GREAT EXPECTATIONS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SELECTION, SCHOOL
PREPARATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SELECTION, SCHOOL
PREPARATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Presented by Angela Michelle Crawford Sheffield,
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certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Matthew Sheffield. He has encouraged me every step of the way with whatever I attempt throughout our 27 years together. He has treated our marriage as a true partnership, working hard to ensure I am able to fulfill my dreams. This dream was no different. He has provided support, suggestions, computer skills, critique, and the money necessary to make this dissertation journey happen. His love keeps me going and makes everything possible. I am forever grateful to him.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences surrounding the selection, preparations, and implementation of a professional development program, Great Expectations, at two schools that adopted the program at different times in their existence. Twelve participants took part in this basic qualitative study which utilized three forms of data collection: (a) interviews, (b) observations, and (c) document and video clip analysis. The researcher analyzed data as it was collected. Upon completion of the data collection, the researcher used constant comparative, inductive analysis, which resulted in the emergence of themes and subthemes. The study's findings revealed differences at the two schools, as well as some similar experiences. Although neither school's participants had a say in the decision-making process, the new school had positive wordings while the existing school voiced negative experiences. The preparations for implementation revealed an extensive time commitment in training and classroom preparation at both schools with some differences in the emotional aspects. Again, the experiences were more positive at the new school. The practices to maintain fidelity of implementation revealed several similarities, with differences in human resources provided. The findings indicate the need for a plan when implementing a school-wide professional development program. The plan should include more stakeholder voices at the decision-making table, more time and resources during contract time for preparation, and continued support during the practice of implementation.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Every summer, teachers begin preparing their classrooms and administrators prepare their schools for the upcoming year. Disaggregating data is a part of many teachers' and administrators' preparations (Shen et al., 2010). The accountability era has yielded much research on test scores, data-driven practices, and ways to utilize data to increase student achievement. Teachers and administrators make decisions in many ways based on data (Mandinach & Gummer, 2015). Shen et al. (2010) found student achievement data were used most often, and the data were used for accountability purposes. Data were used to improve teaching and learning, but the primary use of student achievement data overshadowed any use of student and community background data and school process data (Shen et al., 2010). When the data streams are not connected together to create a complete picture of students and learning, an area for teachers and administrators to explore is created to further student achievement. One way to explore is through professional learning.

Use of educational data allows teachers and administrators to see where deficits exist in educational planning and programming. Professional development (PD) is created, found, and attended by educators to address teacher and student needs and any deficits exposed by data (Jones & Dexter, 2014). Research surrounding PD is plentiful and findings vary widely about its effectiveness. Still, PD remains a way to continue training for teachers in policy changes, methods, best practices, and rapidly developing areas of education (Jones & Dexter, 2014). Therefore, individual teachers attend PD for their needs and interests and for school-wide reform.

This study focuses on one such PD program designed as a school-wide reform. The developers of Great Expectations (GE) designed the program with a vision to empower teachers with best practices for teaching in order to create a better learning climate for students (Great

Expectations, 2017; Sheffield, 2016). Great Expectations was developed in Oklahoma by Charles Hollar in response to a report asserting that American schools were failing (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983). Mr. Hollar responded to the data presented in the report by seeking out the best practices for teachers and administrators to increase student achievement. The facets of the program fall into two areas: academic excellence and a culture of respect (Sheffield, 2016). The program espouses six basic tenets and provides a blueprint for teachers' methodology through seventeen classroom practices (Great Expectations, 2017). Great Expectations chooses to use all streams of data mentioned by Shen et al. (2010) in order to build a school culture primed for student learning. Teachers can attend the training on their own, or administrators can send teachers as a part of a school-wide training. Great Expectations has training programs in four states (Great Expectations, 2017) and attendees have come from multiple states and as far away as Okinawa, Japan (C. Sheffield, personal communication, June 3, 2017).

The six basic tenets upon which GE is based spring from what GE research considers the “very best of what is known about teaching today” (*Great Expectations Foundation*, 2013, p. 7). Great Expectations begins with the premise that all children can learn, regardless of any labels that have been placed upon them or personal challenges they face. A second belief is that teachers must hold high expectations of students and themselves and must communicate the expectations clearly to the students (Sheffield, 2016). Additionally, GE asserts that building student self-esteem is essential. A fourth tenet of GE indicates the necessity of creating a culture of mutual respect within the entire school setting. The final two tenants, importance of teacher attitude and responsibility and impact of teacher knowledge and skill, are based on research stressing the importance of the educator within the school. Great Expectations embraces these tenets recognizing “each teacher is the decisive element in the class setting where he or she is

offering education” (Sheffield, 2016, p. 14). The GE tenets are the undergirding for the 17 classroom practices meant to provide “the most effective manner of educating young people” (Sheffield, 2016, p. 16). The 17 classroom practices are part of the methodology training provided by GE. For each of the practices, the Methodology Handbook (2013) states the reasons for implementing the practice. The reasons are drawn from research from multiple sources cited in the handbook (*Great Expectations Foundation*, 2013).

The GE program began as a way to build upon a school’s culture. Because of this goal, existing schools have implemented the program. As GE has expanded its scope, new schools have been built, implementing the GE program from the beginning of the school’s start (Great Expectations, 2017). Implementation of GE is the key to changing the teaching and learning processes (Sheffield, 2016). An investigation determining any difference between the process of implementation of GE in a school built with this program from the beginning or in an existing school adds to the body of research surrounding fidelity of implementation.

Statement of the Problem

Because implementation is key to optimal student success, GE has methods in place to assist teachers and administrators with implementation. The initial training is intensive; GE coaches work within the schools to facilitate implementation; follow up trainings are available throughout the school year; opportunities are provided to encourage collaboration and communication among like-minded teachers; and additional conferences and sessions are held as specific interest and topic learning opportunities (Sheffield, 2016). Great Expectations is not a one-shot PD program. The GE program follows many of the elements of effective PD programs studied by Blank (2013) in a meta-analysis.

Measuring implementation is the way in which GE administrators audit the program's effectiveness. Evaluators from GE observe teachers, looking for evidence of the 17 practices. They use a rubric provided to the teachers and administrators at the onset of the program. The GE program categorizes schools as model when 90-100% of the teachers in that school implement 100% of the classroom practices daily. Schools are considered progressive when 80-89% of the teachers implement 100% of the classroom practices daily, and schools are categorized as transitional when at least 50% of the instructional staff have completed a summer institute in methodology. These categorizations and percentages are determined following the definition of fidelity of implementation--the program is implemented in the way in which it was intended (Harn, Parisi, & Stoolmiller, 2013). In addition to these categories, GE identifies teachers as model, progressive, and transitional implementers. The descriptors of what teachers in these categories do, say, and actions they take are similar to the school descriptors of the same categories. Model implementers incorporate all elements of GE at high levels throughout their teaching. Progressive implementers incorporate GE elements at fairly high levels but do not implement as seamlessly as model implementers. These teachers implement most elements but not all. Transitional implementers are either new to GE or slower to incorporate the tenets. They use a few of the GE practices, but the depth and consistency is much less than progressive implementers (Great Expectations, 2017).

Great Expectations signifies an additional category describing the amount of implementation teachers enact. The program calls these teachers resistant implementers. These teachers implement GE elements sparsely and superficially. They follow only compliance requirements (Great Expectations, 2017). Resistant implementers are similar to what Bower and Parsons (2016) referred to as "opposers" (p. 756). These types of teachers are why a study of

fidelity of implementation between “from the ground up” schools and “from the top down” existing schools is warranted. Resistant implementers, or opposers, reduce the fidelity of implementation of a PD program. According to available research, the purpose for program implementation is to increase student achievement (Blank, 2013). If teachers do not fully implement a PD program, desired student achievement could be restricted.

Great Expectations measures fidelity of implementation within schools utilizing the program, but no studies have explored the process leading to fidelity of implementation between schools that incorporated the tenets of GE since the school's beginning and compared this to established schools that adopt the program at a later time. There are no studies surrounding the timing of implementation available for other implemented school-wide programs. Research is widely available for fidelity of implementation on school-wide reform programs, but these focus on the components, different aspects, and outcomes of implementation and none examine programs implemented from the beginning and programs implemented in existing schools. There is a gap in the research in this area of fidelity of implementation of PD programs. Research in this area of fidelity of implementation would better inform administrators when new school buildings are being built in their districts and when deciding the best way to bring a PD program into their buildings.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the program selection, school preparation, and the fidelity of implementation when the same PD program, GE, is implemented in a school that was built based on the GE tenets and in an existing school. This study will add to the body of knowledge surrounding fidelity of implementation in an area where limited research is available.

In a limited scope, the study will determine what differences, if any, exist in the process of implementation between schools.

The research questions guiding this study are:

Using the three-stage framework of effective program implementation,

- What were the experiences surrounding the selection of a PD program at
 - a. a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place, and
 - b. an existing school that adopted the GE program?
- What preparations for the PD program implementation were made at
 - a. a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place, and
 - b. an existing school that adopted the GE program?
- What were the practices teachers and administrators implemented in order to maintain fidelity at
 - a. a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place, and
 - b. an existing school that adopted the GE program?

Conceptual Framework

The framework providing the lens for this study is a modification of a framework for effectively implementing evidence-based programs and practices (Education Development Center, 2013). This framework includes three stages for effective implementation: selection, preparation, and implementation (Education Development Center, 2013). These stages lead school building leaders or district leaders through the decision to bring a PD program into their schools. After identifying that a change is needed or required, preparations are made to begin the implementation. The third stage is the implementation and monitoring that assists in successful implementation (Education Development Center, 2013).

Research indicates that when a change is desired in a school, PD is often a response (Blank & de las Alas, 2009). Change requires change management in order to get teacher buy-in. This is where organizational and educational leadership are important. Andrade (2011) discussed the need for administration in education to utilize strategies “for managing change and encouraging faculty involvement” (p. 218). These strategies are important in order for faculty and staff to be ready for and to support the changes as they will be the persons accountable for implementation (Inandi & Giliç, 2016). Hannay, Jaafar, and Earl (2013) recommended educational leaders “adopt and develop organizational structures that foster sustainable change in teacher practices” (p. 66). Under these structures, a safe climate can be created in which all stakeholders can question, add input, and ultimately have some ownership of the decision to implement changes (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Evers, van der Heijden, Kreijns, & Vermeulen, 2016; Inandi & Giliç, 2016; Lencioni, 2002; Levi, 2014; Marsh, 2012). When increased student achievement is a goal of any changes, PD is often the administrators’ choice. Blank (2013) stated professional learning that combines multiple approaches and has clear goals improves teacher skills and ultimately leads to greater student success. The framework incorporates these aspects through the steps within the selection stage: conduct a needs assessment; identify gaps; and find evidence-based programs or practices (Education Development Center, 2013).

The next stage within the framework is preparation (Education Development Center, 2013). Included within this stage are steps that interact with and influence school culture. When implementing a school wide PD program, the culture surrounding such an undertaking must be focused on student achievement but through teachers’ freedom to apply best practices (Bower & Parsons, 2016). Ohlson, Swanson, Adams-Manning, and Byrd (2016) posited that school culture plays an important role in student outcomes, and those outcomes are strengthened with a

common vision and collaboration. When considering change management, reasons for and attitudes toward PD, members of an educational organization must be willing to create such a culture. One might say there must be a certain school culture already in place to accept a school wide PD program (Bower & Parsons, 2016; Inandi & Giliç, 2016).

The final stage in the framework is implementation. The steps in this stage include monitoring, providing ongoing training, utilizing supports, and evaluation (Education Development Center, 2013). Desimone (2002) researched successful implementation of comprehensive school reform. Several factors played into a program's success or failure of implementation. A consistent finding was that low implementation was attributed to the lack of training necessary to fully implement the program's objectives (Desimone, 2002; Turri, Mercer, McIntosh, Nese, Strickland-Cohen, & Hoselton, 2016). Great Expectations includes an extensive support structure for teachers and administrators before, during, and after the implementation process (Great Expectations, 2016).

Design of the Study

This study utilized a qualitative methodology in order to provide an understanding of the selection, preparations, and implementation process for the GE program at two schools. One school in the study is a school built from its inception upon the principles of GE; the other is an existing school in which the program was adopted. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because its purpose is to seek understanding of "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). This section outlines the design of the study, discussing the setting, participants, data collection tools, and data analysis process.

Setting

The settings for this study were two elementary schools in the central south United States. The schools are part of a district in a suburban location outside of a large metropolitan area. The district consists of ten elementary schools, three intermediate schools, and seven secondary schools including junior and senior high schools. The elementary schools chosen for the study chose to implement GE as a school-wide reform program within the same time frame. One site is a school built from its beginning on the principles of GE. Another site is an existing school in which the administration decided to adopt GE. Both schools require the same state standards as their framework for instruction. The researcher made every effort to maintain the schools' anonymity to ensure confidentiality.

Participants

The participants in this study were teachers and administrators who were working at these school sites when GE was implemented for the first year. To select the participants, a two-tiered sampling was used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The first tier, the sites selected, was chosen based on the criteria that the sites implemented GE within the same time period and both sites use the same educational standards. The second tier consisted of the participants from these sites. The participants in the study were teachers and administrators who have implemented the GE program in these two schools. The participants for the study were selected through purposeful maximum variation sampling (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2013). This type of sampling was chosen because the sites differ in timing in the school's history of when GE was implemented and was based on the small available sample size (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The director of GE and the school district's committee for research approval committee gave their permission to conduct this study. These gatekeepers were given a proposal for review. The proposal explained the purpose for the study, what activities would be conducted on site, the length of the time spent on site, and how the results would be reported (Creswell, 2014). Once their approval was given, the teachers and administrators were invited to participate. The participants were involved in an interview process and observations. Four participants from the school implementing GE from its beginning and eight participants from the school implementing GE later in its existence agreed to interview.

Data Collection Tools

To begin data collection, permission to conduct research was obtained from the institutional review board (IRB) at the University of Missouri and the IRB at the school district. IRB approval allows the researcher to examine the rights of human subjects and ensures those rights are maintained during the study. The IRB process also requires the researcher to consider the potential risks and benefits to the participants and address ethical concerns (Creswell, 2012; Seidman, 2013). The participants received a letter requesting their participation (see Appendix A). As required by the IRB, informed consent was explained and collected at the beginning of each phase of the data collection (see Appendix B) (Seidman, 2013).

Upon IRB approval, the researcher began data collection. To answer the research questions, the researcher utilized multiple tools to gather data (see Appendix C) (Creswell, 2014). The initial phase of qualitative data collection consisted of individual interviews with participants at both school sites. The purpose of the interviews was to gather data to understand and make meaning regarding the selection of and preparation for implementation of the GE program (Seidman, 2013). The interviews were semi-structured in format with open-ended

questions developed using constructs within the framework of this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The items for the first step of the framework were used with the administrators and teachers and focused on the paths leading to selection of the GE program. The items for the second step of the framework included administrators and teachers regarding the preparations made to implement the GE program. The questioning path included introductory, substantive, and closing questions (Creswell, 2014; Seidman, 2013). These interviews were recorded in order to ensure an accurate record of the participants' information (Creswell, 2012). The interview times varied, with the mean of 45 minutes.

The second phase of the data collection consisted of observations. The researcher observed coaching sessions with teachers, administrators, and GE coaches. Observations also included classroom sessions. The observations provided context for information gathered during the interviews. While providing information for the third research question, the observations provide triangulation for the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The final phase of the data collection involved examining documents and video clips. The documents included the rubrics for GE implementation and the note guides for GE practices. The video clips included interviews with administrators from the school district discussing the decision to choose GE for their district and their buildings. These documents and video assisted with triangulation and provided context for the experiences of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The documents used for this data collection were analyzed (see Appendix D), alongside the other qualitative data to gain a better understanding of implementation of GE at these schools (Creswell, 2012).

To ensure participant confidentiality, identifying information was eliminated by following steps laid out for the IRB. These steps included assignment of ID numbers, scrubbing

the data set of identifying information, acquisition of informed consent, and archival of summarized data only and disposal after the allowable amount of time (Creswell, 2014; Fink, 2013). In order to reach the goals of reliability and validity, the interview items were clear and unambiguous, the purpose of the instrument was clear, and any instruments used will exhibit evidence to document validity (Creswell, 2012).

Data Analysis

The purpose of the data analysis phase was to provide answers to the research questions. The data were examined and as themes began to emerge, a greater understanding was reached (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During this study, the data analysis process occurred simultaneously with the data collection (Creswell, 2014). This process was also iterative as the researcher was able to gather additional data to fill in gaps to gain a deeper understanding as the analysis proceeded (Creswell, 2012).

The data analysis began by transcribing the collected interview, observation, and document analysis data as it was gathered (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012) recommended conducting a "preliminary exploratory analysis" (p. 243). This process, consisting of exploring the data, allowed the researcher to immerse herself in the details. After the interviews were completed, the transcripts were coded using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software following a thorough review of the available programs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The data were coded using both predetermined and emerging codes. The predetermined codes regarding implementation fidelity were based on GE goals and GE identified best practices (Great Expectations, 2017). The emerging codes served an additional purpose of accounting for bias in selecting pre-determined codes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The codes were further organized into themes. The data were examined for broad themes and narrowed into a few themes

(Creswell, 2012). After winnowing the data to a few themes “aggregated together to form a major idea in the database” (Creswell, 2012, p. 245), a description was written to form an understanding. To provide a more thorough understanding and additional insight, the identified themes were layered and interconnected (Creswell, 2012).

The documents analyzed were rubrics and notes regarding the GE practices observed during coaches’ visits to the school sites. The purpose of the coaches’ visits was to document the practices of implementation of the GE program and to provide feedback to the administration and the teachers (R. Pierce, personal communication, April 26, 2018). The documents from each school site provided additional descriptive information and offered new categories and understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posited that a great advantage to document analysis is stability. The absence of the investigator allowed the documents to be objective forms of data compared to other forms (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

For examination of the third research question, practices the two schools’ personnel use to demonstrate fidelity of implementation were observed during visits to the teachers’ classrooms and sitting in on meetings with the GE coaches, teachers, and administrators. After each of the observation sessions concluded, the researcher compiled the field notes into a highly descriptive narrative format (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through observation, the researcher was able to provide specific incidents and actions to add additional context to the interview information and document analysis.

Aware that one of the strengths of qualitative research is validity (Creswell, 2014), the researcher utilized strategies to address trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability. Validity was strengthened by using multiple methods of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher triangulated the findings by comparing the data from the interviews, observations,

documents, and video clips (Creswell, 2014). An additional way to ensure validity included use of member checking (Creswell, 2014). The researcher followed up with participants to determine if they wished to clarify or expound on any information. A detailed description of the setting and PD program will allow readers to determine if the results can be transferred to their situation.

Limitations

Every effort has been made to develop a study that is trustworthy and will add to the body of knowledge surrounding professional development; however, this study included some assumptions and limitations. This was a qualitative study seeking understanding. The researcher assumed the participants were truthful in their responses in order to assist the researcher to understand (Seidman, 2013). In order to enhance the participant's confidence in their participation, confidentiality was maintained throughout all phases of data collection. Participants expressed understanding that they were able to withdraw from the study at any point with no ramifications.

This study also included limitations. One limitation surrounded the sample. The study involved two sites, and the number of available participants was limited. The validity of research can be increased even with a small participant size with adequate data collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interviews with participants continued until saturation had been reached. To strengthen the accuracy of the study, teachers and administrators were interviewed. The process of providing corroborating evidence was part of triangulation (Creswell, 2014). An additional way the researcher increased the accuracy of the study was to provide an audit trail for the duration of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A journal was kept detailing the process of conducting the research. Finally, the researcher's questions, decisions, and reflections provided

an account of how the study was conducted and how the data were analyzed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

An additional consideration was the researcher's positionality. The researcher has worked in education for 24 years and has attended hundreds of hours of short term and long-term PD trainings. She has experienced the gamut of feelings about the trainings, presenters, and content of the PD. The reader should also be aware that a relative of the researcher works as a consultant for GE. Remaining aware of her own biases, examining the interview items to exclude leading questions, and reviewing best ethical practices throughout the study helped the researcher remain as impartial as possible (Seidman, 2013).

Definitions of Key Terms

To create clarity in this study, the following key terms are defined. For the purpose of this study, professional development was defined as a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). School-wide reform was defined as any school-wide program that consists of a comprehensive reform strategy designed to improve the entire educational program.

The three stages of effective implementation presented in the Education Development Center's (2013) framework are selection, preparation, and implementation. For the purpose of this study, selection was defined as the thought processes and the steps taken to choose an appropriate PD for the needs of an organization. Preparation included research regarding how a program was working in other communities, engagement of stakeholders, and provision of adequate training and support to ensure intended implementation. Implementation of fidelity was

defined as the delivery of content and instructional strategies in the way in which they were designed and intended to be delivered: accurately and consistently” (National Center on Response to Intervention, n.d.).

Significance of the Study

It seems to be an oxymoron that change is always present in the educational world. Change is inevitable because educators and legislators are constantly searching for ways to increase student achievement (Desimone, 2002). Professional development is one way educational leaders choose to create the change they hope will lead to this increase. For PD to be effective, however, the program must be implemented as intended (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). This is why fidelity of implementation research has grown in educational studies over the past few years. Many research studies have been conducted in different areas concerning fidelity of implementation. These have included studies on frameworks (Carroll, Patterson, Wood, Booth, Rick, & Balain, 2007; Dane & Schneider, 1998), school-wide programs (Harn, et al., 2013; Kisa & Correnti, 2015; Lee & Min, 2017; McIntosh, Mercer, Nese, Strickland-Cohen, & Hoselton, 2016), and individual aspects (Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, & Rintamaa, 2013; Carroll et al., 2007; Century, Rudnick, & Freeman, 2010; Holliday, 2014; Mowbray, Holter, Teague, & Bybee, 2003; O'Donnell, 2008; Xin, Collins, Kruse, & Lenhart, 2015).

Little research has been conducted surrounding the selection, preparation, and fidelity of implementation of the same program implemented in a school built upon the principles of the program compared to an existing school adopting the program. This study investigated that gap in the existing literature. Utilizing a qualitative study will allow understanding from the participants' viewpoints regarding the three-step process of selection, preparation, and fidelity of implementation.

A study of this kind can provide information for administrators when the opportunity presents to build a new school. Research can be conducted on various programs to determine which would best provide the desired school culture and educational practices (Blank, 2013; Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Evers, van der Heijden, Kreijns, & Vermeulen, 2016; Hongboontri, & Keawkhong, 2014). This study can also inform administrators about considerations when choosing to adopt a school-wide program in an existing school that has possibly been through multiple programs before. During the course of a school year, schools may be implementing more than one change or policy at a time (Dane & Schneider, 1998). Regardless of the value of a program, asking a faculty and staff at an existing school to implement a program may be met with more resistance than a faculty and staff who choose to be employed in a school built upon a specific program at its inception. This study could provide insight about these types of concerns.

Finally, Great Expectations is expanding throughout the country (Great Expectations, 2017). As new schools are being built and existing schools are considering adopting this program as a way to change school culture for the purpose of increasing student achievement, a study surrounding the selection of, preparation for implementation, and fidelity of implementation of its program may assist each type of school situation in their decision making. Great Expectations could also use the information to add additional training or develop new protocols and guidelines for consideration.

Summary

One result of the era of accountability in education is the increase in PD programs designed to increase student achievement (Blank, 2013; Desimone, 2002). The effectiveness of the PD is a source of concern and the reason for many research studies. Effectiveness can be measured by the fidelity of implementation of the program. The study this researcher proposed

to undertake revolved around the selection of, the preparation for, and the fidelity of implementation of a school-wide program, GE. Great Expectations is a PD program designed to change or enhance school culture in order to increase student achievement (Great Expectations, 2017). This study sought to understand how administrators and teachers at school sites selected, prepared for, and implemented GE in a new school built upon the principles of GE and in an existing school that adopted the program.

The research was a qualitative study. Within this design, the researcher gathered and analyzed qualitative data to determine any perspectives and emerging themes from interviews, observations, and documents and video clips. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data following methods suggested by Creswell (2014) and Merriam and Tisdell (2017).

This study adds information to the existing body of research surrounding selection of, preparation for, and fidelity of implementation in educational programs and fills a gap by investigating a situation not found in current research. The study can help inform administrators about the choice and timing of implementing programs. Great Expectations will gain more information regarding implementation of their program, which can be valuable as the program expands into other states across the nation.

SECTION TWO: PRACTITIONER SETTING FOR THE STUDY

This study focused on aspects of implementation of the GE program. The GE program is available and used nationwide, and although this study's qualitative data were collected at two school sites implementing GE, the interest is on the program itself, in addition to the timing of its implementation at the school sites. Some context regarding the school sites is useful especially when determining transferability. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) discussed providing a rich description of the setting in order for those exploring the study to gain an understanding of the context of the research. This section provides a description of the two school sites at which research will be conducted, the history of the GE program, an analysis of the GE organization and its leadership, and a discussion of the implications for research of GE by examining two school sites.

Description of School Sites

The school sites at which the research was conducted are located in a suburban town that is part of a metropolitan area in the southern region of the United States. The school district serves approximately 16,000 students in 10 elementary schools, 3 intermediate schools, and 7 secondary schools (school website, 2018). The school sites chosen for this research are elementary schools and have implemented GE. One site adopted the program as the school was being built and the culture of the school was organized (Great Expectations, 2017). The other site adopted GE several years after the school opened its doors.

The school sites share some characteristics and differ with others. These schools follow the state standards, State Essential Knowledge and Skills (State Education website, 2017). According to the accountability summary, both schools showed similar student achievement results per the four index indicators (State Education website, 2017). Each site is led by a female principal and assistant principal. One school site serves between 500-600 students; the other

serves between 700-800 students. The smaller school site has 29 grade level classes—kindergarten through fifth grades. The second site has 35 grade level classes—kindergarten through fourth grades (school website, 2018). According the school websites, each school employs 44 staff members (school website, 2018). One of the schools reports 8.4% of its student body is economically disadvantaged and 17.0% are English Language Learners. In this school, 8.8% of the student body receive special education services and the students' mobility rate is at 10.7% (State Education website, 2017). The other school reports 25.9% of the student body are economically disadvantaged, 33.4% are English Language Learners, and 6.5% are receiving special education services. The school's mobility rate is 6.3% (State Education website, 2017).

History and Background of the Organization

Great Expectations is a school-wide PD program designed to empower teachers with best practices for teaching in order to create a better learning climate for students (Great Expectations, 2017; Sheffield, 2016). The GE program was developed in Oklahoma by Charles Hollar in response to a report asserting that American schools were failing (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983). Hollar began to develop a vision for education based on research he read. He questioned and discussed educational practices and policies. Before any methods or programs were created, he frequently contacted the Secretary of Education in Oklahoma, asking for support and financial backing (Sheffield, 2016). Gathering bi-partisan support from the State Superintendent, Hollar took a group of educational leaders to Chicago to study a school that had been featured nationally for their teaching practices. Excited about what they saw, a group of educators compiled the best practices in teaching and the best ways to explain those practices (Sheffield, 2016).

Hollar's early dreams, meetings, and plans culminated in the creation of Great Expectations in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in 1991 (Great Expectations Foundation, 2013). The first week-long Summer Institute was held at Northeastern State University that year. The training session was attended by 175 teachers and administrators (Great Expectations Foundation, 2013). Since that year, enrollment has steadily increased. Since 1999, over 4,000 educators have attended trainings each summer (Great Expectations Foundation, 2013). Sheffield (2016) reported that over 52,000 educators have been trained in GE methodology since the beginning of the program.

The facets of the GE program fall into two areas: academic excellence and a culture of respect (Sheffield, 2016). The program espouses six basic tenets and provides a blueprint for teachers' methodology through seventeen classroom practices (Great Expectations, 2017). Teachers can attend the training on their own or administrators can send teachers as a part of a school-wide training. Existing schools have implemented the program, but as GE has expanded its scope, new schools have been built implementing the GE program from the beginning (Great Expectations, 2017).

Organizational Analysis

The Great Expectations organization's structure most closely resembles a simple hierarchy (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The board of directors forms the top of the apex followed by the president and CEO. Below these levels in the hierarchy are the other members of the GE organization. The structure of these membership layers is similar to the operating core in Mintzberg's model (Mintzberg, 1979). The operating core for GE includes the consultants, account manager, coordinator, instructional coaches, technology specialist, and the receptionist (L. Dzialo, personal communication, April 8, 2018). This structure works for GE based on its

end goals. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), structure must be designed based on “the desired ends, the nature of the environment, the talents of the workforce, and the available resources” (p. 56). Because organizations exist to achieve specific goals, GE’s organizational structure is designed to best utilize its talents and resources and to accomplish its founder’s mission (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

The Board of Directors at the apex of the organizational structure serves the purpose of viability and support for GE’s mission. The main function of members of the Board of Directors is to hire and evaluate the CEO. Bolman and Deal (2013) described the simple hierarchy’s second level as the middle manager. In the GE organization, the CEO fills this position in the simple hierarchy. The CEO is a part of the strategic apex and although her position is below the Board of Directors in the hierarchy, she makes the big decisions (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The decisions surrounding the direction in which GE is headed were made by its founder and shaped through its mission statement (Great Expectations, 2017), but the ways in which to steer the organization in that direction and to carry out the mission are made by CEO. The Board of Directors provide financial and political support and evaluate the performance of the CEO as she makes the decisions (L. Dzialo, personal communication, April 9, 2018). The CEO has the authority to make these decisions, and the Board of Directors has the authority to evaluate the decisions. Each level of the hierarchy is charged with keeping actions aligned with GE’s mission (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The vertical coordination between the Board of Directors and CEO allow the GE organization to stay within the bounds of the stated mission efficiently, but the organization benefits from lateral coordination as well (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

The lateral coordination comes within the operating core (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The scope of the professional development GE desires to provide requires a substantial amount of

coordination. The locations of the trainings, model schools, and schools desiring additional support are divided up between coaches within geographic regions (C. Sheffield, personal communication, April 17, 2018). Some members of the operating core work at the headquarters of GE; others work remotely and travel to sites as needed (C. Sheffield, personal communication, April 17, 2018). The physical separation of the members of the leadership team, coaches, and mentors provides challenges to coordination, but the leadership has put multiple avenues for coordination in place. The various members in each role communicate through traditional means via email messages, text messages, and telephone calls, but other structures are in place for situations that require a larger group or when the members of one role need to meet. Closed websites such as an instructor website and a coach website exist for the specific roles. Trainings are held with recordings and livestreaming available for those who are "drastically prevented from attending" (C. Sheffield, personal communication, April 17, 2018). These methods of communication include formal and informal means with enough flexibility to carry out the daily tasks needed to accomplish GE's mission (Bolman & Deal, 2018). Great Expectations uses both vertical and lateral coordination depending on the situation and the goal; however, GE relies on a team structure that spans the simple hierarchy.

The structure of GE's organization coordinates training and support in many locations, and the operating core must work closely together to orchestrate a complex schedule in order to provide their clients the PD they are seeking. To accomplish this, GE employs a team structure in addition to vertical and lateral coordination. Levi (2014) posited that a team's success can be tied to its supportive organizational culture. These types of cultures encourage communication and collaboration and grant power and responsibility to control their own actions (Levi, 2014). Bolman and Deal (2013) discussed this as developing commitment to working relationships.

The leadership team within the organization consists of the CEO, coordinators, and instructional coaches. This team is important for GE because of the mission of the organization, the complex orchestration, the integral quality of the PD and scheduling, and yearly changes (Levi, 2014). Due to the consistency of the PD, other teams work throughout the year to provide support to schools and teachers and to plan for summer sessions.

Leadership Analysis

Although GE's Board of Directors is on the apex of the simple hierarchy, the main decisions are made by the CEO. Her title is CEO, but the other members of the organization commonly refer to her as the Director of GE (C. Sheffield, personal communication, April 17, 2018). Northouse (2016) defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 6). The CEO (Director of GE) leads to ensure the mission of GE remains on track with effectiveness and efficiency.

The process of leadership within GE includes research in order to find best practices, incorporate newest technologies, and evaluate to ensure the program is implemented as intended (Sheffield, 2016). The trainings and meetings held within the organization evolve as needs arise and situations change (L. Dzialo, personal communication, April 9, 2018). When addressing the needs of the organization and recognizing the changes required to fit these needs, the CEO of GE exhibits her ability to utilize action logic (Rooke & Torbert, 2005/2011).

The self-awareness through action logic allows the CEO of GE to wield influence among the members of the operating core. The CEO has spent much of her career in myriad aspects of education, from classroom teacher to superintendent. She also has experience in higher education as vice president of student affairs (Great Expectations, 2017). This experience allows the members of the organization to identify with her and to desire to emulate her (Northouse,

2016). The website shows the emotional component of leadership (Northouse, 2016) through the use of words such as "motivate," "inspire," "challenge," and "excellence" (Great Expectations, 2017). With strong, emotional vocabulary in the mission of GE, the CEO is able to appeal to her followers and motivate them to achieve (Goleman, 1996/2011).

The next piece in Northouse's (2016) definition of leadership concerned the concept of groups. The groups the CEO of GE leads consist of more than just the operating core of the simple hierarchy structure (Mintzberg, 1979). The various configurations of the members of the operating core are led according to their tasks and the organization's needs (Bolman & Deal, 2013), but the CEO's leadership extends outward into the schools and businesses served by GE. The CEO is responsible for ensuring the quality of the PD program implemented in schools nationwide (L. Dzialo, personal communication, April 9, 2018). While much of this work is delegated to the operating core, the Board of Directors evaluates the CEO on her progress toward upholding the mission of GE (L. Dzialo, personal communication, April 9, 2018). This responsibility requires from the CEO's leadership direction, protection, orientation, managing conflict, and shaping norms within the organization to accomplish the mission (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997/2005; Northouse, 2016).

Finally, the CEO of GE is responsible for projecting and achieving a common goal (Northouse, 2016). The leader and the followers have a mutual goal toward which they are reaching. In the case of GE, this goal is to provide "teachers and administrators with the skills needed to create harmony and excitement within the school atmosphere, elements that are basic for inspiring students to pursue academic excellence" (Great Expectations, 2017, para. 1). With that goal in mind, the CEO searches out ways to accomplish the mission through research support, financial support of donors, and legislative support (L. Dzialo, personal communication,

April 9, 2018; C. Sheffield, personal communication, April 7, 2018). The ten characteristics of servant leadership (Northouse, 2016) are avenues through which the CEO leads toward the common goal of all GE stakeholders. The characteristics of listening, empathy, healing, and awareness (Northouse, 2016) are displayed through the myriad ways of communication between the stakeholders. Actively seeking best practices and providing training and support allow stakeholders to realize the commitment to the goal. Because GE's success relies on legislative and financial support, the characteristics of persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, and commitment to the growth of people (Northouse, 2016) must be present in the CEO's daily interactions with the stakeholders. The final characteristic of servant leadership, building community, is one of the basic tenants of GE.

Implications for Research in the Practitioner Setting

This study will provide information to the school board, superintendent, and GE organization regarding the experiences of two school sites in selecting, preparing for, and implementing the GE program. The study addresses a gap in the literature surrounding program implementation and will provide the school district leadership and GE organization's leadership with additional research about the PD program. With options for PD available in myriad places and through many means (Akiba & Liang, 2016; Desimone, 2002), the findings of this study can help GE promote their PD program to set it apart from others. The school district's leadership is currently attempting to implement GE in all of their campuses, so this research can help inform their decision making, preparations, and implementation process. Because lack of training was a consistent reason for failed implementation of school wide programs (Desimone, 2002; Turri et al., 2016), an understanding of any differences between a school built on the GE tenets and an existing school that implemented GE can give direction for any changes the organization might

wish to make in their PD training. At the conclusion of this study, the school district leadership and GE leadership will receive a white paper outlining the study and results.

SECTION THREE: SCHOLARLY REVIEW

A recent web search yielded over a billion hits on the key words “education and change.” Most recently the changes have revolved around accountability (Marsh, 2012; Singh & Al-Fadhli, 2011; Thessin, 2015). Accountability has become a part of public school functioning; thus, teachers find implementing change a part of their jobs (von der Embse, Pendergast, Segool, Saeki, & Ryan, 2016). To assist with changes required of teachers, professional development (PD) provides needed training and skills (Blank, 2013; Ohlson, Swanson, Adams-Manning, & Byrd, 2016). The focus of this research centers around a professional development program started in Oklahoma in 1991; currently trainings are held in four states and teachers are attending workshops from all over the United States, and, as far as Japan (Great Expectations, 2017).

Overview of the Organization

Great Expectations (GE) is a school-wide professional development program designed to empower teachers with best practices for teaching in order to create a better learning climate for students (Great Expectations, 2017; Sheffield, 2016). The GE program was developed in Oklahoma by Charles Hollar in response to a report asserting that American schools were failing (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983). The facets of the program fall into two areas: academic excellence and a culture of respect (Sheffield, 2016). The program espouses six basic tenets and provides a blueprint for teachers’ methodology through seventeen classroom practices (Great Expectations, 2017). Teachers can attend the training on their own, or administrators can send teachers as a part of a school-wide training. Existing schools have implemented the program, but as GE has expanded its scope, new schools have been built implementing the GE program from the beginning (Great Expectations, 2017).

Much like other PD programs (Doyle, Brown, Rasheed, Jones, & Jennings, 2018; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Kisa & Correnti, 2015), GE is researched based. The

GE program actively sought best practices in teaching in order to create what they considered to be an exemplary PD program (Sheffield, 2016). A two-year study of PD conducted by Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) and a meta-analysis of effective PD programs compiled by Blank and de las Alas (2009) revealed common elements of effective programs. In a compilation of these elements of effective PD programs, Blank (2013) noted the following characteristics. Effective PD is content focused, seeking to increase the knowledge of the teachers. The PD includes more contact hours for the learning and is long in duration. Multiple learning activities and methods are utilized during the training. The connection between content and appropriate pedagogy is maximized. Finally, collective participation between teachers is a focus of the PD training (Blank, 2013). The GE website's (Great Expectations, 2017) description of their training topics and timeline of training fit the common elements found in the Blank and de las Alas (2009) and the Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) studies.

Implementation of GE is the key to changing the teaching and learning processes (Sheffield, 2016); therefore, an investigation determining any difference between implementation beginning from selection of GE in a school built with this program from the beginning or in an existing school adopting the program adds to the body of research surrounding fidelity of implementation. Great Expectations measures fidelity of implementation within schools utilizing this program, but no studies have compared the implementation levels at schools built based on GE tenets and established schools that implement later, nor are any studies available for other implemented school-wide programs with the same comparison. Research is available for fidelity of implementation on school-wide reform programs, but these focus on different aspects of implementation and none compare programs implemented from the

beginning from existing schools. There is a gap in the research in this area of fidelity of implementation. This review provides context and background for such an investigation in the areas of selection of professional development (PD), preparation for implementation of PD, fidelity of implementation.

Conceptual Framework

This review of the literature relating to fidelity of implementation takes direction from a framework developed by the Promote Prevent division of the Education Development Center (Education Development Center, 2013). Use of this framework in a study of GE will add to the body of knowledge of implementation frameworks because it has not been used in other research. The framework was designed to help schools achieve success with implementation of evidenced based programs. Great Expectations is such a program. Great Expectations is a program built on research based best practices and is intended to show its effectiveness by elevating a school's culture and increasing student achievement (Great Expectations, 2017; Sheffield, 2016).

The framework includes three stages for effective implementation: selection, preparation, and implementation (Education Development Center, 2013). These stages lead school building leaders or district leaders through the decision to bring a PD program into their schools. After identifying that a change is needed or required, preparations are made to begin the implementation. The third stage is the implementation and the monitoring that assists in successful implementation (Education Development Center, 2013). The following discussion relates to the steps in the framework. The selection stage includes administrators or teachers deciding that a change needs to be made. At this stage, administrators or teachers intentionally plan how to manage the change and what PD would be most instrumental in addressing the

change needed. The preparation stage requires that school culture be examined so all staff and faculty can achieve the most from the PD. The final stage in the framework and this review of literature is implementation. Included in this stage is support for implementation and challenges to implementation.

Change Management and Professional Development Selection

Choosing GE as a school wide PD program is sometimes a decision made in response to accountability policies in a changing educational climate (Sheffield, 2016). Marsh (2012) posited that challenges educators face today are not greater than those of previous generations, but they are different. Teachers are educating students for what Hannay, Jaafar, and Earl (2013) described as a “knowledge era” (p. 65). Knowledge flow should be present among administrators and educators, educators and educators, and educators and students (Hannay et al., 2013). By extension, if the knowledge flow is present along the previous members of the educational community, knowledge flow will be present among all stakeholders in the education process. In order to keep up with rapid changes in an increasingly globalized knowledge flow society, educational organizations require intentional planning for these changes (Inandi & Gilic, 2016). Intentional plans require additional learning.

Completing a teacher preparation program does not signal the end of formal and informal learning. Many policy changes over the course of a teacher’s career require learning material as well as how to make required changes while still maintaining other requirements such as state standards, testing mandates, and curriculum (Evers, van der Heijden, Kreijns, & Vermeulen, 2016). Although it may be obvious, the leaders of an organization are key when it comes to necessitating change and the learning that may be required for these changes. Andrade (2011) discussed the need for administration in education to utilize strategies “for managing change and

encouraging faculty involvement” (p. 218). These strategies are important in order for faculty and staff to be ready for and to support the changes because they will be accountable for implementation (Inandi & Gilic, 2016).

The organizational structure of a school district or building is typically designed structurally with a strategic apex at the top handing down the policies and directives to the middle line, operating core, technostructure, and support staff, who work to implement the directives (Mintzberg, 1979/2005). This type of organizational structure may no longer fit the goal of educational institutions today. Because citizens are in the knowledge era, and communication is now at the global level, in order to manage change that an organization must achieve, school systems must be reshaped (Hannay et al., 2013). As administrators prepare faculty and staff for changes, a shared vision through collaboration is imperative (Andrade, 2011; Evers et al., 2016; Hannay et al., 2013; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Marsh, 2012). Andrade (2011) suggested this type of change management of engaging the key stakeholders could be achieved by examining the organization through Bolman and Deal’s (2013) four frames of organizations.

When a decision has been made that a school district or building’s faculty and staff will undergo a change such as implementation of a PD like GE, collaboration about that decision or vision will increase the likelihood of the organization’s members’ support (Hannay et al., 2013; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Marsh, 2012). Andrade (2011) proposed to start by evaluating the organization within multiple frames to identify where one might be improved to assist the change process. Bolman and Deal (2013) analyzed a framework for organizations. The framework was divided into four frames—lenses through which an organization could be viewed (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames are interconnected, and

understanding where an organization is in each of these frames can help an organization change where needed (Andrade, 2011; Bolman & Deal, 2013). Hannay et al. (2013) recommended educational leaders “adopt and develop organizational structures that foster sustainable change in teacher practices” (p. 66). Under these structures, a safe climate can be created in which all stakeholders can question, add input, and ultimately have some ownership of the decision to implement changes (Evers et al., 2016; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Lencioni, 2002; Levi, 2014; Marsh, 2012). Professional development is one way for teachers and administrators to lead their schools further into the knowledge era and globalization. When the PD is integrated into the structure of the organization, the environment becomes one that is collaborative and ready for change (Hannay et al., 2013; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Ohlson et al., 2016).

Research surrounding this subject is important because professional development continues to be a staple for school districts around the United States and serves many purposes for teachers and administrators in those districts. As school districts grapple with the accountability policies and changes required by the federal and state governments, PD becomes an option to address these policies and changes (Akiba & Liang, 2016; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Raising test scores to show accountability has dominated educational thinking and PD has become a way for teachers to build capacity in content knowledge and pedagogy (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010).

One purpose of PD is to fill a requirement mandated by state departments of education throughout the country. Murchan, Loxley, and Johnston (2009) expressed concerns about the cost of PD in the researched school districts to fulfill a requirement. This concern was mirrored by Broad (2015) who described these as “pump-primed courses that were coordinated by the standing conference of regional advisory councils” (p.17).

Another purpose of PD is to increase student achievement. Mouza (2006) stated that growth is a prominent purpose of PD. Just attending a session does not fulfill this purpose. Blank (2013) stated professional learning that combines multiple approaches and has clear goals improves teacher skills and this will ultimately lead to greater student success. Hill (2009) added that while educators are careful to seek out differentiation for students, they may not look for differentiation in teacher PD. This concern leads back to the need for multiple types of PD created specifically to lead to student achievement that teachers and administrators intentionally seek to find (Education Development Center, 2013). Each district in each state is different from others; the PD should be different as needs arise (Glover et al., 2016). The research surrounding the implementation of school-wide PD should include a look at changes required and needed and student achievement related to those changes.

Finally, existing research indicates another purpose for PD is gaining knowledge without a specified end goal for that knowledge. Much research has been conducted about PD, but many times the ultimate purpose and goal of PD are stated as simply gaining knowledge. The end goals for this gained knowledge are professional or personal, but sometimes these are not noted. Research indicated that sometimes teachers want to or need to learn information related to a variety of things. Perhaps a new population of students has moved to an area (Genareo, 2016), new strategies in instruction are desired (Burton, Brown, & Johnson, 2013), or information is not readily available through other sources (Allison, 2013; Sears, Edgington, & Hynes, 2014). Teachers desire to take specific PD courses for personal or professional reasons.

Multiple reasons for PD have been researched, and the struggle to find appropriate PD to fulfill varying needs is well documented (Broad, 2015; Marerro, Woodruff, Schuster, & Riccio, 2010; Zhang, Parker, Koehler, & Eberhardt, 2015). This research showcases the importance of

studying PD within multiple contexts is necessary. States or school districts require PD, and a purpose of the PD is fulfillment of that requirement, but the PD should lead to growth (Mouza, 2006).

Preparation and School Culture

The professional development program, GE, requires change which can be managed through organizational structure incorporating PD as an integral part of the organization. The importance of PD for a variety of reasons for teachers can become an impetus for a shift in school culture. Bolman and Deal (2013) defined an organization's culture as a product that "embodies wisdom accumulated from experience" (p. 263), and a process that is renewed and recreated as new members of the organization learn the ways and adapt. Roby (2011) agreed with this characterization of culture being a process in that teachers are continually "defining and redefining a school culture" (p. 782). Hongboontri and Keawkhong (2014) described the process as unique because school cultures are being created and re-created. Members of a school have the ability to shape the existing culture as culture develops with social interactions (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Roby, 2011).

School cultures can be positive or negative, and because the culture is a process, the cultures can flip from one category to another depending upon the people and situations involved (Roby, 2011). The decision to implement a school wide PD program must consider if the process could create a negative school culture rather than an intended positive one. Thessin (2015) reported that members of a school's professional learning community gave credit for its success to the principal; conversely, other unsuccessful schools responded that their leaders provided little structure and took away any collaborative decision making.

Bower and Parsons (2016) conducted a study on a school reform program designed to increase student achievement. Their study focused on the school culture surrounding this reform. The teachers were characterized into one of three personality types when it came to their attitudes toward the reform. These attitudes and types pushed and pulled at the atmosphere of school culture during the course of the reform implementation. Bower and Parsons (2016) described one type as “the Believer” (p. 754). This personality understood the need for and agreed with the changes. The Believer utilized the materials but deviated when the perceived students’ needs did not align with the program. A second personality type was “the Hopeful” (Bower & Parsons, 2016, p. 755). The Hopeful hoped the reform would bring about necessary change, but did not share the same confidence as the Believer. The Hopeful also implemented the changes but “was much more hesitant and more aware of the unintended consequences of reform” (Bower & Parsons, 2016, p. 755). Although the Hopeful had reservations, he or she did not vocalize these nor speak out against the program. The Hopeful departed from the implemented program as needed, and the as needed changes were more substantial than the Believer’s changes. Finally, the third personality type was “the Opposer” (Bower & Parsons, 2016, p. 756). This personality implemented only the pieces that were desirable to his or her expertise as a teacher. The Opposer was vocal about any opposition to the reform and provided explanation for that opposition. In general, the Opposer considered the teacher to be the expert and rejected the imposed reform from outside influencers (Bower & Parsons, 2016).

This study, although limited in scope, highlights the importance of a shared and collaborative vision with any PD programs. Levi (2014) stated it is critical for the success of an organization that an organization’s culture support collaboration. In education, this culture of support among the administrators, teachers, and students increases desired outcomes (Cansoy &

Parlar, 2017). Lester (2003) indicated collaboration in development of PD action plans increases teachers' acceptance of responsibility for the PD. When implementing a school wide PD program, the culture surrounding such an undertaking must be focused on student achievement, but through teachers' freedom to apply best practices (Bower & Parsons, 2016). Ohlson et al. (2016) posited school culture plays an important role in student outcomes, and those outcomes are strengthened with a common vision and collaboration. Success in school restructuring through PD comes about when "teachers drive the process" (Fischer & Hamar, 2010, p. 12). When all stakeholders collaborate in their PD, the reform efforts are high quality and sustainable (Fischer & Hamar, 2010). This is one of the outcomes GE desires when the program is implemented. According to GE, implementation of the program tenets leads to production of "an educational environment where students experience a school atmosphere" (p. 14) conducive to scholastic success (Sheffield, 2016).

Although all members of an educational organization add to or detract from the culture of the organization, the process of a change in school culture is guided by the leadership (Bower & Parsons, 2016; Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Hannay et al., 2013; Hongboontri & Keawkhong, 2014; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Ohlson et al., 2016; Roby, 2011; Turan & Bektas, 2013). In describing the human resource frame of an organization, Bolman and Deal (2013) discussed the varying views of the human aspect in organizations but concluded that organizations need people and people need organizations even if the needs between them are not always aligned. Many organizations that have been successful have invested in people in order to produce a competitive advantage (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Turan and Bektas (2013) concurred when stating, "Good leaders have the power to change organizations, while better leaders have the power to change people" (p. 157). In a school building, the administrator works with the faculty and staff to shape the culture

into one that will increase student achievement. Ohlson et al., (2016) recommended schools become places where collaboration is encouraged and opportunities are provided for this “collaboration to flourish” (p. 122). The administrator is the driving force behind this type of culture. Hannay et al. (2013) stated when administrators place the focus on improving student learning, a safe workplace emerges. A safe workplace allows changes to classroom practices that can improve student learning (Hannay et al., 2013).

Maintaining a positive school culture or improving school culture is a topic of importance due to its relationship to increased student achievement (Andrade, 2011; Bower & Parsons, 2016; Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Hannay et al., 2013; Hongboontri & Keawkhong, 2014; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Marsh, 2012; Ohlson et al., 2016; Roby, 2011; Turan & Bektas, 2013). The GE program is designed to create a positive school culture (Great Expectations, 2017). However, when considering change management and reasons for and attitudes toward PD, members of an educational organization must be willing to create such a culture. One might say there must be a certain school culture already in place to accept a school wide PD program (Bower & Parsons, 2016; Inandi & Gilic, 2016). The value of a program such as GE is in jeopardy if those responsible for its implementation are not on board with the necessary changes.

Fidelity of Implementation

One of the questions on which this research focuses is the implementation of the GE program within a school built from the beginning based on the program and an existing school’s implementation of GE. Implementation has been researched for many years in the area of public health and program evaluations for interventions but is a relatively new area of research for K-12 curriculum interventions (O’Donnell, 2008). However, with accountability prevalent for school buildings, districts, and state departments, any PD teachers attend is expected to lead to student

achievement in some way (Desimone, 2002; O'Donnell, 2008). Pas and Bradshaw (2012) reported "research suggests that, on average, schools are implementing a dozen or more different prevention programs" (p. 2). These programs are focused on raising student academic performance (Desimone, 2002; Lee & Min, 2017). Implementation of programs have become an area of interest.

Definition of Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity of implementation is defined within many research articles with minor differences in wording, but the general definition is the same: The extent to which an intervention or program is implemented compared with the original design (Cantrell, Almasi, Carter, & Rintamaa, 2013; Century, Rudnick, & Freeman, 2010; Harn, Parisi, & Stoolmiller, 2013; O'Donnell, 2008; Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004; Swain, Finney, & Gerstner, 2013; Xin, Collins, Kruse, & Lenhart, 2015). The GE program categorizes schools as models when 90-100% of the teachers in that school implement 100% of the classroom practices daily. Schools are considered progressive when 80-89% of the teachers implement 100% of the classroom practices daily, and schools are categorized as transitional when at least 50% of the instructional staff have completed a summer institute in methodology. These categorizations and percentages are determined following the definition that the program is implemented in the way in which it was intended (Great Expectations, 2017).

Reasons Fidelity of Implementation is Difficult to Study

Examining studies surrounding implementation, three main reasons emerged as to why fidelity of implementation of educational programs has not been studied as long as public and mental health programs. First, Holliday (2014) discussed that there is no standardized way to measure fidelity of implementation. Kisa and Correnti (2015) agreed with this finding. A

finding in their research stated it is important to standardize the process of measuring implementation fidelity (Kisa & Correnti, 2015). There have been numerous frameworks developed for measurement, but these are unable to be used universally (Carroll, Patterson, Wood, Booth, Rick, & Balain, 2007; Century et al., 2010; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Holliday, 2014). Century et al. (2010) researched development of a fidelity of implementation measure that could be used across multiple programs. This framework was developed by aligning with previous work surrounding implementation fidelity. That research illustrates the second reason fidelity of implementation has not been studied as long.

Another reason for the lag in research is the confusion from the multiple facets, aspects, or dimensions of implementation fidelity (Nelson, Cordray, Hulleman, Darrow, & Sommer, 2012). Century et al. (2010) investigated fidelity of implementation frameworks in order to develop a more universal framework. They found categories that should be considered when measuring fidelity of implementation. They labeled their categories with similar names found in a seminal work by Dane and Schneider (1998) and Carroll et al. (2007) with one addition: structure and process. Carroll et al. (2007) researched literature surrounding the concept of implementation fidelity. They identified five elements to be measured: adherence; exposure; participant (student) responsiveness; differentiation within the program; and quality of delivery (Carroll et al., 2007; Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Adherence closely aligns with the definition of implementation fidelity. Century et al. (2010) suggested this was not a dimension of fidelity of implementation but rather the same as fidelity of implementation. Exposure refers to the frequency and duration of the program received by the students. Responsiveness includes judgments about the outcomes of a program. Differentiation involves identifying elements of a program that are essential for its success. Quality of delivery is one

element Carroll et al. (2007) categorized as “ambiguous.” Quality of delivery involves the way in which more qualitative aspects of the program are delivered (Century et al., 2010). These could include enthusiasm, preparedness, and attitudes.

In addition to the above aspects found in many studies, several studies added additional categories combined in different ways. Xin et al. (2015) investigated adherence to content, frequency, duration, and coverage but also added the dimensions of input, activities, and output. These dimensions are instrumental in determining which pieces of a program, when implemented, are critical to the desired results. Holliday (2013) identified similar categories: inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Using these categories through a logic model was the basis for a framework for fidelity of implementation measurement (Holliday, 2013). Harn et al. (2013) reported researchers measure structural and process dimensions of fidelity. These are similar to Century’s et al. (2010) categories of critical components. The researchers identified structural critical components and instructional critical components when it came to what was necessary for fidelity of implementation (Century et al., 2010). Structural components are the elements of the program that are “what to do” (Century et al., 2010, p. 205) and what the program implementer “needs to know” (Century et al., 2010, p. 205). The instructional components or Harn’s et al. (2013) process dimensions include the “actions, behaviors, and interactions” (Century et al., 2010, p. 205) in which the teacher or the student are expected to engage. Although many studies measured similar aspects and categories, the lack of a universal framework and measure adds difficulty to comparative research (Century et al., 2010).

The role of adaptation in fidelity of implementation is a third reason educational program research lags. Dane and Schneider (1998) discussed the debate surrounding fidelity and adaptations from the intended program aspects. They presented the three perspectives:

opposition to adaptation in order to maintain adherence to the program; support for adaptation because modifications are essential for a program's success; and a compromise suggesting adaptations to accommodate for local needs are acceptable as long as the critical elements of the program are implemented as designed (Dane & Schneider, 1998). Harn et al. (2013) advocated educational PD programs should have built-in adaptations teachers could modify to meet local needs. These adaptations would be available to all but may not be necessary for all teachers thus leaving the critical elements of the program intact (Harn et al., 2013). Durlak and DuPre (2008) presented two sides of the adaptation debate. The discussion stated the current research shows fidelity and adaptation "co-occur and each can be important to outcomes" (Durlak & DuPre, 2008, p. 341). They reported some adaptation will occur, and PD programmers' attempts to oppose it would be "futile" (Durlak & DuPre, 2008, p. 341). Durlak and DuPre (2008) concluded the focus should be on measuring each dimension, fidelity and adaptation, and "finding the right mix" (p. 341) and certainly deserves more research. O'Donnell (2008) mirrored this conclusion by stating adaptation and fidelity are separate constructs to be isolated for research and then related to the outcomes.

Fidelity of implementation is integral to a program's success (Desimone, 2002; Durlak & DuPre, 2008) but has proven to be difficult to study. There is no standardized way to measure fidelity of implementation although there have been attempts to create a universal framework. Confusion is present when attempting to study fidelity of implementation because of the many facets, aspects, dimensions, and categories surrounding implementation of a program. Finally, adaptation to a program must be considered when measuring fidelity of implementation.

School-Wide Reform Implementation

Despite the reported difficulties in researching fidelity of implementation in educational PD programs, many programs have been studied, and the results have added to the body of knowledge surrounding fidelity of implementation. As stated, GE can be a PD attended by individual teachers, but the program's intent is that it is implemented school wide in order to change or enhance the school culture to increase student achievement (Great Expectations, 2017). School-wide programs and comprehensive school reform initiatives have been researched to determine how their implementation affected student achievement.

Garet et al. (2001) reiterated that longevity of PD produces greater results through their study of the Eisenhower Professional Development Program. They posited that if the PD is sustained and intensive, it is more likely to have an impact (Garet et. al, 2001). Garet et. al (2001) discussed the importance of collective participation and professional communication in the PD having lasting effects. These findings were a theme throughout other studies surrounding school-wide PD programs. Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000) concluded that while duration and collective participation are integral, lack of funding and resources may be a detriment to providing such PD. Kisa and Correnti (2015) studied America's Choice schools and found that with longevity of a PD program, care must be taken to include strategies to account for administration and teacher mobility. This can add to the cost of a school-wide PD program. With respect to the cost of PD, Doyle et al. (2018) studied the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education for Teachers PD program and posited choosing a PD program which has evidence of efficacy and has been rigorously researched may be more expensive than programs created locally, but the overall expenditure may well be worth it.

Desimone (2002) researched successful implementation of comprehensive school reform. Several factors played into a program's success or failure of implementation. A consistent finding was that low implementation was attributed to the lack of training necessary to fully implement a program's objectives (Desimone, 2002; Turri et al., 2016). Other barriers to school-wide program implementation were present in additional studies of comprehensive school reform. In addition to lack of training, lack of teacher buy-in affected implementation (Desimone, 2002; Lee & Min, 2017; Thomson & Turner, 2015; Turri et al., 2016). School characteristics influenced the fidelity of implementation as well. Secondary schools did not reach implementation as quickly, if at all, as elementary and middle school levels (Desimone, 2002; McIntosh, Mercer, Nese, Strickland-Cohen, & Hoselton, 2016). Schools with fewer resources displayed more difficulty with program implementation (Desimone, 2002; McIntosh et al., 2016). This finding would indicate a cost analysis for thoroughly researched PD could be beneficial (Doyle et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Great Expectations is a PD program often implemented in response to accountability policies. The program is designed to change or enhance school culture in order to raise student achievement (Great Expectations, 2017). The relevant literature to a study of the fidelity of implementation between schools built from the ground up based on the tenets of GE and established schools implementing from the top down includes studies investigating elements of the conceptual framework. A framework developed for effective implementation of evidence-based programs directed this review through three stages including change management and professional development, school culture, and fidelity of implementation (Education Center Development, 2013).

Change management is integral to any program implementation because effective school leaders are critical in orchestrating aspects of the program (Desimone, 2002; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Turri et al., 2016). Great Expectations is an intensive PD program for individual teachers or an entire school faculty. Teachers choose to participate in PD for many reasons, but regardless of the reasons, successful, complete implementation of the PD is imperative for the programs to make a significant difference in student achievement (Blank, 2013). Once building or district administration lead the change and the PD is attended, a shift or enhancement of school culture can lead to increased student achievement (Sheffield, 2016). With a shift in school culture being a goal of GE, fidelity of implementation is imperative (Great Expectations, 2017). While the number of research studies surrounding fidelity of implementation in education has increased with the era of accountability (Cantrell et al., 2013; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; O'Donnell, 2008), there are variations in the aspects, dimensions, and categories of implementation and lack of universal measurement instruments (Carroll et al., 2007; Century et al., 2010; Holliday, 2014). This review provides information to better inform a study on fidelity of implementation of a PD program designed to promote change in school culture by comparing two schools with different timing for implementation.

SECTION FOUR: CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

To be presented to the school board of the site schools' district and to the GE leadership at separate times. The presentations will be in the manner of a professional conference and will include an Executive Summary and a PowerPoint. The presentations will take place within two months of my dissertation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Great Expectations: A Qualitative Study of Selection, School Preparation, and Implementation of a Professional Development Program

Statement of Problem: Fidelity of implementation is integral to a PD's effectiveness. A gap in the research exists surrounding the process of implementation of the same PD program adopted in an existing school and a school built from the beginning with the PD principles in mind.

Purpose of the Study: This study provides an understanding of the decision, selection, and implementation process of a PD program in an existing school and a school built on the program's principles from its beginning.

Research Questions: What were the experiences surrounding the selection of a PD program; what preparations for the PD program implementation were made; what are the practices teachers and administrators implement in order to maintain fidelity at

- a. a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place, and
- b. an existing school that adopted the GE program?

Review of Literature and Conceptual Framework:

- Conceptual framework is a modification of a framework for effectively implementing evidence-based programs and practices from the Education Development Center (2013). This framework includes 3 stages: selection, preparation, and implementation.

Design of the Study:

- Qualitative Methodology (Creswell, 2014)
- Participants: Four teachers from the school built from its beginning with GE principles. Six teachers and two administrators from an existing school that adopted GE.
- Data collection tools: Individual interviews, document and video clips analysis, classroom and coach meetings observations
- Data analysis: Inductive, constant comparative analysis; open coding, lean coding, axial coding; emerging themes answering the research questions (Creswell, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)
- Trustworthiness: Description of setting; narrative description of observations; triangulation of data; audit trail; member checking; researcher positionality (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2013)

Findings:

- What experiences surrounded the GE program selection?
 - New school: A boost for school culture; Copying other districts to get what they have; Desire to build or increase feeling of community
 - Existing school: Impact on school culture; Voiceless in the decision; A sense of confusion; Stress-inducing decision
- What preparations were made for the GE program implementation?
 - New school: I wanted an interview
 - Existing school: Mental buy-in; Learning a new language

- Both schools: Extensive training; Extensive classroom preparations
- What practices were implemented to maintain fidelity to the GE program?
 - New school: Peer assistance
 - Existing school: Resources from administration
 - Both schools: Coaching; Recordable and deliberate actions taken; Using the right words; Watch me—do this

Recommendations for Practice:

- New schools
 - Continue to seek out candidates who show enthusiasm for the program.
 - Continue to go back to the reasons GE was chosen for the school and assess if those goals are maintained.
- Existing schools
 - Provide a process that will allow teachers to have a place at the decision-making table.
 - Provide a thorough explanation of a new program including why it was chosen, what will be required to implement it fully, and the benefits of this program.
- Both types of schools
 - Continue to provide resources for full implementation.
 - Continue to provide coaching, peer, and administrative assistance.
 - Continue to celebrate the successes of the program.
 - Allow contract time needed to ready classrooms, hallways, etc. with the required components of the program.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SELECTION, SCHOOL PREPARATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ANGELA M. SHEFFIELD

Statement of the Problem

- Many studies have focused on myriad aspects of fidelity of implementation but none have explored implementation of a PD program within a new school and an existing school.
- Great Expectations (GE) is a professional development program that seeks to improve student achievement by impacting school culture. Its effectiveness is increased with full implementation.
- GE was chosen as a school-wide PD program within these two schools but was implemented at two different time periods in the schools' histories.

Purpose

- Research demonstrates the effectiveness of a PD program is dependent on the fidelity of implementation.
- This study examines the program selection, school preparation, and the fidelity of implementation when the same PD program, GE, is implemented in a school that was built based on the GE tenets and in an existing school.
- Add to the body of knowledge surrounding fidelity of implementation.

Research Questions

- What experiences surrounded the selection process at
 - a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place , and
 - an existing school that adopted the GE program?
- What preparations for the PD program implementation were made at
 - a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place , and
 - an existing school that adopted the GE program?
- What were the practices teachers and administrators implemented in order to maintain fidelity at
 - a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place , and
 - an existing school that adopted the GE program?

Conceptual Framework

A modification of a framework for effectively implementing evidence-based programs and practices from the Education Development Center (2013)

Includes 3 stages for effective implementation:

- Selection
- Preparation
- Implementation

Review of Literature

Guided by the framework used for this study, the review of the literature fell into the following sections:

Change Management and PD Selection

School Culture and Preparation

Fidelity of Implementation

Change Management and PD Selection

When a change is needed, PD is often the answer.

(Akiba & Liang, 2016; Blank, 2013; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010; Ohlson et al., 2016)

When implementing a change, leaders should create a plan.

(Andrade, 2011; Evers et al., 2016; Inandi & Gilic, 2016)

A shared vision is imperative when choosing PD to address a needed change.

(Andrade, 2011; Evers et al., 2016; Hannay et al., 2013; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Marsh, 2012)

Preparation and School Culture

Choosing to implement a school-wide PD program can affect the school culture.

(Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Hongboontri & Keawkhong, 2014; Roby, 2011; Tessin, 2015)

School culture can play a role in the reactions of teachers to a PD program's implementation.

(Bower & Parsons, 2016; Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Lester, 2003; Levi, 2014)

School leadership plays a large role in changing school culture.

(Bower & Parsons, 2016; Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Hannay et al., 2013; Hongboontri & Keawkhong, 2014; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Ohlson et al., 2016; Roby, 2011; Turan & Bektas, 2013)

School culture is related to student achievement.

(Andrade, 2011; Bower & Parsons, 2016; Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Great Expectations, 2017; Hannay et al., 2013; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Marsh, 2012; Ohlson et al., Roby, 2011; Turan & Bektas, 2013)

Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity of implementation is difficult to study.

- There is no standardized way to measure (Carroll et al., 2007; Century et al., 2010; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Holliday, 2014; Kisa & Correnti, 2015)
- There is confusion about the multiple facets, aspects, and dimensions of implementation (Carroll et al., 2007; Century et al., 2010; Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Nelson et al., 2012)
- Adaptations to a program are frequently present. (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Harn et al., 2013; O'Donnell, 2008)

Components of successful PD must be present to create lasting effects.

(Birman et al., 2000; Desimone, 2002; Doyle et al., 2018; Kisa & Correnti, 2015; Lee & Min, 2017; Thompson & Turner, 2015; Turri et al., 2016)

Qualitative Study Design

- Setting
 - Great Expectations program
 - Two elementary school sites in a suburban city
- Participants
 - Teachers and administrators at both school sites
- Two-tiered sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)
 - 1st tier—sites selected by GE implementation and similar characteristics
 - 2nd tier—participants selected by purposeful maximal variation sampling

Design: Data Collection

- Individual interviews
 - Semi-structured, open-end items
 - Conducted with teachers and administrators
- Observations of coaching sessions and classroom sessions
- Raters' notes and rubrics used for document analysis

Design: Data Analysis

- Initial analysis occurred while collecting data
 - Allowed for asking targeted questions during each phase of data collection (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).
- Once interview transcripts transcribed:
 - Open coding → Lean coding → Axial coding → Themes and categories
- Document analysis:
 - Explore bias → Explore background → Ask questions → Explore content

Design: Trustworthiness

- Description of the PD program and the setting to help determine if findings are transferrable
- Journal kept throughout the process to clarify the researcher's thoughts during the data collection and analysis
- Triangulation through three collection tools
- Member checking to allow participants to clarify and expound
- Audit trail

Findings: Selection of GE

SELECTION AT NEW SCHOOL			
THEMES	A boost for school culture	Copying other districts to get what they have	Desire to build or increase feeling of community
SUBTHEMES	Student behavior	Where I came from	Community outside
	Belonging	I knew about	Community inside

SELECTION AT EXISTING SCHOOL			
THEMES	A boost for school culture	Voiceless in the decision	A sense of confusion
SUBTHEMES	Common language & actions	Was not a part	No behavior issues here
	Shaping behavior	"Volum-told"	Here we go again
	Positive school culture		Overwhelmed
			Demands on personal time

Findings: Selection of GE at New School

- A boost for school culture
 - GE was chosen because the program increased a positive school culture.
- All suggested GE address student behavior throughout every part of the school day.
- Most participants described attributes that indicated a sense of belonging.
- Most participants noted that with a new school, the culture can be anything they want it to be.

"It could be anything we wanted it to be. Like starting over and choosing, you know, choosing the good. The great. Of course it would be GE."

Findings: Selection of GE at New School

- Copying other districts to get what they have
 - All participants knew about GE in some way.
 - 3 participants mentioned they knew other districts using GE.
 - 2 participants came to this district from schools implementing GE.
 - The administrator expressed enthusiasm about the success other school districts had with GE.

Findings: Selection of GE at New School

- Desire to build or increase feeling of community.
 - All participants mentioned the idea of community during their discussion about selection.
 - Some participants discussed how GE enhances the feeling of community outside of the school setting.
 - A participant mentioned how GE positively affects the families of the students.
 - A participant stated that GE allowed the district, although large, to feel like a small community in "spirit."

"I mean, we all feel a part of each other. One spirit, one way of thinking, no matter where you are..."

Findings: Selection of GE at Existing School

- Impact on school culture
 - Participants also mentioned culture when discussing the reasons for selecting GE.
 - Half of participants discussed the need for a school commonality.
 - Some mentioned that GE would give this common language.
 - Many participants spoke about shaping behavior as a reason GE was chosen to improve school culture.
 - Both administrators wanted this for their building because of the positive culture it would bring.
 - One participant expressed that "time will tell if it has accomplished" improving the school culture.

"When I found out that the district was going to let two more schools adopt GE, I jumped on it. I was like, 'YES! I want this!' and I immediately emailed."

Findings: Selection of GE at Existing School

- Voiceless in the decision
 - Most teachers discussed they had no say in the decision.
 - An administrator said the teachers would tell you they were “volun-told.”
 - Many teachers mentioned they were told in a faculty meeting.
 - One administrator discussed rolling out the decision with what she hoped was enough excitement.

“I think I know why [administrator] chose GE, but I would just be guessing because I was not included in that decision.”

Findings: Selection of GE at Existing School

- A sense of confusion
 - Many participants discussed some aspect of confusion about the decision to adopt GE.
 - A few participants stated they felt, at first, that their building did not need GE.
 - Half of participants expressed the sentiment that here was another initiative the teachers were expected to try.
 - The administrators said they knew some teachers felt this was another program similar to others they had to implement through the years.

“I thought—now what? Whatever it is, we will do it for a while until the next thing comes in.”

Findings: Selection of GE at Existing School

- Stress-inducing decision
 - Most teachers discussed their feelings of being overwhelmed, skeptical, wary, and unhappy when they were told.
 - One teacher was concerned about the money it would take.
 - An administrator stated she would have rolled out GE differently if she could do it again because of the stress it caused.
 - An administrator mentioned the teachers implemented it willingly—not because of their excitement about it but rather because they would do anything asked of them out of respect for their principal. But she would rather have had the excitement as the reason.

"This seemed to lead to a great deal of stress...as we already had other changes that were being put into place and increasing heavy demands on personal time."

Findings: Preparation for GE

PREPARATION AT					
THEMES	NEW SCHOOL	BOTH SCHOOLS		EXISTING SCHOOL	
	I wanted an interview	Extensive training	Extensive classroom preparations	Mental buy-in	Learning a new language
SUBTHEMES	Wanted to be a part	4-day summer training	Printing resources	One more thing to do	Same language
	Actively sought	Mandatory		Giving up personal time	School-wide within every student space
		Rearrange summer plans	Replace resources		
		Reactions to the training	Adjusting resources	Administrative assistance

Findings: Preparation for GE at New School

- I wanted an interview
 - All of the teachers spoke about becoming a part of the faculty as a preparation for GE.
 - 2 teachers actively sought a job at that school because of GE.

"So I contacted the then principal of this school. And I put myself on the line...I have implemented Great Expectations at my school. So, I would love a chance to interview to be at this school."

Findings: Preparation for GE at Existing School

- Mental buy-in
 - Many teachers used the wording, "one more thing to do."
 - Most participants indicated the preparation took personal time.
 - One teacher mentioned the greatest challenge was to believe GE could work.
 - Many teachers participants discussed how administration helped make the transition easier.
 - An administrator agreed with this finding stating his role in preparation to make the process as easy as possible.

"We wanted to make it as easy as possible, offering whatever the teachers needed so they didn't feel so, so, like they were starting from scratch."

Findings: Preparation for GE of Existing School

- Learning a new language
 - All administrators mentioned the expectation that all faculty and staff would use the same language in regard to GE.
 - All participants discussed the need to learn and use this common language.
 - 2 teachers had more difficulty with this preparation due to their lack of time with the students.

"The idea of having a set of school-wide expectations for the students and school-wide practices to implement...gave us hope for student success and achievement overall."

Findings: Preparation for GE at Both Schools

- Extensive training
 - All participants in the study talked at length about the training required to implement GE.
 - The 4-day training was mentioned 36 times among the participants.
 - All teachers stated it was mandatory.
 - Many participants discussed the teachers were expected to rearrange their summer plans to be able to attend.
 - Several teachers at the existing school mentioned negative reactions about training requirement, while none of the teachers from the new school responded negatively.

"I heard grumbling of Oh no! and some concern with the need to attend the training...when people already had plans."

Findings: Preparation for GE at Both Schools

- Extensive classroom preparations
 - Many participants stated the necessity of classroom preparations in order to implement GE.
 - Some described needed GE resources.
 - Some spoke about tying the expectations and life principles to their units of study.
 - All teachers from the new school discussed making their classrooms GE ready as a part of creating a new classroom.
 - Teachers from the existing school expressed classroom preparations involved additional work

From the new school: "All of it had to be started again, so adding in the expectations, the life principles, the, all of it, it was just a part of starting over fresh."

From the existing school: "I finally had it all in a place in a way that made sense, and then we were told, 'Nope. We don't do it like that anymore.' So, yeah, it hurt."

Findings: Practices to Maintain Fidelity

PRACTICES TO MAINTAIN IMPLEMENTATION AT

THEMES	PRACTICES TO MAINTAIN IMPLEMENTATION AT					
	NEW SCHOOL	BOTH SCHOOLS				EXISTING SCHOOL
	Peer Assistance	Coaching	Actions	Verbal Cues	Visual Cues	Resources from administration
SUBTHEMES	Tailored coaching	Time for GE coach	Rise & Shine	Prompting	Wall coverings	Counselor provided information
	Observations teacher to teacher	Classroom observations with coach feedback	Greet Callbacks		Symbolic reminders Hallway displays	Principal memos Scheduling
	Mentors		Signals

Findings: Practices to Maintain Fidelity

The researcher observed classroom sessions and coaching sessions for over 12 hours and examined documents related to GE implementation to ascertain what practices were in place to maintain fidelity to the GE program.

Findings at New School: Practices to Maintain Fidelity

- Peer assistance
 - Coaching sessions were tailored to the teachers new to the building.
 - Teachers experienced with GE hosted the new teachers in their classrooms.
 - A GE committee was in place to support new teachers to the building or any other teachers who needed assistance with GE implementation.
 - The observing teachers used a GE rubric to identify practices and resources

Findings at Existing School: Practices to Maintain Fidelity

- Resources from administration
 - The counselor distributed information weekly about the principles to be the focus of that week.
 - The principal sent out weekly memos to inform the faculty and staff about the school happenings including the GE principles and expectations.
 - Administrators encouraged classroom observations, scheduling time for teachers to participate if they desired that resource.
 - Administrators scheduled coaching sessions so classes were covered while the teachers participated in coaching and observations.

Findings at Both Schools: Practices to Maintain Fidelity

- Coaching
 - Each school had an assigned GE coach.
 - Coaching sessions followed similar formats.
 - Coaches invited the teachers to discuss what they were doing in the classrooms and to ask questions.
 - Coaches reminded teachers about the “big picture” of GE.
 - Coaches went into classrooms to observe teachers and to make notes about their practices.
 - Follow-up sessions included discussion, questions, and encouragement.

Findings at Both Schools: Practices to Maintain Fidelity

- Recordable and deliberate actions taken
 - GE rubrics looking for specific actions
 - Teachers exhibited both literal and "spirit" of rubrics
 - Rise and Shine ceremonies
 - Student greeters.
 - "Call backs" and student jobs
 - Hand signal reminders (existing school)
 - Sometimes the actions were natural and fluid; in other cases, the teachers were obviously "getting the hang of it," but all were deliberate and done with specific purposes.

Findings at Both Schools: Practices to Maintain Fidelity

- Using the right words
 - Using a common language; both schools used verbal cues with their students.
 - Student responses indicated they understood the GE practice.
 - Students responded in complete sentences.
 - Students began a response with a phrase similar to "Mrs. [name] and class,..."

Findings at Both Schools: Practices to Maintain Fidelity

- Watch me; do this
 - Visual cues
 - 8 expectations & several life principles posted on the walls.
 - Life principles printed with pictures related to units of study or literature.
 - Class creeds posted.
 - Visual of GE's magic triad.
 - Prominent displays of teachers' personal memorabilia representing who they were as learners and citizens.
 - Easily seen word walls.
 - Hallways covered with visuals related to GE expectations and principles.
 - Student successes posted in school buildings.
 - Visuals were there with the purpose of putting this into practice—not just for show, but for do.

Discussion

Overall, the findings revealed that:

- The framework suggesting creation of a plan for the selection, preparation, and implementation for a school-wide PD program will work to make an easier transition. (Bower & Parsons, 2016; Desimone, 2002; Harn et al., 2013; Kisa & Correnti, 2015)
- Emotions are present when implementing a change in a school. (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Harn et al., 2013)
- Components necessary to successfully implement GE mirrored those found in research. (Blank, 2013; Blank & de las Alas, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2002)

Discussion

- The role played in the decision making process impacted the level of buy-in.
 - Teachers at the new school chose to be a part of the school implementing GE, producing a positive feeling. (Desimone, 2002; Fischer & Hamer, 2010)
 - Teachers at the existing school did not play a part in the decision and this caused negative emotions and stress. (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Education Development Center, 2013; Fischer & Hamer, 2010; Lester, 2003)
 - However, all spoke positively about their interactions with GE 2 years later. Corresponds with research stating not having initial buy-in does not doom implementation. (Desimone, 2002; Education Development Center, 2013; Lee & Min, 2017)

Discussion

- Implementation requires much preparation.
 - Both schools required a substantial time commitment which is a factor of success for a PD program. (Blank, 2013; Blank & de las Alas, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2002))
 - The teachers at the new school expected the amount of time, as everything needed time because they were starting from scratch.
 - The teachers at the existing school viewed this more as a concern. This could be an interference to implementation. (Lee & Min, 2017)
 - The 2nd year of implementation was much easier. The pieces fell into place and the participants were “finally figuring it out.” (McIntosh et al., 2016)

Discussion

- Even though mental buy-in was important, implementation was truly a “doing” process.
 - Coaching played a crucial role in both schools.
(Blank, 2013; Fischer & Hamer, 2010; McIntosh et al., 2016)
 - Support, critical to successful implementation, was available.
(Blank, 2013; Blank & de las Alas, 2009; Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2009); Fischer & Hamer, 2010)
 - The shift from the participants’ tone in their memories of the decision to implement GE to their discussions of practices for implementation was marked.
 - The change in attitude could be attributed to effective leadership.
(Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Durlak & DuPre, 2008)

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has the following recommendations for practice for the school district and the PD organization:

- New schools:
 - Continue to seek out candidates who show enthusiasm for the program.
 - Continue to draw focus back to the reasons GE was chosen for the school and assess if those goals are maintained.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has the following recommendations for practice for the school district and the PD organization:

- Existing schools:
 - Provide a process that will allow teachers to have a place at the decision-making table.
 - Provide a thorough explanation of a new program including why it was chosen, what will be required to implement it fully, and the benefits.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has the following recommendations for practice for the school district and the PD organization:

- Both types of schools:
 - Continue to provide resources for full implementation.
 - Continue to provide coaching, peer, and administrative support.
 - Continue to celebrate the successes of the program.
 - Allow contract time needed to ready classrooms, hallways, etc. with the required components of the program.

SECTION FIVE: CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP

Article Title: Great Expectations: An Examination of the Selection, Preparation, and
Implementation of a Professional Development Program

To be submitted to *Professional Development in Education*

Abstract

This study explored the selection, preparation, and implementation of the school-wide reform professional development (PD) program, Great Expectations (GE), in two schools in the same school district. One school was built from its beginning based on the GE principles; the other school is an existing school that adopted GE. This qualitative study utilized individual interviews with twelve participants, documents, and videos, and observations in data collection. Findings indicated similarities between the two schools in the preparations made and the practices used to maintain fidelity of implementation; however, the timing of implementation in the schools' existence indicated a difference in the experiences surrounding the decision-making process and some of the preparations. The findings highlight that regardless of the timing of PD implementation within a school's existence, leadership can take actions to make the transition to a new PD program smooth for all stakeholders.

Keywords: fidelity of implementation, professional development, Great Expectations

Great Expectations: An Examination of the Selection, Preparation, and Implementation of a Professional Development Program

Use of educational data allows teachers and administrators to see where deficits exist in educational planning and programming. Professional development (PD) is created, found, and attended by educators to address teacher and student needs and any deficits exposed by data (Jones & Dexter, 2014). Research surrounding PD is plentiful and findings vary widely about its effectiveness. Still, PD remains a way to continue training for teachers in policy changes, methods, best practices, and rapidly developing areas of education (Jones & Dexter, 2014). Therefore, individual teachers attend PD for their needs and interests and for school-wide reform.

This study focuses on one such PD program designed as a school-wide reform. Great Expectations (GE) was designed to empower teachers with best practices for teaching in order to create a better learning climate for students (Great Expectations, 2017; Sheffield, 2016). The program was developed in Oklahoma by Charles Hollar in response to a report asserting that American schools were failing (*A Nation at Risk*, 1983). Mr. Hollar responded to the data presented in the report by seeking out the best practices for teachers and administrators to increase student achievement. The facets of the program fall into two areas: academic excellence and a culture of respect (Sheffield, 2016). The program espouses six basic tenets and provides a blueprint for teachers' methodology through seventeen classroom practices (Great Expectations, 2017). Great Expectations chooses to use all streams of data mentioned by Shen et al. (2010) in order to build a school culture primed for student learning. Teachers can attend the PD on their own, or administrators can send teachers as a part of school-wide PD. Great Expectations has programs in four states (Great Expectations, 2017) and attendees have come

from multiple states and as far away as Okinawa, Japan (C. Sheffield, personal communication, June 3, 2017).

The six basic tenets upon which GE is based spring from what GE research considers the “very best of what is known about teaching today” (*Great Expectations Foundation*, 2013, p. 7). Great Expectations begins with the premise that all children can learn, regardless of any labels that have been placed upon them or personal challenges they face. A second belief is that teachers must hold high expectations of students and themselves and must communicate the expectations clearly to the students (Sheffield, 2016). Additionally, GE asserts that building student self-esteem is essential. A fourth tenet of GE indicates the necessity of creating a culture of mutual respect within the entire school setting. The final two tenants, importance of teacher attitude and responsibility and impact of teacher knowledge and skill, are based on research stressing the importance of the educator within the school. Great Expectations embraces these tenets recognizing “each teacher is the decisive element in the class setting where he or she is offering education” (Sheffield, 2016, p. 14). The GE tenets are the undergirding for the 17 classroom practices meant to provide “the most effective manner of educating young people” (Sheffield, 2016, p. 16). The 17 classroom practices are part of the methodology of the PD provided by GE. These practices are substantiated by research and are the offshoots from the basic tenets (*Great Expectations Foundation*, 2013).

The GE program began as a way to build upon a school’s culture. Because of this goal, existing schools have implemented the program. As GE has expanded its scope, new schools have been built, implementing the GE program from the beginning of the school’s start (Great Expectations, 2017). Implementation of GE is the key to changing the teaching and learning processes (Sheffield, 2016). An investigation determining any difference between the process of

implementation of GE in a school built with this program from the beginning or in an existing school adds to the body of research surrounding fidelity of implementation.

Because implementation is key to optimal student success, GE has methods in place to assist teachers and administrators with implementation. The initial PD is intensive; GE coaches work within the schools to facilitate implementation; follow up sessions are available throughout the school year; opportunities are provided to encourage collaboration and communication among like-minded teachers; and additional conferences and sessions are held as specific interest and topic learning opportunities (Sheffield, 2016). Great Expectations is not a one-shot PD program. The GE program follows many of the elements of effective PD programs identified in a meta-analysis by Blank (2013).

Measuring implementation is the way in which GE administrators audit the program's effectiveness. The GE program categorizes schools as *model* when 90-100% of the teachers in that school implement 100% of the classroom practices daily. Schools are considered *progressive* when 80-89% of the teachers implement 100% of the classroom practices daily, and schools are categorized as *transitional* when at least 50% of the instructional staff have completed a summer institute in methodology. These categorizations and percentages are determined following the definition of fidelity of implementation--the program is implemented in the way in which it was intended (Harn, Parisi, & Stoolmiller, 2013). In addition to these categories, GE identifies teachers as model, progressive, and transitional implementers. The descriptors of what teachers in these categories do, say, and actions they take are similar to the school descriptors of the same categories. Model implementers incorporate all elements of GE at high levels throughout their teaching. Progressive implementers incorporate GE elements at fairly high levels but do not implement as seamlessly as model implementers. These teachers

implement most elements but not all. Transitional implementers are either new to GE or slower to incorporate the tenets. They use a few of the GE practices, but the depth and consistency is much less than progressive implementers (Great Expectations, 2017).

Great Expectations signifies an additional category describing the amount of implementation teachers enact. The program calls these teachers resistant implementers. These teachers implement GE elements sparsely and superficially. They follow only compliance requirements (Great Expectations, 2017). Resistant implementers are similar to what Bower and Parson (2016) referred to as “opposers” (p. 756). These types of teachers are why a study of fidelity of implementation between “from the ground up” schools and “from the top down” existing schools is warranted. Resistant implementers, or “opposers”, reduce the fidelity of implementation of a PD program. According to available research, the purpose for program implementation is to increase student achievement (Blank, 2013). If teachers do not fully implement a PD program, desired student achievement could be restricted.

Great Expectations measures fidelity of implementation within schools utilizing the program, but no studies have explored the fidelity of implementation between schools that incorporated the tenets of GE since the school's beginning and compared this to established schools that adopt the program at a later time. There are no studies surrounding the timing of implementation available for other implemented school-wide programs. Research is widely available for fidelity of implementation on school-wide reform programs, but these focus on the components, different aspects, and outcomes of implementation and none examine programs implemented from the beginning and programs implemented in existing schools. There is a gap in the research in this area of fidelity of implementation of PD programs. Research in this area of fidelity of implementation would better inform administrators when new school buildings are

being built in their districts and when deciding the best way to bring a PD program into their buildings.

The purpose of this study is to examine the program selection, school preparation, and the fidelity of implementation when the same PD program, GE, is implemented in a school that was built based on the GE tenets and in an existing school. This study will add to the body of knowledge surrounding fidelity of implementation in an area where limited research is available. In a limited scope, the study will determine what differences, if any, exist in the process of implementation between schools.

The research questions guiding this study were:

Using the three-stage framework of effective program implementation,

- What were the experiences surrounding the selection of a PD program at
 - a. a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place, and
 - b. an existing school that adopted the GE program?
- What preparations for the PD program implementation were made at
 - a. a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place, and
 - b. an existing school that adopted the GE program?
- What were the practices teachers and administrators implemented in order to maintain fidelity at
 - a. a new school established with the tenets of the GE program in place, and
 - b. an existing school that adopted the GE program?

The framework providing the lens for this study is a modification of a framework for effectively implementing evidence-based programs and practices (Education Development Center, 2013). This framework includes three stages for effective implementation: selection,

preparation, and implementation (Education Development Center, 2013). These stages lead school building leaders or district leaders through the decision to bring a PD program into their schools. After identifying that a change is needed or required, preparations are made to begin the implementation. The third stage is the implementation and monitoring that assists in successful implementation (Education Development Center, 2013).

Research indicates that when a change is desired in a school, PD is often a response (Blank & de las Alas, 2009). Change requires change management in order to get teacher buy-in. This is where organizational and educational leadership are important. Andrade (2011) discussed the need for administration in education to utilize strategies “for managing change and encouraging faculty involvement” (p. 218). These strategies are important in order for faculty and staff to be ready for and to support the changes as they will be the persons accountable for implementation (Inandi & Gilic, 2016). Hannay, Jaafar, and Earl (2013) recommended educational leaders “adopt and develop organizational structures that foster sustainable change in teacher practices” (p. 66). Under these structures, a safe climate can be created in which all stakeholders can question, add input, and ultimately have some ownership of the decision to implement changes (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Evers, van der Heijden, Kreijns, & Vermeulen, 2016; Inandi & Gilic, 2016; Lencioni, 2002; Levi, 2014; Marsh, 2012). When increased student achievement is a goal of any changes, PD is often the administrators’ choice. Blank (2013) stated professional learning that combines multiple approaches and has clear goals improves teacher skills and ultimately leads to greater student success. The framework incorporates these aspects through the steps within the selection stage: conduct a needs assessment; identify gaps; and find evidence-based programs or practices (Education Development Center, 2013).

The next stage within the framework is preparation (Education Development Center, 2013). Included within this stage are steps that interact with and influence school culture. When implementing a school wide PD program, the culture surrounding such an undertaking must be focused on student achievement but through teachers' freedom to apply best practices (Bower & Parsons, 2016). Ohlson, Swanson, Adams-Manning, and Byrd (2016) posited that school culture plays an important role in student outcomes, and those outcomes are strengthened with a common vision and collaboration. When considering change management, reasons for and attitudes toward PD, members of an educational organization must be willing to create such a culture. One might say there must be a certain school culture already in place to accept a school wide PD program (Bower & Parsons, 2016; Inandi & Gilic, 2016).

The final stage in the framework is implementation. The steps in this stage include monitoring, providing ongoing training, utilizing supports, and evaluation (Education Development Center, 2013). Desimone (2002) researched successful implementation of comprehensive school reform. Several factors played into a program's success or failure of implementation. A consistent finding was that low implementation was attributed to the lack of training necessary to fully implement the program's objectives (Desimone, 2002; Turri, Mercer, McIntosh, Nese, Strickland-Cohen, & Hoselton, 2016). Great Expectations includes an extensive support structure for teachers and administrators before, during, and after the implementation process (Great Expectations, 2016).

Materials and Methods

This study utilized a qualitative methodology in order to provide an understanding of the selection, preparations, and implementation process for the GE program at two schools. One school in the study is a school built upon the principles of GE; the other is an existing school in

which the program was adopted. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because its purpose is to seek understanding of “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). This section describes the design of the study, setting, participants, data collection tools, and data analysis.

Setting

The settings for this study were two elementary schools in the central south United States. The schools are part of a district in a suburban location outside of a large metropolitan area. The district consists of ten elementary schools, three intermediate schools, and seven secondary schools including junior and senior high schools. The elementary schools chosen for the study chose to implement GE as a school-wide reform program within the same time frame. One site is a school built from its beginning on the principles of GE. Another site is an existing school in which the administration decided to adopt GE. Both schools require the same state standards as their framework for instruction.

Participants

The participants in this study were teachers and administrators who were working at these school sites when GE was implemented for the first year. To select the participants, a two-tiered sampling was used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The first tier, the sites selected, was chosen based on the criteria that the sites implemented GE within the same time period and both sites use the same educational standards. The second tier consisted of the participants from these sites. The participants in the study were teachers and administrators who have implemented the GE program in these two schools. The participants for the study were selected through purposeful maximum variation sampling (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman,

2013). This type of sampling was chosen because the sites differ in timing in the school's history of when GE was implemented and was based on the small available sample size (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The director of GE and the school district's committee for research approval gave their permission to conduct this study. Once their approval was given, the teachers and administrators were invited to participate. The participants were involved in an interview process and observations. Four participants from the school implementing GE from its beginning and eight participants from the school implementing GE later in its existence agreed to interview.

Data Collection

Before data collection, permission to conduct research was obtained from the institutional review board (IRB) at the University of Missouri and the IRB at the school district. To answer the research questions, the researcher utilized multiple tools to gather data (Creswell, 2014). The initial phase of qualitative data collection consisted of individual interviews with participants at both school sites. The interviews were semi-structured in format with open-ended questions developed using constructs within the framework of this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The questioning path included introductory, substantive, and closing questions (Creswell, 2014; Seidman, 2013). These interviews were recorded in order to ensure an accurate record of the participants' information (Creswell, 2012). The interview times varied, with the mean of 45 minutes.

The second phase of the data collection consisted of observations. The researcher observed five hours of coaching sessions with teachers, administrators, and GE coaches. Observations also included six hours of classroom sessions. The observations provided context for information gathered during the interviews. While providing information for the third

research question, the observations also provide triangulation for the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The final phase of the data collection involved examining documents and three video clips. The documents included the rubrics for GE implementation and the note guides for GE practices. The video clips included interviews with administrators from the school district discussing the decision to choose GE for their district and their buildings. These documents and video assist with triangulation and provide context for the experiences of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data Analysis

The purpose of the data analysis phase is to provide answers to the research questions. The data were examined and as themes began to emerge, a greater understanding was reached (Creswell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During this study, the data analysis process occurred simultaneously with the data collection (Creswell, 2014). This process was also iterative as the researcher was able to gather additional data to fill in gaps to gain a deeper understanding as the analysis proceeded (Creswell, 2012).

The data analysis began by transcribing the collected interview, observation, and document data as it was gathered (Creswell, 2012). After the interviews were completed, the transcripts were coded using Dedoose software. The data were coded using both predetermined and emerging codes. The predetermined codes regarding implementation fidelity were based on GE goals and GE identified best practices (Great Expectations, 2017). The emerging codes served an additional purpose of accounting for bias in selecting pre-determined codes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The codes were further organized into themes. The data were examined for broad themes and narrowed into a few themes (Creswell, 2012). After winnowing the data to a

few themes “aggregated together to form a major idea in the database” (Creswell, 2012, p. 245), a description was written to form an understanding. To provide a more thorough understanding and additional insight, the identified themes were layered and interconnected (Creswell, 2012).

The documents to be analyzed were rubrics and notes regarding the GE practices observed during coaches’ visits to the school sites. The purpose of the coaches’ visits was to document the practices of implementation of the GE program and to provide feedback to the administration and the teachers (R. Pierce, personal communication, April 26, 2018). The documents from each school site provided additional descriptive information and offered new categories and understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posited that a great advantage to document analysis is stability. The absence of the investigator allows the documents to be objective forms of data compared to other forms (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

For examination of the third research question, practices the two schools’ personnel use to demonstrate fidelity of implementation were observed during visits to the teachers’ classrooms and sitting in on meetings with the GE coaches, teachers, and administrators. After each of the observation sessions concluded, the researcher compiled the field notes into a highly descriptive narrative format (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through observation, the researcher was able to provide specific incidents and actions to add additional context to the interview information and document analysis.

Aware that one of the strengths of qualitative research is validity (Creswell, 2014), the research team reviewed the work at all stages. The team utilized strategies to address trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability. By using multiple methods of data collection, validity was strengthened (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The research team triangulated the findings by comparing the data from the interviews, observations, documents, and video clips

(Creswell, 2014). An additional way to ensure validity included use of member checking (Creswell, 2014). The research team followed up with participants to determine if they wished to clarify or expound on any information. A detailed description of the setting and PD program allows readers to determine if the results can be transferred to their situation.

An additional consideration is the researcher's positionality. The researcher has worked in education for 24 years and has attended hundreds of hours of short term and long term PD trainings. She has experienced the gamut of feelings about the trainings, presenters, and content of the PD. The reader should also be aware that a relative of the researcher works as a consultant for GE. Remaining aware of her own biases, examining the interview items to exclude leading questions, and reviewing best ethical practices throughout the study helped the researcher remain as impartial as possible (Seidman, 2013).

Findings

Themes emerged through data analysis, providing answers to the study's research questions. For the first question regarding experiences surrounding the selection process of a PD program, three themes emerged for each setting with two to three subthemes each. The second research question regarding preparations for the PD program implementation yielded three themes at one site and four at the other with two to four subthemes each. The final research question regarding the practices used to maintain fidelity of implementation resulted in five themes for each site and two to four subthemes for each. The subthemes for each theme are italicized.

Experiences Surrounding Selection

The experiences surrounding the selection process of the GE program differed between the two school sites. The teachers and administrator at the school built from its beginning based

on the GE principles used more positively worded phrases than the teachers and administrators at the existing school. The themes and subthemes are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

SELECTION AT NEW SCHOOL			
THEMES	A boost for school culture	Copying other districts to get what they have	Desire to build or increase feeling of community
SUBTHEMES	Student behavior	Where I came from	Community outside
	Belonging	I knew about	Community inside

Figure 1. Themes and subthemes for the new school summarizing selection of the PD program.

The subthemes are listed by order of relevance, top to bottom.

SELECTION AT EXISTING SCHOOL				
THEMES	A boost for school culture	Voiceless in the decision	A sense of confusion	Stress-inducing decision
SUBTHEMES	Common language & actions	Was not a part	No behavior issues here	Too many changes
	Shaping behavior	"Volun-told"	Here we go again	Overwhelmed
	Positive school culture			Demands on personal time

Figure 2. Themes and subthemes for the existing school summarizing selection of the PD

program. The subthemes are listed by order of relevance, top to bottom.

Selection of GE at the new school. Three themes emerged as teachers and administrators discussed their experiences with the selection of GE as the school-wide PD program for their school.

A boost for school culture. All of the teachers and the administrator indicated they had some knowledge of school culture being a reason GE was chosen for their school. All teachers mentioned student behavior as a part of a school's culture and suggested GE addresses *student behavior* in a way that enhances every part of the school day. Three teachers mentioned attributes of the district that indicated a sense of *belonging*. A sense of family, a small-town feel within the district, and a place where families want to be were mentioned as qualities implementing GE would bring to their school. One teacher explained culture and climate were "wide open at the beginning of a new school and GE was the obvious choice to build" these. The administrator at the school's beginning shared that sentiment. A teacher responded enthusiastically, "It [school culture] could be anything we wanted it to be. Like starting over and choosing, you know, choosing the good. The great. Of course it would be GE."

Copying other districts to get what they have. The teachers were aware of other districts that were using GE or had in the past, and that awareness played a role in the experiences surrounding the selection process. Three teachers mentioned they knew of other districts that had adopted GE in some of their schools. Two teachers came to this district from schools where GE was currently or had been at one time implemented. This created excitement for them because they knew this was present where "*I came from.*" They expressed their excitement in realizing the new school was going to be a "GE school." All used the phrase, "*I knew about GE*" in some way or another. These teachers came to the new school with at least the knowledge of

GE. The administrator expressed enthusiasm about the success other school districts had with GE as a part of their academic success.

Desire to build or increase feeling of community. Community was interjected as a reason the participants thought GE was chosen for this school. Two aspects were mentioned—*inside and outside communities*. All teachers mentioned the word during their discussion about selection. “The tenets of GE build community,” one teacher expressed while making a wide gesture around the room. She spoke about the *community inside* the school. A teacher who was new to teaching and to the building the year the school was built mentioned, “I was treated with respect and kindness as a professional...I loved the community between grade levels.” Two teachers discussed the sense of *community outside* the immediate school setting. One mentioned how GE positively affects the families of their students. Another teacher expressed how the district, although large in size, was small in its “spirit.” The participant went on to explain, “I mean, we all feel a part of each other. One spirit, one way of thinking, no matter where you are—on one side of the district or all the way on the other. We are together.”

Selection of GE at the existing school. Four themes emerged surrounding the teachers’ and administrators’ experiences about the selection of GE as a school-wide program for their school. One theme was similar to a theme found at the new school, with the emphasis on the impact to the school. The other themes had a different emotional feel than those at the new school.

Boost for school culture. A positively worded theme from participants was that GE was selected for the existing school because of its impact on the school culture. Four teachers discussed the need for *common language and actions* within the school. “I remember thinking it is important for all of us to speak the same language,” a participant stated when talking about the

decision. Three teachers mentioned that GE would allow the students to hear and see the same things from class to class. “It wouldn’t matter which [class] they were in,” and “Even the specials [classes such as music and art] would use it.” *Shaping behavior* was an aspect five teachers and an administrator saw as a reason for choosing GE to improve school culture. One teacher, however, mentioned that “time will tell if it has accomplished that.” Two of the administrators discussed wanting this for their building because of the *positive school culture* it would bring. “When I found out that the district was going to let two more schools adopt GE, I jumped on it. I was like, ‘YES! I want this!’ and I immediately emailed [the district administrator].”

Voiceless in the decision. All the teachers discussed they had no say in the decision. They mentioned that they *were not a part* of the decision process in any way. An administrator stated, “They [the teachers] will tell you that they were *volun-told*.” A teacher put it this way, “I think I know why [administrator] chose GE, but I would just be guessing because I was not included in that decision.” Five teachers recalled that the administration told them about the decision in a faculty meeting. They went to the meeting and the information about GE was relayed to them. “We didn’t really know much about it—just that we were going to do this now.” One administrator remembers that the plan was announced with excitement. Emails were sent out announcing that great things were coming “to build momentum and excitement.” The administration was attempting to build excitement “hoping that we could- that was enough of a push to get our teachers to go, ‘okay!’”

A sense of confusion. Five teachers discussed some aspect of confusion surrounding the decision to adopt GE for their building. “We really *didn’t have behavior issues*, and that’s where, where I came from, that’s why they had GE, so I didn’t really know why we were doing

this.” Two teachers stated they felt, at first, that their school did not need GE. Three participants mentioned the sentiment related to “*here we go again*,” meaning that GE was another initiative the teachers were expected to try. The administrators stated they knew some teachers felt this was another program similar to many others they had to implement over the years. One teacher listed off three other initiatives and programs she had been involved in over the past ten years of her career. She stated, “I thought—now what? Whatever it is, we will do it for a while until the next thing comes in.”

Stress-inducing decision. A final theme that emerged from participants at the existing school was that the decision caused stress. All teachers discussed their feelings of being *overwhelmed*, skeptical, wary, and unhappy when they were told of the decision to implement GE. *Too many changes* at one time and *the consequences* of those changes were on some teachers’ minds. A teacher mentioned, “This seemed to lead to a great deal of stress...as we already had other changes that were being put into place and increasing heavy *demands on personal time*.” Another teacher added the concern about the cost. She stated this would “add additional stress to teachers already feeling the tension...I was concerned about the cost of the program and all the training and if there would be other areas the money could be better spent.” The unknown quality of GE increased the feelings of stress. One participant relayed:

We just didn’t know, you know, what it looked like, how to DO it. We just, even when we got on board, you know, ok we are told we are going to do this. Yes, let’s do it. But what does it look like? If we could just see it in action. More than just the videos—which were great. But, ah! What are we doing?

An administrator concurred by stating she would have rolled out GE differently if she could do it all again. She mentioned that the teachers did this willingly because they would do anything the

asked of them out of respect for the principal, but in hindsight, “we could have done a better job of really explaining what the program was all about before they got to train.

Preparations for Implementation

The responses for the research question about preparations for implementation yielded two similar themes among the school sites. One unique theme emerged from the new school, and two from the existing school. The themes and subthemes are shown in Figure 3.

PREPARATION AT					
THEMES	NEW SCHOOL	BOTH SCHOOLS		EXISTING SCHOOL	
	I wanted an interview	Extensive training	Extensive classroom preparations	Mental buy-in	Learning a new language
SUBTHEMES	Wanted to be a part	4-day summer training	Printing resources	One more thing to do	Same language
	Actively sought	Mandatory		Giving up personal time	School-wide within every student space
		Rearrange summer plans	Replace resources		
		Reactions to the training	Adjusting resources	Administrative assistance	

Figure 3. Themes and subthemes for the new school, existing school, and themes exhibited with both schools summarizing preparation for the implementation of a PD program. The subthemes are listed by order of relevance, top to bottom.

Preparations for implementation at the new school. While the interviews revealed three themes from the teachers and administrator at the new school, two themes were the same as those at the existing school, and one theme was unique to the new school.

I wanted an interview. All of the teachers spoke about becoming part of the faculty as a first step in preparation. The excitement about this school opening with GE was a reason given by three teachers for wanting to work at the school. They felt that they *wanted to be a part* of what was happening at the new school. A teacher said about her choice to interview, “It wasn't necessarily a coincidence that I interviewed for the position because I knew it would be a GE school.” Two teachers *actively sought out* the principal to express an interest in working at that school. One teacher recalled, “So I contacted the then principal of this school. And I put myself on the line... I have implemented Great Expectations at my school. So, I would love a chance to interview to be at this school.”

Preparations for implementation found at both the new school and the existing school. Two themes surrounding the experiences of preparations for implementation of GE emerged at both schools. The following is a discussion of these two themes.

Extensive training. Each participant- teachers and administrators- from both school sites talked at length about the training required as preparation to implement GE. The *four-day training* in the summer was mentioned thirty-six times among the thirteen participants interviewed. All participants stated the training was *mandatory*. Ten teachers discussed that all teachers were expected to *rearrange summer plans* to be able to attend. “We were all told so we could make sure those days weren’t taken,” one teacher explained, while another respondent said, “It was so important that one teacher, who had plans in Puerto Rico, she came back from Puerto Rico for the training and then went back!” Participants from both sites reported they received professional development credit hours for the training.

The shared theme and subthemes surrounding the extensive training explored some of the experiences of both schools; however, a unique subtheme emerged from the teachers at the

existing school. The *reactions to the training* were uniquely discussed by the teachers at the existing school. While all spoke about the training, some teachers at the existing school revealed negative feelings about the training when they first heard about it. A teacher stated she was not very happy, specifically related to the four-day training. Another discussed the reactions of others. She heard complaints and concerns from colleagues about the time it would be taking. Another teacher also spoke of reactions she had witnessed, “I heard grumbling of Oh no! and some concern with the need to attend the training...when people already had plans.” Conversely, none of the participants at the new school responded with negative reactions of themselves nor of colleagues.

Extensive classroom preparations. Ten teachers and one administrator stated the necessity of classroom preparations in order to implement GE. Among the classroom preparations mentioned were items required as display in the classrooms. Six teachers listed *printing out GE resources* as one of their preparations. These resources include the eight expectations, life principles, and classroom or school creeds. The six participants discussed finding resources on GE’s website. Five teachers spoke about tying the expectations and life principles to their classroom units of study. For this, three mentioned finding pictures and resources to visually represent these units. Four teachers from the new school talked about how displaying GE terminology was a part of being in a new classroom. “All of it had to be started again, so adding in the expectations, the life principles, the, all of it, it was just a part of starting over fresh.” Another teacher stated, “It was no big deal. I was starting with a blank canvas.”

Similar to the theme about extensive training, both schools discussed the extensive classroom preparations, but two of the subthemes were unique to the teachers at the existing school. The additional subthemes specific to the existing school included information about how

the teachers had to change the resources they already had and used. The teachers at the new school did not discuss this, because as one teacher stated, “We were starting from scratch because everything was new.” Teachers from the existing school expressed that classroom preparations involved additional work. This included removing classroom wall resources and *replacing* those with GE-themed resources. One teacher stated, “I thought I’d keep them though, like in my closet, because we might, you know, you never know when you’ll use them again.” Two teachers discussed how their teaching practices already were similar to GE, so their classroom resources simply *needed adjustment* to contain the verbiage specific to GE. Four others recollected their reluctance to replace the materials they had worked hard throughout the years to create or collect. “Putting my clip chart away hurt. Physically, inside. I finally had it all in place in a way that made sense, and then we were told, ‘Nope. We don’t do it like that anymore.’ So, yeah, it hurt.”

Preparations for implementation at the existing school. The participants at the existing school revealed two additional themes not found at the new school.

Mental buy-in. A theme unique to the existing school was the idea of the need for mental buy-in as preparation to implement GE. Five teachers used the wording “*one more thing to do*” to express a challenge to their preparation. The *use of personal time* for the required preparation was indicated by six teachers. One teacher felt the preparations were necessary to make GE work, but expressed concern “that this would constitute a trend where teachers would be obligated to give up more and more personal time for the sake of someone else.” A teacher remarked that the greatest challenge for her was to believe GE could work. She stated, “I didn’t give up on it and continued to do my best to learn all the practices and implement them...”

Administrative assistance was integral to the buy-in at the existing school. Four teachers

discussed how the administration helped to make the transition easier. Three mentioned the actions taken by the administration, and another mentioned the support given. This finding is congruent with the responses given by the administration regarding their roles in preparation. “We wanted to make it as easy as possible, offering whatever the teachers needed so they didn’t feel so, so, like they were starting from scratch.”

Learning a new language. A final theme found within the existing school was the idea that preparing to implement GE required learning a new language. As previously mentioned, the teachers discussed replacing classroom resources for those using the GE verbiage. Administrative participants mentioned the expectation was that all faculty and staff would use the *same language* so the students would recognize the practices throughout the school. The idea was that GE would be pervasive; the concepts would be *school-wide within every student space*. The teacher participants concurred with this finding. “It was clear that GE was the expectation and there were no exceptions,” one teacher stated and then continued to discuss how all teachers—regular classroom teachers and specialist teachers (librarians, music, band, English language learner, special education, etc.) alike—were using the same phrases, participating in the same rituals and activities, and posting the same wording on walls in classrooms and in the hallways. One teacher expressed her feeling of hope she had at the beginning of implementation, “The idea of having a set of school-wide expectations for the students and school-wide practices to implement...gave us hope for student success and achievement overall.”

The specialist teachers among the participants mentioned more difficulty with common language than the classroom teachers. Having less time with students was a reason given for the difficulty. “Being able to fit in the details such as the current callback, quote, and whatever, is hard with just 30 minutes,” one teacher stated. Another mentioned:

Specialists may not be able to implement in the same way as the classroom teachers due to time constraints but as it has become a culture within the school, we can serve to reinforce and demonstrate how the practices are universal within any school setting.

Practices to Maintain Fidelity

In order to answer the third research question, the researcher observed classrooms and coaching sessions within the two schools. The observations yielded four shared themes between the schools with two to four subthemes within the themes. Each school site had an additional, unique theme, as well. The themes and subthemes are shown in Figure 4.

PRACTICES TO MAINTAIN IMPLEMENTATION AT						
THEMES	NEW SCHOOL	BOTH SCHOOLS				EXISTING SCHOOL
	Peer Assistance	Coaching	Actions	Verbal Cues	Visual Cues	Resources from administration
SUBTHEMES	Tailored coaching	Time for GE coach	Rise & Shine	Prompting	Wall coverings	Counselor provided information
	Observations teacher to teacher	Classroom observations with coach	Greets		Symbolic reminders	Principal memos
	Mentors	feedback	Callbacks		Hallway displays	Scheduling
			Signals			

Figure 4. Themes and subthemes for the new school, existing school, and themes exhibited with both schools summarizing practices to maintain fidelity of implementation of a PD program. The subthemes are listed by order of relevance, top to bottom.

Practices to maintain fidelity of implementation at the new school. Five themes emerged at the new school. Four of these were found at the existing school also, and one was unique to the new school. The participants at the new school discussed the use of peer assistance, and those at the existing school spoke about resources available from the

administration. Themes emerged at both schools surrounding the coaching, actions, verbal cues and visual cues used to maintain the fidelity of implementation.

Peer assistance. A theme that emerged from observations at the new school was peer assistance. As mentioned previously, the *coaching sessions were tailored* to the teachers new to the building. Observations that helped improve the practices to maintain fidelity were *teacher-to-teacher observations*. Observing colleagues allowed for a less stressful environment because the teachers held peer relationships rather than a relationship of supervisor to teacher or coach to teacher. Teachers with GE experience hosted the new teachers in their classrooms to observe. Two interview participants discussed being *mentors* to teachers who were new to GE. An administrator spoke about the GE committee. One of the committee's functions is to provide help and support to new teachers to the building. The teachers observed were given handouts with tips for incorporating GE practices and asked questions regarding specific expectations during the coaching sessions. During the classroom observations, the new teachers practiced identifying practices pertinent to GE implementation. The teachers had a GE rubric to aid in this. The purpose of these observations was to allow the new teachers to see how others implement the GE practices in order to better implement them in their own classrooms.

Practices to maintain fidelity of implementation observed at both schools. Four themes were revealed at both schools. The following is a discussion about the themes in common at the new school and the existing school.

Coaching. Each school site utilized a GE coach as part of their plan for implementation. *Time for the GE coach* to come in to the schools was set aside, and this time was fully scheduled throughout the days the coaches were present. Each school had a different coach, but the coaching sessions followed similar formats. Groups of teachers met with the coach to discuss

how the year was going and what was different from last year. The coach invited the teachers to talk about what they were doing in their classrooms and to ask questions. Both coaches reminded the teachers about the “big picture” of what GE is meant to accomplish. After the discussion session, the teachers and coach went into other grade level *teachers’ classrooms to observe*. Their objective was to watch for implemented GE practices. Each observing teacher and the coach had a rubric to refer to as a guide for the practices. The observers looked about the rooms, watched the students and the teacher, and wrote on the rubrics during this time. Following the observation, the teachers and coach returned to the conference room and discussed their observations. Teachers were encouraged to write a specific piece of positive feedback for those they observed. The discussion included positive observations, questions, and areas for growth. When one group had completed this cycle, the next group of teachers came in to the room. This pattern continued throughout the day. The GE coaches are responsible for measuring the fidelity of implementation of the program, so their observations were feedback rich.

The coaching session for the existing school included all teachers; the session for the new school was specifically for teachers who were new to the building that year and were new in their GE training. The coaching session at the new school included the coach providing handouts with ways to incorporate numerous practices during a class unit of instruction in order to show the teachers ways to create fluidity in their implementation.

The administration in both schools sat in on many coaching sessions. The administrator at the existing school accompanied groups of teachers into classrooms for observations. Both administrators mentioned their support for arranging peer observations, citing the importance of learning from each other. In their interviews, two participants at the existing school mentioned

the administration encourages the faculty to spend time in each other's classrooms. This was confirmed with the observations.

Recordable and deliberate actions taken. The observations revealed the actions teachers took in order to maintain implementation fidelity. The GE rubrics list several actions the raters look for when determining the level of fidelity to the GE program. Teachers exhibited these actions explicitly and in their own ways. Whether they were following the rubrics to the letter or following the spirit of the rubrics, all teachers and administrators were deliberate in showing the GE principles.

Both schools conducted a *Rise and Shine* ceremony at the beginning of the school day. During this assembly, students led the school in announcements, quotes, school creeds, and the Pledge of Allegiance. The teachers prompted and encouraged the students in their roles. The administrators were present for the assemblies and introduced the students to the guests at the school for the day. The students *greeted the guests*. This recognition continued during the day as the observers were greeted by a student at each classroom. Each greeter introduced himself/herself, welcomed the observers to the classroom by stating the name of the teacher and the grade level, and asked how he/she could help the guests. Each classroom in both schools *demonstrated callbacks*. The callbacks included the teacher beginning a phrase or a quote and the students completing it. During the observations, the teachers used callbacks during transitions, to regain students' attention, and as students were waiting in line. Additionally, classroom jobs were actions observed in both schools. Teachers called out for certain tasks to be done and specific students would respond and do the task. As an example, in one classroom, a teacher was instructing using the Smart Board and needed to show another screen. She called

out, “Tech Person, please go to the second screen.” The student was seated at the teacher computer and clicked for the second screen to appear at the Smart Board.

In the existing school, additional actions observed were *signal reminders*. In four of the classrooms observed, teachers made hand signals when asking a question. These hand signals prompted a student to respond in a certain manner or reminded the student to address the class in a designated way.

The actions taken by teachers and students were all items on the GE rubric. Observers looked for specific actions in order to rate fidelity of implementation, thus, the actions observed were deliberate. The actions might have been second nature to those teachers who had been fully trained in GE methods, but they were still made deliberately. The teachers observed each other during the school year, and the coaches observed for the purpose of strengthening these actions and behaviors as indicators that GE has been implemented as intended.

Using the right words. Another practice observed in the implementation of GE was choosing the right words. Teachers in both schools used verbal cues with their students, and the students’ responses indicated they understood the GE practice. In every class observed, students responded to teacher questions in complete sentences. If they did not, the teacher *prompted* them to do so. In all but one classroom observed, students began a response by stating, “Mrs. [name] and class...” Again, if the student did not begin in this manner, the teacher provided a cue to redirect him or her. The one classroom in which this practice was not observed was a specialist teacher’s classroom. As previously noted, this class period had fewer minutes of instruction time and the content taught required choral response. There were few opportunities for the students to answer in the prescribed manner.

Watch me; do this. In addition to verbal cues, visual cues were observed as a practice meant to show implementation of GE. *Wall coverings* were obvious throughout the school buildings. Every classroom had the eight expectations and several life principles posted on the walls. Many classrooms had the life principles printed with pictures related to units of studies or literature used in the teachers' classrooms. All the observed classrooms had a class creed posted. *Symbolic reminders* of how the administrators, teachers, and students are learners and unique human beings were evident. Five classrooms had an obvious visual representation of GE's magic triad (a positive and caring environment, and discipline with dignity and logic). Six classrooms and two administrators' offices had prominent displays of the administrators' and teachers' personal memorabilia representing who they are as learners and citizens. Four of the classrooms observed had easily seen word walls. The possibility exists that the researcher overlooked some of the GE required visuals in classrooms due to vantage points or time spent in the classrooms. The time of the school year could play a part as well. Because it was early in the year, some teachers may not have had all the resources posted or had not used the resources in their lessons, after which they would post the visuals.

The *hallways in the school buildings were covered with displays* related to GE principles and expectations. These visuals included posters, student work, wordings, quotes, and recognitions. Affirmations of good citizenship were found around the school as well as reminders of positive behaviors. Student successes were posted in the form of newspaper articles, information sheets, and selected work. In the new school, even the faculty restrooms had a copy of the expectations of focus for that week.

During the four days spent in the two schools, eight teachers and administrators mentioned at some point that all of these visuals were reminders of the expectations and

principles needed to make GE work. The purpose of showcasing all of these was for the purpose of putting the practices into use. The visuals were not just words; they were practices. One teacher said that the visuals were not just for show; they were “for do.”

Practices to maintain fidelity of implementation at the existing school. In addition to the four themes common to the new school, a fifth theme emerged at the existing school.

Resources from administration. A theme from the existing school was resources provided from administration. Two of the interview participants mentioned the *counselor provided information* about the principles to be studied for the week. This finding was confirmed when a copy of a spreadsheet was distributed to some teachers during the coaching sessions. The teachers were aware of what the entire faculty and staff’s focus was to be. This ties back to the expectation that GE implementation would provide a common language. The *principal sends out memos* weekly to inform the faculty and staff about various happenings around the school. These memos include the week’s focus principles and expectations. The administration provides support by *scheduling* time for observation, coaching, and “any other GE time [my] teachers need.” The administrators encourage classroom observations; the principal stated that any time a teacher desired to observe a colleague, she would make it happen. The administration also schedules the coaching sessions with the purpose of assisting the teachers to fully implement GE. The school achieved model school status (90% of the teachers implementing 100% of the practices daily) recently, and the administration provides opportunities to maintain that status.

Summary of Findings

Each of the three research questions revealed themes as the teachers and administrators shared their experiences about the selection, preparation, and implementation of GE. When

exploring the selection of the program, the new school participants discussed how GE would be a boost for their school's culture; they copied what other districts had to gain those benefits as well, and they felt a desire to build and increase a feeling of community. The existing school participants also discussed the impact on school culture with the selection of GE, but their other experiences had a more negative tone. They spoke of being voiceless in the decision, feeling confusion and increased stress. Within the discussion of the preparations made for the implementation of GE, both schools discussed the extensive training required and the classroom preparations needed. Those at the new school spoke of desiring an interview to be a part of the school. The participants at the existing school discussed needing mental buy-in and to learn a new language in order to prepare for implementation. Finally, the practices to maintain fidelity shared more commonalities at the schools than differences. Both schools participated in coaching, took deliberate actions, used the same wordings, and provided visual cues students were to copy. Those at the new school discussed the peer assistance available to them, and the participants at the existing school spoke of the resources provided from their administration.

Discussion

This qualitative study adds to the understanding of the experiences surrounding the selection, preparation, and implementation of a PD program. The findings demonstrated that the framework suggesting creation of a plan for the selection, preparation, and implementation for a school-wide PD program will work to make an easier transition. The timing in a school's existence for the adoption of a PD program revealed challenges and benefits in the three explored areas. Implementation involves many variables (Bower & Parsons, 2016; Desimone, 2002; Harn et al., 2013; Kisa & Correnti, 2015). These findings reflected there are steps school personnel can take to reduce the variables and improve the process.

The selection process revealed emotion at both school sites. The teachers at the new school expressed excitement to be working at a GE school. Even if they did not play a role in the decision process, the findings indicated no negativity with the decision. In fact, a job at the school was sought out because of the decision to implement GE. Conversely, participants at the existing school demonstrated many negative emotions regarding the decision. The feelings associated with being “volun-told” align with the findings of Cansoy and Parlar (2017) and Durlak and DuPre (2008) in that limited participation in shared decision-making results in less ownership in a program. Neither group of teacher participants was instrumental in the decision to implement GE, but it appeared that willingly joining the school with knowledge of the expectation ensured teacher buy-in from the beginning. The feelings of stress and confusion demonstrated from the teacher participants at the existing school could have been alleviated by the process becoming more teacher driven (Fischer & Hamer, 2010). Lester (2003) posited teachers want their voices heard. When the strategic, systemic planning of PD is conducted by the stakeholders, more buy-in takes place (Desimone, 2002; Education Development Center, 2013).

Teachers and administrators at both school sites reported school culture as a positive outcome of the decision to implement GE. Even though participants at the existing school did not see a need for GE at their school, improving school culture remained important, and GE was seen as an instrument for that improvement. Improving school culture was a reason for school-wide PD in research conducted by Bower and Parsons (2016) and Roby (2011).

No teachers reported they resisted implementation (Bower & Parson, 2016; Great Expectations, 2017), but six teachers at the existing school stated they had negative reactions and knew of others who had strong feelings against implementing GE. It is important to note that

although the participants at the existing school revealed their memories of negative emotions and used negative word choices to describe their thoughts and feelings at the beginning of implementation, all participants spoke positively of their interactions with the GE program two years into the implementation. This follows Lee and Min's (2017) research where, although teacher buy-in was integral to implementation of a PD program, lack of buy-in does not derail the entire process. Near the conclusion of each interview when the participants were asked if they wished to say anything else about GE, every participant revealed something positive she felt about the program. If there were "opposers," these teachers did not seem to reduce the fidelity of implementation of GE (Bower & Parson, 2016; Great Expectations, 2017).

Both school sites shared many of the same preparations to be ready to implement GE. Each group required a substantial time commitment. Time is a factor of success for a PD program according to studies conducted by Blank (2013), Blank and de las Alas (2009), Darling-Hammond et al. (2009), and Desimone (2002). Again, it appeared that the participants at the new school were prepared for the amount of time, whereas the participants at the existing school viewed the time commitment as an area of concern. At a new school, every operation from scheduling to cafeteria function is being built from the beginning; therefore, the newly hired teachers were aware that everything would require time to produce. Perhaps this made a difference in the participants' way of thinking about the time required to implement GE. Participants at the existing school had already put in the time preparing their classrooms and units of study and considered themselves "finished" with minor tweaks to be done each school year. The requirement of more personal time to implement GE interfered with the buy-in important for the success of implementation (Lee & Min, 2017).

The second year of implementation was reported to be much easier. Participants at both schools mentioned that once the initial preparations were completed, especially with regards to the printed resources, only minor additions or changes were required. Teachers at the existing school spoke about things falling into place and “finally figuring it out.” This parallels findings by McIntosh, Mercer, Nese, Strickland-Cohen, and Hoselton (2016) that the success of a program is not necessarily diminished if a program does not reach full implementation its first year. McIntosh et al. (2016) cited several factors increasing the likelihood of sustained fidelity of implementation including persistence and supportive resources such as coaching.

The final research question investigated the practices used to maintain fidelity of implementation. The finding surrounding coaching was shared between the two schools. The importance of coaching was discussed by Blank (2013), Fischer and Hamer (2010), and McIntosh et al. (2016). The positive discussion about the coaches and coaching sessions at the two schools underline the findings of the previously mentioned studies. The administration’s role in the availability of resources—coaching, physical, and mental—was a finding unique to the existing school. The responses reflected findings that suggested support is imperative in fidelity of implementation. Cansoy and Parlar (2017) spoke of administrative support and open channels of communication as must-haves for PD programs to create desired results. Blank (2013), Blank and de las Alas (2009), Darling-Hammond et al. (2009), Desimone (2002), and Fischer and Hamer (2010) stressed the need for support of personnel and resources in order for sustained implementation. It is obvious the participants at the existing school felt they have the support necessary to implement GE fully.

Within the existing school, the shift in the participants’ tone from their memories of the decision-making process to their discussions of the practices for implementation of GE was

marked. The change in attitude could be attributed to many reasons. The statement from a participant indicating the faculty would do anything the principal asked suggested what Cansoy and Parlar (2017) described as feelings of mutual trust and goodwill, which are important when a school decides to implement a change. Durlak and DuPre (2008) indicated effective leadership is the key to implementation fidelity, and the chances for success of a PD program increase when the program fits with the organization's mission and existing practices. These two conditions seem to be present at the existing school.

Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

Although the research team took steps to develop and conduct a trustworthy study, this study includes limitations. The first limitation involves the population size. The population of participants is small; therefore, even with maximum variation sampling for selection of participants, the responses cannot be generalized. Transferability should be considered only by those whose institutions, PD program, and participants are similar to those in this study. A second limitation is the number of participants at the new school. Repeated efforts were made to encourage more participation, but the number remained small.

The findings reveal more positive reactions to the selection, preparations, and implementation of GE at the new school than at the existing school, yet the reactions about GE in the third year of implementation were overwhelmingly positive in the existing school. The participants at the new school used words that indicated a positive feeling about GE, but the same level of excitement was not present. An opportunity exists to study the effect elapsed time has on the enthusiasm for a school-wide PD program when looking at schools with buy-in from the beginning (the new school) and a "volun-told" school (the existing school).

An additional opportunity for research surrounds the administration's leadership style and the response of the faculty to the leadership. As stated in the findings, teachers and an administrator at the existing school discussed being willing to do anything for the principal and jumped into the GE program for that reason. Research at other schools might find different patterns of administration leadership and teacher support of change.

Finally, this study did not address the aspect of student achievement after implementation of GE. An opportunity exists to study if any difference exists in achievement between a school that adopted GE from its beginning and one that adopted GE later in its existence.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declared no conflicts of interest regarding this research.

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SECTION SIX: SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER REFLECTION

When going through the National Board Certified Teacher process, I heard the phrase “life-long learner” again and again. I decided this term applied to me; after all, I was going through the rigorous process to obtain national certification. After completing the Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership program, I wish to amend how I view myself. I am now a scholarly practitioner. Scholarly practitioners blend professional skills and research practices to solve problems of practice and become instruments of change (Perry, 2016). Enveloping the doctoral experience afforded me opportunities to examine scholarship and its use in practice. This section follows the ways in which the dissertation-in-practice has allowed me to progress as an educational leader in my scholarship and in my practice.

Progress in Scholarship

My doctoral journey began as many journeys do—in small increments. What was so confusing at the beginning continues to make more sense. Working toward the ultimate research project, the dissertation, helped me to see each step of the research process with clarity and discover how each works together to create the final product. I have a greater understanding and appreciation for the scholarship necessary to conduct educational research. This section discusses the ways in which my dissertation journey has influenced me as a scholar through: (a) thinking, (b) reading, (c) writing, and (d) speaking.

Thinking

In the beginning stages of the process of scholarship, I was encouraged to think about three important components involved in research: philosophical worldview, research designs, and research methods. I identified with the positivist worldview, believing in absolute truths and the goal of knowledge to be what we could observe and measure (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I

was convinced quantitative research was my niche, and that numerical data told the truth and painted the picture I would need to answer a question.

As I thought through what excited me about education and what problem of practice interested me, my thoughts kept coming back to teachers' experiences with professional development. As I developed the research proposal, I recognized the need to gain the perspectives of many teachers and administrators in order to tell a more complete story of their experiences with required professional development. Numbers alone would not give me that story. Qualitative research was the route I needed to take. Qualitative researchers seek to understand how people interpret their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I saw the importance of a constructivist worldview. Creswell (2014) stated humans construct meanings as they interact with the world they are interpreting and make sense of that world based on their own perspectives and context. The complexity of the views is deep because of the complexity of human beings (Seidman, 2013).

The shift in my thinking provided me a deeper understanding of the teachers' and administrators' experiences with the Great Expectations (GE) professional development (PD) program. Numbers alone would not provide the full picture. Using qualitative research methods such as interviews, document analysis, and observations allowed the participants to use their own words to describe how they interpreted the implementation of GE. The power of words was evident in the participants' enthusiasm as they spoke with me about their experiences. According to Seidman (2013), the researcher interviews others because their stories have worth. As I thought about how a qualitative study would better fit my problem of practice, and the methods required, I knew my study would require rigor to ensure the credibility of the study. Patton (2015) posited methods, research design, and procedures to do not ensure rigor. Rigor

comes about through “rigorous thinking—about everything, including methods and analysis” (Patton, 2015, p. 703).

Reading

The thinking process continued within the reading required for this graduate program. The volume of literature available to researchers on myriad subjects is extensive and inexhaustible. Even for the most proficient reader, this can be daunting. The dissertation process helped me hone the skills necessary to elevate my scholarship to that of researcher. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) compared conducting a literature review to a having a dialogue with the community similarly interested in the topic. The literature review serves various purposes. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that a literature review: (a) serves as a foundation for contributing to the knowledge base, (b) demonstrates how the current study adds to what is already known, (c) contributes to streamlining the research process by answering design questions, and (d) strengthens the study in the discussion of the findings.

During my research, I constantly referred back to previous studies, sought out other studies, and followed question trails in search of related literature. I remember distinctly the moment an author’s name came to mind when processing information. I was comparing what two participants said concerning a question, when I remembered what an author from my study said on that specific point. The moment was exhilarating. I realized that my contribution to scholarship could provide such a moment to another. The amount of reading continues to be extensive; the struggle to keep abreast of it is still overwhelming; however, my desire to tackle the reading of research has grown to match the required work.

Writing

As previously mentioned, the moment of clarity when I discovered my desire to be an author whose research is recognized reinforced a goal of the dissertation in practice—a publishable ready article. Advancing through the coursework, I was required to conduct research and write about the research following the pattern used for the dissertation. I honed skills in quantitative styles of disseminating the information and practiced ways to use description to enhance qualitative stories. I wrote voluminous amounts, as Creswell (2014) recommended, allowing writing to become a habit.

The consideration of ethical issues was included in my writing process. Although ethical considerations and practices must be in play at every step in the research process (Creswell, 2014), the writing at the culmination of the research evidences a project that followed ethical procedures. The dissertation process heightened my awareness of knowing ethical procedures and practicing those. Prior to the study, the IRBs at my institution and the school district where I conducted the research approved the proposal, clearing the way for the research to progress. From there I sought local permission from the principals, the gatekeepers, to be in their buildings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Seidman, 2013). Each participant signed an informed consent outlining the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, and guaranteeing confidentiality (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During the study, I kept notes and journals about the process. I wrote down my thoughts, questions, and interpretations as a part of an audit trail (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additional practices followed the data gathering. While writing the results, I strove to report the findings accurately, avoiding favoring one side over the other (Creswell, 2014). I practiced maintaining confidentiality and avoiding plagiarizing throughout the process.

As I wrote my findings, the desire to share these grew continually. I am grateful to be part of program requiring a dissertation chapter prepared for journal submission. To prepare for submission, I researched the chosen journal's requirements and adapted my writing to match the format (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Completing the dissertation process with a deliverable that will add to the body of knowledge surrounding PD adds to my feeling of accomplishment.

Speaking

Finally, my progress as a scholar includes the fourth admonition I received through the doctoral program—speaking. I have added to my skills as scholar with my thinking, reading, and writing; I have improved my ability to speak as a scholar, as well. Just as each profession, group, and community has its own language of meaning, I had to reacculturate myself into this academic community (Bruffee, 1999). In order to speak with meaning, I had to make meaning from the thinking, reading, and writing in which I involved myself. Each discussion in class, with peers, and with members of the community with whom I conducted mini research projects, provided me experience speaking the language.

The dissertation-in-practice includes a component designed to address a goal of the program. As a part of the research proposal, I identified the group to whom I would present the findings of my research. The opportunity to present includes translating the results into language the community to which I am speaking understands (Bruffee, 1999). I am better able to add to discussions surrounding educational research, leadership, and policy as a direct result of my doctoral journey.

Progress in Practice

In addition to the progress I have made in scholarship, I have progressed as a practitioner. The gains I made in scholarship mean nothing if I never put those into practice. In my

professional role, I am encouraged to look at data in order to make decisions for my classroom; however, the demands of the job and the volume of the data often left me scratching the surface of the information, rendering my decision-making quelled. Through the work involved in the dissertation process, I am able to see the value in, even crucial need for, digging into the data to have a better understanding in order to make the best decisions. Data-digging happens in many places. My progress through the dissertation allowed me to see that data are not the end of research. Data are what allows meaning to appear. Meaning provides the context for data. Using scholarship to assign meaning to data allows me to be a better practitioner. This section discusses the ways in which I have progressed as a practitioner through: (a) searching relevant literature, (b) valuing others' perspectives, and (c) taking active roles in leadership.

Searching Relevant Literature

Creswell (2012) discussed the importance of research in the educational field. He stated these three reasons: (a) research adds to our knowledge about issues, (b) research suggests improvements for practice, and (c) research provides information to policy makers (Creswell, 2012). Learning to read and apply research has made a difference in my practice as an educator.

As issues arise in the place I occupy as an educator, I am able to turn to research to seek solutions. In my progression through the doctoral program and the dissertation I have sought and used research to answer questions, strengthen positions, and curb curiosity. I found it useful to practice using the databases available through the university libraries. Being efficient in the keyword use has helped me to narrow and expand my searches when I need relevant research. With the skills I practiced and honed, I feel confident in my ability to find research in areas related to my position. Examples of issues I have encountered in my career during the years of my doctoral program include rights of transgender students, diversity among the student

population, literacy instruction, report cards for school sites, and a change in state standardized testing. I found myself seeking research to help me gain information about these issues and read what the studies' authors had concluded.

Seeking relevant literature has also improved my practice. I am more acutely aware of trends in education and adaptations in thinking. I have this awareness, in part, because of the amount of research I was required to read throughout my program. The habit did not end with the conclusion of coursework. When a new initiative is proposed in my school district, I choose to examine research concerning the initiative so I am informed and can address any issues or concerns. My colleagues jokingly refer to me as "the bookworm," anxious to share what I learn and eager to try new practices.

My growth as a result of the dissertation process included a spark in my interest of policy. Discussions with colleagues at my current school indicate many teachers see a disconnect between policy and practice. What our state's department of education requires often does not reflect best practice or encroaches on already demanding tasks and time. Bartell (2001) posited that the political system's focus on elections, policy overload, and specialization has led to the fragmentation. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) concluded that what teachers do has the greatest effect on student achievement, but the policy makers may not have the same knowledge of best educational practices. Progression through coursework has invigorated my desire to be a liaison between my work site and policymakers. I have narrowed the search for what I wish to do next with this degree. Bardach and Patashnik (2016) directed their handbook to those who wish "to look at the world through the eyes of a practitioner" (p. xvi). I am a practitioner, and who better to analyze policy written for practitioners than one trained to analyze policy?

Valuing Others' Perspectives

When I entered the doctorate program, I was aware of other perspectives but tended to surround myself with people who shared my perspective, values, and ways of living. Obviously, this was true in my personal life. Even at my school site, I worked well alongside many different people, but I socialized at work with those who were most like I am. As I draw to the conclusion of my dissertation process, I realize, although I still hold the same beliefs and values, I am aware of and see great value in others' perspectives.

Part of this change resulted from the diversity inherent in the program. Members of our class came from all over the state, worked in many different professions, and brought their individual stories. The time spent with people, listening to their perspectives, allowed me to participate in transformative learning experiences. Mezirow (2009) defined transformative learning as reframing references to make them more inclusive, reflective, and open to change. In some ways, it was disorienting to study about adult learning theories and recognize the changes occurring in me at the same time. Merriam and Bierema (2014) stated while changing society is a goal of many adult learning theories, the process begins with the individual. Throughout the program, we were encouraged to participate in critical reflection. This practice was instrumental in my recognition of assumptions I made about the world and my place in the world.

An additional way in which I began to increase the way I value others' perspectives was through the choice of conducting a qualitative study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that taking an interest in knowing more about and improving one's practice often leads to qualitative research studies. Having a personal interest in PD was the impetus for my study, and the desire to understand what others experienced brought me to a qualitative project. One of the ways by which I sought understanding was through the interview process. An interest in understanding

people's experiences is the reason for in-depth interviewing (Seidman, 2013). Although the process was arduous and time-consuming, I enjoyed speaking with the participants and hearing their thoughts and stories. In an effort to ensure trustworthiness, I spoke with the participants a second time to ensure the transcripts of the interviews accurately reflected their words and meanings (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Their responses to this additional step allowed me even more insight to their lives and perspectives.

The design of my doctoral program and the people with whom I spent time weekly and throughout the summer broadened my circle of understanding. I stepped outside of my comfort zone and participated in learning experiences designed to expand my perspectives. Choosing to conduct a qualitative study put the theoretical study into practical usage. I actively sought others' perspectives and to make meaning from experiences. I do not anticipate that the habits formed during my doctoral program regarding thinking about the world through different lenses will wane soon.

Taking Active Roles in Leadership

The application to gain entrance to this doctoral program forced me to consider my leadership status. I was not an administrator; I was not a department chair, nor did I hold a community leadership position. I stared at a blank page wondering how I would address the question about my leadership experience. My journey through the doctoral program and the dissertation process gave me insight about my leadership style. I recognize the leader I was and am excited about the leader I have become.

Rooke and Torbert (2011/2005) concluded a leader's journey is not simple. I found this to be true for me, but because of this program, I see within myself the substantial changes Rooke and Torbert (2011/2005) mentioned. As I submitted my application to the doctoral program, I

recognized the leadership activities in which I participated and fully embraced these, seeing the merit in the activities. Part of me still wondered if I was truly a leader. Progressing through the program bolstered my confidence. During my first summer of coursework, I researched my identified strengths and continued throughout the program to recognize how best to use my strengths (Clifton, Anderson, & Schreiner, 2006). I now understand I held incorrect assumptions about what leadership was. This was a cause of my inability to view myself as a leader. After studying leadership, I realize leadership has many facets and no one definition. I identify strongly with what Northouse (2016) describes as servant leadership.

My progression through the doctoral program and the dissertation process has shaped and solidified my confidence as a leader. I take the initiative and see the need for me to be in positions of leadership. I have much to offer. My colleagues and classmates might describe me as quiet and unassuming. Some of them are taken aback when they discover my sense of humor or hear me get angry about something. It was difficult, then, for me to see myself as a change agent when I thought of change agents as those trailblazers who are in the public letting their voices be heard above the crowd. I silenced my doubts, though, when I thought of our readings on leadership. Goffee and Jones (2011/2000) stated that inspirational leaders dare to be different. They use what is unique about themselves as an advantage. I bring my skills, talents, and unique experiences as I become an impetus for change. I will continue to grow in leadership, evolving as my skills develop and my situations change (Northouse, 2016), but I no longer wonder if I am a leader. I am a leader.

Conclusion

As I stated at the beginning of this section, I once thought of myself as a life-long learner. The completion of my doctoral program has added the signification of scholarly practitioner to

my view of myself. In scholarship, I have become proficient in thinking, reading, writing, and speaking as a scholar. I value these qualities and recognize their value as tools in my profession. The scholar I have become is interwoven into my practice. As Perry (2016) stated, a scholarly practitioner can blend research and wisdom with skills and knowledge to recognize and solve problems of practice. Using the skills practiced during the doctoral program to investigate a problem has provided me with a better understanding of the scholarship and practice required to make a difference in my corner of the world.

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Appendix A

Appendix A includes the invitation to participate in the individual interview.

Interview Invitation

Interview Invitation (by mail and/or email)

Dear <insert administrator's name>,

My name is Angela Sheffield, and I am a doctorate student at the University of Missouri-Columbia in Columbia, Missouri. I am also a 7th grade language arts teacher at Tecumseh Junior High in Lafayette, IN. I understand the intensity of your work as an administrator and how it makes a difference to the teachers in your building. I am writing to ask for your participation in a research study that explores the implementation of the Great Expectations program in your building. I am interested in gaining your perspective about the decision made to choose Great Expectations and the preparations made to implement the program.

I would like to interview you to learn more about your experiences through the process. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes and can be scheduled at a date and time that will work best for you. I will follow up with a phone call or email to determine if you would be willing to participate.

If you have questions or comments, feel free to call me at 870-715-7839 or email me at asheffield@lsc.k12.in.us

Thank you,

Angela Sheffield

Dear <insert teacher's name>,

My name is Angela Sheffield, and I am a doctorate student at the University of Missouri-Columbia in Columbia, Missouri. I am also a 7th grade language arts teacher at Tecumseh Junior High in Lafayette, IN. I understand the intensity of your work and the daily challenges and celebrations that come with the job of teacher. I, too, have participated in professional development throughout the years, and professional development is what has piqued my interest for my research.

I am writing to ask for your participation in a research study that explores the implementation of the Great Expectations program in your building. I am interested in gaining your perspective about the decision made to choose Great Expectations and the preparations made to implement the program.

I would like to interview you to learn more about your experiences through the process. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes and can be scheduled at a date and time that will work best for you. I will follow up with a phone call or email to determine if you would be willing to participate.

If you have questions or comments, feel free to call me at 870-715-7839 or email me at asheffield@lsc.k12.in

Thank you,

Angela Sheffield

Appendix B

Appendix B includes the informed consent documents for the individual interview.

Informed Consent – Interview

This form is designed to provide you with an understanding of the purpose of the research being conducted and of your rights as a potential voluntary participant. If you volunteer to participate, this form will serve as the record of your agreement to participate.

Research Study: Great Expectations: An Examination of the Selection of, Preparation for, And Implementation of a Professional Development Program

Researcher: Angela Sheffield

Address: 7124 West Greenview Drive, Battle Ground, IN 47920

Phone: 870-715-7839

Email: asheffield@lsc.k12.in.us

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in a study examining the selection of, the preparation for, and the implantation of the Great Expectations professional development program. Specifically, you are invited to participate in an individual interview where you will be asked to share your thoughts and experiences about these processes of Great Expectations at your school site.

The interview will be face-to-face with the researcher and will be held at a mutually agreed upon location. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Research Uses

The data collected for this study will be utilized by the researcher to complete the dissertation requirements for a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri. Participants may request to view the results by contacting the researcher (870-715-7839 or masheffield@hotmail.com).

Participant Rights

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to not participate or you may withdraw from participation at any time. Additionally, you may choose to not answer all of the interview questions. Your decision to not participate, to withdraw, or to not answer all of the questions does not affect you in any way.

Risks

Participation in the interview may cause participants to reflect on themselves and their experience with Great Expectations. As a result, it is possible that participants could experience varying degrees of emotional discomfort. The researcher will make every effort to minimize any discomfort.

Benefits

Participants may receive benefits from completing the interview, such as learning more about themselves and how their experience with Great Expectations has influenced them in some way.

Costs/Payments

There are no costs or payments for your voluntary participation in this study; however, a \$10 Amazon gift card will be offered as an appreciation for participating.

Participant Confidentiality

Your identity and personal information is strictly confidential unless law requires disclosure. Audio files and transcripts of the interview, along with the results of the study will be kept on a password protected computer. Any paper copies of results will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Participant responses may be quoted in results, but no identifiers will be included. The results shared in the researcher's dissertation will not include participant names or specific identifiers.

Contact Information

You may ask the researcher any questions you have regarding this study prior to consenting to participate, during the interview, or after the interview is completed. If you wish to withdraw from this study, you may do so at any time. During the interview, you may let the researcher know that you wish to withdraw. After the interview, you may use the contact information to inform the researcher you wish to withdraw.

This project has been reviewed by the University of Missouri's Institutional Review Board and by the Tomball school district. If you have questions regarding this research or the review process, please call the University of Missouri's Office of Research at 573-882-3181.

If you choose to voluntarily participate in this study, please sign this form below. By signing this form, you are communicating that you understand the contents of this form, the research study, and the associated risks and benefits. Additionally, by signing this form, you are agreeing to voluntarily participate in this study. Please sign both forms. You will keep on form for your records, and the researcher will keep the other.

Printed Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Appendix C

Appendix C includes the data collection protocol for the individual interview.

Interview Protocol

Project: Great Expectations: An Examination of the Selection of, Preparation for, and Implementation of a Professional Development Program

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Angela Sheffield

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please review the informed consent form (allow time to review). Please note that your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Also, please note that you will not be identified as a participant in this study, and your participation is confidential. Do you have any questions? (Participants will sign the consent form if they are giving consent).

I will be audio recording our interview to ensure that I have an accurate record of our conversation. I will begin recording now.

Questioning Route:

- 1) How long have you been a teacher?
- 2) How long have you taught at your current school?
- 3) Thinking about the Great Expectations program—what can you tell me about the decision made to implement this particular program?
- 4) What was it about the program that made this the choice for your school?
- 5) Once the decision was made, how was the decision communicated to the faculty and staff?
- 6) What was your reaction to the decision?
- 7) What reactions did other teachers have?

- 8) What can you tell me about how the school prepared to implement Great Expectations?
- 9) What preparations did you make to implement Great Expectations?
- 10) What are your feelings about the preparations you personally made?
- 11) What challenges, if any, did you have in implementing Great Expectations?
- 12) What kind of support is in place for implementing Great Expectations?
- 13) If a new teacher comes to the building, what process is in place for them to learn the program?
- 14) Is there anything else you want me to know about Great Expectations at your school?

Appendix D

Appendix D includes the document analysis guide.

Reviewer Date Reviewed _____ Source of Document _____

Author _____ Date Prepared _____

Prepared for _____

Summary of Contents

Issues

Potential Benefit

Potential Bias

Comments

VITA

Angela Sheffield was born in Mountain Home, Arkansas, and has lived in various places throughout the United States: pre school years in Protem and Marshall, Missouri, elementary school in Topeka, Kansas, and junior and senior high school in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City with certifications in special education and history. Throughout her career she added certifications in PK-4th grade general education and 4th-8th grade English, social studies, math, and science. She has been an educator for 26 years, teaching in Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, and Indiana. She has taught many levels of students during this time, but the majority of her career has been teaching at the junior high level. Sheffield earned her Master of Science in Education in Reading at the University of Central Arkansas. She achieved National Board Certification in the area of Middle Level Generalist and completed the Smart Step Literacy initiative through Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. In 2017, Sheffield moved to Lafayette, Indiana, where she teaches 7th grade language arts. She serves on various committees with the purpose of increasing student success. Sheffield plans to work in education policy at the state or federal level and to share her love of teaching by instructing pre-service teachers at the postsecondary level.