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Closing the Gaps in Professional Development: A Tool for School-based Leadership Teams

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CLOSING THE GAPS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

A TOOL FOR SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP TEAMS

by

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ABSTRACT

The field of professional learning in education has been studied and added to extensively in the last few decades. Because the importance of learning in authentic contexts through professional dialogue has become so important, high quality, school-based professional learning is vital to building capacity at the school level. Unfortunately, the literature on professional development (PD) does not provide much guidance on how to bridge theory and practice at the school level, creating a gap. With the goal of PD ultimately being to improve teacher performance and student learning, the problem with this gap is that school-level professional development is arbitrarily planned, resulting in variable outcomes. I propose the reason for this is schools lack a comprehensive framework or tool that guides the design of a quality professional learning plan. This problem was identified in Orange County Public School and this dissertation in practice aims at developing a solution that accounts for the district's specific contextual needs. My proposed solution is the design of an integrative tool that school leaders can use to guide them through the professional development planning process. The School-based Professional Learning Design Tool incorporates the professional development standards in planning, learning, implementing, and evaluating outlined in the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol. It also guides leaders in taking an inventory of the culture and context of their school in order to plan PD that will be viable given those considerations. The components of the Tool guide teams through assessing school teacher performance and student achievement data to help identify focus groups; determining gaps in learning through root cause analysis; creating goals aligned to gaps in performance; and selecting strategies for professional learning,

follow-up support, and evaluation. The development of the Tool was informed by the extant literature on professional development, organizational theory, state and national standards for professional development, and principles of design. The Tool is to be completed in four phases. Phases one and two, the focus of this paper, include the literature review, organizational assessment, design specifications, and the first iteration of the Tool. In the next phases, the goals are to solicit feedback from an expert panel review, create a complete version of the Tool, and pilot it in elementary schools. Although the development of the Tool through its final phases will refine it considerably, there are limitations that will transcend all iterations. While the Tool incorporates best practices in professional development, the lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of specific PD elements in the literature renders this Tool only a best guess in helping schools plan effective professional development. Another limitation is that the Tool is not prescriptive and cannot use school data to make decisions for what strategies to implement. Taking these limitations into consideration, the use of this Tool can significantly impact the quality and effectiveness of professional development in schools.

To my beautiful girls, God has beyond blessed me as your Tia and I hope He affords me more opportunities in this life to show you that the possibilities are limitless. Always remember that with one dream, a little hope, some hard work and effort, and a whole lot of God, you can change the world.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother and late paternal grandfather for having the boldness and courage to immigrate to the United States for a better life for themselves and for their family. The opportunities extended to me in this country would not have been possible without your resolve.

And lastly, to all the hard-working educators whose unquenchable thirst and passion for knowledge inspire students to be lifelong learners. Your commitment to continuous self-improvement inspires me and leaves me in awe.

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Success is almost never accomplished alone. It not only takes a village to raise a child, but it takes a village to help its members prosper, thereby making the village stronger. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my "village" for without them, the small contribution this project makes to the education of our children would not have been possible.

First and foremost I'd like to give thanks and credit to my God for opening doors along this amazing life, and for holding my hand and walking me through each and every one of them. Your. Love. Never. Fails. I couldn't have done it without Your Word echoing in my mind:

I can do all this through Christ who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13 NIV)

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)

Secondly, I'd like to acknowledge all the leaders and colleagues in my field who have guided me and fostered my growth as a teacher and a leader. Thank you to my advisor,Dr. Boote, for struggling through this novel dissertation with me as we figured out all it could become. A big thank you to principals Ruth Ortega, Lisa Suggs, and Amy Klaber for mentoring me, believing in me, and affording me opportunities to learn what it means to be a servant leader. I will forever be indebted to you. I'd like to also thank my colleague Kristina Sanford. I don't think you realize

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

GiP   Gap in Performance

IC   Instructional Coach

LEA   Local Education Agency

LT   Leadership Team

OCPS   Orange County Public Schools

PD   Professional Development

PDS   Professional Development Services

PLC   Professional Learning Community

RCA   Root Cause Analysis

RTTT   Race to the Top

SIP   School Improvement Plan

CHAPTER ONE: PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

<u>The Gap between Theory, Policy, and Practice</u>

Theory as the Foundation

At present, teacher quality and teacher evaluations are the topic of much discussion and debate across the industrialized world. Government, and the people it represents, are calling for teacher accountability and evidence of learning for all students. Common educational lore says that the more effective the teaching force (the front-line) is, the more gains will be seen in student learning (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley (2007). Nestled within this more global problem of improving student learning, is the means by which to improve teacher quality – professional development (PD). Simply put, "Professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students" (Guskey, 2002a, p. 381).

Schools are inherently learning organizations and the professional development of its staff is a necessary component of a school's structure. Luke and McArdle (2009) assert, "Professional development is a foundational element of all models of teacher professionalism and quality" (p. 2). In order for a school and its staff to continuously improve and be effective, lifelong learning for its teachers and administrators is fundamental (Southworth, 2010). Newman, King, and Youngs (2000) found that effective professional development is a strategy used for school improvement. And as education reform cycles through year after year, the need

for teachers to understand the inadequacies of their own understanding and thereby see a need to learn becomes essential for building teacher capacity (Spillane, 1999). The message is clear – teacher knowledge and expertise count and has been shown to improve student learning (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Luke & McArdle, 2009).

One of the strongest indicators of a professional development program's success is whether it is school-based. Although some researchers hesitate to admit that local control can deliver high-quality guidance for a successful PD program, much of the research indicates that the most effective professional development is one that emerges from working together with colleagues using current student work and data at the school site (Guskey, 1996; Guskey, 2003; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Owen, 2003). Professional development elements that research has shown to be the most effective at changing teachers' knowledge, skills, mindsets, and ultimately behaviors include elements that are primarily found at the school sites such as: collegial collaboration with current student work (lesson planning, data analysis, student artifact reflection); follow-up support for implementation (coaching, feedback); accountability to superiors; local needs identified; and goals for teacher learning tied to local school improvement goals (Guskey, 1996; Guskey, 2003; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Newman, King, and Youngs, 2000; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Owen, 2003).

The current theory on the effectiveness of professional development for teachers acknowledges that it is necessary component for school improvement. It is the means by which teachers grow professionally in their knowledge, skills, and mindsets in order to improve student learning. Although there are many models of professional development, the sustained work of

teachers learning at their school sites is the most effective and beneficial method for building teacher capacity and improving schools.

Policy: Theory Put into Action

"For much of their history, public schools have taken little direct responsibility for the quality of the teacher workforce beyond initial hiring and routine staff evaluation" (Little, 1999). With decades of research to support major policy decisions, the government has put some teeth behind the call to action for the professional development of America's teachers. I will be discussing three of the most significant "game-changing" policies and programs implemented at both the federal and state levels: School Improvement Grants, Race to the Top, and the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol.

School Improvement Grants

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, enacted by former President Lyndon B. Johnson during his "War on Poverty", established various Title programs. The Title I program specifically allocates funds to schools and school districts that serve disadvantaged students. The funds are used for various educational expenses, including the professional development of teachers. The specific grant that allocates the funds to states and school districts is the School Improvement Grant. Under this grant, schools must complete a School Improvement Plan (SIP) to show how the funds will be used to improve the school. One of the primary methods for school improvement outlined in the SIP is the professional development of teachers. Schools must use data to identify annual goals for school improvement and detail the

problem solving process used to identify resources, barriers, and strategies for meeting those goals. The School Improvement Plan is a requirement for allocating how a school's Title I and other discretionary funds will be used. Since it is tied to funding, there are accountability measures in place to enforce its implementation, such as planning for monitoring the implementation of the plan, as well as the plan's fidelity to the goals.

Race to the Top

In 2009 President Barack Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This legislation provides over $4 billion for the Race to the Top Fund (RTTT) (Department of Education, 2009), a competitive grant fund that rewards states that are supporting and implementing educational innovation and reform in four core areas:

- Standards and Assessments - Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;

- Data Systems to Support Instruction - Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;

- Great Teachers and Leaders - Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and

- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools (Department of Education, 2009)

Although not a mandated policy, RTTT is a government-funded initiative that has created, as well as dissolved policy at the state and district levels for those awarded the grant.

One of the eligibility requirements for applying for this grant stipulated that, at the time of application, a state cannot have any laws or regulations that prohibit linking student achievement data to teacher and principal evaluation (Department of Education, 2009). This meant that many states had to pass legislation to either create this law or dissolve an existing law that allowed for the prevention of using student data as a factor in educator performance evaluations. The reason for this lies in one of the core areas of reform, Great Teachers and Leaders. With the award of the monies to the states and districts, LEAs had to plan for and implement a teacher and administrator evaluation model that met certain conditions set out in the selection criteria. Also in the section outlining the criteria for Great Teachers and Leaders, LEAs are to "provide effective support" to teachers and leaders. It specifically outlines many of the effective support methods evidenced by the literature on PD, such as, providing ongoing and job-embedded effective data-informed PD, coaching, and common planning and collaboration time (Department of Education, 2009). Because of the financial support LEAs are receiving through this grant, implementation of quality school-based PD, *based on evidence-based best practices* (as outlined in the criteria), has become a requirement.

Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol

In the 1990's and early part of the 21st century, the state of Florida's legislature required the Department of Education to develop a system that would evaluate the quality of its districts' professional learning systems (Florida Department of Education, 2010). That system is currently the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol, also referred to as the Florida Evaluation Protocol. The Protocol was created in conjunction with the National Staff

Development Council (now Learning Forward) and is comprised of many components for quality evaluation and accountability at the school, district, and state level, including 65 specific standards that align with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Development. The standards were born out of the research on professional development and ideally move educators and schools through a cycle comprised of four main phases – Planning, Learning, Implementation, and Evaluation. Although the Evaluation Protocol includes standards schools strive to meet, the leaders at the school level do not have a framework, or a guide, to help them meet those standards.

The three main policies that intend to improve professional development in schools and districts, School Improvement Grants, Race to the Top, and the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol, all support best practices in professional development. The problem lies in how to help support schools in implementing these policies when school staff are untrained or lack experience in what makes PD effective at a school.

<div align="center">*Practice: Where the Gap Exists*</div>

With so much research on best practices in professional development, and policies that supposedly provide structures for successful, quality school-based PD implementation, there remains remarkable differentiation in school-level PD plans. They can range from whatever minimal district initiatives administrators *have* to push through, to one sustained focus for everyone all year, to solely feedback from observations and formal evaluations. A gap exists between the theory-based policy and what is actually practiced in schools and I believe there are three reasons for this - lack of accountability, variability across schools, and lack of trained staff

or guiding protocols. In the following sections I describe Bolman and Deal's (2008) framework for understanding organizational theory, and then examine these reasons through their lenses.

<u>Examining the Gap through Organizational Lenses</u>

For many years now, organizational theory has evolved as the need has risen to make organizations more efficient and effective at attaining their goals. Bolman and Deal (2008) have developed a comprehensive framework that consolidates the major schools of thought and have refined it into four perspectives that can help frame problems and create solutions. They include the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. The frames are intended to be used symbiotically to analyze organizations, meaning, one cannot solely assess an organization through one frame and not consider the others.

The structural frame is the lens by which we see systems and organizational frameworks in place that help or hinder an organization from meeting its goals. At the core of the structural frame is the perspective that organizations must have "clear, well-understood goals, roles, and relationships" and that "adequate coordination are essential to organizational performance" (Bolman and Deal, 2008)

The human resource frame is also built on core assumptions. These include: organizations exist to meet human needs; they need each other; when the fit between them is poor, one or both suffer; and a good fit benefits both (Bolman and Deal, 2008). Along with those assumptions, the human resource frame is also built on the idea that building human capital is the source of increased effectiveness in meeting the organization's goals.

The political frame illuminates how organizations are formed and managed through and because of the different groups and interests that inevitably exist. The basic assumptions of how the political perspective frames organizations are: organizations are coalitions; coalition members have enduring differences; decisions involve allocating scarce resources; conflict is unavoidable and power is the ultimate resource; and goals and decisions emerge out of bargaining and negotiations (Bolman and Deal, 2008).

Stemming from various disciplines such as political science and anthropology, the symbolic frame has us examining organizations through a more subjective lens. The beliefs associated with the symbolic frame are: meaning (especially individual meaning) takes precedence over what activities or the events that have taken place; during times of uncertainty, hope and faith are anchored in symbols people create; expression finds more purpose than the actual product; and culture is the most vital component of an organization that helps people work together to accomplish goals (Bolman and Deal, 2008).

Evidently, the frames are very unique and different from each other. But when combined to examine and analyze organizational causes to problems, or when developing a solution to problems found in organizations, they all need to be used because most problems will be affected by more than one frame.

Lack of Accountability

With the amount of work that educators and leaders already do at their schools, each time a new program or initiative is rolled out, it should have an accountability component in order to

be successfully implemented. Stephen Covey, author of many books on personal success and leadership, once said, "Accountability breeds response-ability." A good accountability component leads to the desired response. Some policies, like the one that requires schools to create a School Improvement Plan, do come close with requirements for monitoring implementation and the plan's fidelity to the goals. However, support for those pieces is lacking. The plan is created, revisited at a mid-point, and then closed out without regard for true follow-through; hence continuing to make the motivation for authentically creating and using the SIP more out of compliance than out of genuine necessity.

In the case of the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol, although the protocol itself is also the tool used by the state to evaluate the quality of PD implementation at the district and school level, it is also intended to be a tool schools use to plan, implement, and evaluate PD at their sites. Unfortunately, unless it is an audit year, there is no accountability to ensuring those standards are guiding the development of PD plans at school sites. The few documents that are submitted to the district regarding PD have more to do with awarding inservice points for licensing recertification than following through with the Florida Evaluation Protocol.

Although some accountability pieces are in place, schools lack the accountability necessary to *help* them implement plans successfully. The lens most closely associated with this problem is the structural frame. This frame suggests that in order for organizations to succeed, they need to provide clear goals and comprehensive systems. With the inadequate structures in

place to hold schools accountable, this gap can be identified as a structural gap needing a structural solution.

<u>Variability Across Schools</u>

In addition to the problem of absent accountability, another reason I believe there is a gap between theory-based policy and practice is because of the decentralization of professional development back to the schools. Although there are number of benefits to giving schools local control over how to plan and implement PD, there are a few drawbacks. A school's ability to customize plans for their culture and context, use their own student's work, and embed PD in the collegial work teachers do together is essential for a successful PD program (Armour, and Makopoulou, 2011;Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Guskey, 1996; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Opfer &Pedder, 2011; Owen, 2003; Southworth, 2010). However, when the PD plan lacks quality-producing elements like these, then having local control may not be the best option.

The main issue with decentralization is actually the variability that can exist across an entire district. This variability across schools creates a teacher corps that is inequitably, and possibly inadequately prepared. While the needs of the specific school are important factors to take into consideration, training, support structures, and accountability measures can still be put in place by the district to create the needed regularity. When left up to the schools, without structure, and little guidance or accountability from the district, administrators and teacher leaders arbitrarily plan for professional development without considering best practices in PD or measures for effectiveness. Armour, and Makopoulou (2011) also make note that "…not all

schools have the capacity or expertise to become the kind of learning organisation that can support and extend teachers' professional development" (p. 337). Any standardization that has been long-fought for by researchers in the field of teacher learning and professional development is compromised when ultimately it is left to administrators (who may be inadequately prepared) to direct PD efforts according to their discretion. At best, results are unpredictable and highly variable (Luke & McArdle, 2009).

At first glance this problem appears to be situated uniquely in the human resource frame because the different school leaders are not adequately trained in how to lead effective professional development planning on their campuses. This is a concern, but it will be addressed more appropriately in the next section. The cause of variability is more aptly aligned with the structural frame again because the district has not put in place non-negotiable minimum expectations for what all administrators should have in place at their schools for professional development. If the solution is viewed through the structural frame and those expectations are put in place, there would be less variability across schools.

This particular problem can also be viewed through the political frame. One possible reason as to why administrators choose different plans for their school's professional development could be because of the various other competing demands. If fragmented departments in districts do not communicate well with each other, the result can be too many requirements placed on administrators and they can only fulfill a few well. The fragmented departments in the district could also be seen as a structural cause since this lens includes

viewing organizations through how well they communicate clear goals and effectively coordinate their efforts.

<u>Lack of Trained Staff or Guiding Protocols</u>

Although gaps can exist because lack of accountability or variability across school sites, those two causes become moot if there are guiding protocols or a staff well-trained in professional development planning. It is the latter that I believe can bridge the gap most effectively. Preservice teachers usually have various training experiences such as college courses and internships. But that level of training is not available for educators or leaders who choose to increase their expertise in the area of professional development. The lack of training in the area of PD seems counterproductive to the work schools are expected to realize in building teacher capacity. Nir and Bogler (2008) cite that "more successful schools tend to make greater use of internal experts for professional development purpose" (p. 378). Without trained staff to incorporate professional development best practices into the school's plan, schools are indiscriminately planning and implementing PD, without evaluating its effectiveness towards teacher and student learning.

Since professional development training is scarce, and it is most often a "trial by fire" experience, support materials are the next best option. Borko (2004) found that in some instances, programs that provided guides and resources for PD facilitators were successful in their implementation. As previously mentioned, the SIP and the Florida Evaluation Protocol provide some guidance in their materials, but it either has missing components, or does not provide specific enough support, especially when it is the only guidance school leaders have for

creating an effective PD plan. Books and articles about professional development in schools are plentiful, but without the proper training, can be insufficient, as well as unlikely to be supplemented by the school or district.

This gap is clearly related to the human resource frame. This frame explicitly values building human capital and capacity; therefore, lack of adequately trained staff can hinder the organization's ability to meet its goals.

The Bridge

All across America teachers are doing the best job they can to educate our students. They desire to grow and improve, for their students' sakes. Ultimately, the breeding ground for that level of growth is their own school. The federal and state governments have acknowledged the value in professional development and have made strides to support it in the schools and districts, as researchers have worked to identify best practices in school-based PD. The gap therefore exists on the part of the practitioners responsible for professional development at the school level. With the goal of PD ultimately being to improve teacher performance and student learning, the problem with this gap is that school-level professional development is arbitrarily planned, resulting in variable outcomes. I believe the reason for this is schools lack a comprehensive framework or tool that guides the design of a quality professional learning plan. An effective learning plan would integrate best practices in PD, including standards; take into consideration the culture and context of the organization, including competing demands; and incorporate an aligned evaluation plan that uses formative assessments and data. This dissertation in practice

proposes to bridge the gap between theory and practice and solve this problem with the development of the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool.

Organizational Context: Orange County Public School

Introduction

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) is one of the largest districts in the nation. Its diverse student population is comprised of over 180,000 students. There are approximately 13,000 instructional faculty and 44% of them have advanced degrees. The district has 122 elementary schools, of which the professional development (PD) of its teachers is the focus of this design.

While this Tool was created to meet a need in Orange County Public Schools, it is designed to take any school desiring to create a structured and aligned professional development plan through each step of that process.

History and Conceptualization of the Problem in OCPS

From Centralized to Decentralized, and Back Again

Orange County Public Schools is currently under new leadership with the selection of Dr. Barbara Jenkins as superintendent in May of 2012. Her predecessors include Ronald Blocker, who served from 2000-2012, and Dennis Smith, who held the position from 1999-2000. It was during Mr. Smith's term that the five different learning communities were established (now six).

By the creation of these learning communities, Dennis Smith was moving the district into a more decentralized model where responsibility was being turned over to the learning communities and the schools (M.O., personal communication, October 2013). With that, professional development was left up to the schools with little support from the district. The district would put on one-shot-workshops and that was the extent of their involvement (E.T., personal communication, October 2013). Even with district-offered PD, there was still the possibility that principals would not allow teachers to miss a day of instruction and attend, or if they did attend, there was no site-based support or follow-up (K.S., personal communication, September 2013). Eventually, with the successive superintendents and new initiatives like Race to the Top, expectations changed and structures were put in place to hold both the schools and the district accountable for PD. The district still provides off-site training, as well as uses an online platform for virtual learning (both voluntary), but the understanding is that professional learning is primarily the school's responsibility.

Along with this more centralized model, many district initiatives are being implemented simultaneously that are non-PD related (E.T., personal communication, October 2013). This makes it difficult for schools to effectively focus on one model for teacher growth and learning when other requirements demand their time and attention. Often times, PD becomes less of the priority, and with lack of support or accountability, and no structure to guide the work school leaders are trying to accomplish, purposeful and planned professional learning does not happen. Dr. Ellis, Director of Instructional Development for OCPS, recognizes this and purposes to integrate initiatives as much as possible so that it does not seem like one more thing to do (A.E.,

personal communication, November 2013). She also admits that as a district we are not appropriating the sufficient amount of time and resources for faculty and staff to learn something *well* when we have too many initiatives going at one time. A district coach admits that the push of initiatives from different departments does not give anyone the big picture of all that is being required of schools and therefore some things end up being dropped (K.S., personal communication, September 2013).

Existing Plans

Master Inservice Plan

The district has a Professional Development Services department that oversees implementation of district-wide initiatives and school-based professional development. The Master Inservice Plan, which is revised annually, is developed with input from the Staff Development Advisory Council, comprised of stakeholders in the district. The Plan is based upon the National Staff Development Council's Standards for Professional Development and incorporates the state's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol. It states the roles and responsibilities of the district and the school leaders regarding the planning, implementation, and evaluation of PD for instructional, administrative, and non-instructional personnel. Currently, the oversight of school-based professional development consists of submitted plans, forms, artifacts of the PD plan, and evidence of its implementation (i.e. School Improvement Plan, sign-in sheets, etc.). There is no other guidance or evaluation required of school-level PD to the district.

Instructional Coaches

The main district vehicle for realizing recent initiatives at the school level is through the instructional coaches (A.E., personal communication, November 2013). Each school selects an instructional coach (IC) who attends mandatory trainings three times a year. The purpose of these trainings is to provide the necessary knowledge, skills, tools, and resources to execute the initiatives at the school level. During these trainings is when the ICs get trained on using the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol; however, the training has not always been consistent, there has been no measure of accountability required, little to no support extended, and with teacher leader turn-over, the levels of experience with and understanding of the Protocol has varied greatly (K.S., personal communication, September 2013). The Professional Development Services (PDS) Department has recently adjusted its training to account for some of these factors, yet implementation continues to vary across schools and evidence of compliance with the initiatives is only provided to PDS on a voluntary basis (A.E., personal communication, November 2013). The only level of accountability comes from the state when they conduct audits of districts and randomly selected schools. Florida publishes the auditor's questions and PDS prepares ICs and schools for possible audit when an upcoming audit year is approaching.

To date, although the district has rocked back and forth between a more centralized or decentralized approach, one effort has remained somewhat constant – instructional coaches. The training and expectations have changed with new state and district initiatives, but they are still

the primary person the district holds responsible for PD at the school level. The school administrator is still ultimately responsible for making the decision about who delivers PD and the content of the learning. Through the PDS department, the Evaluation Protocol, as well as PLCs, common assessments, and lesson study, have been the focus of trainings in the recent years (per state requirements). They have provided ICs with practice using the Protocol, allowing ICs to individualize it with the content focus of their school.

Despite the work Professional Development Services does to prepare instructional coaches to train their school's faculty on district initiatives and models of professional learning, on average, less than 30% of teachers indicated they are aware of or use the different PD models (i.e. lesson study, action research, etc.), or have learned and are using the various instructional practices required by the district (i.e. common assessment, deconstructing standards, etc.).

School Improvement Plan

Recently, the state of Florida completely overhauled the format of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the new structure integrates professional development, along with monitoring components for implementation and fidelity, but only if that fits into the school's goals and plan. Although this is a step in the right direction in terms of accountability, it still does not marry the Evaluation Protocol and practice. A senior administrator who supports school-based administrators with the new SIP mentioned that even with common training and a consistent message, implementation still varies across schools because this district is so large

(E.T., personal communication, October 2013).

Through the Lenses of Organizational Theory

I will now assess the problems within this specific context through the lenses Bolman and Deal (2008) provide in their framework on organizational theory. Part of an organization's structural goals is to provide clear and comprehensive guidelines for how to meet the overarching goals set out by the organization. In the case of elementary schools in Orange County, lack of *specific* guidelines for developing a professional learning plan and lack of comprehensive accountability measures are examples of organizational gaps that are viewed through the structural frame.

The political frame deals with how different groups vie for power in order to move their agenda forward. The initiatives that come from the various district departments seek to win a school's commitment and follow-through. Seeing that many different district leaders are pushing for their initiative to work, and there is no extra time allotted to successfully implement them all, means professional development initiatives get divided attention and therefore, without a framework to help structure and integrate initiatives, many goals will not be met.

The people in charge of the PD work at school sites should also be a main focus for organizational change. Instructional coaches, and other school-based leaders should have the proper training to implement professional learning at the school level that meets the demands of external requirements, as well as the needs of their specific school. Building this human capacity is understood through the human resource as vital to an organization's success.

In conclusion, Orange County Public Schools has undergone considerable changes in its district leadership. Throughout the years, it has continued to evolve and attempt to bring cohesion to processes and outputs, evidenced by their slogan, "One Vision, One Voice." Unfortunately, when it comes to school-level professional development, there has been a lack of consistency in results, support, and accountability, and therefore the effectiveness of school-level professional development on student learning cannot be determined.

Synthesis of Literature on Professional Development

Professional development can take many different forms, and can be seen by some as systematic reform (Guskey, 2002a). But one thing that most researchers and policy makers can agree upon is that professional development's main purpose is to improve student achievement (Guskey, 2002a; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Yoon et al., 2007). According to an analysis conducted by Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007), PD affects student achievement in three ways: It enhances teacher knowledge and skills, which then enhances classroom practice, and in turn improved teaching raises student achievement. Many researchers claim that professional development contains a specific recipe of elements that make it effective in increasing student achievement; these include, but are not limited to: sustained time, ongoing support, focus on research-based best practices and content and pedagogical knowledge through active learning, focus on student work, collaboration with colleagues, coherence with policy, targeted to specific needs of the learners, feedback, and resources (Armour & Makopoulou, 2012; Birman,

Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Guskey, 2003; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Johnson, Lustick, & Kim, 2011; Little, 1999; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Newman et al., 2000; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Owen, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Southworth, 2010; Spillane, 1999; Yoon et al., 2007). Also included in this list, despite the inherent problems (listed above) with it, is that PD should be school-based in order to be effective (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Little, 1999; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Owen, 2003; Yoon et al., 2007). The one-day workshops with little or no follow-up, or consideration for context, have almost unanimously been deemed ineffective and archaic in light of all the lack of empirical evidence of its effectiveness (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Richardson, 2003; Yoon et al., 2007). Little (1999) proposes, "schools can and should play a far more powerful and consequential role in integrating teacher development more fully into the ongoing work of teachers" (p. 234). The benefits of rooting PD in schools will be discussed later.

Unfortunately, identifying the correlation between effective elements of PD and student learning has been elusive. Yoon and his colleagues (2007) recently undertook an extensive review of the literature to identify the elements of PD that actually increase student achievement, and of the 1,300 cases they identified as making such claims, only nine met the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards. Many researchers have echoed this conclusion that studies linking PD to student achievement lack empirical evidence (Borko, 2004; Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Luke & McArdle, 2009). Borko (2004)

suggests that because of the multiple factors and settings involved, it is difficult to claim any particular element can be enacted with fidelity and in isolation to produce evidence of student achievement. In addition, Guskey (1994) asserts that it makes it difficult for researchers to come up with universal truths about PD because of the complexity involved in teacher learning and the diverse contexts of the schools in which it happens.

The following sections detail the elements the literature consistently identified as important for a successful professional development program.

Policy

Policy is the framework by which professional development is grounded. However, because of the lack of empirical evidence, designing PD at the district and school level that is coherent with and supported by policy initiatives has been difficult. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) argues that despite initiatives reformers seek to bring alive to promote long-term change in teachers' practices, if policy is not supportive and is at odds with this focus, success will be intangible. Again, this is a power play that is common when viewing organizations through Bolman and Deals' political frame.

Building teacher capacity is also affected by policy. For example, in addition to the various factors that impact the effectiveness of PD, as mentioned above, policy regulates curriculum and assessment standards, teacher certification, hiring and promotion, teacher evaluation, and school and district governance procedures (Newman et al., 2000). Policy makers would fare well by recognizing what the literature says should be the shifts in policy in order to

support PD. Some suggestions include, redistribution of resources; evaluation of policy to seek alignment with best practices in adult and student learning as well as best teaching practices; and assessment of appropriate magnitude of change (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Guskey, 1994; Newman et al., 2000). Ultimately, this lack of alignment between policy and practice is directing financial resources in the wrong direction. Studies need to show empirical evidence of what makes PD effective in order to provide the clear guidance needed to steer investments in professional development (Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008). Despite the lack of evidence, however, if using the human resource frame to view and support organizational change, capacity building should be a priority because helps organizations to meet their goals.

School-based

As mentioned above, there are concerns with school-based professional development. But most of the literature suggests that in order for PD to be most effective, it should be part of the school structure and culture (Guskey, 1996; Guskey, 2003; Guskey &Yoon, 2009; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Newman et al., 2000; Owen, 2003; Wayne et al., 2008). Guskey (1996) reasons that localizing PD allows for the content and procedures to be determined by building-level educators and therefore it will be relevant and they will be the most impacted. He does however recognize that research suggests this may not always be most effective considering all the variables that are involved (Guskey, 2003). Despite the lack of resources schools may have, or inadequate networks and connections to outside expertise and collaboration (Armour &

Makopoulou, 2012; Guskey, 1996; Owen, 2003), optimal teacher learning occurs through calibrated and sustained professional work at the school level (Luke & McArdle, 2009). Owen (2004) supports this idea by stating, "School-based PD is particularly significant, because it provides opportunities for sustained collegial focus on topics relevant to directions in school improvement" (p. 104). Whereas local schools are the optimal learning environment for teachers because of accountability, collaboration, and relevance, the lack of evaluation for quality is still a concern.

Accountability and Evaluation

Evaluation of professional development is a necessary component that cannot be ignored. Guskey (2002a) claims that the success of any professional development program depends on having specific procedures to provide ongoing feedback so the results can inform alterations that may be needed in the design or elements of the PD. Evaluation determines the value of something and identifies if the program achieved its intended results, as well as if it was worth the costs (Guskey, 2002b). Surprisingly, most schools do not have a system in place to account for the resources being used considering the urgent need to account for the use of these resources in the current era of increased funding accountability (Luke & McArdle, 2009). Currently what the literature says constitutes evaluation is often these "opinionaires" (like the district survey above on PLCs); but to measure knowledge, it would need to look much different, and to measure pedagogical knowledge would take direct classroom observations, which are costly and time consuming (Fishman, Marxa, Besta, &Talib, 2003). Ultimately, evaluation needs to

encompass correlations to student learning – what evidence is there that students are improving as a result of improved teaching practices?

Focus on Student Work

Interestingly enough, most of the time, student learning is seen only as one of the evaluative components of professional development, but Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) as cited in Johnson, Lustick, and Kim (2011) ascertain that using student learning is a *precursor* to teacher learning. They found that teachers will not incorporate new learning into their thinking until they have tried out and reflected on a particular new strategy and how it worked with students. Guskey (2002a) goes on to support this in stating that the key to the endurance of any change is demonstrable results in student learning, and that a significant change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs primarily occurs after they gain evidence of improvements in student learning. Although it has been seen as one of the most powerful and least costly ways to improve teacher learning, sustained study and reflection of student work is rarely capitalized on by reformers (Little, 1999; Spillane, 1999) In a study conducted by Southworth (2010), school improvement stemmed from schools that were classroom-focused. Most of the literature agrees with this tenet that professional development must be centered on student learning and student work associated with the unique school or classroom makeup of the participants (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Guskey &Yoon, 2009; Johnson et al., 2011; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Spillane, 1999). Because of the lack of

uniformity in school-based PD, there is no assurance that schools across a district are using student-focused learning experiences with their teachers.

Knowledge, Skills, and Mindsets

As mentioned earlier, focusing on student learning by reflecting on it is a powerful way to change a teacher's mindset and, as a result, their practice. According to Luke & McArdle (2009), the published literature reinforces the message that teacher knowledge and expertise count. It is not just teacher knowledge, however, that accounts for school capacity; it is also teacher skills and dispositions (Newman et al., 2000). In order to impact student learning, teacher learning must be improved. Fishman, Marxa, Besta, &Talib (2003) define teacher learning as "changes in the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of teachers that lead to the acquisition of new skills, new concepts, and new processes related to the work of teaching" (p. 645). Many researchers agree that, in terms of knowledge and skills, it is content and pedagogical knowledge associated with that specific content that is more effective than knowledge of general teaching skills (Birman et al., 2000; Guskey, 2003; Guskey &Yoon, 2009; Newman et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2008; Yoon et al., 2007;). Southworth (2010) found that in order for this to happen, schools and teachers must constantly seek self-renewal. This self-renewal can only happen if teachers are honest about their practice and reflect on student learning in relation to their teaching. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) assert that professional development in schools must provide opportunities to reflect critically on their practice. Part of reflecting is a teacher's understanding and belief that change is always needed to

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improve. A teacher's own understandings can be both valuable or an obstacle to change (Johnson et al., 2011). Being able to identify inadequacies in their current understanding allows them to see the need to learn, and often times coming to terms with the need to discard their deeply rooted understandings of teaching, learning, and subject matter (Spillane, 1999). In addition to this, teachers must be in a developmental stage where they are ready to learn, in turn optimizing PD (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). Once this is accomplished, the next step is identifying what teachers need to learn and how best to teach them. The problem from this perspective now becomes more about the individual and can be seen as either cognitive in terms of the ability to reflect and learn, or also behavioral and motivational in terms of having the right mindset and conditions to be motivated to change the behavior.

Needs Assessment

In any learning context, needs assessment is key. It tells the educator what the learner knows and needs to know. If PD is going to help teachers grow as professionals, it must address their needs (Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Southworth, 2010; Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010). Gregson and Sturko (2007) suggest teachers should be a part of this needs assessment and planning for learning experiences that will best fit their needs. This can also be seen as creating investment and therefore motivation in teachers. Guskey (2003) warns that evidence shows that teachers rarely are able to articulate their needs. There are contrasting findings, however, in the more recent literature indicating that teacher efficacy self-reports have been proven as reliable indicators of teachers' strengths and areas of need (Luke & McArdle,

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2009). With this lack of agreement, it would probably be best to use a mixed mode of needs assessments to triangulate data in order to be as precise as possible. Being as specific as possible in identifying teachers' instructional needs serves two purposes: it allows for targeted professional development and for differentiation in delivery (Luke & McArdle, 2009). With the scarcity of resources, including time and funding, differentiating PD for the different needs of teachers would allow for those resources to be maximized as much as possible. Luke and McArdle (2009) conclude that the result of not differentiating would be educationally ineffective and cost inefficient. This is why designing appropriate instructional experiences are vital.

Active Learning

Currently, researchers are echoing the need for professional development to include active learning in order to be effective (Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Luke & McArdle, 2009). In contrast to the abstract discussions that are commonplace in many PD activities, active learning includes planning, active teaching, observation, and reflection with colleagues on instruction and student learning (Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). This is a strong shift away from the PD that has dominated our schools and districts for many years (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Little, 1999; Richardson, 2003; Yoon et al., 2007). Many of the theories on learning that we tend to use to guide our teaching with students are just as applicable to adult learners. Adults need to be self-directed to construct their own knowledge with others and in their own contexts (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Birman

et. al. (2000) found that collective participation, where teachers on the same team, grade, or in the same department work together lead to better active learning experiences. Ensuring active learning is a sustained practice in a school's PD efforts can then lead to learning networks where teachers are continuously sharing new knowledge, which in turn, can create a positive social and collaborative environment (Southworth, 2010).

Motivation

As mentioned earlier, motivation on the part of the teachers is also a strong indicator of whether a learning experience will be effective. The majority of professional development efforts fail because they do not take into account what motivates teachers to engage (Guskey, 2002a). The learning process can be impeded by negative attitudes when teachers feel they are being told what to do and as a result they become passive learners (Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Southworth, 2010). There is also a sense of anxiety that can develop because of the fear of being ineffective (Guskey, 2002a). Teachers really do want to improve and are motivated by a desire to grow and improve job satisfaction (Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Guskey, 2002a). To combat this, school leaders should include opportunities for teachers to become a part of the decision and planning process regarding professional development (Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Nir & Bogler, 2008).

Giving teachers ownership over their learning, as well as assuring them that support will be provided, promotes and encourages their involvement as learners in the professional development experience. This combination will help overcome barriers to applying the new

practices (Yoon et al., 2007). In a summary of findings of the research synthesis conducted by Yoon et al. (2007), Guskey &Yoon (2009) noticed virtually all of the studies that "showed positive improvements in student learning included significant amounts of structured and sustained follow-up after the main professional development activities" (p. 497). Guskey (2002a) posits that support alone could not be enough. He suggests that support coupled with pressure is essential. Pressure allows for those who do not have a great self-impetus to initiate change, while those with anxiety of failure get the support to take risks (Guskey, 2002a). At the school level, resource teachers, or coaches, take on these roles. The disparity then occurs across schools when some may not have the resources to employ full-time coaches to do this work. And even when there are coaches available, school administrators have the discretion to use them in whatever capacity they need, such as discipline control or textbook managers.

Time

In regards to resources, time is one seen across the literature and in the schools that is the scarcest. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) suggest that although time is not the only variable that matters, it's a prerequisite for effective learning. Studies have shown that sufficient time has a positive and significant effect on student learning (Birman et al., 2000; Guskey, 2003; Yoon et al., 2007). Time is used to include time for professional development sessions, as well as common planning and reflecting time, and time for observing, coaching, and debriefing (Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Guskey, 2002a). One of the reasons this resource is so scarce is because it is tied to funding. It costs money for high-quality professional development; release time for teachers to attend professional development opportunities,

planning, and observing; as well as for school-based support personnel (Newman et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2008). In previous years, Title II funds have been made available by the federal government for purposes of improving school-based PD, including planning; however, they were limited and schools had the discretion to use them or not. The way time was structured and funds were used was also left to the school-level leadership, therefore how all schools utilized these funds looked different.

Culture and Context

Professional development is inherently a learning process and in order for learning to occur, it takes a particular environment (Owen, 2003). Many researchers agree that designing effective professional development should take into consideration the complex context in which it takes place (Armour & Makopoulou, 2012; Birman et al., 2000; Fishman et al., 2003; Guskey, 1994; Guskey, 2002b; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Newman et al., 2000). This is partly because of the need to integrate PD into the ongoing work that teachers are presently concerned with, as well as the need for it to be fully incorporated into the culture of the school and aligned with other policy and reform efforts in order for it to be effective (Armour & Makopoulou, 2012; Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Guskey, 2003; Little, 1999; Newman et al., 2000). If it is to be integrated into the structure of the schools, PD also has to be malleable because people are diverse and dynamic and change over time (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Guskey, 1994). This could lead to the conclusion that professional development and the school structure must be completely redesigned to include increased time for elements not previously seen in

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school-based PD, such as, common learning time for teachers, including time to reflect (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010); purposefully eliminating excessive paperwork (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010); as well as adjusting staffing patterns and schedules so teachers have an opportunity to collaborate within and across grade levels (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Southworth (2010) suggests these new structures allow for peer analysis, collegial challenge, and open and frank discussion about student performance and progress towards goals. He goes on to propose that new and stronger norms need to be established in order to avoid the staff becoming defensive or moving into denial. Guskey (1994) also warns that to focus entirely on the individuals and neglect factors such as organizational features and systems, politics creates a debilitating environment that limits the likelihood of success.

Collaboration

Another aspect of the contextual factor that needs to be examined is how the school culture and ethos affect learning. Part of the struggle for many schools across the country is the collective resistance of teachers to collaborate. For years there has been this unspoken understanding that teachers close their classroom doors and take care of business as they best see fit (Richardson, 2003). However, the literature on professional development has resoundingly espoused that teacher learning happens best in the context of a professional community (Borko, 2004; Croft et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Little, 1999; Newman et al., 2000; Nir & Bogler,

2008; Southworth, 2010). Much of what has been mentioned regarding effective teacher learning experiences and structures come to life through professional learning communities: collaboration on instructional practices best suited for their students; reflection on progress and analysis of areas for improvement; peer observation, coaching and feedback; and common planning. In addition to these elements, professional communities have a culture that welcomes open and honest inquiry, problem solving, and the evaluation of instructional practices and materials (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). The question then becomes how to create this culture, this sense of community where there might not be one. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) make a few suggestions. First, they point out that empowering teachers to be decision makers is highly correlated with professional community. And second, they propose there are human and social resources that are needed to ensure professional community. These include supportive leadership that creates a climate that invites risk-taking and innovation, as well as mutual respect steeped in strong professional knowledge. As with any change, it will take time to form a particular culture where one did not exist.

The fundamental goal of professional communities is for teachers to collaborate. Little (1999) reminds us that it does not seem probable that high levels of success in student achievement can happen by teachers working alone. She also reminds us that it is a widely accepted sociological tenet that complex tasks require strong lateral relationships. Although our schools may not be invested in this idea, as evidenced by the lack of structures in place to support collaboration, it is not to say that it cannot change, but it takes persistence (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Knowledgeable Facilitators

Another major concern regarding school-based professional development is the inconsistency across schools for highly effective and knowledgeable PD facilitators. This can be seen through Bolman and Deal's human resource frame, which emphasizes trained and competent employees as contributing to an organization meeting its goals. Schools may choose to use in-house resources or classroom teachers, or they may outsource to experts in the field. Due to the need for PD to be integrated in a professional community that values collaboration, although it may not necessarily be present, facilitators must establish rapport and trust with a variety of learning professionals, and this depends on their extensive knowledge of teaching and learning, as well as considerable interpersonal and group-process skills (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Croft et al., 2010;). This is in addition to the deep content knowledge they must already possess, as well as their ability to be risk takers and demonstrate humility at the same time (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Little, 1999). The problem is now compounded with not only the need for schools to have access to an effective facilitator, but for facilitators of PD to be well prepared. There is little formal training for school-based PD facilitators on many of these skills.

In Summary

Although consensus may never be reached regarding what makes "best practices" for professional development, the research is clear about what should be taken into consideration when designing and customizing professional development at the school-level. Professional

development should consider the benefits of being student-centered, with a focus on teacher content and pedagogical knowledge. Attention should also be paid to teachers' needs and how those are assessed (externally or in collaboration with teachers) and how that may affect teachers' motivation to learn and engage in the professional development. Allocation and distribution of resources (time, funding, support), as well as accountability for these resources are other aspects that can differ within a district. Probably the most variable of the elements to take into account is the idea that individual school contexts, to include the culture around professional communities and collaboration, have the most significant impact on teacher learning. While these factors are essential to tailoring professional development for specific schools, it also leads to variability and lack of quality control within a district.

CHAPTER TWO: GOALS

Professional learning at the school level can take on many different forms; it does not always mean a workshop or face-to-face training. Oftentimes it is realized in a haphazard way as we spontaneously fill a need as it is encountered. And that is OK – some of the best learning comes from taking advantage of in-the-moment opportunities. Unfortunately, without a plan, just like in the classroom, professional learning at the school level will not meet intended goals.

<u>Big Scale</u>

Professional learning can take on many forms in a school setting. There has been an extensive amount of literature written on PD, however, for many schools in our district, there is a gap between theory and practice. This problem exists at federal and state levels as well. There is no research-based, or theorized model to guide the development of PD policies and strategies (Luke & McArdle, 2009). Although much has been written and studied in regards to what makes effective professional development, most of it has been inconclusive, partly because of the very nature of education (Borko, 2004; Guskey, 2003). Conducting pure experimental studies with invariable controls, as if in a vacuum, is nearly impossible, and surely unethical in the educational setting. One cannot control for students' home lives or backgrounds, or give one group a treatment and not allow any other "good teaching practices" to prevail just to identify a direct correlation. Because studies cannot conclusively determine whether a particular strategy caused student achievement, a model would be difficult to develop that could be used in system level policy. Although Luke and McArdle (2009) frame a systems level model that synthesizes much of the literature on effective PD, and they propose that the most valuable and profitable PD

is seen at the school-level, their model does not quite address some school-based factors that need to be taken into consideration. I would like to take models like Luke and McArdle's to that next level by incorporating those school-based contextual elements, as well as the socio-cultural aspect of learning, into a tool that can be used by school-level leadership teams.

The tool I am proposing bridges theory and practice at the school level. As mentioned above, one of the goals of this tool is to help school-based leadership teams (LTs) recognize and take into account the organizational culture and context when deciding on how to structure PD, as well as what specific strategies to use with individual teachers, teams, or cohorts. But before a strategy is conceived, LTs must identify the focus and goals of the PD, and this tool will guide them in conducting a root cause/gap analysis to determine the greatest instructional needs – the ones that will make the biggest difference (Gregson& Sturko, 2007; Guskey, 2003; Luke & McArdle, 2009). Luke and McArdle (2009) identify this as "Sources of Professional Development Priorities". But where they are looking at the larger teaching force and prioritizing the needs categorically, the goal of this tool is to help identify the *instructional* needs and merge them within the scope of competing demands. For example, if after collecting data on third through fifth grade teachers, the LT concludes the root cause of their greatest need is teacher instruction and student tasks aligned to the depth and rigor of the standard, the LT would also be guided into considering the external factors such as new curriculum, new standards, and a new teacher evaluation protocol, and *then* plan accordingly to ensure the competing demands are met within the school's identified priority need.

Another goal of this tool is for it to guide the leadership team in selecting the most appropriate and organic strategies possible for professional learning to occur, as well as guidance on devising a plan for the necessary follow-up and continued support (Guskey, 1994; Guskey, 2002; Guskey & Yoon 2009). Professional development is commonly understood as face-to-face workshops, oftentimes away from the school campus. Fortunately, the literature on PD has provided an extensive menu of various options for school-based leaders to select from (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond and Richardson, 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Johnson, Lustick, & Kim, 2011; Gregson &Sturko, 2007; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Newman, King, and Youngs 2000; Richardson, 2003; Yoon et al., 2007); however, many variables that are, again, specific to the school context need to be taken into consideration when selecting appropriate strategies (Armour & Makopoulou, 2011; Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Guskey, 1994; Guskey, 1996; Little, 1999; Newman et al,. 2000; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Southworth, 2010). Professional learning in the workplace is most definitely not a one-size-fits-all. It needs to be customized to the unique needs and goals of the individual and the school. Guskey (2003) echoes this idea that differences in the school communities uniquely affect PD and its effectiveness. He suggests that school leaders carefully "[consider] the unique contextual elements of each school and the community of learners in that environment, and continually [direct] efforts toward improvements in student learning outcomes" (p. 17). One way to do this is by setting measurable goals and continually assessing where student learning is in relation to those goals. Some of the contextual factors that a LT would consider include the collaborative

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nature of the teams, vertical alignment and discourse between grade levels, resources available, and competing demands to name a few.

In addition to the literature on strategies and effective PD elements, the National Staff Development Council (now known as Learning Forward) has published Professional Development Standards to help guide schools and districts in developing plans that will yield desired results (see Appendix A). The state of Florida has taken these standards and created the Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol. This protocol outlines the cycle the district and school-based leaders should take in developing and implementing PD. There are four main structures: planning, learning, implementing, and evaluating. Unfortunately, despite efforts by our PD department at the district to make it known, accessible, and applicable, many school-level administrators and coaches are not very familiar with this protocol and do not use it in planning for PD. As a result of this inequity across schools within our district, one of the goals of this Tool is to bridge the gap between the state protocol and standards and school-level practice. The Tool itself is designed to take the LT through the cycles of the Evaluation Protocol to help ensure maximum benefit from their PD efforts.

One of the major discrepancies found in PD across the district lies in the capacity of a school's leadership staff. There are many reasons to account for lack of basic understanding of effective PD standards and practices, such as high turnover, lack of accountability, or insufficient training. Much of what this tool is guiding LTs through is the Evaluation Protocol cycle, with special considerations for contextual factors and varied options for learning. To that end, the last goal for this tool is to be educative in nature. The hope is that with this tool, a LT who may not

have trained, PD professionals on their team, will be able to have some guidance in developing and implementing an organic PD plan at their school site by following a flow chart that will provide aligned options as they move through the cycle, as well as some rationale for each option so that ultimately the LT makes the most informed decision that is best for their school. One of the ways to help make it educative is to also have worked examples in the form of personas so there is a model to follow and gain perspective.

To recap, I am proposing a tool that can bridge what we know about adult learners in the workplace, best practices in professional learning, and the PD standards and how to apply them within our own schools. The specific goals this tool is set out to accomplish are:

1. Guide LTs in determining the root cause of the gap in student learning and teacher instruction;

2. Lead LTs in planning appropriate and organic PD within the unique context of their school;

3. Align the LTs PD plan and efforts to the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol Standards, including a plan for evaluation,; and

4. Be educative in nature through rationales and worked examples (personas).

Scope

Evaluation

In considering all that this tool can encompass so that it fully incorporates the cycle of planning, implementing, and evaluating professional development, I want to clarify the scope of

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this phase of the development. This project would need to be completed in four phases, the first of which is the development of the front end. This would include the synthesis of the current PD literature, PD standards, and organizational theory into a usable and applicable framework that leadership teams can use to identify PD goals, strategies, and aligned follow-up support. The next phase would include the development of design specifications, and then the tool itself in the form of a work flow. The work flow's user is guided in a linear fashion to enter specific information about the school as the development of the PD plan is completed. In its final phase, the Tool would be moved onto an online platform with "if-then" drop-down menu options. The third phase would incorporate the use of an expert panel to review the Tool and provide input, followed by a stage of redesign and another submission to the expert panel for feedback. The next phase would be to finalize the Tool with an evaluation component. In contrast to the evaluation of the professional learning plan developed by the leadership teams, this phase refers to a program evaluation of the effectiveness of the Tool itself.

An existing summative evaluation model that can inform this Tool's evaluation development comes from Guskey (2002b) where he identifies five levels of evaluation: participant's reactions, participant's learning, organization support and change, participant's use of knowledge and skills, and student learning outcomes. As Guskey (2002b) put it, "Lack of organization support and change can sabotage any professional development effort, even when all the individual aspects of professional development are done right" (p. 5).

Once those phases are complete, the final phase would be to pilot the Tool and perform the program evaluation to collect qualitative and quantitative data on its effectiveness in order to

make the necessary changes and move ahead with a final product. This project focuses on phases one and two only.

Assumptions

In thinking about the scope of this Tool, there are many elements that can and cannot be accounted for at this time. This Tool is intended to guide leadership teams in identifying PD goals and a plan for accomplishing those goals. The Tool is not intended to be a panacea for schools that lack a strong PD plan. It is intended, however, to be a starting point to guide the LT in a more structured direction that gives them varied options. The Tool will take into account that teacher leaders at the school level may not have had formal training on delivering PD or coaching and supporting as part of the implementation of PD, hence its educative design. However, it is not designed with the assumption that the Tool is enough to train or prepare teacher leaders to effectively carry out a PD plan, or that all teacher leaders have the same competencies. Another consideration is the reality that teacher leaders do not always have the freedom and resources available to exercise what they understand to be best practices in coaching and supporting. As much as it will be educative in nature, the individuals on the LT have their own competencies that this Tool cannot account for, as well as limitations placed on them from their administrators, and therefore these need to be taken into consideration when assessing the Tool's effectiveness.

Another assumption that cannot be made about this Tool is that it is prescriptive in nature. Although it can serve as a guide and provide many options, one of the main elements that is factored in when making decisions with this Tool is the one that comes from the individuals

and their school's culture and context. These elements play a large part in deciding which path to take with the faculty, and because the combinations are limitless, one cannot assume this Tool can prescribe one sole path. The goal of the Tool is to direct LTs into examining all the external factors that need to be considered (where they may have not been considered before), and to help them see the many options available as they develop a plan that is customized and suitable for their school.

More and more the literature emphasizes that schools need to promote a culture of collaboration and learning in order to foster real changes in teachers' practice (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Newman et al., 2000; Nir & Bogler, 2008; Southworth, 2010). As much as I believe that to be true, developing that culture is not within the scope of this project. It takes time and good strong leadership to carry out specific tactics to create such an environment (Croft et al., 2010).

Another related aspect of professional learning commonplace in schools is the use of professional learning communities (PLCs). Professional learning communities are schools with groups of teachers who work together in collaborative teams, with a purpose to learn and grow by analyzing and reflecting on their impact on student learning by looking at student samples and data and using various means (i.e. book study, data chats, lesson studies, etc.) (DuFour, 2006). While this also has to do with the school culture and climate, PLCs can still be effective with small pockets of teachers on campus regardless of where the school is as a whole. Although PLCs and collaborative teams are a great vehicle by which to foster professional learning, the scope of this Tool does not include the development of PLCs and collaborative teams. There are

usefule resources already available for LTs to utilize in creating a successful PLC at their school. The creation and use of PLC collaborative teams was an OCPS district initiative many years ago, and currently most schools have some form of PLCs at their school sites. Although the design of the Tool will assume the school is a PLC with collaborative teams, it will still guide LTs in assessing whether the strategies planned will work given the level of collaboration and openness actually demonstrated in the teams.

Existing Concepts/Frameworks Embedded

There are some frameworks in the current literature that create a space for this Tool to function. Using these frameworks to inform the development of this Tool allows for a more comprehensive design.

Professional Capital

In their most recent book, *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School,* Hargreaves and Fullan describe the concept of "teaching like a pro" and what it takes. They draw on the most widely accepted professions to describe how they are successful, and how teaching and learning can borrow some of these trademarks. They group these into a term called professional capital.

Hargreaves and Fullan make it a point to start out by distinguishing professional capital from business capital by defining it as "the systematic development and integration of three kinds of capital – human, social, and decisional – into the teaching profession" (2012, Preface). Whereas business capital is understood as aggressive investments that yield quick returns and

continue in a cyclical fashion, professional capital in education is more of a long-term investment in developing the assets that have already been acquired.

The authors describe professional capital not only in terms of the individuals, but also of the collective. For example, where much is known about human capital and investing in the talent, knowledge, and skills of individuals, professional capital takes human capital to another level by focusing on developing and sustaining it by circulating and sharing it. This in turn is where social capital comes in. "Social capital refers to how the quantity and quality of interactions and social relationships among people affects their access to knowledge and information; their senses of expectation, obligation, and trust; and how far they are likely to adhere to the same norms or codes of behavior" (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, Three Kinds of Capital). Long gone are the days of excelling at teaching behind the closed door of your classroom. In a study by Carrie Leana out of the University of Pittsburg (as cited in Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012), student achievement gains were the highest for teachers who had high human and social capital, and lower for teachers who had lower human and social capital. What was noteworthy was that for teachers who were lower on the human capital scale but higher on the social capital indicators, their students performed at par with teachers with average human capital. Hargreaves and Fullan conclude that both human and social capital are important to the development of the teaching profession. They also make the point that focusing on developing human capital will not necessarily yield an increase in social capital, but that focusing efforts on developing social capital will "generate increased human capital" (p. 4). The extant literature has had a difficult time showing direct correlations between PD and student achievement. They

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purport this is because increasing knowledge and/or skills alone (human capital) is not enough – it is only the precursor to true change (Armour, & Makopoulou 2011; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Guskey, 1996; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Johnson et al., 2011; Yoon et al., 2007). Therefore, thinking in terms of the assets schools have to work with, a major focus of professional development needs to be in increasing collaborative social capital.

Professional capital, as defined by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) also includes decisional capital. The authors begin to make a case for decisional capital by likening it to what all professionals do in their respective fields - "Making decisions in complex situations is what professionalism is all about… They come to have competence, judgment, insight, inspiration, and the capacity for improvisation as they strive for exceptional performance" (p.4). They go on to clarify that having decisional capital is having the ability to make wise judgments based on various experiences, practice, and reflection, as well as by tapping into the experiences and insights of their colleagues – making the concept of developing social capital integral to developing decisional capital.

Too often current PD structures rely on face-to-face, workshop-type trainings. Our district has recently invested in growing their online professional development opportunities in order to accommodate more participants. The big disconnect with some of these PD methods is that, although the case may be made for developing human capital, there is little opportunity to build social capital and much less decisional capital. Schools have to be more proactive about building in opportunities for teachers to collaborate, observe each other, provide feedback, and

reflect together in order for social and decisional capital to develop. The use of this Tool is intended to guide schools in taking all three components of professional capital into consideration to improve teaching at the site level. The menu of options for professional learning strategies will provide possible avenues for increasing teacher content knowledge and pedagogy (human capital), as well as building in opportunities to practice, get and provide feedback, collaborate, and reflect in order to build social and decisional capital.

Although Hargreaves and Fullan refer to professional capital at the individual and even the collective levels, I would like to propose considering it at the systems level, in particular by increasing the decisional capital of the leadership teams in the schools. None of the "capitals" can truly be isolated as they are inherently related, however, while it is commonplace to see teacher leaders attending trainings, what is oftentimes amiss is the opportunity for teacher leaders to collaborate across schools. This results in a form of isolation that can lead them to a narrow understanding of how to guide PD on their school campus. Although cross-school collaboration is out of the scope of this project, the Tool can serve as a scaffold for LTs to learn how to make better judgment calls regarding PD planning and implementation. If other schools also use the Tool, it can create a common framework and language to then become a bridge for cross-school collaboration, in turn leading to increased social and decisional capital at the LT level.

Professional Discretion

If teachers are to develop professionally and cultivate their decisional capital, they must be given the space to exercise what Boote (2006) refers to as professional discretion. Like decisional capital, professional discretion is developed over the course of a teacher's career. In

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this era of accountability and prescriptive "boxed" curriculum, and in an effort to account for varying teacher quality, professional discretion is a concept that falls between high levels of accountability and control and complete teacher autonomy. Boote put it simply when he stated, "A teacher has adequate professional discretion for a particular task when that teacher has the ability to make professional judgments and the capacity to act on those judgments" (p. 462). He describes teacher's professional discretion as falling into one of three levels – procedural, substantive, and innovative. Procedural discretion is the most limited of the three. It is where the teachers can follow procedures and make limited decisions regarding curriculum and instruction. Most often this is seen with our more novice teachers as they begin to gain the experiences necessary to critically evaluate and reflect. Until then, school administration limits their professional discretion until they show they are capable of critical reflection. The next level of discretion, substantive, is where teachers are able to be reflective and self-critical. At this level, they are also able to not only evaluate their actions, but also make modifications without outside support. Substantive professional discretion is hallmarked by choice – choosing to adopt or not adopt a particular curricular resource or instructional strategy. The ultimate goal is for teachers to have innovative professional discretion. Once teachers are at this level, they have not only shown their ability to critically reflect and evaluate, but also their ability to see a problem and create a viable solution within the context and limitations of their working environment. This level of professional discretion calls for teachers to challenge the status quo, which could sometimes mean challenging their colleagues and administrators as well. In order to develop teachers to this

level, it is important for school level administrators be open to their challenges, and for teacher leaders and coaches to foster this ability.

Hargreaves and Fullan provide a limited scope of what decisional capital can encompass. I would like to use Boote's (2006) concept of professional discretion to fill in some of the gaps by marrying these two frameworks and incorporating them into the development and execution of this Tool. One of the components of this tool will guide LTs in scaffolding professional discretion among teachers, so they can make the necessary decision calls to exercise and strengthen decisional capital. For example, if at the beginning of the school year we assess a teacher to have procedural professional discretion, then autonomy will be limited as we work to develop the teacher's ability to critically evaluate teaching decisions and resources. But as we notice the teacher's ability to reflect and make wise judgments improve, then more professional discretion is warranted so that they may exercise and strengthen these abilities. I feel this is an important point to make. All too often schools and districts flood teachers with PD on new and innovative ideas yet limit their decision-making power in their classroom to try those new ideas, to take risks, to fail, to reflect and learn, and to try again. With this in mind, the Tool will guide LTs into providing time for teachers to try new things with varied levels of support in order to gain more decisional capital in order to be granted more professional discretion over what to teach and how best to teach it.

Boote repeatedly makes reference to the need to consider the external factors, such as the school's culture and administration as influential factors in teachers' ability to make decisions. One of the main goals of this Tool is for LTs to integrate an understanding of the organizational

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climate in making decisions that are appropriate for their school. If building capacity is the goal, then developing decisional capital so teachers will be able to use more professional discretion are steps along the way to realizing that goal.

Cycles of Professional Learning

An existing model for embedding a successful approach to professional learning at the school level is described by Nelsen and Cudeiro (2009) as Cycles of Professional Learning. They have incorporated many of PD's best practices into one model. As I've mentioned before, many elements are vital to a successful PD plan. The ones this model specifically targets are quality learning opportunities, opportunities for safe practice, observing colleagues, receiving feedback, professional reading, peer discussion/looking at student work/data review, and monitoring/measuring/modifying by the LT. The one element that sets this model apart, and what I hope to borrow in developing this Tool, is they include repeated cycles. Nelson and Cudeiro (2009) point to the need for cycles of high-quality professional learning followed by collaboration and support. They suggest that in order for new learning to become teaching practice, teachers must learn the material in many ways and practice it in many ways, but the cycles can only focus on one new concept or strategy at a time. Then a new cycle is started with new content.

Unfortunately, as much as this model, as is, sounds like an effective solution to building a culture of professional learning, I think the authors are leaving out other important factors. In an ideal situation you would cycle through these best practices, but the reality is many schools are in different places regarding their organizational context. Some schools' culture and climate are

not in a position where teachers can be expected to do any reading outside of the prescribed PD and planning time during the workday. That is not to say there may not be teachers on who would be more than willing to; however, the current status quo is one of resistance to extra expectations and work because teachers are already overloaded with their current expectations and simply do not have the time to dedicate. Another constraint for schools is the resource of time and competing initiatives. Many lower performing schools may have interventions programs put in place by the district or state. If that is the case, the goals of the intervention program are the priority and time resources are dedicated accordingly.

As I mentioned above, the component of the model that I will borrow for this Tool is the nature of the cycle. Realizing that adults need to work through learning new material in various ways over various times, the Tool will incorporate guidance on directing LTs to develop plans that are narrowly focused on a few areas per school year and provide multiple learning and practicing opportunities. The way Nelson and Cudeiro describe repeated cycles is that new learning begins and primarily occurs in the first two weeks of the cycle. The following weeks are when there are opportunities for observations, coaching, feedback, and monitoring and adjusting. At this juncture the Tool would incorporate a planned formative assessment and the LT would meet to discuss what conclusion can be made about teacher learning and application.

CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

In designing the Tool, there were certain goals and parameters that had to be established before actually beginning on the design of the Tool (see Table 1).

Table 1

School-based Professional Learning Design Tool - Design Specifications

	GOAL	RESEARCH/LITERATURE BASED	FORM/DESIGN
FUNCTION	Planning Scaffold Tool used to guide school leadership teams in: • Considering all the hard and soft inputs • Appropriately selecting goals for teachers or groups of teachers based on data • Appropriately selecting an effective plan (intervention/growth/strategy) to achieve professional development goals and build capacity	Literature on: Professional Development/Learning in the workplace (effective elements – time, follow-up support, student-results focused, collaborative, admin supported, ownership/autonomy) Learning Theory – cognitive, socio-cultural, and adult learning theories Organizational theory – are there structures in place to support intervention (time/schedule, policy, etc.)? Whose needs are going to be prioritized/married? What is the climate of the school/team – collaborative, transparent, individualistic? What is valued most?	Data collection tools (Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model) Table of learning strategies aligned to meeting a knowledge, skill, or mindset gap Organizational considerations Aligned to PD Standards/FL PD Evaluation Protocol and SIP
	Educative Educating leadership team members on best practices in PD and guiding them towards designing a plan customized to their unique context and needs	Literature on: Educative Curriculum Principles of Design	Worked examples with personas and rationales Progressive Disclosure/Learning Links – uncommon terms defined and hyperlinked to resources online Face-to-face training planning template
	Evaluative Embedded components to help plan for an evaluation of the PD plan and learning strategies	Literature on the need for evaluation of PD programs	Built in from the beginning when analyzing data, creating goals, and planning and collecting data for formative assessments
USABILITY	Integrated Merged with existing district and school goals and structures (i.e. SIP, FL PD Evaluation Protocol, OCPS PD Initiatives, etc.)	Organizational Theory • Structural frame - working with structures/systems already in place • Political frame – prioritizing and working within existing goals and external expectations	Use of data Accountability measures Structured plan development
	User-friendly Usable by school personnel of all experience and expert levels	Principles of Design	Familiar educational jargon (i.e. not scholarly language) Streamlined: quick and easy to understand and follow

I chose to classify the specifications into two broad categories – function and usability. Within each of those broader groupings I considered the various goals for the specifics of the tool, the literature that is informing the specifications, and the form and design for how it will all be materialized in the Tool. Figure 1 below details the sequence in the planning Tool. Table 2 describes each step in more detail. See Appendix B for a blank version of the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool.
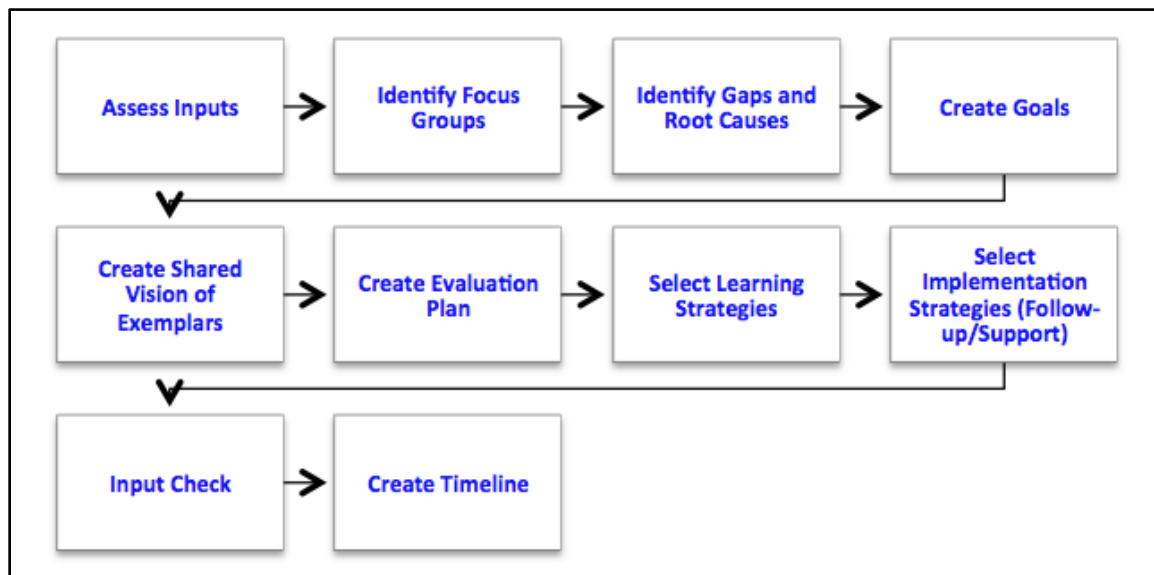

Figure 1: School-based Professional Learning Design Tool Flowchart

Table 2

School-based Professional Learning Design Tool Components

Component	Description
Assess Inputs	Leadership team identifies relevant hard inputs (student data, teacher performance data), as well as soft inputs (culture/climate, resources, competing demands, etc.).
Identify Focus Groups	Leadership team uses data to identify group(s) of teachers align with gaps in performance. They also explain a rationale for selecting group as well as the unique sub-cultural considerations of the group.
Identify Gaps and Root Causes	Leadership team writes gap statements clarifying the discrepancy between the current and expected performance data. Leadership team conducts a root cause analysis and identifies the knowledge, skill, or mindset gap that is the barrier to expected performance.
Create Goals	Leadership team develops SMART goals for each focus group.
Create Shared Vision of Exemplars	Leadership team discusses and clarifies what the goal looks like and sounds like when observed.
Create Evaluation Plan	Leadership team creates formative assessment to gauge progress toward goal.
Select Learning Strategies	Leadership team discusses and selects which learning strategies align best filling the gap identified in the root cause analysis. Consideration for soft-inputs, including the focus groups' sub-cultures, is taken in selecting strategies.
Select Implementation Strategies (Follow-up/Support)	Leadership team decides on strategies to support implementation of new learning.
Input Check	Leadership team reviews entire and checks against soft inputs to ensure those elements were taken into consideration and the plan is feasible.
Create Timeline	Leadership team creates a customized schedule to include all action steps identified in plan, along with a monitoring component for accountability purposes.

<center>Rationale for Design Specifications</center>

<center>*Function*</center>

There are three main functions of this Tool-

1. To guide leadership teams in –

    a. considering all the hard and soft inputs

    b. appropriately selecting goals for teachers and groups

    c. appropriately selecting effective PD strategies

2. Be educative in nature

3. Help guide and prepare LTs in creating an evaluation plan

<u>Considering Inputs</u>

Before school leaders decide on the professional learning goals to address in a given school year, the needs of the school have to be specifically identified and factors that affect professional learning need to be considered. I will call these hard and soft inputs (see Table 2). Information from soft inputs can be considered qualitative in nature and collection of this data can be done with standard inventories of curriculum resources, lesson plans, district resources, and state standards. Some questions to ask are, "Do the lesson plans show where teachers plan to model thinking and processes and for students to deepen their knowledge and practice?", "Do our school-based and district resources align fully to the standard or are teachers needing to scrutinize these resources often to determine if supplemental materials are necessary?", or "How do teachers understand the standards? Do they deconstruct them? Do they use the item

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specifications?" This information will help the LT begin to understand the context in which they will be planning professional learning experiences and what to prioritize.

As mentioned earlier, special attention needs to be given to organizational factors when making decisions regarding professional learning goals for teachers, teams, or the school as they greatly influence the effectiveness of any PD plan (Armour & Makopoulou, 2011; Birman et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Guskey, 1994; Guskey, 1996; Little, 1999; Newman et al,. 2000; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Southworth, 2010). The lenses Bolman and Deal (2008) use to describe organizations will be used here again– structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames, and for purposes of this Tool, will be considered as soft inputs. There are systematic and structural factors, such as scheduling, financial resources, school policies and district and state expectations. Some of the district and state expectations and initiatives can also double as political in nature because they are all vying for the precious time needed to grow professionally. Other factors that are unique to each school are related to the human resource frame. Those include the collective efficacy belief of the teachers and their individual competency and preparedness for learning and change. In taking into account the symbolic frame, a school leader desiring to bring about change needs to consider the culture and climate of the organization - the long-standing beliefs about what is valued amongst the staff and community.

Hard inputs take the form of more quantifiable data. Data on student engagement, instructional strategies, and even teacher content knowledge can be gathered using walk-through observations. In Orange County, the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model would serve as a

resource for collecting data on research-based, effective instructional practices. This model is discussed further in the Integrative section.

So far I have discussed inputs of data collected from school, district and state resources, as well as teacher observation data. The last of the "hard inputs" would be student data. More often than not, schools will use vetted district and state assessments such as the OCPS Benchmark Assessment or the new Comprehensive End of Course Exams (CEOC) to determine student achievement, and ultimately the effectiveness of the faculty. As teachers continue to learn and implement new strategies, or grow in their own content knowledge, and then ideally teach better lessons, student data will be also be collected from classroom assessments or district mini-assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning plan. Since the ultimate goal of professional growth is to improve student learning, it is necessary that we continue to look at and guide ourselves by student data.

Table 3

Hard and Soft Inputs

Hard Inputs –Quantitative Directly tied to student achievement	Soft Inputs – Qualitative Indirect influence on student achievement

• Student engagement data
• Instructional strategies data
• Teacher content knowledge data
• Student achievement data
	• Curriculum resources
	• Lesson plans
	• Human Resource Frame
	  o Teacher self-efficacy beliefs
	  o Individual competencies
	  o Preparedness for change
	  o Teacher leader staff
	• Symbolic Frame
	  o Culture and climate
	  o Long-standing beliefs about what is valued
	• Political Frame
	  o State and District Initiatives/expectations
	• Structural Frame
	  o Scheduling
	  o Financial Resources
	  o School Policies

Selecting Goals

Professional learning has been long-studied, resulting in much consensus in the literature regarding effective elements. One piece that seems to be missing however, is how to define professional development goals at the school level. Selecting goals has been a cursory process at many schools. Often times they are selected as a knee-jerk reaction to symptoms leadership teams are seeing in the classrooms, or sometimes they are selected based on what they are being told by the district what the goals *should* be without consideration for what is actually going on in the classroom or looking at data. Dr. Preuss makes it very clear in his book *A School Leader's Guide to Root Cause Analysis, Using Data to Dissolve Problems (2013),* that school-based staff development programs are most effective when they aim at dissolving the causes for failures. The guidance established by using the Tool takes leadership teams through the process of

looking at teacher and student data to identify gaps in performance (GiP) and then through a simple root cause analysis (RCA) to identify the underlying causes of the gaps. Understanding the root cause to why something is not working then allows for goals to be developed that will actually eliminate barriers, not just symptoms.

When looking at data, leadership teams should make sure to include data that provides a full picture of instruction and teacher performance. Typically, this kind of data is observational. The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model is how OCPS administrators collect instructional effectiveness data.

As part of root cause analysis, Preuss (2013) provides guidelines for collectively looking at the data and beginning by asking questions. He calls this the Questioning Data Process. The first step is to look at the data and ask, "What do you see in this data set?" Before moving on to the second question, I recommend pausing to identify the gaps in performance. A gap in performance is simply a quantifiable measure of the difference between expected outcomes and actual performance. Quantifying the gap oftentimes verifies the decision a LT makes for selecting a priority GiP to address. The GiP is also used in creating the goal and measuring progress towards that goal.

The second question in the Questioning Data Process actually begins the root cause analysis – "What questions do you have about what you see?" The questions the LT will ask peel away the layers of the more visible symptoms and lead to asking the 'why' questions related to the GiP. The RCA process implemented with this Tool is the most simple of the various processes Preuss outlines in his book. The process is called The Five Whys. There are two

reasons why I selected this RCA process, and the first is time. Since this is only one part of the school improvement process, I did not feel it warranted the other, more extensive processes he describes in his book. The other reason is because of capacity. Preuss recommends that a trained facilitator is necessary for truly digging deep with RCA, and since this Tool is intended for school-based LTs who may or may not have professional development training, I felt The Five Whys was attainable. The Five Whys is basically the idea of asking 'why' five times to get to the root cause of a problem. Preuss claims that typically one can arrive at the alterable root cause within asking about five whys, however, he does recognize that sometimes one will arrive at the root cause in more or less than five whys.

When it comes to human resources, the root cause will typically fall into one of three areas – knowledge, skills, or mindset (including beliefs and motivation) (Rueda, 2011; Preuss, 2013). This is important to know because depending on which of these gaps it is, determines what the intervention will be to remove the barrier to that gap. For example, if it were a knowledge gap, typically the teachers would need a learning experience to help close that gap.

The next and final step in the goal setting process is to create the goal. Preuss (2013) gives some guidance regarding the creation of goal statements. He says, "…goal statements are a derivative of the desired ideal condition with the addition of a timeline and starting point. Both the statement of the desired ideal condition and the goal statement clarify and quantify the concept of a key indicator." (Ch. 2, Section - Using Key Indicators of Student Success). He also mentions they should provide a time frame for achieving the target and that the specific target for achievement should be compared to the present. This closely mimics a SMART goal. A SMART

goal is specific, measurable, attainable, results-focused, and time-bound. Since SMART goals are used in School Improvement Plans, as well as in collaborative teams when designing lessons, this Tool will guide LTs in creating them for their professional learning plan. SMART goals can be overarching or specific. Since we are deriving them from gaps in performance, they will be more overarching. The RCA will be used to select the strategies that will be implemented to meet those goals.

<u>Selecting Strategies</u>

One of the main purposes for looking at data closely and identifying root causes is to create attainable goals and to select strategies for learning that are aligned with the true gap. Learning as defined by Mayer (2011) is, "…a change in knowledge attributable to experience" (p. 14). Rueda (2011) adds, "Knowing what people should know or how people learn is only part of the equation. Equally important is knowing how to help them to learn" (p. 33). Although there is a great multitude of learning theories out there, most conclude that learning does not happen in a vacuum and thus includes some kind of experience. This is the same for all learners, young or old. The purpose of this section is to align the appropriate instructional experiences with the type of learning that needs to take place to ultimately change teachers' performance.

In his book detailing the gap analysis framework for finding the right solutions to the right problems, Rueda (2011) categorizes the possible gaps into three dimensions – knowledge and learning, motivational, and organizational. Since the scope of this project is not to solve organizational problems, only to take inventory of the local context's status quo through the lenses mentioned above by Bolman and Deal (2008), I will only borrow from the first two

dimensions. When referring to knowledge and types of knowledge in order to align instruction accordingly, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) have categorized it into four types – factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive. Since our district expects instructional coaches to model learning experiences using the Marzano Instructional Framework, I'm going to merge factual and conceptual knowledge into what Marzano terms declarative knowledge, and keep procedural the same, therefore only categorizing knowledge gaps into two types – declarative and procedural (Marzano, Welch. L, Adams, Brown, Welch, A. 2008). For purposes of ease and usability, when referring to the types of gaps we are addressing, declarative knowledge will be termed 'knowledge' and procedural knowledge will be termed 'skills'. Although skills are typically observable behaviors, all learning originates from a change in the learner's knowledge (Mayer, 2011).

The second dimension, motivational, is the third type of gap that this Tool will attempt to address. Rueda (2014) uses Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece's definition of motivation – "the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (p. 38). I would like to broaden the concept to include mindsets and beliefs because at the core of one's motivation is a mindset or belief that leads to an action or lack of action. Specific learning strategies can lead to improved motivation due to an increase in self-efficacy belief.

When looking at teacher observation data and determining a root cause, a leadership team would identify what kind of gap is present – knowledge, skill, or mindset gap. In OCPS, instructional coaches have many PD models to choose from that are supported by the district. Table 3 details the list of strategies to select from for instructional learning experiences that align

with the type of gap the team is trying to address. This is not a perfect science, but what I am attempting to do here is give suggestions for strategies that will help close the various knowledge, skill, and mindset gaps that impede building teacher capacity. Some strategies may be useful to close multiple types of gaps. Leadership teams are advised to use this as a guide and to take all the other factors into consideration as well before deciding on which strategy to use.

Table 4

Instructional Strategies Aligned to Gap

	GAP		
Instructional Strategy	*Knowledge*	*Skill*	*Mindset*
Action Research	x	x	**X**
Book study	**X**		
Coaching cycle		**X**	x
Face-to-face training	**X**	x	
Instructional Rounds	x	**X**	**X**
Lesson Study		**X**	x
Modeling (coach or video)	**X**	**X**	x
Observation-Feedback cycle		**X**	x
Online modules	**X**		
Peer Mentor	x	**X**	x
Peer observation	x	**X**	
PLC Collaborative meetings - common planning, data analysis, etc.	**X**	x	x
Side-by-Side Coaching	x	**X**	x
Study of student artifacts	x		**X**

X = Instructional strategy strongly suggested for the gap
x = Instructional strategy suggested for the gap

Educative

One of the goals of this Tool is to be educative in nature. The term *educative* typically

refers to K-12 curriculum materials that implement components specifically to increase teacher

content knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge (Davis and Krajcik, 2005). The

instructional coach on a school campus is still a teacher. They are facilitating the learning of a

diverse teaching faculty in order to help effect changes to practice that will lead to improved

student achievement. Unlike being a classroom teacher, instructional coaches are not formally

trained in the content knowledge of professional development or the pedagogical knowledge of adult learning. The problem of untrained facilitators is compounded when there is high turnover and newly inducted coaches on a regular basis. Last year alone, there were over 100 new instructional coaches in the district. To date, there is no system in place for selecting or training new ICs. All instructional coaches attend the same annual trainings offered by the district three times a year. That means there is no induction or differentiation for new ICs, and they are expected to be one of the instructional leaders on their school campuses.

"Facilitators serve as catalysts for professional learning, supporting teachers in conducting inquiries and team collaboration while strengthening the connection of teacher learning to student learning" (Croft et al., 2010, p. 9). The need for trained and prepared professional development facilitators is nothing unique or new to OCPS. Ball and Cohen (1999) have recognized that there are little professional development opportunities for the facilitators themselves and that they would need to take it upon themselves to seek it out. This Tool would help to meet the need for ICs, and other school-based leadership team members, to build some background knowledge regarding effective school-based professional learning elements. I do caution that it is still critical for the PD facilitators to continue to seek out opportunities for growth in the area of professional development, as educative tools and curriculum are only one of many approaches that should complement each other (Davis and Krajcik, 2005).

Borrowing from Davis and Krajcik's (2005) work on educative curriculum, this Tool aims to incorporate four educative considerations into the design:

1. Knowledge Base - The incorporation of new strategies to add to their repertoire and knowledge base.

2. Rationales - Providing not only an explanation of the process, but a rationale for decisions in an effort to increase design capacity.

3. Time - Taking into consideration the ICs competing demands, such as other duties assigned, as well as requirements by the district.

4. Design - Finding ways to differentiate the educative components to meet the needs of various experience levels of the learners.

As mentioned above, newly placed instructional coaches, or many members of the LT, may not have a repertoire of strategies for engaging adults in various learning experiences (i.e. action research, observation-feedback cycle, instructional rounds, etc.). In addition to those, they also have to be able to meet a district expectation for modeling instructional strategies teachers should be using in the classroom, such as the instructional strategies in the Marzano Instructional Framework (also known as the Elements). The Tool is designed to not only direct LTs to strategies aligned to the specific gap in knowledge, skill, or mindset (see Table 4 above), but to provide general information on the strategy, as well as point them in the direction where they can find a more detailed description and become more familiar with the strategy, eventually adding it to their own repertoire.

One of the markers of curriculum that is actually educative is that it includes a rationale and not just an explanation (Davis and Krajcik, 2005). Curriculum can support the use of a specific strategy but if it does not support teacher learning of that strategy so they are able to

apply it to different contexts, it is not educative in nature. Davis and Krajcik promote the need to build teachers' (and in this case, facilitators') design capacity in order for them to be able to make adjustments to the curriculum, or the professional learning plan, according to variables in the learners or the context that may present themselves. This is an important skill to promote since the variables in school settings are always changing and LTs need to be prepared to make adjustments as needed. In the detailed examples in chapter 4, the Tool is used with rationales for each entry made. The rationales, which are in the form of callouts in the margin, are explanations for why and how decisions were made and entered in the Tool (similar to a think-aloud). In order to maximize the applicability of this Tool to various types of schools, two examples were provided with distinct school contexts.

The last two educative considerations I will discuss here is the need for the design of the educative components of the Tool to take into consideration LTs competing demands. Davis and Krajcik (2005) describe one of the tensions of designing educative curriculum is determining the appropriate amount of guidance and support. Since oftentimes educators do not have time to read through extensive educative materials, they suggest including only critical areas of understanding in the educative elements. One of the ways to adjust for the overuse of possibly unnecessary educative elements and the differing needs of LTs is to make the Tool electronic, so educative components pop up as requested by the user. This design principle, called progressive disclosure, displays only necessary or requested information at the users discretion in order to manage information complexity (Lidwell, Holden, Butler, & Elam, 2010). Hovering over the term displays pop-up text with a brief description of the word or strategy. Clicking on the term links

the user to a website where more detailed information is available for further study. Clicking on the term will link the user to a website where more detailed information will be made available for further study. Using this method to make the Tool educative alleviates the possibility of an overwhelming amount of text, which may discourage a user from reading the necessary information.

<u>Evaluation Development</u>

One of the goals for the function of this Tool is that it incorporates an evaluative component. Although many systems-level frameworks and even the PD standards call for an evaluation phase to the PD cycle, it is often missed at the school level. One reason for this is that teacher learning and its correlation to student achievement is one of the most difficult things to measure (Borko, 2004; Croft et al., 2010; Luke and McArdle, 2009; Yoon et al., 2007). Another reason could be the lack of knowledge on how to evaluate school-level PD. In an era of data and accountability, however, the need is still present to ensure that a school's resources (time, money, staff) are being used to effectively improve student achievement.

The use of this Tool would make the school-level evaluation process much more feasible by using the same methods used to collect data to set the goals in the first place. This data would not only include student achievement information, but teacher performance and implementation data as well. A strategy that can be borrowed from *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) is the idea of planning with the end in mind, or backwards planning. If the LT is using the tool to guide the development of PD goals, those goals will seamlessly transition into creating a vision of what they look like when they are accomplished, and thus begin to develop

their evaluation phase. Specifically, in the sections *Creating Goals* and *Create Shared Vision of Exemplars*, LTs identify which goals they will use to measure effectiveness, and what it looks and sounds like when they are attained. In the section *Create a Timeline*, LTs are putting into place the accountability pieces that are aligned with the SIP so that progress is recorded.

Professional development evaluations are typically thought to only include indicators from teacher performance and student achievement. However, I am proposing a tool that will incorporate the organizational culture and context as factors in the development of the PD plan; therefore, the evaluation would need to account for those changes, as well as assessing the organization's systems and structures to determine how they contributed to or hindered the effectiveness of the PD plan. The process of evaluating the effect of inputs in the PD plan is started in the section *Input Check.*

Professional development evaluation is often times thought of as summative and only conducted at the end of the school year, but this Tool will include ways to incorporate formative assessments to provide feedback so that the program and strategies can be altered along the way (Luke & McArdle, 2009). One of the purposes of this Tool is to be integrative with non-negotiable, existing structures already imposed on the school so that it does not become "one more thing to do." One of the state and district expectations for schools is the development and implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The recent redesign of the framework incorporates two monitoring components – one for monitoring the fidelity of implementation and the other for monitoring the effectiveness of the strategies. This existing structure can be used to

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help develop the formative assessment component of the evaluation phase for this Tool in the section *Create a Timeline*.

Usability

Integrative

      The literature on PD resoundingly claims that the most effective teacher learning happens at school sites where there is sustained collegial focus using relevant data on teachers' own students, and where individual needs are addressed (Guskey 1996, 2003; Guskey and Yoon, 2009; Luke and McArdle, 2009; Newman, King, and Youngs 2000; Nir and Bogler 2008; Owen, 2003). In contrast, the same authors recognize there is research that points to the variability and inequity in allowing schools to structure their own professional development. Hargreaves and Fullan (2005), as cited in Luke and McArdle (2009), found that change in the classroom happened when more centralized initiatives were the impetus for school-based PD decisions. The tool I am proposing acknowledges that schools are still part of a larger system and must abide and be led by those policies and structures. It is intended to be integrative so school leaders are working as efficiently as possible by leveraging district and state resources instead of competing with external initiatives, and therefore making it *usable*. In OCPS, there are three external initiatives that the Tool takes into account and merges with so work is not replicated:

1. School Improvement Plan
2. Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol (to include Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning)

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3.   Marzano Instructional Framework

Monies from the Federal Title I program (program established to financially support under-resourced schools) are awarded to states for school improvement. In order for LEAs to be awarded those funds, schools must provide a plan for how they will systematically problem-solve to identify areas for improvement and plan for removing the barriers to improvement. The state of Florida recently revamped the planning process and has provided all LEAs with an online platform to complete and submit their SIP. The new features of the SIP that align with this Tool include identifying resources, performing a root cause analysis, creating formative assessments for evaluation purposes, and creating a timeline for accountability purposes (see Table 5).

The Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol was created when Florida's Legislature required the Department of Education to develop a system that would evaluate the quality of its districts professional learning systems (Florida Department of Education, 2010). The Protocol was created in conjunction with the National Staff Development Council (now Learning Forward) and is comprised of many components for quality evaluation and accountability at the school, district, and state level. It also includes 65 standards, of which 20 are school-based standards and are integrated into the Tool, as detailed in Table 5 (see Appendix C for a description of each standard). One of the main motivations behind the need for this Tool is the need to close the gap between theory and practice. Although the Florida PD Evaluation Protocol includes standards schools strive to meet, the leaders at the school level do

not have a framework, or a guide, to help them meet those standards. The purpose of the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool is to help close that gap by guiding all members of a LT in the creation of a professional development plan that is aligned to the cycle outlined in the Evaluation Protocol.

Although these standards were written for this state-specific protocol, they are derived directly from Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning and can be applied to any school's professional learning plan. As illustrated in Appendix C, the Florida Evaluation Protocol school-level standards align closely with the Standards for Professional Learning.

The final integrative component is the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model. This model, developed by Dr. Robert Marzano, is a culmination of five decades worth of research on which instructional strategies produced significant effect sizes (Marzano et al., 2008). The model is made up of four domains and the first one is Classroom Strategies and Behaviors. In Domain 1, there are 41 elements – teaching strategies research has shown to have high effect sizes. Across many states, including Florida, districts are using the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model, and it has now become enculturated in OCPS. As part of our state legislature mandate to have an evaluation system, per Race to the Top, it is one more competing demand that is in place at all schools. The Tool purposes to use the existing teacher evaluation data to conduct a needs assessment, use it as rationale for selecting focus groups, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan (see Table 5).

Table 5

Integrative Components of the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool

School-based Professional Development Tool Components	School Improvement Plan Components	Evaluation Protocol Standards (Standards for Professional Learning)	Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model
Assess Inputs Hard Soft	Using data as a baseline Identifying resources Identifying barriers	2.1.1. School Needs Assessment 2.1.2. Reviewing Professional Development Plans 2.1.3. Reviewing Annual Performance Appraisal Data 2.2.6. Time Resources 2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan (Data, Resources, Outcomes)	Teacher Evaluation Data (specific and aggregate) Deliberate Practice selected elements iObservation resources
Identify Focus Groups	Creating Strategies	2.1.1. School Needs Assessment 2.1.2. Reviewing Professional Development Plans 2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan (Data)	Teacher Evaluation Data (specific and aggregate) Deliberate Practice selected elements
Identify Gaps (knowledge, skill, mindset)	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*	2.1.1. School Needs Assessment 2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan (Data)	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*
Root Cause Analysis	Identifying barriers	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*
Create Goals (specific to focus group)	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*	2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan (Learning Designs)	Teacher Evaluation Data (specific and aggregate)
Create Shared Vision of Exemplars	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*	*Not specifically aligned (gap)* (Outcomes)	Element Protocols and Scales
Create Evaluation Plan	Monitor Goal Progress	2.4.2. Changes in Educator Practice 2.4.3. Changes in Students 2.4.4. Evaluation Measures 2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan (Outcomes, Data)	Teacher Evaluation Data (specific and aggregate)
Select Learning Strategies	Creating Strategies Create Action Steps	2.2.1. Learning Communities 2.2.2. Content Focused 2.2.3. Learning Strategies 2.2.4. Sustained Professional Learning 2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan (Leadership, Learning Communities)	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*
Select Implementation Strategies	Create Strategies Create Action Steps	2.3.1. Implementation of Learning 2.3.2. Coaching and Mentoring 2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan (Implementation, Leadership)	Evaluation Feedback
Input Check	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*	2.2.6. Time Resources (Resources)	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*
Create Timeline	Monitor Goal Progress Monitor Implementation Fidelity	2.4.2. Changes in Educator Practice 2.4.3. Changes in Students 2.4.4. Evaluation Measures 2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan (Outcomes)	*Not specifically aligned (gap)*

<u>User-friendly</u>

The School-based Professional Learning Design Tool has two main purposes: to serve a function and to be usable. As mentioned above, part of the goal of it being usable is that it is integrated into existing structures that are required of schools. The Tool may serve a function and fill a need, and it may be well aligned with existing structures, but if it is not user-friendly, sustained usage will diminish and the Tool would be rendered futile. For this reason, design principles were used to help make the Tool user-friendly. "The use of well-established design principles increases the probability that a design will be successful" (Lidwell, Holden, Butler, & Elam, Introduction, 2010).

In the book, *Universal Principles of Design,* the authors compile 125 general design principles from various disciplines to help guide the successful design of products (Lidwell, Holden, Butler, & Elam, 2010). Since the level of experience and expertise of the leadership team members will vary from school to school, incorporating design principles that will aid in the ease of use of the Tool is important. For this phase of the design of the Tool itself, eight principles have been applied in order to make it user-friendly. Table 6 lists the eight principles, the definition from *Universal Principles of Design,* and a brief explanation of how the principle has been applied to the Tool

Table 6

Universal Principles of Design Application in the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool

Design Principle	Description	Application in the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool
1. Advance Organizer	"An instructional technique that helps people understand new information in terms of what they already know." Can be an illustration used to present new information in learning situations that have a linear sequence.	Flow Chart at the beginning of the Tool
2. Aesthetic-Usability Effect	"Aesthetic designs are perceived as easier to use than less-aesthetic designs." Designs that look easier to use, whether they are or not.	The form is completed in a linear fashion and entry points are clearly presented by text boxes and tables.
3. Five Hat Racks	"There are five ways to organize information: category, time, location, alphabet, and continuum." Time refers to information organized in a sequence.	The Tool is organized in a sequential order to guide the user in creating the professional development plan in successive steps.
4. Highlighting	"A technique for bringing attention to an area of text or image" Highlighting may include using bold, italics, underlining, typeface, and color.	Unfamiliar terms are highlighted in color to indicate educative components (learning links).
5. Performance Load	"The greater effort to accomplish a task, the les likely the task will be accomplished successfully." Kinematic load refers to the number of steps need to reach a goal.	The Tool's electronic format will incorporate hyperlinks to bookmarks to allow the user to move through the Tool with ease and less scrolling.
6. Personas	"A technique that employs fictitious users to guide decision making regarding features, interactions, and aesthetics." Creating profiles for a small number of users to guide development for user needs.	The Tool incorporates the use of a hybrid between worked examples and personas. It takes the idea of creating profiles (in this case, two of the typical schools that would use this Tool), and merges each profile within the Tool to create a worked example with rationales for each entry. The use of personas also informs the further development of the Tool and user needs.
7. Progressive Disclosure	"A strategy for managing information complexity in which only necessary or requested information is displayed at any given time. " Reduces information complexity for new or novice users by gradually disclosing information as requested by the user.	As an educative component, possibly unfamiliar terms are highlighted in color throughout the Tool. As the user hovers over the term, a description will pop up. If the term is clicked, the user will be directed to website with a more complete description and possible resources for further study.
8. Readability	"The degree to which prose can be understood, based on the complexity of words and sentences." Appropriate use of readability level determined by factors such as word length, sentence length, and word commonality.	The Tool keeps the language simple and clear, without too much use of educational jargon because of the diverse levels of experience and expertise of the leadership team members completing the plan.

Source: Lidwell, Holden, Butler, & Elam, 2010

CHAPTER FOUR: PERSONAS AND THE TOOL

In this section, personas have been provided as part of its educative design to help the reader understand how the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool can be used. In deciding which type of learner was appropriate to select in portraying the personas, the three options were a teacher or team, a school-based resource teacher or coach, or a school. After considering whom the target audience is for the use of the Tool (the leadership team), it was decided that the work that they will be doing is first more global and then more focused, therefore, the school became the persona. Also, the way the Tool is designed, it is intended to be used with all focus groups of the school, with much of the information used to populate the Tool being school wide. These personas were chosen because it represents the majority of schools in this district. While there are schools with greater professional development needs, oftentimes they have state or district interventions in place that are currently not accounted for in this Tool.

Two different school personas were chosen to illustrate the various types of schools in OCPS. School Persona A is an average performing Title I school. State grade has been a 'C' for the past three years and there is little turnover regarding staff members. It is a small neighborhood school of just about 500 students. Although having a primarily Hispanic population, the ELL population is relatively low, but still considerable. This persona was chosen because it characterizes many of the schools in this district in many ways.

School Persona B is a classic high-performing school. Set in an upper-middle class neighborhood with almost 1,000 students, they have a low ESE and ELL population. There is also little racial diversity with 70% of students being Caucasian. There is very little turnover

amongst staff and leadership, and not much has changed in instruction in the 10 years it has been open because they have always been an 'A' school. I chose this persona to exemplify a population in the district that is seeing change as a result of new standards and expectations. District leaders are concerned that the school administrators and teachers at these schools are reluctant to change since they have had success in the past without needing to make adjustments. Many have speculated that these types of schools have been successful because the students come from a more affluent home life where parents are able to help their children in their academic performance. Exemplifying this type of school is useful in order to illustrate how to plan professional learning with limited resources.

The represented personas provide a view into how these schools' leadership teams could use the Tool to help them design focused professional learning at their school. In addition to the completed Tool, the examples also provide two other educative components: learning links and rationales. The learning links are there to provide more information on a particular concept or strategy. When the yellow-highlighted words are hovered over, a pop-up displays a brief definition. When clicked, it takes the reader to an online resource for more information. This allows the learning to be customized for the reader (see Appendix D for the pop-up descriptions and website addresses). The rationales are in the form of callouts, and provide further information regarding how and why decisions are made for each of the components of the Tool. The personas are also in blue text to differentiate the text from the Tool itself.

For purposes of this dissertation, the completed Tools have been made into figures following this introduction.

School-based Professional Learning Design Tool: School Persona A

How to Use this Tool

This tool is intended to be used by leadership teams at the school level. Although it is user-friendly, it is time consuming so plan on dedicating the necessary time to complete together. Also consider that you will need to collect data ahead of time and have available before meeting so plan accordingly.

Below is a process flow chart of the steps to be followed when using the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool. Each step is hyperlinked to a place in the tool where you will fill in the information needed.
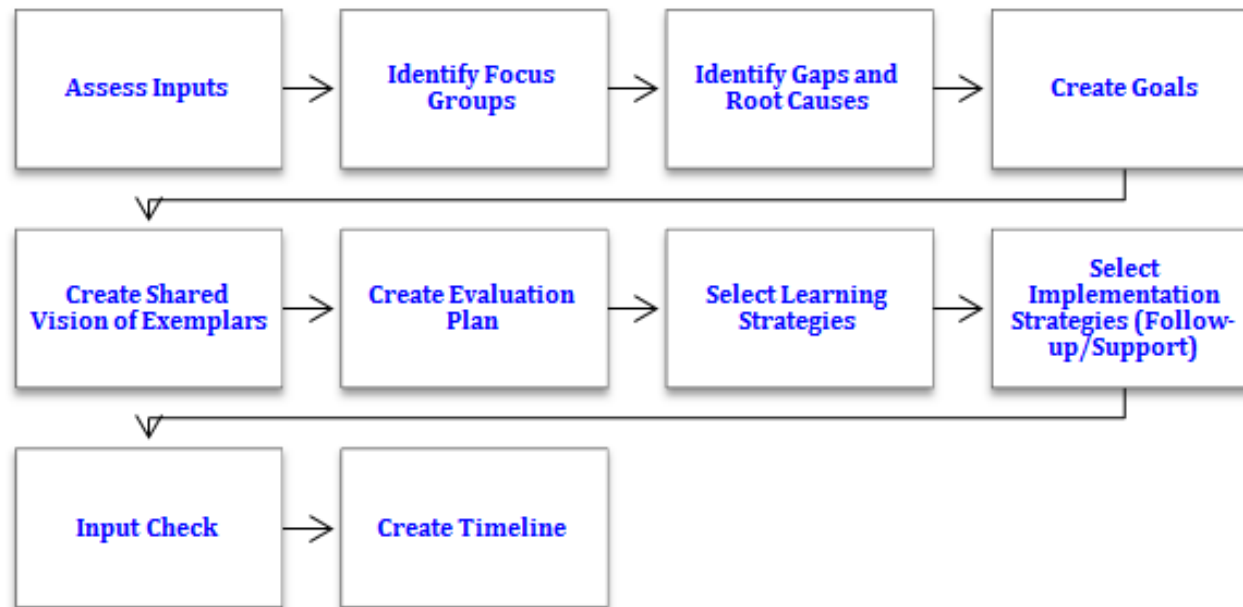
```
┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
│ Assess Inputs│ ──> │Identify Focus│ ──> │Identify Gaps │ ──> │ Create Goals │
│              │     │   Groups     │     │ and Root     │     │              │
│              │     │              │     │  Causes      │     │              │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
       │
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┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
│Create Shared │ ──> │   Create     │ ──> │Select        │ ──> │   Select     │
│ Vision of    │     │  Evaluation  │     │Learning      │     │Implementation│
│ Exemplars    │     │    Plan      │     │Strategies    │     │Strategies    │
│              │     │              │     │              │     │(Follow-      │
│              │     │              │     │              │     │up/Support)   │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
       │
       v
┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
│ Input Check  │ ──> │Create Timeline│
│              │     │              │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
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Figure 2: School-based Professional Learning Design Tool: School Persona A

<u>**Assess Inputs**</u> – It is important to keep these in mind as you design all aspects of professional learning at your school site. You may want to write them down on chart paper and post them on the walls as your team comes together to work on the plan.

Hard Inputs

Student Achievement Data	Student Data Source (specify student population and assessment)	Aggregate Data
	3rd – 5th grade district fall math benchmark On-grade level cut score > 50%	3rd - 22% of students were on grade level 4th – 40% of students were on grade level 5th – 57% of students were on grade level
	3rd – 5th grade district fall reading benchmark On-grade level cut score > 50%	3rd -46% of students were on grade level 4th – 43% of students were on grade level 5th – 52% of students were on grade level

Teacher Performance Data	Data Collection Method/Date: Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model	Area of Focus: (i.e. student engagement, instructional strategies, teacher content knowledge)	Aggregate Data and Trends
	Marzano – October 2014	E1 – Providing Rigorous Learning Goals and Performance Scales	57% of observations were rated at a beginning level (goal not aligned to standard or lesson)
	Marzano –October 2014	E7 & E15 – Organizing students to interact with content	61% of observations where this element was rated were less than the applying level.
	CWT – September 2014	Standards-aligned instruction	14% (3/22) of classrooms visited had standards-aligned instruction

Comment [SS3]: We chose to only use 3rd-5th grade data for three reasons:
1.It was the most aligned, reliable data we had available. K-2 students do not have non-diagnostic assessments that are standards aligned.
2.Since this is the first year for the new assessment, FSA, we wanted to focus most of our resources in the intermediate grades.
3. Our area superintendent team uses this data for school progress monitoring and we are responsible to them for improvement on this particular assessment.

Comment [SS4]: Although some aggregate evaluation data showed other areas (elements) with poorer performance, the leadership team discussed which of the elements were most aligned to instruction and rigor. After focusing in on those elements, we decided to select elements that, if improved upon, would result in the most academic gains.

Soft Inputs

1. Inventory:
   a. What are the resources you have available on campus (time, funds, staff, curriculum)?

- Teachers have two 45-minute planning blocks in the day
- Some Wednesday early-release days are available to use at teachers' discretions
- Coverage is available for teachers to visit other teachers in our school or another school
- Money has been set aside for the primary PD initiative of two half-day planning days per 9-weeks
- We have 4 instructional coaches
    - A Math/Science/STEM coach, who is also Marzano evaluator trained
    - An ELA coach
    - An MTSS coach
    - A behavior coach
- Two administrators who perform evaluations and support teachers
- Each teacher owns a copy of *Becoming a Reflective Teacher* by R. Marzano and has access to resources on iObservation
- Curriculum and Resources – GO Math!, CPALMS, Journeys (Reading), deconstructed standards documents, IMS Curriculum Resources
- District coaches' support
- PDS Online (District Online PD)
- GO Math PD Podcasts

   b. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of lesson plans.

Strengths-

- Sometimes detailed with teacher steps and teacher talk
- All math and reading standards clustered and on LP appropriately
- A sequence is evident

Weaknesses –

- Sporadically contain fleshed out activities
- When available, instructional activities not always aligned to the intent or depth of the standard
- Lesson sequence does not align to the progression of the elements in the Marzano Instructional Framework
- Sometimes just page numbers of the teacher edition
- Daily targets do not progress from introducing content to student processing and practice.

2. What are the current state and district initiatives and mandates affecting your school (competing for time)?

- Deliberate Practice – district mandated continuous improvement plan (district)
- Course scheduling - 90 minute reading block, 30 minute reading intervention (state)
- District meetings (admin and coaches)
- Core Connections writing trainings (district)
- School Improvement Plan goals and action steps (state)
- Student testing – district benchmark, CELLA (ELL students), state assessment (FSA), comprehensive end-of-course exams (CEOC's K-5)
- IStation student computer program (district)

3. Describe the following:
   a. Current culture and climate of the staff at your school-

Strengths-
- New administration is welcomed by entire staff
- New administration creates an open and friendly climate where risk-taking is encouraged
- New administration has brought more structure and organization to the school, as well as made expectations clear, which has led to staff being less confused and frustrated (as was with previous administration)
- Teachers are finally beginning to feel comfortable stepping out of their comfort zone and finding various resources to teach the standards, recognizing no one resource is 100% aligned
- They feel they have their creative license back to have fun with the kids
- All teams meet 2-3 times a week to authentically collaborate on lesson planning

Weaknesses –
- Teachers feel there is too much on their plates and feel over-worked and stressed (high number of absences and high number of illness amongst staff)
- Teachers feel there is not enough time to do everything that is expected and although they find creating their own curriculum liberating, they are frustrated that someone hasn't created something that is 100% aligned yet.
- Strong union presence advocates for strict compliance to the contract, and will bring up concerns that are not related to contract
- There are still teams where some members are not trusted by their team

Identify Focus Groups – Job-embedded professional learning is most effective when done in collaboration with others. After assessing all inputs, decide which groups of teachers are aligned with the data. The focus group can be a single teacher, grade-level team, a cohort team, grade-level band, or an entire school. Then assess other data to consider if this is the greatest area of need for these teachers.

- *Example: Marzano Evaluation data shows that five teachers are not effectively engaging students in content learning. We then looked at student data and also noticed below average student data when compared to their grade-level team. When considering all other data for these five teachers, we realized their lessons were aligned to the standards and the learning tasks were appropriately challenging and motivating. This led us to believe that if these five teachers improved their ability to actively engage students, student learning would improve. This is now a focus group since their learning opportunity is similar.*

Focus Group	Rationale for Selecting	Sub-Culture/Individual Considerations
3rd Grade Team D. Bales, F. Guilles, W. Boolay, T. Noles, M. Allen	Historically, most reading and math achievement data has hovered around 50%. The 3rd grade math data is considerably below the average.	• Team is new to working together • Beginning teacher dominates much of planning process • They plan together but will deviate from plans often and not share ideas
3rd Grade Teacher – D. Bales	Still a beginning teacher and math student data is one of the lowest on the team. Also, her evaluation data is consistently low and not improving.	• Open to feedback from coaches • In a masters math and science program • Not reflective regarding her own instructional practices

Identifying Gaps – Using the data collected on student achievement and teacher performance, write a gap statement. The gap statement should include the assessment tool, evaluator information, assessment data and timeframe, the expected performance, and the gap in performance.

- *Example: The administrative and leadership team at the school conducted 4 informal observations of each teacher grades 3-5 at the beginning of the school year. Using the evaluation tool to assess the level of effectiveness, the evaluators rated the teachers' use of the student engagement strategy using the continuum on the scale and the results showed that of the five teachers in the focus group, 25% of the time or less the teachers attained the "applying" level for this element. Since the goal is to have all teachers at the "applying" level, 75% of the time, the gap is 50%.*

Focus Group	Gap
3rd Grade Team	Administrators conducted 4 informal observations using the Marzano Evaluation Model on the 5 teachers. Of the 20 math classroom observations, only 4, or 25%, were rated at the applying level for E1. Expected performance is 75% or greater of the observations should be at the applying level. The gap is therefore 50%.
3rd Grade Teacher – D. Bales	Administrators conducted 4 informal observations using the Evaluation Model. Of the 4 classroom observations, only 1, or 25%, was rated at the applying level for E7. Expected performance is 75% or greater of the observations should be at the applying level. The gap is therefore 50%.

Root Cause Analysis

After identifying the gap, begin to dig deeper to identify the root cause of why the gap exists. Keep asking why until you identify root causes in the areas of knowledge, skills, and mindset. Using what your team knows about the teachers and the context, select the root cause that will yield the most growth.

- *Example: The possible root causes are below. From what we know of the teachers, we believe it is a mindset gap.*

  - *Knowledge gap: does not know effective strategies for student engagement*
  - *Skill gap: uses ineffective strategies for student engagement OR uses engagement strategies ineffectively or incorrectly*

  - *Mindset gap: believes that students are sufficiently engaged and is not motivated by student responses to change engagement strategies (lack of withitness).*

Focus Group	Root Cause
3rd Grade Team	Root cause is teachers do not know *how* to efficiently deconstruct a standard into targets and create lesson plans aligned to those targets. Therefore, it is a **SKILL gap**.
3rd Grade Teacher – D. Bales	After meeting with the teacher, root cause is teacher does not believe her students can work cooperatively together because of behavior. After observing her class, her classroom management skills lack the ability to set students up for success in cooperative learning. Therefore, it is a **mindset gap that is caused by a SKILL gap.**

Create Goals – Goals should be aligned to data collected used to identify focus group and gap, and it should be written as a ==SMART Goal==. SMART Goals are specific, measurable, attainable, results-focused, and time-bound.

- *Example: By the end of the semester, cohort group A, will be rated "applying" 75% of classroom visits according to observation data collected using the Marzano Evaluation Model.*

Focus Group	SMART Goal
3rd Grade Team	By the end of January, 75% of collective 3rd grade math classroom observations will be rated at applying for E1. Also, as a result of improved instruction, student on-grade-level data on spring math benchmark will improve by 20% or more.
3rd Grade Teacher – D. Bales	By the end of February, 75% of classroom observations will be rated at applying for E7 or E15.

Create Shared Vision of Exemplars – It is very important to build consensus as a leadership team as to what meeting those goals looks like so that everyone is involved in supporting the focus group of teachers. In order to build consensus, write down what it will look like and sound like for teachers to meet the goal.

- *Example: Teachers who are meeting their goal of increasing student engagement will have classrooms where over 50% of the students are actively cognitively engaged in the task. This means students are talking about the content, using the appropriate vocabulary, collaborating, asking questions, and staying on task. This does not mean students are compliant only.*

Focus Group	Vision of Exemplar
3rd Grade Team	Teachers who are meeting the goal of standards aligned instruction will have unit goals displayed that use the language of the standard, as well as daily targets that align to the skills and concepts in the standard. Instruction will also be explicitly and clearly related to those targets.
3rd Grade Teacher – D. Bales	When students are actively collaborating, they are following procedures and expectations for conversations and contributions, ultimately, staying on task. They are also deepening their understanding of the content evidenced by the types of questions, conjectures, and conclusions they develop through the collaboration.

Create Evaluation Plan – Every plan should have an assessment component to determine whether the plan was successful. Having already created a goal and an exemplar, the summative plan is already in place. Formative assessments need to be planned throughout the learning time frame to make adjustments as needed. Data collection for formative assessments need to be aligned to the goal but can take on many forms – it does not have to be quantitative data only.

- *Example: The following could be some different formative assessment types -*
  - *Individual teacher reflection after a learning experience*
  - *Student observation – anecdotal notes of student discourse as evidence of cognitive engagement*
  - *Informal observations with the Marzano Evaluation Model*
  - *Coaching notes*

Focus Group	Assessments
3rd Grade Team	Lesson plan review by math coach for each unit
	Informal observations by math coach
	Common assessment data review for each unit by coach
3rd Grade Teacher – D. Bales	Teacher reflection
	Informal classroom observations by coach
	Coach's notes from debriefs

Comment [SS1]: Reviewing lesson plans by unit allows the coach to see if the plan for instruction has a good foundation. It all starts with a plan. In the plan you are able to see if the learning goal is aligned to the standard. Also, since a new expectation for this team will be to include targets drawn out from the standard(s), the lesson plan should include these. The lesson sequence and activities should also show the progression of learning towards each of those targets. Having a solid plan to teach from is foundational to improved lessons.

Comment [SS2]: In order to see if the lessons are being executed as planned, observations are needed. If the plans are created well and instruction does not follow the plans, then we would need to begin looking for other causes such as lack of skill (in using lesson plans to deliver instruction) or motivation.

Comment [SS3]: Ultimately, if plans are created with aligned goals, targets, and activities, the results should show up in student data since our goal with all of this is to increase student achievement.

Comment [SS4]: Since the teacher is unmotivated because she *thinks* her students cannot work cooperatively, having evidence of her mindset change is important because it shows growth in her ability to provide cooperative learning structures in her class and how it is related to student success in working cooperatively.

Comment [SS5]: In order to see if the new skills of providing cooperative learning structures in her class are being acquired and implemented, observational data is needed.

Comment [SS6]: Part of realizing whether skills have been acquired and mindset regarding the connection between structure and successful student cooperation has changed, comes from debriefing over lessons with the teacher. The coach's accounts and notes from these debriefs can serve as a valid assessment.

Select Learning Strategies – There are many different options for school-based learning. Each strategy has a different focus and purpose. It is important to select the strategy or strategies that will provide the most appropriate learning experience given the kind of gap that has been identified. Below are some of the most common strategies available at the school level. Since job-embedded professional learning occurs best in collegial collaboration, take into consideration that when selecting strategies for learning *or* support, that at least one should include some form of collaboration, if appropriate. Each strategy has been identified as primarily targeting knowledge, skills, or mindset gaps (in priority order). Please note, this does not mean that a strategy *only* targets those kinds of gaps.

School-based Professional Learning Strategies

		GAP	
Instructional Strategy	*Knowledge*	*Skill*	*Mindset*
Action Research	x	x	X
Book study	X		
Coaching cycle		X	x
Face-to-face training	X	x	
Instructional Rounds	x	X	X
Lesson Study		X	x
Modeling (coach or video)	X	X	x
Observation-Feedback cycle		X	x
Online modules	X		
Peer Mentor	x	X	x
Peer observation	x	X	
PLC Collaborative meetings - common planning, data analysis, etc.	X	x	
Side-by-Side Coaching	x	X	x
Study of student artifacts	x		X

X = Instructional strategy strongly suggested for the gap
x = Instructional strategy suggested for the gap

Focus Group	Learning Strategies
3rd Grade Team	Modeling
	Side-by-Side Coaching
	Lesson Study
3rd Grade Teacher – D. Bales	Modeling
	Side-by-Side Coaching
	Coaching Cycle

Select Implementation Strategies – In order for teacher performance and behavior to change, <mark>follow-up support</mark> to the learning strategies must be embedded throughout the plan. Ultimately, the goal is capacity-building so consider these strategies as scaffolds to getting teachers to eventually learn and own the strategy without any assistance.

- *Example: Since the learning strategies included the coaching cycle, coach feedback would be appropriate. As a follow-up to the modeling, individual reflection with an action plan would be the most aligned. As a way to add collegial collaboration, collaborative reflection will also be used.*

School-based Implementation Strategies (follow-up/support)

- Administrator/coach feedback
- Peer feedback
- Real-time application and reflection
- Collaborative Reflection
- Individual Reflection with an action plan
- Facilitated implementation (i.e. co-planning or co-teaching with coach support)

Focus Group	Follow-up with Support
3rd Grade Team	Facilitated Implementation
	Administrator/coach feedback
3rd Grade Teacher – D. Bales	Coach feedback
	Individual reflection

Comment [SS1]: Similar to side-by-side coaching, facilitated implementation means that the support staff member (i.e. coach), is there to help implement the new learning. In this case, the coach would continue to plan with the team even after responsibility has been handed off to the team to ensure continued implementation of the new skills, as well as support in classrooms during instruction of that lesson.

Comment [SS2]: It is important for feedback to be given in relation to the goal for these learning experiences. As a coach, stepping out of the facilitator role and assessing progress is important for continued growth. As an administrator, feedback is needed to affirm successful acquisition of new skills.

Comment [SS3]: Since this teacher has been working with the coach as part of her learning, feedback is important so that she continues to change her practice and try new things.

Comment [SS4]: Part of the gap for this teacher was her mindset. Individual reflection allows us to gauge how that has change, as well as helps her see how her changes have led to student changes.

Input Check- All of the inputs assessed at the beginning of this process are vital to the success

of your plan. It is time to make sure that all factors affecting planned professional learning will

not hinder the effectiveness of the plan. The goal is to answer "yes" to each of these questions. If

there are any "no" answers, stop and discuss the necessary changes needed to maximize success.

- Do you have the necessary resources (i.e. time, funds, staff, materials, etc.)?
- Are the learning strategies appropriate given the culture/climate/relationships of the focus group and the school?
- Are the systems and structures in place going to support success (i.e. existing workloads, external district/state support, competing initiatives, etc.)?

Create Timeline – All plans must have actionable steps that are time bound. Create a calendar

that is most familiar or comfortable with your team that includes the following:

- Learning strategies (specific dates for frequency)
- Implementation strategies (specific dates for frequency)
- The person responsible for each
- Formative assessment data collection (specific dates for frequency)
- Summative assessment data collection (specific end date)
- Person responsible for monitoring fidelity and check-in dates.

School-based Professional Learning Design Tool: School Persona B

How to Use this Tool

This tool is intended to be used by leadership teams at the school level. Although it is user-friendly, it is time consuming so plan on dedicating the necessary time to complete together. Also consider that you will need to collect data ahead of time and have available before meeting so plan accordingly.

Below is a process flow chart of the steps to be followed when using the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool. Each step is hyperlinked to a place in the tool where you will fill in the information needed.
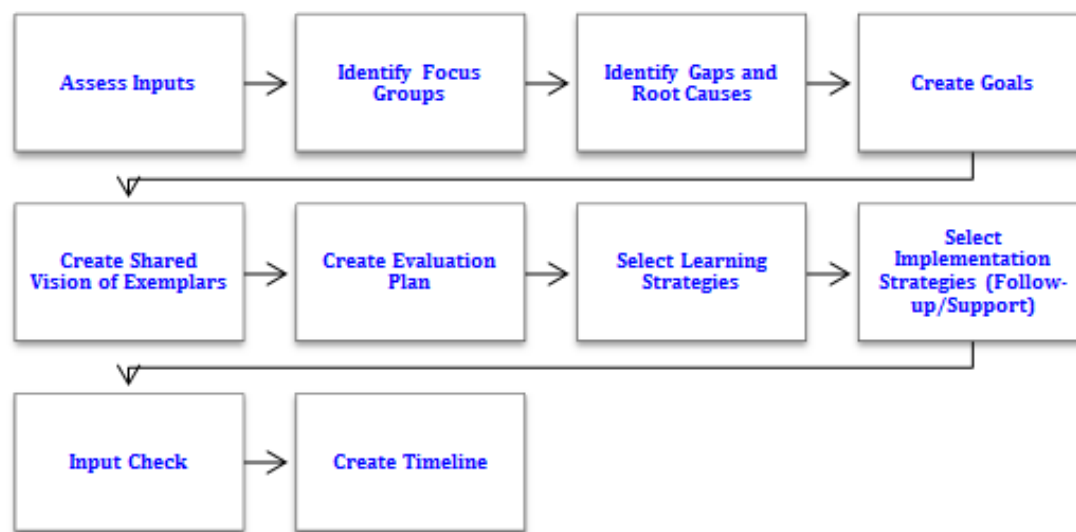

Figure 3: School-based Professional Learning Design Tool: School Persona B

Assess Inputs – It is important to keep these in mind as you design all aspects of professional learning at your school site. You may want to write them down on chart paper and post them on the walls as your team comes together to work on the plan.

Hard Inputs

Student Achievement Data	Student Data Source (specify student population and assessment)	Aggregate Data
	3rd – 5th grade district fall reading benchmark On-grade level cut score > 50%	3rd – 62% of students were on grade level 4th – 49% of students were on grade level 5th – 41% of students were on grade level
	3rd – 5th grade district fall math benchmark On-grade level cut score > 50%	3rd – 69% of students were on grade level 4th – 67% of students were on grade level 5th – 50% of students were on grade level

Teacher Performance Data	Data Collection Method/Date: Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model	Area of Focus: (i.e. student engagement, instructional strategies, teacher content knowledge)	Aggregate Data and Trends
	Marzano – October 2014	E 17 – Helping Students Examine Similarities and Differences	75% of observations where this Element was rated were below the applying level. This Element was rated only four times in 3rd – 5th grade teachers.
	Marzano – October 2014	E 18 – Helping Students Examine Their Reasoning	This Element was rated zero times.
	Marzano – October 2014	E 19 – Helping students Practice Skills, Strategies, and Processes	75% of observations where this Element was rated were below the applying level. This Element was rated only eight times in 3rd – 5th grade teachers.

Soft Inputs

1. Inventory:
    a. What are the resources you have available on campus (time, funds, staff, curriculum)?

> - Teachers have one 45-minute planning block in the day
> - Some Wednesday early-release days are available to use at teachers' discretions
> - We have an ELA coach and a CRT (Curriculum Resource Teacher), whose primary responsibilities include textbook administration and testing coordinator. (There is also a Compliance Coordinator and a Staffing Specialist but their duties are non-instructional)
> - Two administrators who perform evaluations and provide feedback
> - Each teacher owns a copy of *Becoming a Reflective Teacher* by R. Marzano and has access to resources on iObservation
> - Curriculum and Resources – GO Math!, CPALMS, Journeys (Reading), IMS (District supported resources), Ready Florida (reading and math curriculum support resources)
> - District coaches' feedback when they observe
> - PTA support (funds)

Comment [SS30]: When considering the resources we have to help support development in the areas of focus listed above, we are very limited since we are a non-Title I school.

b. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of lesson plans.

> Strengths-
>
> - All math and reading standards clustered and on LP appropriately
> - Learning goals and scales are appropriately aligned (primarily taken from the IMS Scope and Sequence district document)
>
> Weaknesses –
>
> - Limited learning sequence evident where teacher actions and student learning activities are not detailed
> - Most plans just denote page numbers in Teacher's Editions of adopted curriculum
> - Lesson sequence does not align to the progression of the elements in the Marzano Instructional Framework
> - Much of the necessary pieces just copied a pasted from IMS Scope and Sequence without regard for alignment to instruction

Comment [SS31]: This section was difficult to complete because administration did not set out expectations for lesson plans. Teacher were encouraged, but not required to use the District Lesson Plan template, therefore, there are different forms being used across teams. Also, the scarcity of the content made it difficult to find weaknesses so only the evident ones were listed.

2. What are the current state and district initiatives and mandates affecting your school (competing for time)?

- Deliberate Practice – district mandated continuous improvement plan (district)
- Course scheduling - 90 minute reading block, 30 minute reading intervention (state)
- Core Connections writing trainings (district)
- School Improvement Plan goals and action steps (state)
- Student testing – district benchmark, CELLA (ELL students), state assessment (FSA), comprehensive end-of-course exams (CEOC's K-5)
- IStation student computer program (district)

3. Describe the following:
    a. Current culture and climate of the staff at your school

Strengths –

- Teams stick together and share ideas and resources, and generally come to consensus on what to teach.
- Everyone seems happy and content with the work they do and there does not seem to be a culture of stress since there are not excessive demands placed on the teachers and all core instructional materials are provided for them.
- Administration and other members of the leadership team are liked and friendly with most staff members.
- Low turn-over and staff gets together outside of school hours for various functions (fitness competitions and races, birthday outings, etc.).

Weaknesses:

- Many teachers are adamant that what and how they are teaching is working because students are showing success on district-adopted curriculum assessments.
- Teachers complain when asked by the principal to deconstruct standards or look for external resources to meet the demands and depths of the standard. They claim the district's adopted curriculum should be enough since they are the experts and evaluated the materials before making the significant purchase.
- Some teachers are not satisfied with evaluation ratings and do not seem to understand the reason for their rating (evidenced by the post-observation conference with the principal).

b. Teachers' preparedness for change at your school-

> About 80% of the teachers are reluctant to change instruction. They have verbalized that they have all the standards-aligned resources they need because they are district-approved and purchased materials. Since their classroom assessments show the majority of their students on grade level, they have even less motivation to change. Although evaluation data in DQ3 is not high, such few observations have been done in those Elements, that most teachers are not affected by the lower ratings. The 20% of teachers who are less reluctant seem to be teachers with 1-4 years' experience. They still spend much of their time looking for resources online and creating materials to stock their classrooms.

c. Long-standing beliefs about what is valued-

> Appearances are highly valued at this school. Parents are largely invested stakeholders who make their needs and wants heard loud and clear. They are the school's #1 customer and they tend to get what they want. The school needs to look good. The staff is also expected give the right impression. Classrooms should look neat and organized – prioritized over evidence of rigorous learning. It is very important for administration and the staff to make sure the parents are happy.
> A more internal aspect of the school that is valued is that teachers get their work done primarily during the working hours. Leaving work at a reasonable hour to go home to young families is important. Many teachers have voiced that is one of the reasons they wanted to work at this school. When that precious "off-the-clock" time is threatened or compromised, directly or indirectly, it seems to go against the grain of how this school works.

d. Current work-load-

> - MTSS Progress Monitoring (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly)
> - Monthly data meetings to discuss individual student progress
> - Common planning meetings once a week and lesson plans uploaded weekly
> - Assigning assessments online for students

Identify Focus Groups – Job-embedded professional learning is most effective when done in collaboration with others. After assessing all inputs, decide which groups of teachers are aligned with the data. The focus group can be a grade-level team, a cohort team, grade-level band, or an entire school. Then assess other data to consider if this is the greatest area of need for these teachers.

In addition to identifying this group, describe the strengths and weaknesses of their specific culture.

- *Example: Marzano Evaluation data shows that five teachers are not effectively engaging students in content learning. We then looked at student data and also noticed below average student data when compared to their grade-level team. When considering all other data for these five teachers, we realized their lessons were aligned to the standards and the learning tasks were appropriately challenging and motivating. This led us to believe that if these five teachers improved their ability to actively engage students, student learning would improve. This is now a focus group since their learning opportunity is similar.*

Focus Group	Rationale for Selecting	Sub-Culture/Individual Considerations
3rd-4th Grade Teachers (10) 5th Grade Reading Teachers (2)	Student benchmark data in reading is the lowest it has been in over 3 years. Teacher observation data consistently shows teacher instruction is surface level and students are not getting opportunities to deepen knowledge or apply and transfer what they have learned.	For the most part, teachers work well together. A few of the newer teachers have started banding together across grade levels because they share non-traditional ideas.
5th Grade Math Teachers (2)	Lowest student benchmark data in math across 3rd-5th and a considerable drop since last year's scores. Teacher observation data shows teachers are not providing students opportunities to apply math knowledge and skills in authentic and real world ways. Anecdotal observation notes also indicate that teachers are teaching surface level mathematics and "tricks" and procedures only resulting in limited conceptual understanding.	Both math teachers are veteran teachers with 20+ years' experience each. They have both expressed how they don't know why they need to teach this "new math" and that the way they learned it worked just fine. They blame the benchmark assessment for being a poorly constructed test because their unit tests indicate most students are on grade level. They meet only once a week to discuss what they have already planned.

Identifying Gaps – Using the data collected on student achievement and teacher performance, write a gap statement. The gap statement should include the assessment tool, evaluator information, assessment data and timeframe, the expected performance, and the gap in performance.

- *Example: The administrative and leadership team at the school conducted 4 informal observations of each teacher grades 3-5 at the beginning of the school year. Using the evaluation tool to assess the level of effectiveness, the evaluators rated the teachers' use of the student engagement strategy using the continuum on the scale and the results showed that of the five teachers in the focus group, 25% of the time or less the teachers attained the "applying" level for this element. Since the goal is to have all teachers at the "applying" level, 75% of the time, the gap is 50%.*

Focus Group	Gap
3rd-4th Grade Teachers (10) 5th Grade Reading Teachers (2)	Administrators conducted 3 informal observations using the Marzano evaluation protocol on the 12 teachers. Of the 36 classroom observations, only 6, or about 17%, were rated at the applying level for Element 17 – Helping Students Examine Similarities and Differences. Expected performance is 75% or greater of the observations should be at the applying level. The gap is therefore 58%.
5th Grade Math Teachers (2)	Administrators conducted 4 informal observations of each of the two teachers using the Marzano Evaluation protocols. Of the 8 observations conducted, Element 19 – Helping students Practice Skills, Strategies, and Processes in DQ 3 was only rated twice at the Applying level and Element 18 – Helping Students Examine Their Reasoning was never observed. Since school-wide teacher performance data indicates a lack of teaching for deeper understanding, the goal will focus on Element 18. Since expected performance is 75% or greater of the observations should be at the Applying level, the gap is therefore 75% since there are no observations of this Element.

Root Cause Analysis

After identifying the gap, begin to dig deeper to identify the ==root cause== of why the gap exists.
Keep asking why until you identify root causes in the areas of ==knowledge, skills, and mindset==.
Using what your team knows about the teachers and the context, select the root cause that will
yield the most growth.

- *Example: The possible root causes are below. From what we know of the teachers, we
  believe it is a mindset gap.*
    - *Knowledge gap: does not know effective strategies for student engagement*
    - *Skill gap: uses ineffective strategies for student engagement OR uses engagement
      strategies ineffectively or incorrectly*
    - *Mindset gap: believes that students are sufficiently engaged and is not motivated
      by student responses to change engagement strategies (lack of withitness).*

Focus Group	Root Cause
3rd-4th Grade Teachers 5th Grade Reading Teachers	Teachers seem willing to try something new with support and without repercussions if it fails. They have been using the adopted curriculum resources for some time so they don't *know* other strategies to help their students go deeper with content. Therefore, it is a KNOWLEDGE gap.
5th Grade Math Teachers	Teachers have expressed they don't see the need to change instruction and curriculum test results are adequately indicating students are mastering skills. The priority gap is a MINDSET gap.

Create Goals – Goals should be aligned to data collected used to identify focus group and gap,
and it should be written as a ==SMART Goal==. SMART Goals are specific, measurable, attainable,
results-focused, and time-bound.

- *Example: By the end of the semester, cohort group A, will be rated "applying" 75% of
  classroom visits according to observation data collected using the Marzano Evaluation
  Model.*

Focus Group	SMART Goal
3rd-4th Grade Teachers 5th Grade Reading Teachers	By the end of January, 75% of collective classroom observations will be rated at Applying for Element 17 – Helping Students Examine Similarities and Differences
5th Grade Math Teachers	By the end of January, 75% of classroom observations will be rated at Developing or Applying for Element 18 – Helping Students Examine Their Reasoning.

Create Shared Vision of Exemplars – It is very important to build consensus as a leadership team as to what meeting those goals looks like so that everyone is involved in supporting the focus group of teachers. In order to build consensus, write down what it will look like and sound like for teachers to meet the goal.

- *Example: Teachers who are meeting their goal of increasing student engagement will have classrooms where over 50% of the students are actively cognitively engaged in the task. This means students are talking about the content, using the appropriate vocabulary, collaborating, asking questions, and staying on task. This does not mean students are compliant only.*

Focus Group	Vision of Exemplar
3rd-4th Grade Teachers 5th Grade Reading Teachers	Teachers who are meeting the goal of having students examine similarities and differences are modeling the thinking and processes involved throughout the different strategies used to compare (Venn Diagram, comparison matrix, etc.). Students are using these various strategies independently or in a small group. Teachers also model how to use the new information gained from comparing to write a summary of what they learned, and then students apply it independently.
5th Grade Math Teachers	Teachers will provide opportunities for students to examine their reasoning various times throughout each unit – first in whole group with class discussion, then independently and in small groups. Students will openly justify their reasoning to their peers and ask each other questions to clarify.

Create Evaluation Plan – Every plan should have an assessment component to determine whether the plan was successful. Having already created a goal and an exemplar, the summative plan is already in place. Formative assessments need to be planned throughout the learning time frame to make adjustments as needed. Data collection for formative assessments need to be aligned to the goal but can take on many forms – it does not have to be quantitative data only.

- *Example: The following could be some different formative assessment types -*
    - *Individual teacher reflection after a learning experience*
    - *Student observation – anecdotal notes of student discourse as evidence of cognitive engagement*
    - *Informal observations with the Marzano Evaluation Model*
    - *Coaching notes*

Focus Group	Assessments
3rd-4th Grade Teachers 5th Grade Reading Teachers	Lesson plan review by reading coach Unrated classroom walkthroughs Student artifact collection
5th Grade Math Teachers	Unrated classroom walkthroughs Student observation Informal teacher reflection (conversation)

Comment [SS1]: Although the gap is in knowledge, the goal is for teachers to use the new strategy after learning about it; therefore, implementation of the new strategy should be evident in their lesson plans.

Comment [SS2]: Classroom walkthrough data is an effective way to observe how the strategy is being implemented (and whether it is being implemented at all). It is unrated so that teachers don't feel pressured and feel comfortable to take the risks of trying out a new strategy. Walkthrough data will also provide our administrator with a picture of how well the strategy is being implemented and if the students are exhibiting the desired effect.

Comment [SS3]: Since we identified exemplar to include students producing summaries, holding teachers accountable to this will help motivate them to fully implement the new strategy. The reading coach and administrator will review the student artifacts.

Comment [SS4]: In the beginning stages of teaching the strategy the math teachers are implementing, student discourse is the primary evidence for evaluating how well it is being taught.

Comment [SS5]: Since the primary gap these teachers are facing has to do with their mindsets, it is important to gauge what they think about the process of using a very different strategy than what they are used to. In order to take into consideration their expressed concerns (and resistance),

Select Learning Strategies – There are many different options for school-based learning. Each strategy has a different focus and purpose. It is important to select the strategy or strategies that will provide the most appropriate learning experience given the kind of gap that has been identified. Below are some of the most common strategies available at the school level. Since job-embedded professional learning occurs best in collegial collaboration, take into consideration that when selecting strategies for learning *or* support, that at least one should include some form of collaboration, if appropriate. Each strategy has been identified as primarily targeting knowledge, skills, or mindset gaps (in priority order). Please note, this does not mean that a strategy *only* targets those kinds of gaps.

- *Example: Since we are targeting a skill gap (lack of withitness), the team has decided to use modeling and the coaching cycle with this focus group.*

School-based Professional Learning Strategies

		GAP	
Instructional Strategy	*Knowledge*	*Skill*	*Mindset*
Action Research	x	x	X
Book study	X		
Coaching cycle		X	x
Face-to-face training	X	x	
Instructional Rounds	x	X	X
Lesson Study		X	x
Modeling (coach or video)	X	X	x
Observation-Feedback cycle		X	x
Online modules	X		
Peer Mentor	x	X	x
Peer observation	x	X	
PLC Collaborative meetings - common planning, data analysis, etc.	X	x	x
Side-by-Side Coaching	x	X	x
Study of student artifacts	x		X

X = Instructional strategy strongly suggested for the gap
x = Instructional strategy suggested for the gap

Focus Group	Learning Strategies
3rd-4th Grade Teachers 5th Grade Reading Teachers	Book study Online modules PLC Collaborative meetings
5th Grade Math Teachers	Action Research Study of student artifacts

Select Implementation Strategies – In order for teacher performance and behavior to change, follow-up support to the learning strategies must be embedded throughout the plan. Ultimately, the goal is capacity-building so consider these strategies as scaffolds to getting teachers to eventually learn and own the strategy without any assistance.

- *Example: Since the learning strategies included the coaching cycle, coach feedback would be appropriate. As a follow-up to the modeling, individual reflection with an action plan would be the most aligned. As a way to add collegial collaboration, collaborative reflection will also be used.*

School-based Implementation Strategies (follow-up/support)

- Administrator/coach feedback
- Peer feedback
- Real-time application and reflection
- Collaborative Reflection
- Individual Reflection with an action plan
- Facilitated implementation (i.e. co-planning or co-teaching with coach support)

Focus Group	Follow-up with Support
3rd-4th Grade Teachers 5th Grade Reading Teachers	Reading coach and administrator feedback Collaborative reflection
5th Grade Math Teachers	Real-time application and reflection Administrator feedback

Input Check- All of the inputs assessed at the beginning of this process are vital to the success of your plan. It is time to make sure that all factors affecting planned professional learning will not hinder the effectiveness of the plan. The goal is to answer "yes" to each of these questions. If there are any "no" answers, stop and discuss the necessary changes needed to maximize success.

- Do you have the necessary resources (i.e. time, funds, staff, materials, etc.)?
- Are the learning strategies appropriate given the culture/climate/relationships of the focus group?
- Are the systems and structures in place going to support success (i.e. existing workloads, external district/state support, competing initiatives, etc.)?

Create Timeline – All plans must have actionable steps that are time bound. Create a calendar that is most familiar or comfortable with your team that includes the following:

- Learning strategies (specific dates for frequency)
- Implementation strategies (specific dates for frequency)
- The person responsible for each
- Formative assessment data collection (specific dates for frequency)
- Summative assessment data collection (specific end date)
- Person responsible for monitoring fidelity and check-in dates.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The look and feel of professional development can vary in many ways, but some things remain constant, in particular, its goal – improved teacher performance and student learning. It is not an easy feat to accomplish however. As I have experienced in my field of work and uncovered in the literature, there are many other considerations which must be factored in for schools to plan and implement successful professional learning. Although the literature provides decades worth of research regarding what is important to include in PD, and policies have been put in place so that schools and districts make PD a priority, the gap between theory and practice still exists in schools today. In this chapter, I will be reviewing how the gap is framed within the context of theory, policy, and practice; how it relates to the problem of practice in Orange County Public Schools; and how well this need is met with the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool. Limitations in the design of the Tool will then be discussed, concluding with future plans for the continued design, implementation, and refinement of the Tool.

Discussion and Summary

Throughout the work that I have done as a classroom teacher and a teacher leader and coach, I have witnessed the disparity amongst schools to provide a comprehensive, cohesive, and effective professional learning plan. In framing the problem, it became evident that it mostly exists at the practitioner level. Professional learning has long-been studied and there are countless articles and books written about the many facets of PD. The reason professional

development at the school level is not as effective as it could be is not for lack of information and guidance (theory) on what makes it effective. Oftentimes reform efforts are unsuccessful because policy does not change in order to create the systems or structures necessary for those reform efforts to take root and thrive. In the case of professional development, I do not believe that is the case. With the introduction of grants like the School Improvement Grant and the Race to the Top fund, as well as standards for professional learning at the national and state level, schools and districts are encouraged, and in many cases, expected to build the capacity of their teacher corps. With theory and policy sufficient and in place to support effective implementation of professional learning at the school level, the missing piece is at the practitioner level. Some researchers have identified areas in practice that may be responsible for this gap – lack of accountability, variability across schools, and lack of staff trained in professional development.

After framing the problem within theory, policy, and practice, I looked closely at how it was conceptualized within my organization, OCPS. To date, Orange County's organizational structure has rocked back and forth between a more centralized governance, to a decentralized one, and now somewhat of a hybrid. As a result of this, the role of PD provider has switched between the schools and the district. Until recently, when the responsibility laid with the schools, administrators solely would decide what to plan for PD and how to implement and evaluate it, if at all. Since major federal initiatives, the state of Florida has created and implemented the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol to not only provide standards for PD, but also to evaluate schools and districts on the effectiveness of professional development at their levels. In addition to the protocol standards, a district Master Inservice Plan details how

they would implement those standards at the district and school levels. The district's plan for implementing the Evaluation Protocol standards lies with the Instructional Coach at each school. The district provides training and support for the ICs to use the Evaluation Protocol at their school sites, but high turnover and lack of accountability have resulted in haphazard implementation. Along with the Inservice Plan and Evaluation Protocol, currently, the School Improvement Plan also provides some guidance and requires accountability of the schools regarding their PD plan, but it is mostly still viewed as a compliance piece.

Once the problem was understood in terms of the organization, a synthesis of the national and international literature was warranted to determine two things: effective best-practices in PD and what frameworks or tools were already in place to bridge the gap between theory and practice. As mentioned earlier, professional development has been studied for many years, and after conducting a synthesis of seminal and current literature, there are elements of successful professional learning plans that were evident throughout. Within that same search, no single framework or tool was found that guided school leaders in creating a comprehensive professional learning plan that included the incorporation of best-practices in PD from the literature, including taking into consideration the culture and context of the school or organization, and a plan for evaluation using data.

The problem of practice was then concluded as school-level professional development is arbitrarily planned, resulting in variable outcomes. I believe the reason for this is schools lack a comprehensive framework or tool that guides the design of a professional learning plan and incorporates best practices in PD, including standards; takes into consideration the culture and

context of the organization, including competing demands; and incorporates an aligned

evaluation plan that uses formative assessments and data. From this identified problem, the

School-based Professional Learning Design Tool was created.

Initial Goals Assessment

When beginning the design of the Tool, I considered what already existed in the

literature, evaluated what was in place at the district, and what was expected in policy. Out of

this synthesis I developed the overarching goals for the Tool:

1. Guide LTs in determining the root cause of the gap in student learning and teacher instruction

2. Lead LTs in planning appropriate and organic PD within the unique context of their school

3. Align the LTs PD plan and efforts to the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol Standards, including a plan for evaluation

4. Be educative in nature through rationales and worked examples (personas)

Although the Tool is only in its initial design phase, after completion of the first iteration, an

assessment of the Tool against its goals is warranted.

In the first goal, the Tool was to guide leadership teams through the process of

determining root causes to gaps in performance. The first steps in the process outlined in the

Tool have LTs analyze their student achievement and teacher performance data to select focus

areas to include in their plan. Using data to identify gaps in performance, another process further

in the Tool, allows the team to begin the root cause analysis and identification of the gap in learning. This approach is vital to implementing viable solutions to real problems in practice because identifying the root cause allows the team to address the real problem, not just the symptoms. When the team gets to the process of identifying root causes, the Tool does not specifically scaffold or guide the team through the process. As part of the educative components, it does however provide support. Since most administrators have been trained on root cause analysis, the term "root cause" is highlighted and linked to further study how to conduct a RCA for those LTs who still need further direction, therefore meeting the first goal of guiding teams through determining the root cause.

With the incorporation of student achievement data and teacher performance data to guide the root cause analysis, part of the second goal - selection of goals and learning strategies for professional learning - should be completely aligned. The Tool supports LTs in selecting organic learning strategies that will help close the gaps in learning already identified by providing a list of common professional learning strategies available at the school level. This part of the Tool has three educative components: pre-identified strategies aligned to gaps in learning, further study available for less common strategies via learning links, and rationales in the worked examples of the personas. The other part of this second goal is that the Tool guides LTs in considering the culture and context of their school and each focus group when selecting these strategies. Although I believe the Tool sufficiently provides guidance in selecting aligned learning strategies through the embedded components just mentioned, some support is lacking in helping LTs assess the soft inputs (culture/climate, teacher's preparedness for change, etc.) and

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use them to guide selection of the learning strategies. The Tool does require LTs to take an inventory of the soft inputs in order to frame their planning process, as well as consider and describe the sub-culture of the focus group. However, when selecting the strategies, using that information is overlooked. While the Input Check in the Tool does have the team go back to assess the created plan against the soft inputs, more educative components are necessitated to help them use the information from the soft inputs in making decisions; in particular, teacher preparedness for change and learning. An examination of the literature on adult learning theory could inform the development of this need in the Tool.

The third goal of the Tool is to guide LTs through the cycle prescribed in the Florida Evaluation Protocol – planning, learning, implementing, and evaluating. As illustrated in Table 5, each process in the Tool guides the LT through the four stages in the Protocol. The Tool itself helps teams created a *plan* that is aligned to data. The process of selecting strategies identifies the *learning* to take place. The Tool also has teams identify strategies to ensure professional learning is sustained and *implemented.* An improvement to this section could include a list of implementation strategies and types of formative assessments for LTs to choose from to scaffold their learning. The use of data to select focus groups, create goals, and create formative assessments does partially align to the evaluation piece of the cycle. However, when looking closely at the school-level evaluation standards (see Appendix C), the Tool does not guide leadership teams through a summative assessment of the plan itself and its effects on student and teacher learning. More research on program evaluation would need to be conducted to develop or modify one that would encompass those goals.

The last overarching goal of this Tool is for it to be educative because of the variability in teacher leader and administrator levels of experience and expertise. With educative elements such as the list of strategies, learning links, rationales, and personas, the Tool provides a suitable amount of requested-by-user support to help enable teams to complete a comprehensive plan. There are particular areas in which more of the same educative elements could have been extended into, for example, the previously mentioned soft inputs with theories on adult learning, as well as the summative evaluation. Although the possibilities are endless, as cited in chapter three, it should only be one of many approaches to learning about professional development strategies and plans (Davis and Krajcik, 2005).

In summary, the initial phases of this design have yielded a Tool that I believe has met most of the goals it set out to accomplish. Although there are areas for development, I hope that future work with expert panel reviews and a program pilot will produce an enhanced Tool that will lead to improved teacher performance and student learning.

<center>Limitations</center>

In chapter two, I outlined the scope of this project. In review, the completed design will take four phases and this paper outlines phases one and two only. I also described how this Tool is not designed to be a comprehensive answer to the problems associated with a weak or absent professional learning plan, such as a hostile school climate or inexperienced leadership staff. In addition to the aforementioned scope, there are other limitations to the design of this Tool that

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will transcend future phases. In this section I will describe how the Tool is limited by lack of empirical evidence in PD and its non-prescriptive nature.

Lack of Empirical Evidence

An examination of the vast literature on professional development will produce common elements that researchers echo will produce improved teaching and student learning. However, when studies and meta-analyses have been conducted on the correlation and effects of professional learning on teacher practice and student achievement, very few can claim that any particular elements or programs always produced the desired outcomes (Croft et al., 2010; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Luke & McArdle, 2009, Yoon et al., 2007). Part of the problem in identifying PD elements and programs that are proven to be effective is that each learning context is unique and diverse and therefore cannot be replicated and applied to all settings (Guskey, 2003). It is also difficult to attribute success to any one particular aspect of professional development because of the other various factors that influence student learning that cannot be measured or taken into consideration. Throughout the literature, however, when professional development was successful, there were common elements threaded throughout. For purposes of this project, those are the elements considered best practices.

To this end, the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool is a best guess in helping schools incorporate best practices in PD while customizing the plan to the needs and context of their setting. After identifying those best practices in the literature in chapter one, they were all incorporated in the design and function of the Tool. But while the Tool will guide leadership teams through the process of creating an aligned plan, many factors, including the

team's capacity itself and the external demands placed on high-needs, low-performing schools can create variability and alter the effectiveness of the plan; therefore limiting the Tool's effectiveness.

Non-prescriptive Nature

The Tool is designed to take many school-based factors into consideration so LTs create a customized plan to meet their needs. And while the process draws out many hard and soft inputs affecting the creation of their plan, the ultimate decisions about what to do is up to them. The Tool is not designed to "tell" anyone what to do. It is intended as a guide to help LTs take into consideration certain aspects of their learning environment that might not have been previously considered. At no point do they plug information in and the Tool produces a prescription for what to plan. All decisions are left up the team. For this reason, educative elements were included. They help build the knowledge the team may need in order to make educated decisions regarding their plan. Guskey (2003) clearly makes a case for this when he wrote:

> It seems clear therefore, that differences in communities of school administrators, teachers, and students uniquely affect professional development processes and can strongly influence the characteristics that contribute to professional development effectiveness. Because of these powerful contextual influences, broad-brush policies and guidelines for best practices may never be completely accurate. Still, by carefully considering these contextual elements and making decisions based on specific evidence

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of student learning, visionary school leaders can better ensure that their professional development programs and activities will meet with success. (p.16).

Future Work

Since the scope of this project was only to move the design through the first two phases, there is still work to be done to produce a completed Tool. The refinement of the Tool takes it through the phase three where an expert panel reviews the design and helps inform continued iterations. Phase four completes the design by incorporating a summative program evaluation of the Tool. There are also additional ideas for the form and function of the Tool that I would have liked to include, but because of limited time and resources, will have to wait until the Tool is closer to the end of its design phase. And lastly, as an extension to the Tool, many supportive resources could help with full implementation of the Tool, making it a more robust and comprehensive Tool that could help all schools meet their learning needs.

Refinement

As with the goals for the Tools usability, the principles of design, outlined by Lidwell and his colleagues (2010), will be used with phase three and four of this project to refine the Tool and situate it in the broader context of professional development.

The process outlined in the Development Cycle principle creates a general structure for the other design principles that will be utilized. Using this principle takes a product through four stages of creation: requirements, design, development, and testing (Lidwell et al., 2010). In phases one and two of my project, the Tool has gone through the requirements stage and begun

to enter the design stage with the examination of literature, conceptualization of the organization, creation of design specifications, and initial draft of the Tool. Within the design stage, the inclusion of other design principles begins to evolve the product and make it ready for development and then testing.

Maintaining within the design stage, the next step for the development of the Tool is to include contributions and feedback from experts in the field. The use of collective brainstorming is a design principle called Design by Committee. This principle is "preferred when projects are quality-driven, requirements are complex, consequences of error are serious, or stakeholder buy-in is important," many of which apply to this project (Lidwell et al., 2010, Design by Committee). In order to make the Tool usable within various school settings around the country, an expert panel review will be sought with knowledgeable, diverse members, including professional development facilitators, district PD leaders, administrators, and coaches. As dialogue is recorded, and feedback is collected and synthesized, the Tool will be redeveloped using prototypes, and iterations will continue through the cycle until the Tool is ready for development and testing using a pilot, all recognized principles of design.

One aspect of the refinement process that I think is important to include is the improvement of the Tool's form and function. With today's society acclimating quickly to user-friendly technology, it is imperative for this Tool to be successfully integrated into the work of schools by creating a seamless user interface and making it available online. This would allow for more access to multi-media resources, as well as provide functions that improve the intended use of the Tool. Ideally, the information the user is inputting into the form would auto-populate

into an easy-to-read table so the completed plan is can be viewed on one document or pane, and the user can easily check for alignment of the plan its focus group and data. Putting the Tool online also allows for controlling how much of the Tool is available to view via navigation buttons, making it less daunting and easier to navigate rather than scrolling.

Once the Tool has been fully developed, it is ready for testing. This is the last stage in the Development Cycle. Testing a product in the real world with real people is typically known as piloting. During the pilot of a program, data is collected on various aspects of integration. Some of the data collected will include how well each component of the Tool met its goals, ease of use and reliability of each component, and feedback from the end users. Also included in this stage is a summative program evaluation of the Tool's effectiveness in bringing about change related to teacher and student learning in the ways the Tool intended.

As you can see from the level of refinement necessary to produce a Tool that is viable and successful at bringing about change at the school level, this process is going to be a lengthy one. But I believe this level of dedication to the Tool's development will fill a need, both in theory and in practice.

Supporting Resources

One of the main goals of the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool is to support schools in planning for professional development on their campuses. In and of itself, the Tool does not encompass all the necessary pieces to *implement* a plan optimally. There are many resources out there for coaching that could enhance the effectiveness of a school's PD plan. One way to supplement the Tool so that schools are more successful with their plan is to provide

supporting resources that align with the learning and implementation steps teams develop. Future work on the progression of this Tool could include providing supporting materials such as a face-to-face-training planning template, coaches' tracking log, and observation and feedback forms.

Other supporting materials that might be necessary for some schools are needs assessments. Researchers have concluded that successful professional development plans take teachers needs into consideration as they plan (Guskey, 2003; Luke & McArdle, 2009; Southworth, 2010). Some even purport that teachers should be involved in the decision making process through individual needs assessments (Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Nir & Bogler, 2008). In light of these findings, another way to extend the capacity of this Tool would be to include an individual needs assessment for teachers so that LTs can decide how to use that data when considering their inputs.

An organization's culture can also play a major role in whether professional learning and teamwork flourish (Croft et al., 2010). Although it is not within the scope of this project to "fix" organizational and cultural problems, I believe providing an organizational culture assessment, as a supporting resource, would be a useful tool that could help inform planning for leadership teams that are prepared to take those steps.

<u>In Summary</u>

The goal set out for this dissertation in practice was to identify a problem of practice within an organization and create a viable solution. In my years as a teacher and learner, I began to clearly see that all professional development was not created equal. I walked away from excellent learning experiences exhilarated and ready to conquer the world, and angry and

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frustrated from inadequate ones, knowing my colleagues felt the same. This began my love of professional development and my desire to change it for the better. After many years in the classroom examining PD as a participant, and then as a facilitator when I became an instructional coach, the problem of practice was becoming clearer to me. Then through the work of this program, I was able to identify and frame the problem of practice as a need for more guidance on effective professional development at the school level. The purpose of this dissertation was to create a solution for the lack of guidance for school-level leaders on how to develop a professional learning plan, taking into consideration the unique context and needs at their school site.

Through an examination and synthesis of the literature, along with the use of existing frameworks to situate the problem and solution, the idea for the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool was formed. Design of the Tool followed, after design specifications and goals were clearly articulated. In assessing whether the Tool met the goals it set out to accomplish, generally speaking yes. There were areas where further development is warranted however. The first one was the ability for the Tool to effectively guide LTs in assessing and taking into consideration the culture and context of their organization as the plan for PD. And the second one was the lack of a summative program assessment.

Next, limitations of the Tool were evaluated. Although suggestions of areas for improvement were mentioned when assessing the Tool against its goals, the limitations identified surpass future iterations of the Tool. The design of the Tool is primarily based on the extant literature in professional development, but within that same work, researchers admit there is no

program or universal elements that can provide empirical evidence for the effectiveness of PD partly because of the nature of research, but partly because each context is different. Also because of the unique settings in which educators practice, there is no prescription for creating a PD plan.

Lastly, I described the future work that would need to take place in order to fully develop the Tool and make it ready. This included continuing through the last two stages in the Development Cycle with an expert panel review, prototypes and iterations, and then finally piloting the design and collecting data and evaluating its effectiveness. Although the refinement of the Tool is necessary for a finished product, future work on the Tool also included optional enhancements. These were in the form of supplemental supporting resources such as coaching logs, observation forms, and needs assessments.

As I continue to look around at the field in which I work, speak with colleagues from around the nation, and read about the constant evolution of students and education in our country and in the world, it is clearly evident that there is a need for us educators to evolve as well. The need is not new, and as we continue to grow and change as a society, we will always have this need to grow and change with it. My hope with this project is to break down barriers to that continued growth for educators so that our love of learning is constantly being reignited, if not for ourselves, for our students.

APPENDIX A: LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Learning Communities - Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

Resources - Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

Learning Designs - Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

Outcomes - Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Leadership - Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

Data - Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

Implementation - Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change.

APPENDIX B: SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DESIGN TOOL

School-based Professional Learning Design Tool

How to Use this Tool

This tool is intended to be used by leadership teams at the school level. Although it is user-friendly, it is time consuming so plan on dedicating the necessary time to complete together. Also consider that you will need to collect data ahead of time and have available before meeting so plan accordingly.

Below is a process flow chart of the steps to be followed when using the School-based Professional Learning Design Tool. Each step is hyperlinked to a place in the tool where you will fill in the information needed.

```
┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│              │    │ Identify     │    │ Identify Gaps│    │              │
│ Assess Inputs│ →  │ Focus Groups │ →  │ and Root     │ →  │ Create Goals │
│              │    │              │    │ Causes       │    │              │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
        ↓
┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│ Create Shared│    │ Create       │    │ Select       │    │ Select       │
│ Vision of    │ →  │ Evaluation   │ →  │ Learning     │ →  │ Implementation│
│ Exemplars    │    │ Plan         │    │ Strategies   │    │ Strategies   │
│              │    │              │    │              │    │ (Follow-up/  │
│              │    │              │    │              │    │ Support)     │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
        ↓
┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│ Input Check  │ →  │ Create       │
│              │    │ Timeline     │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
```

Assess Inputs – It is important to keep these in mind as you design all aspects of professional learning at your school site. You may want to write them down on chart paper and post them on the walls as your team comes together to work on the plan.

Hard Inputs

Student Achievement Data	Student Data Source (specify student population and assessment)	Aggregate Data

Teacher Performance Data	Data Collection Method/Date: Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model	Area of Focus: (i.e. student engagement, instructional strategies, teacher content knowledge)	Aggregate Data and Trends

Soft Inputs

1. Inventory:
   a. What are the resources you have available on campus (time, funds, staff, curriculum)?

   b. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of lesson plans.

2. What are the current state and district initiatives and mandates affecting your school (competing for time)?

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3. Describe the following:
   a. Current ==culture and climate== of the staff at your school-

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   b. Teachers' preparedness for change at your school-

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   c. Long-standing beliefs about what is valued-

```




```

d. Current work-load-

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                             │
│                                                             │
│                                                             │
│                                                             │
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└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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<u>Identify Focus Groups</u> – Job-embedded professional learning is most effective when done in collaboration with others. After assessing all inputs, decide which groups of teachers are aligned with the data. The focus group can be a single teacher, grade-level team, a cohort team, grade-level band, or an entire school. Then assess other data to consider if this is the greatest area of need for these teachers.

- *Example: Marzano Evaluation data shows that five teachers are not effectively engaging students in content learning. We then looked at student data and also noticed below average student data when compared to their grade-level team. When considering all other data for these five teachers, we realized their lessons were aligned to the standards and the learning tasks were appropriately challenging and motivating. This led us to believe that if these five teachers improved their ability to actively engage students, student learning would improve. This is now a focus group since their learning opportunity is similar.*

Focus Group	Rationale for Selecting	Sub-Culture/Individual Considerations

<u>Identifying Gaps</u> – Using the data collected on student achievement and teacher performance, write a gap statement. The gap statement should include the assessment tool, evaluator information, assessment data and timeframe, the expected performance, and the gap in performance.

- *Example: The administrative and leadership team at the school conducted 4 informal observations of each teacher grades 3-5 at the beginning of the school year. Using the evaluation tool to assess the level of effectiveness, the evaluators rated the teachers' use of the student engagement strategy using the continuum on the scale and the results showed that of the five teachers in the focus group, 25% of the time or less the teachers attained the "applying" level for this element. Since the goal is to have all teachers at the "applying" level, 75% of the time, the gap is 50%.*

Focus Group	Gap

<u>Root Cause Analysis</u>

After identifying the gap, begin to dig deeper to identify the <mark>root cause</mark> of why the gap exists. Keep asking why until you identify root causes in the areas of <mark>knowledge, skills, and mindset</mark>. Using what your team knows about the teachers and the context, select the root cause that will yield the most growth.

- *Example: The possible root causes are below. From what we know of the teachers, we believe it is a mindset gap.*

    - *Knowledge gap: does not know effective strategies for student engagement*
    - *Skill gap: uses ineffective strategies for student engagement OR uses engagement strategies ineffectively or incorrectly*

- *Mindset gap: believes that students are sufficiently engaged and is not motivated by student responses to change engagement strategies (lack of withitness).*

Focus Group	Root Cause

<u>Create Goals</u> – Goals should be aligned to data collected used to identify focus group and gap, and it should be written as a <mark>SMART Goal</mark>. SMART Goals are specific, measurable, attainable, results-focused, and time-bound.

- *Example: By the end of the semester, cohort group A, will be rated "applying" 75% of classroom visits according to observation data collected using the Marzano Evaluation Model.*

Focus Group	SMART Goal

<u>Create Shared Vision of Exemplars</u> – It is very important to build consensus as a leadership team as to what meeting those goals looks like so that everyone is involved in supporting the focus group of teachers. In order to build consensus, write down what it will look like and sound like for teachers to meet the goal.

- *Example: Teachers who are meeting their goal of increasing student engagement will have classrooms where over 50% of the students are actively cognitively engaged in the task. This means students are talking about the content, using the appropriate vocabulary, collaborating, asking questions, and staying on task. This does not mean students are compliant only.*

Focus Group	Vision of Exemplar

Create Evaluation Plan – Every plan should have an assessment component to determine whether the plan was successful. Having already created a goal and an exemplar, the summative plan is already in place. Formative assessments need to be planned throughout the learning time frame to make adjustments as needed. Data collection for formative assessments need to be aligned to the goal but can take on many forms – it does not have to be quantitative data only.

- *Example: The following could be some different formative assessment types -*
    - *Individual teacher reflection after a learning experience*
    - *Student observation – anecdotal notes of student discourse as evidence of cognitive engagement*
    - *Informal observations with the Marzano Evaluation Model*
    - *Coaching notes*

Focus Group	Assessments

Select Learning Strategies – There are many different options for school-based learning. Each strategy has a different focus and purpose. It is important to select the strategy or strategies that will provide the most appropriate learning experience given the kind of gap that has been

identified. Below are some of the most common strategies available at the school level. Since job-embedded professional learning occurs best in collegial collaboration, take into consideration that when selecting strategies for learning *or* support, that at least one should include some form of collaboration, if appropriate. Each strategy has been identified as primarily targeting knowledge, skills, or mindset gaps (in priority order). Please note, this does not mean that a strategy *only* targets those kinds of gaps.

School-based Professional Learning Strategies

		GAP	
Instructional Strategy	*Knowledge*	*Skill*	*Mindset*
Action Research	x	x	X
Book study	X		
Coaching cycle		X	x
Face-to-face training	X	x	
Instructional Rounds	x	X	X
Lesson Study		X	x
Modeling (coach or video)	X	X	x
Observation-Feedback cycle		X	x
Online modules	X		
Peer Mentor	x	X	x
Peer observation	x	X	
PLC Collaborative meetings - common planning, data analysis, etc.	X	x	x
Side-by-Side Coaching	x	X	x
Study of student artifacts	x		X

X = Instructional strategy strongly suggested for the gap
x = Instructional strategy suggested for the gap

Focus Group	Learning Strategies

Select Implementation Strategies – In order for teacher performance and behavior to change, <mark>follow-up support</mark> to the learning strategies must be embedded throughout the plan. Ultimately, the goal is capacity-building so consider these strategies as scaffolds to getting teachers to eventually learn and own the strategy without any assistance.

- *Example: Since the learning strategies included the coaching cycle, coach feedback would be appropriate. As a follow-up to the modeling, individual reflection with an action plan would be the most aligned. As a way to add collegial collaboration, collaborative reflection will also be used.*

School-based Implementation Strategies (follow-up/support)

- Administrator/coach feedback
- Peer feedback
- Real-time application and reflection
- Collaborative Reflection
- Individual Reflection with an action plan
- Facilitated implementation (i.e. co-planning or co-teaching with coach support)

Focus Group	Follow-up with Support

Input Check- All of the inputs assessed at the beginning of this process are vital to the success of your plan. It is time to make sure that all factors affecting planned professional learning will not hinder the effectiveness of the plan. The goal is to answer "yes" to each of these questions. If there are any "no" answers, stop and discuss the necessary changes needed to maximize success.

- Do you have the necessary resources (i.e. time, funds, staff, materials, etc.)?
- Are the learning strategies appropriate given the culture/climate/relationships of the focus group and the school?

- Are the systems and structures in place going to support success (i.e. existing workloads, external district/state support, competing initiatives, etc.)?

<u>Create Timeline</u> – All plans must have actionable steps that are time bound. Create a calendar

that is most familiar or comfortable with your team that includes the following:

- Learning strategies (specific dates for frequency)
- Implementation strategies (specific dates for frequency)
- The person responsible for each
- Formative assessment data collection (specific dates for frequency)
- Summative assessment data collection (specific end date)
- Person responsible for monitoring fidelity and check-in dates.

APPENDIX C: FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM EVALUATION PROTOCOL SCHOOL-LEVEL STANDARDS ALIGNMENT TO LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol School-level Standards	Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning						
		Learning Communities	Resources	Learning Designs	Outcomes	Leadership	Data	Implementation
Planning	**2.1.1. School Needs Assessment:** At least annually the school identifies professional learning needs through a classroom-by-classroom analysis of disaggregated student achievement data by content and skill areas, subgroups needing special assistance, and other school data.				X	X	X	
	2.1.2. Reviewing Professional Development Plans: The school administrator meets with individual educators to review the IPDP and identify additional individual professional learning needs based on performance appraisal data and priorities for students, grade levels, school, content areas, or the whole school.			X	X	X	X	
	2.1.3. Reviewing Annual Performance Appraisal Data: The school administrator uses information from annual performance appraisals of educators to identify professional learning needs for individuals, teams, or whole-school faculty				X	X	X	
	2.1.4. Generating a School-wide Professional Development Plan: As part of the School Improvement Plan and in collaboration with the district's Professional Development System, the school administrator and School Advisory Council generate a school-wide Professional Development Plan that includes research- and/or evidence-based professional development aligned to identified classroom- level needs for student achievement, responds to educators' level of development, and specifies how the plan will be evaluated.			X	X	X	X	
	2.1.5. Individual Leadership Development Plan: School administrators create and implement Individual Leadership Development Plans that are based on school and classroom disaggregated student achievement and behavior data and the needs of student groups not making AYP, and contain clearly defined professional learning goals that specify measurable improvement in student performance, improvements in teacher effectiveness, changes in administrator practices resulting from professional learning, and an evaluation plan that determines the effectiveness of the Individual Leadership Development Plan.				X	X	X	
Learning	**2.2.1. Learning Communities:** School-based professional learning occurs in collaborative teams of adults whose goals are aligned with the team members' IPDPs and the school and district goals for student achievement.	X	X	X				X
	2.2.2. Content Focused: Professional learning focuses primarily on developing content knowledge and content-specific research- and/or evidence-based instructional strategies and interventions in the content areas specified in s. 1012.98 F.S. and aligned with district and state initiatives.	X		X	X			
	2.2.3. Learning Strategies: Professional learning uses strategies aligned with the intended goals and objectives; applies knowledge of human learning and change; and includes modeling of research- and/or evidence-based instruction, practice, and classroom-based feedback.	X		X	X			
	2.2.4. Sustained Professional Learning: Professional learning is sufficiently sustained and rigorous to ensure learning for participants that leads to high- fidelity classroom implementation for student achievement.	X		X				X
	2.2.5. Use of Technology: Technology, including distance learning, supports and enhances professional learning as appropriate and the application and assessment of that learning as appropriate.	X	X	X				X
	2.2.6. Time Resources: Sufficient time within the work day is available and used for professional development.	X	X					X
	2.2.7. Coordinated Records. School administrators regularly generate and review reports on faculty participation in professional learning.					X		X
Implementing	**2.3.1. Implementation of Learning:** The school provides follow-up support to facilitate implementation of professional learning in the workplace.		X	X		X		X
	2.3.2. Coaching and Mentoring: The school provides mentoring and/or coaching for all educators to ensure high-fidelity classroom implementation of professional learning, with the assistance continuing as needed until educators implement the learning with comfort and accuracy.		X	X		X		X
	2.3.3. Web-based Resources and Assistance: The school supports the implementation of professional learning through school and district web-based resources and facilitates educator awareness of and access to district web-based resources		X					X
Evaluating	**2.4.1. Implementing the Plan:** At least annually the school conducts an evaluation of the degree of fidelity with which the school's Professional Development Plan is implemented.				X	X	X	X
	2.4.2. Changes in Educator Practice: The school conducts an evaluation of the Professional Development Plan to assess its impact on educator practices at the classroom and/or school level.				X	X	X	
	2.4.3. Changes in Students: The school conducts an evaluation of the Professional Development Plan to assess its impact on student performance.				X	X	X	
	2.4.4. Evaluation Measures: Schools use summative and formative data from state or national standardized student achievement measures, when available, or other measures of student learning and behavior such as district achievement tests, progress monitoring, educator-constructed tests, action research results, discipline referrals, and/or portfolios of student work to assess the impact of professional learning.				X	X	X	
	2.4.5. Use of Results: School administrators and the School Advisory Council review school-level evaluation data as part of the needs assessment process for the subsequent school year's professional development planning in order to eliminate ineffective programs and strategies and to expand effective ones.				X	X	X	

APPENDIX D: LEARNING LINKS

The following terms, in the Tool, were linked to external websites for educative purposes. Definitions of each term have been provided here along with the website address.

- **Culture/Climate** – The spoken and unspoken values, beliefs, and systems that dictate how staff and students behave in a school. (The Glossary of Educational Reform http://edglossary.org/school-culture/)
- **Root Cause** – The underlying, modifiable cause for a perceived problem. (Thwink.org http://www.thwink.org/sustain/glossary/RootCause.htm)
- **Knowledge, Skills, Motivation** – The necessary components for changed behavior. (Service Strategies http://servicestrategies.com/blog/the-knowledge-skill-motivation-performance-equation/)
- **SMART Goal** – A type of goal used to ensure maximum success and attainability. (University of Virginia, Human Resources http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing_SMART_Goals.pdf)
- **PLC Collaborative Meetings** – Collaborative team meetings focused on student achievement and professional growth (The Glossary of Educational Reform http://edglossary.org/professional-learning-community/)
- **Lesson Study** – A collaborative form of professional learning where a team works together to plan, implement, and collect data on a lesson's effectiveness. (Lesson study puts a collaborative lens on student learning. *Tools for Schools*. Summer 2011. Vol 14 No. 4 https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/sites/default/files/media/pdfs/lessonstudy/learning_forward.pdf)
- **Side-by-Side Coaching** – A form of coaching the mimics team-teaching. The coach strategically chooses when to jump in and model or support the teacher with direct guidance. https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/2013/03/13/the-power-of-side-by-side-coaching
- **Observation Feedback Cycle** – When a teacher leader/coach takes anecdotal notes during an observation, conferences with the teacher regarding areas for growth, observes

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again and provides feedback on the progress.
http://www.coltsneckschools.org/cms/lib7/NJ01000853/Centricity/Domain/3/Teachscape
_Observation_Cycle_Cliff_Notes.pdf

- **Peer Observations** – Teachers observe teachers for the purpose of learning new strategies and skills and/or providing feedback. (Education World http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin297.shtml)

- **Instructional Rounds** – A small team of teachers is led by an instructional teacher leader to observe multiple classrooms, collect specific data, debrief, and reflect on their own practice. This is a non-evaluative, non-judgmental practice. The purpose is to reflect on your own practice.("Using Rounds to Enhance Teacher Interaction and Self-Reflection: The Marzano Observational Protocol" http://www.iobservation.com/files/Marzano-Protocol-Using_Rounds1009.pdf/)

- **Action Research** – A form of professional learning initiated by the teacher. The teacher identifies a problem in practice, studies it, implements a solution, and uses data to determine whether it worked. (*Guiding School Improvement with Action Research (Chapter 1)* http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100047/chapters/What-Is-Action-Research¢.aspx)

- **Follow-up Support** - Support provided by administrators, teacher leaders, or peers to ensure integration of new learning into practice. Also known as Implementation Support. (Learning Forward http://learningforward.org/standards/implementation#.VXnMmOvI6-o)

APPENDIX E: IRB APPROVAL

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

From : **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To : **Sandra Sampayo**

Date : **July 16, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 07/16/2015 the IRB determined that the following proposed activity is not human research as defined by DHHS regulations at 45 CFR 46 or FDA regulations at 21 CFR 50/56:

Type of Review:	Not Human Research Determination
Project Title:	Closing the gaps in professional development: A tool for school-based leadership teams
Investigator:	Sandra Sampayo
IRB ID:	SBE-15-11426
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

University of Central Florida IRB review and approval is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are to be made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human subjects, please contact the IRB office to discuss the proposed changes.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 07/16/2015 02:34:43 PM EDT

IRB manager

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