collect participant observation data about the study's major research questions. Eventually, I settled on the role of internal investigator/evaluator who functioned primarily as an interviewer (though my participant status did allow me to gather data about the program that are presented in the first part of the findings section). During most of the study, interviewees talked back, clarified, and explained their points while simultaneously being encouraged to focus on aspects of their peer review experience through topical interview techniques.

I was, in short, an insider who selected a research approach that makes the researcher himself/herself the primary instrument used in the study, Merriam (1998) indicates:

Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are filtered through that human being's worldview, values, and perspective...The researcher thus brings a construction of reality to the research situation, which interacts with other people's constructions of interpretations of the phenomenon being studied. (p. 22)

Peshkin (1988) states that this type of subjectivity "can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected" (p. 55).

In light of the views of Merriam and Peshkin, it may be useful for me to briefly discuss my own experience with traditional evaluations and, in the process, to acknowledge the assumptions and expectations I brought into the study. The next section presents a brief account of these matters.

The Researcher as Instrument: A Personal Reflection

I began my career as a teacher in the Fall of 1980 with a great desire to perform my craft as an educator with inimitable excellence. At the same time, as a beginning teacher, I felt that if anyone knew how truly stupid or incompetent I really was, they would immediately realize that a horrible error had occurred in the Personnel Department which inadvertently led to my being hired. And, had the error been discovered, I would have been terminated as soon as was possible. This was the mindset with which I approached each of my evaluations.

Now, after twenty-one years of teaching experience in California, I have concluded that most teachers dread the process of traditional evaluation for the duration of their career. Novice teachers don't understand the process; experienced teachers pretend they do; and administrative evaluators feign expertise. However, evaluation is conducted on a regular basis for all teachers regardless of his/her proven success, or the evaluator's proven lack of it. During previous evaluations, I remember feelings expressed by my colleagues—regardless of age or experience—of great anxiety that I assumed were caused by a shared fear of being exposed as an inferior member of the teaching staff.

The principal or vice principal observed my teaching, as well as that of my peers, for one class period or less and then made written comments which the evaluator and I would later discuss with an artificial sense of importance and understanding. I personally felt like I was the prey and the administrator was searching for signs of weakness and thus be able to expose me as inadequate, inferior, and incompetent.

The first part of the evaluation process was for the teacher to fill out separate objectives for the following areas: Student Progress, Professional Competence and Other

Duties, and Learning Environment and Student Behavior. The requested information appeared fairly straight-forward until I tried to fill in the boxes. I was not providing information for a specific goal or task, but somehow trying to predict how I thought I would accomplish these goals and objectives over the course of an entire year. I never felt as if I was successful at forcing the subject of music into the box and I still don't understand how to provide evidence of student understanding regarding aesthetic appreciation. Fortunately, my evaluators didn't either.

The first step for me to complete the "Objectives Form" was to get a copy of someone else's acceptably completed form. (I suspect other teachers used this method.) This way I had a model to follow regardless of its accuracy or applicability to my own teaching style, student goals, or specific subject area. As a result, it became fashionable for all forms to be completed using the following preface: "Eighty-five percent of all students will be able to..." I still don't know why we began our "Student Progress" objectives with these words. I did, however, know that this verbiage was an acceptable method of completing the form.

Fortunately, no one ever held us accountable for our objectives or the included student percentages. Perhaps even more importantly, no one held the evaluators accountable for their observation results. As a participant in traditional evaluation, I identified success as simply participating in the dance until the ritual was over. I was a participant and willing advocate of what Patton (1997) termed "evaluation disuse." I felt I was merely going through the motions. Any impact on my performance as a teacher was negligible but I did, however, maintain an ethic of non-maleficence because no one was directly harmed. A teacher had to be totally non-functional in the classroom or involved in criminal activity for any action to be taken to remove a teacher from the classroom. Satisfactory or glowing judgments were consistently rendered and, teaching never improved as a result of this evaluation method. In fact, the law of the day, Stull

Bill Evaluation, indicated that if a teacher was deemed unsatisfactory, the teacher would be "allowed," not required to get help.

During the early stages of my literature review I discovered that the views many of my colleagues and I held were not unique and were consistent with literature citing the shortcomings of traditional evaluations. I also discovered many opinions of what teacher evaluation, in an ideal world, should accomplish. For example, Bloom and Goldstein (2000) state the following:

Evaluation should be a serious effort to improve teaching and at the same time provide a kind of quality assurance that only competent teachers are in classrooms. But teacher evaluation in this state (California), as elsewhere, falls far short of these goals. (p. 20)

I realized that the advent of Assembly Bill IX, and the resulting Grossmont Model of PAR, might have the potential to establish formative evaluation processes that do, indeed, attempt to improve the quality of teaching and ultimately increase student learning. I was also cognizant of the fact, for reasons discussed in Chapter 1, that the PAR alternative to traditional evaluation might, in the end, turn out to be no better--no less a process of procedural display--than traditional evaluation. I decided it would be appropriate to systematically study participating teachers' perceptions of their experience in PAR and their views about PAR relative to the more traditional approach to evaluation. With these aforementioned concerns and an awareness of my own biases against traditional evaluation methods shared in my personal reflection, special attention was given to ensure that I did not impose my own opinions into the interviews or the resulting data.

As is appropriate for qualitative interviewing, I had an understanding of the culture and process of traditional evaluation methods and of peer review. Hence, I was aware of how this knowledge affected not only what I heard and understood, but also, how I interpreted respondent information. As is also consistent with qualitative

interviews, I was not a neutral actor but a participant in the interview relationship. However, to ensure that I did not impose my own biases upon the interviewees, I intentionally excluded my own case-load of participating teachers from the sample.

My own case-load of Participating Teachers had ongoing interaction with me. Consequently, it is possible that had they been included in the sample, they may have inadvertently provided interview data they believed I would find desirable. Therefore, respondent selection was limited to Participating Teachers who were assisted and reviewed by the remaining three Consulting Teachers. Of the twelve respondents in the sample, I was vaguely familiar with just one. I had not met or had any previous contact with the remaining eleven respondents.

To further guard against tainting the data with my own bias, an interview guide was utilized to ensure not only that questions were consistent between all of the interviews but also that I did not "lead the witnesses." Furthermore, an interview question translation of the study's underlying research question, "Will the Grossmont Model of PAR be perceived as not only a viable alternative to traditional evaluation, but the preferred choice for veteran teachers who wish to improve their teaching practice?", was not a part of the interview guide because the wording itself may have influenced respondents by giving the impression that I was hoping PAR would emerge as the preferred choice of teacher evaluation.

To further insure that I did not simply impose my prior biases on the data during data analysis, after I had transcribed and coded the interview data, I conducted a member check from December 26, 2001 through January 8, 2002. This process will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Data Collection Procedures

Interviews

Interviews served as the primary means of data collection. Since Participating Teachers completed their PAR activity prior to the end of May, 2001, it was my initial

plan to interview all participants prior to the end of June, 2001. Unfortunately, winding up the school year, grading final exams, completing grades, preparing for graduation, and the hectic pace associated with other end-of-the-year tasks required a more realistic interview schedule. Consequently, the majority of interviews were conducted in June but a few were delayed because, once school was officially out for the Summer, three teachers immediately left town. Two of those leaving were not due to return until the end of August. As a result of this setback, one of the three remaining interviews was not conducted until the end of July and the final two interviews were not completed until the first week of September, 2001. Comparison of the transcripts of those interviewed in June with those in September revealed no discernable patterns that might be attributed to the time gap.

Topical Interview Approach

Given the research goals articulated previously in this chapter, it was necessary to play an active role in directing the questioning and keeping the conversation focused on the peer review experience provided by the GUHSD. This approach to interviewing is sometimes referred to as the topical strategy.

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), "Topical studies explore what, when, how, and why something happened. An educational administrator might do topical interviews to find out how teachers are responding to a new curriculum" (p. 196). The purpose for my selection of topical interviewing techniques was to piece together, from different participating teachers, a report that would provide a clear picture of how the currently negotiated PAR program is perceived by those with first-hand experience along with their perceptions of how the PAR approach compares with the traditional approach to teacher evaluation.

Consistent with topical interviewing procedures, a considerable amount of background work was conducted so that questions could be formulated that elicited specific, detailed information. As a veteran teacher in the GUHSD and an identified

Consulting Teacher in the PAR program, I was able to conduct the interviews with a personal knowledge of not only traditional evaluation but also of the specific program implemented in the GUHSD. My personal experiences helped shape both the main questions that formed the frame of the interviews as well as the follow-up questions that served as probes, though, as noted above, I employed various safeguards so that my biases did not unduly influence the data collection and analysis processes

Informal and General Interview Guide Approaches

My more phenomenologically-oriented goals in this study required that I combine the topical interview approach discussed above with a more open-ended strategy. Thus, I began each interview by using an informal conversational approach in an effort both to establish a level of comfort with each informant and to give the interviewee an opportunity to discuss what was important to him or her. I then segued into a more topical approach, utilizing an interview guide (See Appendix 3) and focussed on eliciting the reasons why the teacher chose to forfeit traditional evaluation and opt for peer review. Many respondents stated that they volunteered for PAR because they did not like traditional evaluations. This answer prompted a follow-up in the form of an example question (Spradley, 1979 p. 88). Specifically, I asked respondents to give an example of what it was that they didn't like about the traditional evaluation method. My objective in utilizing an example question was to discover what respondents would independently identify as weakness in traditional evaluation.

Once I was able to move beyond the initial question, I asked respondents to identify how their PAR experience was different than the activities associated with traditional evaluations performed by administrators. In all situations, once the respondents began and were encouraged to say more, the interview moved into directions that I had not anticipated (Patton, 1990).

Even when I employed the interview guide and a more topical strategy, many of the questions were open ended and as such allowed the respondents to say what was

really on their mind without being influenced by suggestions from the researcher. Some respondents provided responses that were extremely candid, while others provided answers that seemed a bit superficial. For example, the question "What would prohibit you from volunteering for PAR during your next evaluation?" produced, "Just time" as the response in one case. When I received this sort of response I asked the respondent to elaborate. In the case just mentioned, for instance, I asked the respondent to explain how time would prohibit her from participating in the future. Responses then included discussions of how their participation in PAR required being out of class and away from students for extended periods of time. One respondent also discussed how the time factor became an issue when the Participating Teacher's school observed a block schedule and the Consulting Teacher's school was on a regular day schedule.

In order to clearly retrieve and accurately grasp the meaning of the responses provided by the respondents, I audio-taped each interview (with the written permission of the respondents). Although Rubin and Rubin indicate that not all respondents are comfortable while being audio-taped, and that in such situations the tape recorder is out of place (Rubin & Rubin, 1997 p. 127), audiotaping did not appear to be a problem for any of the respondents. In my letter of introduction, I indicated that the interviews would be tape-recorded, so in all cases the respondent was prepared for, and seemed completely at ease with, the tape-recorder.

I arrived at the various interview sites early and was able to locate electrical outlets and test the recording device and recording levels so that, when the respondent arrived, I was prepared. I initially indicated that the interview would take no longer than thirty minutes, however, an unexpected but welcome phenomenon was the necessity to stop the ninety minute tape and turn it over on four occasions.

It was my goal to transcribe each interview in its entirety within twenty-four hours and, since I was never able to schedule more than one interview per day, I was able to achieve my transcription goal. It took a minimum of four and a maximum of six hours to

transcribe each interview. In all situations the tape recorder functioned very well and I had no problems deciphering the words of respondents.

The letter of introduction soliciting participating teacher involvement in this study also indicated that follow-up interviews might be needed to ensure accuracy. In addition, I stated that each respondent would have access to their transcript and, if they chose, could make corrections, changes, or modifications for purposes of accuracy and confidentiality. Although respondents indicated in writing that they would be available to participate in a short follow-up interview, actually performing follow-up interviews proved to be difficult since, at the time of this write-up, all respondents were actively involved with tasks associated with the start of a new school year. Follow-up data or clarification, however, was solicited from four respondents and obtained via phone conversations, e-mail and facsimile.

Respondents were then mailed a copy of his/her transcript--with clarifications--during the second week of September, 2001. No interview transcript has been returned with corrections, however, phone calls were made to all respondents confirming receipt of the transcription.

Member Check

As indicated above, no interview transcript was returned with corrections and follow-up data collection was limited to efforts to clarify a limited amount of material contained in the transcripts themselves. For this reason, on December 20, 2001, I began conducting a member check and was able to make contact with all twelve respondents by January 8, 2002. Prior to initiating contact, a member check guide was developed in which I was able to not only confirm data provided during the initial interviews but also inform respondents of the categories in which this data was placed. The member check guide (See Appendix 4) served to ensure that I had interpreted the data correctly and that collected data were properly reflected in the findings. Exactly half of the respondents

provided additional specificity; the clarifications, however, did not alter the initial findings in any significant ways.

One change, for example, occurred with a respondent who initially indicated that she "hated" the traditional evaluation process. During the member check conversation I indicated that her transcript did indicate that she had indeed said, "I hated that traditional method. There was just so much that I was doing that was unnecessary." The respondent, upon reflection, determined that it was really her intention to report that, although she did "hate" traditional evaluation, she did so because it did not support teacher improvement. Additional modifications have been incorporated in the findings presented in Chapter 4.

Documents and Archival Records

A review of AB IX and the minutes of Joint Panel meetings of GUHSD allowed me to confirm the one-year chronology of events which led to the current program in the GUHSD. Documents such as the California Standards for the Teaching Profession, request forms indicating a desire to participate in Peer Assistance and Review (See Appendix 5), Growth Plans (Appendix 6), PAR Classroom Observation Forms (Appendix 7), and the PAR Growth Plan Summary (See Appendix 8) also served as a means of verifying specific activities and events cited by respondents during interviews. Since the PAR program is still evolving in the GUHSD, no archival data about the program exist. As a result, Joint Panel members allowed me to use the minutes of all Joint Panel meetings in the study. As it turned out, however, substantive contents of the meeting minutes were not relevant to the study's research questions; their use was limited to constructing the background information about the program contained in the first part of Chapter 4.

I had originally hoped to use documentation contained in the California Assembly Bill No. 1X (AB IX) and documents provided by the GUHSD as means of verifying or problematizing information obtained during interviews. However, these sources also

provided little more than a simple chronology of events that led to the development of the PAR program and, specifically, the Grossmont Model. Because this study addresses the perceptions of the teachers with first-hand experience with the Grossmont Model of PAR, confirmation of the accuracy of my analysis of the transcripts was provided by allowing respondents opportunity to review their interview transcripts as well as by "member checking" the findings and conclusions derived from the data and the interpretive analysis.

Observations

Although I did not directly assist or review any respondents, my experience as Consulting Teacher with other PAR participants permitted a general understanding of the process experienced by the twelve respondents. Merriam (1998) states that "Critics of participant observation as a data-gathering technique point to the highly subjective and therefore unreliable nature of human perceptions. Human perception is also very selective" (p. 95). Consequently, the absence of formal observations in this study not only did not create problems but also may, in fact, have helped to guard against my own bias against traditional evaluation methods entering into the data.

Data Analysis Methods

In my initial analysis of the interview data, I consciously looked for information that had applicability to the previously identified fundamental question: Will the Grossmont Model of PAR be perceived as not only a viable alternative to traditional evaluation, but the preferred choice for veteran teachers who wish to improve their teaching practice? Although this underlying research question never was transformed into a direct interview question--in part because of the possibility it would bias the results by suggesting to the interviewees what I hoped to hear--the questions contained in the interview guide (especially the question about why respondents opted to participate in PAR) inadvertently provided respondents an opportunity to make critical, reflective, and candid comments about traditional evaluation, as well as to make comparisons between

the traditional and the peer assistance and review approach. In other words, although I did not intend to test existing theory about the utility of the traditional approach, respondent's unsolicited comments about traditional evaluation made such "theory testing" possible.

Initially, the analysis was organized around the interview questions. Eventually, as responses to these questions were coded, I identified fourteen categories, sub-categories, and themes. During multiple subsequent coding forays, what originally began as fourteen separate categories became more finely tuned and resulted in the recognition of four major categories: factors contributing to voluntary selection of PAR in lieu of traditional evaluation; factors contributing to positive perceptions of PAR; factors contributing to negative perceptions of PAR, and factors relating to identifiable differences between PAR and traditional evaluation.

Within the category of factors contributing to the selection of PAR in lieu of traditional evaluation, I identified two subcategories. The first addressed existing negative perceptions of traditional evaluations. These perceptions included descriptions of traditional evaluations as (1) meaningless hurdles/institutional hoops, (2) limited in its ability to help teachers improve, (3) focusing on atypical classroom performances, (4) encouraging stagnant preparation, and (5) requiring administrators to play a role for which they were not suited. A second subcategory for volunteering for PAR was characterized as "a desire to try something new;" the characterization reflects the "native language" (Spradley, 1997) used by one respondent.

When I coded interview data within the category of factors contributing to positive perceptions of PAR I identified five subcategories: (1) ownership, (2) on-going improvement, (3) change in classroom practice, (4) ability to focus, and (5) freedom to take risks. Coding for negative perceptions of PAR resulted, first, in a large subcategory concerning an increased commitment of time, a second, less frequently discussed category addressing misconceptions of the program, and a third subcategory concerning

fear of honest and critical self-assessment. Finally, the category of identifiable differences between PAR and traditional evaluation produced two subcategories. The first subcategory addressed the utilization of a peer reviewer and the second contrasts the differences experienced between traditional and peer review activities.

The process by which I coded the data was extremely time consuming. After each interview was transcribed, it was saved as simple texts and imported into NUD.IST QSR. NUD.IST QSR is a complicated software program specifically designed to perform coding tasks. I required in excess of two-hundred hours to become minimally competent with the program and its capabilities. Once I obtained basic familiarity with the program, I was able to code, re-code, categorize, re-categorize, and essentially re-work and re-evaluate the entire volume of data at least a dozen times. Though this process was time-consuming, it was in no way tedious or dull. On the contrary, I have learned more about the data with each transcript review and have developed a level of commitment to "getting the write-up right" that perhaps would not have been achieved otherwise.

As I wrote my summary of the findings a primary concern was that of protecting the identity of all respondents. I sought to provide an accurate portrayal but also wanted to protect the identity of respondents and be sensitive to their feelings, as well as the feelings of Consulting Teachers, administrators, and members of the Joint Panel of the GUHSD. To strike this balance I had to alter the findings to some extent. For example, it became necessary to omit data related to specific growth plans since discussing them would provide clues to the identity of Participating Teachers and also their Consulting Teacher. As a result, all specific growth plan activities, collaboratively developed between the Participating Teacher and Consulting Teacher, are generically referred to as "growth plan."

To further ensure confidentiality, it became necessary to refrain from stating the specific change implemented in teacher practice as a result of their participation in PAR

because to do otherwise would lead to the identification of respondents via subject area taught, or growth plan developed. In addition, I found it necessary to omit some of the responses of one respondent because they indicated that one Participating Teacher received substantially different--and substantially less--peer assistance and review than the other 11 teachers received. Although this finding clearly is significant, reporting it in this study would not only have revealed the identity of the Participating and Consulting Teachers, but also might be harmful to the individuals involved.

As noted above, on-going face-to-face contact with the respondents was impossible due to varying schedules, work sites, and time-related constraints. However, the member checking process served to ensure that the views of all respondents were, in fact, accurately portrayed in the findings. I also made concerted efforts to include all ideas expressed during the interviews even if just a single respondent expressed a unique outlier perspective. (The number of respondents who expressed a particular idea was duly cited in the write-up, of course.) The inclusion of all perspectives provided, at times, a wide and contrasting description for some categories and subcategories; at other times, respondents uniformly expressed cohesive perceptions identifying important factors to be considered by those responsible for the education of students, those responsible for teacher evaluations, and those responsible for PAR program effectiveness.

Phases and Time Period of the Study

The Joint Panel of the GUHSD granted formal approval to conduct this study at their December 1, 2000, meeting. Written confirmation of the panel's approval was included in the application submitted to the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of San Diego. The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects granted approval in mid May, 2001. Because conclusion of participant involvement with PAR only ended at the end of May, 2001, the first interview was not scheduled until June 13, 2001. The final two interviews were conducted during the first week of September, 2001. Coding and analysis began the end of June when I had

transcripts from the first eight respondents. As the final four interviews were conducted, they were added to the project. At times this meant developing new categories, subcategories, or the recognition of new thematic material. During the second week of September, 2001, I sent copies of transcripts to all respondents requesting that they review their transcript, make changes if necessary, and return the copy with corrections. As previously stated, no corrections were requested by respondents, though each received a phone call verifying receipt of the transcript. By the end of September, I completed the data analysis and a draft of the write-up. Through subsequent write-ups and consultations with Dr. Robert Donmoyer, the Chairman of my Dissertation Committee, it became evident that a member check was necessary. This was conducted between December 20, 2001, and January 8, 2002.

Through the initial interviews and following member check activities, the findings identified areas that were problematic and, if clarified or altered, might improve the PAR program in the GUHSD before the second phase began. Since participants will now be involved with PAR for one full year rather than the previously observed single semester, the window of opportunity to make adjustments and clarifications will necessarily close once the program begins in September of 2002. Data related to recommended changes/improvements will be discussed in the following chapter and the preliminary recommendations, along with additional recommendations gleaned from subsequent analysis, will be presented in Chapter 5.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the various qualitative research orientations employed during this study. As previously noted, the combination of specific traditions included (1) the phenomenological and case study tradition (to gain access to the perspectives of the veteran teachers who voluntarily selected to participate during initial implementation of the PAR program in the Grossmont Union High School District), and, although not a consideration at the onset of this study, (2) the positivist tradition (in an

effort to informally test existing theory pertaining to teacher perceptions of the traditional approach to teacher evaluation), (3) the grounded theory tradition (to begin to construct theory about factors that lead to positive and negative perceptions of the newly established PAR program, and peer assisted review in general), and (4) the evaluation tradition (to conduct a formative evaluation of the Grossmont Model of PAR).

CHAPTER 4: THE FINDINGS

In this chapter I will first describe the Grossmont Model of Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) in detail. I will then examine the major themes that surfaced during my analysis of the transcripts obtained from interviews conducted with twelve teachers randomly selected from a total population of thirty-six voluntary participants in the newly established PAR program in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD).

The Grossmont Model of Peer Review

For teachers in the GUHSD, negotiations between the teachers' union and district office administration about PAR policies resulted in contractual language allowing peer review to replace traditional evaluations performed by administrators. In essence, veteran teachers in the GUHSD—like teachers in a handful of other school districts—now have the choice of continuing the traditional method of evaluation or substituting their regularly scheduled traditional evaluation for a peer review. This version of peer review was labeled the "Alternative Model" by the California Teacher's Association because it functions as an alternative to traditional evaluation.

The Alternative Model, unlike the majority of PAR programs implemented in California during the pilot year, does not limit participation to teachers in need of assistance or teachers identified as unsatisfactory. Veteran teachers in the GUHSD—even those with established stellar careers—were not only allowed to participate to improve their teaching practice, but could do so in lieu of their regularly scheduled (every-other-year) traditional evaluation. Although teachers are able to voluntarily participate exclusively for reasons of professional growth rather than to also meet formal bureaucratic evaluation requirements, during first-phase implementation, all teachers participated in lieu of their traditional evaluation. Since this voluntary characteristic is

just one of many elements differentiating the PAR program utilized in the GUHSD from programs implemented in a limited number of other districts, for the purposes of this paper, this model shall be referred to as "The Grossmont Model."

The Joint Panel

PAR programs in the school districts of California are governed by joint union-management panels, with teacher members (who, by law, must make up the majority of joint panel members) chosen by the union and administrators by district-level administrative staff. California Assembly Bill IX (AB IX) mandates that the joint panel shall be responsible for PAR program development, implementation and evaluation.

As a result of negotiations between the Grossmont Education Association (GEA/teachers union) and district office administration, the Joint Panel of the GUHSD was established with a majority of four teachers and a minority of three administrators. Union members decided that union officers would have complete freedom to identify teachers to serve on the panel and members representing the administration were selected by district office staff. At the time the write-up of this study was completed, the GUHSD had a joint panel that had been fully operational one year prior to the state-mandated implementation date of July 1, 2001.

As articulated above, program evaluation is one of the many tasks joint panels are required to perform. An operating assumption of the Grossmont Model of PAR is that one of the primary concerns of the Joint Panel will be to assess, among other things, whether or not voluntarily Participating Teachers view their participation in the program as a positive or negative experience so that, if necessary, changes can be implemented to improve the existing program and encourage increased voluntary participation in the future.

Participants

The first official meeting of the Joint Panel of the GUHSD took place in Carmel, CA, from July 26 - 28, 2000. During this first meeting, the Joint Panel determined by

consensus—the method of decision-making utilized by the committee—that first-phase implementation would be limited to the participation of two types of volunteer teachers. The following lists categorize each of the two types.

Teachers Choosing PAR in lieu of Administrator Evaluation:

- Teachers commit to a minimum of one semester in the program
- Teacher selects a Consulting Teacher (based on availability)
- Consulting Teacher and Participating Teacher develop a growth plan based on one or more standards selected from the California Standards for the Teaching Profession chosen by the Participating Teacher
- Principal approves the growth plan
- Participating Teacher implements the growth plan with collaboration and observations negotiated with the Consulting Teacher
- Participating Teacher submits summary of activities and growth to principal upon completion of plan

Teachers Choosing PAR for Professional Growth:

- Teachers commit to a minimum of one semester in the program
- Teacher selects a Consulting Teacher (based on availability)
- Consulting Teacher and Participating Teacher meet to discuss professional growth plan
- Participating Teacher implements plan
- Documentation upon completion may be submitted for District hurdle credit, professional growth hours, or graduate units (if approved). (Joint Panel minutes 7/2000)

The term "growth plan," alluded to in the above lists, refers to activities (developed through collaboration between the Participating Teacher and the Consulting teacher) through which the Participating Teacher will address self-identified areas of growth. Participating Teacher growth plans and associated activities must directly

address one or more of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (See Appendix 1).

For example, if a teacher chooses to address Standard 1: "Engaging & Supporting All Students in Learning," the teacher would then be directed by his or her Consulting Teacher to select from a laundry list of objectives identified beneath that Standard (e.g., Standard 1.2 "Using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students' diverse needs"). With as few as just one specific growth objective identified from just one Standard, the Participating and Consulting Teachers collaboratively develop strategic activities addressing the needs of the Participating Teacher via the specific standard. These activities may include, for example, observing other teachers, attending workshops addressing the selected objective, and taking additional courses. The growth plan may also include a video taped observation of the Participating Teacher's classes--to be viewed privately, if desired, by the Participating Teacher--as well as a non-judgmental classroom observation that is objectively recorded by the Consulting Teacher. In essence, the Consulting Teacher merely records what occurred as objectively as possible. For example, the Consulting Teacher might write: "While the teacher gave the homework assignment twelve students were packing their backpacks."

In short, Participating Teachers identify an area in their teaching practice that they desire to improve. Each Participating Teacher, in collaboration with his/her Consulting Teacher, then determines the best way to address that specific area. The growth plan is the document in which the Participating Teacher's activities are aligned with the specific objectives addressing one or more of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

As noted above, during first-phase implementation all participants voluntarily chose to participate in lieu of traditional evaluation. In other words, although it would have been possible for people to participate in the program and be evaluated by an administrator, there were no applicants in the professional-growth-only category. Also

not included in first-phase implementation was a third category of "Referred Teachers" who, because of previous unsatisfactory evaluation results, will be required to participate in peer review starting in September of 2001.

Consulting Teacher Selection

As part of the GUHSD's implementation process, the Joint Panel was charged with--among other duties outlined in the Legislative Digest--identifying Consulting Teachers. The Joint Panel, during first-phase implementation, agreed to select four teachers to function as consultants. These consultants would receive necessary training enabling them to provide peer assistance and reviews beginning in January of 2001. Consequently, from August 28, through August 31, 2000, the Joint Panel of the GUHSD made formal presentations soliciting applications from teachers desiring to serve as Consulting Teachers. In addition, veteran tenured teachers with a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience were simultaneously recruited to voluntarily participate in PAR as Participating Teachers.

As a result of these presentations, the Joint Panel received fifteen applications for Consulting Teacher positions. They also received requests from thirty-six veteran teachers desiring peer assistance and review.

Consulting Teacher applicants went through an initial paper screening process in which Joint Panel members reviewed application forms and two letters of reference per applicant. If an applicant was selected by the panel to proceed beyond this initial paper screening, teams made up of one administrator and one teacher--from among the membership of the Joint Panel--observed applicants teaching in their classrooms. As a result of these activities, the Joint Panel identified three other teachers and myself to function as consultants. Peer review training was then provided by the GUHSD.

Consulting Teachers received intensive training for five consecutive days during November, 2000. Biographies were then generated by each of the Consulting Teachers that included, among other things, years of experience, higher education degrees, subjects

taught, and areas of educational interest. In addition to initial training, once the program was in full swing, Consulting Teachers attended on-going bimonthly meetings to evaluate program effectiveness and/or identify problematic areas of the PAR program in the GUHSD.

Of the thirty-six veteran teachers who volunteered to participate in PAR, all were permitted to participate, and all did so in lieu of traditional evaluation. As noted previously, no teachers volunteered for PAR exclusively for professional growth purposes.

Consultants and participants were introduced during an after-school meeting held on December 8, 2000. Because the meeting was held after normal school hours, union officials insisted that Participating Teachers be paid on an hourly basis for attending the meeting. The GUHSD administration agreed to this request and Participating Teachers were informed that they would be compensated seventeen dollars for attending the hour-long meeting. After meeting the four Consulting Teachers and reviewing their biographies, Participating Teachers then ranked--by order of preference--their first three choices of Consulting Teachers.

On January 19, 2001, Consulting Teachers met over lunch and began matching Consulting Teachers with Participating Teachers. Every effort was made to ensure that Participating Teachers did, indeed, receive their first or second choice of consultant. However, this was not always possible. For example, if one Consulting Teacher had a preexisting and close professional relationship with a Participating Teacher, the consultant could have requested, for purposes of objectivity, a different Participating Teacher. Not considered when matching consultants with participants were individual teaching schedules or the variety of schedules at each of the district schools. Furthermore, it was not evident that Participating Teachers selected their consultant based upon their peer review objective. The specific growth objective, in fact, had not yet been determined by the Participating Teacher.

Although the Joint Committee began operating in July of 2000, actual peer review began with the second semester on January 29, 2001. Consulting Teachers who had a full load (i.e. five classes and one preparation period) during the first semester were released during the last two periods of their teaching day to perform peer reviews during the second semester. Replacement staff was hired and teaching schedules were adjusted to accommodate this mid-year change in teaching assignments.

With logistics seemingly worked out, Consulting Teachers provided peer review to their case-load of participants from the end of January, 2001, through the end of May, 2001. Peer review in the GUHSD concluded with a written summary of PAR activities complete by the Participating Teacher and submitted to site principals in June, 2001. With the end of first-phase implementation, I began random selection of respondents and began to schedule the interviews.

The Findings About the Grossmont Model of PAR

Participants were asked for information about factors contributing to voluntary selection of PAR in lieu of traditional evaluation; factors contributing to positive perceptions of PAR; factors contributing to negative perceptions of PAR, and factors relating to identifiable differences between PAR and traditional evaluation. This section is organized around these areas of inquiry and considers whether or not participating teachers perceive PAR as not only a viable alternative to traditional evaluation but the preferred choice. In short, I provide not only a description of perceived differences between the two evaluations methods but also some sense of participants' judgments about the relative limits of the two approaches.

Factors Contributing to Voluntary Participation in Peer Assistance and Review

After attempting to put respondents at ease and create a non-threatening collegial interview environment, I began my interviews by asking respondents to share the reasons prompting them--veteran teachers with at least five years of successful experience--to voluntarily participate in PAR in light of the fact that the program was undergoing

first-phase implementation. In a sense, of course, the very fact that these individuals volunteered to participate in a new and largely undefined program itself says something about personality-related factors contributing to participation: All participants are, to some extent, risk takers and secure enough to venture into unmarked territory. In addition to such personality characteristics, however, participants articulated two fundamental reasons for deciding to participate: (1) dissatisfaction with traditional evaluation, and/or (2) a desire to try something new. (See Chart 1 on page 65 for respondent matrix.) Each of these general categories of response is detailed below.

Dissatisfaction with traditional evaluation as a reason for voluntary participation in PAR

Eleven participants revealed that they volunteered to participate in PAR because they were dissatisfied with the traditional method of evaluation. The intensity of the dissatisfaction appeared to vary. One person used the word "hatred" to describe her feelings toward the process. The reasons for general dissatisfaction with the traditional method were consistent with the limitations described in the literature. Participants described traditional evaluations as (1) meaningless hurdles/institutional hoops to be jumped, (2) limited in their ability to help teachers improve, (3) based on atypical classroom performances, (4) encouraging stagnant preparation, and (5) requiring administrators to play a role they are not equipped to play. (See Chart 2 on page 71 for a matrix of responses.)

Traditional evaluation as meaningless hurdle/institutional hoop. Four participants used the jumping hurdles or hoops/going through the motions metaphors to characterize their perceptions of the traditional evaluation experience. Excerpts from respondent transcripts obtained during the original interviews are identified below.

- My experience has been that the administrators view it—and the teachers as well—as sort of just a hurdle that we had to go through every couple of years.

CHART 1

Reasons for Voluntary Participation in Peer Assistance and Review

	Dissatisfaction With Traditional Evaluation	Desire to Try Something New
Respondent 1	X	X
Respondent 2		X
Respondent 3	X	X
Respondent 4	X	X
Respondent 5	X	
Respondent 6	X	
Respondent 7	X	
Respondent 8	X	X
Respondent 9	X	X
Respondent 10	X	X
Respondent 11	X	X
Respondent 12	X	X

- I basically considered it a hoop that I had to jump through. It was the same with the administrators. The impression they gave me, it was sort of inferred in their behavior and sometimes explicitly stated.
- You're jumping through hoops. You're just doing stuff to check off the boxes. It just doesn't seem relevant.
- To me, [traditional evaluation] is just going through the motions and I've never gotten anything out of that...With traditional evaluation you don't feel supported. The administrator comes in with a piece of paper. Yada, Yada, Yada. [Administrators] are going through the motions and they're going to shove [the evaluation form] in a file somewhere and as long as the ceiling doesn't fall down during the observation or the kids aren't hanging from the rafters, you're probably going to get a pretty good review and it really doesn't matter.

The experience, however, was not viewed so benignly that there was no incentive to opt for an alternative evaluation procedure once one became available. Furthermore, during the subsequent member check, two additional respondents chose to include the meaningless hoop description as part of their description of traditional evaluation.

Traditional evaluation as limited in ability to help teachers improve. Three respondents indicated that their distaste for traditional evaluation was based on traditional evaluation's inability to provide information teachers can use to improve or make changes in their classrooms. Sample quotes from each of these respondents are listed below.

- I hate that [traditional evaluation] because it seems when I'm doing that I'm taking away from what I could be doing in the classroom....I was just doing so much that was unnecessary. I did not have time to actually improve my teaching.

- [Traditional evaluation] is kind of limited in helpfulness for me as a teacher. The administrator comes in the one time.
- It hasn't really been that helpful because [administrators] say what went on. I already knew what went on. I was there....So, I didn't get any feedback. I didn't feel that there was any growth. That's basically the reason I volunteered for PAR.

Traditional evaluation as atypical performance. Five of the eleven respondents indicating dissatisfaction with traditional evaluation as their reason for volunteering for PAR characterized traditional evaluations as being based on atypical displays of somewhat artificial and pretentious classroom performances. One of these respondents said, "I've always viewed the traditional evaluation as a performance. I've never enjoyed it and always feel like I'm putting on a show. I feel it's not typical. I feel it's pretentious." A second respondent citing traditional evaluations as atypical classroom performances made the following comments:

Traditional evaluations, I think, are stupid. I mean the only thing you get is you get an administrator who comes into class and as opposed to coming by and talking to you or looking at you like they normally do...you know, coming by and saying: "How's it going?" All of a sudden it's a formal deal. They come in and sit down. Everybody in the class know it. The kids know it. The kids are on their best behavior. They go: "Oh my God, if we do something wrong the teacher's going to kill us." Or, [the students]act out. One of those two. And so, it's (traditional evaluation) a really artificial thing.

A third respondent said, "I mean, I can make cosmetic changes if someone is coming in to observe me on just one day." The fourth respondent simply said, "[I] do a little window dressing and make myself look pretty." The fifth respondent said, "I mean, really, anyone can put on a dog and pony show for an hour."

Traditional evaluations and stagnant preparation. A total of four respondents indicated that they prepared for their traditional evaluation with very little, if any, serious planning. Sample comments on this point from each of the four participants are:

- If you've been teaching the same class, traditional evaluation is not too bad because you can just turn in your former goals and objectives you used in previous years.
- Some people prefer what has been traditional because it's like, OK, I already know how to play that game. I already have this great lesson that works. I did a lesson last year and it really worked. I'll just do that one again. It's like I've checked off the box. It's over.
- It's so easy just to take out that handout that you did last year and present this thing, go through the motions, and you can do fine with that kind of evaluation (traditional) and that kind of teaching."

A traditional evaluation can be prepared the week before and you do whatever. The administrator comes in and it's over with.

Traditional evaluations and the inappropriate use of administrators. In most school systems, administrators have the responsibility of performing traditional evaluations and four of the twelve respondents in this study, in fact, indicated that performing evaluations of newly hired faculty members was a necessary function of administrators and one of their primary job responsibilities. One respondent, for instance, shared the idea that it was good to have administrators evaluate beginning teachers because administrators should be aware of what goes on in the classroom of a beginning teacher. A second respondent echoed this theme and stated, "For the first-year teacher it's kind of a good thing to have a vice principal sitting in their room. It forces [the teacher] to get tight...organized, stuff like that. That's good." A third respondent also was sympathetic with the idea of administrators evaluating new teachers but emphasized the benefits to the administrator. Specifically, this third respondent noted

that administrators are "forced to go in and watch, but it also gives them a good opportunity to get a glimpse of what's going on in the classroom." The fourth teacher added no novel rationale for supporting administrator evaluations of newly hired teachers, but reinforced the views shared by three prior respondents.

This more or less positive view of using administrators as evaluators of beginning teachers expressed by four veteran teachers was absent when these respondents and others discussed the use of administrators during veteran teacher evaluations. In fact, during initial interviews, four out of twelve respondents indicated that the use of administrators as evaluators of their teaching practice was a factor contributing to their negative view of traditional evaluations and contributed to their decision to volunteer for PAR during the original interview. During member checking, however, all but two respondents indicated that the use of administrators during veteran teacher evaluations was limited in effectiveness. The responses ranged from one slightly negative view to extremely negative accounts of administrators as evaluators of veterans' teaching practice. Sample quotes from each of the four initial respondents are provided below.

- The administrator comes in and sees what I normally do. I think that's what they want to see. They don't want to see something different. You'd really like an administrator to give you honest feedback and identify ways to improve... but that was never put in any of the traditional evaluation write-ups.
- Even after many years of teaching, I still get intimidated having an administrator in my classroom. I get nervous because there are some administrators that give you the feeling or give me the feeling, right away, that they're not on my side. They feel that they have to say something negative. It seems to me, and this is just my perception, that administrators get out of teaching because they want to do something different. They leave the classroom because they are not good teachers...well, maybe some are, or have been good teachers. But I don't like the thought that an administrator is telling me what's good.

- If I'm working with an administrator, most of them got out of the classroom a long time ago and in about a minute and a half after they got out of the classroom, they forgot about the teacher. They worry about other stuff. I don't know if an administrator was in the classroom for maybe five years, may not have been a very good teacher, but went and took more classes and became an administrator. You know, real good teachers don't necessarily become administrators.
- I think if I went into the administrator's office and did the goals and objectives thing [traditional evaluation task], fill in the box and just did that, and then sat down with the administrator and talked to him about what's going on—I know more about [my subject area] than they know—and so if I go in and start talking about [my subject], they'll start asking me for stuff, and I'll probably crack up.

Phrases like: "They're not on my side," "They weren't good teachers," "I don't like the idea that they tell me what's good," and "They forgot about the teacher," suggest not only that the use of administrators as evaluators of successful veteran teachers contributes to negative perceptions of the traditional approach to teacher evaluation; they also suggest that traditional evaluation promotes an "us and them" polarity between administrators and veteran members of the teaching staff who are not experiencing any specific problems.

The four respondents who originally had indicated that it was appropriate for administrators to evaluate beginning teachers added, during member checking procedures, that the use of administrators was not as beneficial or appropriate for veteran teacher evaluations.

Two remaining participants did not cite the use of an administrator as a negative factor of traditional evaluation. After follow-up member checking, a total of ten out of twelve respondents viewed the use of administrators during veteran teachers evaluations as ineffective.

CHART 2 Summary of Views of Traditional Evaluations in Response to Questions about Reasons for Participating in PAR

	Meaningless Hurdle	Limited Ability to Improve Teaching	Atypical Performance	Stagnant Preparation	Ineffective Use of Administrator
Respondent 1			X		X
Respondent 2					
Respondent 3		X			X
Respondent 4				X	X
Respondent 5	X		X	X	X
Respondent 6	X		X		X
Respondent 7	X			X	X
Respondent 8	X		X		X
Respondent 9	X	X		X	X
Respondent 10					X
Respondent 11		X			
Respondent 12	X		X		X

A Desire For Something New to Improve Teaching

When asked why teachers opted to participate in PAR, eight of the previous eleven respondents indicating dissatisfaction with traditional evaluation added that they also chose to participate in order to try something new with the hope of improving teaching. One additional respondent identified a desire to try something new as her only reason for participating. Thus, a total of nine respondents indicated a desire to try something new to improve their teaching as a reason to volunteer for PAR. Five of these nine said this during their initial interview and four endorsed this idea during member checking. Here are sample quotes from four initial respondents:

- What I saw was a possibility of doing something that was really good for my class, that was relevant right there and then, that I had wanted to try and that I thought the kids would like. I told the administrator I was going to try the PAR because I wanted to try something different.
- PAR is a little bit different and I just thought it was a pretty good deal because the way it was told to us was that we could go out and do some things to enhance our teaching.
- PAR was something new. Anytime I can try something new, rather than do the same kind of evaluation year after year after year, I'd rather try something else. I thought, from a teaching aspect, I wanted something different and I wanted to feel that it was more meaningful and get something out of it for the students and teachers instead of just watching someone put some checks on a piece of paper saying, "Oh yes, they did an introduction to the class and did basic teaching."
- PAR appealed to me because it was something that was a little non-traditional but offered me something in return as opposed to the standard observation which isn't applicable. And so, I was interested in that.

The fifth respondent in this category did not associate her desire to try something new with improving her teaching. During the original interview she said: "I had no

preconceptions when I went in. I just wanted to try something different. I had no idea how it was going to go." This individual--and four additional respondents who did not previously cite a desire to try something new and/or improve their teaching as a result of PAR--indicated during the member check that they too wanted to try something different and desired to improve their teaching.

Summary

To summarize, the comments of the twelve respondents are consistent with the literature critical of the traditional approach to teacher evaluation (e.g., Millman & Darling Hammond, 1981; Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin & Bernstein, 1984; Gitlin & Smyth, 1989; Millman, Darling-Hammond, 1990; Rogers & Badham, 1992; Valentine, 1992; Duke, 1995; Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 1995; Cornet, 1995; Burns, 1998; Lieberman, 1998; Beerens, 2000; Bloom & Goldstein, 2000).

The general category of reasons for dissatisfaction with traditional evaluation produced the five previously discussed subcategories describing traditional evaluations as: (1) meaningless hurdles or hoops to be jumped, (2) limited in ability to help teachers improve, (3) based on atypical classroom performances, (4) encouraging stagnant preparations, and (5) requiring administrators to perform a task they do not do well. These responses are in keeping with the limitations of traditional evaluation described in the literature. None of the respondents cited traditional evaluation as a viable method of improving veteran teacher instruction. The responses, after initial interviews and following member checks, indicate that the twelve veteran teachers in this study voluntarily participated in PAR because, generally speaking, (1) they were dissatisfied with the traditional approach to teacher evaluation and/or (2) they wanted to try something new that might improve their teaching.

Factors Contributing to Positive Perceptions of Peer Assistance and Review

In responding to a series of questions (questions 7 through 12 in the Interview Guide, Appendix 3), respondents identified factors that contributed to positive

perceptions of the PAR program based on their first-hand experience. For example, respondents were asked how their PAR activity was different from what they would have done during a traditional evaluation. What emerged was a recurring theme of freedom: freedom to take responsibility through an ownership of their professional growth, freedom to continue improving a self-identified area, freedom to change their practice without fear of reprisal should they be unsuccessful during the first attempt, freedom to focus on a specific area in their teaching that they themselves knew needed improving, and freedom to take risks for the sake of improving their teaching practice. In short, as one respondent simply stated "freedom to get out of the box." Each of the above variants on the freedom theme is discussed below. (See Chart 3 on page 76 for a detailed matrix.)

Positive Factor of PAR: Ownership

Ownership was not identified as an area of inquiry and, therefore, questions about it were not directly posed to the respondents. However, Participating Teachers uniformly expressed an ownership of their individual growth plan and subsequent results. Ownership became a recurring unsolicited theme among all of the respondents. All respondents indicated that they were able to buy into their self-identified growth area during their peer review regardless of subject area, growth plan activities and/or self-assessment results. Here is a list of exemplary quotes on this matter from each of the respondents.

- I felt important. I felt like I was respected. It was like this is our program and we're here to help you teach and learn.
- I chose an area and then explained how I was going to address that specific standard.
- I chose my Consulting Teacher. I chose the focus, I discussed with my Consulting Teacher my needs and goals.
- PAR was, they kind of say, "OK. We know you're a good teacher..you probably know what your strengths and weaknesses are. Tell us where you're weak and

then we'll give you an avenue where you can work on it."...It's like you've got to honestly self-assess where you are. You've got to be able to come in and say: "OK. I'm weak here and I'm strong there," and then work on these weaknesses and go from there.

- I got input from other people, but it was really just my own evaluation...it was really more up to me to hold myself accountable.
- PAR helped me get involved with it, but I want to improve the program on my own because I've invested a part of myself into the project.
- I was looking for particular things and I saw them! That was refreshing. PAR makes you reflect on your total program because at the end of it you're putting in a lot more thought into it because you're trying to come up with some kind of reasons that say, "Yes, this is working." Or, "No, it's not." Or "What can I do next year to make things different?"
- The way I'm instructing is different. I've added new ways of instructing and assessing. I figured out some ways to have students grade each other's work. I'm showing the kids how to grade the essays.
- I'll have to put more time into it, but when school starts in September, I'll have all my forms completed and ready with appropriate comments.
- Just the ownership of the whole process heightened my interest level and activity level...we will each be able to personalize our own staff development, our own project, and our own future.
- I feel like I was in charge of my own evaluation. Rather than somebody telling me what to do, I was telling myself what I needed to do...I started the process and I finished it. I saw it through. I was in control.
- I was able to set the parameters. It felt like the professional thing to do.

The prior comments reflect themes of ownership and, at times, on-going self-assessment and improvement, as a result of this sense of ownership. The positive factor of on-going improvement will be focussed on in more detail in the next section.

Positive Factor of PAR: On-Going Improvement

On-going improvement was cited by seven respondents when asked to identify positive features of PAR. Although on-going improvement was cited in conjunction with ownership, it is treated as a separate category since not all of the respondents in the sample associated on-going improvement with their sense of ownership. Each of the seven respondents citing on-going improvement are quoted below.

- And, the impact it had on those students has further implications for me going into the next school year that I'll want to remember and try to put into practice.
- I actually feel that I have improved my teaching. I'm going to continue this [PAR activity].
- As part of their assignment sheets, now I'm adding things to them. Did they come prepared? Did they have this? Did they have that? I'm also adding to their assignment sheets that they will be doing their required reading each week, and that will give them a grade.
- [PAR] has given me feedback on where I need to improve. It's kind of put me back on track.
- I've been thinking about my project throughout the summer and saying, "You know what? I still don't think that's the best way. I think I'll try this."
- We are all going to meet in August, as the (specific subject council) and demonstrate our project and speak with other members of the council so we can all have access to doing these types of presentations more often.
I'll have to put more time into it, but when school starts in September, I'll have all my forms completed and ready with appropriate comments.

The remaining five respondents in the sample did not cite on-going improvement during their interviews. Neither did they add this factor during member checking when they were informed that seven respondents had cited on-going improvement as a positive result of their PAR activity.

Positive Factor of PAR: Change

During initial interviews, nine members cited change as a positive factor of PAR; after member checking, two additional respondents articulated change as an additional factor. (They did not, however, specify what they were doing differently.) Questions 11 and 12 in the Interview Guide asked the respondents to identify the specific ways their teaching practice had changed or improved as a result of their PAR activity. In other words, what differences would be observed in classroom activity following the PAR evaluation.

Change, according to the nine respondents citing this factor during initial interviews, would be observed via (1) increased student performance, (2) increased organization, (3) increased variety of teaching methods and (4) the development of new forms of student assessment. Examples of respondent quotes are as follows:

- I'm going to continue to include this [PAR student-based project addressing the collection and use of multiple sources of information to assess student learning]. In other words, that's part of my curriculum now.
- I'm showing the kids how to grade the essays. [As a result] they're learning how to write, they're getting more writing done, they're covering more topics, and they're doing more reading.
- Grading is sort of a problem in [my subject area]. That's kind of a hard one. I've really had to re-think how I was going to grade [students]. I have kids that would come and work but their grades didn't always reflect that. I've had to come up with ways to change my system of checking them so that I can honestly reflect on: "Are they actually doing what they need to do." I found that the traditional [color]

slip was not enough. I needed the [color] slip to say Missing Assignments?

Weekly reading done? Due date for project? Essay topic?

- I felt that in the time that I had [those students working together] that I noticed marked improvement in the areas that I wanted to see changes.
- Even though the review has ended, I'm going to improve on my [self identified growth area] by setting up more requirements.
- I feel like I've located resources that I will continue to use. The greatest benefit has been connecting with at least two other teachers that [sic] had a lot of great ideas that I would contact again.
- I ended up with useful things that I would not normally have received during a traditional evaluation.
- I'll have something to start the next year with - other than,, "Oh, heck, that didn't work. I'll figure out what I should do.
- I know more now. When students come to me and say, "Hey, I can't figure this out," I know more so I can help them. I'm a better resource.

It is significant to note that, at the time the interviews were conducted, only four months had passed since Participating Teachers had completed their PAR activity. An exploration of continued utilization of new teaching methods will, necessarily, require a separate study that addresses the sustainability of PAR-induced changes.

Positive Factor of PAR: Ability to Focus.

The ability of Participating Teachers to personally determine the specific focus to be addressed in the PAR activity was cited as a positive factor by nine out of twelve respondents during the initial interviews. Two others added--during member checking--that they too experienced the ability to focus as a factor contributing positive perceptions of the PAR program. Respondents emphasized that the ability to focus on a specific area not only contributed positively to the PAR experience but also allowed for a more honest and critical analysis of their teaching so that meaningful teaching

improvements could take place. Here are sample quotes from each of the respondents who raised this positive factor during the initial interview.

- PAR prompted me to really focus my attention on [my specific project]. I probably would have taken a more broad based approach had I not participated in PAR. I really, really focused on my topic. I read articles that pertained to the problems that I was having.
- In my field, the technology changes daily and I have to keep current. What I worked on during the PAR was to improve my skills, my knowledge of technology so that I could incorporate it into my classes. I will be a better resource for my students. The nature of my classes is that when you have problems, you solve them. I know more now. When students come to me and say, "Hey, I can't figure this out," I know more so I can help them. I'm a better resource.
- PAR gave me a chance to be very focused on an area that I wanted to grow in.
- [It] gave me a chance to focus on an area that I think is important that I want to grow in.
- PAR is really an opportunity to focus on an area that you feel isn't quite what you want it to be, and make it better.
- That intensive focus is something I don't think I would have been able to do in a normal evaluation. The traditional evaluation itself would not have prompted me to attempt to address a specific problem. That's not how it works.
- The greatest benefit is that PAR has caused me to focus on what I need to do with the kids.
- I think that the time required for PAR helps to keep you focused on "What do I want to do...What am I trying to accomplish?"
- With PAR I had the freedom to focus on just one goal selected from the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

The twelfth respondent in this study did not cite the ability to focus as a positive factor of PAR initially. Neither did she attempt to include this factor during the subsequent member check, even when she was informed that a total of eleven respondents had cited the ability to focus as positive factor of their PAR experience.

Positive Factor of PAR: Freedom to Take Risks

As already noted, all participants in this new and different approach to evaluation can be assumed to be risk-takers. Their desire to voluntarily participate in PAR during initial implementation is indicative of this characteristic. Four respondents, however, specifically indicated that they viewed PAR positively because it provided them with the freedom to take risks and possibly fail in their attempt to improve some aspect of their teaching. Two additional respondents endorsed this category during member checking.

For the six individuals identified with this category, failure--although not desired--was not viewed negatively. Rather, failure to successfully complete a Growth Plan was seen as a step in a continuing progression of teacher improvement. Here are some quotes from the interviewees who mentioned risk-taking during their initial interviews:

- Now [through the PAR activity], I was able to take a risk and do something that I had not tried at all and the administrator couldn't tear me apart if things didn't work out. PAR allows you to take risks.
- What I did was totally different from what I've ever done before.
- The project didn't work, but that's a part of the process. It's the whole idea of...you are out there, and you have someone you can go to (a Consulting Teacher), and it's a safe environment. You know how it is when you try a lesson. If it doesn't work the first period you can tweak it a little bit. PAR is a little grander because you're working on a major project where, if it doesn't work, or it doesn't work right, you don't want an administrator watching that. That's the biggest thing. PAR gave me the freedom to get a little risky.

- You have to be willing to reveal yourself and look very critically at yourself for PAR to be successful. Don't just accept the feedback the [Consulting Teacher] is providing you as support, but to look at yourself with a very critical eye....Be willing to try new things and fall on your face in pursuit of this noble cause of improving your instruction.

Summary

Respondents independently identified several factors that contributed to positive perceptions of the PAR program in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). Subsets of the twelve respondents in the sample identified (1) a sense of ownership of their own professional growth activity, (2) a desire to continue improvement, (3) the ability to identify changes they had implemented in their teaching practice as a result of their PAR activity, (4) the ability to focus on a specific area in need of improvement, and (5) freedom to take risks for purposes of teaching improvement as elements contributing to PAR's success.

Factors Contributing to Negative Perceptions of Peer Assistance and Review

During the interviews I also asked respondents to identify problems that occurred during their semester-long participation with PAR. Specifically, I wanted to discover what factors might contribute to negative perceptions of PAR.

To ensure that respondents did not reconstruct their views to appear to others (and possibly themselves) as less than successful, and also to make it easier for them to cite criticisms of a program in which I played a key role, questions were not only worded in terms of respondents' own experience but also in terms of the experience of a hypothetical peer's potential problems as a result of his/her participation with PAR. For example, I asked, "What might prohibit a colleague from participating in a peer review and opt for a traditional evaluation?"

Eleven respondents identified increased time demands as a factor contributing to negative perceptions of PAR. The general theme of increased time can be subdivided

into three subcategories: (1) time required to complete PAR growth activities, (2) time away from students, and (3) scheduling time for meetings between Participating and Consulting Teachers.

Another factor contributing to negative perceptions of PAR involved misconceptions about the program that five Participating Teachers had either heard about from their peers, or held themselves based on the initial presentation made at each school in the GUHSD by selected members of the Joint Panel. Essentially, the major misconception was that the Grossmont Model of PAR was primarily a remediation program for ineffective veteran teachers.

In addition to time-related issues and problem of misconceptions, fear of honest self-assessment was, at this juncture, also cited as contributing to negative perceptions of the program. Comments related to a fear of honest self-assessment can also be divided into subcategories: (1) fear of getting out of the box or one's zone of comfort, (2) fear of exposing one's weaknesses, and (3) fear of failure.

Each of the categories (and their related sub-categories) is discussed in detail below. The number of interviewees who raised each of the three overarching concerns is summarized on Chart 4 on page 84.

Negative Factor of PAR: Increased Time

As noted in the above introduction to this discussion on factors contributing to negative perceptions of PAR, 11 of the 12 respondents alluded to some aspect of time as a negative factor. It was also noted that there were three distinct variations in the time category. They will now be discussed.

Time for the PAR activity itself. Ten out of twelve respondents indicated, during initial interviews, that participating in PAR requires a substantial increase in the amount of time normally devoted to evaluation. Respondents not only mentioned additional time required to complete their Growth Plan, but also cited additional time needed to attend

CHART 4

Factors Contributing to Negative Perceptions of PAR

	Increased Time	Misconceptions	Fear of Honest Self-Assessment
Respondent 1			
Respondent 2	X	X	
Respondent 3	X	X	
Respondent 4	X		X
Respondent 5	X	X	
Respondent 6	X	X	
Respondent 7	X		
Respondent 8	X		X
Respondent 9	X	X	
Respondent 10	X		
Respondent 11	X		
Respondent 12	X		X

district-provided workshops. The following are exemplary quotes from each of the ten respondents whose comments raised the time issue during interviews:

- My colleague said she didn't do it (PAR) because it would be a lot more work than a traditional evaluation. There was one other [PAR provided workshop] that I wish I had gone to but it just seemed like too much.
- I've heard people say that they don't want to do it (PAR) because it just takes up too much time. I think the only real barrier would be a person's unwillingness to give the time.
- If you're going to do something new, you've got to start over. You've got to re-plan, you've got to re-do your books. Your old lesson plans from two years ago don't work anymore. So you've got to do that. That's all time. That's all organization.
- It takes more time. For me, if it's something I'm working on anyway, then that isn't a huge cost. But PAR is more time consuming. I mean, I spent a lot more time on this than on a traditional evaluation.
- It's more time consuming. I have to be truthful and say that PAR does take more thought and it does take more reflection.
- It's a sacrifice of time and it's probably a lot more effort than you would normally put into a traditional evaluation.
- In terms of time costs and effort costs, I think that unless there was a situation where someone was totally overloaded by other aspects of their life, a mother coming back off a maternity leave, or they're in a masters program, or they're just overwhelmed in other areas of their life and they don't really have any time to put into a creative self-actualizing process like this - they might just rather be observed (traditional evaluation) and get it over with.... But to compare it [PAR] to a traditional observation where the principal comes in several times and observes you and then writes up what he or she sees, and then you discuss it, that

[traditional evaluation] would be a lot easier for a teacher who just didn't have any time or energy to put into any outside project.

- There's a bit more time involved. It's something I kept in the back of my mind, or the front of my mind at certain points throughout the semester.
- I had to be willing to say, "It's OK if I'm [away from my students] and not out there every second with the kids (due to PAR activities). It's OK for me to be in my office because I'm working on a project, or I'm going to a workshop, or I'm talking on the phone to another teacher getting ideas, or the PAR Consulting Teacher is going to meet me here for half an hour...whatever." It's OK.
- I wouldn't do it (PAR) if it didn't count as my evaluation or in lieu of my evaluation. I don't want any more papers to fill out. Yes, it did take more time, but as I said, I was doing this anyway and it counted as my evaluation.

During member checking, an eleventh respondent agreed that PAR did, in fact, require more time. She did not, however, indicate the reason.

Time away from class. In addition to mentioning that the program took more time than traditional evaluation, a number of respondents discussed time in a zero-sum-game sort of way. More specifically, three of the previously identified respondents listed above noted that PAR workshops and activities took them out of the classroom and away from students.

These three respondents explained how the time factor was aggravated by certain scheduling configurations among the district high schools. Examples quotes from each of the three respondents expressing frustration experienced during their PAR activities is provided below.

- The trouble is when you're on this quarter system and the periods are [X] minutes long. You hate to miss even one class period. It seemed that I would be missing a lot of class instructional time to attend the PAR workshops. Almost two full

days of a traditional class is lost in just one day if your school is on the quarter system.

- On the quarter system I only have forty-five days and so I can't make a mistake. If you do, you lose a kid. He's gone. Mentally, if [they] check out for a week, they're gone. A cost (attributed to PAR) is that you are going to be out of your class. Especially in a block system, absences kill you. As a teacher, you know, when you leave, no matter how good a sub you have, you're not there. And, it seems that to do a decent job to prepare for a sub, it takes about five months of planning. It (the lesson) just doesn't get done. So we've got [X] number of days in our quarter system schedule. If you're gone for two, that's two of those days [the equivalent of four traditional days] that you've actually lost.
- I'm going to have to sacrifice time with the kids during my day, maybe after school. It was hard for me because it's like, "Oh my gosh, I have to give up a half hour! When am I going to do that?" And so, colleagues have to be willing to give up some class instructional time.

Scheduling difficulties between Consulting and Participating Teachers. As discussed in the previous chapter, no two schools in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD) share identical schedules. Some school schedules are not too different from those used in other district schools, but in some cases, there are numerous differences and very few commonalities. Furthermore, even the differences are inconsistent due to student body activities or minimum day schedules. In addition to varying school schedules, Consulting Teachers had teaching schedules determined, in part, by their individual school site and were required to teach three periods per day if they were on a regular six or seven period day; two periods if on a block schedule; or just one period if employed at a school that had an integrated humanities program.

This aspect of the GUHSD created difficulty for one respondent in terms of scheduling meeting times with her Consulting Teacher. She said:

It was difficult to set up meeting times with my Consulting teacher because the consultant [was] not a member of the staff at my school. That was a negative.

We emailed back and forth for weeks before we could agree on a meeting time.

Every effort was made at initial PAR implementation to ensure that all

Participating Teachers maintained the ability to select their own Consulting Teacher, however, when selection was made, consideration of the variety of school schedules was not a factor; nor has it surfaced as a consideration for Participating Teachers making their Consulting Teacher choice for the 2001-2002 school year. Although only one Participating Teacher explicitly cited this as a problem, Consulting Teachers, at times had to alleviate similar situations by calling in substitutes to cover their classes so that they could meet during the time required by the schedule of the Participating Teacher.

Negative Factor of PAR: Misconceptions About the Purpose

Another area cited as contributing to negative perceptions was teacher misconception regarding the PAR program itself. For example, five respondents described levels of distortion and distrust—despite first-hand experience with PAR—that could potentially undermine the program. Here are some exemplary quotes:

- I heard that they had to choose you. So I don't know if they let everybody who wanted to participate in PAR do so, or if some were prohibited from participation. Is there something put in our file? Because, then, this is not an evaluation. Well, from my point of view, what I thought, and there might be some hidden things that I wasn't aware of; that if a teacher volunteered for PAR that perhaps there was something they were trying to get out of or something. I mean, I don't know if there's a perception along those lines.
- There were some people on our campus who made some very critical comments about participation in the program. They would say, "Are you sure you want to associate yourself with that program...because that's what they're going to give to teachers who aren't doing a good job. Are you sure you want to tell someone that

you're doing that? They're going to think that you are a slacker teacher." There were some comments like that.

- The only bad thing about it was that when it was originally explained to us it sounded like the program was for teachers who needed to be remediated. It started with kind of a negative connotation to it.
- When it was introduced to us in the beginning, they alluded to the fact that if a teacher was struggling, that they would be referred to the PAR program. I don't know if it was just at my school that this was said. I mean, I heard that, but I looked at it from a different perspective. The impression the presenters gave... maybe some of the older, closer to retirement teachers saw it as, "Well, I don't want that stigma." If this was a remedial type program, they didn't want that.
- One thing that bothers me about PAR is that somewhere I got the impression that it was for all teachers. And then, I heard through the grapevine that it was for remediation. I'm a little uncomfortable being associated with a remediation program because I'm not a teacher in need of remediation. It's just what I heard, and that bothered me a little bit. Is it true that the program is for the remediation of sub-standard teachers? It's just a perception that's out there. I can't remember the source, but I did not come up with it on my own. Somebody said something. At some time we were talking about evaluation. I said, "What?" As a representative of the group I think you need to be sure and get the word out because I don't think I'm the only person who thinks that. And that could kill the program. I think that when each school meets as a staff I would like to be sure that it is made clear that it is a misconception that if you participate in the PAR program, you do so only if you need remediation. Whoever presents it to the staff needs to clarify that. I wish I could recall where I heard that PAR was a remediation intervention. I originally thought it was just an alternative to traditional evaluation. That's why I tried it.

The five quotes listed above represent faculty from five different district schools. Had all respondents listed above come from a single school site, the impact, although important, would not be as potentially disruptive to the future of the PAR program in the GUHSD. No additional respondents contributed to this factor during member checking.

Negative Factor of PAR: Fear of Honest and Critical Self-Assessment

In addition to raising the various sorts of time related and program misconception issues discussed above, three respondents identified a fear of honest and critical self-assessment as another factor contributing to negative perceptions of the program.

Although the three responses differ somewhat, I placed them all in a single sub-category of "Fear of Honest and Critical Self-Assessment" because this label represents the essence of the varied responses. Exemplary quotes provided by the respondents expressed the following concerns.

- [It] can be, and I've heard this from different teachers doing PAR, it can be a stripping and revealing experience. To kind of have to stand there and show yourself as you appear. I think for many people this is incredibly intimidating. A lot of people are not willing to do that.
- Another cost might be to your ego. You've got to honestly evaluate where you are. Somebody might tell you that you're not as good as you think you are. You're going to come in and you're going to look at yourself and say "Oh [expletive]! I've got to get a little bit better here. They (Consulting Teachers) videotape you and stuff. I mean a lot of people don't want to admit that they're not as good as they think.
- Maybe some people aren't secure enough to fail if [it] (growth plan) doesn't work out. Maybe if it does fail they don't want that attention. I know [someone who] refuses to be evaluated by anybody that didn't hire her.

Of the three respondents indicating that exposing one's weaknesses was a function of PAR, one indicated that she knew "a lot of people" who were not ready or willing

participate in PAR due to this factor. During member checking, no additional respondents identified fear of honest and critical self-assessment as part of their experience with PAR.

Differences Between Peer Assistance and Review and Traditional Evaluations

After posing the final interview question, "How was your PAR experience different than your experience with traditional evaluations performed by administrators?" I heard a repetition of previous responses; I also had an opportunity to ferret out elusive data that may have been inadvertently omitted during previous responses. As it turns out, there were, indeed, additional differences that respondents could clearly identify.

One of the distinctions cited by respondents was the use of peers in PAR rather than an administrator during a traditional evaluation. A number had discussed the inadequacy of administrators as evaluators in responding to an earlier question. The following section gives teacher accounts of how the use of a peer rather than an administrator was perceived by Participating Teachers.

Consulting Teacher/Peer as Reviewer

Nine out of twelve respondents indicated a positive experience with the peer reviewer and a tenth respondent gave a somewhat negative account of her experience with her Consulting Teacher. The two remaining respondents acknowledged the use of a peer rather than an administrator, but provided neutral accounts of the experience. There are reasons for this; however, to discuss the reasons would definitely reveal the identities of these respondents.

Although individual experiences varied depending upon a teacher's self-identified growth area, all but three respondents (including the person expressing the somewhat negative perspective of her Consulting Teacher and the two others who provided neutral accounts of the use of a peer), indicated feelings of approbation. Generally, the responses of the nine respondents providing positive experiences with their Consulting Teachers are in stark contrast to the descriptions of the perceptions of veteran teachers

reflecting on their experiences with administrators as evaluators during traditional evaluations. Sample quotes from the nine respondents are listed below along with the tenth somewhat negative account.

- Having a Consulting Teacher in your classroom, rather than an administrator, is very powerful. With the Consulting Teacher it was a completely helpful comrade type of relationship.
- The fact that I actually interacted with someone made [PAR] incredibly different [from traditional evaluation]. The Consulting teacher and I were talking about issues in terms of their long-term applicability.
- The [Consulting Teacher] asked me what I wanted. She found a bunch of things that I could do. She's the one that found the funding for me. We kind of met on our leisure, it was a lot less threatening than with an administrator.
- My Consulting Teacher met with me and we talked about my goals and what project I wanted to do. She got me resources, suggested other teachers that I could observe, teachers I might meet with, books I might consider. It's just much more thorough.
- My consultant came before school, after school, during my prep period, and we did a lot of talking on the phone.
- I think it was a benefit that my Consulting Teacher seemed as if she were kind of my team mate. Not very critical, but very, very supportive with ideas. I liked that aspect of the experience. That was a benefit to be able to work with another teacher toward a specific goal. You don't feel like you're hanging out there all by yourself. My Consulting Teacher provided me with resources, did a great job, and saved me a lot of leg work.
- My Consulting Teacher kept coming back and saying we're concerned with making this an experience that's going to mean something for you and either change your teaching, enhance your teaching...whatever. She kept saying, "Is this

what we're looking for? This needs to be valuable to you. Is this it? OK. How are you going to get there?"....She was wonderful because she would look at what I had done, and even asked if I wanted her to edit it!

- My Consulting Teacher was willing to do absolutely anything for me. I mean I could have totally utilized her more. She was just willing...whatever I needed, it was just totally available. To have that was just tremendous for me. I felt that [what I was doing] was important. The consultant was willing to come over anytime, arrange help for me...if I needed equipment, anything, she was just willing to go the extra mile.
- My Consulting Teacher had more time to discuss my [growth area] with me than the principal did. I don't see that as a negative. I thought it was kind of nice.
- My Consulting Teacher was very open but had other things to do as well. Since the consultants continue to teach, she couldn't meet when I could meet. We got together a total of two times. Once to start, and once to end. We communicated, but only met face to face twice.

Other Differences Between PAR and Traditional Evaluation

Seven out of twelve respondents provided additional information pertaining to differences between traditional evaluations and the peer review approach. The five individuals not citing additional differences between the two evaluation approaches could not add any novel differences to those already expressed in previous questions. Exemplary quotes from the seven respondents citing additional differences are as follows:

- Well, first of all, an administrator never came in my room this time. I didn't have the stress of having an administrator come in and having to give a performance. I feel that I do a good job, but there is something intimidating about having somebody walk in and observe just this one particular class, on one particular day, one particular lesson, which may not even fit where I'm at with the class.

- Something that I didn't do was ... I didn't sit down and say "OK, these are this school's long-term goals, these are the department's long-term goals, these are my long-term goals, and this is how my lesson plan addresses that. So, writing out lesson plans is something I did not do. But I don't think my professional growth was the poorer for it.
- Compared to the other one [traditional evaluation], I had to write up the form, you know, what we were going to be doing. Kind of like your goals and objectives. Similar type of thing but it wasn't exactly the same... You know.... "On May first do this." That type of thing.
- Rather than writing out my goals for one lesson plan and then having someone observe one lesson, I kind of wrote how it [the project] fit with the rest of the unit. In traditional evaluation there was this brief meeting before the observation. We'd do the evaluation and then I'd sign off. PAR was over a much longer period of time because I had a project that I wanted to develop. I would not have put that much effort into the particular project that I wanted to work on. I wanted to re-do a portion of my [instruction]. I have been using a [specific approach], but I was not very pleased with how it had gone in previous years. It was kind of mediocre. Certainly, for a traditional review I could get you one lesson plan. So, a difference is that PAR required a lot more effort, but that was desirable because I also had more choice about what I would be addressing. Another difference is that PAR is an opportunity to have someone help you find resources, conferences, and arrange for release days to observe other teachers. You don't get these opportunities in traditional evaluations.
- I didn't fill out a goals and objectives form for that observation for that one day. Instead, it was a goals and objectives form for my project. I guess the best difference was that PAR works toward professional growth and that's the key to the program.

- I think the programs are different in that PAR allows you to go to other people's classrooms, to take the time to do that, to have staff development, to have someone come into your classroom—maybe even a specialist in their area—and give you some ideas. Again, some teachers may not feel they can take the time to learn these new things but I think teachers would feel the same way that I did. There's going to be people there who are going to give you ideas. Try this, try that, go and watch this person teach. Watch them, try something new. Just the collaboration with other professionals is a difference.
- PAR is by far more applicable because you can make it be whatever you want it to be and I think that's nice. I think people will respond positively to it.

Summary

In this chapter I have described the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program in the Grossmont Union High School District and examined the themes that surfaced during my analysis of the interview transcripts. This study identified factors that contributed to decisions to volunteer in lieu of traditional evaluations, factors contributing to positive perceptions of PAR, factors contributing to negative perceptions of PAR, and the differences observed by participants between the two evaluation approaches.

There were two main reasons cited for voluntarily participation in PAR. The first involved negative perceptions of traditional evaluation. Traditional evaluation was described as (1) meaningless hurdles/institutional hoops to be jumped, (2) limited in its ability to help teachers improve, (3) focussing on atypical classroom performances, (4) encouraging stagnant preparation, and (5) requiring administrators to do what they do not appear to be able to do well.

A second reason teachers gave for volunteering for PAR in lieu of traditional evaluation was a desire to try something new that might improve their teaching.

Factors cited as contributing to positive perceptions of PAR revolved around the following: (1) Participating Teacher ownership of self-identified professional growth areas, (2) on-going improvement, (3) positive changes in teaching practice as a result of PAR activities, (4) ability to focus on a self-identified area in need of improvement, and (5) freedom to take risks without fear of reprisal should the teacher be unsuccessful in addressing their growth area.

Factors cited as contributing to negative perceptions of PAR included (1) increased time required for PAR activities (This category encompassed three subcategories: time for PAR activities, time away from class, and time for scheduling between Participating and Consulting Teachers.), (2) a number of misconceptions held by peers and at times, the Participating Teachers, including a false perception of PAR as a remediation tool for ineffective teachers and (3) fear of honest and critical self-assessment.

Finally, when probed regarding perceived differences between traditional evaluation and PAR, respondents cited one fundamental difference as well as few additional differences, most of which had been included in responses to previous questions. All of the respondents cited that the use of Consulting Teachers was a fundamental difference between the two evaluation approaches (although satisfaction with the Consulting Teacher relatively varied). I identified two additional differences: (1) PAR is less stressful than a traditional evaluation and (2) PAR does not require as much paper work.

In light of data obtained in this study, it appears that PAR is perceived by the participants as a viable and, for most of them, a preferred alternative to traditional evaluation. However, respondents cautioned that PAR would not be the preferred alternative if teachers did not have the time to devote to the process or if they were unable to honestly and critically self-assess their teaching practice. Ultimately, for the reasons expressed in the literature, as well as by the respondents in this study, potential

participants should be advised that PAR is not an evaluation panacea and does, indeed, contain factors that should be seriously considered before deciding to substitute PAR for traditional evaluation. The ramifications of the findings and their applicability to all stake-holders associated with the Grossmont Model of PAR and peer review in general will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study has focused on Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) as perceived by veteran teachers who volunteered to participate in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). More specifically, this work has identified and explored factors that (1) prompted teachers to voluntarily select PAR in lieu of traditional evaluation, (2) contributed to positive perceptions of the Grossmont Model of PAR, (3) contributed to negative perceptions of the Grossmont Model, and (4) represented differences between traditional and PAR evaluation methods. Interviews with twelve randomly selected voluntarily participating teachers--all with at least five years of successful teaching experience--yielded surprisingly uniform responses, with some minor exception, about the issues listed above.

In this chapter I will first provide a summary of findings regarding the issues outlined above. Second, I will discuss a number of issues and concerns suggested by the data and identify the ramifications of this research for the (a) Joint Panel, (b) Consulting Teachers, (c) future Participating Teachers, and (d) district-level decision makers in the Grossmont Union High School District. Third, implications for policy makers in other districts and at the state level who are interested in PAR will be discussed briefly. Finally, I will explore implications for further empirical research.

Summary of the Findings

As noted in Chapter 3, I began the study with a desire to gain access to the perspectives of veteran teachers with at least five years of successful teaching experience who voluntarily selected to participate during initial implementation of the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). I hoped that the data could be used to begin to construct theory about factors

that contributed to positive and negative perceptions of the newly established PAR program and that the findings also might serve a formative evaluation function for the Joint Panel of the GUHSD. Although I did not design the study in general, or the interview questions in particular, to determine whether traditional evaluation would be a factor contributing to a decision to volunteer for PAR, in the end, I was also able to "test," albeit informally, existing theory about traditional teacher evaluation as described in the literature. The ability to "test" existing theory because of comments about traditional evaluation volunteered by the teachers in the course of answering interview questions that did not explicitly ask about perceptions of traditional evaluation.

The actual findings from the study mirrored those expressed in the literature in several ways. These ways relate to views of the traditional evaluation process. For instance, eleven out of twelve of the teachers interviewed volunteered that they decided to participate in PAR in part, at least, because of dissatisfaction with traditional evaluation. A number of reasons were cited to explain this dissatisfaction including viewing the process as (1) a meaningless hurdle, (2) limited in its ability to help teachers improve, (3) focused on atypical classroom performances, (4) encouraging stagnant preparation, and (5) requiring administrators to play an inappropriate role.

Teachers also gave other reasons for opting to participate in PAR that are not already well documented in the literature. For instance, a total of nine teachers (after member checking) indicated that they volunteered for PAR out of a desire to try something new. This emphasis on novelty may factor into an explanation for PAR's success in the short run. This matter will be discussed in more detail in the second section of this chapter.

The study also revealed both positive and negative perceptions of PAR. The list of positive attributes included PAR's ability to (1) instill a sense of Participating Teacher ownership of their professional growth, (2) promote on-going improvement, (3) create change in teaching practice, (4) allow Participating Teachers to focus on a self-identified

growth area and specify how they plan to address that area, and (5) allow teachers to take risks without fear of reprisal should they be unsuccessful in their attempt to improve aspects of their teaching practice.

What I did not anticipate at the outset was the ability of the participants to clearly articulate specific reasons that they themselves or their colleagues might—in spite of the overwhelming positive PAR experience—select traditional evaluation and forfeit the opportunity to improve their teaching practice via PAR. These reasons were (1) increased time required for PAR activities and related scheduling issues, (2) a fear of honest self-assessment, and (3) a fear of being associated with a program that was perceived as a last ditch effort to remediate ineffective teachers because of past practice.

Virtually all perceived differences between traditional evaluation and PAR could be traced back to the use of a peer reviewer rather than an administrator. Nine out of twelve respondents indicated that the peer reviewer/Consulting Teacher was (1) not threatening, (2) more thorough, (3) totally supportive, (4) able to devote time to the process, (5) able to provide guidance and new ideas, (6) a professional collaborating with another professional, and, (7) like working with a teammate. Most respondents suggest that Participating Teachers have a genuine desire to improve their teaching practice and that this objective is best achieved via PAR collaboration with a Consulting Teacher rather than a traditional evaluation performed by an administrator. Only one respondent might take issue with this last statement due to a less than positive experience with her Consulting Teacher.

In this section I have reviewed the findings in terms of (1) reasons why teachers chose to volunteer for PAR, (2) positive perceptions of PAR, (3) negative perceptions of PAR, and (4) identifiable differences between PAR and the traditional approach to teacher evaluation. These findings will now be used to bring to light potential impending issues and concerns that may prohibit maximum PAR program effectiveness.

Issues and Concerns

The findings bring to light several issues and concerns. These issues deal with (1) the desire to try something new as a reason for volunteering for PAR, (2) problems created by site based management for a district-wide program such as PAR, (3) the principal as instructional leader, and (4) ensuring that misconceptions of the Grossmont Model of PAR are eliminated.

The Novelty Factor

In the previous section it was noted that nine respondents attributed their decision to participate in PAR, in part, to a desire to try something new. Most respondents added that they wanted to try something new that might actually improve their teaching. One respondent, however, simply stated: "I had no preconceptions when I went in. I just wanted to try something different. I had no idea how it was going to go." This respondent--and to a lesser extent most others--suggest a potential issue dealing with the novelty of PAR. The experience of simply trying something new often creates a perception of success and, at times, even empirical evidence of improved performance simply because something was new. This anomaly has come to be known in the literature pertaining to organizational theory as "The Hawthorne Effect."

The Hawthorne Effect was first observed in 1927 when the Western Electric Company at its plant in Hawthorne, Illinois, studied intangible factors in the work place and the effect the factors had on the morale and efficiency of company employees (Mayo, 1933). The Hawthorne plant employed over 29,000 workers and manufactured telephone apparatus. One area of research, conducted by Elton Mayo, was undertaken to investigate if worker output would improve simply by manipulating the intensity of the lighting in the working environment. Production not only increased with increased lighting intensity, but, surprisingly, production also increased when lighting levels were decreased. Increased production, however, could not be sustained indefinitely and

plateaus in production capacity were eventually reached by either increasing or decreasing lighting intensity.

Needless to say, lighting had very little to do with increased production. It was the mere difference in environment that created the increase. Furthermore, what proved to be a more important factor was the observation that the experimental group--made up of six individuals who were separated from the rest of the workforce--developed a group identification, and with it, a pride in what they were able to accomplish. The experimental group, simply by being separated from the larger workforce so that lighting intensity levels could be manipulated in isolation, began to feel valued. In short, some believe the Hawthorne Effect--also known as the "Somebody Upstairs Cares" syndrome--suggests that it doesn't make any difference what you teach or implement, the Hawthorne Effect will produce the positive outcome you want--for a while, at least.

The one respondent who stated that she participated in PAR simply because it was something new may have perceived that the Grossmont Model of PAR was superior to traditional evaluation because it was, at the time this study was undertaken, a novelty. Whether or not participants' positive perceptions will be maintained over the long haul has yet to be tested as does the relationship of perceptions to actual performances.

In light of the Hawthorne Effect, in other words, we must question the long term effectiveness of the PAR once the program is no longer a novelty and once a large number of teachers and not just a self-selected small group of them are participating in the program. This study, in part, due to the vacuum in the knowledge base addressing peer review in California as well as to the recent implementation of the PAR program itself, focused only on teacher perceptions. These perceptions may have been influenced by the Hawthorne Effect.

PAR and Site-based Management

The second area of concern deals with a possible collision between PAR--a district-wide program--and the district's commitment to site based management. For

example, teachers at schools observing block scheduled quarter systems suffer an increased disadvantage when compared to teachers in schools on traditional schedules when teachers are absent from class due to professional growth activities. Teachers on block schedules, in short, miss twice the number of class minutes as teachers in schools observing a traditional school day.

Additionally, individual school sites are able to determine when and if they will bank minutes for future use during staff development days. On the surface this does not appear to be problematic; however, when a single school observes its staff development day (generally, but not always, once every two weeks), all class periods are shorter at that particular site. This creates a great deal of confusion if the Consulting Teacher and the Participating Teacher do not teach at the same school site. Furthermore, student body assemblies occur sporadically at each of the schools. These activities play a role in altering a school's schedule on any given day. Frequently, teachers are not aware of these assemblies far enough in advance to inform their Consulting Teacher or Participating Teacher of the schedule change.

The above problems were complicated by the fact that the Grossmont Model of PAR allows all Participating Teachers, in essence, to select their Consulting Teacher. In theory, this makes sense. In practice, however, it does little more than complicate the PAR program in the GUHSD. Participating Teachers make their selection of a consultant without considering a consultant's unique teaching schedule or the unique schedule at their school site. Furthermore, Consulting Teachers who have little or no input to determine where, when or whom they will review, could potentially end up with a schedule that may contain Participating Teachers from eleven different schools. If a Participating Teacher and his/her Consulting Teacher are not at schools observing identical schedules, again, the negative factor of increased time is exponentially increased and scheduling becomes extremely problematic.

In light of the concerns expressed above, some commonalities between various schedules, be they individual teacher or school schedules, would help minimize the increased time required for PAR activities and simplify the logistics of scheduling between Participating Teachers and their consultants. Those responsible for PAR program evaluation may wish to revisit the policy allowing teachers to select their choice of Consulting Teacher.

Principal as Instructional Leader

One of the more candid aspects of the interview data concerned veteran teacher descriptions of administrator behaviors during traditional evaluations. In their interviews, respondents indicated that administrators (a) didn't want to see anything different during a class observation, (b) felt they had to say something negative during the evaluation, (c) got out of the classroom because they were not good teachers to begin with, (d) forgot about teachers about a minute and a half after they left the classroom, and, (e) have no idea what teachers really do. Participating Teacher respondents not only posit a perception of the traditional approach to teacher evaluation that is mirrored in the literature but also indicate that the process is not only conflicting, but actually promotes an adversarial relationship between administrators and members of the veteran teaching staff.

Historically, principals have conducted teacher evaluations. This is not the case with PAR, however, principals do have the formal authority to raise questions about the growth plans of individual teachers. In fact, the principal must sign off at every step of the PAR process. Interestingly, in spite of the PAR alternative, administrators continue to perform the majority of evaluations. In light of the responses offered in the interviews, administrators may want to consider several issues that might possibly improve the traditional evaluation process. For example, administrators may want to ensure that teachers involved with traditional evaluation are familiar with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession since that is the rubric from which teachers are to be

evaluated. Principals might also consider reviewing the standards. When both parties do this, both sides will know the things the evaluation should focus on. Currently, the data suggests that this is not the case in the Grossmont Union High School District (GUHSD). In fact, copies of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession were only provided to individuals volunteering for PAR. Indeed, had I not been selected as a Consulting Teacher, I would not have seen a copy of the standards which were to be used to evaluate me. I also of course, would not have had an opportunity to think-through how to address and implement these standards in the classroom.

A second issue for administrators to consider deals with a need to devote more time than previously allotted to perform evaluations. Respondent comments such as: "...my experience has been that the administrators view it [traditional evaluation]--and the teachers as well--as sort of just a hurdle that we had to go through every couple of years," suggests that veteran teachers and their administrators have experienced traditional evaluations as a less than desirable tool for addressing teacher improvement. By devoting more time to evaluating each teacher, teacher perceptions should be altered so that the process is viewed as more collaborative and less "top-down." While administrators have a great deal of responsibility, only one of which is the evaluation of teachers, PAR provides some relief because teachers opting for PAR lessen the regular evaluation load of the administrator. As a result, at least in theory, administrators should have more time to devote to individual teachers than they have had in the past.

A third issue for administrators to consider deals with honesty in teacher evaluation results. Administrators maintain the power to prohibit any teacher from participating in PAR. By doing so, the administrator indicates that he/she will formally evaluate the teacher. Should this be the case, administrators must be prepared to accept their responsibility and be willing to identify unsatisfactory teachers without hesitation. Should this fail to occur, teachers in need of assistance will never receive the help they need. Historically, administrators have been reluctant to pursue the removal of an

incompetent teacher because of time, effort, and financial considerations, however, with the advent of PAR, if administrators would honestly identify teachers in need of assistance, more teachers would get the help they need via peer assistance. In the past, this has not been the case and, at times, administrators have failed to follow due process, thus enabling ineffective teachers to remain on the job and badly in need of assistance.

A fourth issue administrators may want to consider deals with performing evaluations in which the goals of the teacher are useful for today's classroom. Respondents indicated that a common practice among veteran teachers was that of turning in the same goals and objectives form year after year after year. The rationale for doing this is that the teacher has identified an acceptable model for evaluation success and, therefore, has no valid reason to change this practice and risk embarrassment or failure during subsequent evaluations. If administrator evaluations could be modified so that openness and trust were promoted, risk-taking would not only be possible, but actually encouraged, so that meaningful professional growth could take place.

To summarize, teachers are free to self-assess their own teaching practice and, with their Consulting Teacher, develop a growth plan to address an area in need of improvement. Administrators, however, continue to perform the majority of evaluations and, in fact, must approve Participating Teacher PAR activities at every step of the process. Based on what teachers interviewed in this study said about traditional evaluation, the traditional approach could be improved by (1) ensuring that teachers understand that the California Standards for the Teaching Professions will be used as the rubric during their evaluations, (2) devoting more time to the process so that it is perceived as being more collaborative and less "top down," (3) providing an honest assessment of the evaluated teacher's strengths and opportunities for growth, and (4) ensuring that the goals and objectives of the evaluated teacher are appropriate for the modern-day classroom.

The Misconceptions

An additional concern that emerged from the study was a revelation of inaccurate interpretations of the purpose of Grossmont Model of PAR. The research consistently produced accounts of successful experiences with PAR among the respondents, however, I simultaneously discovered that there were wide-spread misconceptions, suspicion, and fear associated with the program among members of the teaching staff. This study identified these misconceptions and expressed them in the voices of the respondents involved with PAR who also had direct contact with individuals responsible for the proliferation of false information about the PAR program itself. Comments included the following: "Are you sure you want to associate yourself with that program...because that's what they're going to give to teachers who aren't doing a good job?" "Are you sure you want to tell someone that you're doing that?" "They're going to think that you are a slacker teacher?" such comments may inhibit program success.

Program misconceptions have a negative effect on the PAR program because, should the falsehoods be allowed to continue, they deter voluntary participation for professional growth as well as participation in lieu of traditional evaluation. If teachers fail to volunteer for PAR, the end result would be a program devoted to the remediation of ineffective veteran teachers. While this is not altogether an unworthy pursuit, the Grossmont Model of PAR would need to be redefined. Specifically, if the program served only teachers who had to improve or else be counseled out of the teaching profession, the "peer" element would be lost because Consulting Teachers would be in positions of authority within the peer relationship. Furthermore, the function of PAR would not be to improve teaching and student learning, per se, but rather a function limited to damage control via peer remediation.

Policy Ramifications

This study of the Grossmont Model of Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) is one of a very few empirical research projects addressing fledgling PAR programs across the

State of California. As such, the findings revealed in this study may have policy ramifications for (1) the Joint Panel of the GUHSD, (2) Consulting Teachers, (3) future Participating Teachers, (4) GUHSD district level policy makers, (5) policymakers in other California school districts, and (6) state level policy makers interested in peer review. Implications of this study for each of the groups listed above are discussed below.

Considerations for the Joint Panel

Respondents in this study identified several areas of the PAR program that they experienced as problematic. Based upon obtained data, the Joint Panel of the GUHSD may wish to consider ways to (1) decrease the amount of time required for voluntary participation in PAR, (2) improve the process through which Participating Teachers select their consultants, and (3) clarify the quite different purposes for participating in the Grossmont Model of PAR.

Eleven respondents indicated that during first-phase implementation, increased time was a factor contributing to negative perceptions about the PAR program. Indeed, a few teachers who had initially volunteered for PAR chose not to participate during first-phase implementation because they perceived PAR as requiring more time than they were willing or able to devote to the process. For them, the less time consuming traditional evaluation was preferred. Interestingly, the Joint Panel, for the 2001 - 2002 school year, doubled the time required for voluntary participation to one full year. By doubling the time requirement, they may have doubled the negative perception or, conversely, may have eliminated the concern because teachers now have twice the amount of time to complete their growth plan activities than they did with just one semester. At present, it is unclear which of these two perceptions is correct.

The Joint Panel may want to provide choices for length of voluntary participation in PAR. For example, some teachers might prefer a one semester commitment for PAR activities while others might require a full school year to complete their growth plans.

Since all growth plans are unique, it seems prudent to allow teachers to determine when their PAR activities will be terminated. By doing so, Consulting Teachers could review and assist a heavier case load because some teachers would only be participating for one semester and conclude their participation at the end of the first semester. Another one-semester participant could fill the spot during the second semester of the school year, thus allowing more teachers to be assisted and reviewed without actually increasing the number of teachers receiving assistance from any one Consulting Teacher during a given semester.

In addition to citing the increased time required for PAR as a negative attribute, respondents also cited time out of class for professional growth activities as contributing to negative perceptions of the Grossmont Model. While school schedules are not determined by the Joint Panel, this factor (due in part to the varying schedules among the district's high schools) could be addressed by the Joint Panel by minimizing the number of consecutive days that the PAR program provides workshops and inservices. The Joint Panel may choose to consider paying Participating Teachers to attend inservices on Saturdays in an effort to minimize the amount of time teachers are required to be out of class because of PAR activities. On a block schedule or quarter system, if a teacher is involved for two days of inservice, he/she misses the equivalent of four traditional school days. For many teachers this is unacceptable.

Another consideration for the Joint Panel concerns the practice of allowing Participating Teachers total freedom to select their Consulting Teacher without regard to subject area, location, or daily teaching schedules. While the reasons for this practice are honorable, the reality is that the varying schedules of the school sites, as well as the differing individual teaching schedules, makes arranging meeting times between Consulting Teachers and Participating Teachers a logistical nightmare. Additionally, because Consulting Teachers continue to teach three periods per day, there are times

when it is impossible to meet with the Participating Teacher during his/her preparatory period.

The panel might consider having all Participating Teachers indicate (1) their individual teaching schedule (with preparatory period), (2) the specific subject/period for which they are seeking assistance, (3) their self-identified area of teaching improvement, and (4) their individual school schedule (with regularly scheduled minimum days). With these items clearly delineated at the onset of PAR activity, a more user-friendly matching of Participating Teacher with Consulting Teacher would be possible and would diminish the frustrations experienced when trying to arrange meeting times.

Finally, the Joint Panel should clearly articulate the function of the Grossmont Model of PAR in an effort to eliminate or at least minimize the proliferation of inaccurate information. This through-the-grapevine factor contributed to negative perceptions of PAR by incorrectly establishing remediation as the fundamental priority of the program. Some teachers concluded that they might be perceived as less than satisfactory simply because they had volunteered to participate. The Grossmont Model of PAR's Mission Statement--The goal of the Peer Assistance Program will be to inspire teachers to reach their full potential in teaching methodologies and content area knowledge--will continually be undermined if these misconceptions are left unchallenged. (Respondents citing program misconceptions as a negative factor represented five separate school sites within the GUHSD.)

Considerations for Consulting Teachers

The Joint Panel framed the Grossmont Model of PAR so that voluntarily Participating Teachers could select the Consulting Teacher of their choice, and if the Joint Panel does not alter this policy (as recommended above), Consulting Teachers might consider requesting, in addition to the Participating Teacher's name and school site, the teaching schedules of participants. With this information, Consulting Teachers would not find themselves paired with Participating Teachers whose schedules are so out

of sync with their own teaching schedules that finding mutually convenient meeting times is virtually impossible.

In addition to teacher schedules, travel time to various school sites must be taken into consideration if either consultant or participant is on a block schedule. To ignore this issue could lead to a Consulting Teacher walking into a classroom in the middle of a ninety-minute lesson, setting up a video recorder and attempting to record and script the teacher's classroom activity while trying to be discrete. Clearly, when this scenario occurs, any semblance of discretion is lost and peer review itself can become a nuisance to the Participating Teacher as well as the students.

Another consideration for Consulting Teachers to ponder is the identification of the specific class period for which a participant is seeking assistance. For example, if a Participating Teacher is having difficulty with her second period class, he/she should be paired with a Consulting Teacher who is able to accommodate this schedule requirement. To pair her with a consultant unable to perform peer review during that particular period of the day defeats the Participating Teacher's entire purpose for seeking peer assistance in the first place. Currently, during the consultant selection process, Consulting Teachers have no idea of the needs of Participating Teachers. Unfortunately, when a Participating Teacher selects the class in which he/she would like the peer review to occur, the schedule of the Consulting Teacher is not factored into the equation. As a result, at times, Consulting Teachers are forced to leave their own classes in order to accommodate the needs of the Participating Teacher.

In addition to the Joint Panel's ability to clarify misconceptions about the Grossmont Model of PAR, Consulting Teachers can also play a role in this area because they are in a unique position to stem the flow of misinformation. Since the Consulting Teachers are located at different campuses, each has the opportunity to promote the PAR program, correct misinformation, and recruit future participants.

Finally, it should be noted that Consulting Teachers functioned in a completely non-judgmental and supportive role during first-phase implementation. Even now, during the second phase of implementation, they continue to make every attempt to satisfy the requests of Participating Teachers. However, at this point in time, I am not sure that consultants know if there are limitations to what participants are allowed to request. For example, how many days can teachers be out of class for inservice/training? How many days are too few or too many for a participant to request for PAR growth activities? Furthermore, if Participating Teachers are to be observed by their Consulting Teachers, what recourse does the consultant have if the participant refuses--particularly if the Participating Teacher is a successful veteran who volunteered for PAR?

While it may appear that the issues discussed above fall within the purview of the Joint Panel, in reality, the Joint Panel is not even aware of these issues. These issues will become salient when they are presented to the Joint Panel as recommendations not just from this study but also from the Consulting Teachers themselves.

Considerations for Future Participating Teachers

It is the desire of the GUHSD, the Joint Panel of the district, and the Consulting Teachers to make modifications and adjustments to the program so that it is the best that it can be. Even the California Teachers Association is assessing programs across the state with the understanding that peer review programs, at a minimum, will take five years to fully implement (CTA Southern CA PAR Workshop, Newport Beach, October 8 - 11, 2001). In spite of ongoing modifications to the program, voluntarily Participating Teachers in the future would be well advised to evaluate PAR requirements before deciding to forego a traditional evaluation and committing themselves to a peer review. Teachers considering volunteering for PAR need to be aware that participation in PAR in the future--just as participation in PAR during the period of time covered by this study--almost certainly requires more time than the time needed to do traditional evaluation. One respondent cautioned:

If you're going to do something new you've got to start over. You've got to re-plan, you've got to re-do your books. Your old lesson plans from two years ago don't work anymore. So you've got to do that. That's all time.

The additional time requirement, furthermore, translates into more time out-of-class and away from students. In the words of one respondent:

The trouble is when you're on this quarter system and the periods are [X] minutes long. You hate to miss even one class period. It seemed I would be missing a lot of class instructional time to attend the PAR workshops. Almost two full days of a traditional class is lost due to just one day if your school is on the quarter system.

It is clear that time away from students is exponentially increased when teachers are located at schools on the quarter system.

But, even for those teachers not involved with block scheduling, the time-away-from-students issue must be factored into any decision to participate in PAR. Furthermore, should a Participating Teacher select his/her Consulting Teacher without considering possible scheduling conflicts, additional time will be required to meet and collaborate with his/her consultant. For example, if the Consulting and Participating Teachers are at separate schools that do not have similar schedules, arranging meeting times for collaborative purposes becomes problematic. One respondent indicated:

It was difficult to set up meeting times with my Consulting Teacher because the consultant is not a member of the staff at my school. That was a negative. We emailed back and forth for weeks before we could agree on a meeting time. That was more difficult.

Beyond the problems related to time, respondents also indicated that teachers involved with PAR had to be willing to honestly and critically assess their own teaching. For some, the self-assessment was viewed in terms of costs to one's ego. Three respondents indicated that exposing one's own weaknesses was required in PAR. In light

of this finding, it appears that potential Participating Teachers should ask themselves if they are willing and able to reveal areas in need of improvement and honestly review their teaching practice. The following excerpts (selected from quotes contained in Chapter 4) contain a few descriptions of this process:

- It can be a stripping and revealing experience.
- For many people, this is incredibly intimidating.
- Somebody might tell you that you're not as good as you think you are.

Potential volunteers should consider prior to opting for PAR whether or not they are willing to undergo this type of self and peer scrutiny. If the answer to this question is negative, a traditional evaluation should be the preferred method.

The final issue for potential Participating Teachers to consider deals with a misunderstanding of the Grossmont Model of PAR. Before opting for the PAR process, a teacher should know that, for some, at this time at least, PAR is perceived as a last ditch effort to get rid of ineffective teachers. Future Participating Teachers should be informed of misconceptions and, ideally, assist in clarifying the misconceptions by helping to identifying the multiple purposes of PAR in the GUHSD.

Despite the issues listed above, all respondents in the study—even the one who had a less-than-positive experience with her Consulting Teacher—indicated that they believe PAR is an improvement over traditional evaluations performed by administrators. This endorsement should help put the identified problems in perspective.

Considerations for District-Level Policy Makers

Although PAR programs are defined and implemented at the local school district level by committees made up of a majority of teachers and a minority of administrators, there are some factors, particularly in the GUHSD, that go beyond this committee's responsibility. For example, with regard to PAR, district-level decision makers have the formal authority to implement uniform schedules across the GUHSD. In settings where schools share the same schedule across the entire district, actual time out of class would

be a uniform concern for all Participating Teachers. In other words, teachers involved in professional growth during the school day would share an equal amount of time away from students. Currently, teachers on block schedules miss double the amount of time because of the length of their individual class periods. District-wide schedules would also decrease scheduling conflicts observed by teachers currently in the PAR program. Furthermore, district-provided professional growth opportunities offered during consecutive days would be better attended by Participating Teachers if the block schedule were eliminated.

It is not the goal of this study to promote uniformity in scheduling across the district. Indeed, this is an impossibility because of student transportation concerns. However, the wide diversity and completely unrelated schedules among the high schools in the GUHSD creates a barrier in need of attention. Solutions are possible via either (1) Joint Panel alteration of the Consulting Teacher selection process or (2) district-level policies that decrease the extreme diversification between school schedules. Some combination of these two solutions is also possible.

Finally, this study revealed that misconceptions about the program were reported at five of the eleven high schools participating, and these misconceptions were based upon the presentations provided by selected staff at each of the school sites. Some volunteers interpreted initial PAR presentations with negative connotations. District officials should do everything possible to insure that, in future presentations, every effort is made to correct misrepresentations of the program.

Implications for PAR Policy and Practice in Other Districts

There is some research to empirically support the claim that peer review as a formative evaluation process improves the quality of teaching (see for example, Beerens, 2000, & Lieberman, 1998). However, school districts in the State of California have the freedom to develop and implement their own version of PAR. Teacher union representatives, school district administrators, and teachers may find that this study helps

identify potential areas of concern in their educational organization should similarities exist in their PAR program and that implemented in the GUHSD. Districts focussing their programs exclusively on the remediation of unsatisfactory teachers or those in need of assistance may not find this study less applicable to their version of PAR; however, by reviewing the Grossmont Model of PAR, other districts may become aware of possible implementation concerns and take steps to avoid unnecessary delays, confusion, and negative perceptions during their school district's implementation process.

Implications for Future Research

As previously stated, the study's findings are necessarily limited to perceptions of the PAR program. There is a need to conduct research that moves beyond perceptions and actually determines, if, in fact, peer review does improve teaching and increase student learning and achievement. Even studies of perceptions might be strengthened by using a mixed methodology approach in which surveys are constructed from qualitative interview data and/or qualitative methods are utilized to expand and deepen survey findings.

During this school year, 2001-2002, the GUHSD will require teachers who have previously received unsatisfactory evaluations to participate in PAR. This represents the third category of "referred participation" and is a core function of the program. This additional category contains its own unique set of concerns. It would appear worthy of study to assess whether or not veteran teachers can maintain adequate levels of openness to improvement when their participation is mandated. Furthermore, since referred teachers are tenured and have an established record of satisfactory evaluations, a study of the types of problems veteran teachers develop would be of interest to this researcher.

Another sort of study might involve assessing the differences between various PAR programs to determine what elements make the PAR program in the GUHSD appropriate--or inappropriate--for our specific organizational culture. Similarly, another area for future research might entail identifying particular and differing PAR programs of

multiple school districts. Since school districts are able to locally determine PAR program specifics, it is of interest to assess whether or not the inclusion of voluntary participation in lieu of traditional evaluation is a factor contributing to increased student learning. If so, should other districts desire to include this category? If not, might those districts currently observing this practice choose to devote the majority of their resources toward the remediation of ineffective teachers?

To summarize, possible future research could be conducted to assess if recommended changes to the Grossmont Model of PAR have indeed had the positive effect for which they were suggested. Another study within the Grossmont Union High School District might focus on "referred participants," a category of participants who were not part of the project during the initial year of implementation. Additionally, research involving a range of PAR programs in a range of districts might yield data leading to a better understanding of "what works" in terms of improved teaching and learning in different school and district contexts.

Conclusions

Throughout this study, it was difficult to address the fundamental underlying question: Will the Peer Assistance and Review Program implemented in the Grossmont Union High School District be perceived as the preferred alternative to the traditional approach to teacher evaluations? The answer to this question is illusive because the Grossmont Model of PAR was experienced as the preferred method of evaluation but yet required (1) more time and (2) an ability to critically self assess one's teaching. The findings suggest that should teachers be at a point in their lives when time is not available or the teacher is not comfortable with honest and critical self-evaluation, the traditional approach, in this situation, would be the evaluation method of choice.

This suggests that the findings offer a conceptual framework for assessing teacher perceptions of the Grossmont Model of PAR and indicate that the program is indeed a viable alternative to traditional evaluation and the preferred choice only if the individual

teacher is in search of, as well as has time for, professional growth and improved teaching pursuits. This conceptual framework may also be applicable to other educational organizations faced with fast-track implementation of their own locally developed version of PAR.

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APPENDIX I

The California Standards for the Teaching Profession

CALIFORNIA STANDARDS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION

STANDARD ONE:

ENGAGING & SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS IN LEARNING
1•1 Connecting students' prior knowledge, life experience, and interests with learning goals
1•2 Using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students' diverse needs
1•3 Facilitating learning experiences that promote autonomy, interaction, and choice
1•4 Engaging students in problem solving, critical thinking, and other activities that make subject matter meaningful
1•5 Promoting self-directed, reflective learning for all students

STANDARD TWO:

CREATING & MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING
2•1 Creating a physical environment that engages all students
2•2 Establishing a climate that promotes fairness and respect
2•3 Promoting social development and group responsibility
2•4 Establishing and maintaining standards for student behavior
2•5 Planning and implementing classroom procedures and routines that support student learning
2•6 Using instructional time effectively

STANDARD THREE:

UNDERSTANDING & ORGANIZING SUBJECT MATTER FOR STUDENT LEARNING	
3•1	Demonstrating knowledge of subject matter content and student development.
3•2	Organizing curriculum to support student understanding of subject matter
3•3	Interrelating ideas and information within and across subject matter areas
3•4	Developing student understanding through instructional strategies that are appropriate to the subject matter
3•5	Using materials, resources, and technologies to make subject matter accessible to students

STANDARD FOUR:

PLANNING INSTRUCTION & DESIGNING LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR ALL STUDENTS	
4•1	Drawing on and valuing students' backgrounds, interests, and developmental learning needs
4•2	Establishing and articulating goals for student learning
4•3	Developing and sequencing instructional activities and materials for student learning
4•4	Designing short-term and long-term plans to foster student learning
4•5	Modifying instructional plans to adjust for student needs

STANDARD FIVE:

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING	
5•1	Establishing and communicating learning goals for all students
5•2	Collecting and using multiple sources of information to assess student learning
5•3	Involving and guiding all students in assessing their own learning
5•4	Using the results of assessments to guide instruction
5•5	Communicating with students, families, and other audiences about student progress

STANDARD SIX:

DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR	
6•1	Reflecting on teaching practice and planning professional development
6•2	Establishing professional goals and pursuing opportunities to grow professionally
6•3	Working with communities to improve professional practice
6•4	Working with families to improve professional practice
6•5	Working with colleagues to improve professional practice

APPENDIX 2
Consent to Conduct Research
from the Joint Panel of the
Grossmont Union High School District

Grossmont High School

GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 1043, LA MESA, CALIFORNIA 91944-1043
TELEPHONE 644-8100

Committee on the Protection
Of Human Subjects University of San Diego

December 19, 2000

Dear Dr. Johnson:

The Joint Committee of the Grossmont Union High School District, made up of four teachers and three administrators, has definitive authority to grant permission for Edwin L. Basilio, a doctoral candidate at your institution and teacher in our school district, to conduct interviews with Consulting Teachers and any of the volunteer teachers who have selected to participate in Peer Assistance and Review (PAR).

No individual, Consulting Teacher or volunteer teacher shall be required to participate in the study. Participation in the study shall be completely voluntary and individuals may withdraw at any time if they desire. In the event that individuals decide to refrain from participation, there shall be no penalty with regard to their standing in the Grossmont Union High School District.

The Joint Committee granted formal approval at our December 1 meeting. It is our desire that approbation be forthcoming from the Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of San Diego.

Sincerely,

Linda Pierce
Chair of the PAR Joint Committee

APPENDIX 3
Interview Guide

Interview Guide

- Question 1. What prompted you to volunteer for a peer assistance and review rather than complete your traditional evaluation process?
- Question 2. How was your experience with PAR different than previous administrator evaluations?
- Question 3. What did you do as a result of the PAR program that you would not have done otherwise?
- Question 4. What didn't you do during PAR that you would have done during previous evaluations?
- Question 5. Were you able to successfully address a growth area during your review? If so, what was the growth area? If not, why not?
- Question 6. What would prohibit you from volunteering for a peer assistance and review during your next evaluation?
- Question 7. Would you say your experience with PAR was more effective, less effective, or the same as previous traditional evaluation experiences? Why?
- Question 8. Knowing what you know now about Peer Assistance and Review, would you still have volunteered for a PAR evaluation? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Question 9. What benefits would your colleagues realize if they participated in peer review rather than a traditional evaluation?
- Question 10. What costs should colleagues consider before agreeing to substitute a traditional evaluation for a peer review?
- Question 11. As a result of your peer review, what, if anything, are you attempting to do differently in your classroom? Or, "What are you trying to modify or alter in your teaching practice because of your experience with PAR?"
- Question 12. Now that your PAR has been completed, what do you consider the greatest benefit to your teaching practice?
- Question 13. Based on your experience, will you recommend PAR to your colleagues? If so, why? If not, why not?

APPENDIX 4
Member Check Guide

Member Check Guide

1. Of the twelve veteran teachers interviewed in this study, ten identified, among other things, that they volunteered to participate in PAR because they were dissatisfied with the traditional approach to teacher evaluations. Two respondents indicated a hatred of the process, four defined it as a "meaningless hurdle," two stated that it was limited in its ability to help teachers improve, one indicated that the process was an atypical performance, two did not cite their experience with traditional evaluation as their reason for volunteering for PAR, and one response was omitted for reasons of confidentiality.

Your response, obtained in our interview held on _____ indicates that you fall into the _____ category. Is this accurate? Do you wish to alter this view?

2. Eight respondents indicated that the use of an administrator for veteran teacher evaluations contributed to their decision for volunteering for PAR. Of these eight teacher, three indicated that the use of an administrator was appropriate for beginning teaches. Four respondents did not cite the use of an administrator as their reason for volunteering.

In light of your interview, you were placed in the _____ category. Is this accurate? If not, what would you change?

3. Six respondents indicated that they felt traditional evaluations were an artificial process. Of these six, three indicated the use of previous lesson material during the observation, and another three stated that they prepared for the evaluation a week or so before the actual classroom observation. Six did not indicate that traditional evaluations were an artificial process.

Your response indicates that you fall under the _____ category. Is this correct? If not, what would you change? _____

4. Six of the twelve respondents indicated that they volunteered for PAR because they wanted to try something new. Three of these added that they wanted to try something that would improve their teaching practice. The remaining six respondents did not cite a desire to try something new as their reason for volunteering for PAR.

Within these categories, you were placed under _____ and, _____ (if appropriate). Is this an accurate classification of your response? If not, what would you change?

5. When identifying factors that contributed to positive perceptions of PAR, eleven of twelve respondents indicated that they felt an ownership of their own professional growth activity. Of these, five added that they were continuing--even though they had finished their PAR activity--to address their growth area through self-directed improvement activities. One response was omitted for reasons of confidentiality.

Your responses were placed in the category/ies _____ and _____ (if applicable). Is this categorization correct? If not, what would you change?

6. Change in teaching (as a factor contributing to positive perceptions of PAR) was cited by ten of the twelve respondents. Four indicated an increase in student performance, three indicated increased organization, four others indicated that they had increased their variety of teaching methods, and two identified a change in the ways they assessed student performance. Two respondents did not cite change in teaching practice as a factor.

Your responses placed you in the _____ category. Is this correct? Is there something you would like to alter or add?

7. The ability to focus on a self-identified growth area was cited as a positive factor. In fact, ten respondents cited this factor.

Your response during the initial _____ interview placed you under _____. Do you agree with this finding? If not, what would you change?

8. Half of the twelve respondents indicated that freedom to take risks was a positive factor of PAR. The other half did not identify risk as a factor. You were placed under the _____ category. Is this an accurate conclusion?

9. When asked about negative perceptions of PAR, eleven out of twelve respondents indicated that the increased time required for PAR was a negative factor. Of these, three indicated that they observed the increased time in terms of time out of class. Four others indicated that differing schedules between P.T.'s and C.T.'s contributed to increased time required for PAR beyond that normally associated with a traditional evaluation. One respondent did not cite increased time as a factor contributing to negative perceptions of PAR.

Your response, as I understand it, places you in the _____. Am I correct in my understanding of your view?

10. Five out of twelve teachers indicated that they had heard rumors and misconceptions about the purpose of PAR in the GUHSD. Seven, however, did not indicate hearing such mis-information. You (did not) indicate/d that _____ . Is this a true finding? _____

11. When asked to discuss the differences between the two evaluation methods (traditional and PAR), nine respondents indicated that the use of a Consulting Teacher was a fundamental and positive difference. One respondent had a somewhat negative experience with his/her C.T. and two others voiced neutral responses to working with a C.T.

After studying your transcript, I placed you under the category described as: _____ . Do you agree with this classification?

12. When asked about other differences between PAR and Traditional Evaluation eight respondents were able to identify additional differences between the two methods. Of these eight, four indicated that, unlike the trad. approach, PAR was self - directed. Two indicated that PAR was more collaborative, one indicated that PAR was a lot less stressful than traditional evaluation, three indicated that PAR required less paper-work, and five stated that PAR was more meaningful than traditional evaluation methods.

Information you provided during our interview, led me to categorize your response as _____ and (if more than one) _____ .
Is that an accurate conclusion?

APPENDIX 5
Request Form for
Participation in
Peer Assistance and Review

Request for Voluntary
PAR Participation
in Lieu of a Certificated Evaluation

Teacher's Name: _____

School Site: _____

Content Area: _____

Standard Chosen as Focus for Professional Growth: _____

Standards:

- 1. Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning**
- 2. Creating & Maintaining an Effective Environment for Student Learning**
- 3. Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning**
- 4. Planning Instruction & Designing Learning Experiences for All Students**
- 5. Assessing Student Learning**

Teacher's Signature

Date

Principal's Signature

Date

**Teachers: Please return the completed form to your Principal's Secretary.
Principal's Secretary: Please forward all forms to Sandy Schuster, PAR Program,
Instructional Resources.**

APPENDIX 6
Participating Teacher
Growth Plan Form



Peer Assistance & Review
Professional Growth Plan in Lieu of Certificated Evaluation

Name: _____

Site: _____ *Phone:* _____

Subject Area(s) Taught: _____

Consulting Teacher: _____

.....

My Professional Growth Plan will focus on the following standard(s):

- Engaging & Supporting All Students in Learning*
- Creating & Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning*
- Understanding & Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning*
- Planning Instruction & Designing Learning Experiences for all Students*
- Assessing Student Learning*

Professional Goal: _____

Standard: **Activities for Growth:**

Outcomes: *Cite specific classroom evidence that will indicate your professional goal has been successfully achieved.*

Teacher's Signature

Principal's Signature

Consulting Teacher's Signature

•WHITE: Principal • CANARY: Consulting Teacher • PINK: Participating Teacher • GOLDENROD: Lead Consulting Teacher

APPENDIX 7
Participating Teacher
Observation Form



PAR Classroom Observation

Standard(s): _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Subject/Period: _____

Comments	S	Observation Notes

APPENDIX 8
Participating Teacher
Growth Plan Summary



**Peer Assistance & Review
Professional Growth Plan Summary
Participation in Lieu of Certificated Evaluation**

Name: _____

Site: _____ **Consulting Teacher:** _____

Standard(s) Chosen for Professional Growth: _____

Please summarize your professional growth activities and the implications they had for your classroom practice.

Please cite specific classroom evidence that indicates your professional goal has been successfully achieved.

Teacher's Signature

Principal's Signature

Date

♦WHITE: Principal ♦ CANARY: Consulting Teacher ♦ PINK: Participating Teacher ♦ GOLDENROD: Lead Consulting Teacher