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TEACHER EFFICACY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW
CURRICULUM

SUPPORTED BY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

Douglas Shields Bennett

Master of Arts, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA, 1989

Bachelor of Education, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, 1976

Dissertation

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for the degree of

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In Educational Leadership

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Approved by:

Dr. David A. Strobel, Dean
Graduate School

Dr. Roberta Evans, Chair
Educational Leadership

Dr. Sharon Alexander
Continuing Education

Dr. Neldon Hatch
Westwind School Division

Dr. William McCaw
Educational Leadership

Dr. Don Robson
Educational Leadership

Bennett, Douglas, Ed.D., May 2007

Educational Leadership

Teacher Efficacy in the Implementation of New Curriculum Supported by Professional Development

Chairperson: Dr. Roberta D. Evans

A large body of literature regarding professional development and its effects on teaching and student achievement and learning has emerged over the last decade. There are many teachers who either have limited access to professional development activities or who have access and choose not to take part in professional development activities.

This qualitative study employed a phenomenological tradition in describing the “lived experiences” of participants involved in the implementation of new curriculum. Fourteen teachers and seven principals were purposefully selected to be part of this study in a rural school jurisdiction in southern Alberta. Through a qualitative analysis, this study shared teachers’ perceptions as they described the role professional development plays in enhancing teacher efficacy and changing teaching practices in the implementation of new curriculum.

Data were collected during face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, and the analysis of data revealed six topics: the need for change, professional development and curriculum implementation, professional development and teaching practices, professional development and teacher efficacy, professional development and student learning and motivation.

Major findings from this study concluded that teacher participants recognize professional development as the common thread that motivates teachers, improves their sense of efficacy, assists them in successful curriculum implementation, heightens their awareness of the need to improve teaching practices and the need to become student-centered and improve student learning. Principal participants concurred with teacher participants, and recognize the role leaders play in motivating teachers to become actively engaged in professional learning activities.

Professional development plays a key role in providing teachers with knowledge and skills to hone their teaching practices, to rejuvenate them, and to improve student learning. It also assists teachers in successfully implementing new curricula. As teachers become aware of the need to change teaching practices in order to improve teacher efficacy, professional development provides opportunities to gain confidence and heighten their sense of personal efficacy.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, my best friend, confidante and eternal sweetheart. She encouraged me unfailingly, provided ongoing support and kind words, motivated me, and had confidence in me.

My parents have always been wonderful examples, and taught me the importance of stretching myself. I thank them for loving me unconditionally and for providing me with encouragement in my educational pursuits.

My children, along with their spouses and my grandchildren, are a source of strength to me. May they cherish learning and seek ways to achieve their potential.

Throughout my educational journey as a student and educator, students, teachers, parents, leaders and peers have served as my mentors. I am grateful for their goodness.

Last of all, I thank my friend, leader and mentor, Dr. Leroy Walker, for encouraging me to further my education. His untimely passing has saddened us all, but cherished memories will not fade.

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It has been a pleasure to work with professors at the University of Montana who have shared their passion and knowledge with me. I am amazed at their insight, incisiveness and connoisseurship.

Dr. Roberta Evans, chairperson of my dissertation committee, has been a wonderful example with her boundless energy, zest for living, continual encouragement and optimistic outlook. She has led me on a pathway to learn as much as I can, do as much as I can, and most importantly, to enjoy the journey.

Dr. Bill McCaw impressed me with his passion for teaching and learning. His love of qualitative research and words of encouragement made my phenomenological research a pleasurable experience. Dr. Sharon Alexander, my fellow Canadian, has a passion for adult learning that has impressed me and provided me with a focus to never quit in my pursuit of learning. Dr. Don Robson, my first professor, amazed me with his wealth of knowledge. His analytical approach has encouraged me to see, not just to look, and to seek first to understand, then to be understood. My mentor, Dr. Neldon Hatch, is a powerful, yet quiet leader who leads with personal humility. I continue to learn from him.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

*Many things we need can wait, the child cannot.
Now is the time his bones are being formed
his blood is being made,
his mind is being developed.
To him we cannot say tomorrow,
His name is today.
Gabriel Mistral, Chilean poet*

Introduction

It has been the goal of educational institutions to provide affordable professional development opportunities for teachers, with the expectation that involvement in professional development activities would have a positive impact on teacher efficacy, improved teaching practices, and increased student learning. Several researchers (Bradley, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Sanders & Rivers, 1997; Stronge, Tucker, & Joyce, 2000) stated that there is a correlation between professional development involvement and teacher efficacy. Fox (2001) reported that, although literature suggested that professional development could increase teacher efficacy, her Ohio study revealed results which were less favourable.

Glickman (2004) identified a demarcation between successful schools, those with thoughtful, effective, collective, autonomous staffs, and unsuccessful schools which have unreflective, isolated, powerless staffs. He viewed the demarcation as a cause beyond one's self, and maintained that instructional improvement takes place when teachers are able to improve their decision-making about students, learning content or curriculum, and teaching. He also contended that experienced teachers are more likely to comprehend and implement curricular

and instructional innovations if they are able to link the new innovations to their current expertise and past teaching experiences.

The previously mentioned studies found a correlation exists between professional development activity and teacher efficacy. The real test of teacher efficacy, however, is not theoretical as it deals with change in general. In fact, the real test of teacher efficacy is in the implementation of new curricula, and consequently an increase in student learning.

Numerous studies have documented the fact that teacher quality, of all the variables we can control, is the one that has the greatest effect on student learning (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Sanders, Saxton & Horn, 1997; Goldhaber, 2002). Reeves (2004) concurred that the most important variable affecting student achievement is the quality of teaching. He stated that the quality of the teacher is almost twice as important as every other variable. Darling-Hammond (2000) contended that measures of teacher quality in the context of teacher preparation and certification are more strongly related to student achievement than other kinds of investments such as reduced class size, overall spending on education, and teacher salaries. In contrast to Darling-Hammond's approach, which equated teacher quality within a specified context, Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin (1999) identified teacher quality in terms of student performance outcomes. Their research of 400,000 students in 3000 schools revealed that teacher quality is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The oft-heard expression “If a child doesn’t learn the way you teach, then teach the way he/she learns” is foundational to sound educational practices. A strong understanding of what helps students learn in better ways is the key to transforming belief into improved teaching practices. According to state-by-state statistics reported to the U.S. Department of Education, more than a quarter of U.S. schools are failing under terms of the *No Child Left Behind* law. Paul Baskin (2006) reported in the *Washington Post* that at least 24,470 schools (27% of the national total) did not meet the federal requirement for adequate yearly progress in 2004-2005. Many schools are receiving failing grades in the face of school reform.

Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) described the relationship between teacher efficacy, i.e., the extent to which teachers believe they can affect student learning, and student learning. There is a need to examine a teacher’s involvement in professional development, especially in the area of curriculum, as changes occur on a yearly basis. As teachers become involved in professional learning activities, it is important to determine whether or not their sense of teacher efficacy increases in their role as instructors, and whether or not student learning increases. As school districts across North America face ever-increasing expectations for accountability measures, curricular changes are being implemented on a yearly basis.

In an effort to improve student learning, the *No Child Left Behind* legislation was passed with the largest bi-partisan support of any in the history of

the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). President George W. Bush asked members of Congress to work together in a federal role in education to close the achievement gap between minority and disadvantaged students, and their well-off peers in the dominant population. The result, the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001, embodied the four principles, or pillars, of Clinton's educational reform plan:

1. Stronger accountability of results. States are working to close the achievement gap, and to ensure that all students, including disadvantaged students, achieve academic proficiency.
2. More freedom for states and communities. States and school districts have flexibility in how they use federal funds.
3. Encouraging proven educational methods. Funding is targeted to support effective research-based programs and teaching methods to improve student learning and achievement.
4. More choice for parents. If a child's school does not meet state standards for at least two consecutive years, his/her parents may transfer the child to a better-performing public school (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

School systems are expected to be results-oriented, and accountability is linked not only for funding, but to accreditation. Many educational advocates contended that teachers must do more with less; that is, teacher expectations have increased, but the funding necessary to accomplish established goals have not been forthcoming. For example, Silverman (2005) indicated that approximately nine million students in the U.S. are enrolled in rural schools. While 30% of

public schools are located in rural areas, less than 9 % of a state's overall K-12 funding goes to rural schools. Beales (1994) claimed that when it comes to public education, despite decades of educational spending increases, the perception exists that the government scrimps on schools. She stated that approximately 58% of every education dollar actually makes it to the classroom, leaving educators with far fewer resources than expected. The key question is not how much money is spent, but rather how well it is spent. Beales (1994) reported that non-instructional and support activities make up a large portion of public school budgets. In fact, only 50 % of all public school employees are teachers.

One of the NCLB's counterparts in Canada, the Alberta Commission on Learning (2003) contended that "the first and only criterion for judging the success of schools and the education system should be how well every child learns"(p. 2). The Alberta Commission (2003) stated that in order to achieve its vision, deliberate actions must be taken in eight areas:

1. All children must come to school ready to learn.
2. A world-class curriculum must be maintained.
3. In order to develop excellent schools, there must be a drive to improve students' outcomes, and ensure that students learn to the best of their abilities.
4. Support must be provided so that all children, including those in minority groups, and those with special needs, get every opportunity to succeed in school.

5. High standards must be established with ongoing assessment, improvements and accountability.
6. Technology must be fully integrated and used as a powerful tool for both teaching and student learning.
7. Every child is taught by capable and caring teachers, and every school is led by a capable principal.
8. The various partners in education are engaged in an environment of mutual trust and respect. (p. 5)

The difference between these two initiatives is that the Alberta initiative has received major funding to achieve its vision. It is clear that educational initiatives have established high standards which focus on improvement and accountability. In some cases, public dollars for education are in short supply, and in other cases, there is increased scrutiny by the public, expecting a greater return on their investment. It is crucial to understand what constructs undergird the change process and are most closely associated with maximizing teacher performance.

Although a large body of literature regarding professional development and its effects on teaching and student achievement has emerged over the past decade, there are many teachers who do not avail themselves of professional development opportunities, even when funding is no longer an issue. There is a need for a study to be conducted to learn more about the “lived experiences” of individuals involved in professional development, and the meaning they ascribe to their experiences. Creswell (1998) stated that by “heightening awareness and

creating dialogue, it is hoped research can lead to better understanding of the way things appear to someone else and through that insight lead to improvements in practice”(p. 94). Lived experiences need to be described so that the reader can gain insight through the participants’ experiences.

Few studies have examined factors regarding teacher involvement in specific professional development and teacher efficacy in the implementation of a new curriculum via a qualitative methodology. Fox (2001) conducted a quantitative study on teacher efficacy, professional development and curriculum implementation, and suggested the need to conduct further studies. Researchers such as Hart (2000) have conducted mixed methods studies regarding teacher efficacy and professional development. However, to date there is no qualitative study available which focuses on teacher efficacy, professional development, and curriculum implementation in Alberta.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe through “rich, thick language” teachers’ experiences as they become involved in implementing new curriculum. Through a qualitative analysis, this study sought to share teachers’ perceptions as they identify factors which impact their sense of teacher efficacy throughout the change process in the implementation of new curriculum. The result led to greater insight into understanding teachers’ motivation, locus of control, reasons for resisting change or embracing it, level of involvement in professional development, and how and to what degree teachers implement new curriculum.

A great deal of research has been conducted on professional development, and its impact on enhancing teaching practices (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Elmore, 2004; Guskey, 2002; Stein & Wang, 1988). This study shared teachers' perspectives on the role professional development plays in curriculum implementation, the changing of teaching practices, and teacher efficacy. Principals' perspectives were shared to assist in the understanding of what administrators expect from their teachers in terms of teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation, teaching practices and student learning supported by professional development.

Since the goal of educational institutions is to enhance student learning, this study shared teachers' perceptions on the relationship between professional development involvement and enhanced student learning.

Significance of the Study

Educational leaders need up-to-date information regarding the amount of time and money devoted to professional development to determine if their investment obtains results. This study is significant to educational leaders, senior level administrators and principals who should be able to determine whether involvement in professional development activities, including specific professional development models such as consortia, is vital in supporting the successful implementation of educational goals. This would include the implementation of new curricula to meet emerging educational demands.

In reviewing school jurisdiction vision, mission and belief statements, there are several commonalities (Westwind, 2005; Palliser, 2005; Lethbridge, 2005; Horizon, 2005):

1. The focus is on student learning.
2. Lifelong learning is paramount.
3. Learning systems must be accountable and responsive to student needs.
4. Excellent teaching is paramount to a child's learning experience.
5. Teachers must be knowledgeable and competent in curriculum delivery.

Reeves (2004) stated that leaders are the architects of organizational and individual improvements. As leaders, school boards are expected to provide guidance and direction for educational programs through legislative, executive and evaluative means. Their primary concern is student learning. If, as the review of literature indicated, professional development has a positive influence on teacher efficacy and student learning, and implementation of new curricula requires changes in teaching practices and methodology, school boards may want to explore the possibility of utilizing existing professional development consortia to enhance curricula implementation. If this specific model is not available, school boards may want to lobby politicians to establish consortia. School boards may consider using the professional development consortium model to support the successful implementation of their articulated goals.

The superintendent of schools, in his/her role as Chief Executive Officer, assumes responsibilities delegated by the board. He/she is ultimately responsible for the administration of all educational programs. In realizing vision, mission

and belief statements, the superintendent may work closely with the school board in allocating funds to principals and staff to allow and direct them to become engaged in professional development activities regarding curriculum implementation in order to improve teaching practices and methodology.

Principals act as teacher and student advocates and agents of change, and provide educational leadership in the schools. This study may assist leaders in directing and enabling teachers to engage in professional development activities which will, in turn, assist them in becoming efficacious in implementing new curricula.

The results of this study will provide valuable information to teachers, the educational agents of change. Teachers must have the opportunity to be involved in high quality professional development activities, to keep abreast of curricular changes, to develop a more diversified pedagogical knowledge base, to improve teaching methodologies, and to translate data-driven research into improved teaching practices, and thus enhance student learning.

Professional development consortia coordinate cost-effective professional development activities that meet the needs of educational leaders and members of their organizations. Provincial and state officials would determine whether they should provide the opportunity to use professional development consortia to support the implementation of educational mandates and initiatives.

This study will be significant for those jurisdictions which already have access to professional development consortia, as they see the need to continue to encourage staff involvement in ongoing professional development activities. It

may be significant to those jurisdictions which don't have access to professional development consortia, as they look for ways to promote participation in professional development activities.

The audience, state and provincial educational officials, school boards, school superintendents, school administrators, and teachers, will be able to use the findings from this study to determine their involvement in promoting and facilitating teacher professional development as a whole, with a focus on teaching and implementing new curricula.

Limitations

This qualitative study involving phenomenological data was subject to the following limitations:

1. The individual participants may not be able to articulate their feelings and beliefs clearly. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) contended that the use of a semi-structured interview limits the ability to understand how the subject would frame the topic. In the context of this study, any question asked by the researcher may be seen as framing the topic from the interviewer's, not the interviewee's perspective.
2. Responses may be limited by a teacher's inability to access funds to participate in professional development activities.
3. Creswell (2003) maintained that interviews present limitations since they produce data that have been filtered through the interviewee.

4. Despite attempts to describe the full richness of the subject's complexity, the inability of the researcher to express the essence of the participant's experience serves as a limitation.
5. There are certain factors that may have a negative impact on the study, but over which the researcher has no control. This particular study is bound by time, and does not take into account the changes that may occur in participation in teacher development activities over time.
6. Data are useful only when respondents are honest, and they select answers that characterize their true attitude, as opposed to socially acceptable responses (Gay & Airasian, 2003).
7. Participants teach primarily in a rural area, and may not reflect attitudes expressed by their counterparts who live in metropolitan areas.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to the following:

1. All of the participants in this study were Grade 3 teachers in one jurisdiction of a 10 jurisdiction zone in a Canadian province undergoing an identical curricular change as promoted through specified professional development experiences.
2. Purposeful sampling was used rather than randomly selecting a sample.
As a result, the findings of this study are not generalizable.

Since research studies are unique and contextually specific, Creswell (2003) cautioned the researcher in making claims of generalizability. My attempts to

understand the delimitations and limitations of this study added to my appreciation of the participants' sharing of perspectives.

Research Question

The central question, or the Grand Tour question, according to Creswell (2003), "becomes a 'working guideline' rather than 'truth' to be proven" (p. 106).

The central research question in this study was supported with six sub-questions. The Grand Tour question in this study was: What are teachers' personal motivations to implement, or to avoid implementing a specified curricular change supported by provincial and school-district sponsored professional development programs?

Sub-questions which support the central question included:

1. What factors, if any, do teachers identify as enhancing their confidence in the need for change? In their own professional skills to implement this change?
2. What evidence, if any, do teachers have that involvement in professional development activities assists in curriculum implementation?
3. If teachers believe their teaching practices have changed through involvement in professional development activities, what leads them to this conclusion, and can they describe the changes they have made?
4. If teachers believe that their efficacy has improved through their involvement in professional development activities, what leads

them to this conclusion, and can they describe the change in efficacy?

5. What evidence, if any, do teachers have that their involvement in professional development activities enhances student learning?
6. What role, if any, does motivation play in changing a teacher's sense of efficacy, implementation of curricular change, and involvement in PD and SAPDC activities?

Principals were also asked questions, in order to more fully understand and describe what administrators expect from their teachers in terms of teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation, teaching practices and student learning supported by professional development.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been defined:

Curriculum. The University of Prince Edward Island (2005) defined curriculum as “the skills, performances, attitudes and values pupils are expected to learn from schooling: includes statements of desired outcomes, description of materials and the planned sequence that will be used to help students attain the outcomes” (p. 1).

Phenomenological Study. “Describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 51).

Professional Development: The Alberta Teachers' Association (2001) defined professional development as “any planned activity that provides teachers

with an opportunity for growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes leading to improved teaching practice and enhanced student learning” (p. 2).

Professional Development Consortium. “An organization funded by governmental agencies to support the successful implementation of educational goals, as identified by school boards, and to initiate and coordinate professional development programs to meet emerging education demands” (SAPDC, 2003, p. 4).

Professional Learning Community. “Team initiatives that incorporate shared mission, values and vision, collective inquiry, collaborative teams, action orientation and experimentation, continuous improvement, and results orientation” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, pp. 25-28).

Teacher Efficacy. “The extent to which teachers believe they can affect student learning” (Dembo and Gibson, 1985, p. 173).

Chapter Summary

Educational institutions attempt to provide professional development opportunities for teachers, as they understand that teacher involvement in professional development activities has a positive impact on teacher efficacy, improved teaching practices and improved student learning.

As school jurisdictions face ever-increasing expectations for accountability measures, curricular changes are being implemented on a yearly basis. In some cases, public dollars for education are in short supply. In other cases, funding is not an issue for teachers who want to be involved in professional development activities. Educational leaders need to know if the amount of time

and money devoted to professional development results in improved teacher efficacy, teaching practices, student learning and successful implementation of new curricula.

This study will provide valuable information to educational leaders, senior level administrators and principals as they determine whether involvement in professional development supports the successful implementation of new curriculum and other educational goals. These leaders will then determine if the information provided in this study will be beneficial in their unique setting.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

*Coming in contact with a great teacher
Is like being branded.
The mark never wears off,
So we must make sure
It's not a scar.
Gary Phillips*

Introduction

Everything in the education system must start and end with children and youth. Schools are not there for teachers, administrators or trustees. They are also not there for parents, business or government. They are there for students (Alberta School Boards Association, 2004). Fullan (2001) stated that effective leaders need to possess a strong sense of moral purpose: “Moral purpose means acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole” (p. 3). Within the context of this study, the intent was to make a positive difference in the lives of students.

The purpose of this study was to describe through rich, thick language teachers’ experiences as they become involved in implementing new curriculum. Through a qualitative analysis, this study sought to share teachers’ perceptions as they identify factors which influence their sense of teacher efficacy throughout the change process in the implementation of new curricula. The results could lead to greater insight into understanding teachers’ motivation, locus of control, reasons for resisting change or embracing it, level of involvement in professional development, and how and to what degree teachers implement new curriculum.

A great deal of research has been conducted on professional development, and its impact on enhancing teaching practices (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Elmore, 2004; Guskey, 2002; Stein & Wang, 1988). This study shared teachers' perspectives on the role professional development plays in curriculum implementation, the changing of teaching practices, and teacher efficacy. Principals' perspectives were shared in order for me to gain a more clear understanding of what administrators expect from their teachers in terms of teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation, teaching practices and student learning supported by professional development.

Since the goal of educational institutions is to enhance student learning, this study shared teachers' perceptions on the relationship between professional development involvement and enhanced student learning.

Educational Change

Change is undisputedly part of our world, and education must be part of the change if it is to fulfill its mandate which is to prepare young people not only to live in the world, but also to control and direct the changing world (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2004). Teachers play a key role in educational change as their goal is to enhance student learning. Fullan (2001) pointed out that educational change is a learning experience for the adults who are involved, and that teachers are the agents of educational change. Quinn (1996) stated: "Deep change differs from incremental change in that it requires new ways of thinking and behaving. It is change that is major in scope, discontinuous with the past, and generally irreversible" (p. 3). Deep change demands the acquisition of new

knowledge and skills for teachers, and transformative learning that affects their beliefs about teaching and learning.

The growing demand for accountability in education requires change. Dr. Douglas Reeves (2004), Chairman of the Center for Performance Assessment, pointed out the reality of change in stating that it is never convenient, universally popular, risk-free, or without opposition. He further asserted that it never gets easier over time.

Bennis, Benne and Chin (1985) described three basic change strategies. The power-coercive strategy is authoritative in nature, and can be efficient in the short-term, but depends largely on the leader to push the change. In the long-term, this strategy meets with resistance and proves to be ineffective. The rational-empirical strategy assumes that, as people respond to new information or data, they change through rational responses. This strategy is not effective, since people rarely change because of new data or evidence. The normative-reeducative change strategy links people's drives and needs to change. This strategy has the greatest long-range impact, but it also takes the most effort.

In debunking educational myths regarding change, Reeves (2004) clarified the following five points about change:

1. People are miserable when they are not feeling successful in their professional lives, or when they fail to sense personal mastery.
2. People resist change because they have been burned before on changes that were poorly planned, badly executed, and resulted in more work for fewer results.

3. Resistance to change is an organizational reality. The volume (noise) exceeds the volume (quantity) of the resistance.
4. Perfect research does not exist. “Try it, test it, improve it” is far superior to waiting for the illusion of perfection. You need sufficient research and common sense.
5. There is no risk-free alternative. The risks of change must be compared to the very significant risks of continuing current practices. (pp. 7-8)

If a teacher thinks of himself or herself in a certain way while others think of that teacher in a different way, cognitive dissonance is created. Festinger (1957) stated that people must wrestle with disparate perceptions and find some resolution. Some teachers dismiss the feedback or source of contrary evidence as biased or untrue, and change does not take place. Other teachers believe that they can change their own self-perception by conforming to sources of information provided by peers. Feedback from leaders and peers can lead to a change of behaviour as the sharing of information regarding teacher behaviour and teaching practices can stimulate cognitive dissonance and personal change.

Curriculum

The University of Prince Edward Island (2005) website defined curriculum as “the skills, performances, attitudes and values pupils are expected to learn from schooling: including statements of desired outcomes, description of materials and the planned sequence that will be used to help students attain the outcomes” (p. 1). Stoner (1978) pointed out that curriculum should be considered a learning process for teachers and students which they can use to systemically

reconstruct knowledge and experiences. Curriculum then becomes an innovative force.

Defining curriculum is a task accomplished on several levels.

Understandings of curriculum are diverse, and centered in a contextual framework. This framework reflects the multiple layers of the school community. Marzano (2003) identified a guaranteed and viable curriculum as the factor that has the most impact on student learning. He indicated that a guaranteed and viable curriculum is one in which opportunity to learn and time are strongly correlated with academic achievement, and are so interdependent that they constitute one factor. Marzano (2003) claimed that there are three types of curriculum:

1. The intended curriculum – content specified by the state/province, district or school, which must be addressed in a particular course or at a particular grade level.
2. The implemented curriculum – content actually delivered by the teacher.
3. The attained curriculum – content actually learned by students.

He commented that the discrepancy between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum make the opportunity to learn a significant factor in student achievement. The concept of opportunity to learn emphasizes the necessity for guaranteed curriculum to provide guidance regarding content for specific courses and at specific grade levels. The Curriculum implementation Handbook (2005) indicated that schools must clearly set and track learning expectations and goals, and monitor the extent to which they are achieved.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2002)

outlined the indicators of effective curriculum:

1. Children are active and engaged.
2. Goals are clear and shared by all.
3. Curriculum is evidence-based.
4. Valued content is learned through investigation and focused, intentional teaching.
5. Curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences.
6. Curriculum is comprehensive.
7. Professional standards validate the curriculum's subject-matter content.
8. The curriculum is likely to benefit students.

Although there are similarities between the American and Canadian educational systems, there are also several differences. In Canada, the individual provinces provide a provincially-mandated curriculum. In fact, representatives from four provinces and three territories have partnered to develop a western and northern Canadian protocol for mathematics. Provincially mandated tests for students in grades three, six, nine and twelve are based on the provincial curricula, and accountability measures are used to compare schools and school jurisdictions in each province. School jurisdictions and schools do not complain that assessment practices are unfair, since province-wide assessment instruments are based on, and test province-wide curricula. The assessment instruments are criterion based, and since all students study the same curricula, the student assessments give an accurate

depiction of subject and content mastery. Standards are established which identify tests results as unacceptable, acceptable, or excellent.

In states such as Montana, South Dakota and the District of Columbia, there is no state curriculum, but rather state standards, with local curricula aligning to the standards. The criterion based reference tests are therefore based on the standards.

With the advent of the *No Child Left Behind* initiative (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), funds have been allotted to improve student performance. Punitive measures have also been attached if performance outcomes are not met over a period of time.

Curriculum Implementation

DuFour (2002) emphasized that schools' teachers cannot make student learning their focus until they know what each student needs to learn. Curriculum implementation is a process of innovation and change, and the overarching goal of any curriculum implementation is the improvement of student learning. According to the Curriculum Implementation Handbook (2005), curriculum that is centered on student learning shares some of the following characteristics:

1. It is thoughtfully planned, involving a multi-stage process that recognizes differing contexts.
2. It is collaborative.
3. It is centered on overarching understandings in the written curriculum.
4. It is culturally responsive.
5. It promotes positive outcomes for all children. (p. 4)

Curriculum implementation is a process that is based on the fundamental assumption of student growth and improvement of learning. The process involves aligning instructional planning with learning outcomes which are specified in the curriculum framework. Resources are selected based on usefulness in meeting learner outcomes. Instructional planning becomes the primary tool for assessing student achievement and growth, rather than textbooks and activity-based planning decisions (Curriculum Implementation Handbook, 2005).

The Southern Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortium, in a Working Paper (2004), stated that effective curriculum implementation leads to a change in practice that enhances student learning. Their beliefs are based upon the following:

1. Effective curriculum implementation is a shared responsibility for all stakeholders.
2. Effective curriculum implementation is developmental and contextual.
3. Effective curriculum implementation must be systemic, systemically planned and sustained.
4. Collaboration leads to deeper understanding and shared commitment.
5. Professional development is interactive, continuous and reflective.
6. Effective adult learning is meaningful, purposeful and provided through a variety of opportunities for all stakeholders.

In an analysis of curriculum implementation across several school districts which had committed to improve instruction within the context of new curriculum, Frey (2001) identified a number of common barriers or pitfalls:

1. Lack of basic management. Clear procedures for providing materials and resources were not in place or were not being followed. Teachers who lacked materials during the school year reverted back to old methods of teaching.
2. Lack of required, ongoing professional development for all teachers working with the curriculum. School Districts were not fully training teachers. There was no repeated, hands-on training.
3. Lack of planning and continual oversight. Some administrators, curriculum leaders and principals did not seem to have a vision of what implementation would look like in the classroom. There was little dialogue between levels of administration and teachers.
4. Lack of a basic understanding that it is critical for school districts to outline and articulate clear expectations for all teachers to use the curriculum as it is written.

As Frey (2001) described the common pitfalls, she also stressed that procedures must be in place to ensure that teachers have the supports they need to implement curriculum. Teachers also need ongoing professional development opportunities so that they know how to use the curriculum effectively. Collaboration must also take place between administrators and teachers so that problems or issues with curriculum implementation can be addressed. Teachers must also understand the spiral model for curricula, where topics are readdressed at a higher level in subsequent grades.

Starting a process of curriculum implementation which is based on shared decision-making requires a shift in thinking. Beliefs about effective curriculum, by necessity, inform beliefs about effective curriculum implementation. Building opportunities for ongoing dialogue and communication is essential.

Brooks (2006) indicated that curriculum development, approval and implementation should consist of a six-stage cycle:

1. Review. What is working? What concerns should be addressed?
2. Initiate. What needs to be changed? What strategies should be used?
3. Plan. What steps do we need to take to prepare for change?
4. Develop. How can we keep development work on track?
5. Implement. How do we work together to make the changes?
6. Maintain. How can we provide the best programming for students?

Social Studies Curriculum Implementation

Dewey (1916) stated that education begins with the curiosity of the learner, and inquiry leads to the creation of new ideas. One of the most important teaching practices used today is inquiry in the classroom. An old adage stated, “Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand.” The last part of this statement is the essence of inquiry-based learning. Queen’s University (2006) indicated on its website that students involved in inquiry-based learning take more responsibility for determining what they need to learn and assess their progress in learning.

After years of planning, the Alberta social studies Program of Studies for students in kindergarten through grade three was changed dramatically in 2005.

No previous changes had been made since 1989. The social studies program rationale and philosophy were developed in such a manner that social studies curriculum implementation for all other grades will be based on the same rationale and philosophy.

The program rationale and philosophy outlined by Alberta Education (2005) indicated that “social studies provides opportunities for students to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that will enable them to become engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens” (p. 1). The core change is a shift from the teacher imparting information to students, to student-based learning where active inquiry, critical, creative and historical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving, and metacognition are foundational to achieving curriculum outcomes (Alberta Education, 2005).

Students bring their own perspectives, experiences and cultures to the social studies classroom. They construct meaning in the context of their lived experiences through active inquiry and engagement with school and community. Students ask questions, make connections with their community, share ideas and understandings, listen to and collaborate with others, empathize with the viewpoints and positions of others, and create new ways to solve problems (Alberta Education, 2005). The teacher assists the students in acquiring and developing thinking strategies to enable the students to make connections to prior knowledge, in assimilating new information and in applying learning to new contexts.

The Program Rationale and Philosophy section of the new Program of Studies (Alberta Education, 2005) outlined dimensions of thinking critical to the success of social studies curriculum implementation:

1. **Critical Thinking.** Critical thinking is a process of inquiry, analysis and evaluation resulting in a reasoned judgment. Students will develop skills of critical thinking that include: distinguishing fact from opinion; considering the reliability and accuracy of information; determining diverse points of view, perspective and bias; and considering the ethics of decisions and actions.
2. **Creative Thinking.** Creative thinking occurs when students identify unique connections among ideas and suggest insightful approaches to social studies questions and issues. Through thinking creatively, students generate an inventory of possibilities; anticipate outcomes; and combine logical, intuitive and divergent thought.
3. **Historical Thinking.** Historical thinking is a process whereby students are challenged to rethink assumptions about the past and to reimagine both the present and the future. It helps students become well-informed citizens who approach issues with an inquiring mind and exercise sound judgment when presented with new information.
4. **Decision-Making and Problem-Solving.** Students develop the ability to make timely and appropriate decisions by identifying the need for a decision, then weighing the advantages, disadvantages and consequences of various alternatives. Decision-making involves reserving judgments

until all the options and perspectives have been explored. Problem-solving processes help students develop the ability to identify or pose problems and apply learning to consider the causes and dimensions of problems. These skills help develop thinking strategies, allowing students to determine possible courses of action and consequences of potential solutions for problem that may have multiple or complex causes and that may not have a clear solution.

5. Metacognition. Metacognition, or “thinking about thinking” involves critical self-awareness, conscious reflection, analysis, monitoring and reinvention. Students assess the value of the learning strategies they have used, modify them or select new strategies, and monitor the use of reinvented or new strategies in future learning situations. In this respect, students become knowledge creators and contribute to a shared understanding of the world we live in. (pp. 8-9)

The core changes to the social studies program of studies revolve around student-centered learning, and student utilization of different dimensions of thinking. The key to successful curriculum implementation is the teacher, who guides and facilitates inquiry-based learning.

School Governance

Renchler (2000) contended that school governance in the United States has been a political football, punted from sideline to sideline as federal, state and local stakeholders work (cooperatively or at odds) to develop or influence policy, and to implement accountability measures in order to track the quality of schools.

Epstein (2004) compared education systems to a spider's web that has grown increasingly tangled, and that it is extremely difficult to determine who is in charge.

In order to better understand the role of schools, states and the federal government in education, Alexander and Alexander (2004) described the role of the United States federal government in education:

The powers of the federal government are circumscribed by delegation within the frame of the Constitution and are specifically limited by the Tenth Amendment. The Tenth Amendment makes it clear that the powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved to the states or to the people. Education is not mentioned in the Constitution and is, therefore, presumably reserved to the states or to the people... Standing alone, the Tenth Amendment bears witness that our system of government assures separation of powers and prevents federal activity without express or implied constitutional authority. As such, there is a presumption of state power, which effectively places the burden on the federal government to justify in court its involvement in affairs that may have been presumed to be left to the states... The Tenth Amendment, therefore, assures that federal control over education is secondary to the power of the state. While a state can create, organize, and reorganize school districts; employ and dismiss personnel; prescribe curriculum; establish and enforce accreditation standards; and govern all management and operation

functions of the public schools directly, the federal government can intervene only in a peripheral and oblique way. (pp. 66-68)

Courts today continue to examine the nature of the states' relationship to the central government. In *Rodriguez* (1973 as cited by Alexander & Alexander, 2004), the Supreme Court held that education is not a fundamental right, stating that education is not among the rights afforded under the United States federal Constitution. Holder and Holder (1997) stated that the Tenth Amendment neither adds nor subtracts from the powers of the federal government as described in the body of the Constitution, and was merely designed to reduce fears that the new national government might someday seek to exceed its proper power.

A separate form of government has been created for education, consisting chiefly of state and local education boards and superintendents. For a period of time, this shielded schools from interference by governors, mayors and other political figures. A transformation occurred in the 1970's and 1980's with the advent of state academic standards and tests, and state takeovers of failing schools. Then mayors began wresting control of struggling local school systems. For example, the District of Columbia Mayor's Office (2004) issued a press release that Mayor Anthony Williams submitted legislation in February, 2004, to the Washington D.C. council on governance of D.C. public schools, which would establish a clear line of accountability over the D.C. Public School Superintendent. It would give the mayor and council the ability to appoint the Superintendent and to oversee the D.C. public school operating budget. Kirst and

Bulkley (2000) described mayoral takeovers of several urban districts, including Cleveland, Boston, Detroit and Chicago.

These shifts in school governance prompted Epstein (2004) to write *Who's in Charge Here?: The Tangled Web of School Governance and Policy*. He stated:

Now President and Congress have greatly expanded their reach into U.S. classrooms with the NCLB Act of 2001, requiring annual reading and math tests for all pupils in grades 3-8, tougher yardsticks to measure whether they are making sufficient progress, and penalties for schools that persistently fall short. (p.2)

Renchler (2000) maintained, "States differ so widely in their educational governance structures that it is difficult to prescribe a one-size-fits-all solution" (p. 3). The growing list of modern-day governance interest groups includes business leaders, unions, mayors, politicians, community leaders, teachers, principals and superintendents.

Epstein (2004) argued that state boards of education are becoming less visible to the citizenry, and the public has little interest in local school board elections, with turnouts typically of no more than 15% of eligible voters. The dominant trend has been to centralize power over education in state and federal hands. Stanford University's Michael Kirst (2000) noted that shifting school governance is a backdoor way of shifting school policy. As public trust has dwindled in local school systems' ability to raise student achievement, state and federal officials have implemented standards-based reforms, aligning curriculum, teacher standards, and exams with specific academic goals and increasing testing

to hold schools accountable. A consequence of the shifts in governance is a growing gap between those who make policy and those responsible for results. According to Epstein (2004), some educational analysts view local school boards as an endangered species.

Improving the relationship between the school board and the superintendent looms large in almost all proposals for different governance structures (Hansen & Roza, 2005). Johnston (2000) argued that firing the superintendent is usually the first step in addressing governance problems, but the outcome seems to contribute to a high turnover rate of superintendents which often hinders efforts to improve schools. Edwards (2000), a former school board member, suggested considering a form of governance that takes the decision-making power out of the hands of the board and places it into the hands of teachers, administrators, parents and community members. He believes that the locus of control should be at the building level, not from a board composed of people who are not, for the most part, educators.

In promoting decentralized decision-making to assist principals to do their jobs more effectively, Hansen and Roza (2005) stated that the problem with public school systems is that they are bureaucracies, with codified rules and standardized procedures. Bureaucracies discourage innovation and creativity at the expense of enforcing compliance with the rules. Hansen and Roza (2005) further claimed: "Teaching and learning occur at the school level, and school-level professionals are in the best position to organize teaching, adapt to the present needs of children, and set priorities on the use of child and adult time" (p.

3). Archer (2005) described his visit with U.S. education officials to Edmonton, Alberta, in December, 2004, to examine Alberta's two decades of decentralized school governance where Alberta Education allots funds to local school districts which put 80% of their district budget in principals' hands.

Educational governance is an inherently political activity which operates within a complex political framework. Kirst and Bulkley (2000) noted that reformers will continue to use organizational changes and governance in an effort to improve the performance of education, even though these mechanisms may not offer a direct strategy for improving classroom instruction.

National Accountability Movements

In referring to education, Benson (2003) stated that the past two decades have been marked by a number of "crisis alert" documents. *A Nation at Risk*, which was published in 1983, and the U.S. Department of Education's 1990 declaration that public education is a failure in the United States are two examples of these documents. These types of alerts are generally followed by a variety of attempts to "fix" what is wrong with education. Improving student achievement has always been at the forefront of major educational reform movements (Dilworth & Imig, 1995; Goals, 2000, 2001). It is interesting to note that all funding for education, regardless of national accountability movements in Canada, flows from the provinces, whereas accountability movements in the United States may receive some funding from the federal government.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

As stated in Chapter One, in an effort to improve student learning, the *No Child Left Behind* initiative was established (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). President George W. Bush asked members of Congress to work together in a federal role in education to close the achievement gap between minority and disadvantaged students, and their peers and to push schools to become more accountable in terms of student and teacher standards. The result, the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 embodies the four principles, or pillars, of President Bush's educational reform plan (U.S. Department of Education, 2002):

1. Stronger accountability of results.
2. More freedom for states and communities.
3. Encouraging proven educational methods.
4. More choice for parents.

Rice (2003) indicated that NCLB underlines the importance of having high quality teachers in every classroom. The Bush Administration's proposal defined a "highly qualified" teacher, and is based on the belief that teacher quality is vital to realizing improved student achievement. The call for "quality teachers" to implement higher student achievement has never been more appropriate than in the shadow of NCLB legislation. *Bridging the Gap* (2005) noted that, despite the professional development provisions and mandates of NCLB, a recent survey conducted by the National Staff Development Council found that 47% of teacher respondents felt the law was having no discernable effects on professional development.

The NCLB has been criticized for federal meddling and insufficient funding. Epstein (2004) noted that in early 2004, the GOP controlled Virginia House adapted a resolution, 98 to 1, assailing NCLB requirements as the most sweeping intrusion into local and state control of education in the history of the United States. As of February, 2004, 12 states, including Virginia, Utah and Connecticut were rebelling against the law, refusing to implement NCLB, except where there is adequate funding.

Alberta's Commission on Learning (ACOL)

For the purposes of this study, a close examination of this province's policies, protocols and recommendations took place. ACOL (2003) stated that its core belief is that schools must be hallmarks of excellence in everything they do, so that every child learns and every child succeeds.

Recommendations of the Commission on Learning.

As stated in the October, 2003, *Report and Recommendations of the commission on learning*, "Teacher preparation and ongoing professional development are critical to continually improve schools" (p. 22). In recognizing that teachers are critical to the success of students, and the success of the education system, ACOL (2003) recommended that jurisdictions and schools develop and implement comprehensive professional development plans. The Commission further stated that all teachers be required to develop targeted annual professional development plans that are directly linked to their school's improvement plans.

Of the Commission's 95 recommendations, several deal with curriculum and curriculum implementation. ACOL (2003) stated that "much of the present strength of Alberta's education system can be attributed to the successful implementation and development of a strong provincial curriculum, a curriculum that has provided a model for other jurisdictions" (p. 49). Curricula should continue to be designed so that students achieve a deeper and broader understanding as they move from one grade to the next.

Professional Development

Teaching can be time consuming and difficult, but ultimately, it is a rewarding profession. Doing it well requires intelligence, insight, dedication and collaboration. It is clear that teaching is an increasingly demanding and complex profession, as classrooms are more diverse than in the past. In view of these challenges and the importance of achieving the best outcomes for children, it is critical that ongoing professional development activities provide the support and preparation that teachers need (ACOL, 2003). More than 25 years ago, Joyce (1980) posed an important question: "Do we care enough about teachers to provide the means that they can use to stay vital and to reach out for continuous growth" (p. 21)?

Philosophy of Professional Development

Over the past decade, a large body of literature has been dedicated to the study of professional development and its influence on teacher efficacy and student learning and achievement. The academic success of students can be significantly affected by teachers' access and participation in quality professional

development activities (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Guskey, 2002). Richard Elmore (2002) stated that the main purpose of professional development should not only be the improvement of individuals, but the improvement of schools and school systems. Joyce and Showers (2002) argued that if the aim of professional development is to assist teachers to teach students in ways which improve student learning, then leaders must examine the most effective ways of monitoring professional development activities in order to evaluate their impact on student achievement. Hirsh (2003) maintained that teacher development takes time and money, but it is the only sure way to improve student performance.

As Boards of Education adopt new policies and procedures to facilitate change, it must be remembered that meaningful change will only occur when those who work in schools have the opportunity to develop new knowledge, skills and attitudes. Professional development is the key in facilitating this change (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990). In speaking of policies, Visa founder, Dee Hock (Hargreaves, 2004) provided a standard against which policies can be measured. He stated that policies must have simple clear purposes which give rise to complex intelligent behavior rather than complex rules and regulations that give rise to simplistic thinking and poor behavior. Effective policy provides a clear, compelling purpose which is grounded in improved practice and student learning. It develops complex intelligent behavior in teachers, and provides resources to maintain this effort over a sustained period of time.

Hargreaves (2004) maintained that misguided policies are creating a two-tiered system of “professional development apartheid” where teachers in wealthy

school districts are more likely to experience the benefits of professional development and professional learning communities than teachers in poorer school districts, who are subject to “sectarian performance training” (p. 2).

Sparks (2002) contended that “more often than not, staff development for teachers is fragmented and incoherent, lacks intellectual rigor, fails to build on existing knowledge and skills, and does little to assist them with the day-to-day challenges of improving student learning” (p. 9).

Numerous researchers concluded that high quality professional development does make a difference in educational quality (Bradley, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Sanders & Rivers, 1997; Stronge, Tucker, & Joyce, 2000). High quality professional development has the following characteristics: It is job-embedded, part of the workday of teachers, and it is long-term and in-depth. It also aligns personal and school goals, is content-focused, and incorporates active learning, collegial interaction, analysis and reflection. Several researchers (Guskey & Huberman, 1995; Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998; NFIE, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1999) reached consensus on these qualities.

Unfortunately, many teachers receive what one author (Arizona Education Board Position Paper, 2003) termed “one-shot, drive-by-type workshops offering quick-fix, flavor-of-the-month ‘solutions’ for raising test scores and closing the achievement gap.” Yet, one-shot workshops, with little follow-up, still accounts for a majority of professional development experiences. Research indicates that this is one of the least effective methods of training adults (Birman, Desimone,

Garet & Porter, 2000; Rhoton & Stiles, 2002). One day or short-term workshops or conferences are not considered as effective as ongoing, embedded professional development experiences.

It is not surprising that the duration of professional development activities matters. In fact, “longer activities have the greatest payoff” (Longitudinal study of the Eisenhower grants, 1996-1999 as cited by the Arizona Education Board Position Paper, p. 2). Several researchers have investigated the need for changes in professional development over the past ten years (Garet, Porter, & Desimone, 2001; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998; NFIE-Teachers Take Charge of Their Learning, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1999). In a position paper, the Arizona Education Association Board of Directors (1993) concluded:

Short, scattershot professional development does not produce significant, lasting school improvement. Unless professional development is carefully designed and implemented to provide continuity between what teachers learn and what goes on in their classrooms and schools, it is unlikely to produce any long-lasting effects on either teaching performance or student outcomes. Teacher expertise accounts for significant variation in student test scores-the greater the expertise, the higher the scores. Putting resources into improving teachers’ education has the largest impact on increasing student achievement. (pp. 2-3)

Showers and Joyce (1995), in discussing the importance of a collaborative culture, stated that teachers must be lifelong learners, and must prepare students

for lifelong learning by teaching them how to learn. The authors identified four key components of teacher training:

1. Develop knowledge through exploring theory or rationale to understand the concepts behind a skill or strategy.
2. Model the new skills, ideally in a setting closely approximate to the workplace.
3. Practice the skill.
4. Peer coaching.

Hirsh (2003) reported that the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) challenged U.S. schools to have all teachers in all schools experiencing high quality professional development learning by 2007. The NSDC has adopted a resolution regarding standards on resources. Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. The NSDC recommended that school jurisdictions dedicate at least 10% of their budgets to staff development, and that at least 25% of a teacher's work time should be devoted to collaboration and learning with colleagues.

Purpose of Professional Development

In order to understand the impact of professional learning activities on teacher practice, it is important to understand the purpose of professional development. The Professional Development Team (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) used available research to create a set of ten principles for professional development. According to their study, the following principles were identified. Professional development:

1. Focuses on teachers as central to student learning.
2. Focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement.
3. Respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of individuals with the school community.
4. Reflects best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership.
5. Enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, and technology.
6. Promotes continuous inquiry and improvement.
7. Involves collaborative planning.
8. Requires substantial time and other resources.
9. Is driven by a coherent long-term plan.
10. Is assessed by its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning.

The Professional Development Team also commented that high-quality professional development refers to rigorous and relevant content, strategies, and organizational supports that ensure the preparation and career-long development of teachers and others whose competence, expectations and actions influence the teaching and learning environment. Interestingly, these same approaches hold true today. Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor of education at Stanford University (2003,), stated that “teachers learn best by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see” (p. 2).

Although there has been an increased focus on the importance of professional development, there needs to be a paradigm shift that will swing teachers from activities that deal with isolated skills and strategies to those activities that will improve teaching practices and student learning. Joyce (1990) observed that better designed curricula depend on the strength of the growing professional development programs. Richard Elmore of Harvard (cited by *Raising the Bar Magazine*, 2004) stated, “Those who are being ‘developed’ must consent to learning what they are being asked to do and how to do it; those who are demanding results must understand that school personnel are being asked to implement practices they currently do not know how to do” (p. 1).

Joyce and Showers (2002) stated that professional development activities help teachers learn and apply new skills and knowledge, and that these activities should take place when teachers are fresh, and during uninterrupted blocks of time. Joyce and Showers (2002) also reported that only 10% of teachers add a new strategy to their repertoire without ongoing support. When continual professional development assistance is provided, up to 90% of teachers master a new strategy. Reitzug (2003) reported:

Evidence abounds of the significance of the relationship between the content of staff development, the quality of staff development, and student achievement, so long as staff development adheres to certain principles that emphasize school-level control, focus on student learning and instruction, a commitment of time and resources to implement development over an extended period of time, and the development of

professional development styles that engage teachers collaboratively rather than focusing on them as individuals. (p. 124)

Professional Development Models

Guskey (2000) commented that new views on professional development have led to the development of a wide range of options and opportunities to enhance professional knowledge and skills. The major models include training, observation and assessment, involvement in a development process, study groups, inquiry/action research, individually guided activities, and mentoring.

Despite the paradigm shift towards professional development models, some researchers contend that current models of professional development are ineffective (Cohen & Hill, 1998; Wang, Frechtling & Sanders, 1999). Not all models provide ongoing, embedded professional development. The goal of improving teaching is best met when teachers move away from the belief that teaching is an isolated event. In order for teaching to improve, teachers must examine their professional practices and evaluate their work (Heibert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2004).

Professional development and lifelong learning are seen as being critical components of successful school and school jurisdiction improvement. The Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium (SAPDC, 2004) was established in 1992 to fulfill a mandate:

The purpose of the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium (SAPDC) shall be to support the successful implementation of educational goals as identified in board education plans and school plans

as well as the goals and strategies of the three-year business plan. In doing so, the Consortium will attempt to meet the individual needs of our education partners. To fulfill this role, the Consortium will broker, coordinate, evaluate and act as a clearinghouse for available training and development resources. In addition, the Consortium may also develop, initiate or coordinate professional development programs or action research to meet emerging education needs. (p. 4)

The SAPDC believes that involvement in professional development activities will have a positive impact on improved teaching practices and increased student learning.

The *Minister's Guidelines for Establishing Regional Consortia* (1995) stated the six primary purposes of regional consortia:

1. To support the successful implementation of school jurisdiction goals in board and school education plans as well as the goals and strategies for Alberta Learning's three-year education plan. Advisory committees consisting of representatives from school jurisdictions identify board, school, teacher, support staff and parent goals, needs and priorities, around which the SAPDC builds program offerings to meet cross jurisdictional needs.
2. To undertake the development of professional development programs to meet emerging education needs. The Executive Director of the SAPDC regularly consults with constituents to determine their professional development needs. In 2003-04,

formal consultations were accomplished through a number of committees including the Alberta Teachers' Association PD Chairs, Special Education Advisory Committee, and Alberta Learning staff. Informal consultations with stakeholders regularly occur through telephone contacts, e-mail and/or informal meetings face-to-face. A number of the 147 sessions offered in 2003-04 were a direct result of input received from these committees and/or other needs identified by individuals/schools/groups within this region.

3. To broker, coordinate, evaluate and act as a clearinghouse for available training and development resources. The SAPDC receives and responds to numerous calls seeking information about professional development presenters, resources and training. In addition, the SAPDC provides 8 study kits, available on loan, for school based professional development activities. A number of the SAPDC workshop topics and presenters are invited to schools and/or jurisdictions to meet onsite PD needs. The Study Kits are used regularly by groups of individuals and/or schools to meet ongoing PD needs.
4. To use a collaborative and coordinated approach to the delivery and support of on-going professional development opportunities for all participants in education. SAPDC relies heavily upon its partner organizations, district contacts and advisory committees to

provide information and support, and to work collaboratively with the partners to achieve their professional development goals. The information and support is used extensively to plan coordinated program delivery.

5. To help implement school based decision-making, school councils and the functions included in redefined roles and responsibilities. The SAPDC relies upon board and school education plans to identify requests for PD in this area. Much training and in-service was provided on this purpose in the initial years of establishment of regional consortia. SAPDC has relied upon the Alberta Home and School Council Association (AHSCA) to provide resource personnel to assist in meeting this purpose, when requests have been received.
6. To provide access to in-service, training and professional development programs at a reasonable cost. All programs are budgeted to be cost recovery, based upon anticipated number of participants, actual costs of presenters, meeting rooms, food and refreshments, material costs and additional contract services, as required. At times, programs are subsidized through targeted grants from Alberta Learning, corporate sponsors and/or professional associations/organizations who provide resource personnel such as Alberta Teachers' Association, Alberta Learning staff and publishers. (pp. 4-6)

The Southern Professional Development Consortium's mission statement, "A partnership to nurture continuing educational excellence," and vision statement, "Partners in adult learning for students' sake" underline the importance of linking learning for teachers to learning for students (Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium Annual Report, 2004). Following the success of the SAPDC pilot project, five other regional consortia were established in 1996 in Alberta to address professional development needs. Since 2002-03, the SAPDC has experienced a 13% participation rate increase, with attendance in programs reaching 3307 during 2003-04 (Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium Annual Report, 2004).

Professional Learning Communities

The thirteenth recommendation of the ACOL (2003) stated: "Require every school to operate as a professional learning community dedicated to the continuous improvement in students' achievement" (p. 65). DuFour and Eaker, in their book, *Professional Learning Communities at Work* (1998), noted: "Researchers both inside and outside of education offer remarkably similar conclusions about the best path for sustained organizational improvement" (p. 23). Covey (1996) stated that "only the organizations that have a passion for learning will have an enduring influence" (p. 149). Drucker (1992), who has taught in various universities for more than 50 years, pointed out: "Every enterprise has to become a learning institution and a teaching institution. Organizations that build continuous learning in jobs will dominate the twenty-first century" (p. 108). In what may be viewed as a visionary statement by the M.I.T.

senior lecturer, Senge (1990) claimed that “the most successful corporation of the future will be a learning organization” (p. 4).

Barth (2002) shared his personal vision of a good school, or community of learners, which has been generally accepted by current researchers. He wrote:

A school as a community of learners is a coat rack on which I hang the many supporting components of my vision. There is much talk these days about the importance of student achievement, of staff development for teachers, and of professional growth for principals, as if all these learners inhabit different planets. A good school for me is a place in which everyone is teaching and everyone is learning-simultaneously, under the same roof...Everything that goes on in a good school contributed to this end. School need not be merely a place where big people who are learned teach little people who are learners. (p. 6)

DuFour and Eaker (1998) stated that professional learning communities exhibit six characteristics:

1. Shared mission, vision and values. What separates a learning community from a regular school is its collective commitment to guiding principles. These principles articulate what teachers believe and what they would like to create, and are embedded in the hearts and minds of the schools' stakeholders.

2. Collective inquiry. A professional learning community should continually question its status quo, seek and test new methods, and reflect on the results.
3. Collaborative teams. These teams should share a common purpose.
4. Action orientation and experimentation. Engagement and experience are the most effective teachers.
5. Continuous improvement. A professional learning community should experience persistent discomfort with the status quo and search for a better way.
6. Results orientation. A professional learning community must realize its efforts to develop shared vision, values and mission, engage in collective inquiry, build collaborative teams, take action, and focus on continuous improvement. Improvement must be assessed on the basis of results.

Professional development, seen as broadening of expertise which leads to improved teaching practices, fits into the PLC model, which is characterized by continuous improvement.

There has been a significant shift from teachers working in isolation, as Lortie (1975) noted, where teachers walk into the school, shut the door to their classroom, and teach as they feel they should. At the time of Lortie's research, he maintained that the culture of teaching was characterized as conservative and individualistic, and that innovative processes in schools proceed slowly because

they work in isolation. Lortie (1975) is well known for his work on individual autonomy for teachers. With a paradigm shift towards teacher collaboration and involvement in learning communities, it is no longer acceptable to work in isolation, as teachers hone their craft by sharing best practices with their colleagues. Involvement in professional learning communities shifts the focus from individual autonomy to collective autonomy and accountability.

Adult Learning

Perspectives on adult learning compared to student learning have changed over the decades. Cranton (1994) stated that adult learning has been viewed in many different ways; a means of gaining skills and knowledge, a way to satisfy the needs of the learner, a process of critical self-reflection that may lead to transformation, and as a process of being freed from the stigma of being illiterate.

Intelligence and Adult Development

There are several definitions and theories of intelligence, and how it can or should be measured. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) contended that although intelligence has been studied in terms of the psychometric tradition, which assumes that it is measurable, there is a need to examine other views such as information processing, practical intelligence and contextual perspectives.

Cattell (1987) posited that intelligence consists of two primary factors, fluid and crystallized intelligence, each with different origins. Fluid intelligence is the ability to engage in concept formation, short-term memory, reasoning, abstraction, and to perceive complex relationships. Crystallized intelligence is more heavily influenced by experience and education. Although there is no single

test that measures both fluid and crystallized intelligence, crystallized intelligence is generally believed to increase or remain stable during most of adulthood, while fluid intelligence is thought to peak in adolescence.

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) explained that new information on intelligence in adulthood reveals the importance of framing a more holistic conception of adult intelligence in the real lives of adults. One must not only examine the individual's mind, but also how the individual and the context interact to mould intellect.

When educational theorists discuss how children learn, they focus on the developmental stages that children go through as they learn. Cross (1981) stated that adults also go through developmental stages which can be grouped sociologically, according to socially defined roles of adults, and chronologically. Developmental stages are more concerned with ego development and personality.

Adult Learning Theory

Although the term *andragogy* was originally formulated in Europe in the 1800's, Knowles (1980) introduced the term to North America and defined it as the art and science of helping adults learn. He contended that andragogy is another model of assumptions about learners to be used alongside the pedagogical model of assumptions. Knowles (1980) further explained that the two models should not be seen as dichotomous, but rather as two ends of the spectrum, where an assumption in any given situation will fall somewhere between the two ends.

Assumptions of andragogy. Knowles (1980) formulated five critical assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners (andragogy) that are

different from the assumptions about child learners, on which traditional pedagogy is premised:

1. Self-concept. As a person matures his /her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.
2. Role of the learner's experience. As a person matures, he/she accumulates an increasing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning. People attach more meaning to learning they gain from experience.
3. Readiness to learn. As a person matures, his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles, and coping with real-life tasks and problems.
4. Orientation to learning. As a person matures, his/her perspective of time changes from one where postponed application of knowledge is evident to an immediacy of application. As a result, the individual's orientation toward learning shifts from subject-centeredness to one of problem and performance centeredness.
5. Motivation to learn. As a person matures, the motivation to learn is no longer external, but internal.

Critics (van Gent, 1996; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) contended that Knowles' concept of andragogy is not general-prescriptive, but a specific, prescriptive approach, and that he did not accept research in pedagogy as fruitful for studies in andragogy. Kidd (1978) stated that adult learning is not a different

kind or order from child learning. He maintained that learning must be viewed as a lifelong development, and that principles of learning will apply in all stages of life. Regardless of his critics, Knowles work on adult learning regarding self-directed, autonomous learning is valued today.

A comparison of the assumptions of pedagogy and andragogy. Jarvis (1984) developed four assumptions regarding a comparison between pedagogy and andragogy:

1. The learner. In pedagogy, the learner is viewed as dependent. In andragogy, the learner moves towards independence and is self-directing.
2. The learner's experience. In pedagogy, the learner's experience is of little worth. In andragogy, the learners experience provides a rich resource for learning.
3. Readiness to learn. In pedagogy, people learn what society expects them to (curriculum). In andragogy, people learn what they need to know.
4. Orientation to learning. In pedagogy, learning experiences are defined by acquisition of subject matter. In andragogy, learning experiences should be based around experiences, since people are performance-centered.

Settings for Learning

Prior to Coombs' (1968) introduction of informal learning as a legitimate source of adult learning, there were two widely accepted sources of adult

education, formal education and non-formal education. Formal education consists of learning that is socially organized, goal-directed, and certified by a diploma or a degree. Non-formal education consists of learning that is also socially organized and goal-directed, but where there are no formal educational credentials.

Coombs (1968) introduced informal education as self-directed or serendipitous individual learning which results from daily experience. He maintained that informal learning is as equally important as formal and non-formal education.

Self-Directed Learning

In their book, *Learning in Adulthood*, Merriam and Caffarella (1991) stated the following about self-directed learning:

Learning on one's own, being self-directed in one's learning is itself a context in which learning takes place. The key to placing a learning experience within this context is that the learner has the primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating his or her own learning...Adults engaged in self-directed learning do not necessarily follow a definite set of steps or linear format. In essence, self-directed learning occurs both by design and chance-dependending on the interests, experiences, and actions of individual learners and the circumstances in which they find themselves...Self-directed learning does not necessarily mean learning in isolation – assistance is often sought from friends,

experts, and acquaintances in both the planning and execution of the learning activity. (pp. 54-55)

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning is the kind of learning in which adults are involved as they attempt to make meaning of their lives. Mezirow (2000) defined transformative learning as a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, values, beliefs and perspectives are questioned, and thereby made more accessible and open. Mezirow (1991) also identified a set of phases that people undergo when they experience transformation. The phases are:

1. Experiencing a disorienting dilemma.
2. Self-examination.
3. Critical assessment or assumptions.
4. Recognizing that others have gone through a similar process.
5. Exploring options.
6. Formulating a plan of action.
7. Reintegration.

Critical reflection is central to transformative learning. Mezirow (1981) distinguished between three kinds of reflection:

1. Content reflection. Individuals may reflect on the description or content of a problem.
2. Process reflection. This type of reflection involves a rational kind of thinking about the strategies used to solve the problem, rather than the content of the problem itself.

3. Premise reflection. This type of reflection leads to a question regarding the relevance of the problem; the assumptions, value or beliefs underlying the problem are questioned.

Although learning can consist of a change in one of our attitudes or beliefs, it is not transformative learning. Mezirow (1981) stated that it is only when we change our entire perspective on something that we really transform.

Motives for Learning

Houle (1984) classified adult learners into three learning orientations:

1. Goal-oriented learners. They use education as a means of achieving specific goals.
2. Activity-oriented learners. These learners participate for the sake of the activity and the social interaction and satisfaction it provides.
3. Learning-oriented learners. These learners seek knowledge for its own sake.

Along with his critics, Houle admitted that these orientations can overlap.

Boshier (1971) and Morstain and Smart (1977) identified six factors for adult participation in learning:

1. Social relationships. Make friends and meet others.
2. External expectations. Complying with the wishes of someone else in authority.
3. Social welfare. Desire to serve others and/or community.
4. Professional advancement. Desire for professional advancement or job enhancement.

5. Escape/simulation. Alleviate boredom and/or escape home or work routine.
6. Cognitive interest. Learning for the sake of learning itself.

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) noted that Houle (1984) classified groups of people, whereas Boshier (1971), Morstain and Smart (1977) identified clusters of reasons for adult participation in learning. Houle also examined characteristic orientations that motivate learners, while Boshier, Morstain and Smart identified multiple reasons existing within the same individual.

Teacher Efficacy

Bandura's seminal work on the theory of self-efficacy (1977) led to the construct of teacher efficacy. The former American Psychological Association President and Stanford professor (1997) claimed that his self-efficacy theory is a cognitive process which allows one to construct "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). In defining self-efficacy expectations, Bandura (1986, 1997) stated that they emanate from mastery and vicarious experiences, verbal or social persuasion, or physiological and emotional states. Mastery experiences serve as indicators of an individual's capability, while vicarious experiences are based on comparisons with other's successes. Verbal or social persuasion convinces one that he/she is capable and physiological and emotional states lead one to judge capabilities and strengths which contribute to one's sense of mastery or incompetence.

It is important to understand that self-efficacy deals with self-perceptions of competence as opposed to the actual level of competence. Tschannen-Moran,

Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) emphasized that people generally tend to underestimate or overestimate their actual abilities, and that teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to be more willing to experiment with new ideas and concepts in order to more effectively meet the needs of their students.

In the context of education, Dembo and Gibson (1985) defined teacher efficacy as “the extent to which teachers believe they can affect student learning” (p. 173). Ashton and Webb (1982) viewed teacher efficacy as a multidimensional construct, identifying two dimensions as “teacher efficacy” and “personal efficacy.” Teacher efficacy represents a teacher’s belief that teachers can overcome factors external to the teacher such as the background of the students. Teachers with a low sense of teacher efficacy operate from an external locus of control, whereas teachers with a high sense of teacher efficacy operate from an internal locus of control. The second dimension, personal efficacy, is the belief of an individual teacher in his/her own personal capacity to deliver the necessary teaching behaviors to influence student learning. Personal efficacy is a cognitive, self-perceived, future-oriented belief of one’s competence level, and teacher efficacy shares the same orientation (Fox, 2001).

The construct of teacher efficacy has been debated for over 25 years. It is an offshoot of the nature versus nurture argument of human development, whether our upbringing and environment (nurture) determine who we are, or whether our genetic coding determines our personality (nature).

In 1976, two items regarding efficacy were included in a survey which was conducted by the Rand organization (Armor, D., Conroy-Oseguera, P., Cox,

M., King, N., McDonnell, L., Pascal, A., Pauly, E., & Zellman, G., 1976). These two items dealt with the extent to which teachers believe that they could control students, or whether the environment has greater influence (Tshcannen-Moran et al., 1998). These two items represented the teacher's personal and general sense of efficacy. In other words, from a personal perspective, if a teacher puts forth the required effort, he/she can "get through" to most students. From a more general sense of teacher efficacy, the individual teacher has a perception of the ability of teachers being able to reach students in spite of their environments. Teacher efficacy would be rated low if teachers believe that they can't improve student learning because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his/her home environment. Armor et al. (1976) identified teacher efficacy as one of the few teacher characteristics related to student achievement.

Studies such as Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) reported that the dimensions of teacher efficacy and personal efficacy are independent. Ross (1992) found little correlation between teacher efficacy and personal efficacy. This means that individual teachers, for example, might believe that teaching can determine what students learn, but that the individual teacher is not capable on having a positive effect on the learning of his/her own students.

Other researchers (Guskey, 1998; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990) suggested, from studies they conducted, that there are three, rather than two dimensions to the construct of teacher efficacy. They contended that there are, in fact, two dimensions to personal efficacy; a teacher's sense of personal responsibility for

positive student outcomes, and his/her personal responsibility for negative outcomes.

In commenting on the importance of teacher efficacy, research cited by Davies (2004, p.2) suggested that teacher efficacy may underlie critical instructional decisions including questioning techniques and classroom management strategies (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Hichayluk & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy, 1990). Coladarci (1992) contended that teacher efficacy is a strong predictor of commitment to teaching, and Allinder (1994) concluded that teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy exhibit more enthusiasm about teaching. Teachers with high efficacy tend to experiment with methods of instruction, experiment with instructional materials, and seek improved teaching methods (Allinder, 1994; Guskey, 1988; and Stein & Wang, 1988). Self efficacy theory is a common theme in current views of motivation (Henson, 2001), primarily because of its predictive power and application.

Locus of Control

The concept of locus of control was developed by Rotter (1966), and it refers to a person's perception of main causes of events in life. His construct is bipolar, ranging from an external locus of control to an internal locus of control. Kren (1992) contended that locus of control describes the degree to which individuals believe they are the masters of their own fate.

If an individual has an external locus of control, he/she believes that his/her behavior is guided by luck, fate, or other external circumstances.

Someone with an external locus of control sees environmental causes and situational factors as being more important than internal factors (Rotter, 1966).

If an individual has an internal locus of control, his/her behavior is guided by his/her personal efforts and decisions, and sees himself/herself as responsible for his/her own actions. Those individuals with an internal locus of control often believe that they control their own destiny (Rotter, 1966), and are masters of their own fate (Robbins, 1998).

Spector (1982) suggested that individuals with an internal locus of control are likely to be successful in organizations, and these individuals believe that what happens to them is determined by their efforts, actions and abilities.

Mamlin, Harris & Case (2001) indicated as a result of their research that people who are higher up in the hierarchy of an organization tend to be more internal, and that as people get older, they also tend to become more internal.

To better understand the relationship between teacher efficacy and locus of control, it is interesting to note that several measurement instruments have been developed to assess teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). One area of research is grounded in Rotter's construct of internal versus external locus of control (1966). Teachers who believe that they have the ability and are competent to teach unmotivated or difficult students have an internal locus of control. Those teachers who believe that the environment has more influence on student learning than their own teaching ability have an external locus of control. The Rand organization (Armor et al., 1976) conducted research on teacher efficacy, and developed two items to measure a teacher's locus of control. The first item is

“general teaching efficiency”, which is an indication of environmental factors that overwhelm a teacher’s power to influence student learning. The second item is “personal teaching efficacy”, which is an indication of a teacher’s ability to overcome factors that could make learning difficult for students.

Teacher Motivation

Teachers want to be effective in their practices, and want to make a difference in their students’ lives. Lockwood (1999) noted that “teachers value increased student achievement as an outcome of professional development more than any other variable and judge the value of learning” (p. 13). Glickman (2002) stated that faculty in successful schools have learned to question their instructional practice, and do not blame lack of student achievement on external causes. Research supports the theory that when teachers work together as a professional learning community to hone their craft, increases in student achievement occur more frequently (Benson, 2003; DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Several educational researchers (Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Thompson, 1992) suggested that teachers’ beliefs relate to their classroom practice. Lawrenz (1984) noted that the development of appropriate attitudes is essential in driving and facilitating behavior change. He further contended that teachers pass their attitudes along to their students. Marzely (1990) reported that teachers who are competent and confident in what they do, and who feel good about themselves are more likely to create supporting, nurturing environments for their students. Staff development (professional development) can generate the changes in curriculum and instruction which pull students into higher states of growth (Joyce,

Calhoun, & Hopkins, 1999). According to Hixson and Tinzman (1990), student learning increases when teachers have a high sense of teacher efficacy, and believe that all students can learn, and student achievement is impacted by the effectiveness and appropriateness of the instructional experiences facilitated by teachers. Barzun (2002) maintained that when a teacher squares his/her mind with that of the class, ignorance is removed from a subject which is fully mastered.

Maslow (1954) developed a framework of a hierarchy of needs that motivate humans to act. The five stages in the hierarchy are:

1. Physiological needs.
2. Safety.
3. Belonging and love.
4. Esteem
5. Self-actualization.

According to Maslow's model of hierarchy, human motivation is developmental. Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon (2004), in examining Maslow's work, stated that the needs of a lower stage must be satisfied before a person can be motivated by needs at the next stage:

Once needs for belonging and love have been satisfied, the individual's motivation changes from gaining acceptance within a group to becoming a contributing and leading member of the group. The individual takes a role of initiating actions, assuming leadership, and helping others so they will

see him or her as important. The attainment of status and prestige affirms his or her competence and value to the group. (p. 89)

The culminating need, self-actualization, comes after the acquisition of self-esteem. Motivation becomes a factor in the individual doing what he/she thinks is best, regardless of what other people might think. In speaking of being true to one's self, Maslow (1954) stated, "What a man can be, he must be" (p. 46).

Herzberg's research on human motivation (Herzberg, 1987) supported Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In their study of engineers and accountants, Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman (1959) identified satisfiers (motivation factors) and dissatisfiers (hygiene factors) as distinct from each other. They concluded that eliminating dissatisfiers, or negative factors, such as salary, working conditions, and job salary does not improve an individual's performance. Simply stated, if a person is dissatisfied with his/her working conditions, it will continue to be a source of irritation, and may, in fact, make him/her work less hard. By improving working conditions, the worker is no longer dissatisfied, but it will not improve his/her productivity.

The satisfiers (positive factors) such as achievement, work itself and the possibility of growth do motivate individuals to work harder. Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman (1959) cited satisfiers as the key motivators to improving performance at work. In applying this into a teaching context, Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon (2004) stated:

If a teacher is given increased responsibility for making decisions about materials to use in his classroom and is encouraged to modify his teaching

lessons to add more topics or projects that he believes to be exciting and valuable, then he will tend to put more time and energy into changing his performance. In other words, if a teacher is given increased responsibility to make decisions, he will work harder to see that he succeeds. (p.91)

Herzberg's hygiene factors correspond to Maslow's lower-level needs (physiological, safety, and belonging and love). Maslow's higher stages also correspond with Herzberg's motivation factors. This interaction between higher-level needs and motivation is identified by Maslow (1954) as "going beyond competence."

In describing "going beyond competence" and comparing a teacher's willingness to change and his/her ability to change, Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon (2004) stated:

This is the critical area in which the teacher can choose either to remain minimally competent or to grow in new ways. The choice becomes available when hygiene factors and lower-stage needs have been met and when there is encouragement to go beyond competence by providing a sense of achievement, responsibility, recognition, and advancement so that teachers can choose to improve their instruction. (p.92)

Changes to a teacher's professional situation can result in regression in levels of motivation and thinking. For example, a change in teaching assignment may result in regression because of a loss of confidence. When dissatisfiers and lower-stage needs are not met, teachers may retreat within their classroom, fail to work together collaboratively, remove themselves from meaningful discussion in

professional learning communities, and revert to a self-survival stage. Although teachers may appear to lack motivation, it is important to understand that teachers can become more motivated about their work. Every teacher has the potential to improve. Despite the barriers which have been mentioned, the potential still exists. Understanding the work of noted researchers and authors such as Herzberg and Maslow will assist educational leaders in providing appropriate work environments.

Factors in Student Achievement

The ACOL (2003, p. 119) explained that “high quality teaching in all classrooms and skillful leadership in all schools will not occur by accident.” The Iowa Association of School Boards, in a position paper (2004), stated that the key to improving student achievement is to improve teaching. Teachers must also have ongoing opportunities to improve their practice, and in order to change instructional practice and improve student achievement, professional development must be substantial.

Shulman (1987; cited by Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990) observed, “What we hold true for students must, of necessity, hold true for teaching and teachers” (p. 7). As students are expected to learn daily, teachers will also have to upgrade their skills, develop new strategies, and expand their knowledge to meet the needs of students. This can be accomplished through effective professional development programs.

It is important for teachers and students to understand that learning is a lifelong process. If teachers want to meet the needs of students, they must

continually update the what's and how's. What must students be taught? How must students be taught? In other words, teachers must model the concept of lifelong learning. Teachers and school administrators can set the standard by becoming learning leaders in their schools. Involvement in professional development activities will assist them in becoming lifelong learners. They will then focus not only on individual student improvement, but on school improvement.

Fullan (2000) stated that “school improvement will never occur on a wide scale until the majority of teachers become contributors to and beneficiaries of the professional learning community” (p. 584). Danielson (2002) constructed a model for effective school improvement which includes four components – what we want, what we believe, what we know, and what we do.

Fullan (2001) outlined seven organizing principles that are associated with improvement in student achievement:

1. It's about instruction and only instruction.
2. Instructional improvement is a long, multi-stage process involving awareness, planning, implementation and reflection.
3. Shared expertise is the driver of instructional change.
4. The focus is on system-wide improvement.
5. Good ideas come from talented people working together.
6. Set clear expectations, and then decentralize.
7. Collegiality, caring and respect are central to the process. (p. 175)

Maguire's study (2003) focused on the role of the school district in initiating and sustaining academic improvement, and found six key factors that impact student achievement:

1. Purpose and passion-leadership focused on student achievement is communicated to all stakeholders.
2. Distributed leadership-leadership is valued at all levels, where collective wisdom informs decision-making.
3. Staff development-curriculum-embedded teacher development must be well-grounded in current research, and support opportunities to work collaboratively.
4. School-based leadership-principals are the instructional leaders in the school and share a vision that is centered on student growth and achievement.
5. Data-driven decisions-the cycle of assessment, analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring must be evident.
6. Ethos-student learning is at the core of all decision-making, and collaboration and risk-taking are encouraged.

Darling-Hammond (1997), through her studies on New York City schools, concluded that schools that focus on academics and supportive relationships foster higher student achievement.

Chapter Summary

Teachers play a key role in educational change as their goal is to enhance student learning, but they must always remember that everything in the education

system must start and end with children. Changes in curriculum demand the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for teachers, and transformative learning that affects their beliefs about teaching and learning.

To keep pace with changes in curriculum, technology, and teaching practices, professional development is a key factor to meet ever-changing demands. It is important to understand that the purpose of professional development is to improve teaching practices which focus on enhanced student learning.

Elmore (2002) stated that the main purpose of professional development should not only be the improvement of individuals, but the improvement of schools and school systems. New knowledge does not necessarily bring about change. Professional development must engage teachers' experiences, beliefs and habits. The content of professional development is critically important to its effectiveness. Professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn. This engagement increases teachers' commitment to learn, their motivation, and encourages them to take instructional risks. Showers and Joyce (1995) stated that teachers must be lifelong learners, and must prepare students for lifelong learning by teaching them how to learn.

Effective professional development improves student learning. It fosters and supports teaching, learning and leadership by helping participants build knowledge, skills and new practices. Effective professional development is data-driven, student-centered and curriculum-focused. It is also results-oriented.

Professional development consortia have been established to develop

professional development programs to meet emergent educational needs, and to broker, coordinate, evaluate, and act as a clearinghouse for training and resources at a reasonable cost.

A world-class curriculum is essential so that teachers are well prepared with the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to success. But just having excellent curriculum is not good enough. Combined with that, schools must be places where excellence is the hallmark; where teams of principals, teachers, school staff, parents and students work together to ensure continuous improvement in students' achievement and results (ACOL, 2003). Professional development should be aligned closely with the curriculum students are expected to learn, problems they might confront in learning the content, and specific instructional strategies that address anticipated issues or problems.

Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy must ensure that the intended curriculum and the attained curriculum are one and the same. They must be involved in activities which will improve teaching practices and student learning. Coladarci (1992) stated that teacher efficacy is a strong predictor of commitment to teaching.

Lockwood (1999) noted that "teachers value increased student achievement as an outcome of professional development more than any other variable and judge the value of learning" (p. 13). According to Marczely (1990), "teachers who are competent and confident in what they do, and who feel good about themselves are more likely to create supporting, nurturing environments for

their students” (p. 14). As teachers focus on students’ needs, they will provide learning opportunities which will lead to student improvement.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS AND PROCEDURES

*The real voyage of discovery
consists not in seeking new landscapes
but in having new eyes.
Marcel Proust, French novelist*

Introduction

Gay and Airasian (2003) indicated that “educational research is the systematic application of a family of methods employed to provide trustworthy information about educational problems, issues and topics” (p. 3). Qualitative research into teacher efficacy related to professional development in the face of large-scale curriculum changes is sparse, yet accountability movements expect administrators and teachers to be adept and intrinsically motivated at making such changes. This investigation examined teacher involvement in professional development activities regarding curriculum implementation and teacher efficacy.

Research Design

When choosing a research design, the researcher must be aware of the differences between a quantitative study and a qualitative study, and their inherent strengths and weaknesses. Creswell (1998) asserted that “quantitative researchers work with a few variables and many cases, whereas qualitative researchers rely on a few cases and many variables” (p. 15).

This study employed a qualitative design. The qualitative data from this phenomenology were collected via observation and semi-structured, open-ended interviews,

Qualitative Perspective

Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as:

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p.15)

Qualitative studies are chosen for different reasons. They may be chosen because of the nature of the research question, because a particular topic must be explored, or because there is a detailed need to present a detailed view of the topic. In this study, there was a need to present a detailed view of the role of professional development, and professional development consortia in supporting teacher efficacy and the implementation of new curricula.

Researchers also choose a qualitative approach in order to study individuals in their natural setting, or because they want to emphasize their role as active learners who can tell the story from a participant's view (Creswell, 1998).

A belief that is held by qualitative researchers is that all meaning is couched in individual or collective perspectives or context (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Although there are several different meanings in the world, none is more true or valid than another. Gay and Airasian (2003) stated, "An important belief that underlies qualitative research is that the world is neither stable, nor coherent, nor uniform, and therefore there are many truths" (p. 20).

Qualitative researchers use an inductive strategy, as research methods and problems evolve, and the researcher's understanding of participants and research context deepens.

In comparing qualitative research to quantitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued three points:

1. Qualitative research is characterized by the fact that the researcher and participants construct the reality that they see, whereas in quantitative research, reality is outside the control of the researcher. As a result, quantitative inquiry can be compared to a spectator activity.
2. Epistemological foundations of qualitative research are not based on facts, but upon values and value judgments. A qualitative researcher's values not only guide, but shape his/her conclusions, because he/she is busy reconstructing the reality of the inquiry. The researcher must be sensitive to the participants' created realities, so that all claims of truth are socially negotiated.
3. Qualitative research can be as empirical as quantitative research, even though the philosophical foundations of qualitative research are seen as subjective value judgments. The researcher is the primary research instrument, and it is the role of the researcher to go through the data with the intent of identifying emerging themes. By triangulating themes with themes that have emerged from the same data through other researcher-instrument observation, and by triangulating this interpretive data to other forms of data relevant to the research, the

researcher can be as confident of the results of the research as a quantitative researcher.

Eisner (1998, 1985), in describing the art of educational evaluation and qualitative inquiry, spoke of the importance of connoisseurship and criticism. He described connoisseurship (1998) as “the art of appreciation. It can be displayed in any realm in which the character, importance, or value of objects, situations, and performances is distributed and variable, including educational practice” (p. 83). Eisner (1998) further explained that connoisseurship involves the ability to see, not merely to look. Connoisseurs must be able to understand and appreciate the different dimensions of situations and experiences, to use a wide array of information, and connect their experiences with their values and commitments.

According to Eisner (1998), educators need to become critics, to help others see. Connoisseurship provides criticism with its subject matter. Eisner (1985) stated, “Connoisseurs simply need to appreciate what they encounter. Critics, however, must render these qualities vivid by the artful use of critical disclosure” (pp. 92-93).

In applying the concepts of connoisseurship and criticism to qualitative research, Eisner (1998) maintained that educators need to discover the truth in situations, experiences and phenomena by working closely with others. Qualitative researchers must develop rapport with their participants. In order to become connoisseurs and critics, Palmer (1998) noted that individuals have to

engage in an ongoing exploration of themselves, others, and their arena of practice.

Phenomenological Perspective

Phenomenologists make the assumption that human experience makes sense to those who live it, and that human experience can be expressed consciously (Dukes, 1984). These human experiences are often described as lived experiences (Creswell, 1998). He further asserted that the goal of the phenomenologist is to reduce the structural (how) and textural (what) meanings of experiences to a brief description that expresses the experiences of all participants. Since all participants experience the phenomenon, the end product is a reduction to the essence of the phenomenon, experience, or central meaning.

Data

Participants

All of the participants were from one school jurisdiction (Westwind School Division #74) in one province (Alberta) in Canada. The group for this qualitative study consisted of all 14 Grade 3 teachers, and the different perspectives of participants were examined.

A new social studies curriculum in Grade 3 was established in 2003, and curriculum implementation took place in 2005. Some interview questions were asked about the implementation of the new social studies curriculum.

All seven principals, who have teacher participants in the study, were selected to answer questions regarding teacher involvement in professional development, curricular implementation, and teacher efficacy.

I understood that all participants in this purposeful sample experienced the phenomenon being studied.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, methods such as interviews and observations rely on the researcher's ability and skills to analyze, integrate and make sense of the data which have been collected (Gay & Airasian, 2003).

Qualitative data were collected through face-to-face interviews using an interview protocol developed and field-tested by the researcher. The 14 teachers and 7 principals work in a rural school jurisdiction in one province in Canada. The 14 teachers have experienced the phenomenon, implementing new curriculum, and they have had the opportunity to be involved in professional development activities sponsored by a professional development consortium. The seven principals shared their own perspectives on teacher efficacy and involvement in professional development activities.

Permission was sought by the gatekeepers, senior level district administration and the principals, and obtained prior to conducting the interviews. Gatekeepers were those individuals whose permission must be obtained in order to conduct the interviews and were considered to have insider status within a particular group (Creswell, 1998, Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Principals of teacher participants were also involved as participants in the study.

Procedures

Gaining access and developing rapport. Permission from the IRB was sought initially and gained. The issue of access was limited to finding individuals who

experienced the phenomenon of implementing new curricula with the ability to access professional development sponsored by a consortium, and gaining their permission to participate in the study. The gatekeepers and subjects were contacted with a letter of introduction outlined by Creswell (1998) which included the following:

1. The purpose and importance of the study.
2. The right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time.
3. Explanation of the interview process.
4. Confidentiality.
5. A statement about known risks associated with the study.
6. Expected benefits from participation in the study.
7. A place for them (and researcher) to sign and date the form.

This letter is contained in Appendix G.

I understood that the participants must feel comfortable answering questions, preferably in a setting which adds to their level of comfort. By taking time to get to know the subject before the formal interview began, I hoped that rapport might be established.

Interviews. In the phenomenological study, participants were interviewed face-to-face on an individual basis. Upon arriving at the interview site, the interviewee gave consent for the interview, and filled out a consent form. I reviewed the purpose and importance of the study, the amount of time that would be needed to complete the interview, the assurance of confidentiality, and the fact that the interviewee could opt out of the study at any time. Bogdan and Biklen

(1992) expressed concern that the interviews do not become too rigid, where subjects are not able to express themselves openly, or to tell their story, thus interviews for this study were semi-structured.

Interview protocol. Creswell (1998) stated that a form should be developed to note observations during the interview process. The interview form (Appendix H) included information regarding the time, date and setting, a brief description of the project, the questions which would be asked, and room for the observer to make descriptive and reflective notes.

The interview was audio taped, and transcribed at a later date by a paid transcriber.

Resolving field issues. I was aware of possible field issues outlined by Creswell (1998), and addressed them by developing rapport with the participants, assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity and by having interviews in a comfortable, quiet setting. These issues included:

1. The taxing nature of the interview.
2. Asking appropriate questions.
3. Dealing with time constraints.
4. Patience and skill in having participants discuss the meaning of their experience.
5. Keeping disturbing room noises to a minimum.
6. Protecting the anonymity of the participants.
7. Sharing information off the record.

8. Whether the researcher shares experiences with participants. This sharing minimizes bracketing, which is essential.

Storing data. Creswells' guidelines (1998) were followed. Computer backup copies were made, and audiotapes were of the highest quality. A master list of the types of information was gathered and compiled on a form developed by the researcher. The anonymity of participants was protected by masking their names in the data, and a data collection matrix was developed.

Development of Questions

For the purposes of this study, the interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions, based on a Grand Tour question and six sub-questions.

Grand Tour Question

The Grand Tour question in this study was: What are teachers' personal motivations to implement, or to avoid implementing a specified curricular change supported by provincial and school-district sponsored professional development programs?

Sub-questions. Sub questions which support the central question included:

1. What factors, if any, do teachers identify as enhancing their confidence in the need for change? In their own professional skills to implement this change?
2. What evidence, if any, do teachers have that involvement in professional development activities assists in curriculum implementation?

3. If teachers believe their teaching practices have changed through involvement in professional development activities, what leads them to this conclusion, and can they describe the changes they have made?
4. If teachers believe that their efficacy has improved through their involvement in professional development activities, what leads them to this conclusion, and can they describe the change in efficacy? I will define efficacy for the participant prior to the question.
5. What evidence, if any, do teachers have that their involvement in professional development activities enhance student learning?
6. What role, if any, does motivation play in changing a teacher's sense of teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change and involvement in PD and SAPDC activities?

In order to answer the grand tour question and the sub-questions, teacher participants were asked twenty questions, which were developed through synthesizing literature presented in Chapter Two of this study. Principals were also asked eight questions, so that I would have a more clear understanding of what school administrators expect from their teachers in terms of teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation, teaching practices and student learning supported by professional development.

Research Question Rationale

The review of literature drove the formulation of the Grand Tour question, which was followed by six sub-questions. The Grand Tour or overarching question was stated broadly, and focus was established in the formulation of sub-questions and interview questions.

Data were collected which answered the Grand Tour question and the six sub-questions. Teacher participants were asked twenty open-ended questions during the course of a semi-structured interview, which provided data that were analyzed and categorized with emerging themes and clusters of meanings. The principal participants were asked eight open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview which added clarity to the themes and clusters of meanings.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed within the framework of the Grand Tour question, the sub-questions and the interview questions. Data from the two groups of participants were analyzed separately and jointly.

Treatment of the Data

Qualitative Data

The following steps in a qualitative analysis process, outlined by Creswell (1998), were followed:

1. Bracketing. This first step in the data analysis process is commonly called a phenomenological reduction. The researcher must set aside, to the best of his/her ability, all preconceived experiences in order to best understand the participants' experiences in the study. As a former member of the

Board of Directors of a professional development consortium, I set aside any biases by focusing on the participants' experiences.

2. Horizontalization. In this, the second step of the phenomenological data analysis, the researcher lists every significant statement relevant to the topic, giving each statement equal value.
3. Cluster of meanings. In the third step, the researcher clusters the statements into themes or meaning units, and removes repetitive or overlapping statements.
4. Imaginative variation. The researcher reflects on his/her own description, as well as other divergent perspectives, varying the frames of reference regarding the phenomenon, and constructs a description of how the phenomenon was experienced.
5. Essence. The researcher constructs a description of the essence, or meaning of the experience.

In sum, I analyzed the data according to Creswell (1998) Table 8.2. (p. 148). I created and organized files, recorded descriptive data notes, observer notes, made margin notes and formed initial codes. I then listed the participants' answers to the interview questions, looking for meaning. Statements were grouped into meaning statements, as themes and categories emerged. Through the interpretive process, descriptions of "What happened?" and "How the phenomenon was experienced" helped develop an overall description of the experience, or "essence" of professional development in the context of curriculum implementation, and teacher efficacy.

Verification

Creswell (1998) noted that there are distinct procedures in place to support verification, or the “eureka factor” in a study. The procedures include the observational lens of both the researcher and an outside reviewer:

First, the data can be submitted for confirmation to a different researcher who looks for an “identical pattern.” Second, an outside reader can recognize the logic of the experience and how it matches his or her own experience. Third, further verification occurs through “rational analysis of spontaneous recognition” where the researcher asks whether the patterns fit together logically and whether the same elements could be arranged to constitute an entirely different pattern. Finally, the strength of the results depends, in part, on whether the researcher can subsume them under other data. (p. 207)

In this study, the data were submitted to another researcher who looked for identical patterns, and an outside reader examined the data, and determined how it matched his/her experience. Through a reflective process, I questioned whether the patterns fit together, or if other patterns could be established by arranging the same elements in a different way.

Validity

Validity, or trustworthiness, has been described as one strength of qualitative research, and it is used to determine whether the findings of the study are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, participant and the readers of

the study account. Creswell (2003) indicated that there are eight primary strategies to check the accuracy of the findings:

1. Triangulate different data sources of information.
2. Use member-checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings.
3. Use rich, thick description to convey the meanings.
4. Clarify the bias the researcher brings to the study.
5. Also present negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes.
6. Spend prolonged time in the field.
7. Use peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account.
8. Use an external auditor to review the entire project. (p. 196)

In this study, I used member-checking, rich, thick description to convey the meanings, and clarified any bias I may bring to the study to ensure validity and trustworthiness.

Generalizability

It is generally held that in a phenomenological study, the purposeful sampling procedure, or selection of specific participants, negates the generalizability of the findings. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) noted: “When researchers use the term generalizability they are usually referring to whether the findings of a study hold up beyond the specific research subjects and setting involved” (p. 72). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) further stated:

Some qualitative researches do not think of generalizability in the conventional way. They are more interested in deriving universal statements of general social processes than statements of commonality between similar settings... Therefore, they concern themselves not with the question of whether their findings are generalizable, but rather the question of to which other settings and subjects they are generalizable. (p. 72)

Eisner (1998), in comparing generalizability within the two research paradigms, stated that the researcher in a quantitative study determines the construction of a generalization. However, in a qualitative study, the researcher can also generalize, but ultimately, the readers will determine if the findings of the research fit in their setting.

Those who choose to generalize from this qualitative study, which is limited to findings from one rural jurisdiction in one Canadian province, must determine if the findings are transferable, according to their setting and situation. These individuals will examine their experience with curriculum implementation, and the models of professional development which are, or may become available to them.

Data Reporting

After the data were collected, verified and analyzed, the role of the researcher and the narrative were discussed.

The role of the researcher. According to Creswell (1998), qualitative researchers bring biases, values and judgments to their studies, and it is important

that they are aware of, and acknowledge these biases, values and judgments. I have been an educator for 31 years, have taught subjects in Grades 1 – 9, have been a school administrator (vice-principal and principal) for 15 years, have been a Deputy Superintendent for 3 years, and I am currently serving as Superintendent of Schools in the district where the participants work. As a school administrator, I was a proponent of professional development, setting policy, and involving and encouraging all staff members to be involved in professional development activities. I was also the principal representative on the School Division professional development committee, and have views on professional development and its relationship with teacher efficacy and teaching practices. In my former position as Deputy Superintendent, I was in charge of professional development for the school jurisdiction, and I was also a member of the board of directors for the Professional Development Consortium in a province in Canada.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) indicated that a primary guard against researcher biases are detailed field notes, which incorporate reflection as well as the researcher's subjectivity. Creswell suggests that the researcher include statements about past experiences to help the reader understand the topic. A comment should also be made regarding the connections between the researcher and the participants. The researcher should also indicate the steps taken to obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board. It is also important to reveal the steps taken to secure permission to interview the participants. Finally, the researcher must comment on the sensitive ethical issues that might arise (1998).

The researcher must ensure that any research conducted in his/her school district will be done in an ethical manner.

Narrative. The data were collated and analyzed and then reported in the study's narrative. Creswell (2003) indicated that narratives present information in the form of image or text. Qualitative researches are expected to use rich, thick descriptions in their narrative section.

Chapter Summary

A belief that is held by qualitative researchers is that all meaning is couched in individual or collective perspectives or context (Gay & Airasian, 2003). This qualitative study employed a phenomenological design to describe the meaning, or essence of experiences related by subjects in the study. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured face-to-face format with the use of open-ended questions. Each interview was conducted using a standard interview protocol. With the approval of each subject, the interview was audio taped, and I took field notes to supplement data collected from the interview. Perspectives were shared regarding teacher efficacy and involvement in professional development activities related to curriculum implementation.

In anticipation of the treatment of the data, I followed guidelines developed by Creswell (1998) regarding bracketing, horizontalization, cluster of meaning, imaginative variation, and describing the essence of the experience. The methodology used in this chapter addressed the review of literature included in Chapter Two. It served as a framework for the data collection. All findings from the data analysis were reported in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

*Teachers who inspire...
perceive their task not as one of implementing facts,
but to place the subject in front of the learner through enthusiasm,
imagination, and inventiveness... awaken the appetite of the learner.
Dr. Anthony Witham*

Introduction

A qualitative design was chosen for this study because of the desire to present a detailed view of the role of professional development and professional development consortia in supporting teacher efficacy in the implementation of new curricula. Creswell (1998) maintained that a qualitative researcher “builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). In applying the concepts of connoisseurship and criticism to qualitative research, Eisner (1998) maintained that educators need to discover the truth in situations, experiences and phenomena by working closely with others.

This researcher chose a phenomenological tradition because of the belief that the human experience, as described by Dukes (1984), can be expressed consciously. Creswell (1998) described these human experiences as lived experiences. This research shares these lived experiences and how participants experienced the phenomenon. The sharing of this study’s results is an effort to enable others to understand and appreciate the different dimensions of situations and experiences of the participants in the study, and then connect these

experiences with their own values. In this manner, the essence of the participants' phenomenon can be more fully appreciated.

Creswell's (1998) established qualitative protocol in collecting data and in following qualitative procedures was followed. Permission was sought and obtained by senior level administration and principals prior to asking participants to be involved. All gatekeepers and subjects were contacted with a letter which is contained in Appendix G. All participants signed forms permitting me to use direct quotations from their interviews. Procedural protocol was followed in gaining access to participants and in developing rapport, in storing data, in interviewing participants and in resolving field issues.

The five steps outlined in Chapter three by Creswell (1998) regarding the analysis process of the data were closely followed. It was essential that a phenomenological reduction was constructed. By bracketing my biases and preconceived assumptions, this researcher became more objective in analyzing participants' experiences expressed during the interviews. As a proponent of professional development, the researcher set aside personal thoughts and beliefs in order to present an accurate analysis of the "lived experiences" of the participants.

During the course of this study, I became the Superintendent of Schools. This did not appear to limit participants in sharing their perspectives while answering questions. As the research indicates, those teacher participants who were uncomfortable in changing teaching methodologies were expressive in sharing their feelings.

The second step in the analysis process dealt with horizontalization. All interviews were recorded and transcribed word-for-word. All significant statements which were relevant to the topic were identified and each statement was given equal value.

The sub-questions determined the topics, and for each topic the significant statements were clustered into themes. These themes emerged upon careful and repeated examination of the clustered significant statements. The information was synthesized and repetitive statements were removed.

Considerable time was devoted to the reflection of the researcher's description of the participants' experiences. The divergent participant perspectives were analyzed by varying the different frames of reference. Then a description of what the participants experienced, and how the phenomenon was experienced was constructed. It was in this manner that the researcher was able to construct a description of the meaning of the participants' experiences as they described their involvement in professional development, curricular implementation, and feelings about teacher efficacy.

In order to follow verification procedures, the data were submitted to another researcher who examined it and looked for identical patterns. I also questioned whether the meaning clusters could be arranged in a different manner, and whether I could subsume them under other data. After a great deal of reflection, I am confident that the development of themes accurately depicts and support the topics which were derived from the sub-questions.

Validity was ensured as member-checking was used. Participants shared comments with me regarding their interview experience, and minor changes were made as we consulted. Thick, rich language was used to convey the meanings expressed by participants, and the researcher clarified biases in order to ensure that the findings were trustworthy.

Profile

For the purpose of this study, participants' experiences are described in a narrative form, and direct quotations are used from the interview notes to underscore the textural and structural experiences of the participants. In this study, fourteen teacher participants and seven principal participants were purposefully selected. Teacher participants ranged in age from 33 to 65, with a mean teaching service of 20.5 years, while principal participants ranged in age from 46 to 61, with a mean principal service of 8.7 years. The teacher participant with the least teaching experience has taught for six years, while the teacher participant with the most experience has taught for thirty-one years. The principal participants' range is from four years as a principal to sixteen years as a principal.

In order to preserve anonymity and confidentiality, the identities of the participants and their place of employment have been concealed. The anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the information detract in no way from the collection and analysis of the data.

Table 1

Teacher Participant Profile				
Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Yrs. Teaching	Yrs. Principal
Bill	M	33	6	
Ken	M	64	10	
Ron	M	51	23	
Rita	F	42	17	
David	M	32	9	
Diane	F	41	18	
Barb	F	55	31	
Mary	F	50	24	
Sandra	F	52	21	
Helen	F	51	30	
Freda	F	65	31	
Gail	F	54	31	
Della	F	53	11	
Wanda	F	49	25	
Principal Participant Profile				
Mike	M	61	34	16
Hank	M	46	21	4
Betty	F	55	33	10
Harvey	M	53	30	8
Tim	M	49	26	4
Al	M	55	20	5
Paul	M	59	35	14

Information derived from the analysis of the answers to the six sub-questions assisted me in developing six topics:

1. The Need for Change
2. Professional Development and Curriculum Implementation
3. Professional Development and Teaching Practices
4. Professional Development and Teacher Efficacy
5. Professional Development and Student Learning
6. Motivation

The results of this study appear below each of the topic headings.

The Need for Change

Of the fourteen teacher participants, thirteen indicated that change in teaching practices is imperative, and they identified factors that enhance their confidence in the need for change. Helen, a veteran teacher with thirty years of teaching experience agreed that change can be important in some, but not all situations. She stated after a few moments of reflection, “I think that in some cases it [change in teaching practices and methodologies] is important if the teacher has a need to move on or is getting frustrated with a certain assignment to do things, then I think that it would be important. But if the teacher is comfortable and is still enjoying his or her work, then I think that should remain consistent.”

Kurt Lewin (1948), often referred to as the father of modern psychology, maintained that the change process involved three phases. The first phase, unfreezing involves the re-examination of currently held beliefs. The second

phase, changing, involves the actual substitution of one behavior for another through acquisition of new knowledge and skills. The third phase, refreezing, involves the individual in making the new change a permanent one. The individual must see the benefit of the change, which often requires coaching, support and patience.

Table 2 illustrates the themes which emerged for the topic, “The Need for Change.”

Table 2

The Need for Change

Themes	
1.	Improving Teaching Practices
2.	Students’ Needs
3.	Feedback
4.	Professional Development and Professional Learning Communities
5.	Changing Society

Improving Teaching Practices

Charlotte Danielson (2002, p. 9), a seminal author on school improvement, argued, “In order to provide students with the best possible learning opportunities, teachers must continuously work to advance their knowledge and their skills.”

The analysis of data revealed that flexibility plays an important role in understanding the importance of change and in implementing change in teaching practices. David, a teacher for nine years, responded thoughtfully, “I think you

have to be flexible, to adapt. And I think that's a survivability trait. If you want to be in the profession for the long haul, you have to be able to go where the wind takes you.”

Maintaining the same teaching practices year after year and becoming stagnant were issues discussed by participants. Rita, a teacher with seventeen years of experience in several different schools, spoke passionately about the importance of changing teaching practices and methodologies during the course of a teaching career:

It is extremely important, it is the number one, I think, the number one most important thing a teacher can do, because I've seen too many teachers do the same thing year in and year out. That's not to say that they're not effective teachers, but I don't think they are as effective as they could be if they were working on their practice and changing their practice.

Ron, a veteran teacher of twenty-three years, shared this profound statement: “If you don't ever think you have to change, you are definitely going to be stagnant.”

One participant spoke of those teachers who appear to lack interest and motivation. She believes that if teachers are tired and don't feel like coming to work, they definitely need to change teaching practices. Bill, a well-spoken teacher of six years stated, “Sometimes as a teacher you kind of feel that for no specific reason you are swimming more upstream than other years. So maybe that is the time to shift things a bit when you're feeling uncomfortable.”

As participants discussed the ongoing changes to curricula, the implementation of new curricula and the introduction of new resource materials, they spoke of the changes in methodology to teach effectively. In social studies, teachers must facilitate learning with a student inquiry approach. This shift provides opportunities for teacher growth. Barb, a teacher for thirty-one years, exclaimed, “If you’re not changing and growing as you are teaching, then you aren’t going to be very effective.”

Della, with eleven years of teaching experience emphatically stated, “We need to be constantly improving, looking for better ways of teaching!”

Students’ Needs

As participants discussed factors that lead to an awareness of change, it became apparent immediately that they recognized the importance of addressing students’ needs. Barb stated, “If you don’t feel your students are accomplishing or achieving where you want them to be, then you need to change. If they’re bored, if they are not producing, then there is a problem.”

Danielson (2002) reminded us that we must never forget who the intended beneficiaries of school are; the students. Teachers must be responsive to students and their needs over their own personal preferences. Bill shared these thoughts:

To me, the first clue always comes from the kids. Children change constantly over time and the kids who were in school 15 years ago are different than the kids today. Teaching practice and methods need to evolve to meet the needs of the kids. Since the children themselves and

their needs are ever changing, the curriculum content may stay the same, but the method of delivery is crucial to evolve.

Diane, a teacher with eighteen years of experience, also understood the importance of reading clues from students. She stated emphatically, “If kids just aren’t getting it, you have to change; otherwise it is a waste of time for them to be there!”

Della also noted that lack of student progress is an obvious clue that teachers need to change teaching practices:

The most obvious [clue] is a lack of student progress. But also there is the student, how the students feel about learning, about themselves as learners, and just their overall feeling about school. If it is negative, then something needs to change.

Participants discussed the uniqueness of students, and also the uniqueness of groups and classes of students. Barb shared this thought: “You’re going to find that each group of kids sometimes need a different approach, and as you teach you are also going to find approaches where you are personally more effective.”

Wanda, a confident teacher with twenty-five years of experience, recognized the importance of changing to meet students’ needs:

We need to meet the needs of the children. I think we do need to be open to change. For example, with technology, if we were not open to change, we wouldn’t be able to embrace the good that technology can do, and prepare children to use technology themselves.

Della echoed Wanda's sentiment in stating, "We need to be constantly improving, looking for better ways of helping children learn."

Mary, a veteran teacher with twenty-four years of experience, was pleased upon reflecting on her personal changes in teaching practices and the impact these changes had on students. She derived satisfaction in "knowing that something is working by watching students help other students."

Feedback

Argyris and Schon (1974) discussed the importance of feedback loops for ongoing assessment, learning and change. In explaining the double loop construct, they expressed the need for individuals to examine the values which govern actions. As individuals, we must ask ourselves, "Why am I doing this?" Participants in this study believe that feedback, whether negative or positive, enhances teacher confidence in the need for change. Positive feedback, in particular, fosters change in improving professional skills. The types of feedback discussed by participants include self-reflective, administrative, peer, parent and student feedback.

Wanda discussed the importance of self-reflection, and maintained, "Knowledge improves confidence. As we feel like we understand a new curriculum, if we understand it ourselves, and have the necessary tools to implement the changes, then I think that gives us the confidence to go forward." Having positive experiences is essential in improving one's confidence in changing teaching practices and methodology.

David spoke of feedback in terms of a series of progression:

I think that my first observation would be my own personal reflections on how my day to day job is going, my life is going, those sorts of feelings. If things aren't feeling right, then I do some further reflection and probably start analyzing and thinking about students, or go to your peers. On our staff we do a lot of just kind of venting with each other, and so that sort of feedback is always good, and then, if the need was a big enough concern I would probably go to [principal].

David also discussed the important role that leadership plays in impacting teacher change. Teachers who have confidence in their administrators, and respect their opinions will be more likely to ask for feedback relating to teaching practices. Della spoke passionately about her experiences with an administrator who supported her in her efforts to change teaching practices:

Having a good administration behind you, being willing to let you change, and being willing to let you be a risk taker in making changes that you feel good about but that you haven't done before is critical. You want your students to be risk takers, but we need administrators to be willing to let us be risk takers too in making changes because it's scary.

Della's statement about the importance of risk taking touches on a topic discussed at length by Reeves (2004). He said, "There is no risk-free alternative. The risks of change must be compared to the very significant risks of continuing current practices" (pp. 7-8).

Rita, in discussing the importance of developing relationships with fellow teachers, spoke enthusiastically about collaborating with peers, and how collaboration results in changing teaching practices:

It is really important to have a colleague that you can either work with on the same project or that you can bounce ideas off, that you can be comfortable sharing with them. In my experience, sometimes there have been people who have been less supportive, so what I try to do is go with the people who are always looking for something new in their teaching and that we can bounce ideas off them and get ideas, and just make the staff better too.

In speaking of factors that improve confidence in professional skills to implement change, Helen stated, “Colleagues are probably number one that help build your confidence because you get feedback from them.”

Participants discussed the importance of listening to parents, whether the feedback was positive or negative. Much can be learned from those who are student advocates. Parents remind teachers of their children’s learning style and needs.

Listening to students is also extremely important, according to participants. Helen represented the participants in stating, “I think the response from children is a good way you can get feedback to know whether you’re doing what you should be doing and have success there.” Children are honest and open as they provide feedback, whereas older students and adults may be more hesitant to provide feedback which is indicative of their feelings, as they may be

concerned with hurting feelings or dealing with the consequences of negative feedback.

Ron ratified what was expressed by several participants in stating, “I think that confidence [to implement change] comes when you have a peer, peers, and administrator or administrators who will back up and support what you want to do or try.”

Professional Development and Professional Learning Communities

It must be remembered that meaningful change will only occur when those who work in schools have the opportunity to develop new knowledge, skills and attitudes. Professional development is the key in facilitating this change (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990). Participants recognized the importance of professional development in improving teacher confidence and efficacy in changing teaching practices. Helen, in speaking on factors which improve confidence in professional skills to implement change, stated succinctly, “Professional development definitely plays a role there.” Barb echoed the same sentiment in sharing, “Effective professional development can do a lot.”

DuFour and Eaker (1998) spoke passionately of the role professional learning communities play in enhancing teaching practices and affecting change. What separates a learning community from a regular school is its collective commitment to guiding principles. These principles articulate what teachers believe and what they would like to create, and are embedded in the hearts and minds of the schools’ stakeholders. Collaborative teams should share a common purpose, and must realize its efforts to develop shared vision, values and mission,

take action, and focus on continuous improvement. Improvement must be assessed on the basis of results. Ron was enthusiastic in sharing the successes of his PLC team:

In my experience, I would think that as we sit together with two other Grade 3 teachers, as we sit around PLC meetings, they are an incredibly good time to reflect on changes that need to be made. As a result of all three of us brainstorming, and collaborating together, that's when it [the understanding of a need to change] happens.

Participants, in discussing the importance of working with peers, talked about the importance of collaboration, the need to have a shared vision and the need to improve teaching practices. Although many participants did not identify these discussions as formal participation in PLC groups, all schools in the jurisdiction have formed learning communities, and goals and targets have been established at each school to improve teaching practices in order to enhance student learning.

Changing Society

Just as participants discussed how students have changed over the years, and identified the changing needs and learning styles of students, they also talked about an ever changing society. In examining several jurisdictional websites (Westwind, 2005; Palliser, 2005; Lethbridge, 2005; & Horizon, 2005), mission and vision statements express the need for teachers to prepare students to become contributing members of society. For these reasons, teachers need to continually change teaching practices to prepare students to enter colleges, universities and

the work force. Wanda stated very effectively, “We can’t close ourselves off and stay in our classrooms. We have to be open to what is happening in the world around us.”

Brameld (1976), a futurist, spoke of the 21st Century, and argued that education is a process and not a place. He encouraged teachers to encourage learning, and to assist students in becoming global citizens. Participants in this study opined that their role is to prepare students to contribute to society.

Professional Development and Curriculum Implementation

DuFour (2002) maintained that curriculum implementation is a process of innovation and change, and the overarching goal of any curriculum implementation is the improvement of student learning. The Alberta Department of Education has developed a master plan for implementation of curricula through committee work which involves department personnel and teachers, field testing, and providing professional development activities through its regional consortia to prepare teachers for curriculum implementation. The curriculum implementation for social studies is being phased in over a four year period. Teachers in kindergarten through grade three implemented the new curriculum in the 2005-2006 school year, while implementation for all other grades will be completed by 2008-2009. Participant comments were based on one year of experience in implementing the new curriculum.

The Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium provided, and continues to provide professional development opportunities for social studies teachers to understand and implement changes in teaching methodology to

facilitate the implementation of the new curriculum. This methodology shifts the emphasis from a traditional teaching model to a student- based inquiry approach. The school jurisdiction is also able to provide professional development opportunities to its social studies teachers through “lead teachers” who have received rigorous training from the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium.

Table 3 illustrates the themes which emerged for the topic, “Professional Development and Curriculum Implementation.”

Table 3

Professional Development and Curriculum Implementation

Themes	
1.	Impediments to Curricular Change and Professional Development
2.	Impact on Teachers
3.	Impact on Students
4.	Effectiveness of SAPDC and Professional Development
5.	Principals’ Expectations

Impediments to Curricular Change and Professional Development

After interviewing all fourteen participants, I noted that six of the participants were quite uncomfortable with the shift in teaching methodology to a student inquiry-based learning model. In fact, these participants were passionate in describing their fears. Sandra, a twenty-one year veteran, in describing how she and her school peers felt, stated:

I like the student inquiry approach, but the way they [Alberta Education] set it up, we really felt like it was a failure last year. Of course, that's not fair because with one year of teaching, we were just trying to swim through it.

This is an interesting statement, in light of her following comment which appears to be contradictory:

Well, we were on the cutting edge of it. We were ahead of it in our school and in our Division [jurisdiction] and so we felt quite confident, and we felt like we knew what the curriculum was before we had to teach it, and I think that a lot of people don't have the opportunity we did have.

Sandra, in articulating the sentiments of the other five participants, felt uncomfortable with the fact that she did not see the positive results of the goals she had set after one year, but conceded that her feelings might change over time.

Calabrese (2002) maintained, "We often resist change because we fear that we cannot control the direction or outcome of our intended change. Becoming comfortable with change takes immense trust in oneself and in life" (p. 8). In describing her fear of change, Gail, a teacher for thirty-one years, stated:

I think it [the shift in teaching methodology in the implementation of social studies] is a little bit scary because I have never taught like that, and I wasn't taught like that, and I don't think like that. I'm not an inquisitive person. I'm a factual person and a "do what I'm told" type of person, so for me to come at it from all of these different angles is a bit difficult.

The six participants expressed concern with having little time to implement the curricular changes, and the negative impact the implementation would have on student results on mandated Grade 3 Provincial Achievement Exams. In explaining her concerns on mandated curriculum implementation, Sandra emphasized:

There is no such thing as not implementing! In a grade that requires you to give a provincial examination at the end of the year, you've got to look back and you've got to look ahead and you've got to be tight on the curriculum... You can't just be out there winging it.

Of the fourteen participants, eight spoke positively about curriculum implementation and how involvement in professional development benefited the implementation. Of the six participants who expressed concerns with the implementation, it is most interesting to note that five of the six indicated minimal involvement in professional development or the SAPDC. Gail, who has had little involvement in professional development or the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium, shared this comment:

Sometimes you don't know enough about it [curriculum] to implement.

You can't really do it if you don't know what it is all about. Sometimes it is a fear of something new. Sometimes it is a time factor. You don't really have time to figure it out so you keep doing what you have been doing.

Although one of the goals of the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium was to provide teachers with the opportunity to review new resources, one participant, who participates infrequently in these activities, stated, “We’re not familiar with the material that is coming through.”

Even though most participants spoke emphatically of the need for teacher change, six of the fourteen participants expressed concern over the change in teaching methodology required to successfully implement the new Grade 3 social studies curriculum. The comments shared in this section by the six participants indicate that although they recognize that teacher change is important, change can be difficult without proper preparation.

Impact on Teachers

Professional development, defined by the Alberta Teachers’ Association (2001, p. 2) is “any planned activity that provides teachers with an opportunity for growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes leading to improved teaching practice and enhanced student learning.” In reviewing the importance of professional development, Alberta Education established regional consortia to meet the curricular needs of its teachers. The Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium was established in 1992 to fulfill the Department of Education’s mandate to enhance teaching practices and improve student learning. The question, “How, if at all, has your involvement in PD, and in particular, the SAPDC, assisted in the implementation of new curriculum?” generated enthusiasm in most participant responses.

Some participants discussed their appreciation for Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium activities which clarified the importance of the student-based inquiry model, and training to improve teacher confidence in implementing the new social studies curriculum. In speaking of the student-based inquiry model, Rita stated with a great deal of passion:

I wished I would have been taught how to do this a long time ago. I almost, I don't want to be negative, but I almost feel sad that somebody didn't show me how to do a better job with this earlier in my teaching career. I am very fortunate because the Division [school jurisdiction] has allowed some of us to go into the Galileo [cross-curricular student inquiry-based learning project] , and the Galileo has been a tremendous program for increasing my understanding of what inquiry based is all about.

As participants became involved in the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium to prepare for curriculum implementation, they discussed how, through reflection, their personal beliefs changed. Although participants recognize the legal obligations pertaining to curricular change, the degree of diligence in implementation depends on a participant's core beliefs. Bill stated, "It forced me to be more creative. It forced me to look for multiple perspectives when talking about a single issue." Diane expressed this shared sentiment: "I'm thinking more about the whole world."

Participants spoke of "buying into change", and Wanda expressed herself well when she stated:

I think you've got to buy into it personally. Change means effort and I think a person is willing to make change if they believe it...I make sure the children are actively talking and expressing their ideas. I make sure the social studies classroom is a free place to exchange ideas and impart what they [students] are learning as well as what I have to impart to them.

Impact on Students

Curriculum implementation and professional development share the common foundation of improving student learning (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2001; DuFour, 2002; SAPDC Working Paper, 2004). Participants agreed that the implementation of the new social studies curriculum shifts accountability to the student for his or her learning.

The change in teaching methodology to a student-based inquiry model is a powerful way to allow students to present what they have learned in a way in which they feel comfortable. Those participants who responded positively about the shift in teaching methodology felt that students, rather than being recipients of teacher-based instruction, take a more active role in the learning process. Wanda expressed the following thought: "I think it puts more onus on the children, and they are more a part of the learning process. They are more active in the process, rather than just being a recipient of it."

In speaking of the shift in teaching methodology to a student-based inquiry model, Ken, a teacher for ten years, spoke enthusiastically:

I really like it! I think it's more fun and I think the students get way more involved, and their understanding of what we are trying to do, I think,

really goes to a different level. I just like it a lot better because I think there is a lot more learning which takes place, and a lot more teaching takes place, and it helps the student...I put a lot more of the onus on the student now with that approach. It's more of a guided teaching approach rather than a directive. They are required to do much more in-depth study of what we are trying to learn.

It became quite evident that those participants who eagerly accepted the challenge to implement the new social studies curriculum through a shift in teaching methodology did so because of the positive impact it would have on student learning. There is an interesting contrast between these student advocates, and those participants who were reluctant to change their teaching methodology. The reluctant participants were not as interested in the positive impact on student learning as they were about disruptions to their teaching practices. Bill, a student advocate, shared his experience:

I think the kids buy into it [student inquiry-based learning]. They feel like they are accomplishing something. They are not just memorizing names, dates and people and things. That way, they develop those skills that will be essential for later years.

Ron spoke of an unexpected result of his shift in teaching methodology:

Well, as a result of this shift with the inquiry-based [learning], children's use of technology has increased dramatically, where we are making the children reflect and think way beyond their [present] thinking level. I've

seen tremendous things as children have downloaded pictures of that [software] website.

Participants felt that students who take a more active role in the learning process become more confident. Many participants expressed the importance of moving from teacher-directed instruction to student-based learning, where students exchange ideas. Ron, for example, was pleasantly surprised that his shift in teaching methodology resulted in improved student learning through the use of technology.

Effectiveness of SAPDC and Professional Development

Participants did not generally distinguish between the SAPDC and professional development, since their involvement in professional development is generally through SAPDC. Principals and school professional development representatives receive information regarding upcoming SAPDC events on an ongoing basis. Principals and school professional development representatives forward this information to all staff members electronically as well as in staff meetings.

The director of the SAPDC listens to various stakeholder groups in determining the needs which need to be addressed through SAPDC events. Over 100 SAPDC events are planned on an annual basis, and the major focus is curriculum implementation.

Professional development has been recognized in this jurisdiction as a series of activities which are not hosted by the SAPDC, and which are much more expensive and which also require significant travel. Della stated, “There are some

others that I would just love going to, but they are so expensive that it's very hard to do.”

SAPDC events are easily recognizable by the logo on all documentation. Even though professional development encompasses the SAPDC, participants in this study view it differently. Since the jurisdiction promotes SAPDC involvement, those teachers who are generally involved in professional development go to SAPDC events.

Participants indicated that valuable information is gained through involvement with the SAPDC, and that a distinct benefit is the opportunity to have dialogue with other teachers at the SAPDC events. Wanda, in speaking of how involvement in the SAPDC and professional development assists in the implementation of new curriculum, stated, “It has helped a lot because I have gone to a few different SAPDC workshops and met with other teachers teaching the same subject, same grade level, and that helped a lot.”

The Alberta Department of Education posted its online curriculum guide to implementation on its website, and participants described how involvement in the SAPDC events was beneficial. Bill, who was trained through the SAPDC to share curriculum implementation ideas with his peers, expressed this sentiment:

SAPDC has definitely helped with understanding the Learn Alberta website and the online guide to implementation guide. Going to their session that they put on really helped with understanding what tools and resources are out there aside from the textbooks and the traditional resources we got from the publishers.

Participants recognized that the SAPDC tries to share information which enhances teaching practices. Della discussed the importance of qualified SAPDC presenters:

I've found that SAPDC classes that I have gone to are excellent. They have brought in good, qualified people. I have felt like they had really good people who could help in improving our teaching and I really enjoyed it. And the best part is that they're not too expensive, so they are accessible."

One participant, however, had reservations about SAPDC activities. She attended an SAPDC activity without a rudimentary understanding of the program she was implementing. Although she found the activity boring, the participant recognized that since then she has not "taken advantage of it [SAPDC], and probably should."

Della also expressed what other participants had stated; a person is much more likely to go to an inexpensive SAPDC activity rather than save professional development funds allotted by the school jurisdiction, over a period of time, to attend costly professional development activities.

Principals' Expectations

I interviewed all of the principals of the teacher participants in the study, and all of the principal participants recognized the need for teachers to avail themselves of opportunities to be involved in SAPDC and professional development activities in order to successfully implement new curriculum. In discussing the importance of teacher involvement in professional development

and SAPDC in the implementation of the new Grade 3 social studies curriculum, Hank, a teacher for twenty-one years, including four years as principal, stated:

I think they [teachers] have to be involved with it [professional development]. They have to. The PD gives them ownership and brings it back down to their level. They are saying to themselves, oh, this is going to happen. How am I going to do it? With my experience with SAPDC, one of the best things about it is they rub shoulders with other teachers from other areas. It is not just an instructor-student type of interaction. It is peer to peer, and sometimes more comes out of what they say at their tables.

Harvey stated what teacher participants also noted; one of the advantages of attending SAPDC activities is the opportunity to meet with peers.

Betty, a teacher for thirty-one years, including ten years as a principal, enjoys reading current educational literature. In understanding adult learning theory, she recognized the need for the SAPDC to understand how adults learn best, and to address those needs: “I think that knowing what we know about adult learners, they have to be quite involved in what they are learning, and they have to know why.”

Principal participants discussed the link between involvement in professional development and SAPDC activities and successful curriculum implementation. Al, a teacher for twenty years, including five years as a principal, brought clarity to the link:

I think that it is absolutely essential that they [teachers] are involved as much as possible with the new social studies curriculum. If they're not getting involved [in professional development and SAPDC activities], if they are not learning the things they need to, to implement that thoroughly, then they are not doing their job and being efficient as a teacher.

Paul, a veteran teacher of thirty-five years, including fourteen years as principal, discussed the importance of professional development and SAPDC involvement in helping teachers shift their teaching methodology to a student focus on inquiry, and stated, "That is, for many teachers, a totally different way of teaching a curriculum, particularly social studies."

Harvey, an educator for thirty years, including eight years as principal, also recognized the role the principal must play in encouraging teacher involvement in professional development and SAPDC activities as he stated after much reflection:

This particular curriculum required a real change in thought and philosophy; the whole foundation of it is new. SAPDC took a very active role in trying to emphasize the change in approach and philosophy and their PD opportunities...But, as with all PD, it is up to the teacher to decide to change, and that is the part that is out of SAPDC's hands and in the hands of the principal and the divisional [jurisdiction] staff; to monitor and encourage and foster that change in teacher behavior.

Principal participants also expected that through involvement in professional development and SAPDC activities, teaching practices must change

in order to successfully implement the new social studies curriculum. Hank stated, “They [curriculum changes] are pushing some teachers out of their comfort zone, and saying here is a new way we can touch different students.”

Al expressed himself in a similar manner:

I think the new curriculum forces teachers to look at social studies in a different way. It forces them to look, to be more reflective. It forces them to be more all encompassing in the way they look at merging their curricula together.

Tim, a teacher for twenty-six years, including four as principal, summed up the principal participants’ comments in stating very simply, “The whole emphasis is on inquiry-based [learning], and as the teaching practices change, then the curriculum can be more fully implemented.

Professional Development and Teaching Practices

Joyce and Showers (2002), seminal authors on professional development, maintained that professional development activities help teachers learn and apply new skills and knowledge. Although authors such as Cohen and Hill (1998), and Wang, Frechtling and Sanders (1999) contended that many models of professional development are largely ineffective because of their nature which limits ongoing, embedded professional development. Guskey (2000) maintained that newer views on professional development have led to a wider range of options and opportunities which enhance professional knowledge and skills.

All fourteen participants, as well as their principals, recognized the important role professional development plays in changing teaching practices.

Several of the participants spoke with passion and enthusiasm in expressing their experiences. They described professional development as “crucial”, “vital”, and “invaluable” in changing their teaching practices.

Table 4 illustrates the themes which emerged for the topic, “Professional Development and Teaching Practices.”

Table 4

Professional Development and Teaching Practices

Themes	
1.	Professional Development is Critical in Changing Teaching Practices
2.	Professional Learning Communities
3.	Criticism of Professional Development
4.	Reasons for Lack of Teacher Involvement
5.	Improved Teaching Skills

Professional Development is Critical in Changing Teaching Practices

Participants viewed professional development as critical in encouraging teachers to be continual learners and better teachers, as well as keeping abreast of changes in society and in the environment. In fact, thirteen of fourteen participants expressed a desire, in varying degrees, to participate in professional development and SAPDC activities. Helen stated, “Really, we can stagnate if we’re not constantly learning and we, as teachers, should be constant learners in order to stay abreast of things that are changing in our environment, changing in our communities, and changing in the world setting.” Rita echoed the same

sentiment by stating, “If you don’t go to PD, then you become stagnant and do the same thing over and over again.” Della used stronger language in describing the role professional development plays in changing teaching practices: “Absolutely essential! Anybody who is not involved in PD on an ongoing basis, as far as I’m concerned, is a slacker teacher.”

Some participants described professional development as a catalyst in improving teaching practices and developing professionally. Wanda represented other participants’ views in stating:

PD has got to be there. It is the catalyst between us and doing a good job as we reach the children. PD is right in the middle. If we don’t have appropriate PD, we won’t do as good a job.

Sandra, in speaking of the important role of professional development in changing teaching practices, used a powerful metaphor:

Oh, it is invaluable. I believe that if I haven’t found some way to develop myself professionally each year, that would be like me being a doctor that never upgraded, or a dentist that never looked at the new things that were happening. That’s insanity! And I’ll let you know that I think I am an educational physician, but that’s alright, my kids believe it too.

Gail used a simile as she spoke of professional development, and its role in changing teaching practices:

For us to do it all on our own is really, really hard. Sometimes you’re wandering in the dark where the PD could be a light, and they can show

you what to do instead of you wandering aimlessly on your own...It [PD] just rejuvenates you!

Participants stated that even if they learned one thing at a professional development activity, it is still worthwhile, even if the activity simply leads to self-reflection. Mary stated, "It's just always wanting to know more, because I'm constantly reflecting on things. Find out that I'm doing alright, or, that's a good idea, maybe I'll do that, and try something different."

Several participants spoke of their increased involvement in professional development in the last year. In describing why he is more involved in professional development this year, Ken stated excitedly:

For me personally, participating in PD is just, opens up my mind and opens up opportunities for me to see what others are doing. We get in ruts sometimes and it is pretty boring for the kids when they get the same thing over and over. It's pretty boring for the teacher when you do the same thing over and over. A new approach and new outlooks are really important.

Professional development that is well developed can catch someone's attention and lead teachers out of their comfort zone. Barb maintained, "If the PD catches your attention and makes you feel interested, then you are going to grab what's there and go with it." David expressed his opinion of professional development:

I see PD as kind of a time to stretch your comfort zone and to give teachers maybe a chance to learn something that they may not normally

individually go out and pursue. It kind of takes a direction that you wouldn't maybe take on your own.

Participants also described specific changes they have made to their teaching practices as a result of professional development, such as improved student assessment procedures, less teacher lecture, and more student involvement in discussions, student-based inquiry in social studies and collaborative learning.

The participants' principals described professional development, and in particular, SAPDC, and their impact on participants in a very positive manner. Hank stated that professional development "motivates, refreshes and brings new ideas. Sometimes it starts the fire, something that they have never seen before. SAPDC, in my opinion, is really good at bringing in some innovative gurus."

It is interesting to note that principals were more likely to differentiate between professional development and SAPDC than the participants. Principals in this school jurisdiction receive information monthly about upcoming SAPDC activities, and are expected to share information with all staff members. Tim stated, "I am very pleased with the consortia [SAPDC] and the programs they present. They are to the point and up to date because they are in collaboration with Alberta Education and the Alberta Teachers' Association."

Three of the seven principals were adamant that the only way to improve teaching practices and enhance student learning is through involvement in professional development. These principals referred to current literature in affirming the importance of professional development. Two other principals agreed in theory with the other three principals, but described a broad range of

professional development, including involvement in prescribed activities, as well as jurisdiction based activities, interaction with “lead teachers” who have been trained in professional development, learning communities and personal professional reading. Harvey shared this comment: “PD is the tool you use to present the possibility of change, the mechanism of change. SAPDC, I think, has an important role in the first step of that, which is presenting teaching practice change.

There were two principals who stated that teachers can improve teaching practices and enhance student learning without involvement in professional development. These principals spoke of the intrinsic role motivation plays in changing teaching practices, and how some teachers seem to be naturally gifted. However, both of these principals recognized that the majority of teachers benefit from professional development, and that professional development speeds up the process of improving teaching practices.

Principals stated that SAPDC provides hands-on experience for teachers, and strategies to help teachers visualize what a good lesson looks like. Comments indicated that SAPDC also serves as a motivator, a refresher and that it fosters teacher enthusiasm. One principal summed up the professional development and SAPDC experiences in stating that they provide great introductions to change.

Professional Learning Communities (Learning Communities)

In order to understand professional learning communities, the reader must be aware of its definition. As defined by DuFour and Eaker (1998, p. 25), a professional learning community is a “team initiative that incorporates shared

mission, values and vision, collective inquiry, collaborative teams, action orientation and experimentation, continuous improvement, and results orientation”. Professional learning communities are a form of professional development, which is defined by the Alberta Teachers’ Association (2001, p. 2) as, “any planned activity that provides teachers with an opportunity for growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes leading to improved teaching practice and enhanced student learning.”

Participants viewed peer collaboration as essential, as teachers know best how to teach teachers. Diane, in speaking of a professional development experience with her peer teachers, explained the advantages of sharing information in their learning community: “Team building for one, bouncing ideas off one another, and it is good for the morale of your school.” Ken, in sharing the success of his grade level learning community, stated, “I think getting other teachers involved to teach each other is way more effective than bringing people from way outside to try and help us.”

Several participants described the importance of learning communities, as teachers face similar struggles in their classrooms, and have the opportunity to work collaboratively on issues and problems. As teachers work collaboratively on issues and problems, they will find answers. Freda shared this thought:

You can be with people who have gone through the same struggles you have gone through, and perhaps found some answers. You can work together on a problem. See examples of things that have worked and not worked. Get some original ideas that you may not have thought of. These

are all shared and everything really helps a lot. If you pick up one good idea, then it has been a success and you can implement it and work it.

Participants stated that the sharing of new ideas and successes, and an analysis of what works and what doesn't work provide direction for teachers.

Rita, who has worked in several schools in different communities, stated, "I worked with a lot of people who were fabulous and interested in me and always encouraged me to not be satisfied, to always try a different way to do something."

Interaction with peers results in learning. Della shared this sentiment:

I'm interacting with people who are constantly learning. And as a result, I'm constantly learning from them. It is like brainstorming, getting lots of good brains together and talking over and interacting with other professionals, who are in the field and having the same kind of experiences I am [having].

In representing the principals' view of learning communities and professional development, Harvey explained:

Teachers being human, often need some external prodding, some peer support and peer encouragement. And PD opportunities provide that.

We're a social group as educators, and we do things together in groups, so I think PD is a very effective way to do it, but not exclusively.

Although principals recognized the importance of professional development and SAPDC, they understand the need for teachers to take the new ideas and enthusiasm and translate them into action and implementation. This is one of the key roles of learning communities. Betty shared this powerful

statement: “I think they [professional development and SAPDC] are great introductions, but I think the real work happens at the school level. Once you get the information and ideas, sit down as a team.”

Surowiecki (2004) summed participant’s beliefs about learning communities when he stated, “A successful face-to-face team is more than just collectively intelligent. It makes everyone work harder, think smarter and reach better conclusions than they would have on their own.” Schmoker (2006) maintained that learning communities provide the surest, fastest path to instructional improvement.

Criticism of Professional Development

Researchers such as Guskey (2000) and Joyce and Showers (2002) agreed that professional development, when properly planned, can have a tremendous impact on enhancing professional knowledge and skills. Although there has been improvement in the delivery of professional development, researchers such as Cohen and Hill (1998) and Elmore (2004) point out that professional development models are ineffective if they do not provide opportunities which are ongoing, embedded, cost effective and of high quality. Some participants criticized professional development as they discussed some of their own negative experiences. Barb, in sharing her thoughts on the pros and cons of involvement in professional development and SAPDC, stated, “Effective PD can change teaching practices. Ineffective PD can cause you to dig your heels in and say ‘I’m not going to do that.’”

Educational systems have been criticized in the past for making systemic changes which are not supported by data or research, but which are encouraged by influential educational figures. Della expressed her opinion about jumping on the educational bandwagon:

I have also been very mindful even in our division [jurisdiction] there tends to be bandwagon things that happen. And I'm kind of a rabble rouser and don't want to get on the bandwagon. I want to take a look at these new things, see what value there is, see how I can use it to improve my teaching, but I'm not going to throw everything that I've been doing out and take on some new thing just because it's the current thing that everybody says to do.

Since the participants in this study are quite involved with professional development and SAPDC activities relating to implementation of new curricula, there were relatively few criticisms. In fact, in the previous two sections dealing with professional development, teaching practices and learning communities, participants were very positive in their comments.

Reasons for Lack of Teacher Involvement

Of the fourteen participants, six discussed reasons for participating and not participating in professional development activities, six discussed only those reasons why they participate in professional development and SAPDC, and only two participants shared reasons why they don't participate in professional development and SAPDC.

Those two participants who aren't involved in professional development or SAPDC activities believed that their reasons for non-involvement were justifiable. Other comments were shared by participants who described their peers' lack of involvement in professional development and SAPDC. Participants spoke of the need for a meaningful connection between the professional development activity and what a teacher does in the classroom. Helen stated:

There has to be a need. It needs to be important if it is something we're going to that really doesn't interest us or we don't feel a need to grow or change in that area. Then it's going to be a waste of time.

David, in stating reasons why he may not be involved in SAPDC activities expressed his opinion: "The reasons that I probably wouldn't go is if I just didn't find it meaningful to me or there wasn't a meaningful connection to what I am doing in the classroom." Wanda stated her opinion in a succinct manner: "If you don't buy into it, if you don't feel it's important, you won't attend." She also expressed her views on attending professional development sessions based on educational theories as opposed to concrete ideas to help her in her classroom. "I want to participate in the specifics, in specific things relating to my grade level on a change in curriculum, not overall objectives and theories."

Lack of proper funding continues to be an issue, as some participants indicated that they would not participate in professional development or SAPDC activities if they had to pay out of their own pocket, or pay for substitute time to be out of the classroom. Comments were made previously that the SAPDC activities are low cost alternatives to other professional development activities.

Some participants also revealed that they haven't had a positive experience with professional development and are now less likely to attend future professional development and SAPDC activities. Other participants don't like leaving the school because of the impact their absence might have on their students and the increased burden they feel in providing meaningful, detailed lesson plans for the substitute teacher. In disclosing reasons for participating or not participating in professional development and SAPDC activities, Freda revealed:

Well, it's time out of your own individual personal time. There is a little bit of travel. The low cost [of SAPDC] is not an obstacle at all. Probably finding someone to go with. You need comradeship. It is hard to do it on your own.

Improved Teaching Skills

Joyce and Showers (2002) reinforced the importance of professional development in helping teachers learn and apply new skills and knowledge. They reported that only 10% of teachers add a new strategy to their repertoire without ongoing support. When continual professional development assistance is provided, up to 90% of teachers master a new strategy.

In responding to the question, "Is your repertoire of skills greater as a result of professional development and SAPDC?" all participants answered in the affirmative, and some with a great deal with enthusiasm. Bill stated, "Through SAPDC and through PD, I think I have been able to refine some of my skills, and gain some new skills." Another participant described her overflowing filing

cabinet containing her collection of resources which added to her repertoire of new skills.

Participants discussed some of the new skills they had acquired, but none as passionately as Helen. When asked if her repertoire of skills was greater as a result of professional development and SAPDC, she answered passionately, “Absolutely. No question. Alright, I’ll give you one [example] right here. It’s right here on my desk.” Helen went on to describe how she attended a workshop on student vocabulary, how it improved her repertoire of skills, and consequently, how her students were able to benefit from her newly acquired skills. Barb described an SAPDC session where she was able to develop skills in working with difficult children, and expressed appreciation for the new perspective she gained.

Rita expressed the sentiment of most participants when she said, “I think that the more PD you get, the better teacher you are.” Bill summarized the importance of professional development and its influence in improving teachers’ skills and practices in describing it as a dichotomy:

PD is the only way you are going to go about effectively changing teaching practices. However, teachers being the creatures we are, are extremely hesitant to change. Even if we buy into something initially, we need to be given the time to revisit the techniques or ideas, and to implement them. So much PD is flash in the pan, you know, an hour here and a half-day session there. You are energized when you leave, but how

much of that actually makes its way back to the classroom, especially if it isn't revisited?

Professional Development and Teacher Efficacy

In the context of education, Dembo and Gibson (1985, p. 173) defined teacher efficacy as “the extent to which teachers believe they can affect student learning.” Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) emphasized that people generally tend to underestimate or overestimate their actual abilities, and that teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to be more willing to experiment with new ideas and concepts in order to more effectively meet the needs of their students.

Teachers with a strong sense of teacher efficacy believe that the influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching. Teachers with a low sense of teacher efficacy believe that they are limited in what they can achieve, because a student's home environment is a large influence on his or her achievement. When asked the question, “What do you think of this statement? The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching.” all participants indicated a desire to make a difference in their students' lives. Eight of the fourteen participants agreed with the statement. Participants agreed that the key to overcoming a child's home experiences is to place students in a safe, secure and nurturing environment, and to develop meaningful relationships with him or her and with his or her parents. When a child is placed in such an environment, he or she can grow by feeling success, and teachers can provide honest, helpful feedback. Some participants also felt that once a student

gains confidence through successful school experiences, he or she can overcome anything.

Gail spoke of her former principal who visited the homes of his students: “He would say that our school was their safe place, that it was kind of the only place they could come to that was organized and caring and safe.” Sandra passionately revealed:

I used to spend a lot of time crying over my [cultural group] students, feeling like I couldn't change their world. And then I decided, I've got five and a half hours; I can make those the best five and a half hours of their day, no matter what their background is, no matter what is happening, and that has made a difference.

Mary echoed Sandra's sentiments in stating, “I think we are only limited in what we are willing to do for and with that child in their family.” Rita also spoke passionately in sharing this thought: “I think that a good teacher can really change a child's life...It is not so much about the curriculum and what she is learning, but that she knows that she is a good person and that she is okay.”

In speaking of his classroom, Ron stated, “As that's a safe, warm environment, nurturing, and there is good honest feedback, and the child knows that the teacher genuinely likes them. It can override that [a student's home experience], absolutely!”

Bill summed up the sentiment of the eight participants:

It won't be easy, and the degree to which it is overcome may vary. I firmly believe that as long as a child feels safe and secure within the

teaching environment, they feel safe in trying and failing, and still feel that support is there. I think that every child can grow and overcome, in spite of whatever challenges they may have at home. As long as they know school is the place you come and work and learn and give effort, they realize by giving effort they can feel success, and then they can overcome. It will vary with each kid, but there are no hopeless causes.

When asked the question, “What do you think of this statement? A teacher is limited in what he or she can achieve because a student’s home environment is a large influence on his or her achievement.”, ten of the fourteen participants agreed with the statement. It is interesting to note that eight of the fourteen participants felt that a student’s home experiences can be overcome by good teaching. After listening to the statement regarding a teacher’s limitations because of a student’s home environment, a greater number concurred. In examining these apparent inconsistencies, it must be remembered that participants had a strong desire to impact student learning, but ten participants discussed mitigating circumstances.

Participants felt that it is critical for the teacher to work closely with parents. By working together as a team, the student is likely to have positive school experiences. If a relationship between parents is not established and maintained, the teacher’s best efforts will have a lesser impact on students. Diane stated, “I think that as long as the parents are on your side you can make a difference, but it is really hard if they are not.” Ken shared the same viewpoint: “I do believe that we have a terrific, positive effect on kids. I don’t think it

[student's home experiences] can be overcome, but I think that I can have a powerful, positive effect on kids.”

Regardless of issues of culture, poverty and substance abuse in the home, participants felt that a teacher can still have a positive influence on students.

Helen revealed a sense of frustration in stating:

There are some things you just can't change. There are powerful things that go on in the home and in a child's life that even though this can be a safe and caring environment, you just sometimes can't fix everything and can't change everything for them. You can change, you can do a lot of good, but not as much as we would like to.

Participants believed that relationships can overcome negativity, and teachers must understand the positive influence they can have on students. For some students, the only positive role model may be the teacher. In all, twelve of fourteen participants responded that their sense of efficacy has increased because of professional development. Those participants who indicated that their sense of teacher efficacy did not change through involvement in professional development equated efficacy with passion. They felt that they were passionate about educating students without involvement in professional development.

Table 5 illustrates the themes which emerged from the topic, “Professional Development and Teacher Efficacy.”

Table 5

Professional Development and Teacher Efficacy

Themes	
1.	Improved Teacher Confidence
2.	Acquisition of More Tools
3.	Improved Teaching Practices

Improved Teacher Confidence

Participants discussed how involvement in professional development increased their confidence levels. They noted that as confidence increases, teachers are more likely to experiment with different strategies, different activities, and generally to become risk-takers. Confident teachers are not comfortable with maintaining the status quo, but seek challenges and the opportunity to change, and to accomplish more. Della, in speaking of how her sense of teacher efficacy had changed because of involvement in professional development and SAPDC, stated:

I'm more confident. It gives me the confidence to keep on trying and to tackle really big challenges in the classroom. It's like there is access to help, through professional development. It provides ways and means of tackling really big challenges.

Bill also discussed the positive influence that professional development has had on his sense of efficacy:

I have definitely felt a stronger sense of efficacy. I have felt I could accomplish more. I'm helping a larger portion of my students reach the student outcomes presented in the program of studies. Overall student learning in my classroom is improving as a result.

Mike, an educator for thirty-four years, including sixteen as a principal, summed up other principals' comments: "I do believe that professional development is an essential part of helping teachers develop and understand their roles, and feel confident about what they do and how they affect students."

Participants spoke of student learning and achievement, and how important it is for teachers to provide learning opportunities for all of their students, and to prepare them for the provincially mandated achievement tests. Results from the provincial achievement tests (PAT's) over the past five years indicate that Grade 3 students in this jurisdiction achieve at a higher level on their language arts and math than their provincial counterparts.

According to participants, learning opportunities through professional development and SAPDC improve the level of teacher confidence. Senge (1990), in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, stated:

Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning, we re-create ourselves. Through learning, we become able to do something we never were able to do. Through learning, we perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning, we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life. There is within each of us a deep hunger for this type of learning.

Acquisition of More Tools

During the course of the interviews, participants talked about how education has changed in the past several years. Several participants spoke of how students have changed, how they are wired differently, and how there seems to be an increasing number of students with diagnosed learning disabilities, as well as an increased number of students displaying behavioral disorders. The tools, or skills acquired through involvement in professional development and SAPDC activities helped participants provide direction on how to teach different students with different needs, and how to assist a greater portion of students achieve the learner outcomes outlined in the Program of Studies. Participants also mentioned how involvement in professional development activities exposes them to new resources and skills.

Reference has been made through participant interviews to tools available to teachers, or the opportunity to acquire more skills to meet students' educational needs, and to make the learning journey for students an enjoyable one. Barb used a metaphor in her description of how her sense of teacher efficacy has changed through involvement in professional development activities:

It [professional development] has given me more tools for my tool belt, so to speak. In dealing with children who have learning disabilities, behavioral problems, or just finding new and fun ways to reach all the kids. To make learning fun and exciting.

Wanda also described her sense of efficacy in a similar manner: “I think it [professional development] has helped me to get the tools that I need to teach curriculum.” In summarizing the principals’ views on professional development’s role in improving teacher efficacy, Harvey made this powerful statement:

PD is a method, a mechanism that teachers use to improve their efficacy. Some teachers have a high level [of efficacy]. Some teachers are naturally gifted, but all teachers can improve. PD is one of the tools for improvement. SAPDC is an effective organization, I find. They thoughtfully prepare and present PD opportunities for teachers.

Improved Teaching Practices

Participants discussed how professional development and SAPDC motivated them to change teaching practices so that they were better teachers and more effective in enhancing student learning. They believed that a measure of an increased sense of teacher efficacy is the increase in student achievement on tests given in the classroom as well as achievement on the Grade 3 provincial achievement tests. Participants expressed satisfaction in knowing that their increased sense of efficacy has a direct bearing on improving student learning. After contemplating how professional development has improved her sense of teacher efficacy, Rita responded:

I think I am a much more effective teacher because of PD. One example is through the PAT writing. All of us became familiar with the Joanne Moore [writing] program, and a couple of us went to her workshops, and

that truly has changed the way I teach writing and the way my kids are doing on PAT's. Same thing with reading. I have been to a lot of balanced literacy conferences, and it has changed how I teach. And I think it has changed how the kids in my class have become better readers because of it.

Principals are aware of expected changes in teaching practices in implementing the new social studies curriculum. Paul, who is passionate about the new curriculum, stated:

With the new [social studies] curriculum, there is a new focus in teaching. A new teaching style will be required, so through professional development and in particular, SAPDC and workshops, teachers are to see first hand examples of how teaching practices will have to change to implement the new curriculum, and how to influence student learning.

Al, another principal, stated his opinion succinctly: "I believe that any professional development in which the teacher is really taking it all seriously and attempting to do a better job as a teacher is going to make them more efficacious."

Betty, a veteran principal, understood the relationship between professional development, teacher efficacy, and student learning. She stated quite simply, "I believe that teachers need to understand that they are the key in what happens in their students' learning."

In reflecting upon a teacher's sense of efficacy and a teacher's responsibility to his or her students, Gail shared a powerful metaphor she heard in

a professional development session, along with her comments, which reflect the sentiment of her fellow participants:

Jack Canfield [motivational speaker and co-author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*] tells a story of a guy who picks up starfish and is just throwing them in the ocean, and somebody asks him what he is doing. He says that he is saving these starfish's lives. The other fellow says, "You can't do that for every starfish in the world. You can't make a difference." The guy throws another starfish in the ocean and says, "Well, I made a difference to that one." So I guess we can't save all of the starfish, but we can save some of them, and we can make a little difference. It is just like PD. It can't totally change how I teach, but it can make a little difference. It is the same with us and our students. We can't totally change how they live and how they think, but we can make a little difference.

Professional Development and Student Learning

Professional development provides opportunities for teachers to hone their skills and improve their teaching practices. The Iowa Association of School Boards (2004) stated that the key to improving student achievement is to improve teaching. Teachers must also have ongoing opportunities to improve their practice, and in order to change instructional practice and improve student achievement, professional development must be substantial.

Shulman (1987 as cited in Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990) explained that just as students are expected to learn daily, teachers are also expected to upgrade their skills, develop new strategies and expand their knowledge through involvement in

professional development programs to meet the needs of students. Glasser (1990) explained that whenever we learn something new we have fun. Fun is the payoff for learning, and skilled teachers are able to create joyful classrooms which foster and support high quality academic achievement and learning.

Table 6 illustrates the themes which emerged for the topic, “Professional Development and Student Learning.”

Table 6

Professional Development and Student Learning

Themes	
1.	Improved Confidence
2.	Correlation and Causation
3.	Heightened Awareness and Passion

Improved Confidence

All participants stated that involvement in professional development activities gives them a wealth of ideas and strategies to use in the classroom with their students. Participants felt that they come away from the professional development activities with a better understanding of student needs, and that they are able to facilitate student learning more effectively. Responses regarding enhanced student learning included the improvement in student test scores, improvement in PAT scores because of successful implementation of the new social studies curriculum, which necessitated a shift in methodology to student-based inquiry, and an overall increase in student and teacher confidence.

Participants also believed that involvement in professional development activities increases a teacher's confidence level. With this increased confidence, a teacher is more likely to try different things in the classroom, which benefits students.

Diane spoke enthusiastically about how her involvement in professional development and SAPDC enhance student learning:

I think my students feel more ready for tests. I think they are more confident and have less anxiety about them. I am trying really hard to have a lot of different activities in the classroom, to try to fit all the different learning styles into the different levels. In most classes, I have a huge low end and high end, and I'm trying to give them choices.

Della was reflective in answering the question, "How do you view the role of PD and SAPDC in relationship to student learning?", and purposefully stated, "As I seek professional development, then I improve my skills, and then as I'm applying the things that I have learned, I am always evaluating to see if it is making a difference in student learning."

Correlation and Causation

In response to the question, "How do you view the role of PD and SAPDC in relationship to student learning" responses were laced with passion. All participants responded that there was a strong correlation between the two. Expressions such as "a huge correlation" and a "100% correlation" were indicative of the varied responses. In fact some participants maintained that the relationship was more than correlational. One participant enthusiastically pointed out that the relationship might be causative. Bill shared this thought:

I think there is a correlation and maybe to some degree a causation between the two. As teachers access the PD opportunities provided and improve their skills and knowledge as teachers, I would hope and assume that it is passed on to student learning, and as a result, student achievement increases as well...I'm reaching student outcomes with a broader base of students.

Ken, after some thought, stated, "It [professional development] is not for the teachers as much as it is for the students. Because what we learn, hopefully, we will take back and make our classroom a better place for the student." Helen shared her perception quite simply: "When I get excited, it gets the children excited." Rita explained her viewpoint from a different perspective: "If you are not learning and you are not willing to go up there and learn new things and try new things, then how can you expect that from the kids in your class?" Al, after much thought, stated:

I think it [relationship between PD and student learning] is absolutely matched, that if the teacher is not a good teacher, if the teacher doesn't have the skills that he or she needs to have to do their job properly, that it's going to impact for good or bad on the students that they have in their classroom.

Participants felt that professional development, in its various forms, gives teachers confidence in improving skills and changing teaching practices which enhances student learning, and helps the students taste success. Barb expressed this thought: "A teacher with enhanced skills is going to enhance student

learning. If the teacher feels successful, and that is portrayed to the students, she will make them feel successful.” Della enthusiastically stated, “I’ve made significant changes and I’ve felt like I am a much better teacher, and because I am a better teacher, my students are...I’m able to improve in my teaching and the students learn more.” Hank, a well-spoken principal, stated:

I think there is a huge correlation between teaching practices and student learning. The biggest correlation is students learn differently today than they did ten years ago, fifteen years ago. And for those of us who have been around for a long time, if we keep the same teaching practices, we aren’t hitting anybody anymore. The correlation comes and how do we get through to them with different methodologies?

Wanda’s comments were similar to other participants’ comments, but she also spoke enthusiastically about the joy of student learning:

I’ve been able to use ideas that I’ve gained at those different [SAPDC] workshops and have been able to use things directly at the grade level that I am teaching. I think it has helped, and I’ve been able to see improvement in student test scores, in their confidence and the joy I see in their learning.

Participants referenced research conducted by educational authors. Betty, a principal who reads a great deal of educational literature, stated, “Correlation is 100%. Michael Fullan’s new book, *Breakthrough*, that’s the premise of what he is saying. The teacher makes the difference, and that’s not new. I think good

teaching equals good student learning.” Betty’s comment summarized participants’ comments with that powerful statement.

Harvey expressed his sentiments with conviction:

The common wisdom says that improved teaching practices are essential to improved student learning. Research is following through with that, suggesting that that is true. It is hard to read a professional journal or a serious book about change without seeing improved teaching practices being underscored over and over. It’s really the one and only thing that I can see as a common thread through all attempts at improving student learning; improved teaching practices. It is always there in the popular reading, the serious reading, and in the research.

Several participants discussed involvement in professional development, and subsequent discussion in learning communities. As a result of their conversations, participants felt that they were able to make stronger connections with their students, and that change in teaching practices enhanced student learning.

Ron shared his thoughts on learning communities: “Well, if the SAPDC is successful and the certified teacher is making a gain, if they are correlating with their team, then student learning will definitely be enhanced because you’ll get feedback from your peers.”

Heightened Awareness and Passion

Awareness of students' needs leads teachers to change their teaching practices, according to participants. The awareness of students' needs, combined with a teacher's desire to affect student's lives, leads to ongoing change in teaching practices, as a teacher's philosophy becomes student-centered. Helen, in speaking of how she viewed her job, stated with passion:

[It is] our willingness or our need to affect these children's lives. That is what our job is! I am motivated by every individual in my classroom, so that every child's needs pushes me into trying to affect their life, their learning, their day. Sometimes it is just to make them feel loved.

Helen described how she was motivated by her students, and other participants spoke of being intrinsically motivated, and how that was the key to change. They stated that teachers who are intrinsically motivated have a desire to try new things. They are self-reflective, and evaluate lessons that are effective or ineffective, in order to hone their teaching practices. Wanda described the relationship between motivation and humility:

A willingness to change. I guess humility, recognizing that at any stage of our life, in our teaching career, we can always learn more ourselves, and I think that takes humility in us as educators, and a willingness to open ourselves up to learn from others.

Participants described their passion for teaching, which is renewed through involvement in professional development activities. They felt that as they become more excited about becoming better teachers, their students feed off the

elevated levels of excitement and passion, and become more excited about their own learning. Ron exclaimed, “I can tell just from watching children, they get hooked, like I’m into this thing. I’m trying to get them hooked into the learning, and they become passionate themselves about it!”

Barb stated after a moment of reflection:

Well, I feel I am a much stronger teacher than I was when we started. Much of it is due to professional development. When you enjoy the material you are teaching, you enjoy the children that much more, and if you are enjoying what you are doing and you are enjoying the kids, then the kids are going to enjoy what you are teaching.

David’s comments reflect the common sentiment of other participants: “I think it leads a role to give teachers tools to make teaching more exciting and lessons more meaningful.”

Administrators and peers heighten the awareness of teachers to change teaching practices and enhance student learning, according to participants. Ken stated poignantly:

What leads anyone to change? Well, in order to change any kind of habit, you’ve got to have a desire, some outside force that is prompting you and encouraging you to make that change. I don’t think you can really make it on your own. I think you’ve got to have the help of administration and other teachers.

Rita, in discussing the influences other teachers have had upon her, stated, “I think you need to have someone or a bunch of people on staff who are enthusiastic, who are pro-PD, who are always trying new things.”

Motivation

Motivation is generally defined as intentions, desires or goals that determine a person’s behavior. Daft (1997) defined motivation as “the forces either within or external to a person that arouse enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain cause of action” (p. 526). Glasser (1990) noted:

What happens outside of us has a lot to do with what we choose to do, but the outside event does not cause our behavior. What we get, and all we ever get, from the outside is information: how we choose to act on that information is up to us. (p. 41)

In answering the question, “What role, if any, does motivation play in changing a teacher’s sense of sense of teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change and involvement in professional development and SAPDC activities?”, all participants were eager to talk about the importance of motivation. Responses, however, were general in nature. Little was said about professional development, implementation of curricular change or teacher efficacy. Although the answers given were incomplete in the context of the question that was asked, valuable perspectives were nonetheless shared. Participants spoke passionately about the role motivation plays in bringing about change, and the fact that teachers must understand the importance of change, must be willing to change, and know that the change is worth it. All agreed that

motivation to change has a direct bearing on meeting students' needs. Teachers want students to do as well as they can, and want students to understand their potential.

Table 7 illustrates the themes which emerged for the topic, "Motivation."

Table 7

Motivation

Themes	
1.	The Only Way to Affect Change
2.	The Common Thread
3.	Lack of Motivation
4.	The Principal's Role

The Only Way to Affect Change

Participants felt that motivation is the only way to affect change, because it leads to a desire to change. A high level of motivation leads to an openness to new learning and the acquisition of new skills. The discussion also revealed that all teachers want to help students. This is what drives them to become teachers. They want to make a difference in students' lives. Participants remarked that motivation comes from a desire to learn, which helps teachers lead students down the road of discovery. Gail enthusiastically revealed, "Well motivation is everything, isn't it?" Della stated with authority:

Motivation has got everything to do with it [teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change and professional development and

SAPDC]. If you're not motivated to be improving and not motivated to do the very best you can, you're not going to seek out those opportunities.

Helen stated emphatically, "We have to be excited about what we teach!"

Rita shared her fellow participants' beliefs when she articulated, "See, I like to think that every teacher is caring, that deep down, there is a person in there who really is there because they care about the kids."

The Common Thread

Motivation was viewed by participants as the common thread that connects and weaves teacher learning and student learning together. Views were expressed that motivation increases a teacher's passion to be the best he or she can be and to provide the best possible learning opportunities for students. Teachers who are passionate and excited about teaching develop passion and excitement in their students. After a moment of reflection, Bill stated:

I think a teacher needs to feel a certain degree of motivation to want to change. Where that motivation comes from, whether it is a positive motivation or a negative motivation, I think that the more motivated a teacher is to want to change or to feel the need to change, the greater the changes will be, and the more open they will be to learning and creating new skills.

Diane, in thinking of her students, revealed, "So what motivates me to be a better teacher? I want them [students] to do as well as they can do with what they have got, and I want them to think beyond what they can do."

Harvey, a principal, in reflecting on his interaction with teachers, stated:

I think that this is a mindset of all teachers; they want to help kids. That's why they get into teaching in the first place. If they can help them [students] better in a certain way, that's the way they want to do it. They [teachers] have to learn how to do it, and professional development is one of the ways.

Participants believed that motivation promotes risk taking, the willingness to try new things and to never be content with the status quo. Teachers who are motivated are caring teachers, who understand that their role is to help students achieve their potential. Several participants mentioned a connection between motivation and rewards. Through involvement in professional development, teachers have the opportunity to enhance their teaching practices. That, in essence is the reward. External motivators, such as peer coaching and involvement in learning communities support the need for involvement in professional development activities.

Mike described intrinsic motivation in stating, "It could be self-motivation, but they [teachers] have to have the motivation to strike out and to learn new things and to participate in professional development or in their own research."

Harvey also shared thoughts on intrinsic motivation:

Self-motivation is the feedback teachers are getting when they are attempting a change. As a teacher sees progress, sees student enlightenment, sees more productivity from the students and so on, they are likely to continue to try and implement the change that they have

learned about in PD opportunities. I think that whole area of motivation is what keeps us going.

Laura summarized participants' responses passionately:

Motivation is huge! You've got to want to change. You've got to be willing, but you've also got to feel like the change is going to be worth it. You've got to buy into whatever it is and understand that it is going to make a difference to the students.

Lack of Motivation

Sometimes, people describe their positive viewpoints in negative terms in order to bring clarity to the observer. Several participants framed their passion about motivation in describing it in a negative way. What happens when teachers are not motivated? If a teacher is not motivated, he or she will not be involved in professional development activities, or implement curricular change effectively. Several participants were passionate in speaking of teachers who teach in a mechanical way, jumping through hoops, benefiting no one. Lack of motivation has a detrimental effect on students, as teachers are unwilling to change, and fall into a rut. Participants opined that the biggest losers are the students.

Freda succinctly stated, "If you have no desire, you won't change. It's like beating a dead dog. You can't get it to move."

Mary, in speaking about change, revealed, "If you are not willing, it's not going to open up new ideas and new ways of doing things."

In speaking about unmotivated teachers, David shared this comment: "If you are not motivated to do anything, then it is just kind of a smile and wave

procedure. If you're not motivated to do it [change], then you are jumping through a hoop.”

Gail spoke of the self-destructive cycle of lack of motivation: “If you don't want to change anything, then you aren't about to go and take a class [SAPDC]. Even if you do take a class, you're not going to do it [change] because you don't have the motivation.”

The Principal's Role

Three principals answered the question, “What role, if any, does motivation play in changing a teacher's sense of teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change and involvement in professional development and SAPDC activities? from a principal's perspective. They spoke of the importance of motivating teachers. They felt that by providing timely feedback and positive reinforcement, a principal can influence a teacher to be more reflective, to assess student progress more effectively, and to become a risk taker. A principal can also play a positive role by creating a culture of learning, and discontent with the status quo.

Harvey spoke authoritatively:

Looking at it from a principal's eyes, I have to believe the motivation that a principal can provide and different things a principal can do to motivate a teacher are very important. My experience has shown that simple motivational strategies, you know, notes and thank you's and pats on the back tend to be short lived, but do lead to an increase in participation, and

continued small motivational strategies can bring a teacher to great improvement.

Betty spoke of her role as a principal:

I think it [motivation of teachers] is important and I think a lot of that comes from the person's own desire to learn, but I think as administrators, we create a culture of that [learning] in our building. I believe teachers need to be in an environment where status quo and what you've always done is not acceptable.

Al, in speaking about the journey of learning, revealed:

I think to some degree, principals, leaders, can motivate them [teachers] by giving them glimpses of things they [principals] have learned, so that they [principals] can motivate them [teachers]. In lots of cases that is a good way for them [teachers] to go down that road of discovery themselves.

Principals understand their role as agents of change. Calabrese (2002) noted, "The leader needs to be a change expert who understands the nuance of change, and then, like the conductor of an excellent symphony, orchestrates the change process through its many stages" (p. 2).

Chapter Summary

Participants identified factors that enhanced their confidence in the need for change. They indicated that maintaining the same teaching practices year after year leads to stagnation. Barb stated, "If you're not changing and growing as you are teaching, then you aren't going to be very effective."

The importance of addressing students' needs was recognized as a factor in leading to an awareness of the need to change. Della shared these thoughts: "We need to be constantly improving, looking for better ways of helping children learn." Participants described a heightened sense of passion and awareness of student needs upon returning from professional development and SAPDC activities.

Feedback was also identified as a factor which enhances teacher confidence in changing teaching practices and developing skills. Feedback can be received through self-reflection, administration, peers, parents and students.

Even though participants understood the need to implement new curriculum, six of the fourteen participants expressed concern over the change in teaching methodology required to successfully implement the new Grade 3 social studies curriculum. These participants were, for the most part, not involved in professional development activities addressing the shift in methodology.

Participants revealed that their personal beliefs changed as a result of their involvement in SAPDC activities to prepare for curriculum implementation. Bill stated, "It forced me to be more creative. It forced me to look for multiple perspectives when talking about a single issue."

Principal participants also recognized the need for teachers to be involved in SAPDC and professional development activities in order to successfully implement new curriculum. Al stated, "If they're not getting involved, if they are not learning the things they need to, to implement that thoroughly, then they are not doing their job and being efficient as a teacher."

Participants viewed professional development as critical in encouraging teachers to be continual learners and better teachers. Della was passionate in stating, “Anybody who is not involved in PD on an ongoing basis, as far as I am concerned, is a slacker teacher.”

Comments were shared about participants’ increased repertoire of skills as a result of professional development and SAPDC involvement. The importance of peer collaboration was also identified, as teachers know best how to teach teachers.

Participants mentioned reasons why some teachers do not participate in professional development and SAPDC. Responses included having a negative experience with professional development, lack of proper funding and time spent out of school.

It was expressed by participants that involvement in professional development increased their confidence levels, which led to an improved sense of teacher efficacy. Bill stated, “I have definitely felt a stronger sense of efficacy. I have felt I could accomplish more.” The acquisition of more teaching tools and improved teaching practices from professional development and SAPDC involvement also improved the participants’ sense of teacher efficacy.

Participants felt that motivation is the only way to affect change, because it leads to a desire to change. Diane stated, “So what motivates me to be a better teacher? I want them [students] to do as well as they can do with what they have got, and I want them to think beyond what they can do.” Motivation was viewed as a common thread that connects and weaves teacher learning and student

learning together. It promotes risk taking, the willingness to try new things, and a refusal to maintain the status quo.

CHAPTER FIVE:
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

*In times of drastic change, it is the learners
who inherit the future.
The learned usually find themselves
beautifully equipped to live in a world
that no longer exists.
Eric Hoffer*

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings and provides conclusions and recommendations for the world of practice and for future research. The Grand Tour question serves as a working guideline in this study, and is supported by six sub-questions. Six topics, derived from the sub-questions, serve as a framework for the themes which emerged.

Summary

The Grand Tour question in this study is: What are teachers' personal motivations to implement, or to avoid implementing a specified curricular change supported by provincial and school-district sponsored professional development programs? Topics derived from six sub-questions serve as a framework in which themes emerged and participants' experiences are summarized:

1. The Need for Change.

Participants discussed the importance of change in improving teaching practices. Rita maintained that changing teaching practice is “the number one, I think, most important thing a teacher can do.” Ron added clarity is saying, “If

you don't ever think you have to change, you are definitely going to be stagnant.” Teachers must understand the importance of risk-taking, of taking on new challenges and trying different things to improve their teaching practices so that they do not become stagnant. One of the motivators for teachers is the ongoing desire to improve teaching practices.

Another motivator is the desire to meet students' needs. Diane shared her wisdom: “If kids just aren't getting it, you have to change; otherwise it is a waste of time for them to be there!”

Feedback serves as a motivator as individuals examine their values and assess their impact on student learning. Feedback comes in many forms; student, peer, administrator and parent. Helen emphasized, “Colleagues are probably number one that help build your confidence because you get feedback from them.” Students tend to be honest and open as they provide feedback. Confidence is gained when feedback is given by those who support the teacher in trying to change.

Hixson and Tinzmann (1990) pointed out that professional development is the key in facilitating change. Participants spoke convincingly of the role of professional development. Ron spoke of the importance of professional learning communities in his school: “As a result of the three of us brainstorming, and collaborating together, that's when it [the understanding of a need to change] happens.”

Wanda, in speaking of the need to change because of an ever changing society, commented, “We can’t close ourselves off and stay in our classrooms. We have to be open to what is happening in the world around us.”

2. Professional Development and Curriculum Implementation.

In discussing the shift in teaching methodology in the implementation of the new Grade 3 social studies curriculum to a student-based inquiry model, 43 % of participants were uncomfortable in making the change. Gail indicated, “I think it [the shift in teaching methodology in the implementation of social studies] is a little bit scary because I have never taught like that, and I wasn’t taught like that, and I don’t think like that.” This is a powerful statement about the fear of change. The participants who expressed anxiety about the curricular change were generally not involved, or minimally involved in professional development activities providing information about the change. Even though participants described their passion for personal change, several expressed concern over this required change in teaching methodology. This conundrum speaks to espoused theory and theory in action. Our espoused beliefs do not necessarily drive our behavior.

The majority of participants spoke in positive terms of professional development and how it helped them in changing their teaching methodology. Rita stated passionately:

I wished I would have been taught how to do this a long time ago. I almost, I don’t want to be negative, but I almost feel sad that somebody

didn't show me how to do a better job with this earlier in my teaching career.

Bill spoke about how the combination of professional development and SAPDC and mandated curricular change altered his teaching methodology: "It forced me to be more creative. It forced me to look for multiple perspectives when talking about a single issue." Those participants who spoke positively about the curricular change were generally more involved in professional development and SAPDC activities, and spoke of the importance of student learning as opposed to their discomfort with the change in teaching methodology.

Principal participants were emphatic about the need for teachers to attend SAPDC workshops to receive the information and resource material to successfully implement the new social studies curriculum. Harvey commented, "I think they [teachers] have to be involved with it. The professional development gives them ownership and brings it back down to their level." There appears to be a disconnect between principal participants' expectations for immediate change in teaching methodology, and some teacher participants' anxiety and resistance to change, in light of the professional development and SAPDC opportunities provided. This underscores the need for principals to be actively engaged in working closely with teachers to ensure they have the opportunity, and take the opportunity to receive proper training through professional development and SAPDC to successfully implement new curricula.

3. Professional Development and Teaching Practices.

Participants spoke strongly of the role professional development plays in changing teaching practices. Sandra described herself as an educational physician because of her involvement in professional development. Della spoke so passionately that she described any teacher not involved in professional development as a “slacker teacher.” Participants were quick to point out specific teaching practices that changed because of their involvement in professional development or SAPDC. In comparing comments made in topic # 2 with comments in topic # 3, it is somewhat confusing to me to sense participants’ passion about changed teaching practices because of involvement in professional development and SAPDC, in light of the high levels of anxiety expressed by several participants in changing a specified methodology for implementation of new curriculum. This leads me to postulate that teachers must accept the fact that they cannot just pick and choose those teaching practices they wish to change, but that they must embrace change even though it is mandated at the state or provincial level, if it is going to improve student learning, and provided that professional development opportunities are ongoing and embedded.

Participants agreed that teachers know best how to teach teachers, and some comments were made of the importance of learning communities and peer collaboration. Della noted, “Interaction with peers results in learning. And as a result, I’m constantly learning from them.” Betty further clarified the importance of learning communities: “I think the real work happens at the school level. Once you get the information and ideas, sit down as a team.” Although these are

powerful statements, relatively few participants spoke about learning communities. This could be due to the fact that no specific questions were asked pertaining to learning communities.

Participants discussed some of the new skills they acquired through involvement in professional development and SAPDC. Rita summarized her fellow participants' views: "I think that the more PD you get, the better teacher you are."

Although participants recognized the importance of professional development and SAPDC, they also shared reasons for their lack of involvement; ineffective presenters, high costs, time out of school, extra lesson planning for substitutes, and sessions which are not meaningful. These inhibitors can be removed and this topic is discussed in the section, "Implications."

4. Professional Development and Teacher Efficacy.

All participants, in describing the extent to which they can affect student learning, spoke passionately of their desire. Mary stated, "I think we are only limited in what we are willing to do for and with that child in their family." Some participants admitted that there are mitigating experiences which hamper them in their quest. Helen expressed her frustration in her comments:

There are some things you just can't change. There are powerful things that go on in the home and in a child's life, that even though this can be a safe and caring environment, you just sometimes can't fix everything and can't change everything for them. You can change, you can do a lot of good, but not as much as we would like to.

Participants spoke of their increased confidence and sense of accomplishment through involvement in professional development and SAPDC. They also discussed how they acquired more teaching tools. In fact, Barb spoke of how she was adding tools to her “tool belt.” Professional development and SAPDC serve as motivators in enhancing teaching practices. Participants noted that with enhanced teaching practices, they felt that they were better teachers and more effective in enhancing student learning. Betty explained her view on the relationship between teacher efficacy and student learning: “I believe that teachers need to understand that they are the key in what happens in their students’ learning.”

5. Professional Development and Student Learning.

Participants felt that professional development and SAPDC provide them with skills which have enhanced their confidence, which in turn enhances student learning and improves student confidence. With this increased confidence, a teacher is more likely to try different things in the classroom, which benefits students. These experiences are summarized in Della’s comments: “As I seek professional development, then I improve my skills, and then as I’m applying the things that I have learned, I am always evaluating to see if it is making a difference in student learning.”

A correlation, and acknowledged causation exist between professional development and SAPDC involvement and student learning, according to participants. Ken claimed, “It is not for the teachers as much as it is for the students. Because what we learn, hopefully, we will take back and make our

classroom a better place for the student.” Barb expressed this thought: “A teacher with enhanced skills is going to enhance student learning. If the teacher feels successful, and that is portrayed to the students, she will make them feel successful.” Betty shared one of the most simple, yet profound thoughts: “I think good teaching equals good student learning.”

Participants described a heightened awareness of students’ needs, and rejuvenation of passion for teaching through their involvement in professional development and SAPDC. Barb reflected:

Well, I feel I am a much stronger teacher than I was when we started. Much of it is due to professional development. When you enjoy the material you are teaching, you enjoy the children that much more, and if you are enjoying what you are doing and you are enjoying the kids, then the kids are going to enjoy what you are teaching.

A teacher becomes more student-centered as involvement in professional development and SAPDC activities heightens his or her awareness of students’ needs, coupled with a desire to affect students’ lives. One of the most profound experiences for a teacher is to reflect on improved teaching practices and skills and to see the joy of learning in students’ faces.

6. Motivation.

All participants agreed that motivation is the key to change, but answers were general in nature, as they spoke enthusiastically and focused on the importance of motivation rather than its role. Little was said about motivation’s role in enhancing teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change, or

involvement in professional development and SAPDC activities. The length of the interviews and the placement of the sub-question at the end of the interview may also have had a bearing on the general nature of the answers given.

Motivation to change has a direct bearing on meeting students' needs. Freda succinctly stated, "If you have no desire, you won't change. It's like beating a dead dog. You can't get it to move."

Participants viewed motivation as the common thread that connects and weaves teacher learning and student learning together. Mike described the role of motivation in stating, "It could be self-motivation, but they [teachers] have to have the motivation to strike out and to learn new things and to participate in professional development or in their own research."

Harvey, a principal, described his experience with teachers:

I think that this is a mindset of all teachers; they want to help kids. That's why they get into teaching in the first place. If they can help them [students] better in a certain way, that's the way they want to do it. They [teachers] have to learn how to do it, and professional development is one of the ways.

A few participants described the important role school principals play as leaders in motivating, supporting, and encouraging teachers throughout the change process. Calabrese (2002) noted, "The leader needs to be a change expert who understands the nuance of change, and then, like the conductor of an excellent symphony, orchestrates the change process through its many stages" (p. 2).

Conclusions

Although teacher participants indicated that there is a definite need to change teaching practices during the course of their careers, my experiences with them and principal participants through the interview process lead me to believe that there is a disconnect, to some degree, between what was stated and the actual change in teaching practices necessitated by the implementation of new curriculum.

While some participants spoke passionately about their changes in teaching methodology and practices to successfully implement new curriculum, others spoke of the difficulty they were experiencing in utilizing a student-based inquiry method in the classroom. I believe that those participants who were actively involved in ongoing, embedded professional development felt that they had the necessary skills and confidence to embrace the student-based inquiry method in implementing the new social studies curriculum. Those participants who expressed concern or discomfort did not take advantage of the SAPDC sessions offered on implementation of the new curriculum.

What do we learn from this dichotomy? Professional development is a tool that acts as a catalyst in helping teachers understand the need for change, and offers opportunities and resources to change teaching practices. It was clear to me that those participants who were passionate in their responses were professional development advocates who enjoyed working collaboratively with peers to improve teaching practices. More importantly, these participants expressed a

strong desire to meet students' needs. I believe that professional development involvement provides clarity and direction in understanding the need for change.

When teachers seek constructive feedback on their classroom performance from peers, students and administrators, they will more likely engage in professional development activities. Meaningful change is brought about as professional development involvement increases teachers' knowledge and skills.

I believe that new curricula are implemented to address the educational needs of students and to improve student learning. The new social studies curriculum is an example of how current literature and research influence the decision to utilize a student-based inquiry method, and to promote critical thinking. Teachers must realize that lack of participation in professional development limits their ability to successfully implement new curriculum if they do not know what student-based inquiry is, or what it looks like in the classroom.

Teacher discomfort in changing teaching methodology and practices must be balanced against what is best for the students. The understanding of students' needs should always drive changes in teaching practices. This is where professional development and SAPDC can make the difference. Most teachers understand this, but those teachers who choose not to be involved in professional learning activities need to ask themselves hard questions. What is best for my students? How can I successfully implement the new curriculum? Professional development offers creative answers to these questions.

One participant, Sandra, stated that that failure to develop one's self professionally would be like a doctor or a dentist who never upgraded. Would

you want to go to that doctor or dentist? I believe that parents expect teachers to have the knowledge and skills to provide optimal learning opportunities for their children. If teachers want to hone their craft, they must be involved in professional development. After all, the goal of professional development is to provide opportunities to improve teaching practices and enhance student learning. It is designed to motivate and rejuvenate the teacher.

Although no questions were asked about learning communities, several teachers spoke of the importance of collaborating with peers. I believe that any involvement in professional learning opportunities will ultimately benefit the student. When teachers collaborate, synergy develops, which accelerates the desire to set goals, share best practices and improve student learning. Teachers really do know best how to teach other teachers.

Although participants in this study indicated reasons why teachers don't become involved in professional development activities, this doesn't change the fact that professional development improves teaching practices and enhances student learning. SAPDC provides low-cost activities which are ongoing. The excuse that professional development is too expensive is not valid. In past years in our jurisdiction, teachers saved up money for a period of time, sometimes for up to two or three years, to go to a single professional development activity. What a shame! With the evolution of professional development consortia, money is no longer a factor. As a principal, I felt that my teachers who were involved in ongoing professional development activities were my best teachers. They were

risk-takers, passionate about trying new things, and ultimately, they were student advocates.

In asking participants about teacher efficacy, it was immediately clear that all participants want to impact student learning. Although some participants felt that they were somewhat limited by students' home experiences, I had a clear sense that they wanted what is best for their students. I believe that there is a correlation between involvement in professional development and teacher efficacy. Those teachers who are involved in professional development are more confident in their ability to enhance student learning. This is stated quite simply, but I sincerely believe that it is true. If professional development provides opportunities to improve teaching practices, then it follows that confidence increases, and a sense of teacher and personal efficacy increases.

Educational researchers have stated that teachers either overestimate or underestimate their sense of teacher efficacy, but the real test of efficacy lies in what happens in the classroom. Student success in the classroom builds confidence, and increased student learning and achievement are indicators that the teacher has the knowledge and skills to create successful experiences for students. As I have already stated, professional development provides the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills.

I also believe that teachers who have a strong sense of personal efficacy are highly motivated and passionate about teaching. Again, this is attributable to involvement in professional development.

Motivation was viewed differently by teacher participants and principal participants. On one hand, teacher participants spoke of the need to meet students' needs, which is an intrinsic motivator. Principal participants spoke of their role in motivating teachers. Principals provide feedback, positive reinforcement and try to develop a culture of learning for teachers. I believe that principals can play a large role in motivating teachers to improve teaching practices. Principals have the right to expect teachers to hone their practices through involvement in professional development. If teachers are not involved in professional development, principals should direct them to go to those professional development activities which are directly related to their teaching responsibilities. As teachers and principals are accountable for the successful implementation of curricula and student learning and achievement, principals must provide professional development opportunities for teachers which will assist them in developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes to improve student learning and achievement.

Recommendations for the World of Practice

The following implications for action were derived from face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with fourteen teacher participants and seven principal participants in this study. These recommendations will involve suggestions for teachers, principals, school jurisdictions and provincial/state educational leaders.

Teachers

Teachers were quite candid in answering the questions and appeared to be comfortable in their natural setting. It was immediately evident that all teacher

participants were intrinsically motivated and wanted to be good teachers. Several participants spoke passionately about their experiences with professional development, and how they felt they were better teachers and were able to improve student learning.

Although thirteen of fourteen teacher participants discussed the importance of changing teaching practices, one participant felt that if a teacher is effective, change does not need to occur. Change is part of the educational process. Teachers must be open to those changes which will enhance their learning and improve student learning. By being open-minded, by examining data, reading current literature, and accepting mandated curricular change which may necessitate a change in teaching methodology, teachers will be receptive to change as they think of how the change will benefit students.

Those teachers whose paradigm is “That’s the way we have always done things around here” must re-examine their core values and shift their paradigm to “What’s best for the students?” When this shift occurs, a teacher becomes student-centered. It is critical for teachers to reflect on their core values, and assess their teaching practices and methodologies.

Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) emphasized that people generally tend to underestimate or overestimate their actual abilities. This is where professional development plays a role. Professional development engages teachers in a process where teachers gain information to enhance teaching practices and improve student learning, where they are encouraged to collaborate with peers, who provide feedback and offer support. Teachers need to

work collaboratively in learning communities to share concerns, issues and best practices. Those teachers who have closed the classroom door and are content to teach in their own silos must understand that there is much to learn and much to share. That is the purpose of the community.

The findings from this study confirm that the majority of the fourteen teachers understand the importance of professional development and how it benefits them and their students. This study revealed that fewer teachers actually attend professional development and SAPDC activities. Argyris and Schon (1974) explained this dichotomy as they developed “espoused theory” and “theory of action.” Although some teachers espouse the importance of professional development, they are less prone to follow through and take part in professional learning activities. In this study, teacher participants revealed reasons for not attending professional development activities. These reasons included lack of time, expensive sessions, too much time out of the classroom, added work in developing lesson plans for substitutes, use of personal time, and past negative experience(s) with professional development. Teachers must address these inhibitors and ask themselves, “Will professional development help me become a better teacher, and will it benefit my students?”

Some sacrifices must be made to attend professional development activities. Personal time may be sacrificed, lesson plans will have to be in place, and time will be spent out of school. However, SAPDC in this jurisdiction provides low-cost activities, and learning communities in any jurisdiction can become an embedded part of the school. If a driver has a negative experience in

his or her car, will he or she refuse to drive again? Not likely. Among the teacher participants in this study, a negative experience seemed to justify a lack of participation in further professional development.

In this study, six of fourteen participants were uncomfortable with the shift in teaching methodology to a student-based inquiry model, and indicated that they had not received the proper training or resources. If we believe in accountability in education, teachers must realize that professional development provides opportunities to improve teaching practices, gain confidence in changing teaching methodologies, and to gain access to resources which assist in curricular implementation. Teachers are ultimately responsible for what happens in the classroom.

I would recommend that teachers take risks and try new things. Collaboration drives success and the establishment of best practices. Always remember to move forward, and ultimately, do what is best for the students.

If the real test of efficacy is in the implementation of curriculum, a teacher's mandate is to ensure that the intended curriculum and the attained curriculum are the same.

Principals

The findings from this study reveal that principals are proponents of professional development and SAPDC, and expect their teachers to attend professional development and SAPDC activities. Principal participants spoke of their role in motivating teachers, in providing feedback and reinforcement, in encouraging teachers to become risk takers and in creating a culture of learning.

No principal participants discussed their role in facilitating professional learning within their own schools. In deference to those participants, no single question was asked in reference to the principal's role in promoting professional development and SAPDC.

As the school leader, the principal must be aware of participation, or lack of participation of teachers in professional development activities. That information is readily available in the jurisdiction where this study was conducted. It is interesting to note that there is large difference in teacher attendance in professional development activities between certain schools in this jurisdiction. Those principals who are perceived by jurisdiction leaders as professional development leaders have significant numbers of teachers who attend professional development sessions throughout the year. Those principals who are not perceived as professional development leaders have fewer teachers attending professional development activities.

Principals must ensure, first of all, that information on upcoming professional development, including SAPDC sessions, is provided to all teachers. Principals must also have data on teacher attendance at professional development activities, and provide opportunities for all teachers to be involved in professional learning activities, and encourage them to go. After attending professional development sessions, teachers need to have the opportunity to share information with the rest of the teachers in the school. In this manner, other teachers will benefit, and the presenting teacher may sense an increase of confidence in working with peers.

If principals find that they have teachers who are not engaged in professional learning, they may choose to send that teacher to a professional development session related to that teacher's teaching assignment. I have found this to be beneficial to the entire school community, with no resistance demonstrated by the assigned teacher. The assigned teacher has the opportunity to share his or her experiences with all teachers orally or in written format, depending on individual circumstances.

Through classroom observations and dialogue with the teachers following the observations, principals can help teachers see the gap between teachers' espoused theory and their theory in action. Teachers may believe that their teaching practices assist students in attaining the curriculum, when in fact, the intended curriculum is not being attained. As instructional leaders, principals play a pivotal role in helping teachers enhance student learning.

As the leader, principals understand the importance of modelling behavior to teachers. If the principal is engaged in professional development activities, and shares his or her excitement with teachers, it is much more likely that teachers will buy into the importance of attending professional development activities. A principal's involvement in professional development allows him/her to become a more effective instructional leader. A segment of every staff meeting should involve professional development, whether there is a discussion on upcoming professional development activities, the sharing of best practices, instruction given by the principal or reports by teachers on professional development

activities they have attended. The idea of “return and report” enhances accountability.

Principals must also take the lead in the development of learning communities, where there is a shift from “assignments for the social committee” to meaningful discussion on enhancing teaching practices to improve student learning. The focus must always be on the student. Michael Fullan (2006), in his book *Breakthrough*, emphasized the importance of professional learning communities: “Professional learning communities at the school level are critical in establishing cultures in which teachers learn from each other and school leaders and teachers collaborate for continuous improvement” (p. 88).

If principals have control over allocation of their school budget, sufficient money must be set aside to allow teachers to go to professional development activities. Effective professional development is ongoing and embedded, and time must be set aside to allow teachers to enhance their professional learning, whether it is through professional development, SAPDC or learning communities.

School Jurisdictions

Since the questions asked of participants were mostly about professional development in general, or SAPDC, few comments were made regarding professional learning at the jurisdictional level. School jurisdictions provide a specified number of days in the school year for teachers to be involved in professional development activities. The Alberta Teachers’ Association (2005) has expressed a concern that the average number of professional development days in 2005 in jurisdictions across the province has dropped to 5.5 days a year

from 5.8 days in 2004. Of the 62 jurisdictions in the province, 22 jurisdictions provide 7 or more professional development days per year, in marked contrast to the 18 jurisdictions that schedule only 3 days per year. Jurisdictions must provide enough time non-instructional time during the school year for teachers to be engaged in meaningful professional development opportunities. If professional growth is central to enhancing student learning, jurisdictions must find time to allow for professional growth opportunities.

The Alberta Teachers' Association (2004) maintained that, despite improvements in professional development funding, and access to professional development activities, their survey indicated the investment in professional development continues to be a low priority in Alberta's K-12 system budget. Professional development expenditures at the school jurisdiction level represent 0.5 % of the K-12 system budget. Hirsh (2003) concluded that professional development funding should represent 10 % of school budgets. I agree that jurisdictions must allocate an appropriate amount of their budget for professional development purposes, coordinate effective professional development activities within the system which are ongoing and embedded, and assist in the development of learning communities across the jurisdiction. For example, in a rural jurisdiction, high school science teachers from different schools need the opportunity to meet together and be part of a learning community.

Videoconferencing can play a key role in those jurisdictions where distance deters teachers from meeting together. Jurisdictions need to provide

videoconferencing suites in schools and provide proper training so that teachers feel comfortable in meeting via videoconferences.

With a continuing emphasis on curriculum implementation, school jurisdictions may consider hiring a director of curriculum, professional development and technology. Teaching practices and student learning will improve when teachers who are implementing new curricula have the opportunity to become involved in appropriate professional development activities which may include the use of technology. The director oversees and coordinates these activities with input from teachers, principals and senior level administrators.

Province/State Educational Leaders

In order to provide professional development opportunities at the school level and at the jurisdictional level, there must be adequate funding. The review of literature in this study clearly establishes that professional development is the fulcrum to leverage teacher, student and school improvement. This is possible only if professional development is systematically supported.

Professional development funding in Alberta schools lags far behind comparable benchmarks in other sectors. Hirsh (2003) reported that the National Staff Development council recommends that 10 % of school budgets should be allocated to professional development funding. Professional Development Quarterly (2002) reported that the annual professional development spending by legal firms of \$3,500 per employee is typical of other professions. This is substantially different from the provincial average school district funding of \$494 per employee in the 2003/04 school year (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2004).

If provincial and state educational leaders truly value professional development, they must provide funding so that teachers have the opportunity to enhance teaching practices and improve student learning.

Even though professional development funding in Alberta appears to be sub par in relationship to other sectors, Alberta Education established regional consortia over 11 years ago to develop professional development programs to meet emerging educational needs, to broker, coordinate and act as a clearinghouse for available training and development resources, and to provide access to in-service, training and professional development programs at a reasonable cost.

In the 2005/06 school year, the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium provided 170 workshops for teachers including curricular workshops for social studies, math, french, and daily physical education, and sessions focusing on character education, critical thinking, beginning teachers, special needs and student motivation. The list goes on. Over 5,100 teachers attended SAPDC sessions in the 2005/06 school year. Obviously, many teachers attended more than one workshop but the teacher involvement is still startling!

Participants in this study spoke very favourably of SAPDC sessions they attended, and for good reason. Without making any claims to generalizability, I would recommend other provincial and state educational leaders to explore the opportunity and feasibility of establishing professional development consortia. Through my experience as a teacher, school administrator, jurisdictional leader, and as a former member of the Board of Directors for SAPDC, I believe that

consortia directors understand the pulse of the educational community, are flexible in working with emerging professional development needs, and work closely with Alberta Education. These directors understand the curricular directives initiated by Alberta Education and are able to provide meaningful professional development activities so that teachers can successfully implement new curricula.

In Alberta, the sharing of “best practices” regarding successful curriculum implementation as well as innovative professional learning activities funded through the *Alberta Initiative for School Improvement* project needs to be disseminated to jurisdictional and school leaders.

Recommendations for Future Research

The sharing of “lived experiences” of the participants in this study, the analysis of the data, and constant reflection on my part have all shaped recommendations for future research:

1. Results of this study indicate that involvement in the Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium has benefited these teachers in the implementation of new curriculum. Further research needs to be conducted on the impact of regional development consortia on teaching practices, student learning and student achievement.
2. During the course of this study, it became evident that there is a disparity between implementation of, and involvement in professional learning communities in schools. Further research is merited in exploring the relationship between learning communities and changing the school

culture, the relationship between learning communities and improving teaching practices, and the relationship between learning communities and improving student achievement and enhancing student learning.

3. In Alberta, students are required to take Provincial Achievement Tests in Grades 3, 6 and 9. Students in Grade 12 are also required to write Provincial Diploma Exams. Further research in Alberta needs to be conducted on teacher involvement in professional development, curricular implementation, and student achievement in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 in a longitudinal study. Similar research needs to be conducted where state-wide exams are used as indicators of student achievement.
4. Since distance acts as a barrier to jurisdictional learning communities in rural jurisdictions, further research would be recommended on the relationship between videoconferencing as a form of learning communities and improved teaching practices.
5. Further research should be conducted with the six teacher participants who expressed discomfort with changing teaching methodologies in implementing new curriculum. The following questions would add to the body of knowledge: Has time for self-reflection prompted them to engage in further professional learning opportunities? Have they been involved in professional readings, and do they consider these readings part of professional learning? What is their definition of professional learning?

End Note

Teacher participants recognized professional development as the common thread that motivates teachers, improves their sense of efficacy, heightens their awareness of the need to improve teaching practices and the need to become student-centered and improve student learning. According to Bertani (2002), those teachers who are involved in, or are considering involvement in professional development must understand that professional development is not something that is done to you, but something everyone does to continue their learning.

The ultimate goal of professional development is to promote systemic change. This is summarized by Fullan (2006, p. 94), when he claimed:

A crucial element in any design aimed at improving teaching and learning in schools is the provision of effective, ongoing, and professional learning opportunities for teachers, opportunities that promote learning not just of individuals but of the organization and system as a whole.

Since curricular implementation is ongoing, teachers and organizational leaders must understand the role professional development plays. If implementation involves new behaviors and beliefs, teacher development in relation to the new behaviors and beliefs is essential. This is why professional development in support of curricular implementation is the critical factor for success.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Teacher Interview Questions

1. How important, if at all, is it to change teaching practices and methodologies during the course of a teaching career?
2. What factors, if any, lead to awareness of a need to change?
3. What factors, if any, improve confidence in professional skills to implement change?
4. With the implementation of the new social studies curriculum, what do you think of the shift in teaching methodology to a student inquiry approach?
5. How, if at all, has this shift in methodology impacted the way you teach social studies?
6. How, if at all, has your involvement in professional development, and in particular, the SAPDC, assisted in the implementation of curriculum?
7. What are the reasons for implementing, or not implementing, curricular change?
8. How do you view the role of PD in changing teaching practices?
9. What are reasons for participating, or not participating, in PD and the SAPDC?
10. To what extent do you want to participate in PD and the SAPDC? Please explain.
11. What changes in teaching practices, if any, have you made because of your involvement in PD and the SAPDC?
12. Is your repertoire of skills greater as a result of PD and the SAPDC? Please explain.
13. What do you think of this statement? The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching.
14. What do you think of this statement? A teacher is limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement.
15. Teacher efficacy is defined as the extent to which teachers believe they can affect student learning. How, if at all, has your sense of teacher efficacy changed as a result of your involvement in PD or the SAPDC? Please explain.
16. What leads to change in professional practice to enhance student learning?
17. How do you view the role of PD and the SAPDC in relationship to student learning?
18. How, if at all, has your involvement in PD and the SAPDC enhanced student learning?
19. What role, if any, does motivation play in changing a teacher's sense of teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change, and involvement in PD and the SAPDC activities?
20. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix B

Principal Interview Questions

1. Teacher efficacy is defined as the extent to which teachers believe that they can affect student learning. What role, if any, do PD and involvement in the SAPDC have in improving teacher efficacy?
2. How important, if at all, is it for teachers to be involved in PD and the SAPDC in implementation of the new Grade 3 social studies curriculum?
3. Do you expect teaching practices to change in order to teach the new curriculum?
4. What role, if any, do PD and the SAPDC play in enhancing teaching practices?
5. What, if at all, is the relationship between improved teaching practices and student learning?
6. In your view, can teachers improve their teaching practices and enhance student learning without involvement in PD? Please explain.
7. Teacher efficacy is defined as the extent to which teachers believe that they can affect student learning. What role, if any, does motivation play in changing a teacher's sense of teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change and involvement in PD and the SAPDC activities?
8. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix C

Jurisdictional Authorization Letter**Request for Jurisdiction Permission to Conduct Study**

Doug Bennett
 Box 10
 Cardston, AB
 T0K 2S0

Date _____
 Jurisdictional Administrator Name _____
 School Jurisdiction Address _____

Dear _____:

I am a doctoral student in educational leadership studies at The University of Montana. The topic of my dissertation is “Teacher efficacy in the Implementation of New Curriculum Supported by Professional Development.” The purpose of this study is to describe through rich, thick language teachers’ experiences as they become involved in implementing new curriculum. Through a qualitative analysis, this study seeks to share teachers’ perceptions as they identify factors which impact their sense of teacher efficacy throughout the change process in the implementation of new curriculum.

A great deal of research has been conducted on professional development, and its impact on enhancing teaching practices (Elmore, 2004; Guskey, 2002; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Stein & Wang, 1988). This study will share teachers’ perspectives on the role professional development plays in curriculum implementation, the changing of teaching practices, and teacher efficacy. Principals’ perspectives will be shared in order for the researcher to understand what administrators expect from their teachers in terms of teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation, teaching practices and student learning supported by professional development. Since the goal of educational institutions is to enhance student learning, this study will share teachers’ perceptions on the relationship between professional development involvement and enhanced student learning.

The research design identifies the target population as teachers employed in your school jurisdiction located in Southern Alberta, Zone 6. I am requesting permission to conduct research on the topic of “teacher efficacy in the implementation of new curriculum supported by professional development” in your jurisdiction. With your permission, principals will be asked for permission to interview all Grade 3 teachers in your jurisdiction. As well, I would ask your permission to interview all Elementary school principals. Once jurisdictional and school approvals have been obtained, permission will be sought of the participants to include them in a face-to-face interview. They will be asked open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview, and the interview will be

audio-taped. The teachers will be asked 20 questions, and the principals will be asked 8 questions. I have designed these questions.

The teacher interview will take approximately twenty-five minutes to complete, and the principal interview will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. Each participant will receive an envelope with a copy of your letter of permission, and an informed consent form. I assure you that anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. Reporting of results will not identify jurisdictions or schools.

Thank you for your consideration in providing permission to include schools within your jurisdiction as part of this study. If you have any questions, please contact me at (403) 653 -4991 or my advisor Dr. Roberta Evans at (406) 243-5877.

I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Doug Bennett
Graduate Student
University of Montana

Enclosures

- Interview questions
- Letter to principals
- Letter to teachers
- Dissertation Proposal Approval

Appendix D

Principal Authorization Letter**Request for Principal Permission to Conduct Study**

Doug Bennett
 Box 10
 Cardston, Alberta
 T0K 0K0

Date

School Principal Name
 School Address

Dear _____:

Your jurisdiction Assistant Superintendent, _____, has granted permission for me to elicit collection of data from schools within the jurisdiction. The data collected will be used to complete my doctoral studies in educational leadership through The University of Montana. The topic of my dissertation is “Teacher Efficacy in the Implementation of New Curriculum Supported by Professional Development.” The purpose of this study is to describe through rich, thick language teachers’ experiences as they become involved in implementing new curriculum. Through a qualitative analysis, this study seeks to share teachers’ perceptions as they identify factors which impact their sense of teacher efficacy throughout the change process in the implementation of new curriculum.

A great deal of research has been conducted on professional development, and its impact on enhancing teaching practices (Elmore, 2004; Guskey, 2002; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Stein & Wang, 1988). This study will share teachers’ perspectives on the role professional development plays in curriculum implementation, the changing of teaching practices, and teacher efficacy. Principals’ perspectives will be shared in order for the researcher to understand what administrators expect from their teachers in terms of teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation, teaching practices and student learning supported by professional development. Your school was one of seven schools chosen from your school jurisdiction in Southern Alberta Zone 6.

I am requesting permission to elicit data on this topic from your teaching staff. Specifically, I would like to collect data through an interview process with your Grade 3 teachers. Participants in the face-to-face interviews will be asked 20 open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview.

Upon approval, your Grade 3 teachers will receive a letter of permission, a cover letter and a human subject informed consent letter. The interview will take about twenty-five minutes, and it will be audio-taped. Thank you for your consideration in providing permission to interview teachers in your school. I will be very appreciative of your participation and support. I assure you that anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. Reporting of results will not identify jurisdictions or schools or any information that can identify schools.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (403) 653-4991 or my advisor Dr. Roberta Evans at (406) 243-5877. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Doug Bennett
Graduate Student
University of Montana

Enclosures:

- Letter to teachers
- Human Subjects Informed Consent Form
- Letter of approval for study from jurisdiction administrator

Appendix E
Principal Cover Letter

Doug Bennett
Box 10
Cardston, Alberta
T0K 2S0

Date

Dear Principal:

Your Assistant Superintendent has granted permission for me to elicit data collection from the professional staff at your school. I am requesting your professional assistance in the provision of data by allowing me to interview you. The topic of my study is “Teacher Efficacy in the Implementation of New Curriculum Supported by Professional Development.” The purpose of this study is to describe through rich, thick language teachers’ experiences as they become involved in implementing new curriculum. Through a qualitative analysis, this study seeks to share teachers’ perceptions as they identify factors which impact their sense of teacher efficacy throughout the change process in the implementation of new curriculum.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Reporting of results in this study will not identify individual participants, schools or jurisdictions. Your professional opinion is indeed valued. It is the front line teacher who is the gateway to change and student learning. To provide your perspective, I would like to interview you, and ask you eight open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview, and your responses will be audio-taped to assist me in transcribing your answers. Your responses will be anonymous, held strictly confidential, and will be used only for my research study.

I look forward to the opportunity of interviewing you and sharing the results of the study with you as well. Please feel free to contact me:

e-mail: doug.bennett@westwind.ab.ca

phone: (403) 653-4991 or (403) 752-3178

mailing address: Box 10, Cardston, Alberta Canada T0K 0K0

You may also contact my research advisor, Dr. Roberta Evans at (406) 243-5877.

Thank you in advance for your time and significant contribution to this study.

Respectfully,

Doug Bennett
Doctoral Student
The University of Montana

Appendix F
Teacher Cover Letter

Doug Bennett
Box 10
Cardston, Alberta
T0K 2S0

Date

Dear Teacher:

Your Assistant Superintendent and principal have granted permission for me to elicit data collection from the professional staff at your school. I am requesting your professional assistance in the provision of data by allowing me to interview you. The topic of my study is “Teacher Efficacy in the Implementation of New Curriculum Supported by Professional Development.” The purpose of this study is to describe through rich, thick language teachers’ experiences as they become involved in implementing new curriculum. Through a qualitative analysis, this study seeks to share teachers’ perceptions as they identify factors which impact their sense of teacher efficacy throughout the change process in the implementation of new curriculum.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and anonymous. Reporting of results in this study will not identify individual participants, schools or jurisdictions. Your professional opinion is indeed valued. It is the front line teacher who is the gateway to change and student learning. To provide your perspective, I would like to interview you, and ask you 20 open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview. Your responses will be audio-taped to assist me in transcribing your responses. Your responses will be anonymous, held strictly confidential, and will be used only for my research study.

I look forward to the opportunity of interviewing you and sharing the results of the study with you as well. Please feel free to contact me:

e-mail: doug.bennett@westwind.ab.ca

phone: (403) 653-4991 or (403) 752-3178

mailing address: Box 10, Cardston, Alberta Canada T0K 0K0

You may also contact my research advisor, Dr. Roberta Evans at (406) 243-5877.

Thank-you in advance for your time and significant contribution to this study.

Respectfully,

Doug Bennett
Doctoral Student
The University of Montana

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form**INFORMED CONSENT**Teacher Efficacy in the Implementation of New Curriculum Supported by
Professional Development

Investigator: Doug Bennett
 Contact Information: e-mail: doug.bennett@westwind.ab.ca
 phone: (403) 653-4991 or (403) 752-3178
 mailing address: Box 10, Cardston, Alberta, Canada
 T0K 0K0
 Committee Chairperson: Dr. Roberta Evans
 Telephone Number: (406) 243-5877

I. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part in this study, you need to understand the risks and benefits. This form provides information about the research study. The investigator of the research study will be available to answer your questions and provide further explanations. If you agree to take part in the research study, you will be asked 18 open-ended questions (for teachers) or 8 questions (for principals) in a semi-structured interview which should take approximately 25 minutes. Your responses will be audio-taped to assist me in transcribing your responses.

Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to choose whether or not you will proceed with the interview.

II. PURPOSE

As a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education of The University of Montana, the investigator is carrying out a research study. The purpose of this study is to describe teachers' experiences as they become involved in implementing new curriculum. This study seeks to share teachers' perceptions as they identify factors which impact their sense of teacher efficacy throughout the change process in the implementation of new curriculum.

The study will take place in the geographic area of Southern Alberta, Zone 6. The investigator (person in charge of this research study) is Mr. Doug Bennett

III. PROCEDURES

Your school was one of seven schools selected in your school jurisdiction in Alberta Zone 6. Following approval to conduct this research from your jurisdiction Assistant Superintendent and principal, you were sent a cover letter. The total amount of time you will be asked to participate in this study is approximately twenty-five minutes through an interview process.

IV. POSSIBLE RISKS

To the best of the investigator's knowledge, the research activity that you will participate in will pose no more psychological (stress) risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

VI. POSSIBLE BENEFITS

There are no expected personal benefits associated with taking part in this research study. The information gained from this study, however, may benefit knowledge and other individuals in the future. This study may be beneficial to educational leaders, senior level administrators and principals. They will be able to determine whether involvement in professional development activities, including specific professional development models such as consortia, is vital in supporting the successful implementation of educational goals. This would include the implementation of new curricula to meet emerging educational demands.

VII. COSTS

There are no costs associated with taking part in this research study.

VIII. COMPENSATION

You will not receive any financial compensation for participating in this study.

IX. RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY

Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. You may choose to stop participation or withdraw from the study at any time. You will be told of any new information about the research study that may cause you to change your mind about participation.

X. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH RECORDS

Your responses will be held confidential. Only the researcher is aware of your name, and it will not be shared with anyone. Your anonymity is guaranteed. Your responses will only be used for research purposes.

XI. QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the procedures of this research study, please contact Doug Bennett by telephoning (403-653-4991) during the workday or (403-752-3178) during the evening. You may also e-mail any questions to: doug.bennett@westwind.ab.ca
You may also contact my research advisor, Dr. Roberta Evans at 406-243-5877.

Thank-you in advance for your time and significant contribution to this study.

Respectfully,

Doug Bennett
Doctoral Student
The University of Montana

I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that any future questions I may have will also be answered by a member of the research team. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed (Typed) Name of Subject

Subject's Signature

Date

Appendix H

Interview Form**Interview Form: Teacher Efficacy in the Implementation of New Curriculum Supported by Professional Development**

Date: _____, 2007 Time: _____(am/pm) Male: ___ Female ___

Interview: 1 Follow Up # _____ Longevity: Teacher _____

Principal _____

Subject Code: _____ Teacher ___ Principal _____

Setting _____

This study will share teachers' perspectives on the role professional development plays in curriculum implementation, the changing of teaching practices, and teacher efficacy.

Preamble: Thanks for taking the time to participate in this study. There are some things I would like to share with you before we start the interview.

- I will be asking you open-ended questions, and will write notes as you are audio-recorded.
- All information from this information is strictly confidential. You will not be identified in this study, or in any report stemming from this study.
- I have created a subject code to identify you.
- None of your direct quotes will be used without your prior permission. When quoted, your identity, location, and place of employment will remain confidential.
- Your name and place of employment will only be known to me, your researcher, and Dr. Roberta Evans, of the University of Montana, who is my Doctoral Dissertation Committee Chairperson, who oversees all aspects of this research study.
- The confidentiality of your name and place of employment is also under the purview of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Montana.
- Please be assured that there are no correct or incorrect answers. I will be attempting to share teachers' and principals' thoughts, feelings, perspectives

and experiences regarding teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation and professional judgment.

RELEASE FORM

Permission to use Quotations

The purpose of this form is to secure the permission to use quotations from the semi-structured interview(s), which is part of a research study regarding teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation and professional development, conducted by Doug Bennett.

Subject's Name: _____

The undersigned (subject of the study and originator of the quotation) hereby grants permission for Doug Bennett to utilize quotations by the undersigned to be reported in his research study on teacher efficacy, curriculum implementation and professional development, and any subsequent publications resulting from said study.

The anonymity and place of employment of the undersigned will remain confidential at all times.

(Signature of Subject)

(Date)

Teacher Interview Questions

1. How important, if at all, is it to change teaching practices and methodologies during the course of a teaching career?
2. What factors, if any, lead to awareness of a need to change?
3. What factors, if any, improve confidence in professional skills to implement change?
4. With the implementation of the new social studies curriculum, what do you think of the shift in teaching methodology to a student inquiry approach?
5. How, if at all, has this shift in methodology impacted the way you teach social studies?
6. How, if at all, has your involvement in professional development, and in particular, the SAPDC, assisted in the implementation of curriculum?
7. What are the reasons for implementing, or not implementing, curricular change?
8. How do you view the role of PD in changing teaching practices?
9. What are reasons for participating, or not participating, in PD and the SAPDC?
10. To what extent do you want to participate in PD and the SAPDC? Please explain.
11. What changes in teaching practices, if any, have you made because of your involvement in PD and the SAPDC?
12. Is your repertoire of skills greater as a result of PD and the SAPDC? Please explain.
13. What do you think of this statement? The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching.
14. What do you think of this statement? A teacher is limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement.
15. Teacher efficacy is defined as the extent to which teachers believe they can affect student learning. How, if at all, has your sense of teacher efficacy changed as a result of your involvement in PD or the SAPDC? Please explain.
16. What leads to change in professional practice to enhance student learning?
17. How do you view the role of PD and the SAPDC in relationship to student learning?
18. How, if at all, has your involvement in PD and the SAPDC enhanced student learning?
19. What role, if any, does motivation play in changing a teacher's sense of teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change, and involvement in PD and the SAPDC activities?
20. Do you have any questions for me?

Principal Interview Questions

1. Teacher efficacy is defined as the extent to which teachers believe that they can affect student learning. What role, if any, do PD and involvement in the SAPDC have in improving teacher efficacy?
2. How important, if at all, is it for teachers to be involved in PD and the SAPDC in implementation of the new Grade 3 social studies curriculum?
3. Do you expect teaching practices to change in order to teach the new curriculum?
4. What role, if any, do PD and the SAPDC play in enhancing teaching practices?
5. What, if at all, is the relationship between improved teaching practices and student learning?
6. In your view, can teachers improve their teaching practices and enhance student learning without involvement in PD? Please explain.
7. Teacher efficacy is defined as the extent to which teachers believe that they can affect student learning. What role, if any, does motivation play in changing a teacher's sense of teacher efficacy, implementation of curricular change and involvement in PD and the SAPDC activities?
8. Do you have any questions for me?

