EXPLORING MEANINGS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

A DISSERTATION IN
Education

Presented to the Faculty of the University
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

by
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Kansas City, Missouri
2014

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the perceptions of elementary teachers about professional development experiences in a Catholic diocese in the Midwest. Professional development in this study was defined as local or contextual experiences, regional experiences, diocesan experiences, and other events of learning such as graduate level coursework, workshops, or conferences. The study noted teacher perceptions of how and why professional development decisions are determined so that teacher growth and actions can be enhanced by their professional development experiences. A within-case and cross-case analysis of eight individual case studies of elementary classroom teachers, each with over ten years of experience teaching in a Catholic diocese in the Midwest, was used to investigate the subsequent research questions. The overarching research question was: How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences? The sub-questions used for the systematic research process included: (a) What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as meaningful and useful?, (b) What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and

meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?, (c) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?, and (d) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers?

Through analysis of narratives, focus group sessions, and interviews, two dominant themes of relevancy and practicality were determined. The subthemes of professionalism, disconnect, technology, and attributes of teachers were also determined. The data from this study found that teachers perceive that professional development experiences on the local level are positive when relationships between the administrator and the teachers are positive. Beyond the local, professional development experiences may or may not be relevant or practical because teachers are not asked about their contextual needs. Teachers perceived that asking, listening, and trusting their opinion concerning professional development experiences was important in reframing relevant and practical experiences.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Education, have examined a dissertation titled "Exploring Meanings of Professional Development: Teacher Perspectives," presented by Elizabeth Baker, candidate for the Doctor of Education degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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PREFACE

Personal Reflection

Professional development experiences have always been a priority in my career as an educator and an administrator. As a secondary school English teacher, I was encouraged to attend conferences and classes to enhance lifelong learning, to promote scholarship among my peers, and to stimulate growth in the classroom for each of my students. District and local school administrators took mentoring roles in my professional development because of the enactment of research-based initiatives promoted by a Catholic diocese in the Midwest. Studying brain development, integration of curriculum, and curriculum mapping were all essential components of sharpening skills to become a more effective teacher. The commitment to lifelong learning as well as the effectiveness of educators teaching and leading other teachers led to my interest in the subject of professional development as a tool to promote growth and achievement.

This commitment as a teacher of other teachers helped me to reflect on how decisions were made about the offerings of professional development that are chosen for teachers in the diocese. As a teacher, there were opportunities given, but the administrative choices were made by the diocesan Schools Office or by the local leader. When I became an elementary school administrator myself, and when I was charged with filling professional development days that were scheduled in the teacher contract, I started to reflect on how and why decisions were made. I also began trying to interpret how meaningful these experiences might or might not be for the faculty. Many of the decisions were based on managerial mandates or instructional goals. Some decisions were made strictly by diocesan administrators.

I also began to ponder that the decisions that I was making about professional development were also determinations that either directly or indirectly related to teacher growth and, in turn, student achievement. The diocesan decisions were also having an effect on teacher performance. As an administrator, it was obvious to me that some teachers embraced the offerings of development, some were ambivalent, and some were openly resistant. These behaviors raised the question of how teacher reactions to many types of offerings of development, whether managerial, instructional, technical or, in the case of the Catholic diocese, catechetical, were being utilized or lost in the classroom setting.

It is as a former teacher and as a current administrator that I study the meaning of professional development as viewed by teachers. My goal as an administrator is to support teachers as powerfully as possible to bring about excellent teaching and learning. The goal of this study is to understand how teachers perceive professional development so that teachers' actions can be enhanced by their experiences.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Problem Statement

An administrator influences teaching and learning by making decisions about professional development. Professional development may be a way to promote a school or district leader's priority to improve instruction, immerse teachers in a supportive culture, and, in turn, create strides in academic achievement for every student (Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). As a social justice issue, the United States Department of Education recommended improving teaching and professional learning by supporting better school and system management. They recommended creating new designs for schools and systems to deliver content as essential to fair and equitable education, which is a priority for establishing higher levels of learning for all students (Hardy, 2009).

However, administrators often have provided professional development opportunities that may or may not have usefulness or meaning for teachers by making choices guided by "comfort, convention, history, and habit" (Guskey & Huberman, 1995, p. 15). Furthermore, administrators seldom have the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development on teacher growth. Thus, the decisions made about professional development by administrators without the collaboration of teacher input may or may not provide teachers with tools to enhance student performance (Mustani & Pence, 2010). The essential decisions about professional development could be perceived as meaningful or not to teachers, especially in relation to a teacher's own context.

Lack of Meaningful Professional Development Decisions to Improve Instruction

Organizational mandates regarding professional development may be implemented without regard given to a teacher's content subject area, class size, classroom demographics, or teaching experience. As demonstrated by Dunaway, Kim and Szad (2010), if no individual professional growth is occurring, it is unlikely that organizational growth is occurring. The set policies of an organization may create a dysfunctional culture (Fullan, 2007). In an opposite point of view, Wong, Britton and Gasner (2005) stated that effective programs of professional development are highly structured, focused on professional learning, and are collaborative. But, for administrators, there is the challenge to provide teachers with meaningful and sustainable opportunities for high quality research based professional development that can affect student outcomes (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Accordingly, administrators should develop an understanding of whether professional development is meaningful, sustainable, and useful to teachers (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004). Acknowledging teachers' opinions may be one way to develop this understanding for organizational leaders.

Motivation and sustainability are factors for leaders to consider in promoting teacher and student growth. Currently, in a culture of neoconservative ideology, the "political economy of truth" characterized by political powers who formulate controlling apparatuses of education is a primary consideration rather than teacher opinions and voices (Foucault, 1977, p. 132). Administrators could be more aware of the meaning of professional development for teachers in their choices of professional development, especially because of these external influences (Speck & Knipe, 2001). The effectiveness and use of professional development stem from the meaning, desire, and emotional investment that teachers give to the experience (Joyce & Showers, 2002). "Without desire, teaching becomes arid and empty.

It loses its meaning" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 551). In addition, the opportunity to give input about the experience may help a teacher develop a sense of professional competence (Guskey & Huberman, 1995). Notably, Lindstrom and Speck (2004) offered the learning cycle as an example of sustainability, which includes implementing techniques in a classroom setting, gaining support, and reflecting on the change. According to Fullan (1991), change in a school or classroom may take up to ten years. Under these circumstances, barriers to sustainability include time, funding, and a lack of follow through by leadership (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Nonetheless, sustainability of innovative methods can create positive change in student learning (Guskey & Huberman, 1995). As Table 1 substantiates, the length and level of professional development practices may influence teacher use of training in their classroom settings (Joyce & Showers, 2002). A motivated teacher sustained by strategic practices, such as action research or peer coaching, can promote change in their classroom context.

From pre-service training to end of career teacher improvement, professional development is a consideration in upholding organizational growth. Education Secretary Arne Duncan called on colleges of education to "dramatically change how they prepare the next generation of teachers so that they are ready to prepare their future students for success in college and careers" (DeWitt, 2010, p. 13). In this light, Stodolsky, Dorph, and Nemser (2006) compared the influence of a professional culture to the successful implementation of professional development. For instance, the more bureaucratic the organization, the more likely a professional staff may suffer from alienation (Hoy, 1983). Ultimately, this shift in

Table 1

Percentage of Professional Development Sustainability

Categories	Impact
One day workshops	Less than 5 to 15% use of strategy
Conferences or summer institutes	Less than 5 to 10% use of strategy
Practice, feedback, coaching	85-90% continued use of strategy
Action research	85-90% continued use of strategy

Adapted from *Student Achievement through Staff Development,* by B. Joyce and B. Showers, 2002 (3rd ed.), p. 25, and *Why Can't We Get It Right? Professional Development in Our Schools*, by M. Speck and C. Knipe (2001), p. 143, and *The Principal as Professional Development Leader*, by P. H. Lindstrom and M. Speck (2004), p. 57.

class power can lead to a power which can be exercised by the "mere fact of things being known and people seen in a sort of immediate, collective, and anonymous gaze" (Foucault, 1977, p. 154). As a result, Fullan (1999) stated that transformation, centered on relationships and individual teaching contexts that are required for change, is a difficult problem to address in educational organizations because of issues of stabilization of the central office, training principal leaders, and coordinating districts and states. Despite having an awareness of these systemic issues, administrators should support organizational growth that may translate into teacher and student growth.

Professional development decisions may center on aspects of teaching and learning that are not meaningful to teachers, and as a result, do not improve instructional practices in the classroom setting. For instance, practices of the accountability movement have reinforced a deficit model of teacher supervision (Hargreaves, 1994). On this note, power is described

as relations of forces that when given expression are seen as truth (Foucault, 1977, p. 93). Oplatka (2004) indicated that institutional truth may explain why there are barriers to diversity, responsiveness, and improvement in education. A possible solution, for administrators who wish to be advocates, would be to focus on relationship building in order to enrich a teacher's classroom practice rather than utilizing top-down communication (Cowan & Aresenault, 2008). As a result, teachers may perceive professional development to be more meaningful when their own growth and, in turn, student growth, is an outcome of the training.

Limited Voices in Planning Professional Development

Leaders in educational organizations may not give acknowledgment to the voices of teachers when making decisions about professional development. For instance, leaders may make decisions without assessing teacher or student input about the impact those strategies may have in the classroom (Fletcher, 2009). Although there is emerging research about reflective leadership and collaboration with teachers, there is little research about how professional development decisions by administrators help teachers grow and gain effectiveness (Hirsh, 2010; Leon & Davis, 2009; Sullivan & Wiessner, 2010). One significant shortcoming of professional development training is that it offers little opportunity for choice or individualization (Guskey & Huberman, 1995). Nesbit (1999) substantiated that adult educators were once mainly trained by individual experience but now they are regarded as professionals expected to be credentialed by taking specially designed pre-service and in-service courses. As Ah Lee and Herner-Patmode (2010) revealed, much research of an educator's skills and dispositions in relation to professional training has to do with teacher candidates or pre-service teachers. Listening to the voices of teachers with years

of classroom experience in regard to professional development could promote teacher and student growth.

The perceptions of teachers as critical to student learning and growth could be a reflection for leaders. Namely, teachers have a need to understand the reasons related to organizational decisions, even if they do not agree with a position (Cowan & Aresenault, 2008). According to Reed (2010), an assessment of an individual's professional skills and knowledge is recommended before engaging in meaningful professional development. Lopez-Pastor, Monjas, and Manrique (2011) called for a more collaborative and democratic system of professional development to improve teaching practice. As a result, Downey and Cobbs (2007) recommended that teacher education programs implement curricular innovations that will equip teachers with skills needed to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners. An administrator who aspires to be an instructional leader may recognize the voices and perceptions of teachers in decision making.

The power of listening to the voices of teachers stems from relationships between teachers and leaders. Egawa (2009) suggested that successful participation in professional development, especially when learning from adult colleagues, must be voluntary to be meaningful. There is empirical research on adult education that centers on lifelong and on-line learning (Ast, 2004; Gorard & Selwyn, 2005; Zembylas, 2008). An example of a change in norms related to social justice leadership is the presence of professional development institutes and centers that have been established through "acts of leadership and organization, not legislated, mandated, regulated or coerced" (Little, 1993, p. 137). In addition, adult learners have been studied in terms of educational strategies that promote growth and discourage resistance (Moran & Dobmeier, 2008). However, there is a lack of research about

teachers as adult learners in the decision making process about professional development planning and implementation (Hunzicker, 2011). Acknowledging the relational nature of administrative decision making could impact teacher growth through adult learning.

Organizational goals and teacher contexts helps a leader create meaning in professional development. While empirical studies of organizational growth provide research in areas of education and the business world, the study of individual professional growth, especially for educators, has limited research (Carmeli & Tischler, 2005; Cohen & Tansley, 2001; Cosner, 2009). Educational leaders must have a cohesiveness of focus and support to make change in practice in order to increase student performance (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004). Additionally, promoting a professional culture should support teacher learning (Stodolsky et al., 2006). Schorr (1997) purported that strong schools include practitioners who have strong relationships with administrators and students built on trust and respect. On the contrary, knowledge that is tacit can hold prejudices (Fullan, 1999). Acknowledging the voices of teachers in making decisions about professional development could help leaders create meaningful professional development offerings to promote growth.

Impact of Professional Development on Student Performance

Educational institutions exist to promote and sustain student growth. Kohn (2002) spoke to the norm of institutions seeing schools as a means for boosting economy rather than seeing schools as a way to strengthen democracy. Furthermore, Fenwick (2004) argued that leadership practices may be too individualistic and may disregard the values of equity and democracy. One strategy for leaders seeking to improve achievement is to improve teacher quality by providing conditions which would promote acquisition of knowledge and skills (Boyle, Lamprianou & Boyle, 2004). Ongoing professional development may help teachers

improve the knowledge of the subjects taught and acquire ways to facilitate learning connections (LeTendre, 1996). Leaders should be aware that their decisions have an impact on both teacher and student growth.

The focus on institutional power may influence leadership decisions without regard to student growth. Thus, sometimes relations of power become enmeshed in economic relationships (Foucault, 1977). To address this issue, the Urban Institute (Clewell et al., 2004) suggested that professional development should be linked to curriculum knowledge and to how students learn. On the contrary, according to the National Research Council (2001), elementary teachers are sometimes unable to clarify concepts for students to solve problems that involve more than basic concepts. At the same time, according to Marshall and Oliva (2010), educators must work hard to increase knowledge, especially with regard to responsive pedagogies to support learning for recent immigrants and culturally diverse students. Issues of conceptual development and democratic education should counter the influence of market forces and power on educational decision making.

The embracing of hegemony and bifurcation by leaders disregards the call to acknowledge perceptions of teachers. In this study, hegemony is defined as using power to formulate or manipulate decisions. Hegemonic practices may be utilized by administrators to ease decision making because the norms of power are already established. Alternately, bifurcation, defined as dividing the interests of those in power from those of the participants, designates the intention of a leader to decide without participant input while recognizing the interests of those in power (Oplatka, 2004). From an institutional perspective, the structure of organizational language provides the impetus for conformity and rationale for sameness (Oplatka, 2004). In response to the need for survival, organizations have a tendency to

conform to institutional rules that may incorporate myth or societally agreed upon rules which promote normatively based decision making influenced by those societal values (Oplatka, 2004). Because leaders are accountable for the instructional program and may make decisions based on their own opinions or perceptions, educators have shifted the focus to student learning from learning new teaching strategies (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004). Alternatively, as Marshall and Oliva (2010) noted, the promotion of educators should be examined or changed through systemic and evidence-based intervention. Shifting from the concept of hegemony or bifurcation to acknowledging meaningful growth may prove to be difficult for a leader.

Teachers may support hegemony because of the lack of willingness to change. For instance, a non-directed approach to organizational communication may be viewed as creating confusion among teachers about the priority of change (Fauske & Raybould, 2005). "Efforts to change instructional practices will fail if they attempt to prescribe programs of instruction without taking into account teachers' decision making in implementing the program" (Borko & Putnam, 1995, p. 59). A fundamental change in professional development requires growth in subject matter and subject specific pedagogy (Borko & Putnam, 1995). The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (Jerald, 2006) stated that adequate knowledge of subject matter, teaching for understanding, and a caring classroom environment are all issues of importance. Sturko and Gregson (2009) noted that professional development is often geared toward a content oriented context or structure. Also of importance is the need for professional development that encourages a high level of cultural competencies (Lindsey, Robins & Terrel, 2003). Findings from Bursal and Paznokas (2006) revealed that elementary educators' potential effectiveness was defined by their

conceptual anxiety levels. Change in decision making about professional development may not be perceived as an adequate approach to teachers.

Leaders should seek meaning in professional development decisions to promote growth. Although there is much research pertaining to the relationship of academic achievement and professional development, there is a lack of research about the meaning and usefulness of professional development for teachers, especially related to sustained school success (Jacobson, 2011). Professional development programs have increased their emphasis on diversity, equity, and social justice (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). For example, Hunzicker (2011) detailed the importance of focused and collaborative professional development for teachers. This study examined teachers' experiences of professional development and teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of the transfer of pedagogical skills learned in the offerings to enhance the performance of students (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Leaders could apply the findings in this research study to their own contexts to promote growth.

Insufficient Regard to Matters of Social Justice

Educational leaders should look at the context of their teachers' and students' environment in decision making. Significantly, Lewthwaite (2006) predicted that if current trends continue, all states in the West will have more than half of their children living below the poverty line within five to seven years. Moreover, Coleman et al. (1966) found that differences in average achievement between schools were largely related to differences in the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students. The struggle for fair and equitable education for all citizens of the United States continues to the present day. Freire (1970) was deeply concerned with expanding the human experience of democratic education as a tool to reach potential for transformation. "The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the

student's creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors" (Freire, 1970, p. 75). The issues of diversity associated with race, gender, age, socio-economic status, or religion among students and districts are examples of social justice challenges that academic communities need to address (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Dillon (2010) reported that the United States Department of Education is looking to authenticate that students of both genders and all races are getting equal access to college preparatory curriculum. Affluent students may also have access to teachers who are better prepared than their predecessors, further widening the achievement gap (Darling-Hammond, 2007). In reviewing literature about the conceptual framework, I sought perspectives of issues of social justice. Administrators could give regard to issues of social justice when formulating decisions about professional development.

The use of inclusive practices to respond to the needs of students and teachers is necessary. Both Karpinski (2006) and Otunga (2009) suggested that sustainable professional development should focus on social justice and democratic issues and engage teachers in discussions about leadership for social justice. A call for leadership for social justice can encourage a collaboration of principal and teacher reflection about student growth (Collinson et al., 2009). Studies propose moving away from a directive, structured approach to professional development to a less structured type of training offered during the school day such as professional dialogue, curriculum development, and peer coaching (Collinson et al., 2009; Stoltenberg, 2005). For example, in several studies, job-embedded professional development paired with reflective dialogue addressed inequity, impact on student learning, and connection to school initiatives (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008; Schlechty, 2002; Wolff, McClelland & Steward, 2010). An alternative reality for schools is to create community,

make connections, and commit to loving, nurturing, and sustaining students (hooks, 2009; Leonardo & Parker, 2010). "In the most basic terms, people-teachers, students, and leaders are the keys to effective schooling" (Lynch & Worden, 2010, p. 53). In summary, when faced with the need for promotion of achievement, administrators can note the meaning of learning, empowerment, and the needs of students in their decision making processes.

Empowering teachers means listening to teachers' perspectives and meanings. Transformative leadership suggests that teacher learners should become responsible as well as conscientious about their own learning (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). However, educators must be aware of "contrived collegiality" which solicits teachers who are perceived as leaders (Hargreaves, 1994; Meister, 2010, p. 894). "What is best practice in one context may be malpractice in the next" (Schlechty, 2002, p. xxi). According to Banilower, Heck and Weiss (2007), two-thirds of elementary and middle school teachers report that there is a need for professional development in the use of engaging and investigative teaching strategies. Greene (1988) spoke to Dewey's (1937) idea that knowledge should go beyond established structures so that growth comes from new structures. Educational organizations can be seen as conveyors of social values of a community (Karpinski, 2006). However, school reform in organizations must deal with equity in teaching, especially with a diverse student population, by looking at standards, curriculum, and pedagogy (Little, 1993). Teachers who understand that discourse involving learning another culture's values but retaining their own, are social justice teachers who view their students as individuals who can act on collective self-interest (Finn, 2009). Leaders who look to the theory of social justice may promote teacher and student growth.

This study explored teachers' meanings of professional development intended to support teacher growth. The few studies in the current literature that do address meaning and usefulness often study these perspectives as related to content related fields or pre-service teachers (Downey & Cobbs, 2007; Frey & Fisher, 2010). Educators' choices about the types of professional development and situations that cause leaders to offer professional development to teachers was addressed in terms of the impact on the meaning of those choices for teacher growth (Guskey, 2000). Also, the issue of social justice theory as applied to decisions related to professional development was explored in the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the perceptions of professional development experiences as perceived by teachers. The study noted teacher perceptions of professional development and how and why professional development decisions are determined so that teacher growth and actions can be enhanced by their professional development experiences. The study is a phenomenological study of a qualitative nature. The unit of analysis is professional development experiences of teachers.

According to Patton (2002), I needed to select an appropriate unit of analysis about the different experiences of focus. The different experiences of focus involved teachers with a wide range of experience in professional development as noted by their own local experiences, their regional Parish and Schools of Deaneries (POD) development, their collective diocesan experiences, and finally, their global experiences. With these contexts in mind, Patton (2002) also stated that the focus should be on the different experiences of individuals as well as variations in the processes of a program. This research focused on the

various experiences of professional development of individual elementary teachers of general education in schools in a Catholic Midwestern diocese.

Corbin and Strauss (2007) noted that a unit of analysis is a concept. The concept that the study focused on is professional development as perceived by teachers. The rationale behind choosing perceptions of teachers about professional development for a unit of analysis is that there are various experiences of adult learning including graduate level coursework, one-day workshops, conferences, and many other events of learning that teachers may have experienced that fall under the concept of professional development that may or may not be meaningful to a teacher.

Phenomenology was used as a tradition. Huberman and Miles (2002) describe a phenomenological study as an attempt by the researcher to find fundamental essences in the experience. As noted by Creswell (2007), I bracketed my own experiences as well as collected data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon. By providing a textural and structural description of the experiences of the participants, I conveyed the essence of the experience (Creswell, 2007). Moustakas (1994) identified this procedure as transcendental because I looked at the phenomenon in a fresh light by separating out my own experiences. The rationale in utilizing a phenomenological study is that, as an investigator, I brought my own awareness to the experience of professional development as a lifelong learner and I used that awareness to examine and find the truth in other educators' experiences.

The structure for representation both within and across the study with data collection included eight cases of teachers in the diocese with a narrative piece, two focus group sessions, and individual interviews for the research. The rationale for this study was to

provide descriptions of educators' experiences of professional development. Because of the number of teachers, the data evaluation included within-site and cross-site analysis with an analysis of the sets. All voices of the teachers were captured at the school level.

Research Questions

The primary overarching research question of this proposed research project asked: How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences? The sub-questions used for the systematic research process included: (a) What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as meaningful and useful?, (b) What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?, (c) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?, and (d) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers?

Significance of the Study

The target audiences for this study were administrators on district and school levels who are seeking to promote teacher growth and, in turn, student growth, by offering professional development for their teachers. In addition, teachers could benefit from the study by noting the importance of involvement in organizational decision making. The study may contribute to the policies and practices of districts and site-based educational institutions because of the research related to the meanings of professional development for teachers, especially in the light of social justice issues.

Administrators on the district and school level provide professional development to teachers in order to enhance the growth of their own schools. Academic achievement as

connected to professional development practices was associated with this study. Promotion of professional development to enhance the growth of teachers may in turn affect the performance levels of students. Lalley and Miller (2006) reported that students who are not achieving at grade levels are more likely to fall further behind, and, in some cases, low achievers who receive remediation continue to fall behind in spite of remediation efforts.

According to the United States Department of Education (2000), high quality instruction requires the process of inquiry, which focuses on skills of predicting and testing hypotheses that are aligned with curriculum and can be evaluated by the performance and achievement of the students who benefit from this teaching. The sustainability of professional development is a crucial need for leaders to address. Kedro and Short's (2004) study of long-term professional development found that the longer the model is in place, the more teachers responded that they had received adequate training. In support of these findings, the Urban Institute (Clewell et al., 2004) noted a minimum of 80 contact hours of professional development is needed to change instructional behaviors, and a minimum of 160 contact hours of professional development is required to change classroom environment.

Ongoing support of administrators will help promote quality implementation of professional development transferred into the classroom (Gersten, Baker, Dimino & Griffiths, 2004). Hill and Ball (2004) noted that teachers can learn an effective lesson in one professional development day, but the training that most benefited teachers was long-term and focused on analysis rather than general teaching strategies. "Pupils with higher intrinsic values for the things they learn and higher expectations to be successful are likely to master everyday demands better" (Spinath, Spinath, Harlaar & Phomin, 2006, p. 365). Achievement scores improve significantly when critical thinking, logical reasoning, and inquiry are used in

teaching lessons (Mee-Kyeong, 2007). Williams, Hemstreet, Liu, and Smith (1998) noted that students who were taught using inquiry-based learning scored higher on achievement tests than did students in traditional classrooms. Learning high quality instructional practices in professional development is a need for teachers and is an area of significance for leaders.

Teachers could benefit from the study by noting the importance of involvement in organizational decision making. Professional learning of a teacher has many dimensions, such as professionalism and emotions; therefore teacher growth can be described as complex rather than linear (Gravani, 2007). Understanding the dimensions of adults as learners is important for leaders seeking to change an organization. The organizational culture that exists in a school is linked to the complexities of individual teachers. Students of effective teachers scored significantly higher on assessments than students of neutral or ineffective teachers (Johnson, Kahle & Fargo, 2007). According to Wheeler (2007), raising content knowledge and addressing standards are needed for significant advances in education. According to Thompson (1996), when a professional development plan was implemented providing teachers with experience to facilitate transferring connections to their classrooms, it was evident through analysis of lesson plans developed by teachers that connections were identified in the classroom. Leaders who promote a culture of connections are promoting a culture of learning.

According to De Loo (2002), the goals of learning are to generate useful outcomes that organizations can apply in order to adapt and increase their efficiency. Consequently, Little and Houston (2003) related school reform theory to organizational change by emphasizing that teachers should be trained in quality research based practices. Similarly, Chiva and Alegre (2005) emphasized that there is a relationship between individual and

organizational learning and knowing. School accountability policies, and in stark contrast, social justice issues, are also needs that leaders should address in terms of professional development. However, Futrell (2004) reported that schools that find difficulty in meeting No Child Left Behind (NCLB) constraints are schools that are in communities with a high concentration of poverty. According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2007), the Catholic Church instructed Roman Catholics about their duties and responsibilities to one another and to the larger society, including the right of access to education. "Human decency is respected and the common good is fostered only if human rights are protected and human responsibilities are met" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007, p. 10). The responsibility of leaders to hone the skills of their teachers is significant.

Leaders should acknowledge that political and market forces may influence decision making beyond the context of their schools. "Seeing schools as a means for bolstering our economic system is very different from seeing education as a means for strengthening democracy, for promoting social justice, or simply for fostering the wellbeing and development of the students themselves" (Kohn, 2002, p. 114). Cooper (2009) called on educational institutions to look to leaders who will work to provide equal educational opportunities for all students. "The cultural worker …rejects separatist politics, appreciates the complexity of diversity…strives to combat inequality, and works to empower marginalized groups via collaborative strategies" (Cooper, 2009, p. 696). Collaboration is a type of reframing decision making that may help to sustain collaboration and teacher growth as perceived by teachers. Freire (1970) stated that "the starting point for organizing the program content of education…must be the present, existential, concrete situation reflecting

the aspirations of the people" (p. 95). If the aspirations of teachers and leaders are to sustain student growth through professional development experiences, these experiences should reflect meaning and sustainability.

The current study is significant because there is a lack of research pertaining to the understanding of teachers' perceptions and meanings toward professional development experiences as seen through the complexity of social justice issues. Studies about meaning in education, including the meaning of educational practice, meaning attributed to teacher education, and meaning related to student teachers, are present; however studies about the perceptions of professional development for current teachers are lacking (MacIntyre-Latta, Holstetler & Sarroub, 2007; Van den Berg, 2002; Wasserman, 2009). In order for leaders to sustain growth and change, it may be important to give voice to teachers about their own learning and to execute changes in the culture of their own pedagogical experience to promote advanced student performance (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011). Leithwood et al. (2004) supported leadership initiatives to implement policies which serve all populations of students and which support implementation in teacher contexts. This study adds to the research giving an understanding of teachers' perspectives about decision making about professional development.

Theoretical Framework

The research related to the theoretical framework of this study pertains to the lens of social justice. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) detailed criteria for establishing theory, which includes providing a simple explanation of observed relations relative to the phenomenon, detailing an established body of knowledge, and stimulating further research. The theoretical framework of this study stems from the conceptual strand of social justice

theory coupled with the conceptual framework of organizational behavior, leadership

practices, voices of teachers, and reframing professional development decision making.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) noted that a theoretical framework should help the researcher

maintain coherence and demand mindfulness and awareness. The conceptual framework

helped explain the concepts and theories that informed the research (Maxwell, 2005). These

concepts detailed why researching professional development was important to the current

knowledge of information about this phenomenon (Maxwell, 2005). The theoretical

framework, through the lens of social justice, helped me seek the essence of the meaning of

the experience of participants about professional development (Creswell, 2007). The

theoretical framework, examined with the lens of social justice, detailed how the theory is

evidenced in the study.

Social justice is an important lens, especially in reflecting on teacher perception and

meaning of professional development. As indicated by Creswell (2007), reviewing the

literature with the social justice theory as the theoretical foundation helped establish support

for the meaning of the experience of teachers of professional development. The social justice

lens became an ethical issue because "whenever there is an unequal distribution of power

between two people, the relationship becomes a moral one" (Sergiovanni, 2007, p. 23).

According to Barth (1991), active learning, democratic schooling, and student performance is

achieved when teachers are encouraged to become leaders. The conceptual framework

includes the theory of a socially just teacher or leader who puts an emphasis on nurturing and

sustaining a culture of collaboration in an organization and sustaining high expectations

(National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2008). "Commitment to teaching,

which leads to strong attachment to the professional aspects of teaching and to an interest in

student achievement, results from the fulfillment teachers experience in the classroom as they engage in teaching" (Convey, 1992, p. 125). The social justice theory adds the division of regarding perception and meaning as important in the decision making process.

Organizational Behavior as an Influence on Decisions of Professional Development

Organizational behavior in planning and decision making of leaders, at the district and school level as well as from the public and private school perspective, was explored in the review of the literature. The impact of reform, including accountability and standardization, was examined. The concepts of best practices of professional development and relating those practices to achievement were also the focus of the literature review about organizational decision making. Furthermore, the review of organizational behavior addressed teacher and student growth. This critical examination of decision making by organizations led to supporting the explorations of how a teacher perceives these decisions and experiences.

The reform movement in education presented administrators with a challenge in decision making related to professional development. Administrators face a challenge in making decisions in collaboration with teachers to provide measurable and sustainable opportunities for high quality research-based professional development that can affect student outcomes. For instance, standard two of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2008) indicates that leaders have impact and influence promoting student learning. Consequently, Giroux (2010) implied that an administrator must take care that the values of big business in education do not overshadow the common good of students. Therefore, the examination of literature about reform addressed these challenges.

The goal of a leader is to advance achievement for all students in their institution. In order to change the paradigm of dominations and to advance achievement equitably, a leader may provide teachers with tools and provide opportunities for their voices to be heard (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011). Freire (1970) suggested that women and men have a shared consciousness of oppression, leading to a sense of knowledge and commitment to fight oppression. The priority for educators is to look at the issues of social justice to help every student achieve at higher levels. Foucault (1977) stated:

> For a class to become a dominant class, for it to ensure its domination, and for that domination to reproduce itself is certainly the effect of a number of actual premeditated tactics operating within the grand strategies to ensure this domination. (p. 203)

By examining organizational behavior of social justice, a leader may find that recognizing the voices of teachers and reframing professional development because of those voices may promote achievement in both their own school and district setting.

Organizational behavior as related to growth was analyzed as a subtopic in the theoretical framework. Studies of professional development programs have shown that professional development has the capacity to change teacher instruction and improve student performance (Dangel et al., 2009). By examining the research related to growth, leaders may have to reflect on their own influence and authority in decision making in regard to advancing teacher and student growth. The relational aspect of contextual experiences of teachers and administrators may help to frame professional development for growth in more meaningful ways (Rowney & Taras, 2008; Shields, 2004).

Leadership Practices as an Influence on Decisions of Professional Development

Leadership practices in planning and decision making about professional development was reviewed in the literature. The influence of democratic education was

examined. The impact of power on leadership decision making was also a part of the review. Change in leadership practices was a focus in the review of the literature. The analysis of leadership practices led to an understanding of how teachers perceive decision making.

The review of the literature examined leadership practices which detail social justice components that eventually may lead to a combination of elements that enable a leader to embody leadership for social justice (Alo, 2010; Compton, 2010; Goddard, Neumerski, Goddard, Salloum & Berebitsky, 2010; Hulpia, Devos & Van Keer, 2010). The theoretical framework addressed leadership practices with the subtopics of democratic education, power, and change as significant to understanding teacher perception and meaning. In an example of social justice leadership, Lovett (2010) indicated that distributive justice in leadership minimizes domination and as a result reduces socio-economic inequality or poverty. In research regarding leadership practices, a justification for a continuation of the virtues of democratic education in schools along with an examination of power could lead a leader to make changes in professional development decision making.

Democratic schooling was also examined in the theoretical framework dealing with leadership for social justice. Because of the call to accountability for leaders, improved professional development and improved outcomes are important for all schools in our nation.

> The social climate in a small elementary school where the average student's mother has some college and where only a sprinkling of students are poor is quite different from the climate in a school where the average student's mother is a high school drop-out and where virtually all students are on a meal subsidy. (Alexander, Entwistle & Olsen, 1997, p. 112)

On a contextual note for this study, the struggle to compete with charter, private, and public schools in a NCLB atmosphere of high stakes testing makes it key for Catholic schools to be able to show data about the teaching and learning in our schools. Because of the

need for democratic education, the availability of resources and professional development opportunities should be a priority for school administrators (Scanlon, 2008). The theoretical framework included democratic education as a factor for socially just leadership practices.

In the literature, examples of the significance of power and a vision of democratic schooling may lead to theories that have been motivated by justice and may help to summarize the importance of social justice in administrative decisions about professional development. Inequity is a powerful reason to examine the literature involving leadership for social justice. For example, the poverty-induced learning gap is prevalent in the United States. One-quarter of American children live in poverty (Gibboney, 2008). As research indicates, in the state of Missouri, 39.5% of students were eligible for free and reduced lunch (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). In addition, the mathematics performance of fourth graders in high-poverty public schools was lower than that of their peers in low-poverty public schools. Additionally, urban children were more than twice as likely to be living in poverty as those in suburban locations—30% compared with 13% in 1990 (National Center of Educational Statistics, 2005). In the 2003-04 school year, English language learner services were provided to 3.8 million students, which are 11% of all students in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). In all, teachers need more intensive preparation to be effective for diverse learners in schools (Edwards, Carr & Siegel, 2006). For example, institutional theory, defined by Oplatka (2004) as "conformity to institutional rules and the focus here is on the organizations tendency to incorporate rationalized myth and societally agreed rules in its structure, thereby promoting survival, social legitimacy, and apparent success without increasing efficiency or technical performance," may be present in administrative decisions (p. 147). Consequently, Ricci (2004) purported that power has

shifted from the local level to central authority because of the mandate for accountability, creating a shift in resource dependency and diminishing participatory democracy. Power was examined institutionally.

Change in leadership practices could contribute to teacher and student growth. According to Leithwood et al. (2004), leadership is one of the primary school related factors, next to classroom instruction, that contributes to student learning. As Southworth (2005) noted, change in leadership is effective when the focus is on learning and teaching, because a socially just leader provides a clear vision for educators and promotes a positive effect on student success. Learning-centered leadership included visiting classrooms, sharing learning, and guiding conversations to examine data and work to set goals for learning improvements (Knapp, Copeland, Ford & Markholt, 2003). These changes could reflect a socially just view for leaders about teaching and learning.

The Voices of Teachers as an Influence on Decisions of Professional Development

The voices of teachers about decision making and professional development were studied in the literature. Perceptions of teachers were also noted. Trust as a factor in socially just decision making was analyzed as well. The subtopic of participation was a part of the review. An examination of teachers' voices created understanding of the meaningfulness of decision making processes.

The perceptions of teachers was examined and connected to the social justice theory. Teachers may need to be encouraged to share their voices and perceptions in choosing training in pedagogy that enhances instruction. One reason that professional development may not provide the training needed is that domain-specific professional development may reduce single-subject teachers' receptiveness to initiatives that combine teachers of different

subjects (Torff & Sessions, 2009). Also, Ball (1990) reported that teacher candidates want to give their students meaningful experiences, but they cannot do so because their subject matter awareness lacks concept knowledge and meaning. In contrast, the instructional practices that lend themselves to effective instruction are varied, research-based, and shift because of ongoing educational research (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Keeping teachers aware, knowledgeable, and feeling competent to teach with effective instructional strategies calls for an emphasis on professional development to enable teachers to become action researchers themselves as well as provide avenues for collaboration with their colleagues. In this way, teacher perception can influence leaders to support professional development that promotes growth.

Trust eliminates marginalization and gifts teachers with a sense of empowerment. As Foucault (1977) suggested, discourse is an apparatus of power. So, instead of the administrator making decisions about the professional development offerings, a faculty may elect to use growth strategies of trust such as self-assessment or observation (Ross & Bruce, 2006). As a result, collaborative effort develops as teachers and administrators look at teacher instruction and student achievement (Ginsburg & Murphy, 2002). Traditionally, on the elementary level, administrators have hired teachers who rate organizational skills, such as judgment and effective communication skills, higher than academic skills, such as subject knowledge or numeracy (Leckey & McGaugin, 1997). There is a connection between achievement scores and measures of teachers' content knowledge, such as undergraduate and graduate coursework in the content areas. In reality, the National Center of Education Statistics (2009) reported that eighth graders taught by teachers with undergraduate math majors scored nine points better than those whose teachers did not have a math degree. In

addition, some preservice teachers may not be prepared to teach in a diverse setting. As a result, teacher education programs should focus on developing a culturally responsive pedagogy to gain quality in performance (Barnes, 2006). Being responsive by exhibiting trust with teachers may help a leader develop meaningful professional development.

Another factor in engaging teachers to participate in and implement professional development is providing discourse in the perception of student needs. For example, Ladson-Billings (1994) noted that unrecognized racism may cause a teacher to hold negative beliefs about students of color. "Cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity can empower them to acknowledge, respect, validate, and exhibit compassion for the diversity of their students and engage in cross-cultural interactions that lead to comfortable inter-cultural relationships" (Brown, 2004, p. 132). By participating in dialogue, Shields (2004) encouraged educational leaders to acknowledge that our students have a wide range of common lived experiences. Acknowledging cultural diversity in the classroom enriches discussion and increases the quality of the educational process (Rowney & Taras, 2008). Participation in professional development may educate teachers in research-based strategies that would promote the teaching of concepts to diverse learners and promote meaning in their individual contexts. The theoretical framework examined the voices of teachers with the subtopics of perception, trust, and participation as important elements in decision making by leaders about professional development.

Reframing of Professional Development Decision Making

Reframing professional development with the social justice theory was examined in the literature. Care for teachers as a leadership practice was part of the review. Practices of collaboration were examined. Lastly, alternate structures of professional development that

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may examine social justice as important were noted. The reframing of professional development may lead to teachers perceiving professional development as meaningful.

The socially just concept of care may be important to teachers' perceptions of professional development. Administrators see themselves as facilitators in the professional development process rather than initiators (Pashiardis, Costa, Mendes & Ventura, 2005). Additionally, Nesbit's (1999) research noted that there is a rise in the investment of human resource development and vocational education. A result of collaborative dialogue would be an indication of the training that a staff may need to create organizational change. McGregor (1991) attested that participation and managerial skills can encourage people to express their creativity through voices in decision making which, in turn, would provide satisfaction to workers. Likewise, Guskey (2000) recommended creating support models of policy, openness, collegial support, and time as components that would promote change in organizational support. The component of care as a leadership practice may empower teachers to learn and grow.

Collaboration has been a professional development practice that may be significant for voices and perceptions of teachers. Nesbit (1999) indicated that concepts such as lifelong learning and learning organizations show a relationship between education and work. In such light, Ritt (2008) indicated the need for national awareness about adult learning and the importance of a highly educated workforce. So, the choices that administrators make about professional development should take the theories and practices of adult learning as a measurement of the quality of the offering. In Glickman's (1998) research, collaborative alternatives to training included peer coaching, study groups, and portfolios. The review of the literature detailed how collaboration may be a socially just practice for leaders.

Reframing of professional development can help a leader to note the contextual aspect of their own unique situation and make empowered decisions about professional development. Providing choice in learning is to sustain observation, communication, and collaboration which follow the constructivist principles related in leadership theory (Marcoux & Loertscher, 2009). With professional development opportunities related to cultural competencies, teachers may widen their confidence in pedagogical practices and content knowledge that promote equity (Garri & Rule, 2009). The most successful training may be a combination of job-embedded and organizational programming in which a leader must understand the workings of an organization to find ways to motivate and sustain student learning (Fullan, 2009). Reframing professional development with mindfulness about teacher perceptions of the meaning teachers find in their own context with care, collaboration, and alternate structures was examined in the review of the literature.

In sum, the theoretical framework included the topics of organizational behavior with subtopics of reform, achievement, and growth. Next, the framework examined leadership practices including democratic education, power, and change. Also, the voices of teachers were noted with perceptions, trust, and participation as subtopics. Lastly, reframing professional development was analyzed with the subtopics of care, collaboration, and alternate structures as factors for socially just leaders to acknowledge in their decision making practices.

Design and Methods Overview

The use of qualitative research was significant for this methodology because, during the data collection, I was observing, listening, relating, and interpreting (Berrios & Lucca, 2006). The rationale for using a case study approach was to establish themes and patterns for

the meaning of professional development in the mind of a teacher. The use of qualitative research was appropriate for this study because it was possible to generate representations of the phenomena that depended on my own judgment and skill (Mays & Pope, 1995). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), a phenomenological qualitative tradition with case study approach needs an accurate description and disciplined interpretation. A case study approach is also important to develop generalizations and present a picture for interpretation (Creswell, 2007). This study was a collective case study using eight representative cases to offer different perspectives. The narratives, focus group sessions, and individual interviews furthered the inquiry into the meanings of professional development for teachers. The narratives situated each individual's story of professional development and generated themes that came from that story (Creswell, 2007). According to Patton (2002), narratives are used to study organizations; in this study, the researcher collected stories from both narratives and the focus group that originated in the field of professional development in a Catholic diocese in the Midwest. The logic of replication was utilized so that procedures and interviews were repeated precisely for each case (Creswell, 2007). Replication is the use of verification to note the degree to which the investigation produces valid data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The data gathered from narratives, focus groups, and interviews were based on facts using real voices of people whose actions and reactions are described (Naumes & Naumes, 2006).

Setting, Participants, and Sampling

The site of the study was at eight elementary Kindergarten through eighth grade schools owned and supervised by a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The diocese has 26 grade schools. For this qualitative research, eight schools were studied. The schools were differentiated into two groups named School Set 1 and School Set 2. In School Set 1, the

schools had similarities in socio-economic status, academic achievement, and demographics and were named School A, B, C, and D. This collective group had an average of 51% of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch, had an average of lower than 47% proficiency on sixth grade reading composite scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), had an average of less than 41% proficiency on sixth grade math composite scores on the ITBS test, and had an average of over 52% of a diverse student population based on race and ethnicity. Alternately, School Set 2 schools, named School E, F, G, and H, had an average of 1.25% of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch, had an average of over 72% proficiency on the sixth grade reading composite scores of the ITBS, had an average of over 76% proficiency on sixth grade math composite scores of the ITBS, and had less than 7% of a diverse student population based on race and ethnicity. The population of teachers originated from these eight schools. The site was appropriate for the study because the researcher had access to participants. These participants were over 18 and had experienced professional development opportunities offered by the Catholic Midwestern diocese, through local school districts, through contracting agencies or through graduate level coursework.

The population consisted of eight teachers identified through criterion sampling, which helped me to describe central themes and facilitate comparisons (Creswell, 2007). The sample was derived from principals' databases of elementary teachers with over ten years of experience in the diocese and from teachers who had had global, diocesan, regional, and local school professional development experiences based on rich data gather from evaluations of diocesan professional development. Global professional development experiences were outside workshops, conferences, or seminars offered by entities outside of the diocesan, regional, or local offerings, such as offerings from the local public school

district. The diocese offered professional development, which included keynote speakers and sessions pertaining to curriculum and instructional design, and was formulated by a diocesan committee of principals with the goal of supporting the diocesan goals for national accreditation. Regional professional development consisted of outside speakers or internal professionals who centered on school-based goals and were formulated by local regional principals. Local school professional development experiences were site-based sessions generated by the principal or teachers. Additionally, as part of the criterion sampling, the teachers were not to be supervised by the researcher. The criterion sample of teachers included participation in a narrative account and participation in two focus groups for teachers differentiated between School Set 1 and School Set 2. After the narratives and focus groups were held, themes were expanded to create individual interviews. The narrative, focus group sessions, and individual interviews helped the researcher to find shared patterns and the significance of those patterns. Separating demographic indicators helped illustrate themes and comparisons as well. According to Huberman and Miles (2002), the goal of purposeful sampling was to understand variety within the phenomena and to test ideas. Within-case and cross-case analysis was instrumental in finding meaning about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Data Collection

The data collection procedures included text from the narrative, focus groups, and interviews with coding for frequency indicators of themes. Categorical aggregation occurred to establish patterns and generalizations (Creswell, 2007). Tables and figures were utilized to show visual representations of patterns. The data collection entailed field notes from interviews, documentation, and records of professional development.

Collecting data included the documentation of the unit of analysis of professional development and used documentation related to professional development in the diocese including agendas, professional development plans of each teacher, and evaluations of professional development sessions. The data collection included all narrative, focus group interview, and contextual information. After gathering this data, I created a case record. After condensing the raw data, I wrote the final study description. The separate data were analyzed for patterns or themes (Creswell, 2007). Within-case and cross-case analysis also occurred to find the essence of the meaning of professional development. A synthesis of the findings informed and answered the research questions in the study. The data analysis plan reflected a phenomenological tradition because the narrative, focus groups, and interview included open-ended questions that asked about the participants' experiences in terms of professional development and about what contexts or structures had influenced or affected the participants' experiences of professional development with a focus on the lens of social justice theory (Maxwell, 2005).

The participants were eight teachers from a Catholic diocese in the Midwest who were chosen to write a narrative questionnaire. Differentiated into School Set 1 or School Set 2, eight teachers participated in one of two 60-minute focus groups and one 60-minute interview about experiences of professional development. The narratives, focus group sessions, and individual interviews took place during the 2013-14 school year before, during, or after school hours. The focus group and interviews were audio taped for recording and documenting purposes.

Data Analysis Plan

After collection of the data, coding was used to decipher patterns and themes. Those themes and patterns were broken into data to rearrange them into categories of meaning. The research included a textural description of the experience of professional development and a structural description of the experience with a final composite description that presented the essence of the phenomenon as the definitive case study (Patton, 2002). Using a variable oriented strategy with cross-case analysis including pattern clarification was employed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The phenomenological analysis with a case study approach included within-case and cross-case analysis to find assertions about the interpretation of the meaning of the issue or the essence of the issue (Creswell, 2007). The meaning of professional development was gained from this final description (Creswell, 2007).

Factors Related to Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers must look at a variety of perspectives in order to ensure the validity of the research. Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001) documented criteria that need to be in place for validity to occur. These include credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity. Credibility is the accurate interpretation of the results. Authenticity is ensuring that different voices are heard. Criticality is the appraisal and analysis of all aspects of the research. Integrity means to create avenues to ensure that the researcher can remain self-critical (Whittemore et al., 2001). There are specific strategies to address validity in each tradition.

For a phenomenological tradition, I verified Polkinghorne's (1989) position that the research was well grounded and well supported. The standards that Polkinghorne (1989) suggested include the influence of the researcher, the accuracy of the transcriptions, an

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understanding of all conclusions, an accounting of connections of the experience, and a specification of structural descriptions. Creswell (2007) assessed phenomenology by ensuring an understanding of phenomenology, by studying a clear phenomenon, using procedures of data analysis, conveying the overall essence of the experience, and using reflexivity throughout the study.

To ensure that I was listening to the voices of teachers, a written narrative along with a focus group and interview were utilized for data collection. The criteria for ensuring validity in a narrative included the reliability of the participants, an analysis of the sources of bias, feedback from the participants upon re-reading the narrative during the interview, and the reporting of themes for broad analysis (Creswell, 2007). A focused narrative helped tie different cases together (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Clandinin and Connelly (1998) described narratives as a deep experience that must be negotiated between the reader and the participant. A narrative helped determine perceptions and meaningfulness for teachers.

The case study approach had important criteria for assessment. Summarizing, coding, and analyzing case study notes as well as revisiting the data for understanding was part of the study to ensure that unbiased responses were reflected (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Noting patterns for each case enhanced the rich description to ensure validity and reliability in the study.

The weakness in the study is that I studied subjects that were familiar to me. Because bias threatens the evaluation of the meaning of the phenomenon, detachment was used to eliminate it as much as possible (Huberman & Miles, 2002). In a qualitative study, "closeness does not make bias and loss of perspective inevitable; distance is no guarantee of objectivity" (Patton, 2002, p. 49). Creswell (2007) noted that validity is defined as the

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trustworthiness that a reader can be assured that the data is accurate and accountable. Reliability was gained by having the participants verify that the coding of the data was not biased (Creswell, 2007). Strategies to overcome the bias and to promote validity and reliability were implemented to make up for possible weaknesses in the study.

As a researcher, there was a critical appraisal of all aspects of the research. An ethical problem was a concern in terms of bias in the study about whether I ensured that the results were accurate in the interpretation of the outcome of the data. To act with integrity, I was self-reflective and self-critical. I attempted to show trustworthiness in reporting the rich data (Maxwell, 2005). Another ethical issue was the relationships that were established prior to the study between me and the subjects. According to Creswell (2007), I needed to be aware of the power imbalance that may be a factor in an administrator asking questions of teachers. As part of the criterion sampling, I did not supervise any of the participants and do not stand in a supervisory position over any of the teachers in this population. Also, reciprocity was in the forefront of my mind as to how an administrator can give the time and effort back to the educator for the interviews (Creswell, 2007).

I utilized constructivist criteria for seeking validity. A triangulation of data helped capture multiple perspectives for a deeper understanding of the cases studied (Patton, 2002). Triangulation was the display of multiple patterns and themes as found in the rich data collected during the interviews and focus groups (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Multiple sources of data supported triangulation, which in qualitative research aided in strengthening the study. Patton (2002) described triangulation in terms of data as using a variety of sources of data in a study. The use of triangulation through combined methods strengthened the study. Tests of validity and reliability were utilized in the study.

In order to ensure that high standards of ethics was part of the research data collection, I implemented the ethical issues checklist recommended by Patton (2002) which included explaining the purpose of the methods used, noting reciprocity for participation in the data collection, conducting a risk assessment for the participants, and ensuring confidentiality was honored. Consent forms were utilized to obtain permission for narratives, the focus group, and interviews to ensure that the research was not nor will not be used in an adverse way about the subjects. I also used the protocol of ethical review designated by the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Review Board or the SSIRB.

Summary

Chapter 1 included a description of the problem and the purpose of the study, the research questions, the theoretical framework, and a brief overview of the methodology. Chapter 2, the review of the literature, will include a detailed account of the research and theory relating to the four conceptual strands that support the theoretical framework. Chapter 3, the methodology, will provide a thorough description of the research design, the rationale for qualitative research, setting, and participants, sampling techniques, data collection sources, the data analysis plan, and limitations including validity, reliability, and ethical considerations of this study. Chapter 4, an analysis of the data, will show what the phenomenon meant to the participants from their own perspective. Chapter 5, conclusions and recommendations, will provide implications of the study of teacher perceptions of professional development and professional development decisions and recommend continuing research related to teacher perceptions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study involved an examination of concepts of the theoretical framework as introduced in Chapter 1. My personal connection to the research came from my experience both as a teacher and as an administrator especially as related to my experience of professional development. As a teacher, I spent many hours in professional development through workshops, seminars and graduate level coursework. The decisions that administrators made about my own attendance and my subsequent reflections about that attendance, either with other educators or with school leaders, were varied. In working with teachers as a leader, I had awareness that there are many ways to approach the continuing education of teachers. Specifically, that awareness included following policies or procedures derived by our diocesan leaders concerning professional development, recognizing what my own school needed with an academic and cultural focus, and acknowledging the opinions and insights of the teachers in my school context as well as giving opportunities for reflection about their own experiences of professional development. As noted in the review of the literature, because of various factors, leaders may disregard the use of social justice values as a priority in making decisions about professional development. This was addressed in this qualitative study, and the review was delimited to variables of decision making especially pertaining to teachers and leaders. By incorporating social justice as a lens, the review of literature provided insight to other administrators and teacher leaders about professional development decisions. Because the purpose of the study was to understand the perceptions of teachers about the decision making of leaders the review included the influence of organizational behavior, leadership practices, and the voices of teachers on these decisions

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and review methods of reframing professional development for teachers in regard to these decisions while looking through the lens of social justice. Upon deep reflection of the review of the research in regard to the purpose of the study, I asserted that in order to create meaning for teachers in a socially just manner, leaders should acknowledge the perceptions of teachers when making decisions about professional development.

The research questions presented in Chapter 1 included one question of significance that is addressed through the review of the literature: How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences? Moreover, the review addressed questions concerning the sustainability of student achievement through professional development decisions promoted by the organizational policies of the diocese. Additionally, issues of social justice regarding the viewpoints of teachers were examined. Lastly, reframing of professional development to reflect social justice in an attempt to sustain professional growth was addressed in the review of the literature. My research studied whether teachers perceive that these issues are being addressed in a meaningful manner.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the perception of professional development experiences as noted by elementary teachers in a Catholic school setting. The review of the literature revealed that in order for leaders to create meaning in professional development experiences, the power of social justice could be a factor for leaders and organizations. The influence of organizational behavior and leadership practices in regard to decision making about meaningful professional development was noted in the analysis of research. Equally important, voices and the reframing of professional development were examined in the review. Paying attention to the voices and perceptions of teachers could lead to a more socially just approach to reframing professional development.

Decision making regarding professional development by leaders deserved attention because of the present universal nature of the call in education for organizational reform. Each year, almost three million teachers participated in professional development to help them improve, transform, and respond to their own classroom contexts (Gimbel, Lopes & Greer, 2011; Johnston & Louveouzo, 2009). Despite these organizational demands, Sparks and Hirsh (2000) reported in their national study on professional development, that most school districts allocate only about one percent of their budget to professional development of their staff. Limited resources are a concern for leaders in making decisions about professional development. For instance, noting increasing enrollment demands in both public and Catholic schools, the National Center for Educational Statistics (2011) reported that teachers often do not receive release time, lack resources, and do not receive credit for their time spent in professional development. Additionally, Berg (2010) noted that almost half of the teachers he surveyed in a quantitative study did not think that professional development in their schools or districts was useful. Lucilio (2009) reported that the current workforce of teachers averages 14.5 years of teaching and remarks that their teaching preparation could not have prepared them for skills they need today. Because of the combination of the demands of organizational reform as well as limited funding resources, regard for the perceptions of teachers in decisions about professional development may not be acknowledged by leaders.

From a social justice viewpoint, teachers' perceptions could be included in the design and implementation of professional development. As demonstrated by Lucilio's (2009) study, teachers want to be asked what they need. However, teachers may prefer content-based professional development opportunities. In support, Simon and Black's (2011)

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quantitative study reported that 59% of teachers found professional development in content

areas to be useful, and 50% of teachers found other types of professional development to be

useful (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, Orphanos, 2009; Smith & Desimone,

2003). However, a replicated national survey indicated that only about half of professional

development learning experiences focus on content (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman &

Yoon, 2001; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Furthermore, commercialism in the school

improvement market has become a multi-million dollar business (Hargreaves, 2007; Rowan,

2001). For example, the formulation of textbooks, software, training guides, and the use of

educational consultants are designed by businesses to put profit before teacher development

(Hargreaves, 2007). By reflecting on the reality that organizational decision making may be

driven by business practices, leaders could gain awareness about factors that may discount

meaning and may help to promote the use of social justice values as a priority by attending to

the perceptions of teachers about the objectives of the professional development offerings.

The scholarly significance of the research was to promote understanding for

university level advisors and educators, district leaders, and school leaders about

organizational and administrative support for leaders in their professional development

decisions related to the perceptions of teachers. Certainly, organizational support is the

primary reason that professional training can be effective (Joo, Lim & Park, 2011). However,

teacher contexts are often in conflict with top-down initiatives, and as a result, teachers may

experience punitive measures if the choice is not to comply with standardized rules (Kesson

& Henderson, 2010). In a socially just manner, administrative decisions pertaining to

professional development could recognize the cultural context of a school, acknowledge

teachers' needs, and avoid trends that ignore the challenge of teaching in a democratic

manner (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). Administrators could benefit from this study by gaining additional understanding of the meaning and perceptions of how their decisions about professional development affect teacher and student growth.

In this light, the social justice theory of leadership as it pertains to teachers' perceptions regarding decision making by administrators was discussed in the review of literature. Empirical research was utilized to formulate indications of organizational behavior, leadership practices, teacher voices, and perceptions and reframing efforts related to professional development. Textbooks and professional journals were perused to seek information about the subjects of the theoretical framework. Keyword searches in EBSCO, ERIC, and JSTOR publication databases were performed. In all, 73 books were read carefully and 166 articles were examined. Keywords in the search included "professional development," "leadership," "teacher perceptions," and "reframing." As a result, sufficient empirical research was obtained for the review. The review of the literature, with the support of this empirical research, was developed as a theoretical framework in four sections: organizational behavior, leadership practices, teachers' voices, and reframing professional development. Each of these topics utilized social justice theory as a lens in reviewing the literature pertaining to decisions made about professional development.

A leader typically helps to create knowledge in an organization through decision making practices. According to Meister (2010), administrators can facilitate change in schools by engaging faculty in discussions regarding innovations and goals. Utilizing the social justice theory in combination with analyzing teacher learning and development, the research examined how leaders can use individual and organizational justice to help teachers guide students to achieve (Beachum, 2008). In a replicated survey study, teachers indicated

that the three core features of professional development, which have a positive impact in their own contexts, were changes in content knowledge, active learning, and coherence with research-based learning activities (Garet et al., 2001; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). But teachers are evaluated according to students' progress, and excellent teachers are perceived as those whose students make the greatest gains (Hoerr, 2011). Guskey (2009) suggested that administrators should start making professional development decisions, not by making decisions in terms of accountability but by creating avenues for serious discussion about the specific goals of the activity, reflections on how achievement will be attained through these goals, and how that evidence will be gathered in order to critically evaluate the training. Through the use of practices of social justice, a leader may help advance both teacher and student growth.

The review of the literature was delimited to the phenomenon of professional development and centered on variables that pertain to decision making for teachers and leaders, namely, organizational behavior, leadership practices, the voices of teachers, and reframing of professional development. The definition of professional development, as noted in scholarly literature and as utilized in this study, was to build content knowledge and capacity for skills that improve student performance (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). As defined, successful professional development was both purposeful and sustainable (Hargreaves, 2007). With this definition in mind, the review of the literature began with an analysis of social justice theory as related to the purpose and meaning of teacher development and learning. The social justice theory mirrored social justice education in which the call for social justice is a call to prepare teachers for diversity in their workplace, with their students, and with their peers (Sales, Traver & Garcia, 2011). Pertaining to

professional development decisions, embracing this theory, social justice leaders set aside traditional bureaucratic thinking that limits the concept of leadership, and instead look to formulating organizations that uphold empowerment and equity (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). However, the review of the literature differentiated this call and asked whether leaders are cognizant of teachers' perceptions and the meaningfulness of professional development offerings, especially how well educators are prepared for teaching in the contexts of their districts and schools.

There were four important variables in the theoretical framework for leaders in the decision making process regarding professional development. As a topic in the review of the literature, the first variable was organizational behavior. Although hierarchical structures as well as individuals in an organization can promote the dominance of power, struggles for power can be converted to attempts to share power in a socially just mindset (Foucault, 1977). Socially just organizational behavior required a mindfulness in institutions that enabled stakeholders to be fully informed through the use of critical analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies, the awareness of the welfare of others and the common good, and the concern for the dignity and rights of all people (Moos, 2008). Next, the principles of leadership practices that pertain to teachers experiencing professional development were emphasized in the review included inclusiveness in policy making, equal availability of understanding, and universal access of professional development (Laguardia & Pearl, 2009). Also, the concept of voices, as a variable in the study, was defined as assurance that stakeholders' interests are being addressed through transformative professional development that changes the social and historical context of an organization by becoming dialogic in nature (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Jean-Marie, Normore & Brooks, 2009). As

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demonstrated by the research, teachers reported that learning occurred when they felt

supported through creative and reflective frameworks of professional development (Watson

& Manning, 2008). Lastly, the variable of reframing professional development was defined

as reworking decision making to help to sustain teacher growth. Each of these variables in

the review of the literature helped to examine the perceptions of teachers for decisions of

professional development made by leaders.

       The phenomenon of professional development has a history in scholarly research. The

goal of teacher transformation, in which professional development is deemed long-term,

consistent, in-depth, and provides collegiality, was initially explored in Levine's (1989)

work. As a connection to Dewey's (1937) work, Glickman (1998) argued that professional

development decisions should be democratically made with leadership formulating decisions

based on equality, liberty, and responsiveness to the needs of teachers. In Little's (1993)

treatise on educational reform, he remarked that professional development should have the

capacity to help teachers to formulate, implement, and critique reforms. However, Little

(1993) also reported that professional development is often based on political agendas that

are weak in substance. Other factors addressed in a classic study of professional development

were decisions that confront inequity including socially generated constraints, political

influence, social class distinctions, and the changing nature of the classroom workplace

(Guskey & Huberman, 1995). In this light, the amount of money that is spent on professional

development may be wasted on superficial or fragmented workshops that may not connect

with curriculum and learning (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Gabriel, 2011). In Speck's (1996)

research on best practices, he suggested that administrators should examine professional

development as a process that is diverse and that administrators should promote educator

involvement. According to Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe's (1996) study, professional development could be a lifelong learning process oriented throughout a teacher's career. These classic and landmark studies support analyzing professional development within the scope of social justice theory, because each researcher speaks to some form of teacher involvement when making choices about professional development.

Other more recent scholarly studies included compelling research about the significance of professional development about both teacher and student growth. In support, Kedro and Short's (2004) study of long-term professional development found that the longer the model is in place, the more teachers responded that they had received adequate training. Other studies contended that professional development could be viewed as lifelong learning which enhances the social and democratic participation of humanity in the workforce (Basharat, Iqbal & Bibi, 2011; Fenwick, 2004). Noting the importance of professional development in achievement, Sparks and Hirsh (2000) reported that two-thirds of teachers used three or more activities introduced in professional development compared with a third who did not receive professional development. The Urban Institute (Clewell et al., 2004) suggested that professional development should be linked to curriculum knowledge and to how students learn. Accordingly, competencies such as content knowledge influenced practice and were enhanced by professional development (Kaslow, 2004; Stoltenberg, 2005). Instead of providing training in techniques or classroom management for teachers, administrators look to features of professional development that promoted academic growth such as focusing on content, creating coherence, enacting sustainability, and responding to contextual factors (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010; Schlechty, 2002). According to a study by Williams, Tabernik and Krivak (2009), targeted professional development promotes

improvement gains in achievement as measured by student performance. Opposite of the focus on reform and accountability, recent research revealed that the focus of professional development should be to respond to diversity by creating professional development opportunities that speak to the need for inclusive district, school, and classroom practices (Kose & Lim, 2010). However, Fauske and Raybould (2005) posited that organizational structures in schools do not provide opportunities for educators to interact and share understanding. In support of these findings, Marshall and Oliva (2010) agreed that some policies and decisions about professional development do not utilize social justice methods in the development of teachers. Lindstrom and Speck (2004), in their landmark study, created a rubric for high quality professional development that included both focus on content knowledge and focus on collaboration and sharing. In response to these studies, professional development could be seen as having impact for teacher and student growth when socially just methods of involvement are embraced by leaders.

Professional development, as a general subject area, had sufficient resources to inform the review. Additionally, the theory of social justice was the subject of over 30 recent articles or books. There was abundant research on leadership and leadership theories, including over 50 combined resources of books and article. Also, the theoretical framework for organizational behavior allocated many resources for utilization in the study. Alternatives to reframing professional development also contained many recent resources helping to inform the research.

However, the themes of teacher perception and leadership practices of social justice as related to teachers had fewer entries and encouraged the need for the study. While there were sufficient entries for professional development, perceptions or research involving

teachers beyond pre-teaching or first year teaching were also lacking. For instance, there were only 11 studies in the examination of the overall literature that gave an indication of teacher perception, and these studies were only within the spectrum of mathematic or science content teaching or content professional development. Indeed, only one article addressed the teacher perception of administrative decision making, and this literature was in the context of teacher growth. Because the literature exhibits gaps in these areas, the need for this study was apparent, was warranted, and was necessary for both administrators and educators.

With these research results in mind, the procedures used for collecting and analyzing data included perusing each book or article for ideas that supported the theoretical framework. The goal of the literature review was to be substantive and thorough (Bootes & Belle, 2005). In addition, the notes led to a basis for the conceptual schema, which included the factors that contribute to the phenomenon. In development of the review, the researcher followed a format of noting the most important arguments and counter arguments, down to the least important arguments and counter arguments (Foss, 2002). So as a rule, definitions of terms were depicted in the notes, the notes were either taken directly or summarized, and notes included source information. As a result, the procurement of notes helped to distinguish gaps in the literature.

The paper was organized through the lens of social justice as it pertains to organizational behavior, leadership practices, voices, and reframing of professional development. Primarily, the theoretical framework contained a construct which was an examination of organizational behavior as related to social justice theory including the variables of the influence of organizational behavior, reform, growth, and achievement on policies and procedures that lead to decision making about professional development. Next,

as a construct of the theoretical framework, there was a link between the theory of social justice to leadership, including an examination of variables of leadership practices, democratic education, power, and change. Also, another construct of the theoretical framework was the voices of teachers with subtopics that included contexts, trust, and participation which played a key role because of the lack of abundant research in the analysis of the literature. Lastly, the framework included literature supporting the reframing of professional development using subtopics of care, collaboration, and alternative structures that have the potential to assist teachers in sharing their voices in the decision making process. The organization of the theoretical framework was aligned and complemented with an analysis of social justice theory.

To begin with, the first theoretical construct in the framework addressed organizational decision making, especially in regard to professional development, which had several elements that pertain to both leaders and teachers. For instance, organizational behavior was examined especially by outside influences such as market forces or commercial interests which may play into decision making by an organization. By implementing school reform, leaders could respond to hierarchical structures and institutional goals when planning professional development. In addition, teacher growth was examined because professional roles are subject to change, there is a call to reform, and there are bureaucratic conditions in place because of the structure organizational decision making. This framework topic also addressed the relationship between organizational decision making and student achievement. Above all, the research examined whether teachers describe these organizational professional development policies and practices as meaningful and just experiences.

The next step in the theoretical framework, an analysis of leadership practices, examined research that references the critical question of how teachers perceive leadership decisions about professional development. Beginning with the variable of the influence of leadership practices, the review explored components of leadership. Next, democratic education was examined in terms of equitable practices that are addressed in the research. Then, power was analyzed as a construct for leaders to have awareness of teachers and references relational perceptions between leaders and teachers as examined in the context of social justice. Likewise, change was addressed through the moral, ethical, and relational lenses of social justice that leads to a reframing of professional development.

Equally important in the theoretical framework was the perception of teachers of professional development, which included noting whether the professional development encounters teachers have experienced have led to sustained success. Hearing the voices of teachers can empower administrators to know whether their decisions are promoting transformative change. In essence, engaging and empowering teachers' voices may lead to sustained participation in professional development. The variables of trust and participation were also examined in the literature as components that leaders may address when formulating decisions about professional development.

Lastly, the research included examples of reframing professional development and reframing decisions made by administrators pertaining to professional development. In the final analysis, reframing decision making may help to sustain collaboration and teacher growth in a caring manner. Reframing included collaboration or other alternative structures of involvement as a framework for professional development. If the aspiration of teachers

and leaders is to sustain social justice through professional development decisions, these experiences should reflect meaning and sustainability for teachers.

Therefore, I argued that in order to create meaning for teachers in a socially just manner, leaders should note the perceptions of teachers when making decisions about professional development. This topic was important to me as an educator and a leader because I am connected to teaching and learning through decision making that influences both students and teachers, especially through professional development. Administrators on all levels, including university leaders and educators, district administrators, and school principals, could benefit from the research pertaining to social justice and decisions made about professional development. In particular, addressing the variables of organizational behavior, leadership, voices, and reframing with a social justice lens in this study advanced greater insight into the decision making process about professional development.

The paper was organized with an analysis of the social justice theory, followed by an examination of the research pertaining to organizational behavior, leadership, the voices of teachers, and reframing of professional development. Each of these topics was supported by research, including variables of reform, growth, achievement, democracy, power, change, perception, and care in a perspective of social justice as it pertains to decisions made by leaders of professional development. The organization of the review of the literature helped sustain the argument that socially just leaders should examine the meaning of professional development, especially about teacher and student growth.

Social Justice Theory

The values of social justice could be acknowledge by leaders as a priority in creating meaning for teachers in regard to professional development. In analyzing professional

development decisions made by administrators of the perceptions of teachers, the theory of social justice was utilized. For this study, social justice theory was defined accommodating each individual's diverse needs and understanding the context of that person's situation (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). Another factor included in the study was the meaning and perceptions of teachers in regard to professional development. So, in essence, the social justice theory included the examination of needs and contexts of teachers as related to decisions made by administrators about professional development.

The examination of social justice theory did not include social justice education nor professional development about social justice education in which teachers were trained in creating lessons centered on social justice in their classroom setting, nor did it address the particular needs of students. Rather, the theoretical framework pertaining to the meaning and perceptions of teachers was described in four parts, including organizational administrative decision making behaviors, social justice leadership practices, the acknowledgment of voices, and reframing professional development based on these factors. Additionally, subtopics included an awareness of the influences of reform, democratic education, teacher and student growth, as well as perception and caring. The subtopics of each framework were social justice factors that can assist administrators in understanding the need for the use of social justice theory in reframing educational decision making. The review of the literature of social justice theory was related to decisions about professional development, especially in regard to teacher and student growth.

The predominant methodologies of the empirical research for this theoretical construct were qualitative essays and quantitative studies analyzing survey data derived from

administrators or teachers, primarily regarding professional development. The assertion in this study was that leaders may disregard, because of various factors, the use of social justice values as a priority in making decisions about professional development. To counter this argument, in order to create meaning for teachers in a socially just manner, leaders could examine the perceptions of teachers when making decisions about professional development. For instance, the research indicated that there may be alternatives in decisions regarding professional development that may promote growth. In the review of the literature, the perceptions and meaningfulness for teachers about professional development offerings should be considered by administrators for social justice theoretical contexts.

The social justice theory was directly related to the theoretical framework in the review of the literature. First, a discussion of organizational behavior as related to social justice was examined. Applebaum (2009) suggested that, to work toward a more socially just decision making process about professional development, an individual should recognize the role of the system and the role of their own place in the system. Schools are called to step away from the use of power as status quo and to "challenge the prerogatives of social class and the workings of the free market" (Finn, 2009, p. 168). Often, utilizing social justice leadership as an important part of leader and teacher relationships shifts the priorities to discussion and reflection (Flint, Zisook & Fisher, 2011). This is preferable to teachers passively receiving information from experts who introduce, in a one-time session, district policy initiatives that may shift over time and which they want teachers to implement in their classrooms. The societal contract of current educational policy which include high stakes testing, accountability, and corporate market forces involved in education require conformity instead of ethical, socially just practices (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Wright, 2009). As

stated in the Declaration on Christian Education, Flannery (1997) determined that "there must be no monopoly of schools which would be prejudicial to the natural rights of the human person and would militate against the progress and extension of education, and the peaceful coexistence of citizens" (p. 731). A Catholic school as an institutional organization uses policies contained in the Code of Canon Law from the Canon Law Society of America (1983), which states that all people have a right to education, all parents have an obligation to educate their family, and all schools should work for the good of all children. The right of education is not just included in the laws of education but included the "whole complex of apparatuses, institutions, and regulations responsible for their applications" (Foucault, 1977, p. 95). As indicated in social justice research, organizational behavior, including acknowledging rights and the role of institutional policies, should be a factor for leaders in decision making.

On another note, the social justice theory examines leadership as a construct to be analyzed and examined particularly in the relationship to teachers and administrators in the practice of decision making process. As noted by Foucault (1977), "power relations are unequal and relatively stable relations of forces, it's clear that this implies an above and below, a difference of potentials" (p. 201). Social justice should be a reflection for leaders because no one stands outside of the relationship of power (Applebaum, 2009; Foucault, 1977). As an example, meaningful and democratic participation in organizations could include who designs the professional development, how teachers take control of their own learning, defined as "individually guided staff development," and how teachers work together in school contexts (Dunaway et al., 2010; Randi & Zeichner, 2004; Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989, p. 421). Furthermore, leaders could be aware of forms of oppression

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in leadership decisions and develop awareness and intention to be committed advocates for educational change and ensure that oppression is not built into policies or procedures (Hytten & Bettez, 2011; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). In support, Sergiovanni, Kelleher, McCarthy, and Fowler (2009) contended that a leader must regard both workplace contexts, such as workload, supervision, and autonomy, and psychological contexts, such as meaning of work, stress, and opportunities to learn, in decision making about professional development. Additionally, Watson and Manning (2008) stated that leaders need to note contextual elements at the most elementary level in order to make decisions about professional development. These contexts include the physical setting, even looking at class size, school resources such as paper and equipment, and understanding the social setting of parent influence and the background of learners (Watson & Manning, 2008). While some studies have offered critical questions about selecting professional development including how educators can use deep content knowledge to support their own contextual environments, little research has identified specific program elements that should be included in leadership for social justice training including modifying professional development to include voices, reinforcement of knowledge and skills, peer observations, and other forms of application and self-reflection that may help initiate sustainable change (Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; Hirsh & Hord, 2010). In this light, social justice theory of leadership has to emerge from relationships as well as include critique and reflection (Bogotch, 2008). Therefore, relationships of power between administrators and teachers should be factors in the decision making process.

Leaders could also reflect on teachers' voices for decisions regarding professional development. As noted in qualitative studies, leaders should reflect on building human

capital and the voices of teachers (Fenwick, 2004; Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008). Social capital promoted reciprocity, partnerships, and trust (Coleman, 1988; Cowan & Arsenault, 2008; Putnam, 2000). As acknowledged in the Code of Canon Law, a teacher should be outstanding in their correct teaching and moral responsibility, which is an expectation, and furthermore, administrators and teachers should be the caretakers of quality (Canon Law Society of America, 1983). However, there are many forms of explicit and implicit oppression in which teachers must subvert the domination paradigm and act as an advocate for change (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). As an example, Otunga (2009) proposed leadership preparation practices which emphasize social justice approaches to training that may help teachers to have voices as an advocate. Furthermore, in a school community, giving capacity for reflection and examination through voices can lead to personal and professional discourses about power structures, mind-sets, and positions that enable others to advocate for the disenfranchised or marginalized (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009; Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Hardy (2009) recommended the priority of establishing higher levels of learning for all students, improving teaching and professional learning supported by better school and system management, and creating new designs for schools and systems to deliver content as essential to fair and equitable education. Research supported that 77% of Virginia principals have a strong desire for professional development, ensuring that teachers are trained in research based curriculum (Keith, 2011). Teachers want to learn through offerings of professional development. Consequently, useful professional development must seek to help teachers develop beliefs that will be consistent with effective teaching practices and positive student outcomes (Downey & Cobbs, 2007). Likewise, the relationship to student learning in professional development should be primary to professional development participants (Lee, 2010).

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Acknowledging the voices of teachers may be a socially just form of leadership that promotes more meaning in professional development, thus supporting teacher growth.

In responding to the needs of teachers to promote student growth, another avenue for leaders to consider may be reframing professional development. In arguing for the assertion, the social justice theory lens reflected how educators create supportive environments and how engagement supports the goals of educators (Hirsh & Hord, 2010). "Real community is based upon reciprocity of emotions and relations between individuals sharing a common vision of the possibilities and potentialities of men" (hooks, 2009, p. 85). The commonality among leaders and teachers to promote student growth could offset struggles of power. Social justice theory looked to diminishing the reproduction of oppression (Applebaum, 2009). Using the theory of social justice, which is a theory that is grounded in mutual dependence, reciprocity of accountability, capacity, and centrality of instructional practice, a leader can learn and grow with the students, faculty, and staff along with stakeholders that are connected to the school (Copeland, 2003; Marshall & Oliva, 2010). For example, the definition of social justice theory includes three characteristics that apply to educational leadership for social justice: "a consciousness of the broader social, cultural, and political contexts of school;… a commitment to the more genuine enactment of democratic principles in schools; and a moral obligation to articulate a counter hegemonic vision or narrative of hope regarding education" (Marshall & Oliva, 2010, p. 23). In this regard, Meister (2010) promoted that professional development should have a structure and specific focus, primarily teacher and student growth. Additionally, part of that focus should be about sustaining a community of care with regard to others (hooks, 2009). In this light, educational leaders should become social justice leaders instead of repeating behaviors that contribute to

hegemony or injustice (Brooks, 2008). As a result, hopefulness can help build community, relationships, and safe, inclusive environments (hooks, 2009). A response to this hopefulness in other studies included liberation education in which institutional leaders are committed to social justice through the empowerment of learners by engaging in critical dialogue which may include new organizational models that challenge oppression (Huerta, 2009; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). The review of research examined other alternative structures of professional development for the social justice theory.

In sum, Cooper (2009) called on educational institutions to look for leaders who work to provide powerful educational opportunities for teacher and student growth.

> By limiting the biodiversity of ideas in schools, the less chance we have of critically challenging the status quo, and thinking of creative alternatives to the injustices that need to be challenged within our society. We must fight for the biodiversity of learning and eliminate a test-driven, monoculture training environment. (Ricci, 2004, p. 359)

On this note, Beachum (2008) indicated that social justice regards the individuality and differences among communities and strives to find commonalities that will unite people. Accordingly, leadership decisions made with social justice theory, such as listening, reflection, and action, can empower committed educators (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Freire (1970) reiterated this theme by speaking to a sense of committed involvement teachers could attain through reflection and action, discovering that they themselves can be creators of leadership. Effective districts promoted and sustained relationships between administration and the professional community by providing resources and engaging teachers in a collaborative climate (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010; Thompson, Sykes & Skrla, 2008; Wright, 2009). Relationship building and collective responsibility created a shift in professional development decisions. For professional development to be truly transformative,

organizations should support these alternative academic structures (Smith, 2009). So, utilizing social justice theory, especially in regard to decisions formulated about professional development, can lead to critical reflection about teaching and learning.

Organizational Behavior as an Influence on Decisions of Professional Development

Schools and districts are parties that belong to organizational structures and rely on directives from other institutions such as state or federal entities, as well as, in the case of Catholic education, the Catholic hierarchy. Each organization was designed as a system and has a culture of knowledge and codification for its own institution (Lynch & Worden, 2010). According to Lynch and Worden (2010), organizations are complex and should utilize feedback and metrics to link and align their organizational power structures. Arguably, organizations often depend for their survival on conforming to institutionalized rules (Oplatka, 2004). In education, the ideology of organizations must center on the conditions of truth (Foucault, 1977) because "truth isn't outside power" (Applebaum, 2009, p. 390). The power of leadership in organizational behavior includes the "regime of truth," which are the types of narratives in which organizations accept as true the mechanisms and status of those who purport to speak the truth (Foucault, 1977). Thus, administrators must be careful to understand that, often in organizations, ideology is opposed to knowledge and often involves false beliefs that are seemingly true and support those who are in power (Applebaum, 2009). It was important to examine and understand the power of organizational behavior in regards to decisions leaders make about professional development, especially about the social justice theory. The topic of organizational behavior was examined in four parts, including the

influence of organizational behavior, reform, growth, and achievement in reframing decisions about professional development.

The Influence of Organizational Behavior on Decisions of Professional Development

The research detailing organizational behavior emphasized the influence of decision making by educational leaders in reference to changing or reforming institutional culture of professional development. In examining human organizations, the understanding of teachers' psychological states including motivation, extent of collaboration, and investment in decision making, combined with structures of power, politics, and bureaucracy all played into the organizational culture of an institution (Fauske & Raybould, 2005; Geijsel, Sleegers, Stoel & Kruger, 2009). An administrator with social justice theory in mind could work to create an organizational capacity that is dialogic in nature, promotes critical reflection, and sustains an awareness of the politics of change (Barnett, 2011; Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000). Decisions regarding reform call for change in an educational institution. There should be a fundamental change in how institutions offer professional development to impose new purposes and acknowledge perceptions of how teachers perceive professional development decisions (Karmon, 2007; Wood, 2007). Ideally, one objective of professional development was to view teachers as change agents rather than banking objects who receive knowledge (Freire, 1970; Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2010). Evaluating organizational behavior may benefit administrators in creating avenues for change in the decision making process, especially in professional development.

Organizational behavior was a factor in making decisions about professional development because of policies and procedures that are mandated by institutional rules. As administrators, the characteristics of justice for individuals, institutions, and organizations

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can be enacted conceptually by recognizing social justice theory and concretely by making decisions with this theory in mind (Bogotch, 2008). Organizational behavior was defined in this study as the decisions made or the actions of stakeholders as part of institutional practice or organizational structure. A leader knows the values of an organization and what an organization should achieve; a transformative leader can motivate with a vision for social justice (Kurland, Peretz & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2010). Notably, organizational behavior does not address organizational climate, conflicts in organizations, or motivation of persons in an organization. The review of the literature addressed aspects of organizational behavior that pertain to professional development.

Leaders could not the influence of organizational behavior as a component of decision making about professional development. In countering the influence of power and reform in organizational institutions, administrators must challenge oppressive relationships that are found in traditional forms of education (Freire, 1970; Stevenson, 2010). As options against the status quo in educational organizations, "bottom up systems, whether definable as formal or informal organizations, serve as counter balances to, rather than alternatives of, power exercised from the top-down" (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990, p. 6). Organizational power gains strength at the level of desire and knowledge (Foucault, 1977). An educational leader can focus on power that motivates and promotes skills for teachers in the classroom. To support learning, schools should be structured to encourage intellectual stimulation that fosters knowledge (York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere & Montie, 2006). Changing working conditions was common in successful organizational change and helped to promote positive culture (Fullan, 2007). A caring leader who concentrates on socially just principles of decision making may change oppression with a sense of caring. In like-mindedness, Kolb,

Rubin and Osland (1991) posited that liberation of the oppressed possesses a "humanizing life-affirming" reality where organizational control of allocations is brought to light (p. 146). Freire (1970) stated that protesting oppression is an act of love that causes engagement and opens communication. However, Gandhi and King's methodology of countering oppression shifted the hegemonic nature where whites interpret objections to the norm as an assault on their own way of life and fear a change in power relationships (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009; Leonardo, 2004). This shift in organizational institutions and in the behavior of all stakeholders involved was counter to hegemony, in which power helps to direct decisions. In an analysis of the research in relation to the analysis of power, Heichberger (1975) suggested that the principal is the force behind student learning and success in the learning environment, because principals can change school culture by creating dialogue and relationships with the staff that will promote discussions about positive change. "Much of the success of the school leader in building high-performance organizations depends on how well these leaders interact with the larger social and organizational context in which they find themselves" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 20). Being aware of the context of an institution, and being able to acknowledge and reflect on their own influence of power, an educational leader can more fully support democratic education and growth.

An argument against the assertion that leaders should examine the perception of teachers was the notion that policies and procedures may drive organizational decision making. Certainly, organizational policies about professional development are often legislated or mandated through federal and state government systems (Kaplan & Leckie, 2009). Unfortunately, legislation may cause standardization and homogenization, which may be grounded in "authoritarian logic" (Kesson & Henderson, 2010, p. 215). A reason behind

the institutional hierarchical model's failure to promote educational achievement may be because "practitioners are not given the reason behind new policies or linkages to existing practices" (Collinson et al., 2009, p. 7). The legislative understanding of education may not come from scholarship about teacher and student growth. Rather, policies may be implemented because of business influences. Truly, both neoconservatives and neoliberals emphasize corporate culture and deemphasized democracy (Carr, 2008; Giroux, 1997; Stevenson, 2010). Unfortunately, the resource dependency on central authority shifted power from the school context to the central authority, which in turn mandated what was taught in the classroom (Ricci, 2004). In the research about this argument, studies noted that hierarchical power structures maintained dependency and ideology of central authority as well as promoted the language of accountability and reform (Ricci, 2004). The argument that stakeholders may have a say in decision making would offset this ideology of institutional authority. "Since the right to innovate represents a potent source of power in the organization and since the monistic formulation demands that power be concentrated in super ordinate roles, innovation from below is difficult to achieve in an organization" (Carver & Sergiovanni, 1969, p. 46). In support, Collinson et al.'s (2009) study reported that top-down existing structures tend to create isolation rather than promote innovative thinking. Historically, because of mandated policies, institutions hired individual consultants who focused on market forces, their own expertise, and quick solutions for making gains on state-based assessments (Bradburn, 2004; Little, 1993). As a consequence, Huerta (2009) mentioned that market forces have also led to market-based reforms that promote school choice such as private or charter schools. As a result, parents may evaluate schools based on the impression they have of their school, which may result in rationalized myths that are

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incorporated into the school structure (Oplatka, 2004). Standardization of mandated policies may be a reason that leaders do not honor the perceptions of teachers.

On the other hand, policies and mandates may need to be reformulated to be understanding of teacher contexts. A socially just leader may need to reconsider the organizational mandates when formulating decisions regarding professional development. On deeper reflection, Copeland (2003) purported that the hierarchical models of leadership have failed to be effective in promoting educational improvements in America. As supported by Giroux (1997), social justice in school reform may be missing when accountability is at the forefront of decision making. Currently, the top-down approach can be criticized because mandates may ignore teachers' experience and voices (Meister, 2010). "The expertise that teachers bring is no less important than that provided by experts" (Stigler & Thompson, 2009, p. 449). Leaders may want to promote understanding of teacher context in decision making. Addressing the argument for decisions made about the social justice point of view, organizational commitment reflected on an individual's identification with and involvement with an organization (Hulpia et al., 2010). Other factors to note in decision making would be a belief in the organizational goals, a willingness to work on behalf of the organization, and the desire to remain in the organization (Hulpia et al., 2010). In Lynch and Worden's (2010) study, three organizations measured success by the organizations' ability to deliver service rather than on individual ability to do so, which is opposite from the reform trend in education of holding teachers individually accountable for student achievement. With this in mind, the opportunity for teachers' input can demand self-governance and commitment to an organization (Moos, 2008). While organizational goals are important in institutions, a teacher's context in their school setting and involvement in their institution should be valued.

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Leaders may disregard the perceptions of teachers because the market may drive decisions about professional development without regard to teacher opinion. Although stakeholders' opinion was a commonality in other businesses, research purported that organizations may keep outsiders blind to what actually happens in schools (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009). In response to this claim, Foucault (1977) spoke to the apparatus of economic managements and the disregard of the apparatus of the population. An example of this institutional economic management is the current standards movement of NCLB, in which organizations practice managerialism over leadership (Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Karpinski, 2006). A leader may be more responsive to institutional policy or the letter of the law rather than listening to teachers' perceptions about professional development in the spirit of the law. In retrospect, as found in research, education mirrored labor markets, who also have dealt with discrimination, exclusion, and power in terms of access to jobs and resources (Kantor, 1999). Organizations contend with federal and state funding competition as well as compete for resources and quality teachers. Regardless, the idea that instruction was a product does not fit with the democratic values and beliefs supported by the historical origin of United States education (Williams van Rooij, 2011). In response to this market ideology, Cary (2004) indicated that institutional attitude and theory promotes the corporate masculine notion of professional development. Furthermore, the corporate mentality promoted relationships between commercial interests that may cause a compromise in academic freedom (Mintz, Savage & Carter, 2010). As an example, there was often little or no oversight to the quality of consultant, business led curriculum as product professional development (Blodget, 2011). The professional development as a product of consumerism erased stakeholder opinion from the decision making process. The

meaningfulness of professional development for teachers may be ignored because of decision making centered on economic or market forces.

Changes in institutional policy or mandates about professional development may need to happen in order to promote teacher growth. According to Applebaum (2009), every approach to education exists within a post modernistic framework of discourse and history. However, Moos (2008) posited that modernization mixes the tight and loose workings of an educational system into a negotiable discourse of learning. Knowing when to tighten reins and when to modify management is a skill that leaders can utilize in decision making. Notably, effective leadership promotes diversity, equity, and addresses market driven inequities by creating systemic change (Bogotch, 2008; Fullan, 2007; Glickman, 1998). Change in institutional norms regarding teacher performance would warrant a change in the regime of power at the top of federal, state, district, and school systems (Foucault, 1977; Little, 1993). For instance, being open to teacher input in professional development would be a significant change in organizational governance (Jacobson, 2011). Providing teachers with knowledge about norms and policies opened the door to discussion about the usefulness of such mandates in individual classroom settings. Chiefly, the postmodernism movement challenged the breakdown in democratic education because it embraced the voices and struggle of diversity, otherness, and differences in the contextual situations of teachers (Giroux, 1997). So, one goal of policy making in an organization should be the development of enlightened policies along with the intelligent distribution of resources (Robinson, 2003). Stakeholders can provide important communication about policy. Changes in the norms of an institution can both promote democratic education and create more successful teacher and student growth.

Arguably, teachers may not feel a sense of power in effecting change in institutions. As noted in Carver and Sergiovanni's (1969) study, teachers' feelings of power to influence institutional policies are affected by teacher initiative and the organizational structure of the district or local school system. It would be up to the organizational administration to offer teachers that power. Inequitable choices made in the organization about roles and responsibilities do not always support or help to develop effective professional development decisions (Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Pedder & Opfer, 2010). Furthermore, institutions may make decisions based on market-based formulated professional development. As an example, Little's (1993) work detailed training or packaged learning systems and speaks to organizational hierarchies defending, managing, and evaluating these programs rather than giving teachers or principals in local contexts an opinion about these programs. As a result of these packaged systems, teachers can be seen as technicians with a focus on pedagogical skills and are supervised as such (Meister, 2010; Randi & Zeichner, 2004). Institutional policies or choices about professional development may not support the individual teacher's contexts.

The status quo or norm in institutions can be changed by reflecting on teacher needs. In contrast to the prior argument, exclusive of reform, contexts of the organizational structure of individual schools and districts can be part of the examination of administrators' decisions about professional development along with respect for the diverse needs of teacher learners (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). In support, Lucilio (2009) studied a diocesan school system that did not have an articulated approach to professional development, and both teachers and administrators spoke to the need for effective strategic professional development geared around diocesan goals. With goals as the focus, districts can approach professional

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development with specific strategies that produce teacher growth and student achievement. Educational organizations could deliver skills that help theory applied in practice (McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy & Terry, 2010). Instead of focusing on the deficit model of professional development, principals increased leadership perception by listening and communicating with stakeholders and observing teachers skills (Caldwell & Lutz, 1978; Freire, 1970; Musanti & Pence, 2010; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). Empowering teachers to seek skills that would be utilized in the classroom setting through strategic professional development that is formulated by both leaders and teachers may help leaders increase their perception of how decisions affect teachers.

Another argument against acknowledging the perceptions of teachers was that corporate memory is about institutional knowledge rather than on individual teacher contexts. As noted in a review of literature, a sense of organizational memory, which is collective knowledge both from assimilated members and newcomers, can shape decisions about professional development which may focus on institutional improvement efforts rather than teachers' need for knowledge (Fauske & Raybould, 2005; Randi & Zeichner, 2004). Changes in an organization may go against the grain of the institutional memory which has developed truths and power structures that may be difficult to change. A change in perspective about market forces and economic globalization, which often seem to constrain institutional and policy decisions, can be made in spite of the political nature and institutional memory that are factors of policy formulation (Compal, 2004; Wood, 2007). Additionally, Compal (2004) shared research about politicized policy making that actually replaces bureaucratic decisions informed by educational leaders and stakeholders. According to Freire (1970) and Stevenson (2010), colonialism and capitalism, enhanced by adhering to corporate memory, promoted

hierarchical relations that disregard authentic learning. As an example, the organizational

vision of the school or district may not correspond to the individual contexts of teachers and

learners (Geisjel et al., 2009). In institutions, the organizational memories that exist are

preserved in a systemic manner and have influence on a teacher even before they begin

teaching (Karmon, 2007). Consequently, this dependence on organizational memory can lead

to isomorphism, which is described as the conformity of organizations to resemble one

another over time (Oplatka, 2004). The corporate memory is influential in making

professional development decisions. For instance, often professional development practices

implemented as a result of corporate memory, implicitly or explicitly make legitimate some

ways of knowing as being more valuable to education than other practices (Mustani & Pence,

2010). Isomorphism is promoted by corporate memory and creates models of power in

organizational culture.

However, social justice leaders can change or reformulate the organizational culture

of an institution. Meister (2010) noted that administrators and teachers should share in joint

actions that shape the culture of the school. For example, Johnson and Chrispeels (2010)

detailed how the central office can find links or organizational pathways that might be used

by leaders to build the collective capacity of principals and teachers. With a shared purpose

that supported organizational development, the professional platform of needs assessment,

resource allocation and professional development program delivery by an administrator

helped liberate teachers' performance (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990; Mushayikwa & Lubben,

2009; Wetzler, 2010). Certainly, Hochberg and Desimone (2010) claimed that different local

contexts are examined when looking at the response to policy initiatives which influence

classroom practices of those initiatives. However, the changes should be implemented in a

way that supports rather than marginalizes. Organizational support relied on both supervisor and peer support in an accepting organizational culture (Joo et al., 2011). Understanding of contexts as well as the willingness to shift the climate of the institution to autonomy and collaboration may be helpful in making decisions around professional development.

In the arguments against using social justice as a lens for leaders in making professional development decisions, policies promoted marginalization. As evidenced in the research, constraints included mandates that promoted societal or cultural attitudes about gender, race or differences in people, lack of innovation, and the capacity of teachers to learn (Pegg, 2010). On a contextual note, Lewis, Koston, Quarterly, and Adsit (2011) detailed barriers to professional development including time constraints, lack of awareness of best practices, no access to current research, and the belief that research is irrelevant to practice. Furthermore, market ideology often drives professional development decisions on the institutional level. Lastly, in a school setting, professional development was perceived as being formulated from a top-down mode with teachers as passive recipients rather than considering input from teachers as adult learners (Compton, 2010). On the other hand, some arguments for leaders seeking meaningfulness in professional development for teachers included the value of acknowledging teacher contexts and organizational commitment, changes to norms in institutions, teacher needs, and sharing in order to help to change corporate culture. As clarified in the review, there were gaps in the research pertaining to the study of teacher perception about the influences of organizational decisions.

The Influence of Reform on Decisions of Professional Development

Reform was implemented by institutional leaders, theoretically, in order to hold teachers accountable for student learning. There was a shift in all aspects of hierarchical educational institutional thinking away from autonomy to accountability (Kliebard, 2002). One goal of this shift for educational policy makers was to provide professional development opportunities that build capacity for the district level priorities (Gaytan & McEwen, 2010). As stated, leaders sometimes reframed the relationships between schools and their communities by utilizing a business and accountability lens (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009). Kesson and Henderson (2010) reported that most professional development decisions function in a standardized management structure that focuses on scripted student performance tests or on prescribed curricula that are reinforced by state mandate. However, leaders can make countercultural choices about professional development with teacher context in mind. Historically, professional development was defined as formal or informal learning that extends professional competence, including knowledge and skills (Baumert & Kunter, 2006; Kunter et al., 2007; Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Ludtke & Baumert, 2011). In the reform movement, professional development training may be by consultants who are tied to corporate curricula that become mandated by the state or institution (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). Because of this mind frame, administrators who hold to the accountability mindset can be perceived as critics; however, this "criticism is more a search for emancipator forms of knowledge" (Leonardo & Parker, 2010, p. 143). Kesson and Henderson (2010) claimed that this standardized management paradigm limits the possibility for democratic education. In the search for social justice at the professional development level, an administrator should see that reform is implemented for both teacher and student growth. A typical professional

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development setting is a workshop or seminar in which teachers are lectured to, where topics and presenters were chosen by administrative leaders, and where teachers attended because of a compulsory designated number of hours to attain licensure, certification, or continuing education credits (Collinson et al., 2009). Accountability and reform created a sense of standardization about teachers that is mandated by institutions. Leaders may look to the social justice theory when approaching reform oriented decisions of professional development

An aspect of reform was the reality of competition that promotes isomorphic decisions. Market theory spoke to supply and demand as well as competition (Oplatka, 2004). As noted in research studies, market forces reinforced educational reform movements based on market knowledge which pitted districts and schools against one another (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1996; Oplatka, 2004). In additional research, market influences were found to be related to reform efforts that may contribute to the isomorphism among schools, in which convergence, sameness, and an intolerance of disruption of sameness is upheld (Naqvi & Jardine, 2007; Oplatka, 2004). One result of isomorphism as noted by Gabriel (2011) was that institutional isomorphism can create a lack of diversity. A leader with a mission of social justice needs to be aware of isomorphism in order to reflect on decisions. It is critical to provide educators with professional development opportunities that do not reinforce marginalization (Applebaum, 2009). Likewise, changing classroom practice shifts from an emphasis on "fostering appropriate epistemological and efficacy beliefs" about practices addressing content, pedagogy, and learning needs in response to the contextual factors of the school (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Opposite of market forces or reform

movements that promote sameness, social justice theory speaks to organizational decisions that create a shift in isomorphism.

Reform in education may be influenced by market forces as a business mindset in which competition is at the forefront of decisions. The reform movement, utilizing a top-down approach, could be seen as a form of propaganda because the assumed benefits of the reform are emphasized (Xu, 2009). Little (1993) emphasized that professional development training may not be geared to heightened knowledge of pedagogical practices and research-based learning but may point toward production. As a result, districts can be seen by investors or businesses as a "subsidized marketplace" (Little, 1993, p. 139). The reform movement invested power and resources in competition and business models. Because of the claim that power was coming from the influence of outside interests, Stevenson (2010) noted that neoconservatives have adopted the reform strategies of making education vital to success in the job market, maintaining control over experimentation in learning, and inserting economic and fiscal planning in education. In like fashion, neoliberals emphasized the strategies of standardized curriculum, employment emphasis, and accountability (Carr, 2008).

> This is why many right-wing educators praise the virtues of the competition and choice but rarely talk about how money and power, when unevenly distributed, influence, 'whether people have the means or the capacity' to make or act on choices that inform their daily lives. Issues of human suffering, the inequalities between the rich and the poor, racism, violence against women, the collapse of social housing, the breakdown of public health, and the crisis of public education are erased from the mind of public concern because of a neoliberal culture. (Giroux, 2003, p. 242)

On this note, Giroux (2003) warned that "when citizenship is reduced to consumerism, it should come as no surprise that people develop an indifference to civic engagement and participation in a democratic public life" (Giroux, 2003, p. 36). Still, the

sense that institutional powers' purpose was to meet the demand of production does not match the moral sense of socially just education (Foucault, 1977). On the other hand, the risk of an organization reforming or using accountability with a social justice lens was that an institution may undermine "ceremonial conformity and sacrifices its support and legitimacy" (Huerta, 2009, p. 248). The reforms of an organization promoted a culture of decision making about professional development that is centered on consumerism or production and disregarded the contexts of a community or classroom.

Teachers may not feel that standardization is an effective way of making decisions about professional development. On the surface, it appeared that reform efforts created feelings of teachers being inadequate and mistrusting of district initiatives (Flint et al., 2011). Additionally, Meister (2010) reported that teachers do not see administrators as having an impact on their daily classroom context and are not important influences in their individual work. In deeper consideration, a combination of expectations of leaders and the context of working conditions created tension and feelings of low status in teachers who may otherwise have a positive impact on participation, practice, or critical decisions regarding professional development (Banilower et al., 2007; Short, 1992). According to one study, professional development was not seen as useful to new teachers when external influences such as expert consultants or prescribed programs are part of the training (Rideout & Windle, 2010). Moreover, teachers have often had negative experiences with the agendas of professional development decisions (Burke, Marx & Berry, 2011). Teacher knowledge and learning may not benefit from a traditional approach to professional development. In arguing against the assertion that teachers should find meaning in leader's decisions, the accountability of reform demanded that teachers improve their knowledge, change their beliefs to match the

organizational goals, and embrace open systems of accountability with boards and organizational leaders (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). However, institutional structures do not leave room for employees to be innovative; rather, they are encouraged to adopt a form of "bureaucratic socialization" in which employees adopt the culture of how to approach the workplace (Varrati, Lavine & Turner, 2009, p. 490). A possible reason for perceived dissatisfaction with professional development programs could be that they are viewed as mandated from administration and add to the supervision requirements of education (Sergiovanni & Elliot, 1975). This hierarchal control was, in the past, described by Karpinski (2006) as "American business men exemplified their genetic, moral, political, and economic superiority, schoolmen-not women" (p. 279). In support, classroom work was perceived as "women's work" in which teachers are traditionally marginalized and therefore, teachers cannot be given the authority to make decisions (Grumet, 1988; Hofmann, 1981; Wood, 2000). Programs of professional development may be standardized by the mandates of dominant institutions rather than by the perceptions of individual leaders or teachers.

Making choices about their own professional development may create meaningful experiences of professional development for teachers. Being open to teacher input in professional development would be a significant change in organizational governance (Jacobson, 2011). As well, civic values such as freedom, justice, and the pursuit of progress should be included in school goals and should be included in the decision making process regarding professional development (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). Teachers reported that reasons to attend professional development included being able to make choices, to seek out training that will promote their careers, or because administration has

required them to take the training (Pedder & Opfer, 2010). Attending to social justice values would help leaders and teachers find meaning, especially in their individual contexts. In Johnson and Chrispeels' (2010) study, the research suggested that school reform is sloppy; therefore, goodwill, cooperation and motivated participation was critical in helping move reform to achievement. According to Laguardia and Pearl (2009), teachers should build new conditions to help with fragmentation of reform trends such as being overworked or responding to oversimplification of reform solutions. This research led to Van Duzor's (2011) study in which teachers reported that they are motivated when professional development can be directly utilized in their own classroom contexts. On a similar note, Watson and Manning (2008) found that teachers' positive response to professional development was found in how the learning interacted with their own perceived needs and their own individual contexts in their school. Lastly, the internalization between school goals and individual goals influenced participation in professional development activities (Geijsel et al., 2009). Without involvement of teachers, reforms are likely to be cosmetic and superficial (Xu, 2009). Teachers' opinions and voices in professional development decisions may promote motivation and change in teaching and learning.

Administrators may make decisions about professional development with the belief that teachers may be lacking in the capacity to make choices about curriculum and pedagogy. There was also the question of teacher capacity and about whether professional development strategies can measurably expand a teacher's improvement of teaching (Little, 1993). However, Kliebard (2002) posited that educational reform changes fail because people are not supported in the change efforts and often come into conflict with institutional realities. Leaders can lend support by acknowledging the complexities of teaching in the current

culture and through acknowledging the context of the teacher. For instance, the current research indicated, according to Fletcher (2009), that school leaders, as well as teachers, have no 21st century school training. Additionally, Compton's study (2010) claimed that much professional development was outdated, was formulated in an outdated top-down model of leadership, and did not acknowledge teacher growth. This may point to an explanation of the many variations in teachers' professional learning (Geijsel et al., 2009). In support of this notion, Laguardia and Pearl's research (2009) contended that democratic education for adults, or sustainable professional development, can be diminished when citizens are not knowledgeable about active participation and when organizations are controlled by special interests. The capacity of teachers may be diminished purposefully. Mintz et al. (2010) revealed examples of influence such as interference in curriculum, influence of subject matter, and advertising and selling of products that may impair democratic practices in education. Such relationships with commercial entities may create conflicts of interest that may impair objective decision making by organizational leaders (Mintz et al., 2010). The standardization of professional development and the perceived lack of capacity and business practices of organizations of teachers may be reasons leaders often do not listen to the perceptions of teachers.

Teacher and student growth was strongly connected to professional development decisions. In his influential work on professional development and reform, Little (1993) suggested that alternative models of professional development such as networks, professional development institutes or centers, and long term study groups would help to change "institutional histories, practices, and circumstances" (p. 138). In support, research stated that professional development should be connected to the greater society, to others, and to

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educational policy that contribute to better teaching and learning (Collinson et al., 2009). Little (1993) indicated that utilizing alternatives to the traditional training format suggested compatibility between reform, teaching, and transformation. As an alternative, socially just leaders were reflective about a global perspective in decision making. Notably, global changes in professional development were being addressed (Collinson et al., 2009). In utilizing a socially just mind frame, there could be a shift from deficit thinking to promoting improvement through initiatives such as teacher problem solving, interdisciplinary teaching, and training for teaching diverse learners (Freire, 1970; Randi & Zeichner, 2004; Sparks, 1997). Professional development succeeded when teachers' beliefs and practices mirrored the institutional beliefs and practices (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Therefore, district and diocesan leaders should provide tools of learning, instruction, and evaluation by refining professional development (Desimone, 2011). Organizations can factor in teacher development as an important aspect of teaching and learning.

Reform and market forces are important for leaders in making decisions about professional development. The research that counters the assertion that leaders should examine the perceptions of teachers included characteristics such as standardization, mandated professional development, and assumed lack of teachers' capacity without examination of contexts. However, the research indicated that leaders who use socially just decision making skills may use the choice of alternative forms of professional development with an awareness of the contexts of teachers and promote teacher and student growth through participation and involvement. An examination of achievement may help to clarify the argument.

The Influence of Achievement on Decisions of Professional Development

The influence of achievement on organizational behavior on decisions about professional development was found in the research. Marzano (2003) stated that professional development coupled with teaching experience could have a positive impact on student achievement. In this light, alignment of teacher learning to achievement goals may help teachers to focus on what students are expected to know in national, state, and district standards (Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi & Gallagher, 2007; Randi & Zeichner, 2004). However, leaders cannot expect to eliminate gaps in achievement when gaps in professional development exist (Berg, 2010). The contexts of teachers both in the large scale district and in the local context have to be part of organizational decision making. According to Little's (1993) research, resources in education are not distributed evenly. For instance, the ghettoization in central cities has worked to confine low-income black students and teachers to isolated communities (Laguardia & Pearl, 2009). In addition, Laguardia and Pearl (2009) indicated that high concentrations of poverty limit the ability of educational communities to improve the quality of schools. Kantor (1999) concluded that if blacks had not been segregated in the inner city, the impoverished would have contact with social networks that would promote economic mobility. Elements such as poverty, segregation, and inequity are all factors that leaders should acknowledge in making choices about professional development. Despite economic or equity imbalances, leaders should strive to help educators increase student success (Keith, 2011). Educational leaders can look to achievement as well as equity to promote teacher and learner growth.

The research review indicated that teacher efficacy and empowerment are factors for leaders in making decisions about professional development. According to Hochberg and

Desimone (2010), there is much to learn about the best structures for gaining improvements in student achievement. For instance, giving teachers direct involvement in professional development may help to enrich high quality instruction (Dunaway et al., 2010; Mullen & Hutinger, 2008). Additionally, involvement of all participants in the research helped to ensure that multiple perspectives were being heard and respected (Keating, Diaz-Greenberg & Baldwin, 1998). Furthermore, when teachers are able to make choices about their own development, whether through choosing to read a professional journal, participating in a study group, or joining an professional learning network, their learning was authentic (Desimone, 2011; Kaplan & Leckie, 2009). Consequently, Kesson and Henderson (2010) defined professional development as "disciplined openness" (p. 218). Decisions pertaining to reconceptualizing professional development included engagement, enlightenment, and alignment with the needs of teacher learners (Hunzicker, 2011; Leonardo & Parker, 2010; Marzano, 2003). Establishing measures for the variability in professional development with an emphasis on follow-through of strategies helped educators set professional goals for improvement (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008; Hoerr, 2011). Furthermore, Noddings (1992) implied that excellent professional learning included the quality of the present experience and its role in preparing teachers. Engagement, follow-through, and quality experiences promoted professional development that has meaning in a teaching context. A transformational leadership style included challenging teachers to think creatively and as problem solvers while understanding the mission and vision of the school because a key component of this style was to facilitate organizational change for improvement of student performance (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009; Kurland et al., 2010). This efficacy about teachers' role in professional development could enhance improvement.

Self-efficacy for teachers, including having a say in professional development initiatives, may lead to growth in achievement. Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009) suggested that raising self-efficacy beliefs can have a direct impact on achievement. Little (1993) also found that administrators supported initiatives in which teachers are involved in the creation and evaluation of professional development. Promotion of self-efficacy for teachers in both public and Catholic schools would mean teachers would be prepared to meet the academic needs of their student population as supported by an understanding principal (Kaplan & Leckie, 2009; Meister, 2010). Listening and reflecting on teacher opinion may lead to a sense of self-efficacy for teachers, and, in turn, help to promote student growth.

The approaches to professional development that concentrated on high standards and accountability are addressed. The institutional or "impositional" approach to professional development does not place in the forefront the knowledge, experience, personality, self-identified needs, or the teaching context of real teachers in real places working with real students (Flint et al., 2011, p. 1163). This approach does not reflect the context of districts, schools, or classrooms. Administrators and teachers in all aspects of education are currently struggling with inclusion, student diversity, and the intrusion of family and community problems into their own contexts (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990). As an example of the consequence of lack of understanding of context, Kantor (1999) reported that black inner city workers are at a disadvantage because they do not have adequate education to qualify for employment in new industry. But instead of transforming whole systems, researchers argued that there is a mismatch between reform and the structure of schooling (Dewey, 1937; Little, 1993; Kliebard, 2002). The context of schooling needs to be examined by leaders when making decisions in order to promote student growth.

Organizational structures should be factors of achievement and growth. As an example, in Weglinsky's (2000) study, professional development accounted for increase in differentiated teaching strategies which led to advances in achievement. For instance, leaders looked to differentiated practices which promote inquiry-based learning by professionals using problem-solving, collaboration, and essential questions as a basis for learning (Orrill, 2006). In terms of leading teachers to student achievement, Knapp et al. (2003) gave indications of learning centered leadership, including visiting classrooms, sharing learning, guiding conversations, examining data, and working to set goals for learning improvements. Leaders could look to differentiated strategies in professional development to enhance achievement in schools and districts. As a strategy, Bogotch (2008) suggested that more growth would occur if teachers visited other schools. On a similar note, growth plans were utilized to help a self-directed teacher to reach autonomy in decision making about their own professional growth (Fenwick, 2004). As another strategy, Copeland (2003) suggested organizational schemes such as rotating teachers in the role of principal, implementing a reform coordinator, or coordinating many schools in an inner school design. Lastly, Collinson et al. (2009) reported that there are three trends that broaden teacher learning in continuous professional development, including global networking, mentoring, and supervisory evaluations. Reframing of professional development in a differentiated fashion may be one way of enhancing achievement.

The capacity of teachers could be a frame of reference for administrators in creating professional development opportunities. Current research noted that assumptions are made by leaders about teacher learners, their competence, and their knowledge of reform measures (Joyes, 2008). As an opposite point of view, Berg (2010) posited that teachers must not only

know their content and how to teach it, but they also must work with the range of students and families enrolled, the colleagues who teach with them, and with the organizational structure of the institution. Furthermore, when there was racial segregation and lack of public debate, there was an elimination of democratic education (Lasch, 1995). Teachers must also contend with neo-conservatism, which when found in education, would be defined as a controlled curriculum, high standards, and an increase of measures of accountability (Carr, 2008). In response to these factors, the social justice theory is applicable to both public and Catholic school students and teachers. The factors of context, especially in terms of equity, play a significant role in professional development decisions.

Organizational support was crucial to promote change in the teaching context. Studies affirmed that organizational support is external, but an internal focus on teacher learners can boost self-efficacy and learning skills (Azevedo, Cromley, Thomas, Seibert & Tron, 2003; Joo et al., 2011). Pierce and Ball (2009) posited that professional development for teachers needed to address development as well as attitude and perception. "Self-efficacy develops as an individual acquires self-knowledge and the belief that they are personally competent and has mastered skills necessary to effect desired outcomes" (Short, 1992, p. 12). Those committed to achievement were seen as agents of change in which voices, reflection, and collaboration were the catalysts for empowerment, challenging resistance, and providing awareness for ethical and social responsibilities (Freire, 1970; Gill & Chalmers, 2007; Keating et al., 1998; Sales et al., 2011). Teachers' attitudes and commitment to learning had a direct effect on achievement.

In reviewing the literature, research indicated that achievement was an important factor in the professional development decisions made by leaders. The review detailed

studies that countered the assertion that teachers should find meaning in professional development opportunities including factors such as reform, accountability, and inequity in schools. However, research also indicated that shared decision making, self-efficacy, and empowerment created change in leadership decisions. Reframing professional development to reflect teacher efficacy promoted achievement. The subtopic of growth was analyzed as part of the theoretical framework of organizational behavior.

The Influence of Growth on Decisions of Professional Development

When teachers assumed the responsibility for student performance, supported by high quality professional development, growth occurred (Randi & Zeichner, 2004). For instance, Guskey (2009) found that a leader who provided quality professional development elevated teaching to an inquiry-based profession rather than the traditional classroom strategies. When professionalism became important to teachers and leaders, the purpose of education had ethical clarity in promotion of standards for justice, equity, and freedom (Beckner, 2004; Dunlap & Goldman, 1990). Motivated teachers see their career as a profession. Successful teaching, including the transfer of professional development into the classroom context, was dependent on professional identity, knowledge, and perception of usefulness (Van Duzor, 2011). Currently, Guskey (2009) noted that schools are no better than the people who work within them and that professional growth was directly related to professional development. Dunaway et al. (2010) spoke to the perspective that personal growth was achieved when learning behavior was discovered and designated by the learner. Professional growth can be maintained through professional development. Additionally, growth was promoted through discourse, beliefs, and opportunities given to the learner (Fenwick, 2004). Giroux (1997) contended that because of critical pedagogy, leaders should see teachers as intellectuals that

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can reflect on political and cultural ideologies and create practices that are transformative for their students. In essence, if leaders see teachers as professionals, growth could occur.

The possibility for professional growth came from the teacher's desire to increase their own competence and reflect about their performance (Guskey & Huberman, 1995; Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). The teacher's conception of self as a professional included self-image, self-esteem, tasks perception, and feelings of the future (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1996). Easton (2008) noted that there was clarity in the fact that educators do need to learn; therefore, professional learning should define professional development. Andragogy, or adult learning theory, was the assumption that adults know why they are learning and helped to self-direct and motivate their learning (DuFour, 2004; Speck & Knipe, 2005). However, principals should not just assume that motivated learners will accept and utilize the content or strategies offered in the professional development. Often, educators depended on other teacher role models to learn about professionalism (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008). Easton (2008) noted the characteristics of professional learning, including analysis of data, application in the classroom, and collaboration among professionals. All of these factors helped a teacher in their own classroom context. Administrators might expect teachers to be problem posing educators who naturally help to implement curriculum and teaching strategies that address justice for a diverse student body (Freire, 1970; Keating et al., 1998). However, teachers need support to assist them in achieving goals (Hirsh & Hord, 2010).

Herzberg et al. (1959) contended in their early study of work, that individuals should have control over the way in which their job is done to promote personal growth. Teachers can be influential in their individual growth or in collective growth through an identity as a

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leader in their context (Printy, Marks & Bowers, 2009). Leaders can help teachers to gain insight into their own contextual journey. Professional development choices by leaders can raise teacher expertise and self-efficacy (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010). Teachers, through this expertise and self-efficacy, can determine, through learned judgment and evaluation, what will work in their own context (Anagnostopoulos, Sykes, McCrory, Cannata & Frank, 2010). Greene (1988) and Brooks (2008) revealed that the best judgments should be made outside of isolation and made through engagement with their peers.

Teachers have a negative view about policy making, certification standardization, and professional development strategies when autonomy seems to be lacking in decision making (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010; Little, 1993). Certainly, teachers have a need to understand the reasons pertaining to organizational decisions, even if they do not agree with a position (Cowan & Aresenault, 2008). Administrators who can clarify the vision or mission of the professional development decision can support teachers' understanding. Short (1992) also indicated that professional isolation, lack of exemplary role models, and lack of voice in bureaucratic structures are impediments to promoting teacher identity. In Beaty-O'Ferrall and Johnson's (2010) study about collaboration, teachers often noted that they received mandates from the system level without any consultation. As Hargreaves (2007) stated, the future of staff development should be about "integrity, equity, innovation, and interdependence. Otherwise, domination, dependency, and divisiveness are all that beckon" (p. 38). The professionalism of teachers should include contributing to the knowledge base of research in teaching in order to improve teaching (Stigler & Thompson, 2009). Lucilio (2009) added that professional development decision structures also included time and funding. Finding resources was another aspect of leadership that could promote growth.

The goal of professional development should be to impact positivity in the classroom and enhance teacher performance in the classroom (Gaytan & McEwen, 2010; Wolff et al., 2010). Leithwood et al. (2004) indicated that effective leaders conveyed a strong belief in the capacity of personnel to achieve high standards of teaching and learning. Likewise, in one study, teachers were found to believe that effective professional development should have all students and learning as their foundation (Kaplan & Leckie, 2009). One theoretical model, organizational learning theory, suggested that learning was affected by the structure of a system and the social cognitive players who made decisions, shared information, and interpreted information about the system (Fauske & Raybould, 2005). By empowering and engaging teachers in decision making, leaders can seek socially just methods to promote positive growth. Teachers are motivated by the approach and engagement of professional education, and these motivations should be in line with leadership expectations (McCollum & Kajs, 2009). Once a teacher is engaged in learning, the product of professional development should be sustained teacher and student growth. Sustainability in attaining professional development goals was helped through appropriate content, effective design, and contextual references (Hirsh & Hord, 2010). Principals are called to build organizational climates in which administrators and teachers understand and respect each other's roles (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Instead of teacher development being focused on teachers who can be trained to implement practices, pedagogical relationships can connect to work in the classroom through effective instructional strategies (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Randi & Zeichner, 2004). Teachers see themselves as valuable professionals who may or may not transfer these prescriptive programs into their classroom context or may be innovative in how they interpret the transfer (Van Duzor, 2011).

According to Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009), the technical approach that is focused only on practice does not honor the professionalism, context, or collaborative practices to promote teacher growth. Educators may look at the authoritative mandate of professional development as coming from national, state, or local leadership, resulting in processes that are not consist with their local context (Bogotch, 2008). Smith (2009) noted that when teachers report that professional development has little relevance, teachers are more likely to rely on the skills they already utilize in the classroom. For leaders, it was a challenge to design development that teachers would find useable (Stigler & Thompson, 2009). In response to this challenge, Stigler and Thompson (2009) claimed that administrators depended on outside experts instead of seeing their own experienced colleagues and practitioners as experts. Outside influences may not promote sustainability and teacher growth. However, if teachers are not supported by administrators or their colleagues, the extra work brought about by reforms may cause teachers not to enact practices in their own contexts (Chun, 2010; Polly & Hannafin, 2011; Short, 1992). Hargreaves (2007) stated that administrators often rely on evangelical types of professional development in which purported experts ply their merchandise in the form of curricular change. In this type of professional development,

> one person says he has a way to help all children learn, when he makes educators feel they lack required skills and qualities, when the deficiency is defined so broadly that everyone feels inadequate, and when the evangelist promises expensive training to fix everyone's facility, the system is falling prey to…a fundamental flaw of staff development. (p. 38)

It is easy for leaders to assume that an outsider can help promote teacher growth. These assumptions about the development of teachers are exclusive, express the norms of dominant voices, and are oppressive in the disregard of diversity (Karpinski, 2006). A

teacher, often seen as passive, can be an intellectual who constructs content knowledge rather than a technician, who consumes content knowledge (Giroux, 1997; Little, 1993).

In arguing for the assertion, an administrator can give quality opportunities for individual growth in order to promote growth in the organization (Dunaway et al., 2010). For instance, the distributed leadership model handed the responsibilities of developing teachers to the faculty itself (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008; Wolff et al., 2010). Findings from Hulpia et al. (2010) reflected that, by giving responsibility through distributed leadership, the organizational commitment of teachers is escalated. Additionally, Randi and Zeichner (2004) stated that another form of reform in professional development was to give teachers the capacity to investigate and adjust teaching practices. Each of these approaches was framed in social justice leadership. Additionally, the critical policy approach was based on social justice theory that examined the extent that policies support the educational system, especially in terms of care and mutuality (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Hirsh and Hord (2010) contended that since teaching and learning were improved through professional development there was a link between adult professional learning and social justice. A leader, in making judgments about teacher merit, supported changes in professional development that promoted the professional status of teachers (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990; Karpinski, 2006). Instead of managing educational policy as an institutionalized or technical process based on mistrust or prescription, organizations can present policies that emphasize negotiation (Flint et al., 2011; Moos, 2008). Leaders for social justice can support growth through professional development decisions that reflect teacher input.

In conclusion, the research that speaks against leaders making decisions about professional development with meaningfulness in mind addressed outside expert

involvement, bureaucratic structures, and decisions based on mandates. On the other hand, research also indicated that professional growth, professional learning, and capacity were factors regarding teacher perception when addressing professional development decisions. The next topic explores leaders in organizations and the decisions that they make about professional development.

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Leadership for Social Justice as an Influence on
Decisions of Professional Development

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Social justice theory combined leadership elements with an emphasis on democratic participation and caring concern. An element for utilizing social justice theory when designating professional development for teachers was an administrator's ability to incorporate inclusive practices to prevent barriers and provide support for teachers (Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010). In other words, support of teachers may require an alteration of structures that incorporates new methods of teaching and learning and introduces teachers to new concepts and ideas (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009; Goldring & Sullivan, 1996; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). "As teacher educators, our aim is to develop professional development processes that encourage transformation in schools toward an intercultural, inclusive educational approach" (Sales et al., 2011, p. 911). However, this transformation of leadership from repression and control to inclusivity challenged traditional norms and beliefs. In essence, an administrator using social justice as a lens can be the catalyst that prompts individual and collective transformation as they, as part of their vision of leadership, try to transform the social environment (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009). Hence, a more socially just structure of leadership could promote conditions of equity and voices for teachers (Kose & Lim, 2010).

The Influence of Leadership Practices on Decisions of Professional Development

The influence of leadership practices in terms of social justice theory was portrayed in both historical and current research. In arguing against the assertion that leaders should be mindful of the meaning of professional development decisions in the eyes of teachers, factors such as bifurcation, corporate culture, status quo, and persuasion are noted. On the other hand, research indicated that social capital, distributed leadership, and critical consciousness can be utilized as leadership practices that promote social justice. Leadership practices are analyzed to understand how power can influence teacher and student growth.

Leadership practices can be defined through the ideology of leadership. Leadership for social justice included an ideology in response to unjust relations of power for transforming those relations (Applebaum, 2009). Such transformation may include sustaining some relationships and resisting others to cause real change (Applebaum, 2009). Leonardo (2004) offered a socially just solution that included rearticulation of ideology that would "reestablish the centrality of critique as a primary mode of education" (p. 140). Beachum (2008) stated, "the ideology of individualism could lead to actions which overemphasize difference over commonality" (p. 55). Similarly, the ideology of community could encourage practices that overemphasize unity at the expense of individuality. The beliefs of leaders influence the ideology and practices of leadership.

When leaders embrace the belief or theory of social justice, change may occur in the decision making process. Promoting leadership practices that include educating with social justice theoretical constructs means challenging the problematic growth of conservative, neoliberal, and unjust movements in education (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). Indeed, social justice required making voices heard and constructing new leadership practices to become a

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lived reality (Bogotch, 2008). When a leader promoted interpersonal capacity in which

teachers felt affirmed and motivated, learning was encouraged (Fenwick, 2004).

Consequently, the social phenomenon of leadership, particularly distributed leadership,

resulted in higher degrees of teacher involvement, which is a marker for change in education

(Harris, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2007). Practices of leaders of social justice included how

teachers perceive decisions made by leaders about professional development.

Leaders utilized organizational standards as a priority in decision making. As

evidenced in research, March and Simon's (1969) treatise on organizations noted that

bifurcation occurs when those who lead make decisions do so without acknowledgement of

participants in the organization. A direct result of this hierarchical control, according to

Carver and Sergiovanni (1969), was a gap in organizational goals and what was truly

achieved by stakeholders. And so, professional development was seen as a top-down type of

decision making because leaders were making decisions about the kind of training teachers

need instead of emphasizing professional learning with educators identifying needs for

development (Easton, 2008). From this standpoint, leaders may not note the perceptions of

teachers.

As a counter argument, leaders may want to understand teacher context and reflect on

common organizational goals. As evidenced by research, a leader who used the tenets of

distributed leadership practiced situational ethics in which judgments were made by values

and principles rather than made with bureaucratic formulas (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990).

Specifically, Crippen (2005) detailed the servant leadership philosophy as a model for

building sharing and distributive leadership within schools and communities through "primus

inter pares (first among peers) which enhanced the growth of the learning community by

including and involving parents, students, staff, and support staff" (Crippen, 2005, p. 11). More current research indicated that post-modern concepts of organic systems, interdependence, and constructed perspectives have replaced modernist concepts of closed systems, natural law, and linear thinking (Collinson et al., 2009). Lovett (2010) noted that distributive justice in leadership minimized domination and as a result reduced inequality. In the opinion of Printy et al. (2009), shared leadership enhanced the intellectual atmosphere and helped leaders to model what it means to be professional educators. In professional development, a learner centered approach included critical thinking, respect for voices, and adaptations to individual needs or contexts (Alo, 2010). Teachers' meaning about professional development may stimulate leadership practices that promote growth.

As supported by research, there was the possibility that professional development decisions were affected by market ideologies and may lead to isomorphism in schools and districts. Giroux (2003) claimed that Americans have been inundated by a corporate culture that commercializes and privatizes non-commodified public places, and forgoes civic values and civic engagement. Non-market values that enable people to identify and fight for those institutions, such as public schools, are essential to a vibrant democracy. In terms of social justice theory, "democracy should not become synonymous with the language of the marketplace, oppression, control, surveillance, and privatization" (Giroux, 2003, p. 44). Giroux (2003) believed that, because of a neoliberal political climate, the importance of democracy and education are in crisis because of inequalities, racism, and human suffering. Leaders may need to regard the social justice values and beliefs in the context of their districts and schools.

Supporting teachers through leadership practice means to attend to social justice values. Distributive power was a skill that promoted successful partnerships by using the skills of empowerment, collaboration, and trust with stakeholders by leaders (Parker, Fazio, Voltante & Cherubini, 2008). A disciplined collaborative process helped keep teachers focused on individual and collective goals and built a positive synergy of safety (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008). Alternatively, more current studies indicated that building social capital can alleviate conflict by promoting social justice values of trust and reciprocity (Cowan & Aresenault, 2008; Sales et al., 2011). Using the power of leadership practices that reflected social justice, leaders promoted change.

Leadership practices may be influenced by institutional hegemony. As noted in the treatise by the Congregation for Catholic Education (1972), an educator may feel powerless to enact justice because of the goals of a state school monopoly due to centralization of power which limits freedom in education. Administrators may fear that providing teachers with choice may change the status quo of traditional beliefs about professional development, which, in turn, silences the potential for learning and growth (Keating et al., 1998). As a result, dilemmas occurred when administrators and educators were in conflict about their roles or when their roles are "devalued" (Rose, 2011, p. 152). Whether stakeholders' opinion or social justice values, the values and beliefs of an organization may drive decision making practices.

The research indicated that leaders may use practices which reflect social justice to cause change in the organization. According to Hulpia et al. (2010), the organization of a heterogonous group including the formal leadership positions by the central authority affected the commitment of teachers. This type of distributed leadership described the

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relationship between administration and teachers which implied that leadership capacity is

seen as a network of individuals under the assumption that there will be the social context of

interrelationships (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons & Hopkins, 2007; Hulpia et al., 2010).

For example, "a small heterogeneous group of teachers can form together and share different

strengths" (Lee, 2010, p. 30). To illustrate, Foucault (1977) compared heterogeneous groups

to sex by speaking of not the sexual action, "but the body, the sexual organs, pleasures,

kinship relations, interpersonal relations, and so forth" (p. 210) that formed a heterogeneous

group. The more positive and supportive the interaction between the leadership team, the

more positive the effect on teacher commitment (Hulpia et al., 2010).

However, leadership practices regarding social justice may not conform to

organizational norms. As noted by Huerta (2009), an organization that adopted democratic

criteria and rejected conformity to institutionalized rules, undermined conformity, which may

sacrifice its legitimacy in the public arena. In formats of decision making where there is little

input from teachers, persuasion about new strategies and usefulness in professional

development is utilized (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Stevenson (2010) pointed to

the fact that the "truth" only belongs to the leader or presenter in professional development

and, as a result, participants failed to engage in critical thinking about the strategy (p. 78). On

this note, Naqvi and Jardine (2007) cautioned that traditional paradigms may be lost in the

fragmentation of disciplinary content knowledge, and intellectual thoughtfulness should be

practiced. Leaders may be concerned about fragmentation and implementation in regard to

change in leadership practices.

Administrators should be mindful of the contextual realities of the teaching situation.

Research contended that educational leaders are not just advocates for social justice but must

live the reality of social justice in classrooms, schools, and districts as a valid theory of educational leadership (Bogotch, 2008). Recovering the humanity of the oppressed was achieved by challenging relationships of tradition and engaging as critical and reflective leaders (Freire, 1970; Stevenson, 2010). In this way, Otunga (2009) and Stevenson (2010) declared that critical consciousness was essential to empower leaders to engage in critiquing and challenging oppressive conditions. Such validity has to come from the critical reflection of leaders as well as through experimentation regarding "educative social relationships" which a caring community views as relationships that matter (Bogotch, 2008, p. 14; Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Having a critical consciousness in social justice practices can help further teacher and learner growth.

As a result of the research findings, the influence of leadership practices for social justice was apparent. Some research stated that leadership practices such as bifurcation or maintaining the status quo may prevent socially just decisions from being enacted. However, in making an argument for leadership for social justice, the research alternatively showed that teacher perceptions, shared leadership, and a critical consciousness promoted just decisions. According to this praxis, a leader who has an awareness of social justice was mindful of leadership practices which used tools of support rather than oppression. Next, the research about elements of democracy in leadership practices was examined.

The Influence of Leadership and Democratic Education
on Decisions of Professional Development

The influence of democratic education on leadership was found in the research review. On one hand, the research stated that political climate, oppression, resource distribution, and market forces may influence leadership decisions. On another note, the

values of education, interests, the right to education, and a sense of care were all characteristics of socially just democratic leadership. When leaders valued the perceptions of teachers, they were leading in a democratic manner defined as residing with a focus on the learner (Dewey, 1937). Democracy, in terms of social justice, can be a factor that empowers learners and promotes democratic education.

Democratic education was defined by creating educational opportunities for all citizens. A democratic education requires a mindfulness that enables people to be fully informed through the use of critical analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies, the awareness of the welfare of others and the common good, and the concern for the dignity and rights of all people (Moos, 2008). Dewey (1937) and Lui (2010) described democratic education as residing in a focus on the learner, in particular, a focus on the learner's interests and experiences. As an extension of the influence of power, democracy was seen as a component, residing in power relations, identity, and social change (Carr, 2008). Furthermore, leaders can extend personal concern for colleagues and inspire their best efforts by using a leadership model that promoted democratic values (Printy et al., 2009). The influence of democracy meant that key stakeholders have both the right and the responsibility to be involved in critical school improvement efforts (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009). Because of these characteristics, democracy was linked together with social justice, citizenship, and social well-being (Stevenson, 2010). The challenge to "redefine the social and imbue it with democratic values that deepen and expand democracy is crucial" (Giroux, 2003, p. 44). Democratic education extended to teachers in professional development and learning. Understandably, a society cannot offer democracy and equal opportunity unless it experienced and respected the variety of cultures and persons that make up the society

(Glickman et al., 2010). Furthermore, a social justice leader should exemplify "a democratic disposition … concerned with problem-posing, dialogic engagement, and a politics of conversation" in order to promote educational access (Stevenson, 2010, p. 77). In this light, Starrat (2005) noted that transformational ethics, in which an educational leader calls students and teachers into this democratic mindset, can lead to a high ideal of education. This ideal is reflected in the notion of democracy and democratic education.

The relationship between democratic education and leadership is apparent. The factors of a teacher's context and institutional conformity affected professional development decisions (Howey, Matthes & Zimpher, 1985). The Congregation for Catholic Schools (1988) reported that there should be respect for the state and its representatives including observing the law and being mindful of the common good. In a Catholic school setting, the Church upheld the principle of a plurality of school systems by encouraging the cooperation of diverse educational institutions to give teachers an opportunity to form values and to be trained in how to work in a community (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997). Specifically, Huerta's research (2009) stated that schools need a "governance structure built upon the democratic principles of shared management" (p. 245). Catholic schools offer an alternative by promoting the freedom of teaching, conscience, and parental rights to choose the school best suited for their own child (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997). Catholic schools, although presently perceived as not being democratic, have structures of democracy, and local control that reflect democratic education.

The corporate culture of power marginalizes the concept of democratic education. As supposed by Foucault (1977), when a change occurred in who governed, regimes underwent

a global adjustment. Consequently, change is a set of propositions made by those in power (Foucault, 1977). "It's not a matter of emancipating the truth from every system of power but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault, 1977, p. 133). As is the case in education, the truth, "a system of ordered procedures, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements," was connected to capitalism (Foucault, 1977, p. 134). Leaders should cultivate an awareness of power and truth of influences in education decision making.

To counter this argument, leaders can look to the democratic concepts that will promote teacher and student growth. According to Moos (2008), there are three concepts that defined democratic schools including keeping people informed, utilizing critical reflection, and sharing a concern about the welfare of others. Apple and Beane (1995) noted that democratic schools should also be concerned about the capacity for people to solve problems and about the dignity and rights of others. Also, Ricci (2004) declared that democratic education should not be seen as a value but as a set of values that should guide education. According to Finn (2009), the social rights of citizens were found through schools in democratic education. Research demonstrated that this conceptual approach to democratic education offered classroom, school, and professional climates that reflected acceptance and respect (Alo, 2010). The values of democratic education can help leaders to work in a socially just manner.

Presently, leaders must be conscious of external factors that may not promote democratic education. As noted in research, the challenge for educators was to find ways to negate the factors that defy democracy in schools, including the notion of neoliberalism, in which conditions such as controlled curriculum and accountability occur, as well as the

neoconservative view of consumerism and economic values as being more important than civic engagement and critical learning (Carr, 2008; Giroux, 2003; Kesson & Henderson, 2010; Stevenson, 2010).

According to Dewey's account (1937), there should be more to the words common, community, and communication than a verbal tie. Administrators and teachers should promote this sense of community in their own contexts. Educators should remember that the goal of education is democratic in nature, with participation and freedom for all rather that coercion from power that is oppressive (Foucault, 1997; Glickman, 1998). In turn, teachers should see themselves as socially concerned, utilize reflective practice, and embody interdisciplinary knowledge (Beyer, 1996). As a result, Beyer (1996) emphasized educators as decision makers who can create democratic curricular alternatives to the neoliberal technical language that is mandated by accountability. However, market forces regarding accountability may continue to drive leaders' decisions.

Leaders do have authoritative power to respond to the needs of both students and teachers. Historically, the perception of fairness stemmed from equity theories including distributive justice concerning decision outcomes, procedural justice examining the fairness of procedures used to make decisions, and interactional justice noting how decisions were enacted by authority figures (Miner, 2005). Comparatively, Glickman (1998) and Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) called for a participatory decision making process that is generated in democratic pedagogy. As indicated by Greene (1988), when human beings are offered freedom, they will choose alternatives that "include caring and community" (p. 56). In support of leaders who use their power as a manifestation of social justice, "it remains a matter, for men and women both, to establish a place for freedom…and to do so in concern

with care, so that what is indecent can be transformed and what is unendurable may be overcome" (Greene, 1988, p. 86). On a similar note, Shields (2009) and Foucault (1977) compelled leaders to implement liberation pedagogy, which empowers learners to have critical dialogue about national and global oppressive social conditions. Brooks (2008) asserted that educational leaders hold the power that can influence policy about external freedom and facilitate forms of freedom that promote justice. There are leadership frameworks that model the promotion for justice concerning all stakeholders.

Leadership entails supporting and preparing teachers though organizational structures. However, neoliberalism, which is reflected in education as a controlled curriculum, supported supposedly high standards, an expanding focus on employability, and an increase of standards of accountability (Carr, 2008). Teachers may feel pressure to accept professional development in this mindset but may not utilize the learning in their own contexts. In terms of equity, teachers in both public and Catholic schools should feel adequately prepared to meet the academic needs of their student population through principal support (Kaplan & Leckie, 2009; Meister, 2010). However, leaders cannot expect to eliminate gaps in achievement when gaps in professional development exist (Berg, 2010). Professional development decisions may not reflect democratic education in terms of preparing teachers to help all students learn and grow.

Leaders should acknowledge democracy as an important element in decision making. In other words, leaders and teachers, as change agents, can create democratic and just structures in their own classrooms and schools (Applebaum, 2009; Beyer, 1996). Accordingly, education can be approached through a reform movement that democratizes schools by creating opportunities for teachers to practice citizenship and to offer equal

opportunity for all (Laguardia & Pearl, 2009). Additional research from Kayler (2009) suggested that adult learning centered theory supports democratic education because of the elements of dialogue, a sharing of power, and giving teachers a choice, which indicates a sense of trust in teachers being able to examine their own learning and professional growth. In the opinion of Pius XI (1929), "the child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty to educate him of the fulfillment of his obligations" (p. 15). Also, the State must have a right to educate with the common good in mind (Pius XI, 1929). The structures of democratic learning, including professional development, were designated by leaders who support social justice.

Leaders should be highly aware of the context of the teachers before deciding the structure of professional development. Understandably, a society cannot offer democracy and equal opportunity unless leaders respect the variety of cultures and persons that make up the society (Glickman et al., 2010). Despite economic imbalance, leaders should strive to help educators increase student success (Keith, 2011). Teachers can support student growth in their own contexts when motivated to learn strategies and content. Democratic education is not democratic when civic engagement is lost in the learning experience (Carr, 2008). A understanding of context can promote democratic decision making pertaining to professional development.

Leadership has a responsibility in promoting teaching and learning. In this light, a leader must respond with ethical fidelity to undertake the responsibility of democratic education (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). Clearly, a leader must combine the technical skills of resource management and budgeting with the morality of enhancing teacher learning and creating a democratic culture (Shoho & Barnett, 2010). "There must be no monopoly of

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schools which would be prejudicial to the natural rights of the human person and would militate against the progress and extension of education, and the peaceful coexistence of citizens" (Flannery, 1997, p. 731). Furthermore, leaders can extend personal concern for colleagues and inspire their best efforts by using a social justice leadership model that promotes democratic values (Printy et al., 2009). Leadership as a way of life was characterized in their research by empathy, equity, commitment, and connection (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). Because of these characteristics, leadership was linked together with social justice (Stevenson, 2010). For example, it was suggested in the documents of Vatican Council II (1965) that Catholic school students, teachers, and leaders should be prepared to take their part in the life of society, be trained in necessary skills, and be open to dialogue with others to achieve the common good. Additionally, a social justice leader should exemplify "a democratic disposition…concerned with problem-posing, dialogic engagement, and a politics of conversation" in order to promote educational access (Stevenson, 2010, p. 77). The influence of leadership means that key stakeholders have both the right and the responsibility to be involved in critical school improvement efforts (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009). A democratic culture is promoted when leaders see all the stakeholders as important.

Teacher involvement in professional development decisions may help leaders in framing structures of democratic learning. Democratic education depends on the relationship between teaching and the climate afforded to teaching and depends on individual action to address unjust or dominating practices of oppression (Bogotch, 2008). Consequently, Karpinski (2006) spoke to the necessity of teacher involvement in all aspects of professional development, especially in overcoming competition and inequalities. Change and reform

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were affected by social and political decisions that are made by organizational leaders and, in turn, these changes affect the climate of a school (Kliebard, 2002). Other contextual factors that contribute to the need for change are high mobility, globalization, and racial conflict (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Furthermore, Vojtek (1992) described contract building, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating as institutionalizing a school's capability for problem solving. To resist marginalization and to promote change, leaders may hear the voices of teachers in a format of democratic leadership practices.

Democratic values, including trust, may help promote growth in teaching and learning. The organization of learned knowledge has many implications so leaders must be careful to liberate people by their decision making (Freire, 1970; Karmon, 2007). Furthermore, democratic education should foster qualities of citizenship such as autonomy, respect, and care (Stevenson, 2010). To illustrate, administrators could learn from special education, which is iterative because decisions are never final, and have to be reviewed and renewed annually (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990). Additionally, Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2009) recommended a cycle of behavior of self-efficacy, decision making, and reassessment. In turn, the connection between democratic education and trust is strengthened (Moos, 2008). In the same way, organizations utilized professional socialization to acquire and maintain the values and beliefs of the institution (Varrati et al., 2009). Goddard et al. (2010) compared this approach to a type of democratic education in which an instructional leader would develop structures to enhance participation of teachers in decision making. On a similar note, Hulpia et al. (2010) found that teachers who have a voice in decision making are more committed to the school than their colleagues who do not feel they have a voice. Administrators who embraced democratic education and the participation of teachers through

negotiation and discussion, created a sense of authority and autonomy in the classroom setting (Moos, 2008; Wood, 2007). Then teachers see the benefits of their own professional development as being a "self-journey" about teaching and learning (Meister, 2010, p. 889). This emotional autonomy may help to engage teachers to associate positive feelings with cognitive achievement (Fullan, 2007). As a result, human capital, policies, communication, relational, ideological shared values, and vision were all ideals that the central office promoted by honoring the democratic process in schools (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010). The liberation of people through democratic education has strong implications for leadership.

In conclusion, the influence of democracy on leadership for social justice was apparent in the research. The research that counters the assertion that leaders should reflect on the meaning of professional development included such factors as market influences, oppressive practices, inequity of resources, and institutional mandates and policies. However, research also indicated that socially concerned leaders should be aware of values that guide educators by noting the interests of teachers and that leaders recall everyone's right to education in a caring manner. In making an argument for democracy in leadership for social justice, the research showed that mutual dependence was important for teacher learning. Democracy, in terms of social justice, empowered learners and promoted equality in education. When examining research regarding democracy in decision making, leaders should understand the meaning of professional development for teachers. A discussion of power as related to social justice may support the argument that leaders should be mindful of teachers' beliefs when making choices about professional development.

The Influence of Leadership and Power on Decisions of Professional Development

The influence of power on leaders who make decisions about social justice was reflected in the research. In arguing against the assertion that leaders should acknowledge the perceptions of teachers, hegemony and domination, the establishment of norms, the production of truth, and the use of socialization to sustain power were all addressed. However, the research also indicates that leaders should be mindful in refuting hegemony, be considerate in transferring stated policies, be respectful in affirming teacher knowledge, and be diligent in empowering teachers. In making an argument for leadership for social justice, the research stated that leadership for social justice was a moral obligation. Powerful leaders using a social justice lens can promote just decision making about professional development.

An examination of the definition of power was viewed with relationships and contexts. In the educational setting, the dominance of "war repression" was interpreted as normal or was obscured by unjust practices of institutions (Applebaum, 2009; Foucault, 1977, p. 92). As Foucault (1977) explained, most power is differentiated between a "juridical" power, which centers on what is legal or illegal or "war repression," which is power based on repressing domination centering on struggle and submission (p. 92). The "war repression" form of power in education was represented as a "society of normalization" in which power forces time and labor to be given by the people, or, as in the case of professional development, the teachers (Foucault, 1977, p. 92). Power can be acknowledged as a productive network which permeated through the institution and each subject in the institution was affected by power (Foucault, 1977). On this note, when educators examined the culture of power, the focus was on the safety and education of the marginalized (Applebaum, 2009). Foucault (1977) posited that power was part of the repression in

education and that power repressed classes and individuals alike. However, predominantly, white, male, heterosexual norms that define power should be counteracted by theories that challenge the rationalization of failure of subordinated groups (Towery, 2007). Leaders with the lens of social justice, realized that if power is examined as relations in a hierarchical cluster, one can examine how to "unlearn old ways of thinking about power relationships in schools" (Burke et al., 2011, p. 32). Education is "at the core of colonial domination" (Leonardo & Parker, 2010, p. 143) and was organized to maintain the dominant social order (Ricci, 2004), with the result that dominance was seen as normal and dominant status quo was acknowledged in reform (Applebaum, 2009). Freire (1970) would call this approach "the capability of banking education" which minimized a teacher's power and "serves the interests of the oppressors" (p. 73). Power can cause an imbalance in influencing decisions because of who has the most say or has the status to finalize decisions (Rose, 2011). Power in leadership needs to be examined in regards to decision making.

An examination of power in one's own context can help a leader choose socially just means of making decisions. In response, administrators' decision making could include analyzing the current mechanisms of power, building a strategic knowledge about the connections and extensions of why decisions about professional learning are made, examining the hegemony of the decision, and reflecting on whether those decisions are made with teachers in mind (Foucault, 1977). Professional learning included elements of equity, diversity, and social justice which engender morality in transformational leadership (Finnigan & Stewart 2009; Kose & Lim, 2010). As an educational construct of social justice theory, leadership with an emphasis on critical pedagogy included the concept that systemic social justice exists and that teachers and leaders serve as informers of the many factors

involved in education (Applebaum, 2009; Giroux, 1997). However, because education can never be neutral in the production of knowledge, "attempts to challenge the status quo may be perceived as imposition by those already in power" (Applebaum, 2009, p. 401). Studies of professional development programs have shown that professional development has the capacity to change teacher instruction and improve student performance (Dangel et al., 2009). Enhancing teaching and learning is a powerful responsibility of leaders.

Accountability practices may restrict rather than enhance growth. As stated in Compal's research (2004), the power struggle for control of professional development is apparent because "constituents form an interdependent colluding relationship with bureaucracies and when different constituents align themselves with different political parties, a change to the government produces change in educational policies and practices" (p. 589). For instance, many states require their teachers to attend formal learning opportunities with a specified curriculum for helping teachers acquire knowledge and skills that will enhance their learning (Berg, 2010; Richter et al., 2011). As proven by Berg (2010), accountability in teaching is important because of the inequities of where accomplished teaching was found or where there are not enough accomplished teachers. In this light, an example found in the research indicated that the extension of social rights would be better than demarginalizing or practicing deficit thinking that put at disadvantage teachers of color, those who are marginalized, those with disabilities, or those who otherwise experience inequity in their teaching situation (Freire, 1970; Kose & Lim, 2010). This approach to professional development disregarded or "does not place in the forefront the knowledge, experience, personality, self-identified needs or the teaching context of real teachers in real places working with real students" (Flint et al., 2011, p. 1163). As a product of deficit

thinking, Flint et al. (2011) spoke to an impositional approach to professional development. In support, Laguardia and Pearl (2009) identified that exclusion occurred when administrators practiced deficit thinking by seeing teachers as limited in what they can learn. Often, administrators' deficit thinking included holding negative stereotypes, blaming backgrounds for failure, and seeing diversity as a problem (Kose & Lim, 2010). However, Applebaum (2009) argued that change to professional development practices must be done in a manner that coincides with social justice theories which, in turn, means care must be taken not to impose or indoctrinate another form of oppression on teachers. Leaders may disregard their approach about teachers and decision making because of deficit thinking.

Power may negate the call for reflection. Power is likened to an "unspoken warfare" which is manifested in institutions, economic disparity, and in each person (Foucault, 1970, p. 90). The claim that educators are forced to produce the truth of power that society demands in order to function or that power institutionalizes and professionalizes the pursuit of truth is, in essence, a "perpetual relationship of force" (Foucault, 1977, p. 92). For example, Foucault (1977) described "war-repression" (p. 92) as the continuation of domination in a type of "pseudo-peace"; however, Leonardo and Parker (2010) would call this domination "a violence so hegemonic that it became naturalized." In education, when teachers' voices are minimized, a form of "cool violence" creates an unsafe environment (Leonardo & Parker, 2010, p. 140). "The actual system and theoretical backbone of colonialism and systems of domination create unethical situations wherein individuals are relegated to subject positions that make them something below, or other than human" (Leonardo & Parker, 2010, p. 146). The challenge for leaders who are making decisions is not changing people's awareness but changing the political, economic, and institutional

regime of the production of truth through statements or propositions made by those in power (Foucault, 1977). Consequently, leaders should move away from professional development that is detached from classroom practices and move to teacher autonomy by promotion of inclusive practices, culture, and connections (Hargreaves, 2007; Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Sales et al., 2011). Change in educational practices reflects change in the structures of power.

When leading to reform, care must be taken. As emphasized in research, the roles designated in bureaucracy of superior and subordinate and the rights that are associated with those roles are to be challenged in professional development decision making when emphasizing social justice (Abbot, 1966). For instance, a leader who used critical theory emphasizes "human agency or self-determination in the face of institutional rigidity" (Brooks, 2008, p. 6). Leaders should remember that true change occurs when injustices are addressed by changing school norms which causes disconnect and limits learning opportunities for teachers (Brooks, 2008). Changing institutional norms involves both structural policies and procedures and cultural norms (Fullan, 2007). "The act of liberation for Freire cannot be achieved by relating to those participating in the act of revolt as objects, but instead they must be engaged with as potentially critical and reflective human beings" (Stevenson, 2010, p. 71). Such transformation included sustaining some relationships and resisting others to cause real change (Applebaum, 2009). Leadership decisions should acknowledge teacher relationships and the contextual elements of their own schools and districts.

Several factors such as support, power, and marginalization should be noted by leaders in making decisions about professional development. As a social justice goal, all students should have accomplished teachers (Berg, 2010). Despite this assertion, status

distinction perpetuated the traditional approach of a teacher who controls the process of learning and the learning environment, creating a paradox for the reform movement, in which teachers are called to adapt to changing conditions and contexts (Alo, 2010; Barnett, 2011). Therefore, problems in education come into play when schools struggle with diversity and succumb to the influences of power (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990). In Laguardia and Pearl's (2009) study, the NCLB policy is noted for unfairly punishing schools who serve low-income and minority students. As indicated by hooks (2003), as the gap between the rich and the poor gets larger, advocates for the poor are silenced by mainstream conservatives who devalue the poor. For example, there is often little or no oversight to the quality of consultant, business led, curriculum as product professional development (Blodget, 2011). Conversely, Ricci (2004) noted that once a person is educated, they have already been socialized to support organizational power. Consequently, relations of power often become enmeshed in economic relationships (Foucault, 1977). In another argument, Stevenson (2010) maintained that the State has adapted itself to the needs of business, competition, and provides education for the purpose of accumulating wealth. This class power increased "social inequality with the redistribution of resources from the mass of population towards the upper classes" (Stevenson, 2010, p. 66). As an example, according to Gimbel et al. (2011), principal participants thought they sought teacher input before making decisions, but teacher participants did not agree. Additionally, teachers may make decisions about curriculum instruction based on their own perception of student needs (Chun, 2010; Short, 1992). The perception of teachers associated with power and decisions of leaders about professional development is lacking in the research.

In countering this argument, teacher knowledge and perception should be examined.

Research indicated that this view was supported by hooks (2000), who called on leaders to be

"radically committed to social justice for all" (p. 100). Subsequently, the act of liberation

must engage professionals as critical and reflective people (Freire, 1970; Stevenson, 2010).

Institutional issues such as the educational system, values, and culture were contextual

understandings that should be applied to a leader's decision making (Howey et al., 1985; Lui,

2010). However, the dialogic processes of professional development may diminish the power

and voices of teachers (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011; Flint et al., 2011). Dewey (1937) stated that

teaching is a process that is much more complex than the transfer of knowledge. In support,

Lui (2010) spoke to the importance of teacher education in developing teacher knowledge

which can be defined in the study as subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge,

pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of content. On the same note, Stigler and

Thompson (2009) shared teachers' descriptions of the job of teaching which included

identifying learning problems, learning from the knowledge base, planning, instructing,

incorporating innovation strategies for instruction, monitoring student thinking and progress

both during and after instruction, and reflecting on instruction. This self-efficacy can be

motivational for teachers to engage in behaviors in which they feel can influence their own

students' productivity and implement strategies that may be efficacious to try (Overbaugh &

Lu, 2008). Similarly, Kesson and Henderson (2010) posited that rethinking professional

development relates to the relationship between leader and teacher by undertaking reflective

inquiry together and creating systemic dialogue to plan, organize, and evaluate decision

making. Furthermore, authentic dialogue can exist when assumptions are set aside about the

position of an expert, and instead, teachers collaborate to promote knowledge in their

classroom context (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011). Consequently, as Leonardo and Parker (2010) noted, with change comes fear and resistance that can "rupture regimes of truth, then establishing an alternative or counter regime" (p. 15). As an example, Stevenson (2010) described Freire's (1970) depiction of the neoliberal educator who prefers training to education, which Freire would defend as indifferent to the dignity and respect due to every human. To this end, this affirmation of dignity for all is a "universal human ethic" (Stevenson, 2010, p. 76). In their research, Musanti and Pence (2010) found that teachers perceived professional development as a fix for teachers, as providing knowledge that they did not already have and to change them even if they were resistant to change. Leaders must be aware of their own influence of power, their own commitment to the organizational structures, and their own commitment to social justice.

In sum, the influence of power on leadership for social justice was apparent in the research. On the other hand, the research stated that there may be unjust manipulation of power concerning decisions about professional development. The current state of professional development remains centered on economic decision making rather than decision making with teacher input in mind. In arguing against leadership for social justice, the research stated that there may be unjust practices that are perpetuated through hegemony, manipulating norms and truths in an institution, and in the need for maintaining organizational socialization. On the other hand, in making an argument for leadership for social justice, the research showed that teachers and leaders sought inclusivity and connection in professional development. The research supporting leadership for social justice stated that leaders who utilize the social justice theory, were aware of the influence of hegemony. A justice-minded administrator is a leader who examines stakeholder opinion in

policy making, reflects on teacher knowledge, and empowers teachers. Analyzing power in terms of leadership for social justice can benefit teacher education and encourage learning in a teacher's particular context. A discussion of leadership practices as related to power may support the assertion that leaders should be mindful of social justice in their decision making process.

The Influence of Change on Decisions of Professional Development

The influence of change in leadership for social justice was seen as necessary to refute standardization and status quo. In arguing against the need for leaders to reflect on the perceptions of teachers in professional development decisions, factors such as the neglect of professional growth, the exclusion of the opinion of teachers, sustained ideologies about professional development, and challenges of change are noted. On the other hand, a reformulation of policies, a change in beliefs, and the motivation of teachers should also be examined in the decision making process.

Change was defined as the restructuring of organizational governance. Effective change engaged teachers, which in turn influenced change in how students learn and help teachers make decisions about curriculum and instruction (Printy et al., 2009). As a social justice issue, the priority of establishing higher levels of learning for all students, improving teaching and professional learning supported by better school and system management, and creating new designs for schools and systems to deliver content was essential to fair and equitable education (Hardy, 2009). With professional development opportunities related to cultural competencies, teachers may widen their social justice approaches as their confidence in pedagogical practices and content knowledge that promote equity deepens (DuFour, 2004). The effect of change in leadership practices can promote teacher and student growth.

Educational change may be manipulated by institutional structures of hegemony. In the discipline of education, the conversations about educational decisions, especially in regard to individual norms, may become coded with invented understanding rather than rules or laws designated by stakeholders (Foucault, 1977). As a result, Freire (1970) suggested that manipulation is a strategy of division or an apparatus of conquest.

> By means of manipulation, dominant elites try to manipulate the masses to conform to their objectives. And the greater the political immaturity of these people (rural or urban) the more easily the latter can be manipulated by those who do not wish to lose their power. (Freire, 1970, p. 147)

For instance, when cultural activities or routines are learned implicitly, by participation, and are held in place by assumptions, beliefs, values, and political forces, hegemony resulted in a resistance to change because of the compromise between what is desired and what is perceived to be possible (Stigler & Thompson, 2009). Institutional practices about leadership practices can embrace change in a socially just manner.

Exclusion and marginalizing practices may defer growth as related to institutional change. As an argument, the research indicated that principal leadership may not be important to the change process that impacts student learning, especially if teacher professional growth is neglected or unrecognized as important (Gimbel et al., 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Professional development is centered on the knowledge of instructional practices rather than emphasizing a professional knowledge base (Randi & Zeichner, 2004). For example, Little (1993) acknowledged that established ideologies of schools and districts helped to present and make explanations for past reforms that did not address the failure of reform initiatives. The current reform movement in education has excluded the perspective of minority educators and has not centered on problems of equity

among a diverse student population that calls for an alternation of classroom practices, equitable distribution of resources, and an equal opportunity for students and teachers to learn (Laguardia & Pearl, 2009; Little, 1993). Leadership practices that neglect reflection about context may not support change.

Productive change was related to the theory of social justice. In research against this claim, according to Hirsh and Hord (2010), sustainable change had to be directly connected to social justice in order to modify beliefs. Administrators in the Catholic school setting are challenged to change and examine curriculum reform as a part of the collective responsibility of accountable education (Davies, 2005). For example, Barnett (2011) described skills that are noted as independent school qualities including self-awareness, local knowledge of community, a sense of caring, and maintaining tradition. In essence, the dominant values of education were humanistic, and administrators should be concerned with the "sovereignty and dignity" of the individual and be committed to the realization of human capacity (Carver & Sergiovanni, 1969, p. 409). On a similar note, Oplatka (2004) acknowledged that success lies in the capability of a school or district to build an image which has institutional rules but also is invested as a caring community. Care and a commitment to relationships are factors in exacting sustainable change.

In a counter argument, policy making by leaders may not reflect the perceptions of teachers in a classroom setting. Marshall and Oliva (2010) agree that some policies do not acknowledge social justice methods of developing teachers. Leaders can become ideological in following organizational policy and ignore research about the development of socially just ways to approach creating policy (Kaplan & Leckie, 2009). However, Giroux (2010) implied that an administrator must take care that the values of big business in education do not

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overshadow the common good of students. Apple (1988) added to the problem by describing another focus centered on a demand for content or disciplinary knowledge. The focus on institutional mandate draws a leader to step away from reflecting on teachers' perceptions.

However, the meaningfulness of professional development to teachers has power for change in the classroom or school context. According to hooks (2003), we need teachers who stress strategies to challenge and resist exploitation and oppression. "When we accept that everyone has the ability to use the power of mind and integrate thinking and practice we acknowledge that critical thinking is a profoundly democratic way of knowing" (hooks, 2010, p. 187). If a leader promoted these programs of reflective practices, especially with a mind to democratic values and concerns for social justice, teachers may see themselves as socially concerned, thoughtful, caring, committed people who connect ideas, issues, and forms of knowledge (Beyer, 1996). Laguardia & Pearl (2009) defined deliberative democracy as citizenship that is learned through the practice of listening, persuading, negotiating, and mobilizing support. The conscientiousness of supporting democratic teaching styles can enable safe and dynamic learning environments in which students are empowered to think critically as well as helping students feel free to express themselves in decision making, effective communication, critical thinking, and cooperative skills (Alo, 2010). Professional development may be perceived differently by teachers because of collaboration and reflection practices.

As a counter argument, institutional norms may halt the utilization of the voices of teachers. Some obstacles to professional development included a teacher's own experience, conflicting ideologies about pedagogy, and lack of voices (Jacobs, Assaf & Lee, 2011). Collaboration was not always teachers' preferred type of learning, because they might not be

accustomed to these types of relationships (Musanti & Pence, 2010). Teachers who did not

see a connection in collaboration and student learning did not prefer collaboration as a

professional development strategy (Wood, 2007). One study determined that barriers to

implementing professional development strategies were time, practical norms of teaching,

and student attitudes as challenges (Ebert-May et al., 2011). On the contrary, the enticement

of funding and pressure from commercial sponsors may cause, or give the appearance of

causing, a compromise in the value of distributive justice (Mintz et al., 2010). However, the

concept of violence, rather than justice, was apparent in Leonardo and Parker (2010) and

Foucault's (1970) work which both point to hostile environments in education framed in

economic terms.

> Proponents of professionalizing reforms such as the National Board for Professional
> Teaching Standards assert that teachers, as an occupational group, lack a distinctive,
> codified knowledge base…efforts to identify and reward exemplarity teachers,
> represent, in part, a step toward codifying such a knowledge base and facilitating
> teachers' collective control over it. (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010, p. 364)

Additionally, Polly and Hannafin (2011) claimed that there is a lack of alignment

between practice and workshop reforms of professional development because of the task, the

lack of support, and the disregard of recommended strategies. Institutions provided

alternatives that were intellectual, motivational, and strategic to professional development,

which could be passive or superficial (Leonardo, 2004; Little, 1993; Marzano, 2003). Studies

based on the career stage model indicated that teachers pursue professional development

training in the middle of their careers, while serene or late stage (19 to 30 years of service)

experienced a loss of engagement (Peterson, 1964; Richter et al., 2011). Arguably, teachers

may not support collaboration or reflection as motivational professional development

strategies.

Motivation of teachers may be a key to finding meaningfulness in professional development. In response, the research stated that the aim of reform strategies may be to look for contextual elements to motivate teachers and their decisions (Banilower et al., 2007; Guskey & Sparks, 1996). Schools and communities with a shared sense of purpose exhibited trust in outside influences about school improvement (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009). In essence, voices was essential to change in education, and teachers should have avenues to be heard in the decision making process, through mechanisms that create a culture through leadership expectations (Easton, 2005). Changing culture by giving voices to teachers may help to promote a democratic community and may support school improvement (Kingsley, 2007). Professional development, especially when differentiated, helped open teacher voices to learning opportunities (Compton, 2010). The change process which included motivation, purpose, and voices was noted as a strategy for leadership practices.

In summary, the change process in decisions made about professional development was found in the research. In arguing against examining the meaning of decisions, as seen by teachers, areas such as exclusionary practices, long term policies, and purported alignment of professional development to curriculum were addressed. In turn, in support of the assertion, research reported that a change in policies, the challenge to organizational ideology, and attention to the voices of teachers was noted. The next theoretical framework addressed was voices, specifically the voices of teachers, which are examined in four subtopics including contexts, perceptions, and trust and participation.

The Voices of Teachers as an Influence on Decisions
of Professional Development

Voice was another important variable in social justice theory and leadership for social justice. Applebaum (2009) spoke to the belief that a leader can create a culture that nurtures social justice by responding to the voices of teachers. The growth of students should also be addressed in professional development, and the needs of teachers to help students grow should be part of the decision making process for administrators. In particular, the accommodations of individuals should be examined before the requirements of the institution especially when addressing the diverse needs of people (Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). Engagement in professional development was the context of a teacher's individual situation in relation to the specific needs of their school setting (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010). Markedly, acknowledging practices in professional development such as social justice leadership, adult learning, and the change process helped administrators understand the needs of teachers (Speck, 1996). Administrators who acknowledge the individual context of teachers could be seen as social justice leaders. Finn (2009) preferred to call social justice educators "transforming intellectuals" because the self-conscious critique of inequality in society is a mission to these critical agents or "agents of civic courage" (p. 178). Thus, the social justice approach to leadership described how school leaders were cultivating stakeholders to embrace the responsibility for creating better schools, better educating students, and serving the common good (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). The acknowledgement of voices by leaders could be seen as a socially just practice.

The Influence of Voices and Contexts on Decisions of Professional Development

Teachers' voices are related to professionalism and identity. According to Flint et al.

(2011), teachers saw their professional identities, not through certification, but through authentic inquiry, relationships, and advocacy for their students. Utilizing synergy and harmony helps teachers to meet their own personal goals and the goals of the organization (Kolb et al., 1991; Snowden & Gorton, 2002). For instance, authentic dialogue can exist when assumptions are set aside about the position of an expert to teachers who are collaborators with each other to promote knowledge in their classroom context (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011). As adult learners, sharing experiences help to make sense of new information instead of disregarding their professional knowledge and insight (Hunzicker, 2011; Meister, 2010). Utilizing dialogue, collaboration, and reflection may promote teacher growth.

Professional development makes a difference in education, and voices should be an element in a leader's decision making process. As active agents, leaders should have as their priority the role of teaching and learning (McHatton et al., 2010). Professional development decisions assessed what teachers actually do with reforms or initiatives once they "cross the threshold of the classroom door" (Kliebard, 2002, p. 130). The development of teachers could include understanding the context of their teaching situation. The success of educational change was shaped by teachers' professionalism and innovation (Sales et al., 2011). Additionally, professional development decisions should be differentiated as related to the needs of novice or veteran teachers (Alvy, 2005; Wolff et al., 2010). Management of intersubjectivity, the awareness of domination, and creating vehicles for true reform were steps for crucial action by transformative leaders about shared decision making (Hui & Russell, 2007; Kenaway & Willis, 1998; Towery, 2007). The determination of principals was also a factor in building capacity to affect student learning (Gordon & Seashore-Louis,

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2009). Leaders should understand that different contexts call for a differentiated approach to professional development.

The power of voice is critical in social justice theory. Huerta (2009) contended that giving voice and power to teachers, students, and parents sustained a democratic community and maintained school improvement. In support, hooks (1994) claimed that articulation of a voice for all was to see education as the practice of freedom rather than education that merely strives to reinforce domination. As a contextual example of the use of voices, Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) spoke to the power of discourse to help promote the use of multiple perspectives in educational settings. Both Dewey (1937) and Leonardo (2004) revealed that hope in education gives hope to all involved in the educational process. A leader can give hope by responding to the voices of teachers. The effort of a transformational leader can empower teachers in the organization (Copeland, 2003). A leader should be aware and respond to inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations by listening to the voice of teachers.

Precise outcomes cannot be predicted in implementation of professional development. Teachers are seen as translators of implementation in their classroom setting (Xu, 2009). Arguably, there is a challenge to bring low-achieving students to proficiency in current accountability practices which necessitates support for teachers to learn effective practices because, as Smylie (1988) reported, high concentrations of low-achieving students in a class may be negatively related to change in teacher practice following professional development. Additionally, Hochberg and Desimone (2010) explained that teachers may lack foundational knowledge and skills in content and pedagogy. Teachers felt that information should be personally interpreted to find relevance in their own contexts (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008). By

the same token, Greene (1988) reminded educators that it is important to be mindful of the ways in which lived experiences are different from group to group. A leader could be aware and supportive of this lived reality. Teacher learning and development directly affected students learning and effective teachers utilized professional development; however, teachers reported that they are not receiving effective professional development (Hargreaves, 2007; Wolff et al., 2010). Teachers also are more likely to implement the professional development reform, particularly the use of materials, when they receive training about the materials (Banilower et al., 2007). The reform and accountability movements have lessened teachers' voices in decision making.

The challenge for leaders is to maintain socially just practices in an institutional environment. Leaders need to find a blend of mandate and empowerment to promote a just environment (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Professional self-renewal and distributed teacher leadership sustain school success (Jacobson, 2011). With teacher learning and improved practice as markers, professional development may be seen as more relevant and authentic (Hunzicker, 2011). Specifically, social justice administrators utilized many different avenues of professional development, which in turn affected students. Promoting education, both public and private, was seen as a right for families and is seen as a component of distributive justice (Pius XI, 1929). The State or public authority is bound to protect and defend the liberty of citizens through distributive justice (Flannery, 1997). In support of this belief, Otunga (2009) clarified that scholarship indicated that social justice supported equitable school practices; however, social justice may not be a socially accepted notion by all stakeholders. Ethical leadership sees leadership as a responsibility with moral parameters, embodying all decision making with ethical enactment at all levels of schooling including in

the classroom, in the school, and in the district (Beyer, 1996; Sergiovanni, 2007; Starrat, 2005). Acknowledging the rights of all individuals involved in education would be ethical. Teachers have the need to feel that their professional career is recognized and helps to contribute to school improvement (Saunders, 2008). So, the leaders and the teachers can become allies, even choosing to leverage their state to help achieve social justice for their students through purposeful and caring interactions (Beachum, 2008; Orrill, 2006). As noted in the research, social justice can be utilized by leaders to support teacher growth.

Leaders may not take culture and context into account when making decisions regarding professional development. Research pointed to the "intransigence of institutions" which challenges regimes of truth by democratically pursuing new ideas through inquiry and reflection (Dewey, 1937; Foucault, 1970; Kesson & Henderson, 2010, p. 213). Teachers may generate confrontations to a culture when leaders discount the importance of support. For instance, teachers may create professional communities among themselves where a cultural change in beliefs and practices based on context may determine how the institution makes decisions (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010). Beaty-O'Ferrall and Johnson's (2010) report noted that it is essential for administrators to recognize and support conditions of collaboration for professional development to succeed. Teachers may find avenues to share their voices in their own contexts, outside of the structures implemented by the institution.

An understanding of the workings of institutional policy as related to academic goals may help teachers in their perception of professional development. In a survey of 1,000 teachers, the perception of teachers about the effect of staff development activities was that the focus should be on content knowledge, active learning, and coherence (Garet et al., 2001; Marzano, 2003). Communities of practice embraced engagement and collaboration and

allowed research to be utilized as consumption of knowledge (Lewis et al., 2011). These

practices should correspond to a teacher's context. Teachers interpreted how well aligned the

professional development was within their own interpretive frames of context (Coburn, 2001;

Cuban et al., 1986; Cuban, Kirkpatrick & Peck, 2001; Penuel et al., 2007). According to

current research, if teachers perceived that the professional development is focused on their

own goals, they were more likely to adopt the strategies that were presented (Lumpe, Haney

& Czerniak, 2000; Penuel et al., 2007). Professional development that is developed with an

understanding of the social justice ideals that teaching and learning are valuable. Training in

analysis, evaluation, and critique could help teachers' current understanding of teaching and

learning (Kale, Brush & Saye, 2009). Similarly, Wood (2000) contended that by reflection

teachers can expand their view of the institutional and cultural patterns that may be obstacles

to the contextual work in the classroom setting. For instance, by writing narratives or telling

stories, teachers can be motivated to change (Atwell-Vasey, 1998; Rose, 2011; Witherell &

Noddings, 1991; Wood, 2000) and to "make moral judgments that teaching requires" (Lacey,

1991, p. 4). In the academic realm, teachers must work hard to connect to their commitment

to change (hooks, 2010). An open and communicative approach to educational goals gives

teachers a sense of ownership and motivation.

Arguments by organizational leaders make claims against teachers having the

capacity to understand their own contexts. For instance, a teacher may have values, beliefs,

and attitudes of the middle class and may have to learn new discourses of the communities in

which they are involved (Finn, 2009). "The starting point for organizing the program content

of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting

the aspirations of the people" (Freire, 1970, p. 95). Applebaum (2009) suggested that this

notion may coincide with Foucault's (1970) ideas about dominant concepts that permeate

organizations and help us to critically think about who are the subjects of the struggle or

"who fights against whom?" (p. 207). However, in studying Freire's work, Stevenson (2010)

noted the progression of education as being at first related to care or concern for one another

with a shift later to the concern for ethics and injustice in education. Knowing the context in

which a teacher must work may be the concern of an educational leader as well as evaluating

a teacher's capacity.

The voices of all stakeholders are to be examined by socially just leaders.

Furthermore, the inclusion of many voices in decision making processes establishes a

democratic means of formulating policy (Frabutt, Holter & Nuzzi, 2008). In whatever type of

collaborative context that a leader chooses, there are democratic principles that should be

noted as important for successful interactions; namely emphasis on student learning, sharing

values, concentration on problem solving, and focusing on data and results and reflection

(DuFour, 2004; Muller & Hutinger, 2008; Stoll, Bolman, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas,

2006). In their study, Dunaway et al. (2010) revealed that when school leaders create a

climate of trust and open communication where thoughtful and measureable goals are

collaboratively developed, supported, and monitored, those leaders significantly increased

the effectiveness of professional growth.

> The greater trust between individuals can foster greater societal trust. Trust between
> individuals thus becomes trust between strangers, and trust of a broad fabric of social
> institutions; ultimately, it becomes a shared set of values, virtues, and expectations
> within a society as a whole. (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008, p. 23)

Listening to the voices of teachers by school leaders can promote trust in an organization.

In sum, the use of teachers' voices and perception by leaders can be an important aspect in creating meaningful professional development. The research against using teachers' voices about professional development decisions noted factors such as achievement gaps, teachers' interpretation of their own context in regard to the professional development, and lack of content skills. On the other hand, research noted that collaboration, sustained professional development, and alignment to their own contexts were helpful factors in teachers' own professional development. The next subtopic centers on the perceptions of teachers about professional development as related to listening and understanding the voices of teachers.

The Influence of Perceptions on Decisions of Professional Development

Leadership with social justice in mind is transformative and promotes choice. Professional development that is transformative should focus on teacher learning, teacher insights, and professional knowledge (Geijsel et al., 2009; Orrill, 2006). Teachers who seek choice in learning by driving self-directed professional development can have an impact on professional development programming (Marcoux & Loertscher, 2009; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). Knowing the perceptions of teachers about a professional development offering may help leaders to provide choices in learning. For instance, Richter et al. (2011) purported in their study that self-directed learning was most helpful for older teachers, including choosing professional literature as a different media for a learning opportunity. Fenwick (2004) noted in his study that teacher directed learning is based upon trust and respect and is enhanced by dialogue with others and reflection of self. Providing choice in professional development sustained observation, communication, and collaboration which mirrored the transformational principles related in leadership theory (Marcoux & Loertscher,

2009). Professional development decisions by leaders could reflect on perceptions and choice as important factors in the process.

To promote social justice, a leader can listen to the perceptions of teachers in order to create meaning in professional development experiences. However, the definition of voices for this study does not include all stakeholders in a school, but the study was limited to finding research about the voice of teachers. By helping stakeholders find their voices, administrators can create conversations that promote action (York-Barr et al., 2006). For instance, the hearing of voices and thoughts may make leaders more aware of shared experiences which help to establish and maintain the commitment to learning (hooks, 1994). Furthermore Frabutt et al. (2008) noted that teacher leadership and teacher voices are essential to a coherent curriculum. In turn, it was important for teachers to give students voices of their own experiences (Giroux, 1997). For this study, voice was defined as the opportunity for teachers to share their perceptions, to explore meaning in professional development, and to be reflective.

Therefore, teachers were seen as critical agents in an educational organization. Leaders use autonomy, professionalism, and collegiality as tools to accomplish accountability standards (Compal, 2004). Moreover, Randi and Zeichner (2004) even suggested that teaching may not be a profession unless there is a distinction between "organizational performance oriented workforce and professional learning oriented workforce" (p. 180). Rather than questioning the professional worth of teachers, administrators insisted on upgrading the competence of their teachers, keeping them current in the field of education (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010; Patrick, 2009). Examination of

Examination of teacher voices and participation in decision making could be made by leaders.

In arguing against this assertion, administrators can be aware that there is injustice in educational inequity. Notwithstanding, professional development decisions should not perpetuate those inequities (Wetzler, 2010). Social justice theory emphasized "human agency or self-determination in the face of institutional rigidity" (Brooks, 2008, p. 6). Although educational decision makers were in the process of creating frameworks for student knowledge and learning, there was not a commitment to offer teachers the same framework (Hirsh, 2012). Through critical interrogation, leaders must contend with marginalizing institutional conditions that perpetuate elitism, which is often uncertain and confusing (Leonardo & Parker, 2010; Marshall & Oliva, 2010). In making professional development decisions, a social justice leader should take care to ensure that frameworks are set for the success of each teacher in their context. Some factors in professional development decisions in regard to inequity are socially generated constraints, political influence, social class distinctions, and the changing nature of the classroom workplace (Guskey & Huberman, 1995). By the same token, districts and administrators should build an awareness of power inequities in social, economic, and political structures and address these in their organizations (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). By acknowledging inequity, leaders open the discussion for dialogue in decision making.

Reflection is a tool that educators can use in creating voices for teachers. According to Parker et al. (2008), when partners work together in reflective dialogue, the school benefits from those collective efforts. Research indicated that effective dialogue can include instructional conversations, discussions with speakers who provide culturally responsive

strategies for learning, interviewing experts, and disclosing contextual personal and professional journeys (Devereaux, Prater, Jackson, Heath & Carter, 2010). This reflection helps teachers to step out of their individual contexts to see the greater picture of a school or district setting. Other embedded forms of dialogue such as book studies, case discussions, and peer classroom walkthroughs were seen as beneficial to the work that help educators learn (Easton, 2008). Opportunities to reflect and utilize voices may be socially just initiatives of professional development.

The lack of voice is a commonality in professional development. Many programs of professional development or organizational goals failed because teachers felt isolated or rarely consulted, in conflict with the goals or in conflict with others about the process (Cowan & Aresenault, 2008; Gray, 1989; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Lawrence, Hardy & Phillips, 2002; Meister, 2010). The perceptions of teachers were limited to evaluations after the professional development offerings or were not be examined at all. When administrators and teachers had differing perceptions of a professional development offering, the results of the offering were perceived by the teacher as insignificant (Dunaway et al., 2010). However, Kale et al. (2009) indicated that teachers lacked reflection practices unless they had structured guidance. Institutional issues such as the educational system, values, and culture are contextual understandings that should be applied to a leader's decision making (Howey et al., 1985; Lui, 2010). The shared aims of leaders and teachers allowed for differences in values of professional development (Rose, 2011). For instance, most teachers did not see themselves as leaders but as "performers, clinicians, diagnosticians, and conveyers of information"; however when in an authoritative, dialogic role as a teacher leader, they saw

themselves as a manager or controller (Schlechty, 2002, p. xxi). The involvement of teachers in professional development decisions may promote professional identity and meaning.

Leaders can empower teachers by recognizing voices. Meister (2010) claimed that dispositions can help make teachers better and more able to teach content. The disposition of teachers who are loyal, committed members of a community may have an impact on learning. Many studies have indicated that teacher commitment is vital for performance in the classroom (Dee, Henkin & Singleton, 2006; Hulpia et al., 2010; Tsui & Cheng, 1999). Egawa (2009) asked leaders to hear the stories of teachers in how they have learned from students, colleagues, and experts. Namely, teachers felt more confident in their own knowledge when they were empowered by other teachers through meaningful interactions (Musanti, 2004; Musanti & Pence, 2010). There are leadership approaches that promote these dispositions and collaboration. The integrated knowledge building approach in which embedded learning, reflection, and establishment of relationships is a recommended practice (Fenwick, 2004). Additionally, collaborative learning helped teachers with autonomy and promoted interdependent relationships (Musanti & Pence, 2010). Processing with a language of transcendence through individual efforts as well as collaboration can cause a reflective type of mutual dependence between teachers and administrators (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990; Leonardo, 2004). Another factor in effective change was promoting teacher agendas over the agenda of districts (Burke et al., 2011). When leaders respond to teacher voices and understand the perceptions of teachers, trust is established.

Acknowledging teachers voices and their perceptions of their own context may be helpful to administrators. The more trust or empowerment a leader gives teachers, the more meaningful professional development experiences may be. To counter this argument, factors

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such as inequity and isolation were examined. In opposition, other research concluded that empowerment, collaboration, and autonomy were important to teachers. The next subtopic examines the influence of trust on professional development decisions.

The Influence of Trust on Decisions of Professional Development

Trust stems from the building of relationships. In order to build teacher trust, it is important for administrators to seek teacher input (Blase & Blase, 1998; Gimbel, 2003; Zimmerman, 2006). For instance, responding to the voices of teachers was described by Donaldson and Preston's (1995) research as a type of management having as agents all stakeholders in an institution. Donaldson and Preston (1995) noted that "managers should acknowledge the validity of diverse stakeholder interests and should attempt to respond to them within a mutually supportive framework, because that is a moral requirement for the legitimacy of the management function" (p. 87). With this in mind, teachers' roles in professional development were seen as being just as valuable as student experience (Towrey, 2007). The perception that leaders trust in the voices of teachers could be empowering. Irrefutably, there was evidence of the observed reality of social contract in situations where social justice theory was utilized as well as instrumental evidence which showed a connection between stakeholder management and corporate performance (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Trust is an integral part of the advancement of an organizational structure.

Responding to and acting upon perceptions of the voices of teachers can build trust. However, the responsibility of change in teaching and learning does not lie in administrative hierarchy but should lie in those connected to the daily workings of a school (Copeland, 2003). Providing teachers with a voice promotes trust, empowerment, and the opportunity to persuade others (Hirsh & Hord, 2010). By helping stakeholders find their voices,

administrators create conversations that promote action (York-Barr et al., 2006). Research

about communication in education spoke to the need be heard and the impact of dialogue

(Cowan & Aresenault, 2008). These responses can be specific to teaching contexts and help

form teacher perceptions about their own capacity regarding the professional development

initiative (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy & Hoy,

1998). Gaining trust by listening could help leaders promote growth in classroom contexts.

By having some control over curriculum content, teachers ensured that they were imparting

knowledge and skills to their students (Schlechty, 2002). Isophahkala-Bouret's (2008) study

examined the role of transformative leadership through critical reflection and suggested a

framework for examining the professional self of teachers. When administrators utilized the

voices of teachers, there was enhancement of the professional growth of teachers.

Relationships between administrators and teachers involve listening and trust.

Tschannen-Moran (2007) stated that it is the principal's responsibility to cultivate trusting

relationships. As determined by Overbaugh and Lu (2008), a teacher's sense of efficacy was

a characteristic that consistently related to student achievement. Self-efficacy promoted the

perceived capability to make motivated efforts to change and use that change to impart

knowledge to students (Bandura, 1986; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Tschannen-Moran &

McMaster, 2009). When self-efficacy was high, teachers' response to professional

development was heightened, while the opposite was true because of perceived disconnect

between professional development and classroom-based efforts (Tschannen-Moran &

McMaster, 2009). Self-efficacy promotes a trusting sensibility in relationships.

Principals may not seek relationships with teachers because of institutional demands

or lack of trust. The reform movement promoted the label of authoritarianism for leaders,

which is seen as a flaw in professional development (Hargreaves, 2007). As a result, reform measures, centralization, and authoritarianism create management models that do not promote social justice (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1972). Social justice leadership may be incompatible with the accountability demanded by organizational mandates.

However, the research posited that administrators' support is essential to growth. Teachers who felt supported by principals were more consistent in promoting organizational goals (Banilower et al., 2007). Vanderburg and Stephens' (2010) study formulated four types of change supported by teacher perceptions of professional development: empowerment, authenticity, expanded use of educational theory, and use of instruction. Those teachers who have learned the institutional values may be more likely to participate in professional development than teachers who do not hold those beliefs or leadership roles in the institution (Richter et al., 2011). Teacher commitment to a school was related to increased effort and performance (Geijsel et al., 2009). As an example, teachers have to make sense of their own professionalism (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008). So, leaders could support professionalism through acknowledgment of teacher voices and perceptions. In another example, contact hypothesis theory, in which interactions are more effective than information when dealing with social justice education, the interactions between people included equal status, common goals, freedom from competition, and support by the norms of the institution (Allport, 1954; Cowan & Aresenault, 2008). Support of teachers is essential to professional and academic growth.

Reframing of professional development to support voices may have to occur to sustain organizational growth. This reframing of professional development could include the development of committees and assemblies, the use of dialogue, collaboration, and

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negotiation strategies, and shared leadership (Sales et al., 2011). Marshall and Oliva (2010) mirrored this research by suggesting that coalitions and alliances can form "powerful societal support" (p. 326). However, some teachers with dominant group privilege may not be willing to reflect on looking at the perspective of the marginalized (Applebaum, 2009) and, as a result, these attitudes may comprise a "hidden curriculum" (Towery, 2007, p. 2), reinforcing inequity in schools. Furthermore, there may be racial disparity in the employment of African-American educators whose credentials could be seen as less valuable because of deteriorating conditions in urban schools. Also, there is racial divergence in employment rates in the labor market which some attribute to the black-white achievement gap (Kantor, 1999). Marginalized teachers lack both support and voices in decision making.

Growth occurs when empowerment and professionalism are affirmed. Administrators are called to create an "occupational ethos" unique to teachers to distinguish them as professionals (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010). Teacher learning is seen as positive when promoting intellectual growth, less isolation, empowerment, and professionalism (Beaty-O'Ferrall & Johnson, 2010). The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1997) noted that it was valuable for administration to provide continuing formation. The benefit of empowering teachers was the depth of an individual's involvement and the thinking that was applied to content knowledge (Jun, Anthony, Achrazoglou & Coghill-Behrends, 2007). As a result, opinions changed when teachers saw positive impact on student learning (Pierce & Ball, 2009).

> At all educational institutions today there are teachers who have responded constructively to the critique of biases by changing their curriculum and choosing to teach in a manner that honors diversity for our world and our students. These teachers, who recognize that their classrooms must be places where integrity is valued

for education as the practice of freedom to become the norm, are courageous because the world all around them devalues integrity. (hooks, 2010, p. 32)

Professionalism enables integrity to grow and creates a culture of support for teaching and learning.

Administrators who perceived teachers as professionals grew relationships through trust. The research noted that principals make choices because of institutional demands which may uphold inequity, particularly in the decision making process of professional development. The research that supported the argument that leaders should examine the perceptions of teachers spoke to the culture of relationships as related to growth in teaching and learning. Additionally, teachers felt professionalism and self-efficacy when their voice was heard in the decision making process. The next subtopic refers to the research review pertaining to the participation of teachers in decision making.

The Influence of Participation on Decisions of Professional Development

Several examples of teacher participation in professional development were found in the research. However, gaps occurred in the research communicating teacher perception and meanings derived from that participation. The facilitators of professional development, the location, and the process of learning can be meaningful to teachers (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Some examples of meaningful participation would be integration of organized development days, study groups, classroom application, and collegial data analysis (Marzano, 2003; Mullen & Hutinger, 2008). As an example, mentoring was found to affect teacher participation in professional development (Kale et al., 2009). Additionally, coursework was seen to have a positive impact on learning, especially for teachers who have completed masters studies (Grieve & McGinley, 2010). As another example, cogenerative dialogue was

seen as valuable in offering teachers shared opportunities to reflect on their practices in

teaching and learning (Martin & Scantelbury, 2009). Furthermore, there was positive

response among teachers about the NBPTS certification especially regarding monetary

incentives and the opportunity to collaborate with educators outside of their district or local

context (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010). These examples illustrate how professional

development may have meaning for a teacher.

There are areas that administrators could be aware of as leaders when assessing how

to support teacher identity and voices in a positive and just manner.

> The call for a new social order in an organization suggested that it is incumbent upon
> leadership preparation programs to teach, model, and cultivate the necessary
> behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge to help shape the social justice value stances and
> skills of practicing and future administrators. (Jean-Marie et al., 2009, p.11)

Administrators empower communities with climates of safety, a spirit of risk-taking,

congruence, pro-activity, multiplicity, and reciprocity (Colbert, 2010). In this way,

participatory democratic structures that involved shared power and decision making not only

produce better decisions but also create a sense of ownership and responsibility for the

outcomes of those decisions by stakeholders (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009). By building

organizational structures that promote voices, institutions support growth and achievement.

Teacher leadership promotes authentic participation. An informed administrator

acknowledges barriers and helps teachers make sound decisions (Pierce & Ball, 2009). Also,

an administrator can look to teachers to contribute to the discourse about professional

development decisions. In addition, Laguardia and Pearl (2009) justified classroom authority

as having legitimacy because of the persuasive influence and power a teacher gives to a

student through what is actually being taught. The same authority can be used in a

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professional development setting. Teachers indicated that professional development, because of the reform and accountability movement, was being taken more seriously, and was improving in quality through helpful learning experiences (Overbaugh & Lu, 2008; Wolff et al., 2010). Shared leadership may enhance the quality of professional development.

Professional learning reflects on context and growth. On the contrary, critical consciousness and critical decisions can be neglected in terms of curriculum equity, strategies, methodologies, and pedagogies that teachers need to be trained in because of many reasons including a lack of resources, a disconnect from real teacher practices, and a real lack of reflection about teacher needs (Hargreaves, 2007; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010). Moreover, a teacher's motivation may be lessened because of a lack of relationship between the professional development offering and individual context. Assessment of teaching should include student factors such as level of achievement, socioeconomic status, and contextual factors (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). A teacher's intentions combined with perceptions can account for variability in behavior (Pierce & Ball, 2009). The planning and decision making about professional development may come from a place that does not acknowledge teachers' voices for many reasons, including disconnected and hurried choices.

Teacher learning may be very disconnected from the training model of professional development. In his research, Leonardo (2004) cautioned that there needs to be clarity and frameworks formulated in dialogues to ensure that teacher conversations do not promote violence but promote growth. This transformational model focused more on empowering teachers as leaders and learning in the organization with a focus on organizational goals (Kurland et al., 2010). Administrators and educators in dialogue with one another can attain

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the vision of a "complementary rather than divergent" relationship (Williams van Rooij, 2011, p. 141). However, the context of all teachers needs to be examined in professional development offerings. With this in mind, there is often a disconnect between teacher learning because the professional development offerings convey the values held by the dominant society and reinforce non-inclusive attitudes (Keating et al., 1998). For example, coursework offered by districts on the school campus were normally offered to teachers who are "considered leaders and change agents" (Witsell et al., 2009, p. 51). Social justice principles may not be achieved in the professional development initiatives of an organization.

Relationships in an organization can prove important in teaching and learning. For example, Printy et al. (2009) indicated that leaders who relate through interpersonal synergies create respectful relationships with individual care of each person. As a result, teachers are motivated to extend respect and inspirational motivation that can move through relationships. As a collaborative leader or a diplomatic leader, a mediator uses the philosophy, "I am human only through others" (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008, p. 25). Therefore, human resource theory could be described as a type of invitational leadership in which the focus is on helping people become more able to relate, trust, and eventually, invest in new ways of teaching (Novak, 2005). The traditionally marginalized are acknowledged through engagement and safety when this theory is espoused in leadership (Applebaum, 2009). According to Smith's (2009) report, professional development should actively support reflection that can transform practice in a safe and relational manner. The learning progression of teachers can create a knowledge base for continuous improvement (Stigler & Thompson, 2009). Success in education can be tied to the quality of relationships (Parker et al., 2008). Leadership for social justice implies that administrators support and affirm teachers.

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Leaders should listen to teachers' voices in making decisions. However, teacher leaders should be able to understand the relationships within a school context and provide resources to influence student growth (York-Barr et al., 2006). Leaders should be aware of the needs of each of their teachers. Because the serene phase of career teachers was the largest number according to Compton (2010), it is important for administrators to understand the perceived needs of teachers in this stage. In a recent survey, teachers at all career levels mentioned collaboration and networking as valuable in professional development (Lee, 2010). Stigler and Thompson (2009) question whether the traditional initiatives of present day professional development will be carried over to another generation of educators. The understanding of context of teachers by leaders helps to promote a reframing of professional development. In one study, Kale et al. (2009) observed that the comfort level in terms of assistance and frequency of assistance influenced teacher perceptions about professional development. The communication of goals of teachers, which were seen as essential for improvement in a district, may alter perceptions of those directives and help support professional development initiatives (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010). Furthermore, according to Wolff et al. (2010), teachers at struggling schools should articulate whether or not the professional development that they receive addresses their contextual needs. Teacher needs and contextual factors could be addressed in professional development decisions.

Intersubjectivity rather than bifurcation could be a more socially just approach for administrators. Both the concept of caring and intersubjectivity, defined as the understanding shared by participants in relationship to contexts, goals, and the evaluation of actions regarding these goals, were utilized in this approach in order to make a learner feel empowered and engaged (Alo, 2010; Hui & Russell, 2007). Leadership for social justice in

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which teachers were prepared to be change agents in their classrooms may contribute to academic growth and emotional success (Witsell et al., 2009). For instance, Alo (2010), Hernandez and McKenzie (2010), Hui and Russell (2007), Goddard et al. (2010) and Kayler (2009) spoke to a learning-centered approach to adult learning which placed responsibility for learning on the student but created adaptability in the program to suit the needs of the student. In response, Goddard et al. (2010) suggested that both instructional and transformational perspectives of leadership can be integrated in what would be called a shared instructional leadership model. In this perspective, principals and teachers work together, tapping their mutual expertise, to improve instruction and achievement (Goddard et al., 2010; Printy et al., 2009). Administrators who heed the voices of teachers work in a socially just manner.

Recognizing participation of teachers in learning and growing is necessary for administrators. The research countered the argument by claiming that teachers may be powerless or in a career stage that does not promote motivation or initiative. Furthermore, giving teachers voice may continue to marginalize those who do not have voices or choose not to use their voices. In contrast, the research supported the notion that affirmation, intersubjectivity, and empowerment can be positive tools for administrators. The next framework addressed was reframing professional development with subtopics including methods of reframing, care, collaboration, and alternative structures of professional development.

Reframing of Professional Development Decision Making

Professional growth takes commitment to changing the norms of an institution. A deeper reflection should be made for an intercultural, inclusive educational approach which

is an "educational model that understands diversity as a value and a norm rather than a deficit or a problem; a model designed to combat racism and exclusion through dialogue, cooperation, and democratic participation" (Sale, Travers & Garcia, 2011, p. 911). As an example, collaboration, in a disciplined approach to professional development, requires reflection, dialogue, inquiry, and leads to teachers making decisions about content and democratic values (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). In a similar point of view, democratic education leads to diversification of practices (Dewey, 1937) as "inquiry artistry" informed by a "love of wisdom" (Kesson & Henderson, 2010, p. 219). Kesson and Henderson (2010) explained that educators who embraced democratic education were committed to inquiry, critical self-awareness, and social justice in regard to their students. Social justice leaders found that this context of reframing ties to relationships and an embracing of voices.

The Influence of Reframing on Decisions of Professional Development

Teachers should be instrumental in decision making about professional development. Lucilio (2009) purported through her research that teachers want to be involved in the process of the implementation of professional development. The success of teachers as human resources in implementing professional development depended on tolerance and the values of human rights (Alo, 2010). Shared instruction or transformational learning can be achieved when stakeholders influence curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Printy et al., 2009). The career stage model reinforced social justice by encouraging individuals to judge their own learning needs and self-direct their own learning rather than spend time in professional development that may not be relevant to their own goals and needs (Dunway, Kim & Szad, 2010). Giving voice to teachers was a socially just practice for leaders. A teacher-centered approach to the professional development, including whether the reform has

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teacher-centered objectives, whether teachers have ability to adopt their own pedagogalogical decisions and whether the development addresses questions related to social justice, was recommended by researchers (Hirsh & Hord, 2010; Kale et al., 2009). Teachers' voice and involvement help to guide administration in reforming professional development.

The opportunity to share voices and perceptions may be important to teachers. Leaders should give quality opportunities including deepening content knowledge, practice, sustainability, and problem solving both at the district and local level (Randi & Zeichner, 2004; Vojtek, 1992). As an answer, Cowan and Arsenault (2008) suggested communication as a strategy in creating just policies. Some decisions may be made through delegating or sharing authority by looking at the context of a situation together and empowering teachers to exercise authority in concert with organizational norms (Schlechty, 2002). In changing professional development, mutual understanding through thoughtful dialogue builds a sense of trust and respect (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008). Giroux (2003) and Stevenson (2010) contend that educators have to understand that pedagogy can take place in many spaces and places, including information rich and technological spaces. In arguing for this assertion, as noted in research, an alternative to top-down structures of power would be structures of facilitation where the structures that work best in a particular setting can be put into place (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990). Certainly, shared autonomy in professional development decisions may promote growth.

In reframing, administrators see themselves as facilitators in the professional development process. As facilitators, leaders must be committed to sustainability, time, effort, and context, rather than initiators of one-day seminars or workshops (Hargreaves, 2006; Pashiardis et al., 2005). Leithwood et al. (2004) supported leadership initiatives to

implement policies which serve all populations of students and encourage leaders to uphold

equity in the implementation. In support of the research, Wolff et al. (2010) noted a

relationship between schools that make consistent AYP had high quality professional

development that addressed the AYP attributes. So, administrators as advocates, in order to

enrich a teacher's classroom practice, focused on adapting top-down communication about

relationship building (Cowan & Aresenault, 2008). In this light, teachers have the

opportunity to ask questions and modify what is learned to fit their own context (Patrick,

2009). On a similar note, Guskey (2000) recommended creating support models that examine

policy, openness, collegial support, and time as components that would promote change in

organizational support. Reframing supports the relationships between individual and

organizational learning and knowing.

Leaders may need to note context and career stages of teachers when implementing

professional development. The tendencies about teaching as an identity helped leadership

teams negotiate in different contexts and helped with specific work in classrooms (Moos,

2008). Common characteristics of teacher identity that helped promote investment in

leadership initiatives included identity that is socially constituted, formed and reformed,

multi-faceted, and formulated in experiences (Jarvis-Selinger, Pratt & Collins, 2010;

Luehmann, 2007). Some studies have identified differences in the teaching career or age of

teachers as an element in participation in professional development (Desimone, Smith &

Ueno, 2006; Mesler & Spillane, 2009; Richter et al., 2011). A teacher's identity may change

as career stages change. Teachers utilized different learning opportunities throughout their

career cycle as they progressed (Richter et al., 2011). Teacher identity could promote

thoughtful decisions about professional development.

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Relationships were vital for principal leadership in order to sustain reframing. Several studies supported the findings that relationships were important to teachers' and leaders' ability to promote teaching through the quality of instruction and learning (Flint et al., 2011; Mushikawa & Lubben, 2009; Printy et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2007). Supporting this theory in Leithwood et al.'s (2004) landmark work, researchers claimed that a leader's emotional intelligence contributes significantly to motivating employees. Further, reciprocal or interdependent relationships among the district, principals, and teachers were important to quality instruction (Printy et al., 2009). Therefore, institutional and individual relationships should be mutually supportive (Mushikawa & Lubben, 2009). Research also reported that individual perception concerning leadership and leadership support has an effect on the degree to which teachers are involved in schools (Damore & Murray, 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). Involvement and relationships can be reframed in a critical and reflective structuring of professional development.

Change in the light of reframing professional development may have an impact on teacher learning. When leaders attempt a change, existing frameworks may shape change in organizational learning (Fauske & Raybould, 2005). As a result, teachers have a need to understand the reasons regarding organizational decisions, even if they do not agree with a position (Cowan & Aresenault, 2008). An example of disregarding stakeholder voices would be when leaders make decisions about technology when they have not assessed teacher instruction or student input about the impact technology can have in the classroom (Fletcher, 2009). Unfortunately, teachers perceive that they are asked to follow an established organizational plan, implement it, and then, leaders blame failure or success on individuals rather than on implementation of standards that may not apply to variability of local contexts

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(Little, 1993; Ricci, 2004). Additionally, educators must be aware of "contrived collegiality," which solicits teachers who are perceived as leaders and provides them with time and place for collaboration (Hargreaves, 1994; Meiser, 2010, p. 894). These teacher choices may not promote teaching and learning. "Schools are poorly designed for integrating learning and teaching on the job" (Fullan, 2007, p. 297). A lack of time and focus may also make it difficult for professional development initiatives to develop with sustainability (Wood, 2007). The goal of leaders using institutional standards may not reflect the actuality of the professional development initiative as implemented in a classroom setting.

To counter this argument, research stated that socially just leaders noted the context of their school or district setting and encouraged the voices of teachers in the reframing of professional development initiatives in order to sustain success. McGregor (1991) attested that participation and managerial skills can encourage people to express their creativity through voices in decision making which, in turn, would provide satisfaction to workers. As asserted by DiPaola and Hoy (2008), professional development in high performing schools has been clearly linked to the school improvement plan. Banilower et al. (2007) noted that "professional development is positively correlated with teacher use of teaching practices that are aligned with standards" (p. 391). Furthermore, a sustainable infrastructure of support for teachers included an awareness of effective teaching strategies, identification of teacher leaders, and pursuing technology that can promote productive classroom practices (Speck & Knipe, 2005). Institutional goals can be addressed by administrators with socially just practices of professional development.

In sum, reframing professional development to promote sustainability and implementation of teaching practices of institutional standards can be achieved by

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educational leaders. The research argued that leaders should be aware of teacher identity, career stages, and collegiality that may not promote the voices of all when making decisions. However, the research countered that sustainability comes from recognizing teacher voices, encouragement of teacher creativity, and reframing with the institutional standards in mind. The next subtopic was the influence of care in leaders' decision making.

The Influence of Care on Decisions of Professional Development

Institutions can become places of care. Truly, there is a relationship between the beliefs and practices in an institution (Ritter, 2010). As seen in the review of the literature, Freire (1970) linked the values of justice and care with issues of democracy and educational development. Fauske and Raybould (2005) contended that a principal who influences an organization about social justice can help develop and change a group culture and vision. Further, Carr's (2008) and Freire's (1970) concepts were reflected in social justice praxis thinking, which links the principles of democracy and equity in proactive ways so that the social justice agenda becomes part of the everyday work of school leaders. In this way, schools more honestly became institutions of democracy (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Social justice has a place in institutional structures.

An examination of injustice both in institutions and contexts was important for socially just leaders. Consequently, Stevenson (2010) devised ethical questions for such reflection, including "What kind of critical pedagogy can become mobilized in settings where commercial culture is more readily accessible than democratic culture and…what kind of education is best suited to the development of a democratic, educated, and participatory society?" (p. 68). To explain, Applebaum (2009) suggested that social justice means to be critically reflective with systemic injustices in which leaders would need to possess skills of

not only logic and analysis but skills of thinking alternatively about inherent institutional structures and norms. As demonstrated by Moos (2008), the virtues of reflexivity, social judgment, political consciousness, competence, equity, and empowerment may live in schools, but that bureaucracy has not always enabled these virtues to have sustainability. Leaders, must take care to approach institutional structures that marginalize teachers with a social justice lens (Applebaum, 2009; Otunga, 2009). Teachers' voices should be examined when looking at institutional inequities.

Organizational structures should be examined on every level for justice. In her research, Harris (2005) described social justice leadership as high density, meaning that a large number of people are involved in the work, are trusted with the work, and are involved in decision making. It was also important to note that there are enduring educational skills and practices that have led teachers and students to success, and critical questions may be asked about radical transformation of learning (Barnett, 2011). As intellectuals, school leaders should be willing to engage in critical reflection "as well as to critically interrogate institutions…in order to uncover as well as construct strategies to combat the rituals and forms of institutionalized oppression these organization perpetuate" (Marshall & Oliva, 2010, p. 26). Social justice leaders worked specifically on noting and addressing inequities through engagement and sustaining a culture of support (Hirsh & Hord, 2010; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia & Nolly, 2004). The context of an organization was acknowledged when creating a caring culture of support.

Management has to be understood in a social justice leaders' decision making. Professional development needs include how to teach locally, how to manage classrooms locally, and how to handle issues they are likely to see locally (Ravitch, 2010). According to

Burke et al. (2011), such liberation included teacher directed professional development models, which emphasized local control, flexibility, and creativity. Organizations should approach reform with collaboration, collegiality, and experimentation (Little, 1993; Meister, 2010). The research suggested that teachers form a culture circle, look at generative words, and create dialogue (Freire, 1970). Blankstein (2004) purported that teaming of teachers in planning for growth built capacity in a school setting. Management was a significant reason that leaders choose not to hear teachers' voices.

Leadership about relationship building must be centered on care. Ultimately, caring was essential to how relations were built and how relations were sustained in communities (Parker et al., 2008). While justice was concerned with what was right, caring was concerned with what is good for people (Stevenson, 2010). Likewise, the virtue of caring was an important element in these groups and was demonstrated through dialogue, collaboration, and an "ethic of care" in the community culture (Flint et al., 2011; Noddings, 1992; Parker et al., 2008, p. 46). So, a leader could have receptivity in relationships with teachers as well as a belief in the equality of all (Noddings, 1992; Parker et al., 2008). Research noted that examples of critical theory leadership, in which a reculturing is occurring, included a sense of safety in dialogue, a commitment to critical pedagogy and dialogue, and discussion of current and researched strategies that center on productive application of learning (Fullan, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2008). Thus, strategic planning of professional development should balance between individual and organizational learning (Pedder & Opfer, 2010). In Sparks and Hirsh's (2000) study for improving professional development, teachers claimed that professional development provided them with new information, caused them to change practice or caused them to seek further training. Motivation and desired

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working conditions drive the professional interests of teachers (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1996). Teachers should try to maintain their education with professional development and critical reflection on their pedagogy and practice (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1972). In Desimone's (2011) study, teachers did use the instructional changes in their classrooms to promote student learning when professional development was successful. Teachers may feel supported by reflective professional development.

Reframing of professional development may support a caring culture of teacher growth. One threat to this recommendation was that so many initiatives are adopted in schools such as learning standards-based content, differentiating instruction, creating assessments, participating in classroom walkthroughs, revising grade cards, and collaborating with other teachers (Guskey, 2009). The investment in teacher training should be weighed against the attributes and dispositions of the teacher and how the teacher operates within the discourse of the school community (Finn, 2009). Historically, teachers were responsible to find time to talk to others about their own growth and student growth, finding moral support, help and friendship through caring, and professional discussions (Nodding, 2005). For example, instead of the mentoring approach, Ebert-May et al. (2011) claimed that an apprenticeship approach can be utilized to increase the frequency of contact between teachers and promote timely feedback. Leaders must work not to fragment reflective approaches to professional development.

Administrators can accommodate teacher autonomy by listening to their perceptions. This correlation between autonomy and principal instructional support leads to building teacher capacity (Goddard et al., 2010). Professional development should be consistent with this organizational culture and capacity to develop teaching that accommodates the values of

the principal who demonstrates reciprocity of action and dialogue (Lambert, 2005; Lynch & Worden, 2010). Principals should provide teachers with local level support as they seek to improve their instruction, especially for a diverse student population (McHatton et al., 2010). There has been a call to action in research for educators to challenge the status quo and design professional development that transforms curriculum and strategies, that address social justice issues, and that conform to institutional goals (Freire, 1970; Keating et al., 1998). By the same token, districts and administrators should build an awareness of power inequities in social, economic, and political structures and address these in their organizations (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Being aware of organizational structures and teacher contexts can help address institutional change.

Changing or reframing professional development takes a sense of care by leadership. The research argued that factors such as fragmented initiatives, lack of support, or not promoting caring relationships hinder an administrator in the decision making process. However, the research also stated that care and concern promote growth. Leaders can sustain and nurture growth about the reframing of professional development. The next section spoke to reframing by collaborating in professional development decisions.

The Influence of Collaboration on Decisions of Professional Development

Relationships in education can be sustained by collaboration. By developing a culture of collaboration, implementation of professional development initiatives is strengthened (Ng, 2009). A network of relationships involves culture, values, attitudes, and understandings of the world (Flint et al., 2011). Additionally, leaders promote reflective collaboration among stakeholders that is not simply at the surface level, such as on-line dialogue or support through planning time, but rather embraces the collaborative nature of action research

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(Damore & Murray, 2009; Hui & Russell, 2007; Kale et al., 2009; Lopez-Pastor et al., 2011).

According to Kaplan and Leckie (2009), teachers remain engaged in collaborative

relationships when the relevance of the training connected with their individual contexts.

These relational linkages also helped teachers learn from each other to differentiate how the

reforms were to be carried out, which encourages autonomy rather than relying on

procedures from institutional leaders (Kolb et al., 1991). Relationships promote the use of

voices in decision making processes.

Structures of support can be utilized to promote relationships. Leaders can frame a

structure of support in their local context to promote dialogue that communicates

"expectations, struggles and questions about teaching and learning" (Martin & Scantelbury,

2009, p. 127). As Maxfield (2009) noted, teachers who seek out dialogue come to the

conversation willing to share their views, but also are interested in the perspective of others.

When the goal was dialogue, crucial conversations led to mutual learning (Maxfield, 2009).

Therefore, self-assessment, selecting their own professional development, and monitoring

their own learning helped to strengthen a teacher's leadership capacity (McCollum & Kajs,

2009). Marzano's (2003) classic study of professional development also pointed to effective

feedback as essential to both teachers and students in order to make evaluations about their

own progress in learning and growing. A form of this feedback would be reflection.

Reflection can be a tool for analysis to investigate and inquire (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Gabriel,

2011). Reflecting on their own teaching was helpful to teachers and teaching actions (Xu,

2009). Currently, reflection in professional development does not acknowledge the long term

professional commitment of the teacher by training how to reflect or giving appropriate time

to reflect (Jarvis-Sellinger et al., 2010). Principals should promote reflection and personal

growth in professional development decisions (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). Reflection is a structure that empowers voices in organizations.

Acknowledging teacher context in professional development may help promote teacher growth. Providing teachers with high quality professional learning opportunities that center on Freierian motivation, differentiating between the discourses of the classes and structures that value people over business could positively affect student performance (Finn, 2009; Foucault, 1970; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2010). According to research, teachers recognize and acknowledge local beliefs, climate, examples, and problems in their own contexts (Collinson et al., 2009). Teachers' own experiences motivated content and pedagogical choices in the classroom (Van Duzor, 2011). Professional development should help teachers learn new strategies of inquiry, which should transfer to learning in the classroom (Van Duzor, 2011). Leaders can look to the cultural context of a school or district as a form of reference for professional development decisions.

There is importance in the interplay between all of the stakeholders in an institution. Principals should support teacher engagement by viewing teachers as professional partners in sustaining learning (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Kurland et al., 2010). One study documented how teachers accommodate, reinterpret, and strategically employ the logics embodied in district accountability policy to maintain or extend their individual and collective control over curriculum and instruction (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010). Their perception of the use of the professional development in their own context could be a motivation for teachers.

Professional learning included relationship building. Emotions and trust are more complex than simply providing linear curriculum or content knowledge (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008; Gravani, 2007). "Authentic professional development is voluntary, inquiry oriented,

pervasive across time and space, and open to the complexity, range and variation of professional development based on teachers' self-identified needs and interests" (Flint et al., 2011, p. 1167). Easton (2008) noted that time scheduled for professional learning in a school day is as legitimate as designating set professional development days. Additionally, organizations utilized human resource development to develop competencies in teachers' performance (Joo et al., 2011). Developing relationships went beyond collaboration to reflection and analysis. While collaboration was important for networking and interactions among teachers, educators needed to feel that they were contributing professionally to pedagogy and data analysis in their school setting (Frabutt et al., 2008). The knowledge that teachers needed to specialize in order to be productive occurred in teaming and provided access to organizational decision making (Drucker, 2009). Professional development should promote competency in teaching and learning.

The value of democracy and liberation were important for growth. Laguardia and Pearl (2009) spoke to the quest in education to seek an optimum learning environment for students and for teachers which included characteristics of academic excellence such as an emphasis on the meaning of learning and empowerment from being meaningfully engaged. According to Freire (1970) and Stevenson (2010), the act of liberation cannot be achieved by relating to those participating in the act of revolt as objects, but instead they must be engaged with as potentially critical and reflective human beings. Freire (1970) argued that educated forms of development offer the possibility of either humanization or dehumanization, and that those possibilities remain tied to the prospect of a revolutionary movement seeking to end class and racial oppression. Moreover, Carr's (2008) and Freire's (1970) concepts were reflected in social justice praxis thinking, which links the principles of democracy and equity

in proactive ways so that the social justice agenda becomes part of the everyday work of school leaders. Social justice virtues such as liberation, empowerment, and uplift are part of the belief system that addresses social inequity and become factors in leaders making decisions about professional development (Bogotch, 2008). Social justice and democracy are related because of the values of political consciousness and action. While these virtues and values may exist in most schools, they "are not always furthered on the level of politicians and administrators" (Moos, 2008, p. 233). If these values are not apparent in decision making, professional development may not promote growth.

Teachers could find value and meaning in collaborative professional development offerings. Musanti and Pence's (2010) study spoke to the value of teachers learning how to collaborate and how to help provide spaces for such learning. Positive collaborative projects included goals that create a structure to form relationships by bonding through a common, lived experience (Cowan & Aresenault, 2008). Another approach to collaboration was found in Kennedy and Shiel's (2010) study, in which classroom observation and feedback were promoted to encourage collegiality. Collaboration demanded that teachers learn different pedagogical strategies and learned how to work as a collegial team in addition to incorporating this learning into the classroom (Bradburn, 2004; Dunlap & Goldman, 1990; Van Duzor, 2011). While Damore and Murray (2009), who conducted the first study of urban teachers' thoughts on collaboration, asserted that teachers supported inclusive practices in the context of their own teaching environment, including high numbers of students with special needs or low socioeconomic status, they also acknowledged that teachers felt supported by collaboration with other teachers in these contexts in their own school setting. Parker et al. (2008) contended that in order to keep these professional dialogues of collaboration effective,

time, energy, and an investment of relationships was crucial. Collaboration is a form of professional development that could be reframed in positive ways to promote growth.

Collaboration is an element that provides voice and empowerment to teachers. The arguments against using collaboration included the possible marginalizing of teachers who do not prefer collaboration as a professional development program or that strategies necessary for collaboration may not be possible in certain contexts. The argument for collaboration suggested that teachers learn from each other and that inclusivity of teachers' voices is utilized. In addition, collaboration was seen as advancing student achievement. Reframing professional development with collaboration in mind may be useful to administrators to enhance teacher and student growth.

The Influence of Alternative Structures on Decisions of Professional Development

Engagement is a reason that leaders should formulate alternative structures of professional development. Administrators promote relationships by guiding teachers to intellectual research and give job-embedded opportunities to enhance instructional skills (Kurland et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005). Buttressed by this concept, Penuel et al. (2007) reported that teachers perceived significant changes to their practice when the professional development lasted over a several months. Although presenters of professional development aimed to increase pedagogical knowledge, in Musanti and Pence's (2010) work, presenters reported that emotional engagement and relationships helped to promote teacher change. According to hooks (2010), although self-actualization may not be the goal of teachers, it can occur when genuine learning was happening. In addition, hooks (2010) claimed that the basic principles of love in a classroom form conditions for empowered learning. A critical pedagogy embraced love instead of being

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motivated by profit and addressed those who are oppressed (Stevenson, 2010). An organizational culture of professionalism can be empowering to teachers and leaders.

Growth plans promote self-directed professional development. Self-directed professional development is a result of teachers' own initiative and provides "an internal locus of control" (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009, p. 382). Critical thinking can come about when the student and teacher learn from each other (Stevenson, 2010). As noted in his research, the vocation of teaching requires special qualities of the heart, careful preparation, and a willingness to accept new ideas (Flannery, 1997). The Catholic school educators must be alert to developments in the field and be skilled in the art of education (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997), especially concerning "discoveries of modern times" (Flannery, 1997, p. 733). Notably, Sergiovanni et al. (2009) suggested a value added approach to accountability in which leaders provided recognition of their faculty based on growth that is not necessarily benchmarked. In the same way, Hirsh (2010) claimed that simply by giving attention to early childhood educators and curriculum, the decline in achievement, the failure to be equitable, and the loyalty of the nation would be affected positively. As another example, Teach for America, which was founded in 1990, had the mission of ending educational inequity by offering educators alternative methods of certification and training practices (Gabriel, 2011). Sergiovanni (2007) suggested the practices of coaching, portfolios, and inquiry-based supervision as valuable tools for instructional leadership, especially in contexts with diverse learners. In essence, professional development that offered collaborative working relationships to a diverse group of educators while looking at systematic inequity from all sectors such as grading practices, cultural stereotypes, and equitable social relations, should be embraced by leadership (Beyer, 1996;

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Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000; Wetzler, 2010). There are many models of self-directed, goal oriented professional development that promote teacher professionalism.

Leaders are called to promote a framework of reflection. According to Freire (1970), the recovery of humanity of the oppressed can only be achieved by challenging oppressive relationships that can be found in traditional forms of education. Smith (2009) maintained that reflection and awareness can transform an educator when a framework for support is implemented as professional development. Both informal and formal types of professional development are necessary for teacher improvement (Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, 2006). Content, process, and experience promote educational change (Smith, 2009). The "organic unfolding" of professional development has greater effectiveness than a directive professional development option (Flint et al., 2011). These nondirective opportunities support transformation and renew energy in teaching (Flint et al., 2011). The development of professional development from traditional one-day workshops or short seminars to movement for a more collaborative environment sets the path for alternatives that give voice to teachers and help educational institutions to develop new leadership structures that promote democracy and social justice (Copeland, 2003; Orrill, 2006). Teacher mental models are challenged when professional development is not formulated as a workshop (Orrill, 2006). Reflection can deepen a teacher's perception about teaching and learning.

Dialogue is a framework that promotes voices for teachers. In successful professional development, facilitators have maintained contact, material support, and availability (Lee, 2010). Community partnerships, interdisciplinary collaboration, and field practice are also components of successful professional development (Wood, 2007). However, Jean-Marie et al. (2009) noted that teachers will always dialogue with each other and may need help in

formalizing a dialogical approach to learning. In other collaborative practices, such as peer coaching, teachers are allowed to risk and innovate in a structure that provided the follow up necessary for acquiring new skills (Meister, 2010). Teachers may need direction to pursue a dialogical approach to professional development.

The professionalism of teachers can stimulate useful professional development. Opposite of a loss of agency or identity, teachers' professional life promoted commitment and improve instruction (Flint et al., 2011; Short, 1992). Lucilio (2009) found that for staff development to proceed, especially in Catholic schools, teachers must be involved in developing a vision and engaging their peers. However, teachers were frustrated over their exclusion from important decisions that directly affected them (Meister, 2010; Short, 1992). Spielman and Radnofsky's (1997) study found that the shift in professional development about accountability was designed with the belief that teachers could impose responsibility on themselves in a proactive manner; however, this could only be attained in a climate in which teachers were already treated as professionals. Teacher professionalism is expected to be present for government initiatives of accountability to succeed (Chun, 2010). Consequently, the research encouraged administrators to leave more educational decisions in the hands of professional educators (Kliebard, 2002, Mustani & Pence, 2010). Teachers can become a "repository of practitioner knowledge" (Stigler & Thompson, 2009, p. 442) when on-site professional development is utilized in a school (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010). Although the ISLLC standards address social justice in Standard Five, which states that educational leaders should promote the success of students by showing a sense of ethics and justice, Marshall and Oliva (2010) noted that leaders must move beyond advocating for justice and speak to what is necessary to become a social justice leader by taking a stance of

intervention, especially in relation to teacher learning and student growth (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2008). In like fashion, Stader (2013) spoke to the value of seeking and appreciating the perspectives of others as fundamental in formulating decisions. According to Hirsh and Hord (2010), leadership interventions include the sharing of power, authority, and decision making. Thus, Marshall and Oliva (2010) contend that the incorporation of a caring community mindset for leaders along with the concepts of engagement, connection, and spirituality, would support social justice leadership. Giving responsibility to teachers is a risk, but trust is an element of social justice leaders.

Action research is another structure that supported social justice leadership with accountability as a focus for professional development. For example, action research should be grounded in a teacher's contextual reality, overcoming isolation with collaborative peer groups in which knowledge is constructed through action research data derived from actual classroom contexts (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Musanti & Pence, 2010; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Through direct practice and timely feedback, teachers can study how students learn through action research (Beyer, 1996; Ebert-May et al., 2011). Action research was also seen as important to practice including promoting the professionalism of teachers by enabling them to present to colleagues or promote their research in academic journals (Frabutt et al., 2008; Lopez-Pastor et al., 2011). Districts and schools have used action research to improve practice and contribute to knowledge about teaching (Frabutt et al., 2008). This cultural shift in professional development can enhance social justice leadership by providing critical reflection for teachers (Stigler & Thompson, 2009) and holding "true to the notion of educational artistry" (Kesson & Henderson, 2010, p. 224). This

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example of reframing of professional development to empower teachers through action research is supportive of teacher growth.

Reframing of professional development includes several strategies that promote teaching and learning. Professional development strategies that can be directly utilized as teaching strategies are also found to be effective types of learning tools include chalk-talk, consensus boards, Socratic seminars, and teaching murals (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2007; Harste, Short & Burke, 1996; Kaplan & Leckie, 2009). On-line resources such as the presentation of learning strategies are noted as promoting more commitment from teachers in research (Joyes, 2008; Shanklin, 2009). In another study, Gabriel (2011) reported that access to an on-line community encouraged self-directed learning and higher degrees of collaboration. The use of technology can reframe how professional development is utilized by teachers.

Relationships are important in support of reframing professional development. Professional development can be seen through interventions such as small classes for teachers, targeted programming, and parent education courses (Ravitch, 2010). Small group discussions may be enhanced with communication and exploration of ideas for teachers who may be reluctant to participate in larger groups (Lee, 2010). Mentors help to provide feedback, model demonstration lessons, and promote a learner focused relationship (Compal, 2004; Witsell et al., 2009). The valuable assistance of a mentor can provide career development and assistance in promoting differing strategies of teaching (Kale et al., 2009). Principal leadership should find effective teachers willing to mentor, acknowledge their own professional growth, and experience and motivate them to be of service to their peers (Crippen, 2005; Gimbel et al., 2011). Modeling for others not only transfers knowledge but

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reveals values and beliefs about the profession of teaching (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Framing professional relationships may promote teacher growth.

Collaboration outside of the school context may give a global focus to educators. Collaboration between professionals is important in providing children's services (Rose, 2011). Districts are finding unique ways of providing development that could be directly applied in the classroom setting (Patrick, 2009). This openness may even move to the national level because of competition with other countries, especially in regard to achievement assessments (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). A global community where peers in the building, the district, the local community, and the global world can communicate and learn from one another should contribute to the success of all students in the world (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). International and national standards aligned with curriculum, instruction, and assessment combined with aligned professional development would support teachers in the consistency of their work (Williams et al., 2009). Another form of differentiated professional development is the establishment of professional development schools where faculty from universities partner with teachers to study educational issues in schools and support teachers in their practice (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008; Trachman, 2007). Still another type of collaboration is to invite professors from universities to be "in-residence" at a school to conduct action research, serve on councils or boards, or conduct in-services (Witsell et al., 2009, p. 47). The concept of a "clinical faculty" consisting of master teachers coaching others that help provide support and mentoring was reported as valuable to administrative teams (Randi & Zeichner, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009; Witsell et al., 2009, p. 47). Additionally, providing professional development on-site with active learning has been reported as being useful (Hanna, Salzman, Reynolds & Fergus, 2010). Another

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approach to utilizing master teachers is the use of cogenerative dialogues in which a leader

helps structure discussion times for educators and stakeholders to focus on teaching and

learning (Martin & Scantelbury, 2009). These dialogues involve all stakeholders as "agents

of change" (Martin & Scantelbury, 2009, p. 125) for improvement (Tobin & Roth, 2002).

Partnering with others as a professional development strategy has been shown to promote

success and encourage renewal for all stakeholders (Beaty-O'Ferrall & Johnson, 2010;

Witsell et al., 2009). Working in partnership gives teachers a sense of collegiality and

professionalism.

Reflection includes differentiation of adult learning styles. For example, dreaming

helped teachers to act and represents hopefulness (Leonardo & Parker, 2010). Intensity and

time is needed for teachers to become fully competent in reflective professional development

(Overbaugh & Lu, 2008). Cognitive development for students and adults needs not only time

but interaction with others and structures to provide support for thinking (Hanna et al., 2010).

Lee (2010) noted that teachers recognized when professional development was supportive

and helpful because collegial relationships encouraged productivity (Lee, 2010). The

literature revealed that teacher education programs engaged teacher candidates in reflective

practices and cultural experiences (Devereaux et al., 2010; Sleeter, 2008). Leaders used

reflection to assess the perceptions and meaningfulness of the professional development

decisions.

Administrative support is vital for sustaining professional development. Polly and

Hannafin (2011) posited that teachers must have classroom support, such as model teaching

or peer observation, to enact new strategies. As promoted by learning-centered theory,

materials and resources mentioned in professional development sessions should be available

to teachers as well as a framework for opportunities for reflective discussion (Carew, Lefoe, Bell & Armour, 2008; Smith, 2009). Randi and Zeichner (2004) and Pegg (2010) both articulated in their studies that networking, internships, and work-shadowing are all non-traditional forms of professional development that promote teacher knowledge. The most successful training is a combination of job-embedded and organizational programming in which a leader understands the workings of an organization to find ways to motivate and sustain student learning (Fullan, 2009). All reframing actions included creating a culture of a learning environment for all, creating a clear target with a plan of action, and creating measures that will sustain the effort of teachers and students (Fullan, 2007; Knapp et al., 2003). Reframing efforts can support sustained professional learning in an educational organization.

In conclusion, the use of alternative structures in professional development was emphasized in the research. Appendix A detailed 96 different structures of professional development as found in the research and noted in the study. The counter arguments against using alternatives included fragmentation, the lack of responsibility by teachers to grow, and differentiated styles of learning. On the other hand, the research detailed the argument that sustained professional development utilizes action research, partnerships, and clear plans for measuring growth that stimulated teacher and student growth. Evaluating the research from the theoretical framework of organizational behavior, leadership practices, voices, and reframing, there were gaps in the literature which included a lack of studies pertaining to teachers' perceptions and meaningfulness of professional development decisions. While there is much research about social justice theory, professional development and the influence of

power in organizations, the thoughts, voices, and reflections of teachers was not regarded in the literature. This phenomenological research study addressed the gaps in literature.

Summary, Implications, and Discussion

In conclusion, a leader could look to socially just processes of making decisions about professional development to promote positive teacher perceptions and create meaning for educators in their individual school and classroom contexts. There were several reasons that research concluded would be arguments against using the social justice theory as an administrator. However, there were compelling arguments for using socially just practices. The research in the review of the literature took both points of view and concluded that there was a gap in teacher perception of professional development decision making as formulated by principal leadership.

The arguments against using socially just principles for teacher perception of professional development came from the four topics of discussion. First, the topic of organizational behavior argued that market forces, reform, and accountability may drive professional development decisions. Next, leadership practices made the claim that power, deficit thinking by administrators, and maintaining the status quo were reasons that leaders did not take teacher perception into account. Also, in analyzing the use of voices of teachers, administrators found that teachers may disregard professional development because of their individual contextual situations; teachers may isolate themselves; or leaders may be influenced by institutional demands that negate working on professional relationships. Lastly, the research noted that reframing may need to occur when examining career stage motivation, fragmentation in professional development offerings, or strategies that

marginalize certain contexts. These arguments pointed to a hesitation by a leader in seeking the perceptions about professional development from a teacher's perspective.

On the opposite side of these arguments, a leader may want to seek how a teacher perceives professional development in order to ensure that initiatives will be implemented in the classroom context. So, a counter argument to disregard teacher perception would be that empowerment can create change in professional development. In turn, the leadership practices of providing autonomy and self-efficacy could promote a sense of professionalism. The next argument emphasized the use of voices as a motivating factor in utilizing professional development strategies by teachers. Finally, sustaining professional development by reframing with a sense of relationship building and care can promote growth. These arguments may help an administrator see the benefits of social justice leadership.

The gaps in the literature pointed to a lack of teachers' voices in the research pertaining to how teachers interpret meaning in professional development. Studies indicated that arguments against utilizing teachers' perceptions dealt with administrators' views or examined corporate intentions. The counter arguments examined first year or context area teacher viewpoints and did not include examination of teachers' perceptions specifically regarding professional development. This study and further studies may create scholarly insight for leaders in regard to their own decisions about professional development. Furthermore, this study, in particular, attempted to address the gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3 details the methodology, giving a description of the design as well as providing a rationale for the research. This chapter addresses the case studies, data analysis plan, and limitations to the study. In Chapter 4, the data is analyzed and meaning is derived

about the phenomenon. Lastly, Chapter 5 provides conclusions, recommendations, and

implications of the data analysis. The study will also recommend continued research related

to teacher perceptions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The problem of the study centered on the meaning of professional development in regard to the perception of teachers. In this regard, decisions about professional development may or may not be meaningful to teachers, especially in relation to teachers' context. An administrator's role of providing professional development to teachers as well as assessing whether that offering is helping a teacher to grow as an educator by providing students with excellent teaching and learning is a leadership skill that has not been adequately researched. Kennedy (1998) reported that only 10 of 93 studies of professional development evaluated the impact of professional development on student learning. According to Monroe, Holly, and Rainbird (2000), there may be barriers to staff's experience of learning and development including delivery methods, motivation, or practicing the approach after the training. This study explored the essence of professional development for teachers including teacher perceptions and meanings.

The theoretical framework for the study centered on looking at decision making about professional development with a social justice lens. By analyzing organizational behavior, leaders may reflect on the meanings of professional development for teachers. Organizational barriers to professional education may include the lack of use of research-based teaching practices (Adelman & Taylor, 1999). Also, leadership practices were a part of the framework because, according to ISLLC Standard Two, a leader should promote the success of a student by sustaining an instructional program that promotes student learning (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2008). Giving teachers choice in learning and professional

development is a constructivist principle related to leadership theory (Marcoux & Loertscher, 2009). On that note, hearing the voices of teachers is in the framework. Heichberger (1975) suggested that principals' decisions about professional development influence student learning because principals create dialogue and relationships with the staff that promote discussions about positive change. This dialogue and subsequent development decisions should focus on promoting a culturally responsive pedagogy to gain quality in performance (Barnes, 2006). Lastly, teachers may gain individual professional growth that may in turn affect student achievement. A teacher's knowledge has a significant impact on student learning (Clewell et al., 2004). Reframing of professional development may be a socially just way of examining teacher perceptions and meanings about professional development. In this way, the theoretical framework provided a review of the literature and asserted that leaders may want to note the perceptions of teachers about the meaning of professional development.

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the perceptions of professional development of elementary teachers in a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The study utilized a phenomenological tradition with a case study approach. The unit of analysis was professional development experiences of teachers. Research methods included narratives, focus group sessions, and individual interviews. Each of these data sets examined the research questions and sub-questions of the study.

The phenomenological tradition of the study researched the essence of the meaning of professional development to teachers in a Catholic Midwestern diocese. Moustakas (1994) identified this type of study as transcendental because a researcher looks at the phenomenon separate from their own experiences. The study was phenomenological because the researcher found fundamental essences in the experience (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The

researcher conveyed the essence of the experience by providing a textural and structural description of the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007). Finally, the unit of analysis was professional development because, as noted by Corbin and Strauss (2007), the unit of analysis was a concept. The concept of professional development, defined as building content knowledge and capacity for skills that improve student performance, included various events of learning in the Catholic Midwestern diocese that teachers had experienced.

Professional development was offered to teachers in the diocese in four common ways. First, professional development was provided by the diocese in large group settings twice a year. The first session usually mirrored the strategic planning goals set out by the diocese through national accreditation parameters. These sessions were generally offered as a keynote speaker and breakout sessions. The sessions were conducted by outside educational professionals, administrators, or master teachers in the diocese. The sessions were commonly curricular in nature with research-based practices as the breakout topics. The second session offered by the diocese was a catechetical workshop designed to promote catechetical certification through diocesan parameters and was conducted by diocesan employees.

Professional development was also offered at the regional level. Typically, this professional development mirrored national accreditation goals and was specifically geared to strategies that promoted teaching and learning. The sessions were conducted by outside educational professionals or administrators or master teachers in the region. These sessions were offered once during the school year.

The third form of professional development offered to diocesan teachers was at the site level. On-site administrators, often with a committee of staff members, decided on the professional development offerings at the school setting. The teachers were contracted for

eight days either prior to the school year started and or after the school year ended to attend professional development in their building. In addition, some schools in the diocese have half days on first Fridays designated for site-based professional development. These on-site days can be designated as work days, retreat days, or professional development days. There were some common professional development experiences, such as first aid and CPR training, blood-borne pathogen training, crisis plan updates, and handbook updates. Other professional development choices were solely at the discretion of the administrator or professional development committee of the site-based school.

The last form of professional development offered to diocesan employees was any outside or global professional development that teachers may have access to through Title or other funding. Title I, through by-pass options, provided professional development for those teachers who have Title students in their classes. Title II was offered for teachers who want to take one-day workshops or attend outside conferences. Teachers and administrators may find other sources of funding for professional development to attend for credit or for educational understanding of research-based strategies. These offerings of professional development were at the discretion of the site-based administrator.

The researcher based the study on common experiences of teachers in a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The data sources utilized were common to the diocese. This mindfulness of the data sources and the focus of professional development ensured that the criterion sampling of the teachers was based on common experiences. This type of sampling had a "focus on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

The primary overarching research question of this study asked: How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences? The sub-questions used for the systematic research process included: (a) What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as meaningful and useful?, (b) What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?, (c) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?, and (d) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers?

The study was significant because, while there were many studies about professional development and leadership, there were few studies about the meanings of professional development to teachers. In addition, there were few studies about how teachers transfer this meaning and their experiences of professional development into their own classrooms in order to enhance teaching and learning. Both district and site level administrators, in looking at organizational behavior and leadership practices and in listening to the voices of teachers, could be informed to reframe professional development according to the data of the study. The study could promote an understanding for teachers in terms of helping organizations examine teacher perceptions about the decision making processes pertaining to professional development. District policies could also be addressed by noting teachers' perspectives of the meaning of professional development. In order to create meaning for teachers in a socially just manner, leaders should reflect on the perceptions of teachers when making decisions about professional development.

Chapter 3 provides a rationale for using qualitative research in this study as well as illuminating the role of the researcher. This chapter also provides the design of study, which includes participants, data sources, and analysis of the data. This chapter details the limitations of the study and the ethical considerations of the study.

The use of qualitative research for the study was justified by the goal of finding meaning in a phenomenological sense. The study helped me as a leader to find answers to the problem of making decisions that were meaningful and useful to teachers in choosing professional development opportunities. The study may help other leaders to understand, through the multiple cases, the essence of professional development through data translation that provided a rich interpretation of the meaning.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has significant usefulness in the field of education. According to Maxwell (2005), an intellectual goal of qualitative research is to study a small number of individuals to understand the meaning of events and actions. Qualitative research is also conducted in a natural setting, and a qualitative researcher collects data that focuses on the participants' perspectives and meanings (Creswell, 2007). Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that there are recurring features of qualitative studies that include: doing field work, encompassing a holistic overview, bracketing preconceptions, isolating themes, explicating understandings, interpreting theories, measuring as a researcher, and analyzing data through patterns of words.

The use of qualitative research was significant for this methodology because, during the data collection, the researcher observed, listened, related, and interpreted (Berrios & Lucca, 2006). Qualitative methodology was used in educational research to find themes and

understand meanings as found through gathering data from fieldwork such as narratives and interviews. In qualitative research, a researcher must acknowledge that the theories or findings were not entirely grounded on evidence but on the degree to which the community can find a consensus in the data (Niaz, 2009). The choice of qualitative research for this study came from the intellectual goal of studying individuals to find the essence of events and actions (Maxwell, 2005).

The study of professional development as a unit of analysis warranted the use of the tradition of phenomenology. The teachers who have experienced this phenomenon shared experiences in which the researcher found meaning. This was the intellectual goal of the researcher, and various forms of collection of data helped ensure the essence of the unit of analysis was obtained through extensive data collection. The major outcome sought in this study was the description of the structures of consciousness of professional development experiences of teachers as experienced firsthand (Grbich, 2007). The use of phenomenology enabled the researcher to find the meaning or essence in the experience of professional development for teachers.

Phenomenology has a philosophical component detailed by Husserl (1931) with the common tenets of the study of lived experiences, the consciousness of the lived experience, and descriptions of those experiences (Patton, 2002). In another study, Moustakas (1994) took a different approach to lived experiences. The tradition of phenomenology was utilized by the researcher and was the philosophy that Moustakas (1994) embraced as a focus on a description of the experiences of participants. Moustakas (1994) spoke to the objective reality of the lived experience as well as the individual experience. The reality of the experience was consciousness and described how the participants view the phenomenon,

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which in this case was professional development (Patton, 2002). The question of what individuals have experienced and what situations have influenced those experiences mirrored the study's research question about professional development (Moustakas, 1994).

Patton (2002) described the qualitative inquiry method of phenomenology as the study of essences which have core meanings because of a common phenomenon. The phenomenological technique of qualitative study that the researcher utilized was phenomenology, which was an approach that focused on experiences which were in the world of the teacher. As noted by Grbich (2007), teachers had the capacity to respond and react to professional development, and meanings are uncovered from these reactions. The major outcome in phenomenology is the description of the meaning of the experience (Grbich, 2007). A researcher bracketed out one's own experience as necessary for the phenomenological tradition (Creswell, 2007). There was a defined systematic data analysis procedure suggested by Moustakas (1994) in which the essence of the experience was approached through statements, themes, and descriptions.

The rationale for using the transcendental phenomenological tradition was that the study was a search for meaning or essence of professional development. In order to find that essence, the researcher had to identify the phenomenon, bracket out her own experience and collect data from several people who had experienced the phenomenon. The researcher then had to analyze the data by reducing the information to statements of significance to find common themes to convey the essence of the experience (Creswell, 2007).

Narratives in this research were guided by a theoretic lens of phenomenology. The narratives for this research had a specialized contextual focus of professional development (Creswell, 2007). The narrative research situated the individual's story of professional

development and generated themes that came from that story (Creswell, 2007). The rationale for using narratives in this study was to have the participants in the study relate specific incidents of professional development that they had experienced. The researcher had to explore the context of the different stories to find interpretations (Grbich, 2007). Patton (2002) noted that narratives may provide researchers with perspectives and understanding that would be helpful to gaining the meaning of the phenomenon.

The tradition that the researcher utilized as a lens for describing meaning was the use of case studies. "Multiple cases offer the researcher an even deeper understanding of processes and outcomes of cases…and a good picture of locally grounded causality" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 26). Creswell (2005) suggested that transcendental phenomenological studies which focus on a description of the experiences of participants often have data from five to twenty-five individuals who had experienced the phenomenon. In this case system, the researcher formulated eight individual cases. Case studies were utilized because the research provided multiple cases to illustrate the meaning of professional development. The setting included teachers in a Catholic Midwestern diocese, included criterion sampling of teachers, and included the concept of professional development.

Yin (2003) spoke of the logic of replication in multiple cases studies to ensure that the procedures for each case can be duplicated. The multiple cases in this study had replication from a narrative guide, a focus group session guide, and an interview guide as well as common professional development experiences. The data analysis from the case study led the researcher to detail the lessons learned from each case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The rationale for using case studies was that many perspectives were gained in the study by gathering information from several sources. Cases can be vivid and illuminating,

especially if the researcher was critical in the choices made about the qualitative research data collected and analyzed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The case study approach helped the researcher to sample several teachers and approach the phenomenon of professional development with a differentiated spectrum of traditions.

The rationale for the study came from the present knowledge of reviewed literature, which indicated that professional development may enhance the growth of teachers and influence the performance levels of students. The study targeted the audience as administrators on district and school-based levels who were seeking to promote teacher growth by making decisions about professional development offerings. The reviewed research noted that organizational culture of schools and districts was linked to the complexities of individual teachers' contexts. Leaders may need to look beyond political and market forces and relate decision making to the context of teachers. There was a lack of research pertaining to the understanding of teachers' perceptions and meanings about professional development experiences as seen through the complexity of social justice issues. As noted, studies about meaning in education, including the meaning of educational practice, meaning attributed to teacher education, and meaning related to student teachers were present; however, studies about the meaning for professional development for current teachers were lacking (MacIntyre-Latta et al., 2007; Van den Berg, 2002; Wasserman, 2009). In order for leaders to sustain growth and change, it may be important to give voice to teachers about their own learning and to execute changes in the culture of their own professional development experience to promote advanced student performance (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011). The study contributes to the research about decision making regarding

professional development and the meaning of professional development for teachers, especially in the light of social justice issues.

The rationale for the selected site selection was based on criterion sampling from elementary settings from eight schools in a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The potential pools of school selection were 26 schools in the diocese. The eight schools were determined from sites based on enrollment and socio-economic status, academic, and demographic indicators. These schools were chosen based on the high and low enrollment, socio-economic status, academic scores, and diversity: four schools with low indicators were selected, and four schools with high indicators were selected.

The rationale for the selected population was based on criterion sampling from these eight schools. The potential pool for participants was 120 teachers from eight schools that were selected for the study based on criterion sampling. The first criterion for selection were to select teachers with over ten years of experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. The second criterion for selection were to have common experiences of professional development in the diocese. The third criterion for selection were to have filled out diocesan evaluations about the professional development experiences. The rich detailed data in the professional development evaluations gave indication of persons who had some interest in professional development. One teacher was chosen through criterion sampling from each of the four schools in School Set 1. One teacher was chosen through criterion sampling from each of the four schools in School Set 2. In total, eight participants were selected for the study based on criterion sampling for participant eligibility and purposeful sampling from each site. The researcher was not in a supervisory position over any of the teachers in this study.

The Role of the Researcher

The theoretical influence that was the focus of the research was the theory of

phenomenology. Husserl (1931) described the philosophy of intentionality or consciousness

as knowledge of being present to ourselves and things in the world. Each intention was

composed of phenomenon based on the perceiving person called the nomea and the beliefs

about the phenomenon which is the noesis (Husserl, 1931). In terms of this study, the

researcher had to gather data which detailed the actual experiences of professional

development in terms of setting and context or the nomea, and also gathered data which

detailed the beliefs and feelings about professional development, which was the noesis

(Patton, 2002).

The transcendental aspect of the phenomenology was for the researcher to create an

epoche (Patton, 2002). Epoche was interpreted as suspending judgment in order to gain

perspectives (Patton, 2002). The researcher removed prejudices and assumptions that would

stand in the way of detailing and investigating the phenomenon with validity (Patton, 2002).

The researcher was influenced by the tradition of phenomenology throughout the study

because of the specific details associated with phenomenological research that called for a

researcher to be aware of their own intentions about the phenomenon.

The use of voices as a researcher was important to the study in order to ensure that

epoche and bracketing were occurring in the data analysis (Patton, 2002). The use of epoche

in the study ensured that the researcher was acknowledging those assumptions and prejudices

before embarking on data analysis (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, the use of bracketing in

phenomenological data analysis helped the researcher to differentiate between her own

thoughts and perceptions and that of the individuals from whom data was collected (Patton, 2002).

Design of the Study

Site Selection

The potential pool of the setting of the study was 26 schools in the diocese. The settings of this study were eight elementary schools in a large diocese in the Midwestern United States. All eight school sites were determined through purposeful stratified sampling based on enrollment and socio-economic status, academic, and demographic indicators. These schools in the Catholic Midwestern diocese were chosen based on the highest and lowest enrollment, socio-economic status, academic scores, and diversity: four schools with the lowest indicators were selected and four schools with the highest indicators were selected. All selected schools were located in urban and suburban areas in different regions in the diocese called PODs, were parochial in nature, and were managed by a principal and pastor on site. Each school had one principal as administrator and offered a common curriculum. The largest school had a counselor, a music program, and a special needs resource teacher. The other schools had a mix of these options such as an assistant principal, a social worker, or paraprofessionals on their staff. The schools were generally homeroom-based with classroom teachers providing the majority of teaching of the common curriculum. The diocese had some central control in terms of curriculum, assessment, and finances. The diocesan School Office with consent of the Superintendent had signed a letter of permission for research to be conducted in the Catholic Midwestern diocese (see Appendix B).

As noted in Table 2 and Table 3, for School Set 1, the schools had similarities in socio-economic status, academic achievement, and demographics. School Set 1 had an

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average of 51% of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch, had an average of less than 47% proficiency on the sixth grade reading composite score on the ITBS, had an average of less than 41% proficiency on the sixth grade math composite on the ITBS, and had an average of over 52% of a diverse student population based on race and ethnicity. For School Set 2, the schools had similarities in socio-economic status, academic achievement, and demographics. School Set 2 had an average of 1.25% of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch, had an average of over 72% proficiency on the sixth grade reading composite score on the ITBS, and had an average of less than 7% of a diverse student population based on race and ethnicity.

Participant Selection

The participants in the study were teachers in the elementary setting from eight schools in a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The potential pool for participants was 120 teachers from the eight schools that were selected for the study based on criterion sampling. The first criterion for selection was to select teachers with over ten years of experience in a Catholic Midwestern diocese from the eight schools. The second criterion for selection was to have common experiences of professional development in the diocese. The third criterion for selection was to have filled out three diocesan evaluations about professional development. The rich detailed data in the professional development session evaluations gave indication of persons who had some interest in professional development. Criterion sampling was used to select eight teachers for participation from each school in School Set 1 and School Set 2. An e-mail invitation and waiver of consent, as noted in Appendices B and C, was distributed to invite the eight participants to the study. Based on the completion of the on-line questionnaire, the researcher conducted further data collection through subset focus

Table 2

Percentages of Free and Reduced Lunch and Proficiency Levels 2012-2013

	Free and Reduced Lunch	Sixth Grade Reading Composite	Sixth Grade Math Composite
Set 1 School			
A	81	36	32
B	87	20	12
C	10	53	53
D	24	78	67
Set 2 School			
E	1	80	73
F	4	79	81
G	0	55	79
H	0	76	74

Adapted from the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph *Annual Report*, 2013

group sessions and individual interviews. The eight cases received an e-mail invitation and

completed consent forms applicable to the focus group and interview sessions as noted in

Appendices D and E. The initial contact with the research subjects was an e-mail invitation to

invite the eight participants to participate in the study. The waiver of consent form and

narrative was attached to the invitation e-mail. The waiver of consent form detailed the initial

research collection, which was in the form of a narrative. The narrative research was

conducted on-line in one session with indication that the researcher may contact the study

Table 3

Percentages of Ethnicity and Race 2012-2013

	Hispanic	African American	Asian	Native American	White
School Set 1					
A	60	7	11	0	22
B	73	10	0	0	17
C	10	5	8	0	77
D	4	.5	22	.5	73
School Set 2					
E	1	.5	2	.5	96
F	4	.5	3	.5	92
G	6	2	1	1	90
H	.5	.5	0	.5	98.5

Adapted from the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph *Annual Report*, 2013.

participant one time during the study for a follow-up phone call for clarification and validation of the narrative. The waiver of consent indicated that the narrative would take approximately one hour to complete and the follow-up phone call would be no longer than one hour. There was also indication that the research would take up to two weeks, including the on-line narrative response and the follow-up phone call. The form also indicated that the investigator may follow up until six months after the last contact. The instrument used for the narrative was a narrative guide with ten questions or prompts generated by the researcher.

The standard of care implemented was noted in the waiver of consent confidentiality section, which indicated that the study utilized direct quotes and that separate consent was obtained for this purpose. Study data was not kept if a participant withdrew from the study. The study participants were not named in the report.

After the narrative section of the research was complete, an e-mail invitation to invite the eight participants for further participation in the study was distributed. A consent form was attached to the invitation e-mail. The consent form detailed the focus group and interview stage of the research. The consent form included notification that the focus group and interview was conducted in person at locations within the diocese. There was indication on the consent form that a follow-up phone call for clarification and validations occurred. The consent form also indicated that the research included a one-hour focus group session, a one-hour interview, the possibility of a follow up phone conversation that would last up to one hour, and that the research took no longer than two weeks. The form indicated that the researcher may follow up until six months after the initial contact. The instruments used for the focus group and interview research were focus group and interview semi-structured guides generated by the researcher. The standard of care implemented was noted in the consent form and included an opt out of audio taping of the focus group and interview as well as a detail of possible risks and benefits of the research. Additionally, in the confidentiality section of the consent form, indications were noted that the results of the research may be published and that the participant was not named in the research. The storage of the audio taped information was detailed as being stored with the investigator and would be destroyed in seven years. Study data was not kept if a participant withdrew from

the study. All identifying information was anonymous. Lastly, the researcher was not in a supervisory position over any of the teachers in this study.

Data Collection

Narrative Questionnaire

The first data source was a narrative questionnaire completed by eight participants. An on-line invitation was sent via e-mail for participation in the research study for the narrative research (see Appendix C). The participants were also e-mailed a waiver of consent form as noted in Appendix D. The narrative questionnaire was sent on-line and was in the form of a writing prompt and questions as noted in Appendix E. The writing prompt questionnaire took place two weeks before the focus group sessions and interview. It was conducted on-line and was collected by the researcher. The questions were about the phenomenon of professional development. Coding and analysis of the prompt were organized and managed through computer files. A written narrative prompt was a tool utilized by the researcher for capturing the essence of specific events of professional development. The teachers studied looked at their own professional growth plans over a period of time and chose professional development experiences about which they wrote a narrative. The narrative included the elements of focusing on a single event, situating the event in a broader context, and creating an interpretation of the meaning of the event (Creswell, 2007). The use of narrative in qualitative research was valuable because the researcher noted patterns, found themes, and made comparisons with the text and data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using the stories about professional development, the researcher had another avenue to pursue in validating the patterns of meaning. Narratives, in the form of written accounts, resonated in research because they were compelling, powerful, and convincing (Grbich, 2007).

Focus Group Sessions

The researcher sent an on-line e-mail invitation to the purposeful sample of eight

participants for a focus group session and an individual interview (see Appendix F). The

second data source was two focus group sessions. Four participants from School Set 1

participated in a focus group, and four participants from School Set 2 participated in a focus

group. A consent form was distributed to the eight participants which gave consent to the

focus group session and individual interview (see Appendix G). The focus group sessions

fostered a discussion of the meaning of the unit of analysis and helped to expand the themes

of the in-depth interview (Creswell, 2007). The use of the focus group sessions enhanced the

data about the essence of professional development. The focus group sessions had a question

guide for replication, which included questions that centered on the research questions,

questions about specific events, and open-ended questions (see Appendix H). The focus

group sessions occurred after school hours at one site based school in the Catholic

Midwestern diocese. The focus group sessions were one hour in length and were audio taped,

transcribed, and descriptively and thematically coded. The data were organized and managed

through computer files.

Interviews

The next data source was semi-structured individual interviews with the eight

participants. Interviews are important in a qualitative study because asking appropriate

questions and seeking a discussion of the meaning of the experience helps the researcher to

reflect about the relationship an interviewee has with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The

use of interviews in this study enhanced the data that were about the essence of professional

development by building themes which were expanded and embraced from one level of

narrative to the secondary level of focus group sessions to the last layer, the interview. "In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationships are the means by which the research gets done" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 83).

The eight participants completed a consent form for the interview as well as the focus group sessions (see Appendix G). The eight individual interviews had an interview guide to help the researcher replicate the interviews for each participant (see Appendix I). The guide included clear questions that led to a response from the participants, questions that asked about specific events or experiences, and broad, open-ended questions (deMarrais, 2003). These interviews were in-depth interviews that provided a sense of the essence of the experience of professional development. The interviews were conducted at each teacher's site-based school by the researcher. The initial interview was one hour in length with one thirty-minute follow up phone call conducted two weeks after the initial interview. The interviews were audio taped, transcribed, and descriptively and thematically coded. The coding and analysis were organized and managed through computer files.

The semi-structured interviews included a relevant line of questioning with researcher injected contextual questions (Creswell, 2007). The questions were formulated from a narrowing of the central question and sub-questions in the research study (Creswell, 2007). According to Maxwell (2005), research questions formulate what the researcher wants to understand, and interview questions are formulated to gain that understanding. The data analysis coding process used in this study included enumerative and thematic coding. In Miles and Huberman (1994), coding is defined as analysis. A researcher must take the interview dialogue and dissect meaning from the relationship (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The content analysis that was gained by classifying the interview data helped generate a set

of themes that were compared and differentiated along with document analysis and observation analysis. The content analysis of the interview included identifying, coding, categorizing, and labeling the patterns in the data (Patton, 2002). Additionally, using the narrative, focus group sessions, and individual interviews ensured both triangulation and validity (Grbich, 2007). The three forms of data collection can be replicated and contributed to the formulation for conclusions about the research questions.

Data Analysis Procedures

The use of teachers' voices was crucial to helping establish the essence of teachers' meaning of professional development. Because participants were already telling their story in their own words, the researcher looked at the story for a chronology that helped to provide a causal link between the stories. Also, the researcher analyzed the narrative for themes and looked for commonalities in themes. The analysis of the narrative included descriptive, interpretive, and thematic coding. The finding of common themes helped to generate meaning. The narrative was analyzed first for descriptive elements. Each sentence was examined in the analysis. The descriptive elements, once assigned, were defined by the researcher. Secondarily, interpretive codes were chosen based on the enumerative responses for the descriptive codes. Finally, themes were chosen from the interpretive codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A contextual summary of each narrative was provided in the findings.

"Coding is analysis" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). The meaning behind the words in the narrative and the analysis of these words were important. Strauss (1987) claimed that coding is over when the analysis has run its course. The researcher had to make choices about when the layers of the coding had created understanding and patterns in themes. The researcher had to refine, find meanings, and generated themes from these

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meanings. The descriptive, interpretive, and thematic coding helped the researcher to attain these goals (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The sequential steps to narrative data analysis were to find the key terms in the text, restate the key phrases, reduce the phrases, and create clusters and reduce the clusters, and attach labels, which was also called pattern coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this last phase, comparisons were implicit and explicit and required high levels of inference (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The next steps included making generalizations about the phrases, creating mini-theories or propositions, and integrating theories in an explanatory framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The final product of this analysis was the creation of a central theme from the analysis of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Both the focus group sessions and in-depth interview process followed the phenomenological data analysis procedure as related by Moustakas (1994). First, an epoche was formulated by the researcher in which bracketing of prejudices and assumptions occurred (Patton, 2002). Next, the interviews were coded in terms of descriptive, interpretive, and thematic coding to help generate common themes. Each interview was analyzed through the phenomenological procedure of verbal transcription, subtextural transcription, and a verbal and subtextual transcription (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Verbal transcription means to list significant statements into meaning units to create a description of what the participants experienced (Moustakas, 1994). A subtextural transcription was how the experience happened and included the setting and context (Moustakas, 1994). These reports were compiled into a composite description for each interview. A composite description incorporated both the verbal and subtextural descriptions into the essence of the experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

The Moustakas (1994) modification of the van Kaam (1966) method included a listing and preliminary grouping of text from the interviews. Next, a reduction and elimination of groupings and themes occurred to determine the invariant constituents. A clustering of the themes and final identification of the themes occurred within the interview analysis. Then the researcher created the individual textural description of the experience of professional development. A structural description was also constructed of the experience. Lastly, a textural structural description of the experience of professional development occurred. From the individual textural-structural descriptions, a composite description of the meanings and essence of professional development that represents the entire group was created (Moustakas, 1994).

The case study approach to the data was analyzed by providing a description of the cases. This description was followed by an analysis of themes, both within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. Patterns were established both within-case and cross-case. Creswell (2007) added another step that included detailed descriptions of the cases. The procedure for case study data analysis was finalized by providing interpretations for these analyses.

Creswell (2007) recommended in a case study analysis that the researcher make a detailed description of the case and its setting. Categorical aggregation was defined as collecting instances from the data and finding relevant meanings. The researcher was called upon to find patterns and look for a relationship between two categories. The naturalistic generalization that came from analysis created themes that people can learn from the case, and the researcher compared these generalizations to current literature (Creswell, 2007). A systematic approach to case study analysis resulted in accuracy and depth (Osborne, 2005).

The design of the study was crucial for the researcher to clarify what data were collected and how those data were analyzed. Each source of data was described, protocol about collection of data was addressed, and an analysis procedure for the data was detailed. The traditions of qualitative research were reflected in the design. Reasons for the choice of qualitative research in this particular study were expressed. The design was also related to the purpose and research questions identified in the study. This study had data triangulation because of the different sources of data in the study and methodological triangulation because of the use of multiple methods to study the meaning of professional development (Patton, 2002).

The data plan of analysis for the study included the triangulation of data derived from the narrative, focus groups, and interviews. The study was a phenomenological tradition with a unit of analysis of professional development experiences of teachers. A study of eight teachers was justified because as Creswell (2005) suggested, phenomenological studies focused on a description of the experiences of participants often have data from five to 25 individuals who have experienced the phenomenon.

In the narratives, the researcher looked at the story of the participants in their own words, analyzed the narrative for themes, and looked for commonalities in themes. A contextual summary of each narrative was provided in the findings. The analysis of the narrative included descriptive, interpretive, and thematic coding. The findings of common themes helped generate meaning. The narrative was first analyzed for descriptive elements. Each sentence was examined in the analysis. The descriptive elements, once assigned, were defined by the researcher. Secondarily, interpretive codes were chosen based on the

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enumerative responses for the descriptive codes. Finally, themes were chosen from the interpretive codes.

The focus group and interview data analysis process included coding in terms of descriptive, interpretive, and thematic coding to generate themes through an analysis of the verbal transcription and subtextural transcription generated by the audio taped responses. A composite description was generated for each interview. A clustering of themes created an individual textural structural description of the experience of professional development. A composite description of the meanings and essence of professional development that represents the narrative, focus group, and interview responses then was developed for the participant as a within-case analysis and was analyzed based on research questions and the theoretical framework of the study.

The planned statistical qualitative methods of data collection for within-case analysis included a descriptive code list with definitions of codes and computation of the frequency of codes, a thematic code list with themes, interpretive codes with definitions, descriptive codes with definitions, and frequency, a data accounting worksheet for the narrative, focus group, and interview questions based on reference to answering research questions, and a case dynamic matrix based on the research questions and theoretical framework of the study.

In the case study data analysis, the researcher looked for patterns and relationships in individual composites or in cross-case composites. The cross-case analysis included looking at each case for categorization, patterning, and generalizations. The planned statistical qualitative methods of data collection for cross-case analysis included a data accounting worksheet for the narrative, focus group, and interview based on School Set 1 and School Set 2 schools, a variable meta matrix based on research questions and theoretical framework, a

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construct table for each set based on research questions and theoretical framework, and a meta matrix variable and research question construct table. The procedure for case study data analysis was finalized by providing interpretations for these analyses. The within-case and cross-case analysis systematic approach resulted in the researcher being able to analyze the themes that people can learn from the case and compared these generalizations to current literature. The three forms of data collection can be replicated and contributed to the formulation for conclusions regarding the research questions.

Factors Related to Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers look to authenticity and legitimacy in their findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1995) noted that validity and transferability of research is also vital to a qualitative design. Also because of the phenomenology of the research, the personal assumptions and bias of the researcher focused the need for self-awareness (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Internal and external validity promoted credibility as well as transferability in a research study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Maxwell (2005) indicated that to arrive at internal validity, a researcher must help to promote an understanding through rich description of the interpretation, concepts, and analysis of the findings. Also, Lincoln and Guba (1985) detailed that a study should be generalized to make connections in a similar or larger context. The synthesis of internal and external validity helped in the interpretation of data.

The weakness in the study was that the researcher studied subjects who were familiar. Also, the study was limited to a Catholic Midwestern diocese. These weaknesses may create bias unless the researcher was self-aware enough to detach her own familiarity from the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) supported an interpretation of the data that was formulated

by the researcher to ensure that bias was audited out through extensive field notes and cross-checking by peers. Miles and Huberman (1998) supported that drawing conclusions involved patterns, relationships, and conclusions as well as collecting feedback. By using these strategies to overcome bias and to promote validity and reliability, the study addressed any weaknesses.

The ethical considerations in this study mirrored the theoretical framework of the review of the literature. The researcher trusted the respondents' need for social justice including utilizing informed consent, conducting ethical fieldwork, and reporting in a fair and honest manner (Miles & Huberman, 1995). Sieber (1992) spoke to the social justice ideals of respect, justice, and beneficence to protect the research environment. The power imbalance between teachers and administrator as researcher was also noted(Creswell, 2007). As previously noted, the researcher was not the supervisor of any of the participants in the study. Lastly, reciprocity for the time given by the respondents was relevant to the study (Creswell, 2007).

As a social justice factor, the research participants were treated ethically. First, triangulation of data informed the research, giving multiple perspectives of the cases to be studied (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) recommended an ethical issues checklist that included the purpose of the methods used, reciprocity for participation, and a risk assessment for the participants. Consent forms for permission ensured that research was not used in an adverse way about the subject. The researcher utilized the protocol of ethical review designated by the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Review Board or IRB

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CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The exploration of this study was to understand the meaning of professional development experiences as perceived by teachers. The vision and mission of the school should be focused on student performance, and one way to achieve that performance is to identify support that teachers may need in learning about the science of teaching. Different strategies may be used by educational administrators to enhance this learning. Although there was emerging research about reflective leadership and collaboration with teachers, there was little research about how professional development helps teacher grow and gain effectiveness and how teachers found meaning in the professional development offered by their administrators (Hirsh, 2010; Leon & Davis, 2009; Sullivan & Wiessner, 2010).

This study followed a phenomenological tradition. The unit of analysis was professional development experiences of teachers. The professional development experiences of teachers was defined in this study as local or contextual experiences, regional experiences, diocesan experiences, and other events of learning such as graduate level coursework, workshops, or conferences. The study focused on the various experiences of professional development of eight elementary teachers of general education in schools throughout a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The study explored teachers' meanings of professional development. There were a few studies in the literature that addressed meaning and usefulness of professional development experiences, but those perspectives centered on pre-service or content related fields (Downey & Cobbs, 2007; Fry & Fisher, 2010). This study provided qualitative research to better understand the perceptions and meanings of

professional development experiences as a consideration for teachers with more than ten years of experience in a Catholic Midwestern diocese.

The overarching research question of this research study asked: How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences? The sub-questions used for the systematic research process included: (a) What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as meaningful and useful?, (b) What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?, (c) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?, and (d) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers?

As a qualitative researcher, I examined each case and the aspects of professional development that were important to the teachers including their experiences, what influenced their experiences and what skills they engaged in in their classrooms as a result of what they experienced. The tradition of transcendental phenomenology helped me to bracket my own experiences and find fundamental essences in the experience of each case. Both textural and structural descriptions of these experiences helped to convey the essence of the experiences (Creswell, 2007). The data sources utilized in the study included narratives, focus group interviews, and individual interviews. Criterion sampling ensured that the teachers had common experiences of professional development. Both the data sources and criterion sampling provided a thick, rich description of information of professional development experiences. The study included the intellectual goal of gathering data from individuals to find the essence of events and actions (Maxwell, 2005).

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Site Selection

The case study approach included eight teachers from elementary settings in a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The potential pool for school selection was 26 elementary schools in the diocese. Ten schools were eliminated from the pool because of rural locations, closure, or because the researcher was an administrator in the school. The remaining 16 schools were differentiated schools between enrollments of less than or greater than 300 students. Nine schools had an enrollment of less than 300 students. Seven schools had an enrollment of greater than 300 students. The eight schools were then determined through purposeful stratified sampling because the sites would illuminate insight about the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). These schools were chosen based on enrollment, socio-economic status, academic scores, and diversity (see Tables 2 and 3). School Set 1 was defined as the four schools in the purposeful selection with the lowest enrollments, lowest socio-economic indicators, the lowest academic scores, and the highest diversity. School Set 2 was defined as the four schools in the purposeful selection with the highest enrollments, the highest socio-economic status, the highest academic scores, and the lowest diversity (see Table 4). The logic behind the purposeful sampling of these sites was that each school supported one participant from each site who could provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon which would lead to an information-rich case (Patton, 2002). Selecting the school sets through purposeful sampling helped the researcher to illustrate the meaning of professional development for each cross-case subgroup (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Table 5 illustrates the essences of the themes in the narrative, focus group, and interview as divided by School Set 1 and School Set 2 and revealed through data analysis.

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Table 4

School Sets and Site Descriptions

	Grade Levels Served	Enrollment	Staff on Site	Staff Eligible for Criterion Selection	Administration
School Set 1					
School A	K-6	64	12	3	Principal
School B	PK-8	165	23	7	Principal
School C	K-8	126	17	4	Principal
School D	PK-8	266	32	8	Principal
School Set 2					
School E	K-8	459	36	11	Principal/Asst.
School F	PK-8	320	29	8	Principal/Asst.
School G	PK-8	508	34	12	Principal/Asst.
School H	PK-8	605	41	15	Principal/Asst.

Adapted from the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph *Annual Report*, 2013.

Participant Selection

The potential pool for participants was 120 teachers from 26 schools in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. The selection pool from the designated eight schools used in the study was 68 teachers based on the criteria for selection. The first criterion for selection

Table 5

Thematic Divisions by Data Collection, Measurements, and Sets

		Attributes	Disconnect	Practicality	Professionalism	Relevancy	Technology
Narrative	Set 1	X		X	X	X	
	Set 2			X	X	X	
Focus Group	Set 1		X	X	X	X	
	Set 2	X		X		X	X
Interview	Set 1	X	X	X	X	X	
	Set 2	X	X	X	X	X	X

was to select teachers with over ten years of experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. The second criterion for selection was to have common experiences of professional development in the diocese. The third criterion for selection was to have filled out diocesan evaluations about the professional development experiences. The rich, detailed data in the professional development evaluations gave indication of persons who had some interest in professional development. School Set 1 had a total of 22 teachers eligible based on the criteria for selection. One teacher was chosen through criterion sampling from each of the four schools in School Set 1. School Set 2 had a total of 46 teachers eligible to participate based on the criteria for selection. One teacher was chosen through criterion sampling from each of the four schools in School Set 2. In total, eight participants were selected for the study based on criterion sampling for participant eligibility.

Each teacher, in order to certify confidentiality, was identified through pseudonyms as Carla, Anne, Gianna, Nancy, Kyla, Lucia, Tasha, or Noni. Each of these teachers was selected based on criterion sampling, as they all met the criteria established. All participants agreed through the University of Missouri-Kansas City IRB consent forms to participate in the study.

The participant in Case 1 is Carla. She is a 70-year-old white female with 25 years of teaching experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. Carla has a total of over 50 years of teaching experience. She is a 2nd grade teacher. Carla has a Master of Arts in Education. The participant in Case 2 is Anne. She is a 49-year-old white female with 27 years of teaching experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. Anne has taught all of her years of school at the same elementary school. She is a 2nd grade teacher. Anne has a Master of Arts in Elementary Education. The participant in Case 3 is Gianna. She is a 45-year-old white female with 15 years of experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. Gianna teaches 2nd grade. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education. The participant in Case 4 is Nancy. She is a 58-year-old white female with 27 years of teaching experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She is a 5th and sixth grade teacher in a multi-aged classroom. She has a Master of Arts in Humanities and Education. The participants in Case 1 through 4 are designated as School Set 1 participants.

The participant in Case 5 is Kyla. She is a 41-year-old white female with 13 years in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She teaches 1st grade. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a Missouri State Teaching Certification License in K-sixth Elementary Education. The participant in Case 6 is Lucia. She is a 51-year-old white female with 15 years in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She teachers Kindergarten through 5th grade

technology. She has a Master of Arts in Education. The participant in Case 7 is Tasha. She is a 61-year-old white female with 21 years in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She teaches 2nd grade. She has a Master of Arts in Education. The participant in Case 8 is Noni. She is a 56-year-old white female with 21 years in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She teaches 5th grade. She has a Master of Arts in Educational Administration. The participants in Case 5 through 8 are designated as School Set 2.

Table 6 supports the narrative about the participants and gives an overview of the characteristics of the participants.

Data Sources

I employed a narrative questionnaire (see Appendix E) as the first gathering of data to begin to validate patterns of meaning (Grbich, 2007). The writing prompt questionnaire contained questions about the phenomenon of professional development experiences. Coding and analysis was organized to find patterns and themes and make to comparisons with the text and data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The coding process included descriptive, enumerative, and thematic coding (Grbich, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hearing the voices of teachers through their own words detailing their own meaning of professional development experiences was a factor for leaders as revealed in the theoretical framework.

Next, the data source of focus group sessions (see Appendix H) was utilized. Four participants from Set 1 and four participants from Set 2 participated in separate focus group sessions. The question guide for the focus group sessions replicated questions that centered

Table 6

Overview of Participants

	Age	Gender	Years in Diocese	Teaching Assignment	Highest Degree Attained
School Set 1					
Carla	70	Female	25	2nd	M.A.
Anne	49	Female	27	2nd	M.A.
Gianna	45	Female	15	2nd	B.A.
Nancy	58	Female	27	5th/6th	M.A.
School Set 2					
Kyla	41	Female	13	1st	B.A.
Lucia	51	Female	15	K-5th	M.A.
Tasha	61	Female	18	2nd	M.A.
Noni	56	Female	21	5th	M.A.

on the research questions, questions about specific events, and open ended questions (see

Appendix H). The focus group data was enumeratively, descriptively, and thematically coded

(Grbich, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The use of the focus group data enhanced the data

from the narrative, providing another layer of thick, rich description of the phenomenon.

The third dimension and the major method of the data collection was the individual

interview (see Appendix I). The use of interviews in the study enhanced the data about the

essence of professional development by building themes which were expanded and embraced

from one level of narrative to the secondary level of focus group sessions, and finally, to the layer of the individual interview. The interview questions were formulated based on what I wanted to understand, and the perceptions and meaning of professional development experiences of teachers, in order to gain that understanding. As a researcher, I analyzed the content of the interview data, including enumerative, descriptive, and thematic coding to generate a set of themes which can be compared and differentiated with the narrative and the focus group.

As a qualitative researcher, I respected the honesty of teachers' words and perceptions. The process, designed to build a case that detailed the essence of meaning, created research relationships that I valued (Maxwell, 2005). The process of data collection and analysis helped to provide a rich interpretation of meaning. In the narrative, I wanted the meanings of the experience to be given by people who experienced professional development (Denzin, 1989). Through the phenomenological research, I also wanted to create descriptions that truly reflected the participants' actual experiences (Polkinghorne, 1989). This interpretation led to the essence of professional development experiences for teachers (Creswell, 2007).

Data triangulation was accomplished through the use of narratives, focus groups, and interviews. Additionally, research-based strategies were utilized to look after validity and reliability. These strategies included document coding, member checking, peer review, thick, rich descriptions, and triangulation. The document coding included enumerative, descriptive, and thematic coding practices. As an aspect of member checking, individual participants were contacted to clarify statements. I formulated a peer review concerning thematic coding to check on validity. Lastly, through extensive coding and checking practices and through the

triangulation of data, the reliability of findings provided an accurate description of commonalities, connections, and contrasts of the data (Creswell, 2007).

The process of data analysis began with the narrative findings. The narrative findings examined experiences of professional development through an analytic approach (Chase, 2005). In the analysis, I coded and enumerated words and phrases to generate themes that came from the stories of professional development from each participant. The narrative analysis process included writing a textural summary following Clandinin and Connelly's (1998) three-dimensional space approach based on the elements of interaction, continuity, and situation. A structural description was also included in the analysis, and a composite of the textural and structural aspects of the narrative was included in the analysis. This data analysis built from within-case analysis to cross-case analysis between cases and sets. The multiple cases ensured the logic of replication in which the procedures for each case are duplicated in order to illustrate the meaning of professional development (Yin, 2003).

Next, the data analysis included evaluation of the focus group findings. These findings were coded, enumerated, and arranged thematically. The focus groups were differentiated as School Set 1 and School Set 2 with specific parameters of academics, demographics, and socio-economic factors as differentiating elements. Each participant's words were separated out of the group and analyzed as an individual case. The overall data from each set were also coded and enumerated. As a researcher, I explored the context and structure of individual stories to interpret perspectives that were helpful in gaining meaning of professional development. From that context, composite descriptions of the sets were established. Finally, a combined description of all cases was organized. The data analysis

was built from within-case analysis to cross-case analysis between cases and sets. Again, replication was utilized as prompting questions for each focus group (Yin, 2003).

Lastly, the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using a structured approach as presented by Moustakas (1994). The first step in analysis included bracketing out my own experiences of professional development because as Polkinghorne (1989) noted, the reader should understand what it is like for the participants in the study to find meaning in their own experiences of professional development. As a researcher, I explored the context and structure of individual interviews to interpret perspectives that were helpful in gaining meaning of professional development. Next, I utilized the process coding, enumeration, and themes by identifying significant statements and creating meaning units (Moustakas, 1994). From that context, textural, structural, and composite descriptions of the cases were established. Finally, a combined description of all cases was organized. The complete data analysis from individual cases to cross-case analysis was textural, structural, and combined textural and structural descriptions, which created the essence or meaning of professional development (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

According to Moustakas (1994), in order for the phenomenological study to be transcendental in nature, a bracketing out of one's own experiences should occur. Bracketing was defined by Patton (2002) as suspending one's own reality to listen to others' realities. In the prologue of this study, I spoke to the experiences of professional development that I have encountered as a teacher and subsequently, the experiences that I had to formulate as an administrator. The preface detailed the many experiences that I have had in terms of conducting professional development locally, in the Catholic diocese in the Midwest, and globally at conferences. By bracketing out these experiences and by letting the experiences of

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the participants create meaning clusters, transcendence occurred concerning my own perception of professional development experiences. The subsequent findings reported phenomenological findings that featured the meaning of the experience of professional development for the participants (Patton, 2002).

Findings

The findings include a within case analysis describing each case through textural, structural, and composite analysis. Using individual textural descriptions for the narrative, focus group sessions, and interviews, themes and patterns emerged. The individual structural descriptions also built on the importance and nature of the units of meaning. Creating an individual textural structural composite helped to create the essence of the narrative, focus group session, and interview findings. The narrative description retold the story based on a three-dimensional space approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). The story was retold based on elements of interaction of each participant's personal story, the continuity of the story including what happened in the past, in the present, and what will happen in the future, and what physical places were involved in the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Each individual textural description followed this three-dimensional approach. The within-case analysis of the individual textural description retold the narrative story. Next, structural descriptions were formulated for each data source. Structural descriptions tell how participants experienced professional development (Creswell, 2007). A combination of textural and structural descriptions of patterns and themes related to the narrative, focus group sessions, and interviews created the composite description. Table 7 identifies the structure of these themes from each of the cases. This overview of themes created the "essential, invariant structure or essence" of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007, p. 62).

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Table 7

Thematic Structure of Cases

	Narrative	Focus Group	Interview
Case 1: Carla	1. Professionalism 2. Attributes	1. Practicality 2. Professionalism 3. Relevancy	1.Professionalism 2.Practicality 3.Relevancy 4.Attributes
Case 2: Anne	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality 3.Disconnect 4.Professionalism	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality 3.Professionalism
Case 3: Gianna	1.Professionalism 2.Practicality 3.Relevancy	1.Relevancy 2.Professionalism 3.Practicality 4.Disconnect	1.Practicality 2.Professionalism 3.Relevancy 4.Disconnect
Case 4: Nancy	1.Practicality 2.Relevancy	1.Relevancy 2.Professionalism 3.Disconnect 4.Practicality	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality 3.Disconnect 4.Professionalism
Case 5: Kyla	1.Professionalism 2.Relevancy	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality 3.Technology	1.Practicality 2.Relevancy 3.Professionalism 4.Technology
Case 6: Lucia	1.Practicality 2.Relevancy 3.Professionalism	1.Practicality 2.Relevancy 3.Technology	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality 3.Professionalism 4.Disconnect 5.Technology 6.Attributes
Case 7: Tasha	1.Practicality	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality 3.Attributes	1.Professionalism 2.Practicality 3.Disconnect 4.Attributes
Case 8: Noni	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality 3.Professionalism	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality 3.Technology	1.Relevancy 2.Practicality

The following within-case analysis, which contains the units of meaning from which the themes and patterns originate, provided a textural, structural and composite description for all cases.

Case 1

Individual textural description for narrative. Carla was a second grade teacher in a school in a Catholic Midwest diocese. She was 70 years old. Carla has a Master of Arts in Education. She had been an educator for over fifty years. She had taught in Chicago, Helena, and Kansas City. She had been in this diocese for 25 years and had taught in three schools in the diocese. This was her second time at her current school. Her experiences of professional development had been local, diocesan, and global. According to Carla, "Many times there appeared to be little connection between professional development and life as an educator."

In the past, Carla was trained by two travelling nuns who would arrive by train and go to every Catholic school in the region for a two-week period. The mentor teachers would sit in the classroom to observe and would go over grading, lesson planning, and make recommendations to Carla. According to Carla's past experience, "Many decisions of professional development had the intent of promoting high academic achievement." As for Carla's present experience, she noted, "I do believe that a serious attempt has been made in the past couple of years to make professional development more useful to educators." In terms of the future, Carla claimed, "I have hope that as we become more professionally competent, we will demand more cohesive professional plans and group meetings and speakers."

Carla's situations of professional development had been in the local school building, at diocesan professional development days, and in attendance at either one-day conferences or webinars offered by outside companies promoting development experiences or products. In Carla's experience, "I see the pattern of jumping on the latest bandwagon with little connection from one year to another." Although supported by the local leader, Carla's experiences of professional development were mostly driven by her individual choices.

Individual structural description for narrative. In Carla's case, the responsibility of professional development should be both of the teacher and the administrator. "I do not believe that we find many of the decisions practical in the real world." However, because of the previous statement, she often sought out her own development to gain what she knew she needed in her own context. Carla used webinars on a regular basis in order to promote her own growth.

The search to find relevance in the professional development experiences was important to Carla. Holland and Adams (2002) described professional development plans as negotiated responsibility. Teachers make decisions about what to study themselves and then chart a pathway to new knowledge and skills to improve student learning. Carla currently does not participate in a planning session with her principal but often finds professional development experiences on her own to promote her own growth.

The contextual reality was also important to Carla. As a second grade teacher, Carla would like to see professional development that would "lead professional educators to competence." Although Carla has developed a "resilient yet isolated learner identity" (Makopoulo & Armour, 2014, p. 75), a more collaborative approach with other teachers in

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her context could be helpful. Carla participated in all local and diocesan professional development; however, she felt that some of these offerings "discourage serious educators."

Carla used the term "soup du jour" to describe her professional development experiences. Professional development should "support authenticity and collaboration between teachers" (Smith & Sivo, 2012, p. 880). The learning environment for Carla seemed scattered between what is offered locally or in the diocese and what choices that Carla made for herself. Jimerson (2013) described this practice as fragmented planning and noted that support should be "collaborative, relevant, and ongoing" (p. 52).

Individual textural structural composite for narrative. The narrative textural and structural description of Carla exposed two prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Professionalism, and (b) Attributes of Teachers.

Professionalism. Carla referred to this theme 10 times in the narrative description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Carla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as multi-year plan, plan of action, sequence, jumping on the latest bandwagon, and cohesive professional plans. She recommended "a multi-year plan for professional development that shows an intended growth pattern on one topic."

"By concentrating on areas that impact student success and are tightly coupled with specific objectives in the school improvement planning process, principals and teacher-leaders ensured narrowed, authentic focus on true growth areas, and realized gains" (Sterrit & Bond, 2012, p. 54). For Carla, it seemed like some years in her professional development were not the plan or sequence that was intended for teacher growth.

Attributes of teachers. Carla referred to this theme eight times in the narrative description. Attributes of teachers were defined as the qualities of a professional teacher especially relating to experiences of professional development. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Carla included believe, intended, serious, and connections. For example, Carla mentioned "little connection from one year to another."

Carla discussed what discourages serious educators and recommended promoting professional development that would be more useful to educators. Leaders should provide a high quality experience for educators and provide resources to support that experience (Blau & Snell, 2013). Rather than the "soup du jour," Carla recommended understanding the life of an educator for leaders in making decisions about professional development.

Individual textural description for focus group. The focus group description for Case 1 told the story based on a description of what the participants experienced in relation to the unit of analysis of professional development (Creswell, 2007). This textural description was part of the procedural analysis approach by Moustakas (1994).

Carla's participation in professional development had included small groups that focus on "one particular piece" of the curriculum or skill development. Being able to choose a session or conference was also a preference. "You signed up for it prior to getting there so you knew exactly where you were going. I thought that was a more professional way to do it." It was important to Carla to talk to other teachers about their work in the classroom context especially about the use of technology.

> I would like to talk to somebody who else is doing it. That is my hope. That is my goal, to be able to connect this to my projector so that I can use all these apps which I have been carefully garnering. But I think it would be helpful if, after the presentations like on the web, the name of the teachers, and how to contact them and a kind of a little blurb of what they talked about, were available.

Being able to contact other teachers was a recommendation for future professional development. "Just a little bit of a way to contact, maybe put it on the diocesan web." For Carla, professional development involving other diocesan teachers rather than hired professional development seemed "more real, some of these people wouldn't know a kid if you ran over them with a semi." She related to teachers' contexts and emphasized, "I don't always need to know their glowing successes. I tried this. It didn't work and here's why I think it didn't work . . . what road not to go down."

The challenges of professional development for Carla were formulated around diocesan large group sessions. Carla stated, "I would ditch the big speakers and say to people here's a group that's going to communicate and share ideas." The large group sessions did not seem to apply to the classroom settings of not only Carla but other teachers as well. For instance, in reference to large group sessions, Carla reported:

> I think you can ditch the big speakers as far as I'm concerned. They don't change their presentation. So the high school teachers are bored, the primary teachers are bored, elementary teachers are bored; we are just bored at different times.

Small group sessions and collaboration were Carla's preference. In reference to a presentation at the diocesan level, Carla responded, "I kept saying who called this meeting." The challenge for Carla was to find professional development that worked in her context. "It's things that you know are not pie in the sky. I don't want pie in the sky."

In terms of skills or understandings provided by professional development that have been helpful in Carla's experiences, she reported:

> I have gotten some practical things on how to differentiate instruction from a couple. I've had some work on understanding the Common Core and how to apply that with your students. Those have been a real help. Especially this year for me, differentiated instruction has been key because I have such a span of students.

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Attending professional development was important to Carla, and she worked at finding different experiences to help her grow.

> For me it's always been real important that I stay fresh professionally because I see people who just didn't. I want to say dinosaurs. You know, I don't want to be a dinosaur teacher. And you know what happened to dinosaurs. It wasn't pretty.

Carla was aware of the changes that needed to be made in the classroom setting to help each student learn and grow. "So I'm always trying to either reshape what I have or come up with a new spin to it because today's kid is not the same kids as five years ago, not even two years ago in some cases." She tried to find solutions through professional development experiences as modeled by her statement, "this didn't work but I bet if I tweaked it, it would work."

Individual structural description for focus group. Moustakas (1994) formulated an approach to phenomenological research that included structural descriptions of the unit of analysis. In this study, professional development was examined. The structural description of the individual focus group statements told how Carla experienced professional development (Creswell, 2007).

Carla felt that the majority of her professional development experiences came from her own initiative, although she felt supported by her principal in these efforts. "For me it's more the initiative of me." Carla claimed:

> We don't get that much Title money so basically you fund it yourself. Mrs. Miller is willing to help out when she can. But as you know budgets are tight so that is why I like doing so many webcams and web seminars because I don't have to pay any money or very little.

Paying for her own professional development experiences does not seem to be a negative perception in Carla's eyes.

I went to a really good presentation last year that I found by accident that was put on by Lego downtown in Kansas City. It was a two-day conference about robotics and techniques, and kits. It was a whole twenty five dollars. I felt like I'll float that one.

This initiative by Carla was substantiated by the research of Torff and Sessions (2009), who indicated that no matter the experience, gender, or educational attainment of a teacher, the attitude about professional development was more positive in elementary school teachers. Another perception of Carla was that rather than a professional development plan, there was a lack of connection between different experiences of professional development.

I call it soup du jour. What's the soup du jour this year? We can all name the different fads that have run in and out of the diocese. I wish that they would come up with a comprehensive plan for maybe three years. We are going to really focus on Common Core, say. Everything is on that. I don't need a big speaker.

The perception about professional development experiences for Carla was described metaphorically. She equated some of her professional development experiences, "like pantyhose. One size fits all fits nobody. They just don't fit. This fits one size fits all. Yeah right. It didn't fit you, it didn't fit you, and it didn't fit you." Other times, her experiences seemed to not be connected to other experiences. Carla spoke to this thought by stating, "They change the rules in the middle of the game." Her alternative suggestion would be:

It would be refreshing to have them say okay we are going to have in-service on November 29. In September, they ask you what are some things you would like to have small group collaboration on. I think that makes sense. I mean like I say save the money for the big speakers and say you are going to have a bunch of people who are going to talk about differentiated learning. Maybe go small. I can sign up for that and go hear somebody that I would like to have input on. I'm done with big speakers. My eyes glaze over.

As Hays and Robnolt (2007) reported, data driven planning for professional development provided effective development for teachers. Carla was also concerned about the rigor, which

professional development experiences were lacking. "We are not exploring any one topic with competency. We are just hitting them all a little bit."

Carla spoke to valuable experiences that could happen in her professional development journey. "If I were asked by the gods of the educational world, I would do four longer days and have the fifth day when we can professionally meet and talk." The value she puts on professional development came from collaboration with other teachers. "We do them occasionally… like we are trying to work on rubrics for writing…we do together." Teachers found benefit in discussing with peers the delivery of instruction in professional development (Watzke, 2003). She also detailed her own teaching context and how the time frame of professional development could be a factor in learning and growing as a teacher. "You can't rub two rocks together some days depending on what is happening in your classroom. By the time you get to professional development, you are brain dead."

Individual textural structural composite for focus group. The focus group textural and structural description for Carla spoke to three prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Practicality in Context, (b) Professionalism, and (c) Relevancy for Teachers.

Practicality in context. Carla referred to this theme 45 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Carla included knowing, differentiated, and group settings.

Carla spoke to the meaning of professional development experiences as connected to context. "To me meaningful means that it is not just a bag of tricks. I'm not into gimmicks." The practical use of technology was also of importance to her classroom context and to her

sharing with peers. "There is a webcam coming up on Common Core and here is what I learned." Through the use of technology active learning, collaborative learning, creative learning, and evaluative learning for the teacher occurred (Iwu & Uweh, 2012). Specifically, the engagement of the teacher was an important aspect for Carla in regards to professional development, "I learned a whole lot from Readers and Writers' workshop but I was very fond of it because I was involved in it." Carla noted that leaders should:

> also understand that many teachers would rather hear from teachers who have tried new strategies in the classroom rather than listening to a speaker who hasn't been in a classroom and hasn't experienced a teacher's daily routine or the interruptions we experience throughout the year.

Being able to use the skills learned in professional development was paramount to Carla. "I think anything that has stood the test of time and is not just the fad of the hour. Oh, those fad of the hours." Also, being able to be in contact with peer teachers was a factor in being able to practice what is learned in a professional development experience.

> There were other things she talked about besides how to connect it and how they used that I thought was very useful. They brought things and showed them and asked about feedback on them. I would like information like so and so presented and she's from such and such school and here's how to contact her.

Professionalism. Carla referred to this theme 33 times in the focus group description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Carla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as work, teachers, instruction, and years of experience. According to Carla, "I think it is as much as us letting our administrator know that we are interested."

As Powell (2014) indicated, teacher concerns sometimes outweighed student concerns. Carla had a strong opinion about peer teachers who are not perceived to be

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growing. "There are some people who teach their twelfth year twelve times. I have no patience with that. They keep repeating." She also felt strongly about treatment of educators in some experiences of professional development.

> Sometimes when they do these big group meetings, the principals have to take attendance. I just hate that. You can sign in and sit there and play cards. You can sign in and read a novel…having a sign in …I kind of feel like I'm in detention when I have to sign in.

In the Catholic school setting, the diocese required catechetical professional development for teachers to be certified in catechesis in order to teach religion or theology classes. Carla's experience of certification did not promote growth or professionalism. She told the following story:

> When I did my certification, the supervisor came out and said well you are not certified. I said I beg your pardon. I attended every dog and pony show you guys have put on. Whether you have the paperwork or not, I have and I said if you want I will do a knowledge check and a college bowl, I will stand up to get it. And she never pursued it. I thought what bunch of nonsense.

Relevancy for teachers. Carla referred to this theme 32 times in the focus group description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Carla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as fits, need, new, real, remember, contact with other teachers, and has substance. In the focus group, she commented, "I realized how useful it was. I do want some substance."

For Carla, finding new and different techniques was mostly of her own initiative. "I do a lot of webcams." Teachers increased their content knowledge and found different strategies when they used self-efficacy in their own learning (Sandholtz & Ringstaff, 2011). Carla gave accolades to her peers by claiming, "Some of our teachers are taking classes on-

line." She also commended her principal for helping her to effectively change her classroom context.

> I will say one of the things our principal does that I really like. She belongs to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and she will send us articles. She laughs and she says I think you read them all and I'm not sure some people do. I don't want to be a stale dinosaur because that doesn't go very well so I am always interested. So she knows what I am interested in and she will send things my way. Sometimes I'm the one who initiates.

Individual textural description for interview. The interview description for Case 1 told the story based on a description of what the participants experienced in relation to the unit of analysis of professional development (Creswell, 2007). This textural description was part of the procedural analysis approach by Moustakas (1994).

As to her participation in professional development, Carla spoke to both "the format and the flexibility" of her experiences. In terms of format, Carla examined the styles that she preferred. Carla took the initiative to find learning experiences.

> You have to look for it. I'm always pecking. I wonder about this. Can I try that? I take advantage of the webinars because they are free like the three on the National Catholic Education Association website (NCEA). They are one webinar each month and I signed up for them.

According to Higgins and Harreveld (2013), participation in professional development stirred positive attitudes between professional development and quality teaching. Carla reported that she used information from a webinar to teach a class. "They loved the fact that it was tied to Discovery Education and that I was not just teaching page 2 or page 3. That I was opening their minds to something that they wouldn't have gotten otherwise." Another format that Carla used was reading articles. "I also really like what Mrs. Miller sent us from the professional group that she gets." Lastly, she talked about the use of small groups on the diocesan level as being important to her learning. "I think that is awesome because when

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second grade teachers get together you are talking about second graders. You are not talking about what the needs are of junior high."

The challenges of professional development for Carla in the interview were geared to leaders not having a consistent improvement plan. "I am a big proponent of look to where we want to be. Look to where we want to be in three months. Look to where we want to be in a year. Otherwise you're doomed to failure." Carla also equated the responsibility of learning and growing onto individual teachers. "How willing are people to buy in to it? Then have we worked out a plan so that it is more than the fad of the day?" Forward thinking leaders were organized to improve teaching and learning through frameworks that included support and developed good teaching (Esterhuizen, Blignaut & Ellis, 2013). Another challenge that Carla spoke about was the motivation of teachers about professional development. She asked:

> Have people got so beaten down that their professional development goals are so mindless? Or do they dream big? Do they think, why not? What could they do? Is this possible? Instead of saying we never tried it. Somebody one time said, "well, what is the worst thing that could happen if we tried it?" which I loved.

Another challenge of professional development experiences was how those experiences apply to the classroom setting.

> What can I accomplish? Don't give me this; I am going to change your life. Because it is a second grade classroom with second grade kids. I only have eight hours a day. I cannot save the world or everybody in one day. So what is realistic? Because if you don't keep it realistic and manageable, people just throw up their hands in despair.

The skills that have been formulated and enhanced in Carla's professional development experiences have been associated with planning and follow through. Wilson (2012) reported, "Institutions had a number of different types and levels of professional development, which fit broadly into a four-tiered structure progressing from more basic technical skills to immersive collaboration where learning communities were created"

(p. 895). Carla relayed this structure in her local school setting. She described the experiences as formulation, discussion, implementation, and follow-through "A small group in the faculty on our local level has taken the time to say okay this is what our needs are and then we come back and are accountable for what did you do with that need." The formulation of the small group to address needs was initiated through teacher requests. Then discussion occurred for the plan to be formulated into action.

> For instance, one of the things that we talked about was teaching mathematical vocabulary. So we all kind of looked at the list that our peer teacher had given us of mathematical words and we kind of prioritized which ones are primary and then we began to explore the ways those were taught.

Teachers took those objectives back to their classrooms to teach. "And then when we came back the next faculty meeting, we said okay which ones did you work on? One said I worked on difference and I said I worked on product and fractions." As a final step, the teachers discussed what worked and what did not work and where that skill might work.

> It's not six weeks later. It's the next faculty meeting. That was the idea. So everybody added their little piece. We could say okay I think this word really doesn't fit here. It fits middle or maybe intermediate. But we also tried to make sure when we went through primary that we weren't skipping the essential words.

Carla described for her own learning and growing how local professional development experiences helped her to help her students.

Individual structural description for interview. Moustakas (1994) formulated an approach to phenomenological research that included structural descriptions of the unit of analysis. In this study, professional development was examined. The structural description of the individual interview statements told how Carla experienced professional development (Creswell, 2007).

Again, Carla spoke to her own initiative through administrative support in order to find what she needed for development. This mirrors Varrati et al.'s (2009) research in which they revealed the "emerging trend of mutual responsibility between teachers and administrators" (p. 501). The administrative responsibility came from planning and consistency.

> If we could say we are going to work on the same thing, let's say informational texts with the understanding you are not going to have a new one next week or next year. And each year have some kind of glimmer for where we are going. Then build on it and then the next year do it again with maybe slightly different focus. Maybe include something on test taking. But you're not hopping from topic to topic. That's what frustrates me.

In terms of her own responsibility, Carla remarked:

> What's important? Like when I looked at the webinar that said a mile wide and an inch deep. I went back and looked and said okay where can I maybe cut down the number of lessons or cut down on marching through the lessons and promote a deeper understanding?

Reflecting on her own teaching and finding ways to improve her teaching were of deep impact for Carla. She also perceived diocesan experiences to be disconnected from her local experience. "They didn't even know what state they were in. They were going to talk about everything so they ended up talking about nothing."

The perception about professional development experiences for Carla included a relational and motivational component. Karpinski (2006) stated that leaders should provide vision and inspiration. Carla claimed that leaders should know their staff's strengths and areas where they may need growth. "I think that the factors they look at are what is their staff is like? What is the expertise level right now? Are we starting with bare bones basic or what is their professional development to this point?" She also looked to planning as being important to the experience. "So I think they look at where are you, where do I hope to go

this year, where do I hope to go the next year, and where am I going to do a reality check."

She thought that leadership should evaluate and reflect on where the staff is going with the

professional development experiences.

> Am I going to do a reality check at semester? Maybe half the people say this is not really helpful. Leaders should open it up to evaluation…but then nobody wants to hurt your feelings, especially if you are their boss.

The offerings in teacher education also have to be geared to what teachers need. "I always

think back to an in-service in religion locally and the woman who gave it started with Adam

and Eve and ended with Vatican II. She tried to cover everything." Another component that

Carla perceived about professional development is personal responsibility.

> There is a big component where there is a big responsibility for my own development. I am responsible. So if I don't know how to do something or I want to learn something, by cracky, I go find out where I can get it. It isn't the principal's job to spoon feed you. She is to open the cupboard and say here are the five cans you can work from.

Carla spoke to the value of professional development experience. "I like when we have done

the professional groups like in-service and people have really taken the time to bring their

best practices. That is helpful." Sharing with other teachers was a help to Carla. "I think

professional groups in our building have been very helpful and sometimes large diocesan

groups are helpful." Carla spoke to why these groups are valuable to her.

> It empowers you. You have to say well that person really heard what I needed. If I felt like I needed to work on building better baskets or whatever, and they listened and they researched and they provided me with some ideas.

Discussions in these groups helped to build skills and classroom expertise (Varrati et al.,

2009).

Individual textural structural composite for interview. The interview textural and

structural description of Carla spoke to four prominent areas of reflection. These themes

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were: (a) Professionalism, (b) Practicality in Context, (c) Relevancy for Teachers, and (d) Attributes of Teachers.

Professionalism. Carla referred to this theme 105 times in the interview description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Carla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as years of experience, expertise, grade level, and faculty. According to Carla, "You really have to buy in to it. If you are just sitting there and not buying in to it, you are not a professional."

As Coleman, Gallagher, and Job (2012) reported, teacher knowledge was "multifaceted and dynamic" and was critical to teacher practice (p. 29). Carla would like to see more depth to the knowledge shared in professional development. "We did this fad and then moved to this one and when we moved we never ever got, they were all good, but you never got enough professionalism on the topic." She explained that theory, skill formulation, and implementation were important to the overall purpose of professional development.

> When I say expertise, I think you have to know enough of the theory that if it doesn't work exactly for you, you have some idea of how to change it. I get really frustrated with a bag of tricks because if I don't know any of the theory and it doesn't exactly work, I don't know enough to say oh, if I tweak this piece, it will work.

Carla also expected that professional development was her responsibility. "I am not responsible for their professional development. I am only responsible for mine. I think our obligation is to in-service ourselves. I think if you don't you run the risk of becoming old dinosaur material." Carla also addressed the professionalism of teachers in these experiences:

> I think that burden also falls on teachers because I have gone to professional development where the teachers weren't very professional. I'm sorry, checking papers are not the stance you want to be doing. One time when I was at Adams School, Mrs. Wilson was our principal, and she came into the faculty meeting and she

was talking about doing something, and there were people doing a bunch of other things and she slammed the book down. She said look, I have planned very carefully for this meeting and I expect you to be professionals. That got everybody's attention.

On the local level at her current school, Carla found the most professionalism.

I really have been impressed. Mrs. Miller does take it seriously and she does put out articles and she will ask you about it. And if you come to her and say I want to know more about this. She will ask us what we think. And then she is willing to consider what we think.

Carla sees a connection between the local leader and the faculty.

Mrs. Miller will ask the committee, and then they came back to us and said what do you think about doing these things. There are about four or five things that you can do and which would you like to try? I said well, I'll try this and somebody else said I will try this and somebody else said I will try this. Then they said we will hear from you in a month. And I liked that piece there. It wasn't give it to you and hoping you'll forget.

Practicality in context. Carla referred to this theme 91 times in the focus group

description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development

experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are

mentioned by Carla included to know, time, help, and new. Carla stated, "We will sit around

and talk about it in faculty meetings and then we will ask questions and I will go look and see

what she is doing or show me how you did this. That is very helpful."

Carla found the practicality behind the professional development experience helped

her to be a better teacher in her classroom context. Teachers appreciated the practical

application of incorporating skills in a classroom setting (Burke, 2013). Carla found the most

practical experience of professional development to be webinars.

I think the webinars are the means that most connect with me because I can look at something or watch a thing that maybe nobody else in the building is interested in but I think it is important. I can do them anywhere, do anything, I don't have to go anywhere. Just show up.

As a veteran teacher, Carla noted that practicality was imperative.

> We don't have time for fluff. It's like when I went to get a new job after Adams School, I thought I want to go to someplace where they're really interested in being the best. Because I don't have time. I don't have fifty more years to do it, and I want to make what I do count.

Carla also enjoyed experiences where the presenter could be contacted later for clarification.

> If there are resources that I can go back and look at that I don't expect the person who gave the presentation or who led the group discussion to have all the answers. So I have some idea where I can go to contact the speaker. And they are somebody with credibility in the field. They live in the trenches.

Carla also saw practical application of experiences by working with her own local faculty experts.

> The faculty study groups brainstormed where are the places that you see a weakness and we went around. Then we kind of prioritize them and said these are the things we want to work on first. And then we looked at Iowa Basics scores to see if what we thought were in fact what you know and so we made plans to work on those topics.

Relevancy for teachers. Carla referred to this theme 77 times in the interview description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Carla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as needs, listening, focus, real, different, and goals. In the interview, she suggested, "look at the needs of the kids in our schools and have clear, manageable goals."

> For Carla, relevancy came from vision and planning.

> I think they have been strongest when they have had a clear vision of where they wanted to go and they used appropriate materials. Some of my best learning has been with peers. What they have taught me, what I didn't know. Or showed me ways that I didn't know. I don't even remember the name of the teacher who taught me about those. But I remembered and I thought hmm, I want that.

For her students, Carla was looking for experiences to help her rigor in the classroom. "Who could really profit from a deeper exploration and then how could I figure out how to get it to them." She predicted, "I think we have got to find a new way to invent." Her suggestion for relevant change was the use of technology, and she gives this description:

> I think Skyping would allow us to just work with anybody and I also think that that kind of thing would allow kids to get a topic. If I know that Teacher Smith is really good at explaining fractions, then I can put little Joey Smith over here and let him Skype. Let him sit with him over there and let him learn

Changing professional development experiences as well seemed relevant to Carla. "I love webinars because I can do them on my own." Professional development was vital to relevant changes in teaching and for the quality of programs offered (Higgins & Harreveld, 2013). Carla suggested leaders focus on "talent that we possess in our building" and not "drag in some whoosy hoosy from someplace."

Attributes of teachers. Carla referred to this theme 67 times in the interview description. Attributes of teachers were defined as the qualities of a professional teacher especially relating to experiences of professional development. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Carla included empowered, responsible, and love. Carla described her relationship with her faculty, "Now we all may be working on slightly different basis and we may be approaching it a little differently but we are all in the same boat rowing."

Carla alluded to a faculty situation in which the learning environment was different from what she experiences now. "Now sometimes I have been on a faculty and you know you can tell that whatever you say isn't going anywhere. But that happens in life." Happily, her current experience is more positive.

Our professional development will sustain growth for our school when we are all working on the same thing. We have a common focus so that we have agreed that our math scores or our reading scores need some improvement. We see our kids lacking or parents have commented so we are all working on the same topic.

She does not like situations in which, "I don't want to be rowing in one boat and you're on another boat and you are on another boat because all we have is congestion." She also recognizes the challenges of leadership.

I think it is a tough time as you know to be a principal. I think it is a thankless job. As I tell the kids, that's why they pay them the big bucks. But I think it's hard because there are so many different communities you have to answer to but I think most principals that are worth their salt, are really genuine and interested in their school being better.

As Hemmings, Hill, and Sharp (2013) reported, learning environment, the characteristics of learners. and the instructional design of staff development workshops were powerful learning experiences for teachers.

Case 2

Individual textural description for narrative. The narrative description for Case 2 again retold the story based on the three-dimensional space approach. The story was based on interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

Anne was a second grade teacher in a school in a Catholic Midwest diocese. She was a 49-year-old white female with 27 years of teaching experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She had taught in the Catholic Midwest diocese for all of her years of experience. She had taught in one school in the diocese. Anne had a Master of Arts in Elementary Education. Her experiences of professional development had been local, diocesan, and global. "I have participated in all local and diocesan professional development held in the last 26 plus years. I have presented at a diocesan professional development. I have also attended

NCEA conventions as well and local and out of town seminars." According to Anne,

"Current educational trends seem to dictate the diocesan professional development as well as

grants or funding."

In the past, Anne had participated in local, POD, diocesan seminars, conventions, and

out of town seminars. "They have been groups of all age levels, grade levels, and grade or

subject specific." As for Anne's present experience, she stated:

> Sometimes there are new ideas, but I have found that most of the time I am just
> reminded of something I know about, but just forgot. Many times after professional
> development I come back with a fresh attitude as well as some new ideas or
> techniques that will benefit students.

In terms of the future, Anne asserted, "I think the most valuable part of professional

development is giving you a fresh outlook. I often look for seminars that meet the needs of

my students (i.e., technology, discipline strategies, response to intervention (RTI), bullying,

and differentiated instruction)." In addition, Anne saw the diocese attempting to move to

listening in the future through the use of surveys. She noted:

> This is especially true since we have moved to electronic surveys. It seems that in the
> case of a poor professional development experience, we don't have the opportunity to
> make comments. I do think that the surveys, as well as input from principals, have
> helped to improve professional development. I realize that it is impossible for a single
> professional development session to meet the needs of everyone.

Anne's situations of professional development had been in the local school building,

at diocesan professional development days, and attending global conferences. In Anne's

experience:

> The only professional development plans I have been a part of are personal and
> usually involve attending seminars on a particular need (i.e., technology,
> differentiated instruction). Locally my principals have tried to find professional
> development that meets the needs of the faculty (i.e., bringing people in, sending to
> conferences, seminars, and webinars).

Although supported by the local leader, Anne's experience of professional development was driven by individual choices, and those choices were primarily attendance at conferences or workshops that were supported by corporate sponsors or were promoting a product.

Individual structural description for narrative. Finding practices of change in her professional development experiences was important to Anne. Responsiveness to change and leadership were critical factors in professional development programs (Berger, 2014). Anne made the point:

> I have seen an improvement in the professional development in the diocese since the leaders have started to listen to the needs of the teachers. We don't want to be preached to. This does not create an atmosphere of respect. We want to hear from people with fresh perspective.

Anne was willing to collaborate in order to grow as a professional.

> It enables teachers in similar subject areas or interests to focus on. I think the collaborative part is huge. You learn most from your peers. For the most part grade levels or grade-subject specific are the most beneficial. It's difficult to meet the needs of everyone in a group of preschool through high school.

> The contextual reality of the classroom teacher was practical to Anne. She would like to see professional development that is more collaborative. Collaboration in professional development was built upon both trust and mutual interest (Devlin-Scherer & Sardone, 2013). In agreement, Anne claimed, "The collaboration among peers is the most helpful." She noted:

> The most useful and beneficial professional development experiences are the small group ones where as a teacher you are able to select the session you want to attend. This insures that you are able to attend something that interests you and is beneficial. I also really like the time spent with peers sharing.

Her growth came from collaborating with peer to promote learning and growing, especially in terms of her own context. Practicality of professional development as useful to the second

grade context was of importance to Anne. However, she laments that, in some professional development, she had heard the "same thing over and over." As stated by Bambrick-Santoyo (2013), when teachers cannot put into action what they have learned, the professional development experience was not worthwhile. As Anne related, "Ideally, professional development should leave you energized, not feeling degraded or bored."

Individual textural structural composite for narrative. The narrative textural and structural description of Anne articulated two prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers and (b) Practicality in Context.

Relevancy for teachers. Anne referred to this theme 35 times in the narrative description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Anne mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as surveying, beneficial, needs, and wants. In her narrative, she addressed this need by mentioning, "I think the leaders have done a better job recently of listening to and meeting the needs to the teachers."

By creating relevant change in professional development experiences, teachers transformed their own practice to focus on a more effective instructional environment (Johnson, 2011). "We have had some professional development that does not exhibit social justice. That is probably more the individual speakers than the leader's decisions." For Anne, having professional development that produced effective learning or was relevant for her context would have been more valuable for her own learning and growth.

Practicality in context. Anne referred to this theme 34 times in the narrative description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development

experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Anne included local, grade level, subject level, and differentiated.

Anne indicated the yearning for a voice in professional development. "Sometimes, I think that sometimes surveys do this. Although it seems that when I really have a strong opinion, positive or negative, about a professional experience, the survey does not allow for additional comments." According to Boucher (2001), when the process of identifying strengths and needs was combined with a framework to analyze data, a plan can be developed specific to the needs of teachers. So, having a voice in the experience promoted a focus on the practical application of the objective of professional development to the classroom setting.

Individual textural description for focus group. The focus group description for Case 2 told Anne's story based on "the what" of professional development experiences (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The textural description was part of the phenomenological approach designated by Moustakas (1994).

The participation of Anne in professional development had included global conferences, diocesan, and local in-services. She enjoyed experiences when:

> we have been able to pick where we wanted to go to. I think it is when you get to choose what it is you go to. You have to go to big sessions. I would rather go to three or four little sessions than one or two great big long ones because otherwise it's just kind of if you just sit and listen.

She also appreciated sharing with peers. "I think that collaboration time is the most beneficial and gives you the most things that you can take right back and use." As a part of participating, connecting with other peers was also helpful to Anne. "And they are available to say, oh hey, what exactly did you do with this or exactly how did you do that? You can

contact them again to get further information if you needed to." Being able to have a choice and to work with peers helped in the professional development experience for Anne.

Professional development experiences presented a challenge for Anne because of specific instances where presenters were not attentive to the needs of teachers. Anne felt frustration because "this evaluation I am really going to fill it out because of that presenter and it was an evaluation where there wasn't any space to do anything which I am sure was kind of intentional." An additional challenge is when the presenter does not attend to the audience.

> It seems like, the diocese anyway, has gone to break the group coming in to the big speaker into a little bit smaller levels but I don't think the presenter is making adjustments. They are just making the same presentation three times.

It was challenging for a teacher to attend to a presentation when the speaker has not geared the learning to the needs of the teacher.

The skills or growth that Anne had experienced included "finding out that you don't have to differentiate all day every day. It was just here we will do an activity or here." This experience happened at a global conference in New Orleans. Instead of feeling that "Oh, my God, there is no way I can do this," Anne felt empowered by the knowledge that "you don't have to do it every day all day." Another growth opportunity came when teachers moved from school to school once a month studying Whole Language. Anne states, "just kind of bring what it was that we were working on or doing and you just spent an hour or an hour and a half and you just shared." Anne claimed, in terms of professional development skills, "I would say probably a lot more that you don't use." In terms of unused information, Anne explained:

Most of that, I mean I don't even take notes anymore because it's like why bother because I'm not going to look at them. I mean I do occasionally jot something down. You know, I used to take real detailed and copious notes and now it's like why bother. I just threw out a stack of ten-year-old notes that I have never looked at again.

In terms of growth for teachers, Anne noted, "I think it's those things that you can really bring back and use right away is most beneficial."

Individual structural description for focus group. According to Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological approach to structural descriptions helped to explain the unit of analysis. Professional development was examined through the responses of Anne in the focus group setting. The structural description explained how Anne experienced this phenomenon. (Creswell, 2007).

The administration of Anne's school supported her individual training and encouraged her to train others. For example:

I know that I can go and say, 'I am really looking for something on connecting iPads in my classroom, Kinda looking for professional development on that. I am looking for something on differentiated instruction or technology or whatever the topic is. They've been pretty good about saying, oh hey, I found something on this. Would you want to go do this? And those tend to be the more general, I went to one this summer in New Orleans on Common Core and differentiated instruction and I went to something in California on management or on motivation so they have been really good about listening to what it was that you needed and kind of keeping their eyes open for those things.

Anne realized how hard it is on the diocesan scale to attend to every audience. "Just the logistics of what a second grade teacher needs and what a high school teacher needs are not going to be anything close to the same." As a result, professional development instruction often centered on standards instead of following up on what a teacher might encounter in their own classroom (Blankenship & Kim, 2012). Anne explained that good professional development experiences can result from "When you go to those big things, a lot of what you

get that becomes most meaningful…does it come from the presentation or does it come from the conversation with the people that you are sitting with?"

The perception about professional development experiences for Anne had to do with the logistics of financing, timing, and availability. "I have seen the diocese make a real effort in the last two or three years to do things because we always have those breakout sessions now that we didn't used to have." In terms of budgeting for professional development, "We will do it, do it, do it and then oops, either we ran out of money or this thing came along. There doesn't seem to be much follow through to completion." Traditional forms of professional development changed and adapted because of financial constraints (Branom, 2012). On the local level, she shared, "For a while we were doing you know okay two teachers go this year, two teachers go next year, four teachers go, you know the money was for that but then that kind of just stopped." Anne also found frustration in the timing of webinars or other web-based opportunities.

> They start at three o clock. You can't get on or get going on it because of the timing of them. Oh, this one looks really good. I'll sign up for them because sometimes if you miss it, they will give you the connection that you can go back and look at it later. There have been a bunch that have come through lately that I've seen that, oh, this would be really good. Well, it's from 4 to 5 east coast time. Well that's 3 to 4 our time. You can't do that.

The choices of sessions were mitigated when availability of those sessions was limited. "Part of it is when you go. You don't sign up for them so you get there and you can't get in to half of what you are trying to get to."

There was value in experiences of professional development for Anne." I think at a local level that they do take things into consideration." On the global level, as well, the audience and engagement are acknowledged.

I did see some adjustment by the presenters based on the need when I was at in San Jose. It was much smaller. Under 50 people but the same kind of thing, where they made adjustments to meet those needs of the people that were there.

According to Anne, professional development experiences held the most value when decision makers, "don't just try to guess what we all need." Evaluations of professional development programs helped to determine whether the program was supportive of teacher and student learning (Killion, 2013).

Individual textural structural composite for focus group. The focus group textural and structural description of Anne spoke to four prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Practicality in Context, (c) Disconnect from Contextual Reality, and (d) Professionalism.

Relevancy for teachers. Anne referred to this theme 68 times in the focus group description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Anne mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as different, real, new, focus, and want. In making reference to this theme, Anne shared, "Those that seem to be more productive are especially when it's either collaborative or you can do you know you get a hand on and it's something you can take right back and use."

The experiences of professional development that promoted change for Anne were "kind of an informal, somebody saw the need somewhere and said well, hey let's try this and you could come if you wanted to." However, according to Edwards (1995), it was essential for teachers to reflect and evaluate their practices of teaching and development in order to grow. Anne was able to initiate experiences that promoted growth for herself. "As much as it

is those goals that we all write at the beginning of the year. But it's more like I will see

something and say you know I think this might help." For example:

> I mean like when we had just gotten our Promethean boards, we had somebody from
> Active Inspire come in and do professional development on those. And then, we had,
> you know earlier this year, we've had two of the teachers come in and use their board.

Anne found relevant needs and responded to those needs with initiative in order to help

sustain her own growth and her students' growth.

Practicality in context. Anne referred to this theme 67 times in the focus group

description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development

experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that

were mentioned by Anne included classes, groups, small groups, use, useful, utilized,

information, and time. Anne claimed that, in professional development, one should be able to

"remember what his purpose was about."

Anne noted that, as a veteran teacher, she sometimes forgets about strategies and

skills. "I heard that before, I heard that before, I heard that before but I forgot about that."

Professional development helped her to remember how helpful strategies can be in her

current context. "Oh, I forgot all about that. That would work really good with this particular

student." In Anne's opinion, "part of what we deal with with our presenters is that they have

been out of the classroom for so long or have never been in the classroom that they can't

relate." Traditional professional development was not equipped to meet the new standards for

grade level curriculum and instruction (Killion & Hirsh, 2013).

Disconnect from contextual reality. Anne referred to this theme 49 times in the focus

group description. Disconnect from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of

engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The aspects

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or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Anne included presentation, same, spending, fill, forgot, money, and whether a teacher takes notes or not during an in-service presentation.

The disconnect from contextual reality was a factor in discontent of some professional development experiences of Anne. Anne explained the disconnect by stating:

> It kind of goes in spurts. I think sometimes professional development gets bumped down to the bottom. Oh no, we have to do professional development and then it kind of gets bumped up again. You know you intend to do a little more with it.

Although a vision was expected, Anne claimed, "There doesn't seem to be a lot of necessarily vision with it. It's like, okay, this sounds like a great thing, let's do this." And when disconnect occurred, often the professional development experiences did not relate to the classroom setting.

> A lot of times because they are trying to appeal to such a broad range, most of what they talk about is something you have heard over and over again or something that doesn't pertain to you or they talk at you like you don't know what you are doing at all.

As another example, Anne remarked:

> I've never been real fond of the here read the article and share about it. Kind of, um, just because it seems to be more theory based and not realistic.

Professional development needed to be aligned with the classroom teachers' practices as defined and perceived by the classroom teacher (Slepkov, 2008).

Professionalism. Anne referred to this theme 48 times in the focus group description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Anne mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as certification, administration, teachers, principal, and

years of experience. This was an area of frustration for Anne. "When I thought about that aspect of professional development, we are still spinning wheels."

Anne spoke about professionalism in connection with catechetical training.

> I mean, I know that's been a frustration level. I mean, I felt really fortunate when I got in when I did. So I was able to get it all done but it was like if you left early or weren't there to sign in, you didn't get credit for any of it.

She addressed the professionalism of attendance and accountability. "I mean your principal should say 'yes my staff was there.'" The certification required can also be cumbersome. "I can't tell you how many times I have filled out the paper that said are you certified. Staple the copy of the certificate and send it off." Anne following the advice of a peer, used responsible professionalism to ensure her certification was available.

> Well, when I first started, she was probably a mentor teacher although they didn't use that terminology at the time, she said, make a copy of everything that you send because …you may never see it again.

The frustration of a long term teacher about professional development requirements was shared, "but I think if you go into catechetical, that's a real area of weakness I think because the requirements change before they can actually finish anything." One other area of concern for Anne was the evaluation process of professional development.

> I mean I know we filled out evaluations at the end. How well have they used that? When you are looking at those professional ones, it's hard to know whether they are because, will I ever go back to one? I don't know whether there is a way to measure whether or not they hear you. I know that the one I was at, they did kind of take an informal, okay where are you at with this? Okay, we are going to do this type of thing, where they will kind of adjust what they were going to do based on the needs of who they had there.

As Killion (2013) noted, the process for evaluation of professional development included reviewing, revising, feedback, and results.

Individual textural description for interview. The interview description for Case 2 told Anne's story based on "the what" of professional development experiences (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The textural description was part of the phenomenological tradition designated by Moustakas (1994).

The participation of Anne in professional development was most effective if a plan of action was involved. "Try to have a little more vision about where it is going." For all of her experiences, whether global or local, "There needs to be kind of a long term plan associated with whatever it is that's coming and not just jumping on every bandwagon that comes by." In her experience, "There needs to be kind of a direction that it is going to go and what happens when we run out of money to pay for it. Does it just disappear? Typically."

Professional development experiences were a challenge because, in Anne's eyes, attitudes of teachers and leaders must change. First, in terms of teacher attitudes, Anne noted, "It depends on the teachers that you have and how open and receptive they are to doing things." In her context, she noticed:

> You have to go into it with an open mind and I think sometimes in your school community and I think even in the diocesan community, so many go with an attitude that is going to be a waste of their time no matter what it is.

However, she noticed that "I think young teachers don't go in with that attitude."

The challenge of turnover in faculty was also a factor. "You get a new piece of technology, you know you need to spend the time training. We have had Promethean board training but we have had enough turnover where there are enough people that haven't had any yet and that I'm kind of thinking I know I could do more with this but I can't remember how to do it."

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The challenge for leadership was "It is impossible to meet everybody's needs." Anne thought that administratively each year we do the same kinds of training around security and sexual abuse, "It seems like we rehash that all the time. Are the procedures important? Absolutely, but I don't think we need to be hit over the head with it all the time." Anne felt that leaders were making decisions not always with students as the primary factor in the decision making process. "All the things in the abuse area that we are being forced to do, a lot of things are not really meeting the needs of our kids and are based on some decisions somebody not really related to the situation made to cover something. I mean you know we are the ones picking up the pieces in the end and being held more accountable than the higher ups." Lastly, Anne spoke to social justice and the challenges of administrative decision making: "I mean, are those things important to teach? I think absolutely. But I think we are trying to compensate. I think that is where, as teachers, we are the ones that they are saying here, you have to do this now. And that as far as social justice is concerned, it isn't just at all. I am not saying there is not value to those things but I am saying it is not necessarily the best."

The skills or growth that Anne has experienced included meeting a need that the teacher has and, in turn, helping students to learn and grow. Anne spoke to what she is focusing on in her own context and "consequently that changes from year to year." Skill development "Can address those needs of that age child, you know, the needs that you are facing in that classroom better I think." Anne affirmed that professional development should have follow through and often, "It never materialized; typically that is what happens." Follow through would help Anne with her teaching growth and skills.

Individual structural description for interview. According to Moustakas (1994),

phenomenological tradition to structural descriptions helped to explain the unit of analysis.

Professional development was examined through the responses of Anne in the interview

setting. The structural description explained how Anne experienced this phenomenon.

(Creswell, 2007).

Anne related that grade level, smaller experiences help her to learn more comfortably.

"Adult learners often favor a specific type of learning and will choose that format for their

professional development activities" (Buxton & DeMuth, 2012, p. 14). She described local

experiences as, "Nice because it was a smaller group and you didn't have to travel as far."

She described large diocesan experiences: "For me personally that is not an area where I am

comfortable in a large group and I am much more interested in what you can go back and use

than just what do you think about those things. That's just for me personal." It was helpful to

Anne if the diocese had common days of local development that facilitated sharing. "I don't

think everyone has the same local days which I never could figure out why, everyone is on a

different schedule." She also spoke to the attitude of teachers: "I know as teachers we are

notorious for, we don't want to do any more work than we are already doing. But I mean I

think some of that is they have not been very well received because they don't have the

support of the people that they are supposed to serve." She also knows that leaders have to

examine forward looking topics, "Like I said with Common Core right now is the fact that

because it's a national thing, you either deal with it or be left behind."

Anne had a different perception of professional development because she tried to be a

presenter in the past. "I know that there are times in the past where Mr. Taylor has come back

and said well the diocese is looking for presenters on this topic, does anybody have anything

that you want to present." Anne tried to help the leader and the diocese with her efforts. "There was one that we came up with that we would be willing to do but I think the diocese went with a different direction as to the type of topics, so…" Anne had presented on the local level. "On a local level I think there is more of that just because there is more familiarity." Presenting gave Anne a professional identity by sharing her growth and her knowledge, especially within her own context (Moss, Gibson & Dollarhide, 2014).

There was value in experiences of professional development for Anne. Casey, Starratt, and Dunlap (2013) suggested that professional development experiences and practice potentially stimulated long lasting effects. For Anne, the most valuable professional development experience was when, "There is something there that really speaks to what your need is." Anne focused her valuable, effective professional development experiences on "How to improve that achievement." She wanted to prepare students who "go into an environment where they do test" to succeed even if there is "more rigor in testing" in situations outside of her own context.

Individual textural structural composite for interview. The interview textural and structural description of Anne spoke to three prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Practicality in Context, and (c) Professionalism.

Relevancy for teachers. Anne referred to this theme 145 times in the focus group description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Anne mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as change, different, important, and interest. In making reference to this theme, Anne hoped that leaders realized, "What really is

going on and what is really realistic" in terms of decision making about professional development.

The experiences of professional development that sustained change for Anne come from consistency in administration. "When you have that administration change, you have professional development completely change based on who you have in there." The implication of this change was that the institutional context of the teacher can either restrict or enlarge teacher learning and growth (Yilmaz, 2008). "So hopefully there will be some longevity and there will be some consistency." Anne also recommended looking at professional development practices as a hiring point for a superintendent.

> I think that is one thing that is not taken into consideration when a new superintendent is hired is that is their view of professional development fit with where we are as a diocese. I mean, are they going to move us in a direction where we need to go? Granted we were in a direction where we needed to go somewhere else. I don't know that that is always considered.

Practicality in context. Anne referred to this theme 81 times in the interview description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Anne included assessment, curriculum, meeting, talking, and time. Anne claimed that professional development can be very motivating and useful in her context. "It was fascinating. I don't know what else I did but that one I remember because it was that piece of it that I could take back and apply."

Anne spoke to making decisions about professional development based on practicality and saw empowerment in "making your own selections." For Anne, for those selections, "It is all about meeting the needs of the kids and where they are at so the more tools you get make you a better teacher." Altun and Cengiz (2012) explained that school

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development and professional development should parallel each other so that professional development practices were not impractical to promoting teacher learning. Despite preferring to make her own selections about professional development experiences she would like to attend in order to promote her context, Anne admitted:

> You go in saying this is what I am looking for and it's not. It's something completely different from what you are doing. I think those things tend to be ones that you have to go to have the least amount of positive effect on what you are going to do. And this happens at all levels of professional development, our hope is there will be something that will pop out.

Professionalism. Anne referred to this theme 62 times in the focus group description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Anne mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as formation, teaching, and years of experience. Anne claimed that "Professional respect parallels social justice."

Anne spoke about professionalism in connection with being treated with respect as an educator by leaders. "They have those expectations. They preach it but they don't do it. That is where you get to that not feeling like you are being treated professionally really." According to Gunzenhauser (2013), "Professionalism in education was constituted by ethical practices of teaching" (p. 201). Anne told a story of a teacher at a recent diocesan event, "We had one not too long ago that I thought was not appropriate. I remember whoever was speaking, it was like insulting. I felt insulted when I was listening to them." She feels, because of the repetition of some subjects, "Like I have been beat over the head with knowing some of those things." Anne realized that some of her feelings came from "I mean part of that I know comes from having been in the profession as long as I have." She

admitted, "I would imagine as a newer teacher that those things are may have a little bit of importance, especially to a younger teacher."

Case 3

Individual textural description for narrative. The narrative description for Case 3 repeated the teacher's story based on the three-dimensional space approach. The story was based on the personal interaction of the teacher, the continuity of past, present and future, and the physical situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

Gianna was a second grade teacher in a school in a Catholic Midwest diocese. She is a 45-year-old white female with 15 years of experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She had taught in the Catholic Midwest diocese for all of her years of experience. She had taught in one school in the diocese. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education. Her experiences of professional development had been local, diocesan, and global. "I have participated in many professional development services ranging from workshop, conference, and training, both local and out of state." About these experiences, Gianna stated, "professional development enables teachers to develop the skills they need to address students' learning needs."

Gianna spoke her past professional development by acknowledging that "Most recently, I have participated in diocesan professional development and a Kagan Cooperative Learning conference in Florida." In Gianna's present experience, she stated, "For teachers as well as their students to be as successful as possible, teachers need to continually expand their knowledge and skills to implement the best educational practices." In looking to her future, Gianna asserted that to continue to expand her knowledge, "I feel this is achieved through constant renewal and refreshment of my teaching skills. To be effective, professional

development requires thoughtful planning and careful implementation to ensure it responds to students' and educators' learning needs."

Gianna's situations of professional development have been local, diocesan, and global. In speaking of her experiences, Gianna declared, "The most meaningful professional development experiences I have had have been those that focus directly on student and teacher relationships." Gianna had a positive attitude about her professional development experiences. She noted, "Professional development, I believe is very useful in providing effective teaching training and education."

Individual structural description for narrative. Creating relevant change in her classroom was an important skill in Gianna's professional development experiences. According to Desimone, Smith and Phillips (2013), when teachers focused more on skills, student achievement grew more quickly. As noted in her narrative, Gianna stated, "As an educator, I believe my goals are in line with the goals of other educators. My job revolves around providing the best education I can to my students. In order to do this, I find it important to stay updated on new teaching methods and tools." One way to change and grow, according to Gianna, was collaboration. "Collaborative learning environment and professional development carry the same principle. That is, they both revolve around the axis of swapping teaching methods in order to develop a more informed and ready body of teachers."

The professionalism of leaders and teachers was important to Gianna. She spoke of leaders as "enthusiastic and goal driven." Leaders can "impact and improve professional practice" (Casey et al., 2013, p. 91). Most significantly, Gianna noted, "As an educator, I feel it is my duty to help students learn at the highest levels." Administrators could best support

teachers by providing professional development experiences that ensured optimal learning (Jones, Ratcliff, Sheahan & Hunt, 2012). With common goals, both leaders and teachers effected growth in the classroom.

The practical reality of the classroom teacher was that each year a different context was presented. Gianna spoke to leaders helping teachers to focus on their own contexts. Burke, Marx, and Lowenstein (2012) reported that leaders' contexts for leading were connected to the goals and aim of the local environment, and their decisions were connected to change. In agreement, Gianna spoke to the focus of leadership, "that is, with the quality of students' education always in mind."

Individual textural structural composite for narrative. The narrative textural and structural description of Gianna prompted three prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Professionalism, (b) Practicality in Context, and (c) Relevancy for Teachers.

Professionalism. Gianna referred to this theme 30 times in the narrative description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Gianna mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as teachers, education, and leaders. Gianna explained this theme by stating, "More specifically, professional development that emphasizes how teachers can improve learning atmospheres through their own attitudes and teaching methods."

Teaching practice consists of different activities, and each requires being monitored and supervised to create a level of proficiency and a sense of expertise (Hussain, Javed, Lin Siew & Mohammed, 2013). Gianna believed that "Leaders invest a great amount of time and effort into their work to ensure that their job is successfully carried out." Gianna felt it was

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the responsibility of teachers with the help of leaders to obtain the professional development experiences needed to attain this growth.

Practicality in context. Gianna referred to this theme 28 times in the narrative description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Gianna included students, methods, skills, and training.

Gianna indicated that practicality included "the betterment of students through the improvement and growth of teachers." Brown and Crumpler (2013) spoke to the notion that teaching was a multilayered and challenging process. Leaders should look to practical ways of promoting the quality of professional development to enhance the quality of teachers. Gianna stated, "The quality of teachers is one of the most important factors in raising student success."

Relevancy for teachers. Gianna referred to this theme 24 times in the narrative description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Gianna mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as learning, needs, goals, and success. In her narrative, she addressed this need by mentioning, "It seems leaders of professional development truly want to see progression in teaching."

Relevant change in professional development experiences meant that teachers sought effective ways to make a difference in their own teaching context. Burke (2013) posited that the focus of professional development should be on student learning with collaboration and active teacher learning as avenues to achieve this goal. Gianna felt that she has had experiences that have helped her to have positive results in her own classroom.

Individual textual description for focus group. The focus group description for Case 3 centered on the "what" of Gianna's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). In Moustakas' (1994) approach, the textural description explained what Gianna experienced.

Gianna has participated in global, diocesan, and local professional development. She described experiences with "teachers" primarily with "second grade teachers" as being the most productive in her opinion. Sharing and collaborating with other teacher helped to "save you a few steps in the process" if teachers share about "something that is working for them."

The challenge for Gianna in her professional development experiences came from leaders. "They tell you what to change." In particular, Gianna described her most challenging experiences as "That would have to be diocesan." Gianna alluded to the many different trends and subjects that have been part of her overall experience at the diocesan level in terms of professional development. "Whatever happened to curriculum mapping? Where did it go?" She spoke to the fact that there have been several diocesan leaders in her years of experience "Must be with Mrs. Anderson or Ms. Harris somewhere."

Gianna did discuss the skills that have been honed because of professional development. She especially enjoyed experiences where there was some sort of "take away." "So you are cutting or pasting or gluing or making game boards or spinners. Those are good too. Because, you actually walk away with stuff you can use or copy it." Sometimes, in her classroom context, Gianna found herself using professional development skills without planning for it.

> Or you use it and just don't realize. I don't use Kagan but the other day a kid said "do we get to stand up, hand up, pair up?" and I thought, "oh yeah, I guess so." Then I guess I did come back and use some. They remembered.

Individual structural description for focus group. Moustakas (1994) recommended

a structural description to describe the phenomenon of professional development. The

phenomenon was discussed in the focus group and this description described the "how" of

Gianna's experience (Creswell, 2007, p. 61).

In Gianna's experience, both the principal and she had initiated professional

development experiences. "I had a principal before that suggested professional development

and several of the staff went and it was in Baltimore or someplace like that." She reported

also being supported when she initiated an interest in her own development.

> I have also initiated it and I mean you know my principal when I initiated it, like I
> went to several just workshops in the Kansas City area and I would just take the day
> off and get a substitute I mean they were more than willing to allow us to go.

Experience and commitment moved teachers from external motivation to internal validation

(Moss et al., 2014).

Gianna's perception of professional development offerings was varied depending on

the engagement of the experience. For instance, during a diocesan keynote recently, Gianna

admitted:

> I can't even remember what the speaker was about last time. What was it a month
> ago? All I remember is that she had a southern accent. And I'm pretty sure that was
> like the one before that was in a theater some place. I don't remember a thing she
> said.

According to Berger (2014), trying to find professional development that appealed to

a broad range of audiences is not a simple task. However, in a global experience, Gianna

noted, "Differentiated instruction in Chicago. That was key. It was I think put on by ASCD

or something. Instruction. Lots of ideas. Reading." However, in another global experience,

she stated, "The Kagan one I just went on. I had a good time though. But I don't know that it helped."

The value of her experience for Gianna came from collaboration with other teachers. "One session with second grade teachers, they always pass out e-mails at the diocesan one. She handed me her card the last time I was at the diocesan. She shared the e-mail with the new information." As for catechetical training, Gianna found little value. "I am not certified in any of that. I don't keep track of anything and they don't keep track of anything." In another experience of professional development at the local level, Gianna remained neutral in her explanation. "We also read articles. We read articles, with our new principal, she asks us to read articles." Chang (2009) posited that this professional development strategy may foster peer discussions but should be formulated in a way to accommodate for common interests, focus and grade level disciplines.

Individual textural structural composite for focus group. The focus group textural and structural description of Gianna spoke to four prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Professionalism, (c) Practicality in Context, and 4. Disconnect from Contextual Reality.

Relevancy for teachers. Gianna referred to this theme 19 times in the focus group description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Gianna mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as remember and ideas.

The change that happened during experiences of professional development for Gianna include "Lots of ideas for ways to differentiate in the classroom." She also referred to the power of collaboration to effect change in the classroom context. "We all have different

strategies." This sharing of strategies was relevant for Gianna as a second grade teacher. Teacher practice combined with support sustained change in the classroom (Giordano, 2007).

Professionalism. Gianna referred to this theme 13 times in the focus group description. Responsible professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Gianna mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as staff, teachers, principal, and years of experience.

Professionalism for Gianna was about the relationships that she seeks with her teacher peers. As noted by Moss et al. (2014), personal attributes of teachers combined with professional training make up a person's professional identity. She talked about how her fellow staff members "Are in the trenches." She also referred to global conferences as being "More fun when the whole staff goes." Lastly, Gianna referred to the collaborative sessions in diocesan meetings. "I think within the diocese it's pretty easy to contact someone and I take notes occasionally."

Practicality in context. Gianna referred to this theme 10 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Gianna included time, classroom, and grade level.

Gianna was most at home in professional development experiences where there was hands-on learning. Stanley (2001) stated that the work of education was diverse and required a variety of strategies for success. Gianna revealed, "I have been to a few workshops too where you actually get to make things," However, during a lecture based or keynote, Gianna

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admitted that typically, "I can't tell you one thing she said." In referring to a global conference, she stated, "I am not so sure that I learned a whole lot."

Disconnect from contextual reality. Gianna referred to this theme 8 times in the focus group description. Disconnect from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Gianna included articles and workshops.

Gianna spoke to the disconnect in her local environment. "You have no time to read an article about any subject." The learning style of Gianna did not connect with taking the time to read. Rather Gianna would have liked to make something for the class or set up centers for student learning. "I got these cute little pigs at one thing I did." According to Altun and Cengiz (2012), "Teachers expect that professional development opportunities offered by either school or external agencies should be practical and applicable rather than theoretical." (p. 673).

Individual textural description for interview. The interview description for Case 3 centered on the "what" of Gianna's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). In Moustakas' (1994) approach, the textural description explained what Gianna experienced.

Gianna has participated in global, diocesan, and local professional development. She described her small group experiences as being the most positive. The reason for her positive attitude was that the people who are doing the training are actual teachers. Another positive aspect of her participation in professional development was that was self-selected. "You know which is nice when you get to have a choice. If you are choosing your professional

development, obviously you are going to get more out of it." She also described her global experiences as "higher quality." Gianna explained, "The people who are doing the presentations are obviously well trained."

The challenge for Gianna in her professional development experiences came from the demands of funding. "Filling out all that stuff for Title is a hassle. We are Blue Hills. It took two days just to fill out receipts." Because the global experiences had a cost involved, Gianna finds it cumbersome to apply. "Go ask and fill out all the paperwork. It's a pain in the neck." Another aspect that was challenging about professional development for Gianna was that "There are some people who just choose not to do any professional development." So those who chose to participate in development were charged with coming back to the staff to share. Gianna had the attitude of, "I think that if you go and learn something then it doesn't hurt to come back and share a little bit with your staff." On another note, the challenge of professional development for Gianna was that she realizes money was spent at the diocesan level on keynote speakers. Her opinion about this was:

> They have money to spend on professional development for teachers. They could do a better job. I don't think you can put K through 12 educators together and give a presentation and expect to benefit everybody. I can't teach seventeen kids one lesson and expect everybody to get it. So I think that is just crazy. Hundreds of people. Waste of money, time, and energy.

Gianna did discuss the skills that have been honed because of professional development. "I did go to that cooperative learning in Florida over the summer and my kids are doing a lot more cooperative learning stuff." She preferred professional development that was practical for her own classroom setting. "I went to those with the Kindergarten teacher so we would come back and make stuff and share it because it was just switching out my site

words for her site words so we had the basic sense." Being able to share these experiences with other teachers was a positive aspect of her professional development experiences.

Individual structural description for interview. Moustakas (1994) recommended a structural description to describe the phenomenon of professional development. The phenomenon was discussed in the interview and this description depicted the "how" of Gianna's (Creswell, 2007, p. 61).

In Gianna's experience, there were some factors that leaders had to examine in terms of providing professional development to their staff. The first factor that she noted was money. "That's top on my list." Gianna explained her understanding of how money gets spent for professional development.

> I sometimes I feel like if they are spending all that money to have somebody come in and then talk to teachers in the diocese. I don't know who tells them what to pick but they have never asked me what I would like to hear or what I am interested in learning more about.

Another example of a factor was "small group interaction." According to Fullerton (2013), "If we can establish learning communities in our schools in which teachers feel that they have voice, that their concerns are being addressed, where they feel safe to take risks, we can build a culture of learning in our schools" (p. 446). As well, Gianna noted that she appreciates development experiences that helped her in the classroom context. "A happy classroom makes for a happy teacher." The support for that happy classroom was sometimes interrupted because of a lack of technological support. She narrated her story:

> I do have an interest in the webinars but they are just at strange times. I think they assume that everybody gets off work at three thirty or four o'clock. Some people have two jobs. As far as Pinterest, they have some cute stuff. I use YouTube a lot but now it is blocked. I had the cutest little natural resource stuff, had all the printables, and going through the lesson plans on my iPad. They had somebody come out to school and block YouTube. So the kid's seven sacrament song is gone. I mean gone.

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Gianna's perception of professional development offerings was that she was motivated by what will help her in her classroom setting.

> I did Kagan over the summer and years ago that Susan Kovalik. That was brain based. I was very motivated to go to Kagan. I was very motivated to go to differentiated instruction in Chicago. But I look at whenever we get the little pamphlets. I look at it as is it something I will actually use. And then if I think it is then I ask if I can go.

Lorimer and Schulte (2011) posited that when teachers take advantage of professional development opportunities in a motivated and reflective manner, they see themselves as more professional educators.

The value of her experience for Gianna came from what is useful to her as a teacher and useful to help her students grow and learn. She noted using strategies from her professional development in her own classroom context. "I mean yes definitely. I still have the kids up and moving and drinking water, and interacting, playing music. All the stuff from what I can remember and it's been years ago." Gianna also valued going to global experiences with her peer teachers. "Well, I wouldn't want to go by myself. I went with Mr. Garcia to Florida and that was fun. And then to Chicago with Mrs. Lewis. You can process with a friend." Effective learning occurred when planning and execution occurred between teachers (Hirsh, 2012). Gianna valued leaders and teachers and opined, "I would like to hope that people who are in charge of teaching children care."

Individual textural structural composite for interview. The interview textural and structural description of Gianna spoke to four prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Practicality in Context, (b) Professionalism, (c) Relevancy for Teachers, and (d) Disconnect from Contextual Reality

Practicality in context. Gianna referred to this theme 59 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Gianna included kids, learning, classroom, time and talking.

The practicality of "make and take" workshops was best suited to Gianna's preferences for professional development. For instance, "Even when we are doing centers there is an end. I've been to a lot of center training. If we are doing centers there is an end product that I can see or they can take with them." As Reeves and Burt (2006) reported, "Their schools need new high-yield, strategic decisions based on deep understanding of the school context, student needs, and student performance profile to help ever-more diverse and more socioeconomically challenged student populations" (p. 66). The use of technology is also important to Gianna. "As far as technology, I would be interested in other uses of it." Gianna did not prefer local sessions in which sales are the bottom line of the professional development activity. She related this example:

> Well I think sometimes because we have half days, we schedule stuff just to fill up that time which again I think is a waste of time. Like we had training down in Ms. Hernandez's room where we were on the computer and had gold keys but we never got the program. I was like really that was four hours worth of my time. Mrs. Anderson related later that we could not afford the program.

Professionalism. Gianna referred to this theme 59 times in the interview description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Gianna mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as teachers, trained, years of experience, work, and principal.

Gianna saw professionalism as important to promote sustained learning in her classroom. "I mean I was out of the classroom for years. So when I came back in, I was kind of stale. And I went back in teaching middle school science. So a lot of change. So going to these little workshops and that kind of stuff gave me a lot of ideas and I know that the kids are learning." Unlike the portrayal in Karpinski's (2006) forecast, which stated, "Given the increasing accountability pressures that are largely fueled by economic concerns…we predict that many administrators will be tempted to adhere more tightly to managerial issues" (p. 284), Gianna noted that her administrator will seek to finance professional development if a teacher asked for the support. "I am sure if I talked to my principal right now and told her I was interested in something that she would find the money. I have never had a problem with the principal."

Professionalism to Gianna means that the "Overall goal is that the children are learning." At the diocesan level, the professionalism came from small group teacher led sessions. "We have been able to break off into sessions where a teacher is teaching which is to me more beneficial than all the other stuff that they are offering."

Relevancy for teachers. Gianna referred to this theme 57 times in the interview description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Gianna mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as choice, ask, and remember.

The change that happened from experiences of professional development for Gianna was both innovative and help her to promote achievement. "Remember that guy that got up. That was one of the most innovative. It was iPad training. He made the comment that

technology is like leaving your footprints." She was concerned about the growth and achievement of her students.

> Yeah, I mean I look and see what I am interested in and if it is something that I will use and I can see the achievement, I can see the growth in kids. I would much rather see them up and moving around then they think they are playing but they are actually learning. So I look for stuff like that.

Professional development leaders helped to promote relevant change by providing innovative sessions to encourage teachers to continue practices that encourage student growth (Garmston, 2003).

Disconnect from contextual reality. Gianna referred to this theme 38 times in the focus group description. Disconnect from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Gianna included fill, money, spend, supposed to, and workshop.

Gianna spoke about disconnect in some of her professional development experiences. She remarked, "It should be both teacher and leader initiative. I mean obviously the principal is not going to send a teacher to a workshop that the teacher is not interested in." Gianna was concerned that "I'm not sure how much professional development that other people do." As Saunders (2012) pointed out, depending on their level of involvement, teachers may not be in the same stage as their own colleagues. Gianna wanted to experience professional development with others. "I mean I have always done it with like people that I work with." Another form of disconnect for Gianna was the amount of money that is spent on professional development as a social justice issue. She noted:

> As far as the diocesan training that we were paying huge amounts of money for, I have never had any input on that. Never. Not good. And then that irritates me too

because I am thinking how much money are they spending on that when you know I don't have textbooks. I'm sure they could just cut the check and give it to the principals and let us buy stuff for the teachers instead of listening to this. Because some of those are just, it's just four hours of torture and you know it's expensive. I know it's expensive."

Case 4

Individual textural description for narrative. The narrative description for Case 4 told the teacher's story based on a three-dimensional space approach. The story was based on personal interaction, the continuity of past, present, and future experiences and the physical situation of professional development (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

Nancy was a fifth and sixth grade teacher in a multi-aged classroom in a school in a Catholic Midwest diocese. She is a 58-year-old white female with 27 years of teaching experience in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She had taught in the Catholic Midwest diocese for all of her years of experience. She has a Master of Arts in Humanities and Education. She had taught in two schools in the diocese. Her experiences of professional development had been primarily local and diocesan. "I currently am not signed up for any outside professional development plans. I do attend all professional development days planned by the diocese. I have not attended any conferences or seminars for a while." According to Nancy, "I don't really like to take time off of school to attend them, and in the summer I have other commitments."

In the past, Nancy had participated in local, POD, and diocesan seminars. She noted a past experience of a "Week long class on cooperative learning—there was lots of hands-on along with the theory. I was able to bring much of that back to use in the classroom." Her present experiences included "regularly scheduled professional development days provided by the diocese." As for future experiences, Nancy believed, "Sometimes I think they are just

jumping on whatever bandwagon that comes along; other times it seems like they think if they spend a lot of money on a speaker it will make a difference."

Nancy's situations of professional development had been in the local school setting and at diocesan professional development days. In Nancy's words, "While I can't give an exact experience, the most meaning, useful times have involved hands-on, 'what-can-I-use-in-class-tomorrow' kinds of experiences. I realize that theory has its place, but sometimes it seems pretty pie in the sky." Nancy's professional development experiences were limited in range to local and diocesan with little opportunity or willingness to participate in global experiences.

Individual structural description for narrative. Effecting change for her students was an important prospect for Nancy. Nancy asserted, "Discussion with peers offers insight into solving classroom issues." Teachers sustained change in their classrooms by using collaboration or personalized support to implement innovative practices (Thomas et al., 2012). In speaking of collaboration, Nancy noted, "For me, being able to talk in small groups about concerns or classroom problems is more useful that listening to someone throw a lot of facts and figures at me."

The contextual reality of the classroom teacher was practical to Nancy. For instance, she mentioned "Small group discussion or 'make and take' type of classes have the most meaning for me. As I said, I am a hands-on person." Altun and Cengiz (2012) reported, "Teachers expect to receive more practical professional development" (p. 674). In support of understanding the context of teachers, Nancy reflected, "Certainly there are some things when you come away from a conference or seminars that stay with me and that I use

regularly in class because it seems to help. Whether that is considered 'sustained' I don't know."

Individual textural structural composite for narrative. The narrative textural and structural description of Nancy centered on two prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Practicality in Context and (b) Relevancy for Teachers.

Practicality in context. Nancy referred to this theme 17 times in the narrative description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Nancy included class, hands-on, time, and discussion. Nancy revealed that she has "never been involved" in decision making about professional development. Leaders may not have had awareness in her context because of this revelation.

Nancy did not necessarily feel the need for voice but indicated the need for an awareness of the classroom setting. "I don't think I've ever thought about social justice in regard to professional development." Listening carefully to the concerns that the teachers convey was helpful in understanding teacher's context (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2011). Nancy did indicate a need for an awareness of the classroom setting. "Do I feel I have been marginalized in any way—no. Do I think they sometimes have forgotten what it's like to be in a classroom every day—yes."

Relevancy for teachers. Nancy referred to this theme 13 times in the narrative description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Nancy mentions aspects or meaning units of this theme such as involved and meaning. Alternately, when asked about leaders making decisions about change, she reflected on relevancy, "I have

no idea how leaders use teachers' voice to make decisions—no one has ever asked me for any input regarding professional development."

In her research, Johnston (2011) reported that change can occur with professional development experiences that are relevant. "We have had some professional development that does not exhibit social justice. That is probably more the individual speakers than the leaders' decisions." As to leaders' purpose in creating and sustaining that change, Nancy stated, "Truthfully, I've never given any thought about it. I assume it's their job and they are trying to do it."

Individual textural description for focus group. The focus group description for Case 4 was a textural description about the "what" of professional development (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The textural description explained what Nancy experienced in professional development events (Moustakas, 1994).

Nancy's participation in professional development was limited to diocesan and local in-services. She felt that her participation in professional development had run its course because of her veteran status. "I think there's only so much you can talk about, read about, or listen to." Her preference for current experiences was a more hands-on approach. "At some point you just have to get in there and get your hands dirty."

The challenge for Nancy in terms of professional development experiences was the disconnect that presenters may have about their audience. She cited an example. "At yet another diocesan teacher development, the speaker, a man who was from the public schools in Canada, spent a lot of time telling us all about how wonderful the Canadian public school system was, yet seemed to not have a clue that he was talking to non-public teachers in the USA."

Nancy did detail some experiences that have promoted her own growth. "Some of the better experiences remind me of why I wanted to teach." The skills and dispositions of teaching can be promoted through experiences of professional development. "They send me back a little more invigorated and open to trying something different." The emphasis on gaining new strategies or innovative skills was important to Nancy.

Individual structural description for focus group. In Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological tradition, a structural description was used to explain experiences of professional development in the case of Nancy. Using statements from the focus group setting helped examine the "how" of professional development experiences for Nancy (Creswell, 2007, p. 61).

The feelings attached to professional development experiences for Nancy included enthusiasm and motivation. These feelings were attached to skills that are able to be transferred in the classroom setting. Administration of Nancy's school supported her individual training and encouraged her to train others.

> It was on making different kinds of books that the students could use as part of a larger project. One style was with paper lunch bags laced together. They could write on the paper bags, glue things to it and even put other samples or information inside the open end of the bag. We were working on a rainforest unit at the time and I thought it would be a great way to collect research. Although I ended up not using the idea, I still think it's a good one and I plan on finding a way to use it this year.

On the other hand, when a development experience needed a long term commitment, Nancy noted, "Even if it sounds like a good idea, if it takes too long to put into practice, I kind of lose momentum. It's hard for me to stay enthusiastic or motivated." As Fullerton (2013) reported, using materials for classroom settings and adapting to classroom contexts was a positive use of professional development resources.

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Nancy perceived professional development experiences to be positive when her context was examined. "This past October, at another diocesan teacher development, I attended a session about the 'paperless' classroom which was also very informative, gave me some great ideas." Teachers' perceptions of their experiences of professional development were positive in their relation to content-rich learning (Gomez-Zwiep & Benken, 2013). Nancy claimed, "I wish there were more opportunities for these kinds of professional development." As for her perception of the planning of professional development, Nancy acknowledged:

> I guess I'm like the person who says, 'I don't really know much about art, but I know what I like.' I guess I'm like that about professional development. I don't really know much about how they are planned. I just know that sometimes I come away with ideas I can use, and sometimes I just feel like it wasted my day.

Nancy valued professional development experiences even though she stated, "I have no idea about how those who are involved go about making the decisions." She found collaborative practices to be fulfilling. "One valuable thing I think has come from my experiences is the opportunity to just sit and 'talk shop,' as it were, with other teachers." Collaboration and engagement seemed to be the most valuable professional development experiences for Nancy. These experiences were in line with Van Duzor's (2012) account of changes to professional development which included going "from an instructional workshop model to an extended engagement model that emphasizes understanding how students learn content, use of hands-on activities, and opportunities for instructional practice and reflection" (p. 500). In her focus group, Nancy's responses supported this assertion.

Individual textural structural composite for focus group. The focus group textural and structural description of Nancy alluded to four prominent areas of reflection. These

themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Professionalism, (c) Disconnect from Contextual Reality, and (d) Practicality in Context.

Relevancy for teachers. Nancy referred to this theme 44 times in the focus group description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that paid attention to a teacher's context. Nancy mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as ideas, understanding, helpful, remember, and different.

Change was important in Nancy's professional development experiences. She remarked, "Something I can implement immediately is, for me, the most useful." Relevant change included a transfer for the teacher into classroom context. Professional development could achieve this change through learning and improvement upon instruction, mentoring, and professional development experiences (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2011).

Professionalism. Nancy referred to this theme 28 times in the focus group description. Responsible professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Nancy mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as teach, school, and year of experience.

The idea of professionalism for Nancy was her responsibility to stay current. "As I get older, I realize that it's really easy to fall into the trap of doing things the same way year after year." Sutherland and Marauskaite (2012) related the importance of providing opportunities for teachers to have authentic experiences that addressed the practice of teaching and learning. However, Nancy relied on the professionalism of leaders in order to

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formulate these experiences. "I wouldn't presume to know all that goes into planning or preparing professional development sessions for a whole district."

Disconnect from contextual reality. Nancy referred to this theme 16 times in the focus group description. Disconnect from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Nancy included guessing, sessions and speakers.

Nancy detailed the disconnect that she has felt from some of her professional development experiences. "There have been some that I just really felt were a waste of time and money." According to Kumi-Yeboah and James (2012), professional development experiences that had complexity and center on concepts of effectiveness in the classroom had seemed less wasteful to teachers. Nancy did not discount the importance of professional development; rather, she discussed the need for leaders to make decisions because of the context of teachers. "I understand that there has to be some kind of philosophy behind what we do as teachers. I call it having an ulterior motive."

Practicality in context. Nancy referred to this theme 10 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Nancy included class, time, and hands-on.

The strategies that Nancy most embraced are skills that she can take back immediately to her classroom context. Nancy warned, "If a new idea or concept takes a lot of preparation or study for me as the teacher, I find that I run out of steam." Nancy also found choice in professional development to be practical. Experiences where a teacher can "come if

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you wanted to" created options for Nancy. These options helped a teacher to focus areas of professional development in order to advance their skills (Hsu & Malkin, 2013).

Individual textural description for interview. The interview description for Case 4 was a textural description about the "what" of professional development (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The textural description explains what Nancy experienced in professional development events (Moustakas, 1994).

Nancy's participation in professional development would be enhanced if leaders shared her opinion about the topics. "I would prefer the wanting to ask upfront rather than the make me sit three hours through this so I can tell you I'm sorry but this was a waste of my time." She felt that professional development committees would be profitable as well if they asked about teacher opinions. "Why don't we find out ahead of time what would be more useful and then it won't waste three hours." She also understood the use of evaluative surveys to help committees know the opinion of teachers but preferred those survey results be shared with the teachers.

> If you are on the committee, you see it but I'm wondering if everyone shouldn't see it. And again, it wouldn't have to be a big long thing. It's like you know yeah that did not go over too well. Or 75% of the people really enjoyed this. Because, if you are not going to ask us, and then ask us what we think then, don't be mad at what we say. Don't ask my opinion if you really don't want to know.

In her own school situation, Nancy described her participation as "We truthfully we don't do very much. They are more like let's get down to business unless it comes down from on high like you need to make sure you have done this thing."

The challenge for Nancy in terms of professional development experiences was that often professional development seems to be the "hot topic." She postulates about leadership decisions:

We want to be on the bandwagon. We don't want to be not included exposing them to it because it's what everyone is talking about you know down the line whether or not it's something that is going to stick around or not.

This was a challenge for Nancy because "I mean how many things have we been through where it's like, this is it not going away and guess what, there is that thing that wasn't going away and it's gone." The offerings of professional development were challenging because of the many changes throughout her career. Another challenge that Nancy raised is the use of technology in her school. She explained the challenge of technology in her school setting.

I guess that is an area I would like more training. Some kind of development to learn it. To tell me, "here is a SMART board and here are all the places you can go, sites you can go to." I don't know that you are teaching me how to use a SMART board. We are the poor kids and people always want to help us. Don't help us. It's not like we are getting their new computers. A lot of times we are getting their technology because it didn't work that well. And our kids just get frustrated because it doesn't work and you've got this whole cool neat thing you want to do with them. The computers we have now are better than the ones we had before. The ones when I first came here were dinosaurs. They were so old and so slow. It bugs the daylights out of me. It needs this but it won't let me install it. Well, why not? We can't do that because of this. Or the Successmaker doesn't work. The screen just turned white. There was nothing there. A lot of times we get the junk. We got it because it didn't work or it isn't any good but we will give it to those poor kids. Well no, you are not really helping us if it doesn't work. Not that you need to provide us with everything. But don't give us junk.

Her professional development experiences in the use of technology included training in all aspects of technology including set up, maintenance, and SMART board training. "I am tired of crawling around underneath there trying to figure out if the connection's right."

Nancy detailed some experiences that have promoted her own growth. "I would hope that anything that we learned that we could bring back and do or even just have back there to remind us to do that." She stated that she has used professional development experiences in the past in her present day context. "I would say there are probably bits and pieces of lots of the things that we've done over the years that have been like yeah, I am going to hang on to

that idea because I think that that works well." The professional development experiences

that remained with her were important to the learning and growth of her students.

> I still think that is important even though I don't necessarily do a whole unit but I still look for ways to use the training so hopefully if they are hearing it from here and from here and from here, they are learning.

Individual structural description for interview. In Moustakas' (1994)

phenomenological tradition, a structural description was used to explain experiences of

professional development in the case of Nancy. Using statements from the interview setting

helped examine the "how" of professional development experiences for Nancy (Creswell,

2007, p. 61).

The feelings attached to professional development experiences for Nancy included

change and knowing what works.

> I don't think any one way or one thing is always going to be right in every situation for every kid or every teacher all the time. I don't know that I need or anybody needs to be locked into one way of doing something.

She felt that the diocese can used professional development experiences to promote and

encourage how well schools are doing in teaching and learning.

> I think when we do good, they look good. When we can point to tests scores and say look we are this many percentage points ahead of schools or our kids are this much more likely to go to college or not to drop out. I think if we do good, they look good.

She also discussed her dissatisfaction with professional development that should be geared

around her teaching context.

> I haven't been for awhile because the stuff that they are offering, for me, I was like I just don't know if that's going to be helpful for me. And I thought it was going to be about it helping these kids. To be honest, I don't know what the lady was talking about and I didn't find it useful to me. It was not something that I would come back and sit down with those kids and try.

Along with the professional development experience, communication, and sustained

resources helped to implement directives as well as facilitate learning (Johnson & Chrispeels,

2010).

> Nancy perceived professional development experiences as less than helpful when her

context had not been understood.

> I think what they come from is so different from who we are, so not necessarily what they are saying is bad, but the way they are presenting it or what they are assuming. Like this is not a great big public school district. This is a fairly small diocese and some of our schools are really little and it just it doesn't translate. And so not so much the content but it doesn't necessarily bring it down to what we need or what we can use because it was so geared for the big.

There was value in the information as long as the recipient can interpret it and use it in their

own context (Baughman, Brumm & Mickelson, 2012).

> Nancy found value in professional development experiences that a teacher can "buy

into." However, there was a frustration in Nancy's experience when the consistency in

following a plan was lacking.

> I kind of wonder if the let's do this, wait, no, let's do this, wait, no let's do this, if that really does do that because just about the time where you are like okay I am finally comfortable and I can actually make it work, oh no, we are not going to do that anymore. Now we are going to do this and I find that frustrating because I am like I am a slow learner. I am a little slow on the uptake and it takes me time to practice.

She utilized the professional development in her classroom but then leadership calls for a

change.

> And just about the time I am like okay I get this now I think I understand how I can do this in my classroom, and they are like no that's old school that's passé. And so that I guess that would be my frustration that not always looking at that makes teachers unmotivated.

That lack of motivation led teachers to "go yeah, yeah, yeah, let me grade some papers while

you are talking." Varrati and colleagues (2009) reminded leaders that they should

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acknowledge culture and climate as influences in the work of individuals and use this knowledge to provide support for teachers in their work.

Individual textural structural composite for interview. The interview textural and structural description of Nancy alludes to four prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Professionalism, (c) Practicality in Context, and (d) Disconnect from Contextual Reality.

Relevancy for teachers. Nancy referred to this theme 214 times in the interview description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Nancy mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as ask, help, and need.

Change was important in Nancy's professional development experiences. According to Hyslop (2007), academic excellence combined with a relevant curriculum helped students to learn. Nancy spoke to innovative uses of technology help her to learn and in turn help her students to learn. She wanted her experiences of professional development to be "hands-on." She also wanted to know the theory behind the practice so that she "can see how it works." However, she also thinks that change in professional development experience could include simply asking teachers what they need.

> We've got these ideas. How do you feel about that? Is there something you know? Is there something you read? Just I think to me that would be the thing, let's not assume that just because you have PhD after your name that means you know what we need.

She thought learning would be extended if leaders listened to teachers' voices.

> We don't necessarily need that. We kind of have a handle on that but we need some help with this. So I guess again, don't assume that you know what we need. Ask. Maybe we will be on the same wavelength but maybe you are way off on something but we are like, no, really, that is not going to help us.

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Nancy also shared that relevant practice included many different types of development.

> Maybe sometimes let's do on-line and sometimes let's have a big group. And sometimes let's have a smaller group and sometimes let's have a hands-on and sometimes let's sit and listen to someone who has really got something important that we need to hear.

Practicality in context. Nancy referred to this theme 168 times in the interview description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Nancy included breakout, learn, school, and small groups.

Nancy encouraged leaders to choose practical professional development experiences that were contextual in nature. She most embraces skills that she can take back immediately to her classroom context.

> I think that I also indicated before I want something I can bring back here tomorrow and use. A lot of, I know this part is all necessary the theory and philosophy all that is necessary but after a while I am just glassy eyed for that and after a while I am like tell me what I can do for that kid that needs help tomorrow when I walk into that classroom.

Saunders (2012) reported that teachers want specific innovations that connected with instructional strategies in their classrooms. Nancy spoke to a collaborative effort with professional development happening between local schools in a coursework setting.

> We spent a lot of time in the different schools with speakers who were helping us with literacy with our kids being at a level or socioeconomic level that maybe didn't have the preschool and the mom or dad at home in a position to sit and help them learn their abc's.

This kind of professional development experience helped Nancy to collaborate with others.

> It was easy to sit and say hey, what was that thing that she said, how did she say to do that or what was that website. There was always somebody that was also working on that so a lot of that kind of stuff where you had people that you could go to and say I need a little help with this. How do you think this or what do you think this? How that's going to work with this one kid so I think that was useful.

The practicality of teachers helping teachers has promoted growth in her own classroom

setting. "There has been some really good stuff. There has been stuff that I can't wait to get

back in the classroom and try it out."

Disconnect from contextual reality. Nancy referred to this theme 102 times in the

interview description. Disconnect from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of

engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The aspects

or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Nancy included sit, theories, and waste.

Nancy felt disconnected when professional development experiences did not

correspond with her own classroom setting.

> Sometimes I know that we have had a couple of times when we are in some of these
> all diocese ones where it is like, I don't know where they found you or what your
> background is. You may have all kinds of credentials behind your name but you're
> talking about some great big huge public district and we are this little school. It
> doesn't always translate.

Professional learning was situated through the context of the teacher's actions, practices, and

knowledge (Riveros & Viczko, 2012). Because of Nancy's context, she noted her frustration

with some professional development experiences.

> Sometimes I don't know that they don't have anything good to say, it's just I don't
> think they do understand how different it is in a smaller school in a diocesan school
> where there are other things we have to do besides the common core and this and this
> and this. We don't have somebody who can take kids out for 180 minutes a week to
> help them learn to read. We don't have that to sit one on one with them and you know
> help them learn whatever.

Another form of disconnect for Nancy was not feeling like she had a voice in professional

development experiences. "Sitting in that big thing you feel kind of anonymous and you feel

that I don't feel like he is talking to me." As for planning for professional development

experience, Nancy stated, "But nobody has ever asked, so…". However, she would suggest:

Set that up and say hey look, this is who we are, we are not a big public district with thousands of kids, or dollars and we don't get government assistance and so what you have to say, is it going to help us? Because if it is dependent on all this other stuff, then you may not reach our teachers. They may feel that disconnect because they that is not the way they are working.

Professionalism. Nancy referred to this theme 86 times in the interview description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Nancy mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as experience and historical.

The idea of professionalism for Nancy was whether something was shared that is worth taking the time to learn as an educator. "Experience does make the best teachers" (Moscon & Thompson, 2013, p. 13). Nancy asked, "What do we really need? What do we want? What would we like to hear? What would we like a speaker on?" She thinks leaders should ask these questions especially from teachers with experience.

I feel like I've sat through a lot of them where I was like really this was three hours of my life lost. There have been a few where I was "why are we here?" Not even so much that I don't see the value of knowing some of this, but I just don't know that it is really something that is going to make me a better teacher.

Case 5

Individual textural description for narrative. The narrative description for Case 5 told the teachers' story based on a three-dimensional space approach. The story was based on interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

Kyla was a first grade teacher in a school in a Catholic Midwest diocese. She is a 41-year-old white female with 13 years in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She had taught in the Catholic Midwest diocese for all of her years of experience. She had taught in two schools in the diocese. She had a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a Missouri State

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Teaching Certification License in K-sixth Elementary Education. Her experiences of

professional development had been local, diocesan, and global. "The formats of professional

development that I have participated in are lectures, hands-on training, Professional Learning

Community, diocesan level, POD level, and national (NCEA)." Kyla, in particular, listed

professional development that included experiences on the POD level. "I have attended

diocesan professional development. I have attended local professional development with

POD schools."

In the past, Kyla had participated in local, POD, and diocesan seminars. Her past

experience included "Training on Lumen's for lesson planning and grade recording as well

as ActiveInspire by Promethean for my interactive board." In addition, for her diocesan

experience, Kyla related, "I have been with the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph for 13

years. I have experienced where I have learned methods and strategies adopted by the

diocese but then changed after one to three years." Her present experience was listed as

follows:

> In the last two years professional development has been geared to what teachers need.
> This school year, I have a Professional Learning Community and we are reading the
> Mendler (2012) book, *When Teaching Gets Tough*. While reading the book, I have
> had time to reflect as well as have group discussions with colleagues. At my school, I
> have been trained on the high yield strategies. My team worked on utilizing graphic
> organizers. I am also working on technology.

Kyla's future needs were addressed by the principal who "Asked her staff what our needs are

and has tailored those needs in professional development training."

Kyla's situations of professional development had been in the local school setting, in

POD settings, at diocesan professional development days and on the global level. In Kyla's

physical setting, "I have discussed with the principal that technology is something I need

more assistance with and the help of our Technology Integration Specialist have developed the training I need." She added that "I am receiving support and training from our Technology Integration Specialist." Additionally, Kyla reported that "Collaborative learning involves our Professional Learning Community."

Individual structural description for narrative. Change that was relevant for her classroom context was important for Kyla. The element of change led Kyla to maintain that "The factors that influence leaders in professional development decisions are the climate needs of the school, diocesan initiatives, and educational trends." Conklin (2013) contended that if teachers put time and effort into their professional development experiences that they would gain up-to-the-minute skills that should be relevant to their students. Kyla reflected this research in stating, "Professional development experience has promoted sustained success for me as a teacher. I enjoy learning new strategies and using multi-disciplines to meet each student's needs."

Kyla respected the professionalism of the leaders that she has worked under. "My principal displays respect and caring about professional development." In fact, for each principal that she has served for, Kyla had a positive comment about their work on professional development. "Since I have worked in the diocese for 13 years, I have worked with Mrs. Clark, Mr. Scott, and Mrs. Hill., I feel that I have always had a voice and able to share my ideas and concerns." Leaders had the most positive impact on teacher development (Margolis & Doring, 2012). Kyla felt the support and guidance from her principal in professional development decisions. "During my evaluation each year, I have discussed needs I still need in order to become an outstanding teacher and I look to the principal for guidance and support."

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Individual textural structural composite for narrative. The narrative textural and structural description of Kyla centered on two prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Professionalism and (b) Relevancy for Teachers.

Professionalism. Kyla referred to this theme 49 times in the narrative description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Kyla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as teacher training, learning, teamwork, and years of experience. Kyla spoke to the professionalism at her school. "Each teacher on my team has a voice. We are able to share ideas and strategies. Each team member has made suggestions to help another teacher on the team."

Teachers and leaders were called to work together to formulate decisions based on context and needs (Rogers & Roya, 2013). The principal in Kyla's school exhibited this call to professionalism.

> She remembers what it is like to be a teacher in the classroom with the many duties and the challenges that I face every day. She has an open door policy and I feel I can talk with her at any time about needs I have.

For Kyla, "The most meaningful professional development has been in my school. I signed up for two short training classes in technology. I feel this area is where I need the most growth as a teacher."

Relevancy for teachers. Kyla referred to this theme 42 times in the narrative description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Kyla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as need, strategies, change, community and voice. One statement of significance from Kyla was, "The needs of the

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students have changed and I have changed my teaching style by teaching smaller groups as well as bringing, developing, and researching what each student needs to be successful."

In a discussion of change, leaders were aware of the needs of the community (Hyslop, 2007). Kyla's experience had reflected this awareness. The principal "has designed technology training on what each teacher needs. I am being trained in areas that I am interested in as well as gaining more individual training." The changes that are made were relevant to Kyla because:

> I have been involved in professional development decision making. I feel that the issues of social justice are enhanced through decisions made by the principal about professional development by allowing me to have a voice in what my needs are.

Individual textural description for focus group. The focus group description for Case 5 centered Kyla's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007). For this approach, the textural description detailed Kyla's focus group responses.

Kyla participated in professional development at all levels. Her preference for these experiences was professional development in which "Somebody has already done and that they have lived your experience and that you can truly take it back and utilize it." She would prefer development that is "Simple, boom, go." In her own words, she defined her comment as, "It is not something that you have to completely start all of these things and by the time you've tried to do this entire framework, you have forgotten what you were going to do and it's not going to happen." Kyla spoke in particular about large group diocesan developmental experiences. "So many of our professional development was sitting there and I will be honest, I was zoned out. I'm like, I have no idea. This is not meaningful for me. I am not going to utilize any of this information." Kyla's fear was that in a classroom situation, "What if it didn't turn out quite the way it was on that screen. Where is that person now that I am

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trying to do this and twenty kids are screaming right now and I don't know what I am

doing?" She is happy to report that:

> I've seen this starting to change in the last couple of years. You know I have seen, oh I could do that. I can utilize that. The small short programs, the mixing up, and breaking up on our grade level and talking with your teachers that are in your grade level and bouncing ideas. Those type of things that are very useful I and what I am looking for.

On another note, for local experiences, Kyla related:

> For me, technology is a big thing right now. I grew up in the age with the barely Apple computer in high school and in the eighties and was still using a typewriter so technology to me is a big growth of using the Promethean boards and using the iPads and utilizing the system that I want training in. How to do. I want to know how do I take this and move it into my classroom. What can I do. What can I do to make my students a better learner?

And as a result of her requests locally, Kyla has experienced targeted professional

development.

> We've had some professional development that has been geared in general using we had the Active Inspire in our classrooms. We have been trained for both. I use the smaller version the Active Votes but there is another version Active Expressions but I have learned how to utilize those however our Promethean boards with Active Inspire, I had a short session, we are doing technology short session and it was all by K-1 teachers and we got one-on-one small group instruction because that is what we needed. I feel like I have gained so much more professional development in the last two years because it's geared to what I need.

> Professional development experiences had been a challenge for Kyla because of the

large group settings. She proclaims, "I think the ones that have been the Powerpoint

presentation that they are sitting lecturing and they are going slide after slide after slide and

they say you can print the version and its fifty something pages and I am thinking why would

I want to do that." On the same note, Kyla found the large group setting challenging because

of a lack of connection to the context of a classroom setting.

Over the years some of the diocesan where there is a thousand people sitting there and we are listening to a keynote speaker and you know they are talking about this and I am like okay this lady has not been in the classroom for the last ten years, things have changed and she is telling me oh you can do this and I am thinking when does she have time.

The challenge of time was at the forefront of Kyla's mind when it comes to teaching and learning.

I think, sitting in these sessions, I am doing this, this, this and this I could be grading papers right now; I could return a phone call. I could be e-mailing my newsletter to parents. That would have been more effective to me than sitting in that meeting.

Kyla acknowledged that her own learning style and her growth was promoted by utilizing small group settings.

I am a more individual visual learner. Small groups work better for me than an overall. I am right there with a small group. Seems to help me retain the information a little bit better and to implement it because I feel like I am more focused.

She noted, "Small group moving from whole group instruction to small group instruction has made a big difference in my teaching." The specific skills that Kyla had experienced have to do with pertinent issues present in the classroom setting. "We recently had a couple of people out from Children's Mercy on that and doing special needs. We just recently became a FIRE school and having more training and coming in I think has made a big difference." When a professional development experience was geared to specific situations, Kyla remembered strategies that helped her in those situations. "I just recently had some more training on doing some more strategies we do for those kids and meet their needs. But listening to those trainings again helped me to remember. So I think that was helpful."

Individual structural description for focus group. Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological tradition helped to explain professional development from the perspective

of Kyla. The focus group responded as illuminated through the structural description

explained how Kyla experienced this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

> The facilitation of professional development had changed throughout Kyla's career.

> When I first started in the diocese, a lot of that was happening. Okay, we are going to do Discipline with Dignity. I got trained in Tribes, you know, Curriculum Mapping and, you know, it was it seemed like every year or two we were doing something different so just when I might have gotten a little bit of it we were doing something different then again. I was like okay, this is not helping me. I think we are getting away from that. I'm seeing a difference. I feel much better about that.

Kyla felt that she is getting what she needed from the different kinds of professional

development offered to her. Her experiences of professional development were tied to the

quality of the development (Masuda, Ebersole & Barrett, 2013). "Diocesan ones, then I feel

like the POD and then I feel like my individual school I am getting exactly what I need."

Again, she preferred smaller groups, "It's been that smaller and that learning environment

has been so much greater I feel." She also felt very supported by her principal in terms of

helping her to obtain the learning she felt she needed.

> I think if I went out and said oh, I think I found this conference and it is really good. Is there a way you think we can go? The voice is there I think they are listening a little bit more.

In her school, Kyla had a trainer for technology, and she perceived this kind of development

to be beneficial.

> We have a technology integration specialist is her title and so we love her. She is doing so much for us. We have our white interactive boards and they are great and I've have been utilizing them for the last few years I had them. But there is stuff on there that I had no idea on how to utilize. Did not have time, I don't have time during the school day or even sometimes after school because I am trying to do the mounds of paperwork or everything else to play around and look at that kind of stuff. Having that sub and being able to just focus on that one thing. I was like wow, and so you know I called the integration specialist in and I called in the principal like the next day. I was amazed at how me and my kids were engaged. They loved it. I thought that was the best training I received in a two-hour block.

Kyla saw a transfer of this one-on-one development into her classroom setting.

> I mean, you are seeing better test scores. You are seeing that ah ha moment in their eyes saying, oh I get it now because you've brought another way of teaching into the multidisciplines for them to be a different learner.

In regard to Kyla's perception of professional development, she perceived her local and regional experiences as providing her with tools in the classroom. "I think our voice on the local level is heard. We have that opportunity at the diocesan level, but I am not sure." She had given suggestions on the diocesan level but was not aware of how her suggestions had been utilized. "I have given those suggestions but I am not quite sure that that has always been looked at and listened to what the teachers have said." When Kyla felt that her voice was not heard, her reaction was, "I'm done. I don't want to listen anymore. You have got to give me something totally different." She perceived professional development to be helpful because of "ideas and suggestions." "We are getting more of that individual development from other people and other sources." She understood that leaders had other considerations to make.

> However, they have to look into who is available to speak, what is their budget. There are a lot of things in their game plan that I know they are looking at. I think that they are listening to staff a little bit more.

The listening by leaders helped to make connections and relationships to further teaching and learning (Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2012).

For Kyla, the value in professional development came from being able to implement or utilize professional development.

> Because I think so many of us have said, "Oh this is great, you have given us all of this equipment but we have no idea what to do with it." I mean when we have had the end of year reviews and they ask and say what are some needs that you still need to work on and they have asked our opinion. I said one of mine was technology and

wow, my needs are being met now. I mean that is one area that I know that okay, yeah I am kind of okay, but boy, I could be so much better if somebody helps me.

The principal listened and responded to the needs through the evaluation and teachers felt empowered by the plan of action that would help them in their own context (Fullerton, 2013).

Kyla valued other teachers as learners and saw herself as a learner through her professional development experiences. "It's got to catch my eye. It's got to make me want to find out more about this. I believe they want to learn new things. We really do. But finding the time to implement it and then trying to implement it on your own." There was little value to Kyla of attending a development in which, "Somebody saying you have to be there from 8 a.m. to twelve o' clock and this is what we are going to do and nobody leaves because we are writing down your name." And then transitioning into the classroom setting, Kyla did not find value when a strategy did not pan out.

> I think the most frustrating things for teachers when you have a room full of kids and it is not going just right. You are frustrated and then you call it quits. And you will never touch it again and I see that happen time after time with some things. Just forget it. I will never have time for this. Look at what just happened. My classroom's a mess and now I'm going to be suffering for the next hour or so trying to get them all back together.

Individual textural structural composite for focus group. The focus group textural and structural description of Kyla spoke to three prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Practicality in Context, and (c) Use of Technology in the Classroom Context.

Relevancy for teachers. Kyla referred to this theme 209 times in the focus group description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Kyla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as difference, help, listening, need,

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want, and voice. Kyla reported, "Anytime I feel like I sit down and say I feel like I need more training in this area. It is usually okay what we can do to find that. What can we do?"

Kyla was looking for professional development experiences that can make a change or difference to her students. Instead of "Going from one person to another and we were trying all of these ideas," Kyla preferred "a lot of different things and those are very useful and we can take back to our classroom." Sutherland and Marauskaite (2012) suggested tasks that are realistic for teachers to sustain engagement in the classroom. "I feel like locally in my school I am getting exactly what I need." Bringing development ideas to reality was important for Kyla.

> I made up all of these great things to do for my class. My kids were like at the board utilizing it and she was like, wow, you did that in two hours? I'm like yeah, look what can happen when you have the time to do it.

Also, locally, if a problem arose in the classroom context, the experience was more relevant when a teacher can come to the rescue, "Okay this didn't work how I thought it was going to work. You can't go to someone and say what do I do. When it's at the local level you can get someone else to help."

Practicality in context. Kyla referred to this theme 162 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Kyla included class, implementation, learning, school, small groups, and time. What is practical for Kyla was, "We are getting more of that individual development from other people and other sources."

In her career, Kyla had seen many different types of development. "I know five different programs now that I am supposed to be trying to utilize, but now we are dropping

that one and are going to start something new." For her, these programs were not practical in

her contextual setting. Her preference would be coaching like she had gotten from the

technology integration specialist. "She worked with us one-on-one of where we needed to

find things, how to do things and I was like oh, so that's how you do it." Other types of

development to her seemed scattered. "They all had different ideas and they came from

different parts of the states with different educational backgrounds." Another factor of

practicality for Kyla was time. "Time is key. Time is very much key right now." Kyla

expanded this element to note that leaders should be considerate of that time.

> That was something our principal brought and said okay, we are not going to have a
> faculty meeting every week and I am going to talk to you. We have a team building
> week. We have a week where we have a faculty meeting. We have a week that we
> meet just with our team members in our like my first grade team members and then
> we do our professional learning communities.

Providing time to cultivate relationships through building interactions was affirmed by

Francis-Poscente and Jacobsen's (2013) research.

> The practicality of professional learning communities was also discussed.
> We have professional learning communities and so all of us have adopted an
> educational book and we are meeting once a month with your group and talking about
> those strategies and ideas that are in the book which is great. I feel like we have been
> able to bounce off and my group is not just elementary, I have middle school
> teachers, I have the art teacher in my class and so we are talking about how those
> different ideas, suggestions, strategies that are in there. How are you going to
> implement them in your class. Which I think has been a big difference.

Use of technology in the classroom context. Kyla referred to this theme 17 times in

the focus group description. Use of technology in the classroom context was defined as

access to technological resources or training in the classroom setting as well as the utilization

of the technology for learning. Kyla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such

as technology integration specialist, technology, iPads, and Promethean boards. Kyla shares, "I think as a building we've really decided that technology was a need."

Professional development in the use of technology became a priority for Kyla and for her school. "I know cost is definitely playing a big part of that and their goal is to teach all of us." Having the technology integration specialist for Kyla's preferred style of professional development had been helpful.

> I think with our technology integration specialist and adding the iPads in the classroom and just so many of those needs and using the Active Votes and Active Expressions and the Promethean Board, just so many things that we have utilized now that our school has been mostly focusing a lot on technology right now.

Because of this opportunity, Kyla obtained small group training. "She called us in and we got a sub from one thirty to three thirty so I had a two hour during that time, small group." This was a different type of development from teachers attending overwhelming or disconnected types of professional development with no link to their teaching context (Masuda et al., 2013). Contextually, the collaboration was useful to Kyla.

> What am I trying to do now because now it's on my own but you are able to run down and get help and I think that's where the difference between the national levels of you've got all these great ideas and now I am trying to take them back and now what do I do?

Individual textural description for interview. The interview description for Case 5 centered Kyla's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007). For this approach, the textural description detailed Kyla's interview responses.

Kyla spoke to her participation in local and regional professional development as positive experiences. She reported, "I've also incorporated more technology and I think it made a bigger impact on the kids." She also discussed how that participation has motivated her to offer to become a member of a committee because she saw a need.

I ended up joining that team because I was like, you know, I really have some more to offer for this. I should get on this team and so I became one of those members. Another team that I put myself on. Another teacher growth I know I can contribute. I have some ideas and suggestions that can pertain to this.

She hopes that leaders listen to teachers. "Again, listening. I think you've got to get some surveys out there. What are you looking for? What do you want? Once we get it, let's move on. What's the next thing you want to learn? It's just that listening."

Kyla spoke to challenges that she finds in her classroom context about professional development. "I don't have two or three hours to reset up or sometimes days or weeks or sometimes realign my classroom to feel and meet that professional development." She also believed that leaders should ask pertinent questions about the development experiences. "Look at what are what is happening in your school. How are your numbers? How are you meeting kid's needs?" In addition, helping speakers to know and understand the framework of diocesan schools would be helpful in terms of the experience of professional development.

But that one incident a while back when the woman was here. And I can't go into detail about where she was from, but I was like, okay, she has no clue where we are coming from. No clue. She doesn't get it. This is not going to happen in a diocesan school.

Professional development experiences have helped to support Kyla in her classroom context. She enjoyed professional development in which "You can hone in on what you needed." Even the larger experiences "Are broken up into smaller groups," and this provided Kyla with the ability to "take in to what I need." She detailed what she thinks administrators should reflect on in their decision making.

But you have to take into consideration your colleagues and the student body that you are working with. Your location. Not about what the needs are of another school down the street. I think you also have to work with your school board and parents. Another thing parents might be saying one thing and teachers might be saying we

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need this. So I think you have to take that all into consideration to kind of work that out together.

Individual structural description for interview. Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological tradition helped to explain professional development from Kyla's perspective. The interview responses as illuminated through the structural description explained how Kyla experienced this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Kyla saw professional development helping in her individual classroom, saw herself as a teacher leader, and saw grade level development as helpful in her context. She understood that her administration was supportive because she was asked what she needed and was provided what she needed (McGee, Wang & Polly, 2013). From her technological professional development, Kyla told the success story of using activities on her Promethean board to engage her struggling readers. "They were like excited, this is cool, I like this. And it was something that I can use again from day to day. And again it did not take me a lot of time and to set up for a week. A week of little lessons that they did in one of our centers." Kyla also saw herself as a leader in her local community. "We still do a little bit of going out to learn but our responsibility is to come back and teach the rest of the staff that. It is not you go and you are the only two trained and that is the way it is. You train everybody else now." Lastly, she spoke to how she enjoys the diocesan trainings at grade level.

> I like that best when we do that with the diocese. I was so glad when we ended up adding that. I think that was a big accomplishment because I ended up leaving that day taking probably something out of there more than I did the other stuff. So I feel that was real important. When they tell you to bring a lesson or something like that or let's talk about math ideas. Or you know science ideas. I have left with oh yeah, we can do that.

Kyla was more involved in a professional development experiences when she found "Anything that is very useful that you can bring back and take immediately." As Sutherland

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and Marauskaite (2012) remarked, leaders can assist teachers in integrating experiences with professional practice by promoting a professional identity. Kyla was very clear that she "Doesn't want to be taking another hour to set the classroom up from that professional development" but wants "Something that I can learn and bring back that is going to be easy to implement." Kyla, in speaking with her colleagues, claimed that teachers felt that:

> There are so many things over the years of being in the diocese and I have seen teachers honestly that have said, "Oh, it will go by the wayside." There is where you bring your morale down. There is where you get your burnout of teachers. Because things are not happening. You are not listening to what I need. What I need in the classroom is this. This is what I need to help me be a better teacher. You are bringing me down. I am not helping these students.

As a professional educator, Kyla wanted experiences that apply directly to her goal of teaching and learning.

For Kyla, the value in professional development came from choosing what she knows she needs in her classroom. "Given the wealth of experience that comes with time in the classroom with students, teachers in the late-career stage had seen many different initiatives and were able to select professional development experiences that worked in their particular classroom contexts" (Masuda et al., 2013, p. 7). The priority in Kyla's local environment was technology. "So we have started those small webinars, small group instruction of technology, and I think that's what we need." She saw the priority in the diocese of getting together for "the big picture" but stated:

> You know those type of things are wonderful but right now our school is really on to using the iPads, using the Promethean board, using Successmaker and Advanced Math. How can we do that more efficiently? Those small group instructions of showing us how to do that. We are getting better results. We are seeing kids succeed by doing that.

Another form of development that was a value to Kyla was small group interaction with peer teachers. She reported:

> I feel like there is more that more relaxed feeling and more discussion and examples of how I did this in my classroom. I know what you are talking about. This is a problem. I have seen this. This is what I did to help me. And then other people can give their suggestions so I feel like those are beneficial.

Individual textural structural composite for interview. The interview textural and structural description of Kyla spoke to four prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Practicality in Context, (b) Relevancy for Teachers, (c) Professionalism, and (d) Use of Technology in the Classroom Context.

Practicality in context. Kyla referred to this theme 191 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Kyla included class, time, small group, and grade level. Kyla knows what makes professional development experiences practical for her. "I think visual is very helpful for me. The tactile experience right then and there."

Servage (2009) posited that technique and management in a classroom can undermine the craft of teaching and limit growth and learning. In professional development experience, sometimes the practice of teaching was not acknowledged and that creates a frustration for Kyla. In her career, Kyla had seen many different types of development.

> Don't tell me in a conference or something in professional development and lecture to me for a couple of hours and then five weeks later I am supposed to do it because probably honestly I have forgotten how to do it. So I think the biggest thing is having that visual or having that practice session right then and there.

The practical hands-on aspect of learning technology had been a positive experience for Kyla.

I grew up in the Apple computer; Apple for teachers is I think when I went to college. Had no clue. So I feel like when I talk to my administration to say I need some more of this. I don't know what I am doing. I cannot teach these kids how to use this because I don't know what I am doing. And okay, let's get you some training on this. Let's find what we can do. Who can we talk to? Who in our building can help with this issue? And outside of our building, who can we get.

The small group setting was also practical for Kyla. "I have taken ideas from teachers all my life. That's a great idea and I could use that."

Relevancy for teachers. Kyla referred to this theme 183 times in the interview description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Kyla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as need, difference, idea, and listen. Kyla was motivated by engaging professional development that "Keeps me focused, keeps me ready and keeps me engaged."

Relevant professional development experiences were related to planning, effort, and persistence (Eren, 2012). Kyla "Likes what I am doing." Professional development was important for her "To stay in the professional field of teaching and to make a difference." She also preferred, "Someone is listening to me that if I'm giving a suggestion." "If I give a suggestion again and it's not listened to again that year that brings the morale down and that brings your performance down. For me to be an effective responsible teacher every day, keep me energized." A professional development lesson was relevant to Kyla when, "I can incorporate that now. I can utilize that."

Professionalism. Kyla referred to this theme 79 times in the interview description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Kyla mentioned aspects or

meaning units of this theme such as years of experience, teaching, training, and work. According to Kyla, to promote her own professionalism, "I think we have to stay into the latest technology and the latest abreast of what is happening in education. And I think that is very important."

In her professional experiences, Kyla found it important to "Stay abreast to what is new to education." She also valued higher levels of education to enhance teacher professionalism. "I think offering courses and making that a little more easier for classes. Maybe not even for graduate level but maybe for some type of credit. In all of my experiences, not just in this building but in my last building and within the diocese, I felt like I was always treated very professionally." Varela (2012) reported that professional development can help nurture and enhance a teacher's professional self. Kyla's professional growth was promoted for her mostly:

> In a small group or a local setting where I can ask okay, what do you mean or how can you use that with this first grader who is doing this. I can do that one-on-one and get that personal growth, but I can't do that when there are six hundred people in there.

Use of technology in the classroom context. Kyla referred to this theme 35 times in the interview description. Use of technology in the classroom context was defined as access to technological resources or training in the classroom setting as well as the utilization of the technology for learning. Kyla mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as technology, iPad, downloaded, and Promethean boards.

Data and technology were important aspects of teaching growth for Kyla. "Technology that is not time consuming or bogging you down with collecting more data that you have to keep track of but that you can use for your students and that you can find is

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beneficial. So that is what I am looking for." Small group training in that technology was beneficial to Kyla. "We went into the computer lab and we worked on, there were like four of us, and I got more training in that two-hour block than I would have at an 8-hour day sitting with 200-300 people." Kyla related that using skills learned in these small group settings transferred to her own classroom context. "Students were using the terminology. They were writing paragraphs by the end of the school year. So I saw some actual data and oh, wow, we are really writing now. So I saw some improvement." Wilson (2012) reported that teachers agreed that success comes in their context when staff was able to directly apply skills gained through training.

Case 6

Individual textural description for narrative. The narrative description for Case 6 again retold the story based on the three-dimensional space approach. The story was based on interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

Lucia was a Kindergarten through fifth grade technology teacher in a school in a Catholic Midwest diocese. She was a 51-year-old white female with 15 years in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She had taught in the Catholic Midwest diocese for all of her years of experience. She had taught in one school in the diocese. She had a Master of Arts in Education. Her experiences of professional development had been local, diocesan, and global. "Professional development in my early career was whatever the school or diocese made available to me." Global experiences carried the most significance for Lucia. "The most meaningful professional development was not offered by the diocese but the opportunity my school has given me to go to national conferences like International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), Discovery Education, and Cue."

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In the past, Lucia had participated in local, diocesan seminars, conventions and out of town seminars.

> In recent years my professional development has concentrated more on technology in education. I have expanded from local in-services and workshops to national conferences and conventions that concentrate on technology education and how I can enhance the student learning.

In her present experience, Lucia opined, "Current trends in education, I feel, tend to drive professional development decisions. Curriculum mapping and Common Core state standards are two examples. Also current needs of a school or district also influence this decision." As for the future, Lucia revealed that she would prefer professional development that gave teachers "an opportunity to see what is going on in education outside of the diocese and even outside of our region. It also gives an opportunity to see what is going on in private, charter, as well as public schools."

Lucia's situations of professional development had been in the local school building, at diocesan professional development days, and attending global conferences. "I have participated in large group lectures, small group lectures, and discussions, Professional Learning Networks (PLN), and hands-on workshops. For me, the best professional development is hands-on." Besides attending professional development, Lucia was involved in professional development experiences in her own school setting.

> I have been given the opportunity to give professional development for my school to share the information I received at workshops and conference. I also am a part of offering professional development every week at my school, usually technology based, showing teachers' sites and programs I have used or learned about and offer discussions about how it can be utilized it their classes.

Individual structural description for narrative. Being an effective teacher and making relevant changes in the classroom were important factors in the context of Lucia's

teaching. "As teachers we need to keep up and give our students the most up-to-date information available. We also teach students to be lifelong learners. Professional development is my way of accomplishing both." As shared by Basharat et al. (2011), lifelong learning was a process that depends on initiative and motivation. "My success as a teacher comes from my continued professional development and how I use what I have learned." Also, innovation came from sharing with other educators. "Some of the best ideas come from other teachers, and professional learning networks (PLN) can provide that experience."

Lucia pointed to the professionalism of the leaders as an important aspect of professional development decisions. "Good leaders will look at their school, assess its strengths and weakness, listen to the teacher, and base their professional development on the information they find." According to Bredeson (2013), strong principal leadership promoted successful professional development initiatives. "Good leaders should look to build up their teachers and consequently build up their students also."

Inside of a classroom, the teachers' context was a practical factor in applying professional development to a setting. Lucia noted:

> In-service from professional speakers provide good information but sometimes it isn't practical for the classroom. Ideas that come from other teachers who can share what works and what doesn't, what age group it works best with, the adjustments they have made and how they can differentiate to reach all learners, is the most useful professional development.

Educators should examine collaboration with many different experts in order to create transformative professional development experiences where classroom teachers apply theory into effective practice (Burke, 2013).

Individual textural structural composite for narrative. The narrative textural and

structural description of Lucia spoke to three prominent areas of reflection. These themes

were: (a) Practicality in Context, (b) Relevancy for Teachers, and (c) Professionalism.

Practicality in context. Lucia referred to this theme 55 times in the narrative

description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development

experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that

were mentioned by Lucia included practical, student centered, informational, discussion, and

classrooms. "Many things sound good in theory but are not practical in the classroom."

> Lucia spoke to the importance of voice in experiences of professional development.

> I have been involved in professional development decision making. At school, I have
> been asked for input based on the conferences I've attended and the speakers I have
> seen. I feel I have been treated with social justice in this manner. The topics I present
> are usually related to topics I would use with my students or topics I am passionate
> about.

According to Fridrikkson (2012), using professional voice helped one be a contributing

member of a greater professional conversation. Lucia noted that leaders:

> Also understand that many teachers would rather hear from teachers who have tried
> new strategies in the classroom rather than listening to a speaker who hasn't been in a
> classroom and hasn't experienced a teacher's daily routine or the interruption we
> experience throughout the year.

Relevancy for teachers. Lucia referred to this theme 46 times in the narrative

description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of

teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Lucia

mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as asking, concentrate, new,

opportunity, need, and ideas. In her narrative, she stated, "The world changes every day. As

we learn new thing and new ways to teach, our students get the direct benefit of our professional development."

For Lucia, change was embraced by "Working through what I am learning, experience some of the struggles my students may experience, ask questions, and have discussion about best practices for applying the knowledge I learned." There were difficulties encountered in providing relevant professional development experiences because of the hardship of developing and sustaining teacher learning (Armour & Makopoulou, 2012).

> Large group is good for dispensing new philosophies in education or simple factual information. Small group lecture and discussion is practical for presenting new teaching strategies and discussing the benefits of them. This is also good for touching base with people in the same grade level or areas of education to get new ideas or ask for suggestions on something I might be struggling with.

Professionalism. Lucia referred to this theme 30 times in the narrative description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Lucia mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as decisions, education, work, teaching, and years of experience. According to Lucia, "The leaders at my school value the fact that teachers choose to find professional development outside of what the school/district offers and ask us to share this knowledge."

Experienced teachers had confidence in their professional roles (Moss et al., 2013) Lucia spoke to professionalism in her narrative statements. "Overall the strength of a school depends on the teachers being well rounded in the subject matter they teach. If there is a weakness in a given area, this will show in overall test scores." Professional development spoke to "Whether that need is to address the weaknesses of the students and/or the teachers."

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Individual textural description for focus group. The focus group description for Case 6 related to Lucia's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The textural description explained what Lucia experienced (Moustakas, 1994).

Lucia's participation in professional development included global conferences, diocesan, and local in-services. Her participation had been varied in the sense of quality and usefulness. "Our religious professional development has gone from actually great knowledge to completely unusable in the classroom." Furthermore, Lucia described her experience of professional development as "That mindset of oh, this too will pass, this too will pass." However, on the contextual side of development, "Our academic professional development seems to be settling down a little bit."

The challenge of professional development for Lucia was the teaching style of some of the presenters. "To me there are in-services, when they are reading right off the Powerpoint. Directly off the Powerpoint. I'm like, I can read. Hand it to me, you know." To Lucia, professional development should focus on skills for the classroom setting. "They talked to us and gave us skills." The variety of professional development experiences could be cause for excellent skill production or negative take always.

Lucia had experiences of professional development that have provided skills that she can take back to classroom teachers as a technology teacher and a technology integration specialist. "And it's so useful, especially when you are a specials teacher or when you are teaching in isolation." Strategies and skills enhanced the classroom context of Lucia. "The ones I have gained are in the area of special needs where all these theories are coming out on what is going through the mind of a child and what strategies there are for that." In addition,

Lucia enjoyed learning about theoretical information. "Learning the philosophy behind that has been extremely helpful. A lot of times you get more ideas of what they are doing."

Individual structural description for focus group. The structural description, according to Moustakas' (1994) approach, helped to explain professional development from the discussion of Lucia. The focus group setting enlightened the phenomenon, and the structural description explained how Lucia experienced this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

The attitude that Lucia attributed to her professional development experiences included feeling confident about how the instruction of development transfers directly into the school setting. Lucia thought leaders should look at:

> What do we need to do to improve the overall? What is going on in the building? How are the students doing? Is there an area of weakness in the students? Then there is probably an area or weakness in the teachers. Leaders should look at that and take all that into consideration.

As Francis-Poscente and Jacobsen (2013) pointed out, the quality of professional development is directly related to teaching success, including setting aside beliefs and methods of instruction that no longer give students what they need. This proved difficult to do because "In our diocese you know you have the whole spectrum." Lucia made the suggestion to "Narrow it down to age levels and grade levels."

The perceptions about professional development experiences for Lucia centered on listening and consistency.

> I agree at our building level for the most part we are listened to because we are given so many opportunities to seek out and find what we want professional development on. I think we are given an opportunity to give our voice. And like we said at the diocesan level, I don't see that as much.

On the diocesan level, Lucia had hope and suggested, "My thought is that and I would hope that they are listening to the principals who would come to them with their ideas." Consistent

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professional development was also accepted more readily if there are patterns,

understandings, and a lack of disruption in belief and value systems of teachers (Kumi-

Yeboah & James, 2012). Lucia felt that the inconsistency in listening comes from:

> I think part of our issue currently is that we have had several leaders and not a whole
> lot of consistency so what has happened in the past listening to that and that has to be
> a hard position to be in.

Lucia also explained how a leader must lead at times. "At what point do you ask your

teachers and at what point do you have to make a decision. There are times where teachers

just need to have you make a decision." Lucia saw a real value in the professional

development she has experienced.

> I guess my best one was I've been able to for two years go to ISTE and then be able
> to come back and do exactly what your integration specialist does and I am sitting
> there taking notes and this would be great for this person and this would be great for
> this person. And my job affords me to be that person, teach in the morning and
> collaborate with teachers on their time, and show them those few things and show
> them how to use the technology they have.

She also benefited from "small groups and hands-on" types of development. With technology

at the forefront in her school setting, Lucia spoke to the teachers' needs. "One thing they

complain about is, does that work? So I've been going to the national conference and have

brought all these things and can bring it back to the teachers." Lucia is part of the

development of the teachers on her staff.

> There is so much we want to teach. Can we implement tech Tuesday? Every Tuesday
> from 3:30 to 4 p.m., we provide a topic. No one is required to come. We provide
> chocolate and they come. We have been afforded that opportunity to have that time
> for the teachers. The teachers know they are not obligated to any of it, so it is a come
> and go as they please kind of thing. Our teachers know we are there for all of them.
> That our technology specialists are there for all of them.

The value in going to professional development for Lucia was being able to bring those

learnings back to her own community.

We will sit in the class with you. We will be there to trouble shoot. We have a laptop cart. Call us when you are going to use it the first time. We will be in there to make sure kids get connected and this and that is going on and you know, at our building that we are afforded the opportunity to get our teachers to teach half days so there is someone to go out who is available.

Van Duzor (2012) substantiated that teachers who are encouraged to share their professional experiences saw their learning environment as supportive.

Individual textural structural composite for focus group. The focus group textural and structural description of Lucia spoke to three prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Practicality in Context, (b) Relevancy for Teachers, and (c) Use of Technology in the Classroom Context.

Practicality in context. Lucia referred to this theme 78 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Lucia included time, building, kids, team, and level. Lucia found practicality lacking in some aspects of professional development.

The lack of practicality was experienced by Lucia in some of her professional development over the years. "I can't nail down one, one that you are sitting at and it is all philosophy." Lucia spoke to the span of her experience. "I've seen it as gone from being hands-on and useful to something completely over our heads, especially in the elementary realm and completely, I mean I will say it from a teacher perspective, useless." Some of the developmental choices were repeated over the years. "You know you get your new teachers and your old teachers and the older teachers are going, yeah, that was called this 15 years ago." Often, this repetition was valuable as related by Lucia.

We've done professional development team. And this year we are focusing on Marzano's (2007) book, *The Art and Science of Teaching.* A lot of our older teachers

are going well, this is stuff that we have been doing. You know as you look through it you talk about how is it a good refresher to look back at it to get some older teachers on a professional development team. Take an old concept and go look at this and like scoring guides or assessing.

Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2011) reported that younger teachers seeking guidance from their older peers played a part in promoting collaboration and healthy working relationships. Time was also important as a practical asset for teachers. According to Lucia, she needed "Time to research. Time to plan. Time to modify your plans from what you have done every year."

Relevancy for teachers. Lucia referred to this theme 70 times in the focus group description. Relevancy is defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that pay attention to a teacher's context. Lucia mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as afforded the opportunity, ideas, and opportunities. Lucia claimed, "The advantage that I have is that I can go out and train those teachers."

The professional development opportunities for Lucia helped her to make a difference for her students and her peers. For her own classroom, Lucia looked for experiences where she was "able to expand on individually as we feel our need grows." She also thought during experiences, "What works at each level with those teachers?" "While professional development instructors used a variety of means, the practice of situating content learning within contexts related to K-12 classroom instruction and student learning in professional development was well established" (Sutherland & Marauskaite, 2012, p. 764). As for leadership decisions that affected relevant change, Lucia advised, "I think leadership needs to look at not only the trends in education but at the building level what are the strengths and weaknesses in that building."

Use of technology in the classroom context. Lucia referred to this theme nine times in the focus group description. Use of technology in the classroom context was defined as access to technological resources or training in the classroom setting as well as the utilization of the technology for learning. Lucia mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as technology integration specialist, technology, and ISTE.

The use of technology was a priority for Lucia and her school. Technology was an application component that was relevant to Lucia's context including grade level and demographics (Masuda et al., 2013). Lucia noticed that technology was touched on elsewhere: "The diocese has tried to make that connection but they have tried to make it for us." The development for technology promoted engagement "because you are there because you wanted to be there." According to Lucia, the professional development experience was hands-on and teachers were able to:

> Go through the struggles that the kids are going to go through you are going to go through you know. You will have somebody else next to you who be able to answer your questions or and so I can hear this person saying what did you do to get there or you are two steps behind or vice versa but you are right there doing.

Lucia spoke to the support of her local school principal.

> We have half days once a month and we have been trying to this year and last year, pick a topic. The principals have picked a topic and they have found information on and use that throughout the year and how does that apply. Some are asked by the principal. It was kind of put out to the teachers too. Are you interested? Our current principal, this will be our second year. In the past, we have had that too. Just kind of different leadership. But I think we have had it in different forms like when we did curriculum mapping, we had our curriculum mapping team which was not all professional development but it was our focus so we had a team that became experts as you would say in different areas.

Principal support for technology was crucial in the eyes of Lucia.

Individual textural description for interview. The interview description for Case 6 related to Lucia's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007). The textural description explained what Lucia experienced (Moustakas, 1994).

Lucia's participation in professional development was most productive for her through a "Workshop format where you are actively involved." She learned best "where you are presented with information and you practice it or try it out or get on the computer and research it so that way you are taking back something useful and you know you are actively involved." Lucia was inquisitive:

> Looks for stuff that is current in research studies, current in technology. I look for things that again teachers can use on an immediate basis. What can they turn around and use right away in their classrooms. What is going to keep their interests because if it keeps their interest they are more likely to use it to keep the kids' interest.

She sought out these kinds of experiences not only for her own classroom context but in order to train other teachers.

The challenge of professional development for Lucia was that technology was "Always evolving so I have to stay up on what is going on and what is new." Additionally, Lucia was looking for different ways to teach it "because you can't always hit a kid the same way." Being able to teach a skill or concept differently would be helpful to Lucia.

> I had a kid one time say explaining the same thing to me the same way is not going to make me get it. I was just like oh, that just opened my eyes. And you know you just told me the same thing, I still don't get it. So I think anything even in that field, anything that I could do to show things in a different manner or demonstrating in a different way.

Having a skills-based professional development experience helped Lucia to go back and share those skills with other staff members. "I have taught teachers. And have shared

with them that there is another option for kids." She appreciated her administration offering professional development experiences as a resource.

> I think our administration would seek it out from the community. You know we've got a bulletin board in our office where we put the flyers that we get. They share links of things they get in their office and they use the staff to say has anybody found a workshop on this or I think this person is good at this why don't you team with this teacher and see what you can find. So it's using a lot of resources.

Transferring the knowledge gained in professional development helped Lucia find "perspective so you are actually teaching not only the kids but teaching the teachers so being able to transfer both academic information but also technical information."

Individual structural description for interview. The structural description, according to Moustakas' (1994) approach, helped to explain professional development from the discussion of Lucia. The interview enlightened the phenomenon, and the structural description explained how Lucia experienced this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

> Lucia detailed her working experience with other teachers.

> I've done a lot more networking with teachers. I've done a lot more networking in professional development on webinars as part of Discover Education. I have been actually able to reach out to teachers all over the country and have been a part of workshops and conferences in different parts of the country. Because of that, I've got people all over the country using this: big schools, small schools, public schools, Catholic schools. And here is how I utilize it. Here is how I work on a limited budget. Here is how I work when I've got whatever I need. Here is how I work in this type of community or that type of community.

As noted by Buxton and Demuth (2012), on-line teacher groups felt that they met their topic objectives after professional development and applied what they had learned to their own individual contexts.

The perception for Lucia about professional development was that teachers should be asked about their own learning experiences.

Bringing it out to teachers in a general survey, what would you like to see in professional development? Where? And then sharing with us the results. We send in all our surveys and we never see what that says. I think in general a summary of that survey that says this is how people felt. This is what you know a majority of the people felt this or we were split on this. And then here are some of the ideas that teachers would like to see in a professional development.

Changes could be made in classroom context when effective professional development was embedded into what teachers wanted and understood (Gomez-Zwiep & Benken, 2013). Lucia was motivated by learning.

The more I can learn, the more I can pass on to kids. I mean if I actively know how to do something, if I am actively involved and can see how things work, then it makes me a better person and makes it easier and better for me to teach to the kids.

The value that Lucia found in the professional development she had experienced came from finding practical and motivational skills that she carried back to her local environment.

How I do it and how I apply it to their other classes changes from what I have seen or like in technology, I always see technology changing. That will morph what I will do in my class. For example, I have done a lot more video production. How they can do a book report using video production. That's different from just typing a book report or you know for their teachers.

Instead of negative feelings of diocesan initiatives that have gone by the wayside, Lucia saw opportunities in the educational aspects of learning these theories (Dik, Duffy & Steger, 2012).

I know we go back to curriculum mapping. Teachers say that was useless. Well no. We may have gone by the wayside with it but there are a lot of things that we are still using and how it's morphed the curriculum in our school and made it so much better and how its changed things in the diocese and how we are going back to getting closer to a diocesan curriculum, and that is a result of the curriculum mapping.

Lucia found value in sustained and practical professional development.

Individual textural structural composite for interview. The interview textural
and structural description of Lucia spoke to six prominent areas of reflection. These themes
were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Practicality in Context, (c) Professionalism,
(d) Disconnect from Contextual Reality, (e) Use of Technology in the Classroom Context,
and (f) Attributes of Teachers.

Relevancy for teachers. Lucia referred to this theme 229 times in the focus group
description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of
teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that paid attention to a teacher's context. Lucia
mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as change, different, idea, and need.
Lucia reported:

> I like to see the cutting edge. What's the new research? What's the new technology?
> What's new in curriculum? How is this better for the kids? How is this better for the
> teachers? How is this keeping kids engaged? The advantage that I have is that I can
> go out and train those teachers.

The relevant use of professional development was detailed by Lucia. She asked
herself, "Are these teachers or presenters standing up there presenting the information or
have they actually seen the practical knowledge of it?" Because, as Wilson (2012) stated,
professional development provided opportunities for skills which were effective in the
classroom setting. Lucia found relevance in "always looking for something new and
different." She explained:

> You know when I've taught things over and over and I am like oh I am done with
> this. If I can't find any excitement in myself about it, then the kids can't and I take
> from the kids too. I sometimes take from their lead like what is interesting to you?
> What do you want to know?

Effecting relevant change for Lucia "keeps me excited about what I teach."

Practicality in context. Lucia referred to this theme 197 times in the interview description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Lucia included classes, communities, kids, learning, and time. Lucia defined practicality for herself as "Anything I can use."

"The biggest problem that professional development has encountered was that it was usually developed as an isolated requirement, with no real connection to daily teaching, and with almost no teacher input" (Varela, 2012, p. 18). Lucia said professional development was good when it provided:

> Anything that makes it more meaningful to me, to the kids, to the staff. Anything that is going to not necessarily make my job easier but make my job more exciting. Make it come alive to the kids. So practical is something that you know that I can take back and use right away. And it comes in all different formats. I mean it is the hands-on. It's the knowledge based. It's new and upcoming but anything like I said that I can turn around and use.

She also was aware that you have to know students where they are in their own development.

> Anything that promotes how kids' brains work. Their attention span. Their what are they going to need to know like Common Core. What are the life skills that they are going to need to get out of high school now which is completely different than ten or twenty years ago and you know the technology skills, the computer skills. Things that businesses are going to expect kids automatically know.

Practicality comes from professional development, and Lucia acknowledged that the good experiences, "Are the ones where you can say, here's the idea and here is how you make it work."

Professionalism. Lucia referred to this theme 126 times in the interview description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Lucia mentioned aspects

or meaning units of this theme such as training, administration, and accountability. Lucia pointed to trends in education as an indicator of professionalism.

"I think a lot of it is research and trends in education. What is the research showing? What are the trends in society showing?" The conditions of a school are influenced by the commitment of teachers to professional knowledge (Tang & Choi, 2009). In terms of professional development experiences, Lucia looked for "What are the trends in education showing and then finding conferences or workshops and speakers that we see that are usually on the cutting edge or speaking to those topics or speaking to the research." In her own local context, Lucia felt, "We have been given a variety of things to do and see and hear from and I do believe that we are treated professionally." Lucia also pointed out experiences that helped her fellow peers or students to succeed: "What can they take and work as a group project on the Promethean board? What can they do in small projects with a few laptops?"

Disconnect from contextual reality. Lucia referred to this theme 67 times in the interview description. Disconnect from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of engagement or lack of understanding of the classroom setting of the teacher. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Lucia included conference, budget, funding, and workshops. Lucia observed, if teachers "are sitting there on their iPads playing their Words with Friends or doing their lesson plans," they are probably disconnected from their professional development experience.

Pedagogy in training had been used for years, and it might be time for self-directed learning.

> I really believe every teacher needs to find something outside of the large group that they can go and do and should be required to do. I see a lot of teachers, we are fortunate to be able to offer our teachers a lot. And I see some of them not going, not

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going to do it. Even if it is just one day out of school here in the community I mean yeah outside of what the diocese offers. Something to promote their own personal growth and I know they have they are supposed to do professional development hours depending on their certification. It's more the ones that don't need professional development for their certification. And older or younger, I 'd like to see more and that is a financial thing that I don't even think we can provide is making everyone do something but that would be the ideal to see everybody find one thing every year.

Lucia based this opinion on her own learning and growing.

> Because I always say that no matter what I do, whether it is a workshop or lecture, whether it is a book I read, if I can get one or two good ideas out of it, I feel it's been a successful workshop, conference. You know if I have gone three days to a conference and I bring back two really good things like to share with other teachers or students, I think that's key.

> ***Use of technology in the classroom context.*** Lucia referred to this theme 59 times in the interview description. Use of technology in the classroom context was defined as access to technological resources or training in the classroom setting as well as the utilization of the technology for learning. Lucia mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as technology, computers, equipment, and virtual. The use of technology was presented to teachers in Lucia's school through a Tech Tuesday professional development format.

"But it's like we aren't just going to hand you 25 computers and say have at it." Lucia's current reality was, "How can I make, we make this technology work for them or how can we take this lesson even though we have only have two computers and extend it out into a whole class." Technology helped assure a connection to content and promoted active engagement (Walker et al., 2012).

> We initiated our Tech Tuesdays because we saw that there were a lot of tech needs and in the first week before school and the last week after school teachers are not the captive audience that we need them to be and that we wanted to sustain that growth all throughout the year.

The leadership of the school utilized Lucia as the technology integration specialist in this manner: "We are also asked by administration you know this is coming up. We need you to cover this with the teachers." The leaders ask, "Can you go out into their classrooms during their plan times. And how can you do this or here is what we need them to know. How can you make this happen? What resources can you find?" There was motivation in the school community to make technology happen in Lucia's local context. She related this story:

> It started with a teacher over Christmas break cornered me in the grocery store and said I want a projector. I want a SMART board. How are we going to make this happen? Okay, start finding grants. So three teachers found grants for projectors. So we put projectors in and we came up with plans for the boards. And we were like if you agree to this you guys have to help train other teachers. Sure. So then the first auction, we were able to get twelve more. We were shocked. We had funding for twelve more. And we put out a note to teachers and we were like okay, we will put these out in classrooms but who is willing to learn how to use them, learn how to use the software and is willing to train and be a mentor to new teachers. And there were a lot that backed off. We got ours and then all of a sudden it was those teachers who you would have never thought or who never said put me on the bottom of the list. Well, wait a second, I want one of those. I need one of those. I need to learn how to use one of those. It was real neat to see how. If we would have put them in all of the classrooms all at once, it wouldn't have been used.

Attributes of teachers. Lucia referred to this theme 51 times in the interview description. Attributes of teachers were defined as the qualities of a professional teacher especially relating to experiences of professional development. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Teacher A included encouragement, excited, fortunate and together. Lucia has a mission: "To meet the kid's needs or to meet the kids where they are developmentally."

Lucia is a teacher who is passionate about her own learning. "I love the research." She is also passionate about how the students in her class are learning and growing, "Are they more successful? I think that speaks highly of our diocese when we can say these kids

are going to be Merit scholars and they are going on to college and they are successful here or there." Both competence through learning research and conceptual practice for students was Lucia's passion and mission (Wise, 2008). Lucia also spoke to the growth of teachers.

> I think at the diocese there are things that are coming down the pike that are going to make our teachers be better teachers. That we are not in our little isolated communities just teaching the way we have traditionally taught for years and years.

Case 7

Individual textural description for narrative. The narrative description retold the story based on the three-dimensional space approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). The story was retold based on elements of interaction of the participant's personal story, the continuity of the story, including what happened in the past, present, and what will happen in the future, and what physical places were involved in the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

Tasha was a second grade teacher in a school in a Catholic Midwest diocese. She was a 61-year-old white female with 21 years in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She had been an educator for over 30 years. She had taught in Little Rock, Oklahoma City, and Kansas City. "I have taught in three different states and three different dioceses." She had a Master of Arts in Education. Her experiences of professional development had been local, diocesan, and global. According to Tasha, "I have had many years of professional development, over 20 years, on the local, regional, and diocesan level."

In the past, Tasha remarked, "I have attended a Brain Conference and several NCEA conferences." As for Tasha's present experience, she noted, "I have received a lot of development more on the local level along with my peers so that all of our faculty is on board

with the same language, theories, and disciplines." In terms of the future, Tasha claimed, "I think current trends, laws, locations, and variety of students influence leaders."

Tasha's situations of professional development had been in the local school, at regional events, at diocesan professional development days, and at global events. In Tasha's experience, "Regional developments have been my choice, and most were rewarding." In Tasha's case, her local school combined development with other schools for teacher support in the classroom.

Individual structural description for narrative. The contextual reality was a factor in Tasha's development. As a second grade teacher, Tasha would have liked to see "Better growth for us and our children." The use of "interventions that teachers can implement" would be practical and helpful to Tasha's context (Reglin, Akpo-Sanni, Losike-Sedemo, 2012). As Tasha preferred, "working, teaching, and sharing together" were practical uses of time and energy of teachers for professional development.

The use of professional development as practical to the second grade context was of importance to Tasha. Tasha participated in regional professional development that seemed to link teachers in a collaborative manner, especially as team teachers at the same grade level. "I think two heads are better than one." According to Looi, Sun, Seow, and Chia (2014), teachers' different pedagogical orientations affected their instruction and implementation of curriculum. Collaboration, for Tasha, helped teachers to discuss and explain how they were going about teaching and sustaining common skills and objectives.

Individual textural structural composite for narrative. The narrative textural and structural description of Tasha exposed one prominent area of reflection. This theme was: (a) Practicality in Context.

Practicality in context. Tasha referred to this theme five times in the narrative description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Tasha included grade level and local experiences.

Tasha spoke to the importance of local and regional in experiences of professional development. "I must say that the least beneficial experiences have been at the diocesan level." Being able to connect with other teachers in a smaller setting allowed for sharing and connecting. Collective inquiry and dialogue helped push teachers out of the isolation of their classroom into a collaborative learning environment (Hewson, 2013). Tasha referred to connecting with her own team teacher in this manner and locally being able to find the time to create this connection made a difference in her own classroom context.

Individual textural description for focus group. The textural description for Case 7 detailed the focus group discussion of "what" of Tasha's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The textural description explained what Tasha experienced (Moustakas, 1994).

Tasha participated mainly in local and diocesan professional development activities. One experience where she had gained meaning was her school's participations in an outside company's coaching about classroom management. "Connecting learning assures successful students at our school. I gained information and techniques that helped me with teaching at the second grade level. I received new ideas, new books to use, and student motivators." This sustained professional development experience was done in collaboration with a partner Catholic school in St. Joseph. All teachers in Tasha's school participated in the program as well.

My teaching partner was in attendance as well as all our primary teachers so we could also share our knowledge and use some of the same techniques throughout our teaching day. We all use the same technique or at least we try.

The challenges that are perceived by Tasha came from development that did not help her gain an understanding. For example, she felt that a diocesan presentation on the Common Core was not applicable in her classroom. "The only redeeming part after this main session was the remaining sharing short session." Collaborative and student-focused experiences were Tasha's preference. "I believe I have gained a better brain-based understanding for educating students through Love and Logic."

Workshops or in-services that provided skills and helped teachers to help students to learn was a priority to Tasha. She looked for experiences that "Help(s) to engage students, help(s) them to process and practice their learning and enable(s) the teacher to assess and evaluate as students apply their learning skills." She offered that sustainability was also a priority: "I have gained knowledge from regional development but that dwindled after a few years." Tasha reported that she has made changes in her classroom based on her professional development experience, including "Post a daily agenda and daily procedures. I offer choices to students and try different methods of engaging students in learning. I have a better process for teaching second grade reading and writing."

Individual structural description for focus group. The structural description helped to explain professional development from the perspective of Tasha (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenon was discussed in a focus group setting, and the structural description examined the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

In Tasha's situation, the staff was vocal about the need for collaboration and hoped for an opportunity from leadership to have that time built into the day. "We as a staff have

asked for more sharing time with our teaching partners and those in the same growth area such as K-2." According to Tasha, some time had been given; however, more was necessary for growth. Hargreaves (2013) posited that if leaders respect and listen to the needs of teachers, these needs should be acknowledged in the operation of the school to further teacher learning. If teachers spoke to the importance of collaboration to their leaders, then leaders should value that input (Hargreaves, 2013).

The perception about professional development experiences for Tasha involved the opportunity to share with peer teachers. "To share ideas and to learn together so it is important for teachers to speak up and let their needs be known." In Tasha's experiences, the focus in her local school was on creating learning communities (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2011). In her local school setting, teachers were concerned with their own learning as related to student learning. "What is it that we need for growth and development and how best to do this?" The teachers perceive themselves as advocates for each other's learning growth. "Most of the teachers at our school keep asking for more time to work together."

Tasha saw value in working on individualized professional development. In support, Tasha observed, "Our special teachers don't necessarily need what I need and teachers come with different educational backgrounds and experiences." The perceived need of collaboration was substantiated by Tasha's comment, "It is so hard and next to impossible to lump us all into the same professional development session." According to Francis-Poscente and Jacobsen (2013), "Most professional development is pre-determined, 'sit and listen, maybe try it on Monday' with a one-size-fits-all approach" (p. 325).

Individual textural structural composite for focus group. The focus group textural and structural description of Tasha spoke to three prominent areas of reflection. These

themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Practicality in Context, and (c) Attributes of Teachers.

Relevancy for teachers. Tasha referred to this theme 74 times in the focus group description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that paid attention to a teacher's context. Tasha mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as asked, need, evaluate, grow, help, and meaningful ideas.

The change for Tasha that was relevant applied to her students and to her teaching. "I am better at assessing students' progress and communicating to parents." She shared that she has learned that the "use of teaching styles to match learning styles is important as well as imparting life skills and lifelong guidelines to students." According to Kumi-Yeboah and James (2012), a teacher, as a result of hard work, accumulated information that supported and maintained a classroom climate of productivity for all students.

Practicality in context. Tasha referred to this theme 46 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Tasha included time, knowledge, students, and learning.

The development experience for Tasha included a practical component. In one positive example of a professional development experience, Tasha stated, "I felt like I was able to walk away from this professional development with fresh new ideas, ones I could actually use." In the local setting, Tasha had access to technology. Her experience of development about these devices was described as follows, "For example, I have asked for hands-on help and growth in the use of new technology and instruments. We rarely get this."

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According to Masuda et al. (2013), all teachers valued relevant information that could be used and applied in their contexts. In turn, Tasha wanted information to be used and applied to available devices and tools of technology as a practical application in her classroom context.

Attributes of teachers. Tasha referred to this theme 13 times in the focus group description. Attributes of teachers were defined as the qualities of a professional teacher especially relating to experiences of professional development. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Tasha included partner, share, together, and try.

The attributes of teachers that Tasha described were in existence and necessary in her school. She spoke about her community as having "A love and motivation for lifelong learning." Tasha would like to have more time to discuss and hone this love of learning with her partner teacher and other teachers in her community. Sutherland and Marauskaite (2012) reported on the sense of self that teachers created from their own professional identity, and this self was promoted through relationships of others in the profession as well as in the context of the profession.

Individual textural description for interview. The textural description for Case 7 detailed the interview discussion of "what" of Tasha's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The textural description explained what Tasha experienced (Moustakas, 1994).

Tasha enjoyed participating mainly in professional development that emphasized techniques, strategies, and activities. She also preferred global experiences that "helped me with teaching individual reading when you have all of your levels of reading and writing." She appreciated being asked as an individual what she would like to see in professional

development. Her larger group experiences were "not as great just because I think they are trying to appeal to everybody."

Tasha detailed three distinct challenges that came from professional development experiences. First, she did not enjoy experiences in which she has been "doing some of these things over and over and over again." The repetition was not valuable to her or to her students. Next, she thought, "The hardest thing is when you are trying to group us all together." She stated, "I think it is all trying to lump us all in one blender and blend us up and have something that is for all of us." Lastly, a challenge she saw was the different stages of the career of teaching and trying to appeal to all of those stages in a large group setting. She explained:

> When you go there and look, you see little old ladies who are still there and teaching and you see somebody who is really young and the age of my daughter, nope not the age of my daughter, you are even younger than my daughter; it is hard to reach each person at the level they are teaching. I have already been there, done that and I don't really need that. Maybe the younger teachers need that, not the older teachers. Maybe our age. Maybe our experience. Some of the things that we are trying to work on, I'm like, oh dear, I don't think I need this. I think I heard this before. But the younger teachers are not in the same place.

Tasha favored professional development that provided resources. "We are very fortunate here to have a lot of benefits with money. We are talking about a STAR board and an iPad." The skills she appreciated included "Hey, I found this great website or great app for my iPad, or hey did you know. Those kinds of moments." She also appreciated "When we have sharing time. So kind of like when we are in a group and everybody is kind of discussing or share. Just simple things like that." She explains how she appreciated being able to share with other teachers.

Do a lot of cooperative learning. Choose another table. Work with your person. Share your information. Let's sit around in our circle. All of that. I do enjoy those. We share some good information about what we are doing and what they are doing.

Individual structural description for interview. The structural description helped to explain professional development from the perspective of Tasha (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenon was discussed in an interview setting, and the structural description examined the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Professional development in Tasha's view was helpful when teachers were "just talking to each other and trying to be on the same page." Masuda et al. (2013) reported that teachers preferred small group interaction and collaboration rather than attendance at a mandatory meeting that was irrelevant to their own context. These meetings were important for Tasha because "I think the fact that we are all trying to be on the same page" was helpful to her in her local setting.

"Many teachers have little opportunity to share and discuss their practice in the course of a normal school day beyond chance meetings in the staff room. Such a lack of opportunity can leave many teachers feeling isolated" (Donnelly & Boniface, 2013, p. 690). Tasha related, "Times when we have been able to share with each other have been our best times. We say, oh, that's a great idea keep doing it, or what do you see as our weaknesses." She had learned from other teachers in her setting. For example, she reported:

I did not grow up with any kind of technology except a black and white TV so most of us have an iPad and we were trying to figure out how to do this, this and this and then another teacher was saying hey, my son showed me how you can do this to an Excel, did you know you could do this?

The sharing between teachers provided Tasha with useful and meaningful experiences.

The value of professional development experiences for Tasha came from "Anything to do with changes that we are going to see. Maybe a heads up. Hey what's coming." She commented, "The language has changed. Resources changed." In terms of career development, Dik et al. (2012) spoke to the enhancement of work experience when a teacher felt they were enhancing the growth of their students. "I think anything that is new out there that we may not know about that we need to know. Can you give us specifics on how this will affect teachers?" On another note, Tasha saw her professional growth linked to teacher leadership.

> I know that a lot of times we are asked for our opinions. I was on the Catholicity team. We are asked for our input. So I think we are asked to step up and take different roles in the school just like the diocese asks people to step up.

Individual textural structural composite for interview. The interview textural and structural description of Tasha spoke to four prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Professionalism, (b) Practicality in Context, (c) Disconnect from Contextual Reality, and (d) Attributes of Teachers.

Professionalism. Tasha referred to this theme 301 times in the interview description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Tasha mentioned aspects of this theme such as asking, changing, years of experience, and working.

Professionalism for Tasha came from "A lot of listening and sharing with others." According to Starkey (2012), teachers needed a connected network in order to promote new ideas and to help teachers promote learning in their classrooms. Tasha claimed, "When we are asked to share with one another. We are asked to use the language. That promotes academic achievement." She thought that working together was more cohesive.

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Because sometimes I feel like okay you go to this and you go to that and we don't have the same experience but then we are not in sync unless we work here on it really really hard on the local level.

She spoke to some professional experiences in her own development:

Reading professional magazines or newspapers or taking classes or whatever as professionally I am told to do like we need to be doing this or need to be doing that. And I think now the diocese is working towards us all on the same page.

Practicality in context. Tasha referred to this theme 132 times in the focus group

description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development

experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that

were mentioned by Tasha included information, local, time, and school. Tasha emphasized

practicality by wondering, "Can I take this back to my class? Do I have new ideas for books?

Do I have new websites? Is there anything I can do tomorrow?"

For Tasha, practicality came from "any kind of sharing, especially with other Catholic

school teachers." Honoring the agenda of professional teachers as needing valuable and

intellectually stimulating experiences was important for leaders to understand and

accomplish (McElhone & Tilley, 2013).

I would like more of that instead of going and hearing speakers all the time. I would rather have what do you guys do in second grade? What do you guys do? And what materials are there? So anything I can walk away with at this point.

The practical use of technology was important in Tasha's context.

The STAR Board. Using it as a great tool and I notice that the kids are really focused. I have signed up for a website that has awesome things that go right with everything I teach. So I think it has added that visual piece that kids really really need. Not that I wasn't doing visual things, but this is so much more. It is just easy.

Disconnect from contextual reality. Tasha referred to this theme 76 times in the

interview description. Disconnect from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of

engagement or lack of understanding of the classroom setting of the teacher. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Tasha included guess, sitting, and waste. Tasha described her learning as, "A lot of it has been me just hunting and pecking and talking to teachers down the hall."

Tasha found disconnect in her professional development experiences because she felt she may not be getting all of the information she needed. "It wasn't enough." For example, in the pair and share sessions at diocesan workshops, "A lot of times either they don't get the message that, hey you are supposed to bring something and pair it or but they are usually like I forgot or didn't know I was supposed to do this, can I still share?" Tasha suggested that leaders helped presenters by giving them some guidance.

> They have to look at their audience. They have to look at who they are trying to include. Once again they don't have to have everybody in the same session. You don't want our PE teacher in our sharing. That's why they divide them up. I think when you do a main speaker sometimes the main speaker is just not what everybody needs. I think you have to look at the material they are presenting, look at their agenda, their outline, what they are presenting and say hey, who really needs to be there.

Tasha described an experience of disconnect.

> It just fizzled and that happens. It happens to the best of us in our classroom where you try something. I thought that would work. At least they were good about not saying anything bad about it. It's like when we had that one teacher, not a teacher but a Common Core way back at St. Therese. It was terrible. She talked down to everybody and we were all like, what is going on with this person. And we voiced our opinion on that one; you need to tell her that. That is not how you speak to an audience. And I remember sitting there thinking –it's so rare. It's one of those rare occasions.

As Harvey (2013) opined, teachers can determine on their own what best fits their own professional development plan rather than depending on a traditional training schedule.

However, even choosing her own experiences on the global level, Tasha had experienced disconnect.

> I was thinking that I used to go to the NCEA's and I would sign up for what I thought would be a great…and then I would sit there. Okay this doesn't sound like anything that you said it would be and I stopped going. Because it's a lot of money. Because I wasn't getting anything out of it. A lot of the speakers sounded good. Sounded like a topic that I needed. But it really wasn't once I got there. I found it got less and less.

Attributes of teachers. Tasha referred to this theme 50 times in the interview description. Attributes of teachers were defined as the qualities of a professional teacher especially relating to experiences of professional development. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that are mentioned by Tasha included share, try, and appreciate.

Tasha appreciated professional development as important because, "That makes us aware all the time of any changes that go on." Gimbel et al. (2011) reported, "Principals should solicit input from their teachers when making decisions and should maintain open communication with all teachers, new and veteran, to engage them in conversations about instructional practice. In this way, teachers felt validated and respected for their professionalism" (p. 28). Tasha felt positive about her professional development experiences:

> I have been offered a lot and I feel like I have a lot of experiences. San Francisco, NCEA, one in Philly, Boston, St. Louis, One to Columbia, several locally—not so much globally and then just reading a magazine—I think that counts. And then you read what other school around are doing.

The idea of sharing with other teachers promotes a learning environment for Tasha.

> The ones that show up and the ones that are prepared help. What are we trying to achieve? How are we going to get to those objectives? And what are our resources that we are using? So any of the age old things that we have been doing over and over and now they keep changing the name. How we do it. So we have always done those things but it wasn't called that. Just anything that keeps us going to help with the kids academically. Hey, did you know.

Case 8

  Individual textural description for narrative. The narrative description for Case 8 again retold the story based on the three-dimensional space approach. The story was based on interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

  Noni was a fifth grade teacher in a school in a Catholic Midwestern diocese. She was a 56-year-old white female with 21 years in the Catholic Midwestern diocese. She had taught in the Catholic Midwestern diocese for all of her years of experience. She had taught in two schools in the diocese. She had a Master of Arts in Educational Administration. Her experiences of professional development had been local, diocesan, and global. Noni reported, "I attend all diocesan in-service days. However, I seek out many other opportunities for personal growth. There are many websites, podcasts, on-line resources, and conferences to help us stay current."

  In the past, Noni had participated in local, diocesan seminars, conventions, and out-of-town seminars. She listed some of these conferences: "Staff Development for Educators (SDE), Eye on Education, Teaching Tolerance, and ISTE and websites and magazines from Learning Tree." As for the present, Noni claimed, "My current professional development plan is to keep abreast of current trends in education." As for the future, Noni provided information: "I will attend an educational conference this coming summer." Her future hopes lie with "Best practices that are happening today in education."

  Noni's situations of professional development have been in the local school building, at diocesan professional development days, and attending global conferences. "For me, the most meaningful professional development experience to date has been attending the ISTE conference in San Diego, California, the summer of 2012. Followed by Uncommon Teaching

for the Common Core World conference in New Orleans, Louisiana in the summer of 2013."

Noni, in response to her situation, stated:

> I have attended many, many hours of professional development. These hours have run the gamut from lectures, pair and share, guest speakers, to conferences and conventions. I have gotten the most out of conferences/conventions where we receive useful, practical ideas that are easily implemented into the classroom. I do best when I have been given bags of goodies to take home to use in the classroom.

Individual structural description for narrative. Being an effective teacher and making relevant changes in the classroom were important factors in the context of Noni's teaching. On this note, Noni lamented:

> In the diocese, we are sometimes asked to participate in an all-day affair that seems to be oddly thrown together. I believe that intentions are good, but the professional development day has many shaking their heads wondering how is this helping us to move forward to meet the needs of our students.

The investment in teachers should be to prepare them to meet the needs of students of all abilities and talents (Bruce, DiNatale & Ford, 2008). According to Noni, "The proof is in the pudding."

Noni looked to the professionalism of teachers and leaders as an important factor in professional development. "Professional development for development sake will not sustain teacher success." According to Coleman et al. (2012), "What defines teaching as a profession, and thus calls for standards of professionalism, is the idea that it is a praxis (e.g., a set of practices used in complex ways) that requires reflection and continual growth for success" (p. 27). Noni felt that "Professional development opportunities have to be relevant, practical, and lesson plan ready."

The teachers' classroom context was a factor in applying professional development practically in a setting. Noni noted, "We have to keep moving forward so that our students

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are prepared for high school and college." Engaging effective practices and refining curriculum will help support teachers across the disciplines to support students' readiness for high school and college (Cline, Bissell, Haffner & Katz, 2007). According to Noni, "If they meet this criteria, then the professional development experience can be worthy of praise."

Individual textural structural composite for narrative. The narrative textural and structural description of Noni spoke to three prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Practicality in Context, and (c) Professionalism.

Relevancy for teachers. Noni referred to this theme 24 times in the narrative description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that paid attention to a teacher's context. Noni mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as current, opportunities, and planning. In her narrative, she recommends, "Our students will thrive if they have teachers who are prepared to meet the educational challenges of the future."

For Noni, the professional development decisions by administrators have to be forward thinking and relevant. She described her experience:

> As teachers, we really don't have a voice or the power to effect decisions regarding professional development. Professional development day offerings are predetermined by the school office and a few principals. Teachers are told here are the offerings, sign up for x numbers of courses. The classes tend to not be very relevant and interesting.

Development and sustainability were difficult for administrators to provide in professional development experiences (Armour & Makopoulou, 2012).

Practicality in context. Noni referred to this theme 21 times in the narrative description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that

were mentioned by Noni included implementation, classes, school, students, and practical. Through professional development, Noni wanted to be able to find ways "to implement current strategies in order to enhance learning in our classrooms."

Noni spoke to the importance of collaboration as practical experiences of professional development. "Collaborative learning environments are the lifeblood for keeping the teaching profession up to date and accountable." One suggestion of on-line collaboration by Noni in her narrative was verified by Stevenson and Hedberg (2013) through research supporting the learning that comes from the interaction of multiple learners.

Noni claimed, "We have to be able to learn from each other's expertise as we share and care for one another. On-line opportunities are one of the easiest and quickest ways to see what's happening in our profession." She also spoke to the practicality of collaboration in her context. "Collaborative learning environments are the lifeblood for keeping the teaching profession up to date and accountable."

Professionalism. Noni referred to this theme 19 times in the narrative description. Professionalism was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. Noni mentioned aspects of this theme such as decisions, education and teacher experience. Noni stated:

> I think there is a definite disconnect between what the administrators think we need to be hearing and doing and what actually needs to be accomplished in the classroom. Is this a product of a lack of respect? No, it's the reality of how the chain of command works.

For instance, Noni claimed, "The leaders at the diocesan school office have their own agenda." As noted by Coleman et al. (2012), teaching was a thinking profession that evolved with experience. Rather than make decisions of professional development in isolation, Noni

suggested that all leaders making decisions about professional development consider

professionalism as a factor. "I have only been involved in the planning at the school level."

Professionalism would promote planning along with teachers at all levels.

Individual textural description for focus group. The focus group description for

Case 8 centered on the "what" of Noni's experience of professional development (Creswell,

2007, p. 61). In Moustakas' (1994) approach, the textural description explained what Noni

experienced.

Noni has participated in global, diocesan, and local in-services in her career. The

experiences that she saw as most helpful in her classroom context were described as, "It was

practical. It was hands-on. It was integration. It was all the things we need to be doing right

now and focusing on." On the other hand, Noni had experienced professional development

that was not as helpful.

> There is nothing that irritates me more than that is that you go to something for three
> or four hours and you go well, now what do I do with this. It just needs to be in the
> here and the now. You know, give it to me. Tell me this this and this and put it in the
> classroom and you can use it right now.

Noni described an attitude of change and a promotion of growth for the professional

development experiences that she needed.

> I think first of all it is such a mindset. You know, I have been in this business as you
> have been for so many years. That first thing I have to do is change my mindset. I
> started out by telling the kids you can bring your devices. You know I did have to get
> permission from the principal and that sort of thing. I was like how many of you have
> an iPad, how many of you have Kindle, whatever it may be, can you bring it to
> school. And we just started working with it and now we are not heavy duty with it yet
> and even with my fifth graders.

The challenge from professional development experiences for Noni came from

collaborative sessions that have little focus. "I just think sometimes the pair and share, if it's

not, if it's not specific and not well organized and no one is overseeing that." Noni thought

that collaboration would work if there were better parameters put around this type of

experience.

> You know, we had an experience last year or a few years before. You know, we went into a classroom and kind of all sat there and looked at each other and someone had one little thing and somebody had another little thing and you know we were done in ten minutes and we were supposed to share for an hour and a half or something.

Her answer to solve this dilemma was to provide more specific guidelines to professional

development experiences.

> A lot of times there is no direction for that. Come with something. Okay, do you want a lesson plan, do you want a field trip. Do you want a resource? And so we could have a pair and share as long as it is meaningful. Something. Don't give me a two-hour somebody presenting on an overhead that I can't first of all see and sitting in a gymnasium on a hard bleacher. But I mean I think there are ways to do that but those formats for me are not the best.

Noni did feel that skills that can be used in the classroom were vital to her learning

and growing. "You know these things that we need to be understanding. Common Core. So I

think just even moving along in verbiage so I understand what best practice is." Noni yearned

for help with skills in technology.

> That is where I am headed. My niece is a blended learning coach in the Liberty school district. I am like how cool is that. How do I get one of those? That's what she is. Because I said what do you do. Really. How do you get that kind of job? I would love a blended learning coach.

Technology skills were emphasized through Noni's commitment to her students:

> They just keep going, can I bring my device, can I bring my device? Their handwriting is so horrible so bring it in here and now they all want to do it and that is fine. That is fine. I am fine with that. I will tell you I've gotten resistance of that from the other teachers because you know it frightens them for some reason. No. Yes, bring that here. Bring that here. We will use it. Can I take notes with that? Oh, yes you can. So you just have to start doing it. Just like I said you have to change your mindset because I am an old goat. I come from way back when kids walked in a line and didn't speak. Classrooms were quiet. And we use it with vocabulary words; we

use it to look up a resource. I don't have a problem with it unless I see them fiddling around. But yeah, you just have to start doing it. That's kind of where I am with it.

Individual structural description for focus group. The structural description, according to Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological tradition, helped to explain professional development from the perspective of Noni. The focus group setting examined the phenomenon, and the structural description explained how Noni experienced this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Noni made a point to note the role of the leader in making decisions about professional development experiences. She cautioned leaders about conversations that teachers had about the value of these experiences. "You know again when people are putting on these professional development workshops, they, too, if they do not stay current, you know. We are going to tell people whether or not you should go to that again." If teachers are called to keep current on skills, especially in technology, Noni felt that the presenters should also be well versed in this area of growth. "One of the challenges in teacher education is to assist students to integrate their knowledge and experiences from their coursework with the knowledge and experiences in their professional practices" (Sutherland & Marauskaite, 2012, p. 752).

Noni's perception of professional development experiences was that not all teachers were of the same mindset as her, especially in regards technology. Noni perceived technology as something that she needed to work on in her career stage and hoped that others did as well. "Well, I would like to see everybody go to a technology conference or have the technology come in and again. So that is what I would love to see and that is going to work. That would work if we do it." Because Noni utilized technology in her classroom through the students bringing their own devices, she had a willingness to be engaged in professional

development that corresponded with technology, and she found value in those experiences (Masuda et al., 2013).

Because she found value in these experiences, Noni would like leaders to respond to this value. As Van Duzor (2012) related, teachers found significance in their own learning process when it directly related to student learning. Noni shared her view:

> You know, I would love to see the diocese begin to promote what the schools are doing and really be more vocal about that so people know what is going on. And if you are doing something here that we could share and work with, let us know. This is not a secret.

Individual textural structural composite for focus group. The focus group textural and structural description of Noni spoke to three prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, (b) Practicality in Context, and (c) Use of Technology in the Classroom Context

Relevancy for teachers. Noni referred to this theme 31 times in the focus group description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that paid attention to a teacher's context. Noni mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as mindset, want, and needs.

Relevancy in the context of the classroom was perceived as important to Noni. It was frustrating to her when professional development experiences failed to provide teachers what they perceived themselves to need. "You know something that we can't use and it's not relevant." The vision or focus of leader should be on relevant change. Professional development seemed inflexible in Noni's experience (Hargreaves, 2013).

Practicality in context. Noni referred to this theme 16 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development

experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Noni included classroom, kids, and practical.

The practical application of skills learned in professional development was the preference of Noni. She spoke about "best practices" as a way to better understand what others were doing in their classroom context. Hargreaves (2013) noted that theory should not be given up at the expense of practice being emphasized. Noni was in agreement, stating, "These things that we need to be understanding" as teachers and as practitioners.

Use of technology in the classroom context. Noni referred to this theme nine times in the focus group description. Use of technology in the classroom context was defined as access to technological resources or training in the classroom setting as well as the utilization of the technology for learning. Noni mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as technology, devices, and blended learning.

Despite being a long-term career teacher, Noni was very open to the use of technology in her classroom. She described her attitude: "That first thing I had to do is change my mindset." She was open to having students in her classroom bring technology to the room and learning and growing with them. "Teachers often discussed the coherence between their own learning processes and the learning processes of their students" (Van Duzor, 2013, p. 492). Additionally, having a blended learning coach was on Noni's wish list. This too would help Noni's students, her classroom context, and her own learning and growing.

Individual textural description for interview. The interview description for Case 8 centered on the "what" of Noni's experience of professional development (Creswell, 2007,

p. 61). In Moustakas' (1994) approach, the textural description explained what Noni experienced.

In Noni's experience, she had participated in many global, diocesan, and local in-services in her career. She explained:

> Well, it just has to be. It just has to be. I don't know if convenient is a word, but it needs to be something I can get to. Because we don't have a lot of time. Let's get it. Do it and let's go on.

She especially appreciated the global presentations.

> There was constant with the presenters. They would sit down right next to you. Here's my cell phone, here's my e-mail, here's my everything, and they always wanted to know from us if what they were doing was relevant. If we knew what we were supposed to do with it.

Her participation in the diocese was described with frustration.

> In the diocese, when you gather people from all over the diocese from 27 counties or whatever, it is they come in from, it is just difficult to target everybody. I don't mind listening to somebody talk for an hour or so, but after that then I am to go off to a room and listen to somebody or try to pair share and things just don't work out like they should.

At the local level, she stated, "I do think that I had a voice there. In the school, the principal and I used to plan professional days together."

Noni sought out personal experiences of professional development because of the challenge to gain what she needed in the classroom.

> You really have to seek it out yourself. Because there are not too many people throwing out okay, here is fifth grade. They have to stay current but they have to be able to reach me as the teacher, as I said. If you don't, we are all lost.

Noni also stated, "When we talk about diocesan, there have been quite a few hiccups along the road here. And it's like anything, sometimes we have some really good days and sometimes not so." She would like the voice of teachers to be acknowledged.

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I don't really think the voice of teachers is heard too much. I haven't seen that really. I think maybe more so maybe several years ago, maybe more so. I guess today there is much more expected of us; you know, the decision makers say this is what we have got to do with teachers and then on we go.

Noni did feel that professional development should help teachers with skills that can be used in the classroom.

Globally, I have gone to some really, really good conferences lately. So globally has been very good. But you know what, I get to decide what I am going to, so that makes a big difference. I know what is going to help me. I am using my own voice.

Leaders should work to provide skills for teachers. "The principals have their thumb on that and they kind of know what we need to be doing." Noni noted that skills that she has learned in her development experiences have remained in her teaching context. "Kind of bits and pieces have hung on with me. I think they all kind of hang on with you even though we are not focusing on those things any more. Those of us who have been around for awhile."

Individual structural description for interview. The structural description, according to Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological tradition, helped to explain professional development from the perspective of Noni. The interview examined the phenomenon, and the structural description explained how Noni experienced this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Noni described her feelings about her professional development experiences.

It is a little bit of that feeling that you are not really that important in all of this. You know, unfortunately, you do get that sometimes that sort of feeling. For the most part, I'd say it's positive, but still there's just a little bit that is bothersome to me.

For example, she shared her feelings when a presenter was not connected to their audience.

There is no excuse for it. The leader doesn't connect to any of us or the schools or anything. For opening school, gee, that was uplifting. Thank you for beating the teachers up while you are at it. Sometimes I do feel like they are a waste of time. I do.

Another example of feeling frustrated as a teacher was when at diocesan meetings, there was so much emphasis on dress code.

> I don't know. It's so silly to me sometimes if someone is worried if I have on slacks or not at a meeting. Really? You know. So those sorts of things seem ridiculous to me. If you just say professional dress or whatever, we are good. But you know to worry about some of the things that really don't mean anything.

In support, Sherman-Morris, Rodgers, McNeal, Brown, and Dyer (2012) suggested that leaders find teacher preferences for their own context and examined how these preferences may enhance the professional learning goals of the school or district. On the academic level, Noni spoke to the inequity of offerings of professional development experiences on a global level. "Such disparity. It could happen. It doesn't have to be the haves and the have nots. I am sometimes just critical about those things. It just shouldn't be that way." Noni felt that all teachers should take advantage of learning opportunities. She noted, "The ones I seek out and do on my own have been just really, really fantastic." Noni reported, "I would like to see everybody go to a technology conference or have the technology come in, and again, like I said, it needs to be hands-on. You need to be doing it."

Noni's perception of professional development experiences was formulated through relationships with other teachers.

> Those are the things I want somebody to tell me or help me with. If you could tell me, I am good. I might have to have them run that by me again. There are so many good things happening in schools. How did you know how to do that? How did you think of that? It's just like with everything. If you have no paper to use at school, you figure it out. I'm finding all kinds of other ways to do things. I just kind of figure out a way, can I do that?

Seeking relationships with other teachers helped teachers to learn together in relevant contexts and promoted student growth (Van Duzor, 2012). "There shouldn't be strangers in the diocese. The technology is there. We can do this. That would create community." Noni shared, "I think the professional development days and conferences I have gone to have been

forward thinking. They are student-centered. It's helping me know what I need to do to focus on the kids."

Noni found value in the professional development experiences that promoted change in education. Seyoum (2011) informed leaders that in planning to restructure or transform education, one should offer teachers a means to bring about that change. In local leadership, Noni noted, "The school community has to first of all promote that this is what we are doing and then we follow through with it and we are all on the same page." She described her local setting and the changes that she had seen in education.

> Innovative. Oh my goodness, it's just so many things with the technology. It's so much. So that's where we are going and that's where I need to go. It's going to be hard for me because I am an old dog. We have some students that are doing robotics and the robotic competition and all of these things that are just, would have never been on anybody's radar screen. Even five years ago, so it's those things that make my jaw drop I go, oh really, I think that is just where education is headed. I do.

Individual textural structural composite for interview. The interview textural and structural description of Noni spoke to two prominent areas of reflection. These themes were: (a) Relevancy for Teachers, and (b) Practicality in Context.

Relevancy for teachers. Noni referred to this theme 103 times in the interview description. Relevancy for teachers was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers in innovative, pertinent ways that paid attention to a teacher's context. Noni mentioned aspects or meaning units of this theme such as focus, need, and voice. Noni said professional development was relevant when it produced:

> What can make me better? Whether it's reflection or whatever it may be. I need also that you know inward look at myself, see what I am doing. So if someone can give that to me. Just to help me keep moving. That is what I need to do.

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Relevancy in professional development experiences was described by Seyoum (2011) as helping teachers to implement innovative practices to promote student learning. Noni described her own relevant experiences.

> It will be fine as long as we keep it relevant. I, as a teacher of many years, want the professional development. I am willing to go out and look for it. I am willing to listen to a podcast or to go on-line or a webinar or whatever it may be. So I think if people are going to come out and reach me, I am going to listen. I am going to listen.

She also defined what an irrelevant experience was to her. "We just have to do it. We do gripe a lot about it. I think sometimes we are professionally developed. Overdeveloped. So let's do what we do and do it well. And call it good. Don't send me to something to waste my time." Specifically, her irrelevant experiences were:

> When you have a large group in a gymnasium, you know nobody can hear, only the people sitting up there, you can't see and people are having conversations because nobody can see or understand what's going on And again sometimes when they are just not relevant and when they are not on topic and they go on and on.

Noni found hope in the relational aspect of relevant professional development experiences. "It can be successful for the diocese provided that we continue to go to things that are relevant and then we have to get the word out there."

Practicality in context. Noni referred to this theme 66 times in the focus group description. Practicality in context was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The aspects or meaning units of the theme that were mentioned by Noni included help, local, students, and time.

Noni liked the "hands-on" practicality of professional development experiences. "You have to do hands-on for me. Sometimes you have to draw me a picture. Here's what you do. You put this with this and that with that." A teacher who was motivated would succeed in a school (Rodd, 2013):

I did another conference last summer that was Common Core. And we did a lot of moving about. So for me, I am not a sitter. I am not good with sitting for a long time. So if I can get up and move to the next table and talk about whatever it is I am focusing on, that's good. We are talkers. Yeah, but that conference was really good. That and the ISTE conference. I really liked that. It was in New Orleans, Uncommon Teaching of the Common Core. It was really good.

Noni differentiated between good and bad experiences:

When we have some of the people that come in and present, you know, it is just so general and willy nilly that it just doesn't pertain to me. Or don't give me something that preschool does or give me something that is going to hit me.

The practical aspect of teachers and leaders working on choosing professional development experiences was important to Noni. "At my former school, we used to look and see what sorts of topics and things we needed to work on. We would look and say so and so heard this, so and so does that or this would be good to get in here." Lastly, Noni spoke about practicality in other districts. "The format has to be interactive, integrated, blended. It just has to be. That is where I am headed."

Composite Textural Description

The composite textural description was a combination of textural descriptions for each case. The first composite description addressed School Set 1. The second composite description addressed School Set 2. The final textural composite description described, compared, and contrasted all eight cases. According to Creswell (2007), a phenomenological textural description showed the underlying structure or commonalties across the cases. In all of the composite descriptions, criteria established by Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997) were utilized. The general criteria were applicable to all cases. Typical criteria were applicable to half of the cases. Variant criteria were applicable to less than half of the cases. Lastly, atypical criteria included only one participant (Hill et al., 1997). In this manner, the

"essential invariant structure" of the phenomenon was detailed and reported (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46).

School Set 1

The first composite textural description was of School Set 1 responses. In School Set 1, the schools had similarities in socio-economic status, academic achievement, and demographics and were named School A, B, C, and D. This collective group had an average of 51% of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch, had an average of lower than 47% proficiency on sixth grade reading composite scores on the ITBS test, had an average of less than 41% proficiency on sixth grade math composite scores on the ITBS test, and had an average of over 52% of a diverse student population based on race and ethnicity.. The teachers in Case 1 through 4 originated from School Set 1.

The experience of teachers in School Set 1 included professional development offerings in a wide variety of settings. School Set 1 teachers gained professional development in their local school settings, in diocesan large and small group settings, in regional POD settings, at metropolitan one-day conferences, at nationwide conferences offered by organizations, or through webinars. The typical experience for the teachers was in local, diocesan, and global offerings. The one atypical response came from Nancy, who did not attend global professional development experiences. Nancy explained her preference in connecting to local professional development experiences. "While I realize it's important to stay current and be open to new ideas, to be honest, I usually think my time could be better used in class with my kids." Another atypical response concerning the experience of teachers was from Carla, who mentioned utilizing webinars as a professional development experience.

The other teachers in School Set 1 did not mention this format of professional development as an option that they utilized.

The typical response to past situations of professional development was the mentioning of local, diocesan, and global experiences. An atypical response came from Carla, who mentioned her mentor experience in her formative years as being important to her teaching and learning. The present experiences of School Set 1 were all atypical, including responses detailing the usefulness of professional development, having a fresh attitude of professional development, using professional development to expand skills, and benefiting from the professional development offered by the diocese currently. For future situations of professional development, the typical response was to encourage leaders to plan. Atypically, Anne mentioned meeting the needs of students, and Nancy suggested that the "diocese does not get on the next bandwagon."

The participation in professional development by teachers in School Set 1 garnered a variety of responses. The typical response from Carla, Anne, and Nancy and detailed the involvement of other teachers through sharing as an important experience. Anne, Gianna, and Nancy preferred to self-select or choose their own professional development experiences. For example, Anne stated, "I look for it and then go ask." Anne and Gianna recommended that these sessions be in a small group setting. Other atypical responses from each teacher about their own participation in professional development included using articles, having a plan of action, going to global experiences of higher quality, responding to veteran teachers, and having hands-on experiences.

Each teacher described the skills that they took back to their own contexts from their professional development experiences as valuable. The general consensus for all teachers

was that they sought skills that they could bring back to their classrooms and utilize. Units of meaning such as differentiated, empowered, meeting needs, and practical were used by each teacher as an emphasis about this general criteria. One atypical response to the use of skills learned in professional development came from Nancy, who spoke of the mission of teaching. She stated, "Some of the better experiences remind me of why I wanted to teach."

The challenges that stem from professional experiences for teachers in School Set 1 pertained to the organization of the experiences. The typical response from Carla, Anne, and Nancy detailed the diocesan large group sessions in which the presenter cannot attend to the needs of every teacher in the setting. This led to another typical response from Carla, Gianna, and Nancy in which teachers spoke to the lack of planning and consistency, and the disappearance of one trend replaced by another "bandwagon" educational practice. There may be a relationship between these themes as shown by the next typical response from Carla, Anne, and Gianna, who spoke to teachers' attitudes, motivation, and buy-in as a challenge in professional development experiences. The atypical responses from Carla, Gianna, and Nancy, in School Set 1 included lack of planning, funding, and training in the use of technology as challenges they see in professional development experiences.

School Set 2

The second composite textural description was of School Set 2 responses. In School Set 2, the schools had similarities in socio-economic status, academic achievement, and demographics and were named School E, F, G, and H. This collective group had an average of 1.25% of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch, had an average of over 72% proficiency on the sixth grade reading composite scores of the ITBS test, had an average of over 76% proficiency on sixth grade math composite scores of the ITBS test, and had less

than 7% of a diverse student population based on race and ethnicity. The teachers in Case 5 through 8 originated from School Set 2.

The experience of teachers in School Set 2 included professional development offerings in a wide variety of settings. The general response of all of the teachers was that they participated in local, diocesan, and global experiences. One atypical response by Kyla noted that she participated in POD development experiences as well.

The general response to past situations of professional development was the mentioning of local, diocesan, and global experiences. A typical response to present situations was that there was examination of current trends as noted by Lucia, Tasha, and Noni, who mentioned professional learning communities, and Tasha, who mentioned her experiences at the local level as an atypical response to present situations. For future situations, Lucia, Tasha, and Noni mentioned a typical response of trends and best practices as being important for professional development. In an atypical response of future professional development, Kyla recommended that the principal ask what teachers need. "Let's sit down and figure out what we can do to come up with some ideas. Listening to what our need is in our school."

The participation in professional development by teachers in School Set 2 clearly indicated that teachers want hands-on strategies to take back to their classroom context. The general response from all four cases detailed this need by using units of meaning such as lived experience, active involvement, practical techniques, and activities. The other responses by the teachers were atypical. For instance, Kyla spoke about wanting to participate more in professional development that provided training in technology. Lucia wanted quality experiences that provided current research. Tasha felt that sustainable outside coaching

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would help in her experience. Finally, another atypical response was from Noni, who suggested that teachers need to change their mindset when it comes to participation in professional development.

Each teacher described the skills that they take back to their own contexts from their professional development experiences as valuable. All four teachers agreed with this general response. As a typical response, Kyla, Lucia, and Tasha noted that taking time to share with other teachers was a preferred professional development experience. In an atypical response, Noni preferred learning and sustaining best practices in the use of technology. She stated, "I would love a blended learning coach."

The challenges that stem from professional development for teachers in School Set 2 pertained to the lack of connection to their own classroom context. The general response from Kyla, Lucia, Tasha, and Noni was that experiences of professional development were not applicable in the classroom setting. The typical response of School Set 2 teachers including Kyla, Tasha, and Noni was that leaders could look at what was happening in the local setting, know the career stages of teachers, and listen to the voice of teachers. The atypical responses of teachers all included negative responses to their experiences. Kyla claimed there is no time. Tasha said her experiences did not help her gain understanding. Noni stated that "pair and share collaboration has no focus."

Overall Composite Textural Description

The overall composite description detailed the responses of all eight cases in a cross-case analysis (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The composite textural description was a combination of textural descriptions for each case. The final textural composite description

described, compared, and contrasted all eight cases. The teachers in Case 1 through 8 made up the composite textural description.

The experience of teachers in composite included professional development offerings in a wide variety of settings. The typical response of Carla, Anne, Gianna, Kyla, Lucia, and Tasha was to detail their local, diocesan, and global experiences. An atypical response came from Nancy, who did not attend global experiences. Another atypical response was reported by Kyla, who mentioned the benefits of her POD professional development.

The typical response to past situations of professional development was the mentioning of local, diocesan, and global experiences. As a variant response, Gianna and Tasha emphasized only their global experiences. An atypical response to past situations came from Carla, who described a mentoring situation instead of mentioning other experiences. For the present situations of professional development, a variant response of Lucia and Noni, both from School Set 2, disclosed the use of current trends. Otherwise, atypical responses were spoken by Carla, Anne, Nancy, Kyla, and Tasha. These separate themes included usefulness, fresh attitude, expansion of skills, use of professional learning communities, and learning at the local level. The future expectations of teachers included three variant responses. Gianna from School Set 1 recommended planning for professional development experiences. Anne and Kyla asked that leaders address the needs of the local school setting. Lucia, Tasha, and Noni, in School Set 2, discussed trends and best practices as being important to future experiences. An atypical response came from Nancy, who asked that in the future, leaders try to not "jump on the bandwagon."

The participation in professional development by teachers garnered a variety of responses. A typical response to participation came from Carla, Anne, Gianna, Kyla, and

Lucia, who all recommended involvement with other teachers in small group settings. A variant response came from Nancy, Tasha, and Noni, who looked for hands-on strategies. Another variant response was from School Set 1, Carla, Anne, and Gianna, who wanted to self-select professional development. Two other variant responses included Nancy and Lucia, who mentioned the quality of the experience, and Carla and Kyla, who mentioned the use of technology in their participation. There were a variety of atypical responses, including planning, veteran teachers, sustainability, and changing mindsets.

Each teacher described the skills that they take back to their own contexts from their professional development experiences as valuable. In particular, the general response to professional development experiences in relation to skills was being able to use skills in the classroom setting. Every teacher in each case mentioned this unit of meaning. For example, teachers mentioned "helping students learn and grow in my setting," "taking skills back to the classroom," "changing the classroom," and "helping students learn in my context." According to Garmston (2003), transferring skills as a presenter meant taking abstract concepts and making it clear by teaching how to transfer that concept to another context through examples and knowledge of strategies.

The challenges that stem from professional development for teachers pertained to decisions about professional development. Carla, Anne, Nancy, Kyla, Lucia, and Tasha, in a typical response, referred to large group settings in which the teaching style of the presenter is disconnected from the needs of teachers. In another typical response, Carla, Anne, Gianna, and Tasha spoke to the attitudes and motivation of teachers about professional development experiences as being a challenge. There were many atypical responses. For instance, Gianna spoke to the lack of funding, while Kyla spoke to the lack of time. Nancy recommended

more training in the use of technology, while Tasha recommended that leaders listen to the voice of teachers.

<div align="center">**Composite Structural Description**</div>

The composite structural description was a combination of structural descriptions for each case. The first composite description addressed School Set 1. The second composite description addressed School Set 2. The final structural composite description described, compared, and contrasted all eight cases. According to Creswell (2007), a phenomenological structure description shows the underlying structure or commonalties across the cases. In all of the composite descriptions, criteria established by Hill et al. (1997) were utilized. The general criteria were applicable to all cases. Typical criteria were applicable to half of the cases. Variant criteria were applicable to less than half of the cases. Atypical criteria included only one participant (Hill et al., 1997). In using these criteria, the "essential invariant structure" of the phenomenon was detailed and reported (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46).

School Set 1

The first composite structural description was of School Set 1 responses. In School Set 1, the schools had similarities in socio-economic status, academic achievement, and demographics, and were named School A, B, C, and D. This collective group had an average of 51% of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch, had an average of lower than 47% proficiency on sixth grade reading composite scores on the ITBS test, had an average of less than 41% proficiency on sixth grade math composite scores on the ITBS test, and had an average of over 52% of a diverse student population based on race and ethnicity. The teachers in Cases 1 through 4 originated from School Set 1.

Some of the teachers in School Set 1 expressed the importance of the relevance of professional development experiences to their own context. A typical response from Anne, Gianna, and Nancy encouraged relevancy through collaborating with other teachers. Atypical responses from Carla, Anne, and Gianna also noted finding experiences on their own, responding to change through a fresh perspective, and providing the best education for students and teachers created relevance in professional development experiences.

Teachers in School Set 1 spoke to the practical nature of professional development experiences. A typical response from Carla, Anne, and Nancy again referred to collaboration as a practical experience that would help promote teaching and learning. Another typical response was given by Anne and Nancy when referring to practicality by "putting experience into action" and having professional development provide "hands-on" approaches. An atypical response came from Nancy, who stated that practical professional development experiences should have "students in mind." Two atypical responses came from Gianna in the area of professionalism and an affective learning environment for teachers. Carla thought that leaders should support collaboration in professional development experiences. Gianna described the professionalism of teachers as a "duty to help students."

Teachers in School Set 1 described the "how" of their experience through structural description (Moustakas, 1994). The typical response about their experiences came from Carla, Anne, and Gianna speaking about teacher initiative in their own development. Another typical response was noted by Carla, Anne, and Nancy, who talked of a disconnect and in turn, the lack of ability to transfer skills into the classroom setting. Another typical response came from Anne and Gianna, who both spoke to the power of small group interactions in

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their experience. An atypical response came from Gianna, who asked how money is spent for professional development experiences.

The perception of teachers in School Set 1 came from many directions. First, one typical response from Carla, Gianna, and Nancy was that professional development should engage the needs of teachers within their context. Next, a typical response came from Carla, Anne, and Gianna, who spoke to the professional identity and motivation of teachers. Lastly, Carla, Gianna, and Nancy noted that teachers are looking to explore a topic to gain ideas for their classroom. Nancy stated, "The most meaningful professional development experiences for me have been hands-on, down to earth, I can take this into my classroom and use it tomorrow kinds of things." Atypical responses also applied to the perceptions of professional development experiences. Carla talked about evaluation being important for leaders. Anne spoke to financing, time, and the availability of professional development experiences for teachers.

The value of professional development experiences was explored in School Set 1. A typical response from Carla, Gianna, and Nancy directed a leader's attention to collaboration. Another typical response from Carla, Anne, and Gianna led leaders to look at best practices that address teachers' need and student growth. Carla, Anne and Nancy noted a typical response which included addressing sustainable time for consistent long lasting effects. An atypical response from Anne centered on evaluations as helpful to leaders. Another atypical response came from Gianna, who valued her global experiences with her peers. She says she enjoyed, "having fun while I am working with other people that are in the training." Lastly, Nancy spoke to the value of motivation in professional development experiences.

School Set 2

The second composite structural description was of School Set 2 responses. In School Set 2, the schools had similarities in socio-economic status, academic achievement, and demographics and are named School E, F, G, and H. This collective group had an average of 1.25% of students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch, had an average of over 72% proficiency on the sixth grade reading composite scores of the ITBS test, had an average of over 76% proficiency on sixth grade math composite scores of the ITBS test, and had less than 7% of a diverse student population based on race and ethnicity. The teachers in Case 5 through 8 originated from School Set 2.

Relevance in terms of the relationship to the contextual setting of teachers was reflected in responses of teachers in School Set 2. In a typical response, Kyla, Lucia, and Noni talked about transferring professional development experiences to the needs of students. In an atypical response, Tasha spoke to the importance for her in sharing relevant practices with other teachers. "I look for things that again teachers can use on an immediate basis."

The practical nature of professional development experiences was revealed in the structural description. Lucia, Tasha, and Noni all responded to practicality with atypical responses. Lucia wanted to learn practical ideas from professional development experiences. Tasha needed collaboration to help her with practicality. Noni spoke to the concept of moving forward in her classroom setting.

In terms of professionalism, there was a typical response from three teachers: Kyla, Lucia, and Noni. All three of these teachers talked about sustaining and building teacher growth as a focus for leaders when making decisions about professional development. In an

atypical response, Kyla also spoke to the importance of voice in decision making about professional development experiences.

The perception of teachers in School Set 2 centered on teacher growth through professional development experiences. The typical perception came from Kyla, Tasha, and Noni about the experience providing ideas, tools, or uses for teachers to transfer to their own classroom setting. Another typical response noted collaboration and sharing with other teachers in Tasha and Noni's perceptions. Lucia provided two atypical responses in speaking about inconsistency of development and motivation of teachers.

The value of professional development experiences was explored in School Set 2. First, as a typical response, Kyla and Lucia noticed that experiences are valuable when teachers are able to implement practical strategies. Next, Kyla and Lucia, in a typical response, valued small group interaction. Alternately, Tasha and Noni, in a typical response, valued changes in education. Tasha and Noni, also in a typical response, spoke to teachers' own learning process and trying to avoid "one size fits all." Kyla spoke to an atypical response when she talks about technology training as being valuable to her. Tasha, in an atypical response, saw value in theory.

Overall Composite Structural Description

The overall composite description detailed the responses of all eight cases in a cross-case analysis (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The composite structural description was a combination of structural descriptions for each case. The final structural composite description described, compared, and contrasted all eight cases. The teachers in Case 1 through 8 made up the composite structural description.

All eight cases referred to relevancy in their professional development experiences as being important. A typical response by Anne, Gianna, Nancy, and Tasha related to collaboration and sharing together. Another typical response from Gianna, Kyla, Lucia, and Noni referred to meeting the needs of students. Atypical responses came from Carla and Anne and spoke to "finding experiences on their own, responding to change, and finding fresh perspectives."

Some teachers in both sets spoke to the practical nature of professional development experiences. With the exception of Kyla, practicality was seen as important. A typical reaction included responses from Anne, Gianna, Nancy, and Lucia, who described "hands-on" experiences with students in mind as valuable. The typical response to practicality was from Carla, Anne, Nancy, and Tasha, who noted that collaboration was practical for them.

Four teachers created a variant response in terms of professionalism as related to professional development. Kyla, Lucia, and Noni spoke to sustaining teacher success through guiding, building, and sustaining teachers. Atypically, Gianna spoke to the duty of teachers to help students, while Kyla described how principals should listen to the voice of teachers.

The description of their experience created a structure that formulates meaning about professional development. There were several different areas where teachers saw meaning coming from their experiences. One typical response from Carla, Anne, Nancy, and Noni was the feeling of disconnect. Another typical response from Carla, Gianna, Kyla, and Noni was how teachers take their own initiative when looking for professional development that they can use in their own setting. There were three variant responses about the structure of professional development experiences. First, Anne, Nancy, and Lucia spoke to the transfer of training to the classroom setting. Next, Anne, Gianna, and Lucia found collaboration and

sharing to be important. Another variant response came from School Set 2—Kyla, Lucia, Tasha, and Noni—pertaining to the use of technology. Lastly, a variant response from Anne, Nancy, and Noni spoke to the usefulness of professional development in helping teachers to grow.

The perceptions of teacher were explored throughout the cases. First, a typical response from Carla, Gianna, Nancy, Kyla, and Tasha spoke to the practicality of bringing back lessons from professional development to the classroom context. Another typical response from Carla, Anne, Gianna, and Lucia was to note the professional identity of teachers in making decisions about professional development. Another perception from teachers was a variant response from Anne, Tasha, and Noni, which addressed time to share with one another. The atypical responses came from Carla, regarding evaluation of professional development; Anne, on the topic of financing professional development; and Noni, in speaking to the mindset of technology use in professional development.

The value of professional development experiences was explored in the structural description. As a typical response, Carla, Gianna, Nancy, Kyla, Lucia, and Tasha talked about the power of collaboration. Another typical response was from Carla, Anne, Gianna, Kyla, and Lucia, who articulated the need to bring best practices to the classroom context for addressing needs of students. The next typical response in terms of the value of professional development was from Anne, Nancy, Tasha, and Noni who noted that professional development should examine the changes in educational practices. Other atypical responses came from Carla, who asked leaders to recognize the value of time; Nancy, who valued motivation; Kyla, who needed more training in technology; and Noni, who enjoyed the empowerment of choosing her own learning process.

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Composite Textural Structural Description: The Essence of Professional Development

The overall composite textural structural description detailed the responses of all eight cases in a cross-case analysis (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The composite textural structural description was a combination of the textural and structural descriptions for each case. The textural structural composite description described, compared, and contrasted all eight cases and created an essence of professional development. The teachers in Cases 1 through 8 made up the composite textural and structural description.

Van Manen (1990) described a composite textural structural description as awakening the reader to the significance of the phenomenon. Finding the essence of the experience included analyzing the words of the unique experiences of participants to find the basic elements of truth (Eichelberger, 1989). The gathering of phenomenological data for this study included narrative, focus group, and interviews and captured how the participants experienced professional development. The composite textural structural description helped picture the experience and helped focus on the essences of that shared experience (Patton, 2002). A structured approach kept boundaries around the data collection, and the truth of the experiences was revealed (Moustakas, 1994). The structure of the experience of professional development was established with themes about the common experiences of the participants.

The structuring of the data revealed the essences of the experience. One major theme was generalized throughout the narrative, focus group, and interview. In the essence of the experience, the dominant theme was *relevancy*. This theme, in general, was shared by each of the participants. *Relevancy* resonated throughout the narrative, focus group, and interviews and was mentioned 1,998 times. The most mentioned units of meaning included need, difference, want, and ideas.

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The essence of another theme was also generalized throughout the narrative, focus group, and interview. The theme of *practicality*, in general, was shared by each of the participants. Practicality was mentioned 1,579 times. The important units of meaning for this theme were use, hands-on, time, and learning.

Other themes were addressed in the narrative, focus group, and interview that contributed to the "essential invariant structure" of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). One theme that gave essence to the phenomenon through the narrative, focus group, and interview was *professionalism*. This theme as a typical theme was mentioned 777 times and was discussed by six participants. The units of meaning that were popular for this theme included years of experience, teach, and grade level

Four of the participants spoke to the *disconnect* of professional development experiences from their teaching context. The theme as a typical theme was mentioned 356 times. The units of meaning for this theme included waste and sit. Four of the participants mentioned the theme of *attributes* of teachers to be of importance. The theme as a typical theme was mentioned 189 times. The units of meaning for this theme included try and share. Three of the participants mentioned the theme of *technology* to be of importance. The theme as variant theme was important to the study because the three participants were all from schools situated in School Set 2. The theme is mentioned 129 times, and the units of meaning for this theme included technology and devices.

Relevancy

The essence of relevancy was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers with innovative, pertinent experiences that reflect an individual teacher's context. The essence of relevancy for teachers for professional development experiences was to relate

to teachers' needs in appropriate and responsive ways. The word "needs" was the most common term related to relevancy. A leader may want to understand that individual teachers differ in their needs, such as support and inspiration, which were important aspects but especially in regard to the point at which teachers are in their careers (Hemmings et al., 2013).

As noted in the review of the literature, social justice theory was defined as an understanding of accommodating individuals' diverse needs and acknowledging the context of that person's situation (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). Tasha asked leaders to understand that "more growth comes from teachers telling what they need from whom and how and when to receive it." Tang and Choi (2009) acknowledged in their study that "Fierce competition among individuals and schools, intensification of work, stress, uncertainty, and alienation on the part of teachers evidenced the de-humanizing effects of an increasingly managerialist, and market-oriented approach to school education" (p. 17). As an example of this pressure, Kyla noted her frustration: "It's that bandwagon thing, we are on one band wagon and we are going to the next one and we don't do it for any length of time." A socially just approach that would be relevant to teachers was seen as a need. Lucia claimed professional development experiences should be "Coming from the teachers on this team as opposed to our principal standing up and saying this is what this is saying and this is what you need to do. It is better to have a teacher standing up there." Kyla also found relevancy when she was heard. "I think the teachers have to have a voice. So we basically had voice, we don't want to sit here every Tuesday and listen to you tell us something, and we needed more and that was granted."

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An aspect of relevancy was that changes that were made in teaching and learning in the classroom context. As Wise (2008) indicated, professional development was crucial in maintaining and training for competence. The aggravation with some change was detailed by Carla. "Don't keep turning the ship around and going in another direction." These changes should be relevant to the teachers and not, as Kyla wondered, "What will be the next thing in a few years?" As Lucia noted, in order to promote relevancy, teachers needed to "Learn the skills you need to know, know what you need to handle, and what you need to say." Nancy understood that "It's important to stay current and be open to new ideas." Teachers will be open to change if planning and vision is part of the professional development experience.

Acknowledging the needs of teachers could create positive results in student achievement. However, leaders needed to reflect, as Tasha stated, "Not all teachers have the same needs." Nancy gave some examples of relevant professional development strategies. "Asking questions about how teachers teach different subjects or how they handle difficult situations in class and sharing resources is always helpful." Kyla spoke to beneficial uses of professional development as well. "We did high yield strategies, and you had to adopt one of the strategies and use it in your classroom and provide information back to the rest of the staff members on how you are utilizing that. That was very beneficial." Buxton and DeMuth (2012) claimed that distance learning needed to be utilized to retain relevancy in teacher education and to continue to promote student achievement. However, Lucia shared her concerns about this professional development experience. "Don't give me this technology and not show me how to use it." Teachers understood professional development relevant when the needs of teachers were addressed.

The motivation of teachers was a direct result of relevancy. Leaders needed to regard that "no one way works best" for every teacher experiencing professional development (Harvey, 2013). Gianna referred to one reason for a lack of motivation in her experience. "I think some things just changed names, you are still doing the same thing you did ten years ago it's just called something else now." However, Carla remarked, "You are so empowered when you are asked, 'What do you need?'" In his professional development role, Harvey (2013) indicated, "Covering six grade levels, trying to find examples that would appeal to kindergarten teachers as well as fifth grade teachers was never easy. The span was just too great." Leaders should try to dissipate the disconnection between professional learning and practices (Riveros & Viczko, 2012). Kyla stated:

> It has to be meaningful. Something that I feel that I can use. It's got to be something that I know that I wasn't just sitting there in a training for two hours, yeah, that sounds nice but let them try to come do it in my classroom.

According to Anne, her experience of professional development had relevancy even as a veteran teacher.

> And a lot of them, too, it's like, oh yeah, I forgot about that, I should try that again and I think that at this stage of my teaching career that is what professional development does, because there is really not a whole lot out there that hasn't been presented in some way, shape, or form before. And I think especially, as you become a more veteran teacher, they become fewer and far between. It seems every once in a while you'll get an ah ha moment. Oh, I can do that.

Relevancy notes teachers' needs and wants and helps them to make a difference in their teaching.

Practicality

The essence of practicality was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The essence of practicality was when teachers can

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use or practice real actions in their own classroom contexts formulated from their professional development experiences. The word "use" was the most common term related to practicality. According to Garmston (2003), professional development experiences are most practical when an educational theory was formulated into a real example with clarity given to teachers showing how the newly learned skill can be connected to their own classroom context.

In the review of the literature, practicality was addressed in terms of teacher learning and development. There may be a lack of alignment between practice and professional development experiences due to a lack of teacher support or motivation (Polly & Hannafin, 2011). Tasha indicated, "Any professional development that informs me, educates me, or enhances my skills in any way is useful and meaningful. So whatever does not inform me, educate me, or enhance my skills knowledge in any way is deemed not useful and meaningful." Gianna also said,

> I know decisions are made more within the principals without any input from teachers, and I think maybe that is where we need to have a little bit because this new idea sounds good to this three or four people, but it doesn't necessarily meet the needs of everybody.

Han and Boulay (2013) encouraged leaders to examine the learning and development process as leading to quality teacher performance.

The practical application of professional development experiences was imperative to promote learning in the classroom setting. As Carla acknowledged, "I need some substantive reason for this work. I don't want it to be a bag of tricks. I want something that works and here is the reason that it works." Lucia also talked about how theory was useful in her intellect, but practical uses in the classroom are important to her as well. "This is the

philosophy behind this, and this is the theory behind that. All good and great. Give me the Cliff note version of that and then give me some practical application." In support, a realistic example would be from Esterhuizen et al. (2013), who posited, "More than simple knowledge of technology is required to produce good teaching" (p. 61). Kyla spoke to how practical application of her professional development experiences were not acknowledged by asking:

> How am I going to have time to do that? I feel like great ideas but how can I implement that in my amount of time that I am doing all of these other things in my day? So you know, if I was teaching one thing in one hour, great, I have all the time in the world. I'm just like, are you kidding me?

Teacher context should be noted in practical applications of professional development experiences.

Using practical experiences in their own context, teachers saw academic achievement as a result. "Teachers believe that teachers themselves may contribute to whole school development in many ways such as through collaboration among teachers for academic purposes, improving school-parent partnership, organizing social events, and improving academic success of pupils" (Altun & Cengiz, 2012, p. 681). Lucia acknowledged that her local community had "afforded me the opportunity to go to local and national conferences." Noni stated that her learning style is much like the learning style of her own students. "The format has to be interactive, integrated, and blended." Kyla sought professional learning experiences that supported her learning style as well. "Someone showing me, giving me all of those experiences to use. I think visually and auditory." Professional development experiences should reflect on teacher learning styles in order to provide practical contextual promotion of student learning (Van Duzor, 2012).

Teachers are inspired by the practical approach to professional development. Steinke (2012) hoped that leaders would support the fact that teachers want to become more proficient in accessing information as they see a need. Noni said that her professional development needs are about "taking it into the classroom and it's hands-on and you can get it going right away. Not some pie in the sky." Kyla was looking for "Great tips. Great ideas." Tasha's preference was "local professional development or grade level appropriate development." Gianna was motivated when she received, "Tons of ideas and even now, I can remember, oh, I can do this, with what I have right now in my classroom today to help this kid that needs to be doing something else." Engagement with each other was also a motivating factor in cultivating practical applications of professional development experiences (Gunzenhauser, 2013). Anne stated, "Sometimes it's like, you know, I feel like I need something on that. It's just a casual conversation." According to Lucia, "A lot of our teachers are teaching in isolation and it's great to bounce ideas off of each other and get together and connect." The essence of practicality provided teachers with the motivation to enhance teaching and learning in their own contexts.

Synthesis of the Analysis

The synthesis of the analysis included within-case and cross-case analysis. The synthesis also examined the essence of professional development as noted thematically. The three data sources that comprised the case study were included in the synthesis in order to achieve triangulation to check and confirm meaning. In addition, examination of the research questions of the study with the themes as well as commentary about those themes was included. This process of synthesis was the end product of exploring meaning in Moustakas' (1994) approach to phenomenological research.

The "essential invariant structure" of the themes as related to the research questions is presented in Table 8 (Creswell, 2007, p. 62). This structure validates the analysis that the dominant theme for the meaning of professional development for teachers was *relevancy*.

Table 8

Thematic Connections to Research Questions

Research Question	Attributes	Disconnect	Practicality	Professionalism	Relevancy	Technology
Overall	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sub-A		X	X		X	
Sub-B	X	X	X	X	X	
Sub-C			X	X	X	
Sub-D			X		X	

This theme was revealed in each analysis of the research question. Another major theme that was revealed in the textural and structural description was *practicality,* and this theme was also validated in each analysis of the research question through this structure. Other themes were addressed in the narrative, focus group, and interview that contribute to the structure of analysis. One theme that gave essence to the phenomenon through the analysis of research questions was *professionalism*. This theme was addressed in three of the five research question analyses. *Disconnect* of professional development experiences from their teaching context was also a theme referred to in three research question analyses. Two of the research question discussions mentioned the theme of *attributes* of teachers to be of importance and mentioned the theme of *technology* to be important.

The primary overarching research question of the research study asked: *How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences?* The sub-questions used for the systematic research approach included: (a) What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as meaningful and useful?, (b) What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?, (c) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?, and (d) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers?

The intention of the questions was to find deep meanings about professional development as experienced by eight individuals in the case study (Creswell, 2007). Table 8 details the thematic connections to the research questions. An analysis of the sub-questions led into the meaning of the overarching research question.

Sub-Research Question A

The first sub-question identified as Sub-Research Question A or Sub-A as noted in Table 8 asked: *What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful?* This question included three themes of meaning in the study. The dominant themes of *relevancy* and *practicality* were addressed first. Then the sub-themes of *disconnect* were analyzed for meaning.

Relevancy. The essence of *relevancy* was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers with innovative, pertinent experiences that note an individual teacher's context. The essence of *relevancy* for teachers of professional development experiences was related to teachers' needs in appropriate and responsive ways.

According to Carla, *relevancy* was directly related to the needs of a teacher. "I think they have to be *relevant* to what your needs are." She defined *relevancy*. "I think they have to be accessible and promote dialogue among the staff." Carla had specific expectations of professional development experiences. Her most *relevant* experiences came in the form of webinars that she attended repeatedly to promote her own growth. Whether her professional development experiences were local, diocesan or global, Carla found meaning when they were *relevant* to her current teaching context.

Practicality. The essence of *practicality* was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The essence of *practicality* was found when teachers can use or practice real actions in their own classroom contexts formulated from their professional development experiences.

Anne from School Set 1 enjoyed the professional development experiences in which she could choose what sessions to attend. She stated, "There's usually something there I really want. You know, that seems really interesting." Gianna saw value in bringing *practical* applications back into her classroom setting.

> I think they give you ideas to come back to the classroom and implement. I mean I use what I have been taught. If I use it right away, then it sticks with me. Now I have been to professional development and haven't done anything with it and kind of forget about it until I see it again years later.

The unit of meaning "remembering" was used in the theme of *practicality* often by teachers because professional development sometimes served as a reminder of *practices* that teachers have previously been taught but may have needed a refresher to remind them of the *practical* use of that application in the classroom. Nancy from School Set 1 also spoke to the value of bringing back applications as a direct help to her students.

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I guess it's when I feel like it's something I can use with the kids. It's not the theory that is back here that is going to drive what I do with the kids, it's the actual thing. The actual activity. You know we are going to make a book out of paper bags or whatever it is. I am kind of stuck on the let's get down and dirty in this here.

In School Set 2, the meaning of *practicality* for Kyla was simplicity of application.

I think it has to be meaningful but it has to be practical and useful. I think it has to be simple. I think it has to be boom, boom, boom. We gotta go, go, go, and you can do this. Not well, you have to do this first, and after you are done, then you do this, then this. We don't have time for that. We don't have time as individuals in our classroom with multi students to do that.

Lucia in School Set 2 also spoke to the local school setting as important for *practicality*.

I think they are useful and meaningful when they are something that looks at the situation we are in now. Is it *practical*? Are we talking new? Are we talking something we are going to know as the kids move on, as society changes or evolves or as our community is changing and evolving.

Disconnect. *Disconnect* from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The essence of *disconnect* in professional development experiences was important for decision makers and for teachers.

In order for professional development experiences to be useful to Tasha, she requested:

I want to go out feeling like I haven't wasted my time. I think that is the biggest thing. So many times, I have walked away and said that was a complete waste of my time. I could have stayed here, cleaned my room, organized papers and at least I would have felt like I had accomplished something. Or I could have met with my teaching partner and we could have said hey, why don't we think of new ideas for this or new ideas for that.

Noni realized that leaders do try to make connections in experiences but perceived that planning or vision may be lacking in leadership.

Well, I think everybody is trying. But again, it's like we are going to do this professional development day because we put it on the calendar. So I think the

leaders need to be in touch with us. You know, they are in central office and we are out here. We talk about *disconnect*. We all need to be getting together here. Let teachers have some input.

Sub-Research Question B

An analysis of the sub-questions led into the meaning of the overarching research question. The second sub-question indentified as Sub-Research Question B or Sub-B as noted in Table 8 asked: *What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?* This question included five themes of meaning in the study. The dominant themes of *relevancy* and *practicality* are addressed first. Then the sub-themes were analyzed for meaning.

Relevancy. The essence of *relevancy* was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers with innovative, pertinent experiences that note an individual teachers' context. The essence of *relevancy* for teachers in examining professional development experiences was to relate to teacher's needs in appropriate and responsive ways.

For a professional development experience to be *relevant* for Anne, she needed to be able to transfer the knowledge into the classroom setting.

> I guess you don't really think about it kind of sneaks up on you, you don't really think about doing cooperative learning or the way you put kids in groups. I think you just kind of weave them into what you do and you don't really think about why or where they came from.

Kyla in School Set 2 spoke to leaders listening to the needs of teachers as *relevant* to her own professional development experiences.

> Administration has to listen to your needs and to what your teachers are asking you for. So whatever the administrator is saying and the teachers keep coming and saying I need this. I need this training. I need this. Then go out and find and maybe bring it in.

Practicality. The essence of *practicality* was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The essence of *practicality* was when teachers can utilize or practice real actions in their own classroom contexts formulated from their professional development experiences.

Gianni stated that practical professional development was when you "Come back and use it right away." Nancy also recommended that professional development has some practical application. "I think they should be practical and I think that they should maybe not every time but periodically say ask the teachers what do you guys need." Teachers know what was needed in their own context.

Practical application applied to the Catholic school system according to Teacher F.

You know a lot of the stuff we have been doing recently is more applied to what is going on now. Like the Common Core we are rolling into that and how does that apply to us in Catholic schools. Where can we get the information on what it is, how to use it, how does it change, how is it the same?

She also discussed as a veteran teacher how that *practical* application may trend in cycles.

For those of us who have been around for awhile, how is it just really renamed and they don't really realize it. The older teachers think oh this is another new thing oh. But if we break it down a lot of it is what we are already doing. You are really already doing this. You know some of you have to change things here. You know some of our ones who are the most worried about it are the ones who that's how they teach already.

Attributes. The essence of *attributes* of teachers was defined as the qualities of a professional teacher especially relating to experiences of professional development. The essence of *attributes* for teachers in professional development experiences found meaning in the qualities that teachers brought to their experiences and brought back from their experiences.

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Lucia spoke to teachers as being "Lifelong learners." As a technology integration specialist, she had to make sure that they are available to both seek and find information for their classroom contexts. She also transferred this *attribute* to her own students.

> I hope that I am teaching them how to find the information. How to be lifelong learners. How to seek out anything they need to know whether it is from how to solve a math problem to where to find an important document. How to change a tire and those things and we laugh to the kids and say you do not have to know. You can find anything you want on the internet. Good, bad or other but all that practical stuff. Teaching them how to find it so they can be lifelong learners and take care of themselves.

Disconnect. *Disconnect* from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The essence of *disconnect* in professional development experiences was a realization for decision makers and for teachers.

Seeking input from teachers prevented *disconnect*. Noni related her diocesan experience.

> Just talk to me. Nobody even knows me. They don't know who I am. They don't know me from the man in the moon. So maybe again, we have a superintendent, associate superintendent who are over the schools. Maybe they should come and talk to us. I can't tell you when I have spoken to our superintendent. They need to be the ones reaching out as well.

Professionalism. *Professionalism* was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. The essence of *professionalism* was depicted as competent use of skills of the teaching profession.

The years of experience of the participant teachers helped them to describe their own experience of *professionalism*. Carla acknowledged that her professional development

experiences were helpful, "If they make them realistic, if they meet the needs of the kids, and are cognizant of the level of expertise of the teachers."

In School Set 2, Tasha would like there to be response for the individuality of teachers.

> I understand that if your whole school is closed and you want everybody to go to a professional development day, but I am not sure if that is always appropriate. I know some of the teachers go to individual things for them. Our PE teacher goes to a great conference where she comes away refreshed, new ideas. So let that be hers, and she has already gone to professional development. Why does she have to go to something that maybe she's wasting her time or maybe she could go prepare some of the information that she heard or get the equipment that she needs.

Noni spoke to the issues of funding or incentives for professional development experiences.

> Well, if we could provide some sort of funding for teachers to go. You know to these different outstanding conferences and workshops that would be very helpful. You know this sounds crazy, but people will do a lot of these things on their own time if somebody offered you the incentive to pay you. Now, I don't know where they would get the money and I understand all of that, but I do know that if you want to treat people professionally, then there are certain things that you do. You don't require things above and beyond the call of duty and never say thank you, pat on the back, oh, look what so and so did, or oh, by the way, here is your twenty five dollars a day or whatever. Whatever it is, it just has to be a reaching out at some point because sometimes I feel like we are over here on this little island and central office there and you principals are kind of caught there in the middle of the whole thing. So I just think, you know, it needs to be a little effort on somebody's part.

Sub-Research Question C

An analysis of the sub-questions led into the meaning of the overarching research question. The third sub-question indentified as Sub-Research Question C, or Sub-C as noted in Table 8, asked: *How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?* This question included four themes of meaning in the study. The dominant themes of *relevancy* and *practicality* were addressed first. Then the sub-themes were analyzed for meaning.

Relevancy. The essence of *relevancy* was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers with innovative, pertinent experiences that note an individual teacher's context. The essence of *relevancy* for teachers for professional development experiences was to relate to teachers' needs in appropriate and responsive ways.

Carla, Anne, and Nancy all agreed that leaders should ask and listen to teachers about what they need from their professional development experiences. Carla remarked, "I think they ought to ask teachers." For Carla, relevancy was also about remembering the context of the teachers. "Reframe it in terms of what can we do. Here and now. That reflects the needs of our kids. I don't want to hear about splitting the atom when our kids don't know how to add two and two." Carla also thought that leaders have to be able to make hard decisions about the vision of the professional development experiences of teachers.

> I think the leaders need thick skins, because people may say that is a bunch of hooey. Sometimes a leader has to say we are doing this. You may not like it and you may prefer your ark to be floating someplace else but we are all going to here. Get a grip.

Lastly, Carla summarized:

> So I think the leader has to listen to the people, but ultimately they have to look at the needs of the kids. Not necessarily what any one teacher's favorite theme is. Look at the needs of the kids and look at the expertise and build a framework that is going to be three years in length with five year goals.

Anne also thought that leaders should look at evaluations. Nancy agreed and stated, "And maybe just checking periodically, what do you need?" Anne also would like leaders be aware of time.

> I think recognizing that teacher's time is valuable. We don't need an hour for lunch. We don't know what to do with an hour for lunch. So let us go a half hour earlier or don't give us lunch at all and let us go. I think sometimes that is just as an important part of professional development.

The interaction between teachers was also a factor for relevancy in School Set 1. Anne noted:

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The most valuable stuff is that informal stuff you get. I like those sharing sessions that they are doing now because there is a lot of valuable stuff and a lot of that stuff happens before the session actually starts, you know, just that sitting down and just getting to talk and visiting with the people that you are sitting with, and going, oh yeah, I've got this one kid that does this and because they are grade level you know and especially when like I am now, it didn't used to be, but when there isn't another second grade, you know it has become really important to have those teachers to network with.

Nancy agreed, "I think that goes back to what I said before by just asking. Would you rather do this on a small scale or do you think having everybody there is better."

In School Set 2, Tasha also would like leaders to "Ask teachers what they need. You just need to ask them." She stated:

What are your needs? What are your wants? Just like we do with the kids. Is this a need or a want? And I think we have to be heard and we have to do it. We can't keep putting it on the back burner. You know whether we have to break up into individual schools or whatever it takes and say you guys are all going to meet here and this is what you guys want. This is what you are going to do if we can't get it locally.

Practicality. The essence of *practicality* was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The essence of *practicality* was when teachers can utilize or practice real actions in their own classroom contexts formulated from their professional development experiences.

According to Noni, *practical* experience of professional development should be formulated with student and teacher growth.

Needs to be student centered. Student focused. It has to be easily done or as easy as it possibly can be. For myself, for my fellow colleagues. Whatever we do we are happy to do it but don't make me walk a tightrope to do this and no net underneath.

Professionalism. *Professionalism* was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. The

essence of *professionalism* was depicted as competent use of skills of the teaching profession.

Gianna indicated that she perceived it as the job of leaders to formulate or find professional development experiences that were valuable.

> I think principals should probably talk about professional development more. I think it has always come back on the teachers. I think that maybe principals should talk about it a little more but I don't know if there is funding, so I don't know how that works.

In School Set 2, Kyla spoke to treating teachers as *professionals* in terms of funding. "By giving credits or some type of incentive, we are in this field and we don't make a lot of money but just even those little perks help." Lucia would like to see leaders require more of teachers.

> I think there should be more; really I think it should be required. I mean I think there should be more strong encouragement to do that. And I have seen that happening. You know, especially here in our building. I really think you need to go to this. And not just because you know it's, we started a professional development committee years ago, and it's kind of come and gone and come and gone, and then a lot of it's been on our tech coordinator, and I will go to stuff and share it with the teachers. Well, they get tired of hearing from us and they get tired of hearing from administration, too. Oh, the administration is telling us. You know you need new faces. You need teachers coming back and sharing. I think it is more practical coming from a classroom teacher. Sharing what they have learned and how they are going to use it and how practical it is in a classroom. But I think that, you know, that I really think there needs to be more encouragement, even if it is every other year.

Technology. The theme of *technology* in the classroom context was defined as access to technological resources or training in the classroom setting. The essence of *technology* as a theme was the utilization of the technology for learning.

The use of technology in the classroom helped to keep teachers aware of upcoming trends. As Noni stated, "Keep it current." She expressed her enthusiasm for the use of technology in her local context. "I love this technology and let's keep moving with that."

Sub-Research Question D

An analysis of the sub-questions led into the meaning of the overarching research question. The fourth sub-question identified as Sub-Research Question D, or Sub-D, as noted in Table 8, asked: *How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers?* This question included two themes of meaning in the study. The dominant themes of *relevancy* and *practicality* were addressed.

Relevancy. The essence of *relevancy* was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers with innovative, pertinent experiences that reflected an individual teacher's context. The essence of *relevancy* for teachers for professional development experiences was to relate to teachers' needs in appropriate and responsive ways.

In School Set 1, Carla thought relevancy could be promoted by listening.

> I think they can reframe it by listening to every teacher. St. Benedict said; "Listen to your youngest member." I think by listening to everybody, at least giving them a voice, they may or may not have something great to say. But listening to everybody that empowers everybody.

Anne had the same opinion. "Maybe by giving us a little bit of input. Letting the teachers have a voice, I would say. I feel like locally we do but." Nancy also spoke to relevancy in light of leadership listening.

> Giving a voice. Just ask. Just ask and listen. If you ask but then everybody says we want this and they go whatever, then there is no point. Ask and listen to what they are saying. If they say we need help with literacy, they can get people to come and talk to them about literacy and don't decide that we need to you know do technology or whatever.

In support of this notion, Carla was of the same mind.

> And when you choose certain topics or certain directions to go, clearly kind of explain why. Why? The others are good, but we are going to do this first, and that can lead to this goal, and that can lead us to this, and in two years or in five months, we are going to look back and see if it was the right choice for us.

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The teachers in School Set 2 also would like decision makers to ask questions and to listen. Kyla stated,

> Again, listening. Follow through. Meeting those needs. Asking those questions. Getting surveys. Finding out what your teachers want. Being there and honestly listening. Not just hearing but listening and hearing and taking that into consideration, and finding a way to help your teachers.

Noni reiterated the importance of voice.

> You need to have a voice. If you have no voice, you have no power. And you have to let the teachers be involved somehow, someway. Again it has to be convenient. You know I can't stay two hours after school. It's just difficult to do that. You know, give us some time to maybe have a voice.

Having a vision of accountability is also of importance. Lucia asked:

> What would you like to see at the beginning of the year? Where would you like to see professional development going? You have professional development plans, but really taking those and say, okay you said you want to go to this workshop. Okay, do an accountability check for those throughout the year instead of just leaving it in the teacher's hands. To say, this is what they said, and at the end of the year you said you were going to do this. I think that would help a lot of teachers if that was revisited during the course of the year, and there were steps to help the teacher be successful. Not just leaving it in the teacher's hands even though we are professionals.

Practicality. The essence of *practicality* was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The essence of *practicality* was when teachers can use or practice real actions in their own classroom contexts formulated from their professional development experiences.

Practicality for Anne in School Set 1 meant not doing professional development for the sake of compensating for others. She made these statements in reference to the abuse crisis in the Catholic Church.

> I think that what all the things in the abuse area is that we are being forced to do a lot of things that are not really meeting the needs of our kids based on some decisions by somebody not really related to the situation. I mean, you know, we are the ones picking up the pieces in the end and being held more accountable than the higher ups.

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I mean, are those things important to teach? I think absolutely, but I think we are trying to compensate. I think that is where as teachers we are the ones that they are saying, here, you have to do this now. And that as far as social justice, it isn't just at all. I am not saying there is not value to those things, but I am saying it is not necessarily the best use of development time. I mean, part of that I know comes from having been in the profession as long as I have. I would imagine as a newer teacher that those things may have a little bit more importance, especially to a younger teacher, but I feel like I have been beat over the head with knowing some of those things.

Tasha agreed that the *practicality* of professional development experiences may not pertain to her own classroom context.

I guess just make sure that whatever the topic is or who is doing it or whatever the day is going to be about, that it is on point. On point that it is what they expect, if there are recommendations, that it is a speaker, that it's worthwhile. That maybe you ask what about this? I don't think we have ever been asked before they come. What do you think about doing this, or what do you think about doing that. I don't think I have ever been asked on the diocesan level. I think it's always been mandated. What you are doing, when you are doing it, who's doing it to you, or where you are going to meet, how long it's going to be. So there is not any thought involved for us.

Overarching Question

An analysis of the sub-questions led to the meaning of the overarching research question. The research question identified as Overarching Research Question, or ORQ, as noted in Table 8, asked: *How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences?* This question included all six themes of meaning in the study. The dominant themes of *relevancy* and *practicality* were addressed first. Then the sub-themes were analyzed for meaning.

Relevancy. The essence of *relevancy* was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers with innovative, pertinent experiences that understand an individual teacher's context. The essence of *relevancy* for teachers for professional development experiences was to relate to teachers' needs in appropriate and responsive ways.

Carla in School Set 1 revealed her need for *relevancy* in her context.

> They are more focused, but I am also more focused. I know what I want. I decided that these kids are being educated for a world I won't even know. I think we have to keep saying, these kids are going to live in a world very different and yet in many ways the very same. We want the virtues, we want them to focus. We want their life skills. We want their character skills.

She exhibited a passion for learning so that her own students can learn as well. "In many ways, it has to be your mindset. I would send myself sailing out the window before I would ever intentionally get stale." Carla's preference for collaboration came from her past experiences of mentoring. "She went to every school twice a year and sat in your classroom for hours and made notes." Nancy in School Set 1 also detailed her passion when a professional development experience was relevant. "There has been some really good stuff. There has been stuff that I can't wait to get back in the classroom and try it out."

The teachers in School Set 2 also saw *relevancy* in their professional development experiences. Lucia referred to the opportunity she has been given. "In times of budget cuts and tight funds, I think we have been afforded to keep that position because it, we are helping the other teachers, we are helping the students, we are keeping things going." Tasha noted that some experiences were more *relevant* than others. "Fifty-fifty, I would say. Fifty percent have been really something that I would recommend and fifty percent probably not so much." Lastly, in School Set 2, Noni said that professional development "just has to be *relevant*." She declared:

> You have to go where the kids are. You have to go there whether you want to or not. And so for me as an old dog I am trying to learn the new tricks. And with the kids, I try to learn from them because they know it—the technology—and I don't know so much. So I have to let go of hello, I am the teacher here, and go hello, does anybody know how to—come over here and fix this volume on this thing or those sorts of things, you know. I think I have to learn from them and I have to be *relevant*.

Practicality. The essence of *practicality* was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The essence of *practicality* was when teachers can use or practice real actions in their own classroom contexts formulated from their professional development experiences.

The *practicality* for Lucia in School Set 2 again came from the opportunities of professional development experiences on the local, diocesan, and global levels. Lucia explained:

> My professional development experiences have been good because I initiated a lot of it and then have been supported in it. I have sought out what I want and took initiative and then have been supported and allowed to do that. And on top of that, there have been expectations of me to do that. Once I do that, then share it. If we are going to allow you this time, then please share it with us, with your teachers, share it with administration.

The *practical* application for Lucia helped her to accomplish her secondary task as technology integration specialist at her local school setting.

Attributes. The essence of *attributes* of teachers was defined as the qualities of a professional teacher especially relating to experiences of professional development. The essence of *attributes* for teachers for professional development experiences found meaning in the qualities that teachers brought to their experiences and brought back from their experiences.

Lucia described the *attributes* of teachers as being important because of a lack of time or energy or because of commitments other than their own professional growth. "We find teachers that are not able to because of small children, because of their classroom or whatever, that don't seek out workshops outside of school." Lucia had created with her peers opportunities for those teachers to participate in professional development outside of the

normal framework set up by local, diocesan or global leaders. "They are the ones saying, can you meet with us. We want to do this. Can you meet with us during this time? They are ones that are sitting in Tech Tuesday every time." The *attribute* of finding innovative ways to achieve professional goals brought meaning to the professional development experience.

Disconnect. *Disconnect* from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The essence of *disconnect* in professional development experiences was a reality for decision makers and for teachers.

Anne felt *disconnected* when the teacher of a professional development experience was not connected to a classroom setting. "Most of those tend to be, most of those are now taught by teachers who have not been out of the classroom for very long so they are still in touch with what is going on in the classroom." She posited that global experiences are less *disconnected* because "You pay so much to go to those that the quality is so much better." Gianna also spoke to funding issues in another aspect of *disconnect*. She thought that leaders sometimes call professional development a learning experience when truly it is a sales pitch disguised as development. However, the *disconnect* was not purposeful.

> I think there is stuff on paper that looks like professional development. I don't think that, I don't think that Mrs. Turner was doing the training, she was like, oh, I will hold them captive and make them sit through this and not ever do this program. I think she probably thought that she would be able to get this and have training in it and things didn't really work out.

Nancy talked about learning and growing and the *disconnect* when that did not happen.

> And then there's been the ones when I got home and my family says, how was your meeting, and I went…don't ask. It was a waste of my time. Again, not necessarily that it was not good information, it was I really need me to sit there through that. I am not sure that that was really developing me.

Professionalism. *Professionalism* was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. The essence of *professionalism* was depicted as competent use of skills of the teaching profession.

Effective professional development for Anne had to do with being treated as a *professional*. "Training over the telephone was not the most effect *professional* development." Anne did find teachers teaching to be the most *professional* format because of the knowledge and understanding of context.

> We have had teachers in their classes got up and just basically said, here is how this works, and everybody was like, oh, okay, I will be glad to help you with it if that is something that you want to do, kind of things.

Technology. The theme of *technology* in the classroom context was defined as access to technological resources or training in the classroom setting. The essence of *technology* as a theme was the utilization of the technology for learning.

In the field notes, I took a very informal inventory of this theme as I knew it was emerging from the narrative and focus group conversations. While teachers in School Set 2 had both accessibility and training in technology, teachers in School Set 1 did not mention technology as being an important aspect of their own teaching or their professional development. Carla did mention using webinars as her own preference for learning. Otherwise, technology as a teaching tool and a professional development option was not a central theme to School Set 1 schools or teachers. The ability to access information, integrate this information, and create new information for teachers was varied throughout the eight schools (Akengin, 2008). In my observation, one school in School Set 2 had a computer lab, a media center, a rolling cart with net books, and Promethean boards in each room, while

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another school in School Set 1 had five computers, each with a different processing system installed. Teachers in School Set 1 spoke about purchasing their own devices, while teachers in School Set 2 spoke of fundraising and budgeting for their technology. In accessing teacher information, I noticed that two schools in Set 1 had no websites for their school setting. In these same schools, there was no voicemail access; rather the cell phone of the local principal was used or a paper message was taken. The local school setting seemed to drive the influence of this theme.

The School Set 2 teachers detailed the growth over the years in terms of professional development experiences as related to *technology*. Kyla stated:

> Computer skills are phenomenal. I mean I have an iPad in my classroom. I have Active Votes in my classroom. I have an interactive board in my classroom that I am using. I have a lot of different software programs that I have been utilizing.

Her development does not just include training about the devices. "I have been more educated in several different areas. I can actually read the data that I have collected, so I feel like I have come a long way from where I was years ago."

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of professional development experiences as perceived by teachers. The study noted teacher perceptions of how and why professional development decisions are determined so that teacher growth and actions can be enhanced by their professional development experiences. The data analysis included a phenomenological study of eight participants. The unit of analysis was the professional development experiences of teachers. The structural analysis of phenomenology included the suggested steps of Moustakas' (1994) approach: building data through narrative, focus groups, and interviews, creating horizontalization or coding analysis,

and formulating clusters of meaning or themes. Textural and structural descriptions were formulated from those themes, and, through a composite description, the essence of the phenomenon was structured (Creswell, 2007). An examination of those themes under the overarching research question and sub-questions presented the meaning about professional development as perceived by teachers.

Chapter 5 will provide conclusions, recommendations, and implications of the data analysis of the study of teacher perceptions of professional development and professional development decisions. Chapter 5 will also recommend continuing research related to teacher perceptions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Administrators, because of different influences in making decisions about professional development, may make choices to provide professional development opportunities that may or may not have usefulness or meaning for teachers (Guskey & Huberman, 1995). There could be a connection between student academic achievement and the practice of teachers (Wilson, 2012). Professional development may be a way to promote a leader's priority to improve instruction, support teachers, and create growth in academic achievement for every student (Leithwood et al., 2004). The research of Stodolsky et al. (2006) found that an elementary teacher's professional development had an influence on professional growth. Additionally, instructional leaders should promote professional growth because research revealed that the organization can grow if individuals are growing (Dunaway, Kim & Szad, 2010). Unfortunately, the professional development of teachers may be more bureaucratic than relational and may lead professionals to suffer from alienation (Hoy, 1983).

The review of the literature suggested that an administrator acting as an expert can diminish the power and voices of teachers as agents of change (Crafton & Keiser, 2011). Countering this argument, Reed (2010) recommended that leaders listen to an individual, assess skills, and formulate meaningful professional development from that assessment. Hutchins and Friedrichsen (2012) claimed that professionals who are internally motivated have positive attitudes of professional development practices. Innovative practices that provide teachers with skills are important for the diversity of learners that make up a teaching

staff (Downey & Cobbs, 2007). Decisions made without input may or may not give teachers the tools needs to help student achievement grow (Mustani & Pence, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of professional development experiences as perceived by teachers. Research questions were gleaned from the literature review to guide the study: The primary overarching research question of the research study asked: How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences? The sub-questions used for the systematic research approach included: (a) What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as meaningful and useful?, (b) What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?, (c) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?, and (d) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers?

The study was guided by the conceptual framework of social justice theory. The study identified perspectives of issues of social justice, such as leadership practices and the voice of teachers. According to Huerta (2009), "institutional constraints may limit models that hold potential for promoting voice for teachers to influence change" (p. 244). The needs of teachers should be part of the decision making process for administrators. Professional development of teachers should note lifelong learning as an inspiration in creating an atmosphere of growth (Basharat et al., 2011). As leaders, social justice may mean putting an emphasis on nurturing and sustaining a culture of collaboration, relationships, and expectations (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2008). Dunlap and Golden (1990) stated, "Professional knowledge, ideally, is applied and exercised through

others, not as a dominant act of coercion or authority, but as a realized act of shared values that involves both specialized knowledge and personal influence" (p. 22).

The conceptual framework, guided by the theory of social justice, spoke to organizational behavior and "considered the contemporary challenges of teaching in a democratic society" (Kesson & Henderson, 2010, p. 216). In terms of leadership practices in the framework, Varrati et al. (2009) noted that leaders should stand with their local communities and define practices that reflect the real needs of students. Huerta (2009) claimed, "Even incremental changes that could influence institutional shifts and accommodate innovations prove to be challenging" (p. 247). In order to reframe professional development to acknowledge voice, to create relationships, and to sustain achievement, leaders should listen and understand teachers, which results in renewing the professionalism of educators (Wood, 2000). As indicated by Creswell (2007), reviewing the literature with the social justice theory as the theoretical foundation established support for the meaning of the experience of teachers in professional development.

This study followed the phenomenological tradition. The unit of analysis was professional development experiences of teachers. The professional development experiences of teachers was defined in this study as local or contextual experiences, regional experiences, diocesan experiences, and other events of learning such as graduate level coursework, workshops, or conferences. The study focused on the various experiences of professional development of individual elementary teachers of general education in schools throughout a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The participants were eight teachers from elementary settings in a Catholic Midwestern diocese. The schools chosen for the study had similarities in socio-

economic status, academic achievement, and demographic characteristics and were differentiated into School Set 1 and School Set 2.

Each case was examined to find the meaning and perceptions of professional development experiences of each teacher. The phenomenological tradition helped to find fundamental essences in the experience of each case. Both textural and structural descriptions of these experiences helped to convey the essence of the experiences (Creswell, 2007). The data sources utilized in the study included narratives, focus group interviews, and individual interviews. Criterion sampling ensured that the teachers had common experiences of professional development. Both the data sources and criterion sampling provided a thick, rich description of information of professional development experiences (Creswell, 2007).

The data collection procedures included a narrative of text, a focus group, and case study interviews with coding for frequency indicators of themes. Categorical aggregation occurred to establish patterns and generalizations (Creswell, 2007). The data analysis plan included collecting data on the lowest level possible, which in this case, was a narrative connected to the unit of analysis of professional development and building cases of individual participants. The participants were eight teachers who were questioned through a narrative, focus group, or interview format about experiences of professional development. After gathering this data, the researcher created a case record containing textural and structural descriptions. After condensing the raw data, the researcher wrote a final case study description. The separate cases were analyzed for patterns or themes (Creswell, 2007). Within-case and cross-case analysis occurred to find the essence of the meaning of professional development. Within-case and cross-case analyses were instrumental in finding meaning about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

The data analysis plan reflected a phenomenological tradition because the focus group and interview and included open-ended questions that asked about the participants' experiences in terms of professional development and about what contexts or structures have influenced or affected the participants' experiences of professional development (Maxwell, 2005). The phenomenological analysis included within-case and cross-case analysis to find assertions about the interpretation of the meaning of the issue or the essence of the issue (Creswell, 2007). After collection of the data, coding was utilized to decipher patterns and themes. Those themes and patterns were broken into data to rearrange them into categories of meaning. The research included a textural and structural description of the experience of professional development with a final composite description that presents the essence of the phenomenon as the definitive case study. The meaning of professional development was gained from this final description (Creswell, 2007).

Interpretation of the Findings

The primary overarching research question guiding this study asked: *How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences?* Using the data set, the themes were revealed. The dominant themes were relevancy for teachers and practicality in context with the subthemes of professionalism, disconnect, technology, and attributes of teachers. Participants included both positive and negative perceptions of how their voices were heard in decision making and how meaningful professional experiences were to them in their own context in their classroom setting. The desire for teachers to be heard and to help administrators create pertinent professional development opportunities was a constant in each case study. The study revealed a connection between the findings formulated in the cases and the review of the literature in the conceptual framework.

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Relevancy

The essence of *relevancy* was defined as responding to the needs and wants of teachers with innovative, pertinent experiences that examine an individual teacher's context. The essence of *relevancy* for teachers and leaders for professional development experiences was to relate to teachers' needs in appropriate and responsive ways.

Relevancy for teachers, especially in regard to professional development, had several elements that pertained to both leaders and teachers. Wood (2009) claimed that professional development approaches should inspire teachers and create experiences that can be carried back to the classroom setting. Leaders, in considering decisions should look to teachers' contexts and the demands on teachers (Penuel et al., 2007). The dominant theme of relevancy resonated with each teacher in all cases.

Guskey (2009) made the point in his research that truly effective professional development is not coerced but rather should be formulated according to the contextual characteristics of a district, school, or classroom. For this reason, teachers need to be supplied with conceptual tools that can connect their own experience to historical, cultural, and economic systems of power and privilege. When administrators remember the need of students combined with providing strategies for effective teaching and learning, then an organization can "reconcile its technical activities with its organizational goals" (Huerta, 2009, p. 252). In this regard, Karpinski (2006) claimed that leaders of social justice "should implement policies that support the learning of all children" (p. 7). These policies should reflect relevance to the teaching context as well as connect teachers to structures of their school or district setting.

Institutionalized hegemony, defined as an institution using power to manipulate decisions, can create a lack of relevancy for teachers and can cause situations in which "the formal scales of social justice are informally tipped in favor of the haves, leaving the have-nots at a distinct disadvantage" (Brooks, 2008, p. 71). An awareness of the elasticity of power and a mindfulness of strategies to connect decision making to refute hegemony are socially just factors for leaders (Foucault, 1977). An organization may maintain policies that exclude in-house experts for workshops conducted by outsiders who promote little or no change and who do not regard relevance to context as an important factor in helping teachers (Laguardia & Pearl, 2009; Meister, 2010). Empowering teachers as part of an educational alliance, rather than reducing learning to trends or commercial materials, could promote effective teaching (McGhee & Lew, 2007). In Sergiovanni's classic work (2007), the author indicated that transformative socially just leadership is a moral leadership.

Traditional approaches to professional development can be criticized for causes such as fragmentation, lack of productivity, inefficiency, and lack of follow up (Lucilio, 2009). For instance, the fragmented approach to professional development was identified by a short duration of time in training and a lack of connection to the contexts of a teacher's world (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). Additionally, disparity can be created through state and federal mandates, funding regulations, and dissonance between educational leadership programs and organizational demands (Hytten & Bettez, 2011; McHatton et al., 2010). Apple (1988) described this structure as "deskilling" teachers. Yilmaz (2008) reported that teachers can see the relevance in professional development experiences when they understand the theories related to the teaching and learning experiences. More current research supported the

theme of relevancy by noting that leaders need to help teachers gain relevant information (Higgins & Harreveld, 2013).

Practicality

The essence of *practicality* was defined as the use of professional development experiences and learning in the classroom. The essence of *practicality* was when teachers could use or practice real actions in their own classroom contexts formulated from their professional development experiences.

The theme of practicality was also featured by teachers in each case for leaders. The perception of teachers of professional development included noting whether the professional development encounters led to practical application in their own classroom context. Kennedy and Shiel (2010) suggested that the specific or practical needs of a school setting should be examined for professional development experiences. Practicality was addressed by each of the eight participants as necessary and important to student success.

Specifically, administrators utilized many practical avenues of professional development to address social justice for teachers, which in turn will affect students. Penuel et al. (2007) reported that teachers perceived significant changes to their practice when the professional development lasted over several months. School districts could focus on sustainability including an understanding of economic inequities when focusing on professional development (Keith, 2011). Coherence and alignment of professional development can help teachers understand curricular goals related to content standards (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). As a strategy to support alignment, collaboration seemed of importance to teachers who embraced reflection and who enjoyed the social nature of professional learning (Geijsel et al., 2009). Communities of practice embraced engagement

and collaboration and allowed research to be utilized as consumption of knowledge (Lewis et al., 2011). Teachers reported that there was more ownership in professional development when choices were given, materials seemed related to their classroom context, or they could dialogue with peers about the initiative (Kayler, 2009).

According to current research, practicality was also a motivating factor for teachers because teachers applied methods in their classroom context (Burke, 2013). According to Altun and Cengiz (2012), teachers expected that professional development, whether offered at the school location or an outside offering, should be "practical and applicable rather than theoretical" (p. 674). In Saunders' (2012) study, teachers described using differentiated innovations in their classroom practice. The essence of practicality was supported through a review of the literature regarding professional development.

Attributes of Teachers

The attributes of teachers was a sub-theme that examined the characteristics of professional teachers as important to the success of professional development experiences. The essence of *attributes* of teachers was defined as the qualities of a professional teacher especially relating to experiences of professional development. The essence of *attributes* for teachers about professional development experiences was to find meaning in the qualities that teachers bring to their experiences and bring back from their experiences.

According to Stader (2013), the challenge for a leader was to find a balance between institutional policies and relationships with people without disregarding achievement and by acknowledging acceptance and belonging in the culture. Because education was seen as a social rather than individual activity, social acceptance, fair treatment, and social capital were part of the baseline for implementing a critical pedagogy (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008; Lum,

2008; Pius XI, 1929). As a result, professional development that promoted the attributes of self-understanding and high self-efficacy was a reflection of critical and socially just theory (Gimbel et al., 2011; Meister, 2010). The findings indicated that teachers regarded attributes of teachers to be promoted through professional development experiences. Personal attributes were likely to play a powerful role in shaping teachers' practices as well as their understanding of teaching and learning (Bishop, Brownell, Klingner, Leko & Galman, 2010).

Disconnect

Another sub-theme found in the examination of the cases was the disconnect of professional development experience from a teacher's context. *Disconnect* from contextual reality was defined as either the lack of engagement or lack of understanding about the classroom setting of the teacher. The essence of *disconnect* in professional development experiences was a factor for decision makers and for teachers.

The belief that positional authority members know what is best for students and teachers and mandate compliance through the form of professional development delivery, training, or scripted programming was authoritarian in nature (Hargreaves, 2007). There was pressure from institutional mandates and accountability measure for leaders that promoted a lack of response by principals to teacher input. As evidenced in research, principals perceived that they promoted learning centered leadership and provided teachers with competencies to help in their individual contexts (Reardon, 2011; Stewart, Davenport & Lufti, 2006). Pierce and Ball (2009) reported that negative attitudes of professional development came from the belief that the learning will not promote achievement. For instance, administrative planning of professional development was often perceived as disoriented, misaligned, and rushed (Guskey, 2009). Cleary, Gubi and Prescott (2010) found

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a disconnect between what leaders perceived to be valuable and the actual use of the practices by teachers in their classroom context.

Professionalism

A sub-theme that emerged within a typical sampling of the cases was professionalism. *Professionalism* was defined as skills developed to ensure growth for the profession of a teacher and about students in that teacher's learning environment. The essence of *professionalism* was depicted as competent use of skills of the teaching profession.

Teachers' perceived professionalism was an important factor in decisions about professional development. Supporting teachers in all career stages through differentiation made professional development meaningful for teachers (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). It would benefit educational institutions to promote professionalism through letting teachers design, plan, implement and evaluate professional development (Speck & Knipe, 2005). As a result, teachers could "reinvent themselves professionally, and abandon the traditional roles allocated to them-transmitters of book knowledge and faithful curriculum implementers—in favor of a way of working that legitimates their own agency and powers of decision" (Xu, 2009, p. 55).

According to Freire (1970), leaders must take care not to impose decisions but rather to organize people in order to liberate, not oppress. As portrayed in current research, with the call for democratic pedagogy of teachers, administrators built an awareness and understanding of teachers' belief systems, ideologies, and contextual experiences as well as an awareness that beliefs held by the leader become the school's belief system when making professional development decisions (Kose & Lim, 2010; Martin & Dowson, 2009).

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Institutions enhanced trust by giving support in negotiating with individuals, being transparent, and solving conflicts with legitimate care (Warren, 1999). Flint et al. (2011) stated that relationships built on trust and care contributed to the success of "those who have knowledge and those that receive the knowledge," which relates to the success of professional development efforts of an institution (p. 1165).

Technology

The theme of *technology* in the classroom context was defined as access to technological resources or training in the classroom setting. The essence of *technology* as a theme was the utilization of the technology for learning. The use of technology was addressed as a dominant subtheme by teachers in School Set 2.

"At the teacher level, evidence indicates that there may be a relationship between teachers' background characteristics such as number of years teaching and educational background factors and frequency of technology use" (Miranda & Russell, 2012, p. 654). Funding and resources had equipped some schools with technology to ensure success for students (Ritzhaupt, Dawson & Cavanaugh, 2012). According to Swain and Edyburn (2007), the access and use of technology in schools was a social justice matter because it could influence the future educational and workplace opportunities for students. Access to technology, teacher use of technology in the classroom, and use of technology in professional development experiences were all components of this theme.

Reconceptualized professional development in an organization can be pictured as administrators supporting democratic professional learning where teachers practiced deep learning and develop strategies that promote student growth (Kesson & Henderson, 2010). Veteran teachers may be more likely to participate in professional development offerings

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when these offerings seem relevant or create opportunities for growth (Richter et al., 2011). For instance, teachers may perceive technological professional development to be experimental in nature and may not see the connection between discourse and student growth (Wood, 2000; Xu, 2009). As proven by Garet et al. (2001), professional development that involved teachers in active learning activities had a great impact on teacher knowledge and changes to classroom practice, opposite of professional development that did not provide active learning opportunities (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). For change to occur, especially at the diocesan level and to promote connections with other dioceses on the national level, technological professional development should be designed to promote reflection and interactive professional collaboration in order to promote student growth (Smith, 2009).

Implications of the Research

The six themes as related to the contextual framework had implications for administrators and teachers. The dominant themes were relevancy and practicality. The sub-themes were attributes of teachers, disconnect, professionalism, and technology. The implications of these themes generated recommendations that apply to leaders and teachers regarding decisions about professional development.

Shared decisions making about professional development was in answer to the call for social justice as leaders. In this regard, the diocese and leaders in the diocese did try to reflect on teacher opinion; however, surveys were given after the fact. Participants in the case studies noted that they did not know whether their voices were heard because they had no feedback in the data collected about their professional development experiences. This disregard of the relevancy of the opinion of stakeholders about professional development was a common theme in the study. To create relevance, research noted that there should be an

individual and a collective responsibility about decision making as a shared function, not restricted to bureaucratic hierarchies but definitely respectful of the context in which decision making was exercised (Davies, 2005). With that purpose in mind, content and pedagogical selection for professional development utilizing social justice theory as a lens meant that leaders could be willing to honor faculty input about student learning and evaluation of learning (Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010; Hirsh & Hord, 2010). In essence, leadership for social justice implies asking teachers what they need. The implication for maintaining relevancy for teachers supports that leadership practice of principals should include individuals and intellectual focus to help teachers increase the intention and deliberation of the pursuit of their learning opportunities (Fenwick, 2004; Geijsel et al., 2009; McGhee & Lew, 2007).

While participation in decision making may give teachers ownership to accept professional development initiatives, student learning needs as perceived by teachers was the prevalent reason to incorporate professional development material into their classroom context (Hulpia et al., 2010; Somech, 2005; Van Duzor, 2011). Rose (2011) related that sharing and distributing of expertise helped professionals contribute to the work of teaching and learning. This implies listening to the voices of teachers as important for socially just leaders. However, the responsibility to change or reform institutionally rather than concentrate on the individual capacity for teachers was a challenge for leaders (Davies, 2005). As an example, the participants spoke about the implementation of professional development experiences that were reactive responses to safety and abuse incidents. Although the teachers were advocates for student safety, they questioned the essence of practicality in the repetition of development about these issues. However, according to Beyer

(1996), many educational initiatives and curricular reforms relied on standardization, negating the individuality of teachers and disregarding the cultural contexts in which they work. The implications regarding the essence of practicality noted that examining the context of various professional development providers as well as noting the context of teachers and settings were factors in effectiveness of training (Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen & Garet, 2008).

While some research noted characteristics that influence teacher participation in workshops including reward systems to promote motivation, this study recognized that all participants followed protocol in attending professional development at all levels without motivational rewards (Ebert-May et al., 2011). Hochberg and Desimone (2010) noted that teacher characteristics should be examined in decision making. This implies that leaders should trust teachers and acknowledge their expertise. The characteristics of self-efficacy and attitudes about teaching paired with teachers' own level of dissatisfaction with student learning may be a cause for embracing professional development (Ebert-May et al., 2011). The implication for reflecting on the attributes of teachers supports that teacher efficacy, autonomy, and control can shape teacher learning (Geijsel et al., 2009; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002; van Veen, 2003).

The influence of the principal as a supportive leader helped deepen trust and elevated the commitment of teachers (Printy et al., 2009). Leadership was directly related to the support of teachers which, in turn, was directly related to student achievement (Fullan, 2007). These relational links, defined as trusting professional relationships, created new learning opportunities and are vital to accountability efforts (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010; Lasky, 2004). However, a disconnect in support was an essence in some of the research cases. Participants in the study reported feeling marginalized by other teachers

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when trying to express their voice in opinions about professional development as well as feeling that their voice, although asked for, was not heard. As a result, teachers, often in isolation, began to take their own initiative to find professional development that they felt had relevancy for their own context. Freire (1970) stated that what a teacher needs to do to find freedom is to follow their "own intellectual path" (p. 78). With a knowledge base of experience, and because teaching is contextual, a teacher needed to evaluate situations to analyze the actions that best promoted student achievement (Stigler & Thompson, 2009). In the current study, the disconnect on the part of teachers or on the part of local or diocesan leaders were still part of the relational picture. Elements of morality and trust are factors in standing against disconnect, especially in regard to teachers' willingness to promote and sustain student achievement (Moos, 2008). The implication for disconnect supports that lack of inclusion and disregard of voice can be interpreted as disconnect by teachers.

While the influence of leaders can hold many conflicts such as personal gain, commercial interests, and financial relationships, the findings indicated that principals who considered stakeholder voice, used collegial management style in putting relationships first (Meister, 2010; Mintz et al., 2010). The social justice theory advocates for leaders, especially in positional power and formal influence, to be change agents for justice and liberation in the individuals, namely teachers and students (Bogotch, 2008; Freire, 1970; Hernandez & McKenzie, 2010). Unfortunately, in the case studies, the essence of professionalism of teachers was seen as lacking in some regards. For instance, taking attendance, mandating dress codes, and not paying heed to certification requirements were examples where teachers felt that they were not treated professionally in their professional development experiences. Opposite of these feelings, the social justice theory recognizing the voice of teachers spoke to

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the need for active, generative, and relational engagement of teachers in professional development (Crafton & Kaiser, 2011). The implications regarding the essence of professionalism noted directives spoken about in the cases that made teachers feel disengaged or less than professional.

Distributive social justice should be noted in terms of access to technology for teachers and students and training in utilizing technology for teachers. Emerging technology can be used by leaders to create high quality professional development with accessibility and time constraints of teachers (Hirsh, 2010). This implies that reframing of professional development may help support engagement for teachers on the local, diocesan, and global level. Through this model of instruction in their own development, teachers may formulate different levels of expectations for task completion and environments in which all learners can be successful (Waldron & McLeskey, 2001). The implication for technology was that having this access to alternatives or tools for learning should promote shared learning in a socially just and democratic manner (Hirsch, 2010).

The recommendations that follow were generated through the case study analysis. The recommendations are centered on the implications derived from the research, which are ask, listen, trust, and reframe. The following recommendations apply to leaders and teachers regarding decisions about professional development.

Recommendations for Administrators and School Leaders

      Professional development and organizational behaviors. Leaders who ask teachers about their needs, especially concerning professional development, helped to create awareness and responsiveness of teacher needs. Democratically speaking, the theory of social justice argued that all persons have legitimate interest in the institution; therefore one set of

interests was not prioritized over another set of interests (Marshall & Oliva, 2010).

Democratic education based on the social rights of citizens should be applicable in all

classrooms and guide preparation for citizenship, inclusion, and the learning environment

(Laguardia & Pearl, 2009). However, research substantiated that social justice values are not

being passed on to future generations, and the role of education for citizenship, seen as

crucial in democratic societies, was being forgotten in the midst of schools being utilized as

testing centers and teachers being turned into technicians (Giroux, 1997, 2003; Osler, 2000).

As social justice administrators and teacher leaders, "We must continuously strive toward the

melioration of society by participating in the democratic process, and not allow profits to

take precedence over human, nonhuman, and environmental concerns" (Ricci, 2004, p. 340).

Democratic education can be at the forefront of educational leadership in order to shift

systemic changes including changes in the organization, the social systems, and the culture

(Glatthorn et al., 2006).

The recommendation for leaders to ask teachers, in a democratic manner, their

opinion regarding professional development decisions was emphasized in the case study data.

This recommendation for leaders responds to teachers' needs by encouraging proactive

participation in decisions about their own learning, which in turn, helps teachers bring that

growth back into the classroom setting.

Asking for the needs of teachers in a socially just manner could produce powerful and

effective professional development opportunities (Lucilio, 2009). Teacher perception of

principal support was a positive predictor of the use of professional development initiatives

in teaching practice (Banilower et al., 2007). An example of alternative behavior by leaders

is isomorphism, in which administrators in an organization believe that "hierarchy equals

expertise" while social justice leaders would "recognize the expertise in others and learn and transform in order to be effective" (Rideout & Windle, 2010, p. 9). More socially just forms of management and leadership of support can cause change in teaching practices (Pierce & Ball, 2009). The essence of professionalism is mentioned in the case studies regarding the acknowledgement of teaching as a profession. Fundamental change can happen in existing structures if mutuality and equality stands in place of present structures (hooks, 2000). A recommendation that comes from asking teachers their expert opinion is that leaders who practice these structures can provide vision and inspiration by treating teachers as professionals. This recommendation for administrators creates avenues of awareness and responsiveness for teacher needs.

The dominant theme of relevancy supports administrators in developing awareness and responding to the needs of teachers. Because of the demand for organizational reform, the content of staff development may have been centered on programs that were formulated around standards and may lack the content of pedagogical knowledge (Beaty-O'Ferrall & Johnson, 2010; Randi & Zeichner, 2004). According to Lucilio's (2009) study, increased enrollment and reforms demand greater responsibilities from the teaching workforce. Other barriers to equitable education included political decisions based on educational reform, student motivation, climate of schools, and the utilization or lack of use of research-based teaching practices (Adelman & Taylor, 1999). The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (Jerald, 2006) stated that adequate knowledge of subject matter, teaching for understanding, and a caring classroom environment are all issues of importance. Accordingly, education can be approached through a reform movement that democratizes schools by creating opportunities for teachers to practice citizenship and to offer equal

opportunity for all (Laguardia & Pearl, 2009). In like fashion, Seaton and Carr (2005) detailed directed inquiry and hands-on activities as a means of promoting achievement outcomes but claimed that high stakes accountability limited the impact of professional development on innovative pedagogy. The research about these reforms did not indicate an understanding of whether or not teachers believe these reforms to be relevant in a classroom setting.

As revealed in the case descriptions, participants in this study related that survey evaluations were distributed after their professional development experiences. This negated the opinions of teachers about decisions prior to the formulation of the experience instead of employing strategies for arriving at just decisions (Keith, 2011). A recommendation regarding this theme was to survey teachers at the local or diocesan level prior to decisions about professional development. Also, sharing the data with teachers when those decisions are announced would help teachers see that their opinions were heard. Lastly, another recommendation in regard to relevancy would be to formulate professional development committees or teams on the local and diocesan level who gather teacher opinion, assess data about those opinions, make choices based on engagement, and evaluate those decisions (Marzano, 2003). Experienced administrators help teachers to analyze data and take risks, as well as provide collegial support for listening to each other to support change in the institution (Goddard et al., 2010; Marzano, 2003). These recommendations, derived from results of the findings, would help administrators and school leaders achieve their goals of socially just leadership.

When leaders asked what teachers need, shared responsibility for student achievement by teachers and administrators influenced individual performance (Lynch &

Worden, 2010). For instance, as Cooper (2009) reported, by providing quality professional development, leaders may be promoting equitable education for all students because, as noted by Kedro and Short (2004), student achievement improved in schools where teachers reported adequate training. An example of information which could be provided through professional development that reinforced teachers' actions that promoted student achievement included goal setting, planning around those goals, and executing the goal (Wetzler, 2010).

In the case study, participants spoke to the theme of relevancy by encouraging leaders to formulate professional development plans. The teachers discussed the benefit of local plans derived from conversations between principals and individual teachers. The participants discussed diocese and school improvement plans that helped professional development experiences to be sustainable and focused. By creating both short and long term plans that centered on a specific topic, teachers in the study felt that professional development would be more relevant, especially in their own context.

Professional development and leadership practices. Leaders should not only ask about teacher opinions but this study's findings spoke to the power of listening as well. Ultimately, transformational leadership ensured success through listening and empowered teachers by prioritizing resources and supporting needs in order to remedy the institutional structures of marginalization (Guitterez & Jaramillo, 2006; Hirsh & Hord, 2010). Additionally, Shields (2009) spoke to this transformative leadership as promoting equity, democracy, and social justice. As noted by several participants in the study, the large group sessions designated at the diocesan level did not promote teacher growth.

The recommendation for leadership to ask teachers what they want and what they need and, in turn, to listen to the answers, will help them to make purposeful decisions. The recommendation included using large group sessions as motivational or visionary formats while continuing the use of small group, grade level, or content-specific sharing sessions. The formation and organization of these sessions should speak to the practical needs of teachers in their classroom contexts. The essence of practicality stipulates an ability by teachers to use what is formulated in the small group session in the context of their own classroom. The empowerment of learners may lead to engagement, thus reducing organizational models of oppression (Huerta, 2009; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Accordingly, Beckner (2004) described servant leaders as leaders who are willing to empathize, listen, and develop adjustments as problems arise in order to accommodate strengths and weaknesses of people in their organization.

The practice of listening by leaders as a recommendation is supported because when administrators act as experts, it diminishes the power and voice of teachers as agents of change (Crafton & Keiser, 2011). A similar subject of teacher stories was their feeling of powerlessness or vulnerability in their own context of teaching when outside influences imposed program obligations (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1996; Speilman & Radnofsky, 1997). For instance, sometimes professional development decisions were not linked to district or schools improvement plans or student needs (Sparks & Hirsh, 2000).

The practical nature of listening is embraced by the participants in the study in speaking about the many initiatives that have come and gone in their experiences. Some of the initiatives are still utilized at a base level in their classroom; some they remember upon revisiting; and some they do not recognize as being practical at all to their own context. The

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recommendation for sustaining practicality from professional development experiences is to explore one topic over time with rigor. This recommendation stems from a creation of a culture of professionalism that can happen when there is reflective practice by leaders and teachers, sustainable professional development, and action research (Glickman et al., 2010).

Heichberger (1975) suggested that the principal is the force behind student learning and success in the learning environment because principals create dialogue and relationships with the staff that will promote discussions about positive change. Teachers should have the opportunity to ask questions and modify what is learned to fit their own contexts (Patrick, 2009). Active learning promoted talking, listening, and reflecting on content (Hanna et al., 2010). A sustainable infrastructure of support for teachers included an awareness of effective teaching strategies, identification of teacher leaders, and pursuing technology that can promote productive classroom practices (Speck & Knipe, 2005).

The recommendation from participants in the study consistently asked leaders to attend to practicality by listening to teachers and addressing their specific needs related to their classroom context. The recommendation supported the research, and the findings added to the call from teachers for principals to actively listen as social justice leaders. Professional development that occur as individual teachers work with principals to solve problems in their own classrooms can promote student achievement (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008; DuFour, 2004).

Recommendations for Teachers

Professional development and voice. Leaders should move from a paradigm of domination to trust in order to promote change and to examine the patterns of inequity in their own district or school contexts (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010; Towery, 2007). These patterns can be examined with justice and voice to understand the needs of diverse students

and for institutions to align academics for a complex, diverse and global society (Bogotch, 2008; Kose & Lim, 2010). Berg (2010) posited that in democratic education, teachers must not only know their content and how to teach it, but they also must work with the range of students and families enrolled, the colleagues who teach with them, and with the organizational structure of the institution. With leaders and teachers trusting each other as professionals, participatory democratic structures that involve shared power and decision making will not only produce better decisions but will also create a sense of ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of those decisions by stakeholders (Gordon & Seashore-Louis, 2009).

The essence of professionalism in the case study was recognized in the use of teachers' own money for professional development experiences or in participants' stories about attendance at global experiences and worry about money constraints and paperwork. The recommendation is that local and diocesan leaders look to budgets, grants, and other sources of income to fund professional development experiences. Teachers who generated their own funding or filled out paperwork for their own funding for professional development were confident in their professional life when they made choices about student learning and situations that arose in their own contexts (Randi & Zeichner, 2004). However, Hochberg and Desimone (2010) also contended that these contextual funding factors in both the school and district setting were social justice factors for decision making about professional development.

Because individuals are always in the position of "undergoing or exercising power," Foucault (1977) contended that teachers can escape domination of institutional policy by exercising personal power (p. 55). Furthermore, Moos (2008) described indirect power as a

form of relational power that works when a foundation of acceptance is formulated espousing participation, deliberation, conflict, consensus, and agreement and disagreement.

In the study, teachers spoke to powerlessness when attending faculty meetings in which they felt pressured by other teachers into not using their voice or when they tried to use their voice but were not regarded. The research suggested that, in order to alleviate this essence of disconnect, administrators use processes such as a consensus based, multi-dimensional strategy that formulates decisions with participant input to create methods of decision making about professional development that includes voices (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990). The effectiveness of empowering teachers can be assessed using growth strategies such as self-assessment or observation (Ross & Bruce, 2006). The provision of space and time for discussion upholds the reflection needed for "transformative learning" (Smith, 2009, p. 111).

One recommendation was to acknowledge teacher participation in the sharing of voices as part of the decision making process. This view was supported by the democratic participation of teachers in professional learning decisions which enables a sharing of power, authority, and decision making (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Hirsh & Hord, 2010; McKenzie et al., 2008). Another recommendation was that leaders provide safe avenues for voices for teachers by building structures of acceptance rather than of exclusion.

Reframing professional development. Teachers are called to provide contexts for affirming diversity, promoting problem solving, and enhancing learning in their classroom settings (Kingsley, 2007). As a result, teachers may need assistance to change their professional practices because of a lack of understanding of the institutional belief system, of an anxiety about change, or a lack of professional identity (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009;

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Rose, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). Instead of limiting teacher knowledge, Randi and Zeichner (2004) suggested giving teachers access to principles of teaching and learning that can be used in different contexts. Little and Houston (2003) also stated that organizations can change by emphasizing that teachers should be trained in quality research-based practices that change the language of the norm. These decisions about professional development should not be as general in nature as to touch on every teacher's context, nor should they overemphasize unity or individuality, but should acknowledge the subject area content, grade level, or diversity of students in the classroom setting (Beachum, 2008).

Supported by Beachum (2008), the participants in the study also emphasized that in order to have respectful collaboration, groupings should be formulated according to grade or content level. Additionally, participants spoke about teachers who were unprepared for small group interaction or who did not participate in professional development experiences with a motivated attitude. By utilizing peer participation and a blend of collaborative strategies, professional development can promote district-wide engagement, which is a form of interactive learning (Compton, 2010; Joyes, 2008; Orrill, 2006). The participants in the study spoke to the use of time and the attitudes of teachers who were collaborating with them as important to the essence of relevancy in respectful collaboration. The context of job-related practices and personal experiences can also add value to professional development for teachers (Bradburn, 2004). The recommendation for teachers is that leaders support respectful collaboration, examining factors such as time, teacher attitude, and grade or content levels. This recommendation calls for leaders to acknowledge teachers as having the attributes of trustworthiness and commitment in their participation in professional

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development at all levels. Social justice leaders acknowledge and support teachers with regard to these needs for professional development decisions.

According to Carver and Sergiovanni (1969), leaders should be concerned about promoting the capacity of teachers. According to Reed (2010), an assessment of professional skills and knowledge was recommended before engaging in meaningful professional development. The capacity for teachers, according to Hussain et al. (2013), included skills such as self-confidence, command over the subject matter, instructional styles, and classroom management. In turn, building professional relationships helped to validate the role of professionals (Compton, 2010). Eros (2011) detailed approaches to professional development that might further the professional capacity of teachers such as "assuming leadership roles within schools or professional organizations, expanding or differentiating roles within schools, and fostering additional interaction with colleagues, both formally and informally"(p. 65). In the findings, teachers spoke about their own vocational experience and mentioned their concern about younger teachers. The findings also mentioned working together in with partners, teams, and faculties as part of professional development experiences. A motivated teacher who gains knowledge through differentiated approaches to professional development was more likely to incorporate that knowledge into their own context (Hutchins & Friedrichsen, 2012). Social justice leaders can respond to teachers' needs by recognizing teachers as qualified, certified professionals. The recommendation gleaned from the participants' stories is to offer experienced teachers training in mentoring less experienced teachers. In this way, teacher professionalism is "enacted rather than demanded" (Teleshaliyev, 2013, p. 58).

Hirsch (2010) revealed alternatives that promoted teacher growth and improvement through evaluation by using video capture of classroom settings, ear bud coaching, classroom simulations, and on-line mentoring, all of which address individual needs and promote strategies to improve teaching and learning. Instructional modules could also be utilized effectively for face-to-face on-line personalized instruction (Ullman, 2012). The use of webinars with peer interaction at the local, POD, diocesan, national, or international level could be a way to promote teacher input and interaction. Meister (2010) attested that assessment has to include student input in regard to changes in professional development and the use of technology. On-line professional development could offer immediate feedback for many types of individual needs, including promoting classroom management, addressing standards, helping with lesson plans, offering insight into differentiated strategies, and giving feedback on assessments (Ullman, 2012).

The recommendations can be made for teachers and leaders to find ways of promoting technology in each school in a democratic manner. This recommendation from the study addresses the use of technology on three levels. First, teachers and students should have access to technology (i.e., bring your own device, laptops, PCs, Smartphones) in order to learn and grow. Second, there should be distributive justice in accessing training for teachers in technology, especially in the use of technology in the classroom with student growth in mind (e.g., iPads, Promethean boards, SMART boards, and netbooks). The third recommendation promotes professional learning networks at the local, diocesan, and global level in order to promote site-based, regional, diocesan, national, or international sharing among peers, especially in Catholic school settings.

In sum, the implications of the findings led to recommendations for social justice leaders to create opportunities to ask teachers their opinions and to respond to the needs of teachers by addressing student achievement from these responses. As noted in Table 9, the recommendations stem from creating avenues of awareness, listening to teachers, affirming the professionalism of teachers, and reframing professional development to help teachers. These recommendations speak to the root of the problem of the study by helping leaders examine professional development decisions from the perceptions of teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

In summary, the conclusion of the study included recommendations for future research based on the findings about perceptions of eight teachers towards professional development as related to the dominant themes and limitations of the research.

Expand the study. The first limitation of the study was that the study was limited to a Catholic diocese in the Midwest. Transferring this study to another public district of inquiry, to private schools or institutions or to a similar diocese or smaller or larger diocese would inform the baseline results of the data. In addition, this study could be expanded to question pre-Kindergarten teachers, middle grades teachers, or high school teachers about their experiences of professional development.

Diversify the participants. Another limitation to the study was the sample size. Diversification could occur by expanding the number of participants or through studying participants in a different sampling category or the same sampling size at a different setting. Additional diversification could occur by inviting the school administrators from each site into the study to assess administrative perceptions of professional development as well as the

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Table 9

Implications and Recommendations from Findings

Implications	Recommendations
Ask	Professional opinion
	Survey prior
	Share survey data
	Teams for opinions, data, choices, evaluations
	Short term and long term individual plans
	Short term and long term local and district/diocesan plans
Listen	Large groups for motivational work
	Small groups for practical needs
	One topic over time with rigor
	Address contextual needs
Trust	Fund through budgets and grants
	Acknowledge participation
	Provide structures for voice to be heard
Reframe	Respectful collaboration
	Experienced teachers in mentoring contexts
	Access to technology
	Training about technology
	Learning networks at local, district/diocese and global levels

use of teacher voice in decision making. A cross-case analysis between administrator perception and teacher perception could occur. The diversification could include changing the gender of the teachers to find only male participants, consider race to diversify participants, or considering years of teaching experience.

Change the methodology. A limitation to the study was the use of qualitative data for the findings with a phenomenological study. The study could be transferred into a mixed method study using both qualitative and quantitative means. For instance, the use of survey information or other quantitative data could be formulated in support of interview data. Alternatively, the mixed method format could examine teacher perceptions and analyze quantitative data relative to student achievement. The underlying question for the mixed method analysis would ask if teachers' positive perceptions of the effectiveness of their professional development decision making correlates with improved student achievement.

Also, changing the methodology to strictly a narrative study in which participants spoke to a specific professional development story or studying ethnography in the sense of the culture of a Catholic school setting could be a different way of studying the participants' findings. The research could also be informed by analyzing documents to examine School Set professional development plans and evaluations as related to the data derived from teacher perception in order to examine the context of professional development. In studying whether professional development impacts pedagogy, the study could add field observations as part of the methodology to compare teachers' perceptions of professional development to the instructional practices in the classroom setting.

Replicate the study. Another limitation to the study was the use of specific sampling of a particular group. The study could be replicated in the same diocese with different

participants within the recommended participant sampling pool. A longitudinal method of studying different participants within the same sampling requirements would be interesting in terms of data gathered from different experiences of professional development over a three-, five-, or ten-year period, especially with changes in leadership that may occur at the local or diocesan level.

Repeat the study in several years. It would be interesting to replicate the study with the same participant sampling in a three- to five-year time period as the career stage for these participants changed. Repeating the same study with the same narrative, focus group, and interview questions would provide data that would show changes in those career stages.

Build on the research questions. The limitation of the sub-question about reframing would be interesting to explore. This question served to be the least formulated answer of the set of research questions. As a researcher, my expectation of suggestions of reframing did not match the responses from teachers. A strategy that could be explored with this question may be to provide examples from the literature about reframing or to define reframing with examples. The research question could be rewritten to ensure understanding of the question.

Build on use of technology. A limitation of the study pointed to teachers discussing the theme of technology in terms of their access. Adding questions pertaining to the use of technology in the narrative, focus group, and interview sessions could provide more information about the equitable distribution of devices or the training provided on technology. The expansion of this subject could inform leaders about the use of technology in the classroom context and how this use may relate to professional development.

Summary

The conclusion provided implications of the data analysis of the study of teacher

perceptions of professional development and professional development decisions, which

helped produce recommendations addressing these implications as well as detailed

recommendations for continuing research related to teacher perceptions. Through analysis of

narratives, focus group sessions, and interviews with the participants, two dominant themes

of relevancy and practicality were determined. The subthemes of professionalism,

disconnect, technology, and attributes of teachers were also determined. Teachers perceived

that asking, listening, and trusting their opinion concerning professional development

experiences was important in reframing relevant and practical experiences.

In responding to the overarching research question, How do teachers perceive their

professional development experiences?, the case study participants indicated that teachers

would like to be asked about professional development before the experience occurs, would

like collaborative input of the experience and would appreciate opportunities for evaluation

of the experience. The participants also perceived that teachers wanted leaders to listen to

their needs, to their input, and to their opinion about professional development experiences.

The participants identified the desire for leaders to trust teachers as professionals. The

participants perceived that professional development can be reframed as relevant and

practical experiences.

For this study, the social justice theory was defined as a leader's examination of

accommodating teachers' diverse needs and noting the context of that teacher's situation

(Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009).

Acknowledging participants' voices in the study and addressing elements from the theory of

social justice helped inform leaders of proactive recommendations in response to the overarching question. Social justice leaders should look to formulate structures to support the voice of teachers in order to uphold empowerment and equity rather than pursue traditional bureaucratic thinking that limits the concept of leadership (Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Social justice leaders could step beyond the political and market forces and relate decision making to the context of their schools. In order to make significant changes, it may be possible for a leader of social justice to reframe current practices of decision making about professional development. A social justice framework could include listening to teacher voices and examining teachers' contexts as important to making changes that promoted growth. So, in essence, the social justice theory spoke to the overarching question about teacher perceptions of their needs and contexts as related to decisions made by administrators about professional development. Social justice leaders are encouraged to ask, listen, and trust teachers and reframe professional development with socially just structures and practices.

As an administrator who values social justice, I sought to provide the teaching staff in my local school with opportunities of learning and growing that would make a difference to their teaching. The exploration of this study was to understand the meaning and perceptions of professional development experiences of teachers. This study has confirmed for me that teachers are gifted with professionalism, patience, and perseverance. The honesty of the teachers in this study, the real care given to their students through their own learning, and the initiative they take to create experiences for themselves that will help them in their classroom context were both interesting to hear and inspiring to talk about with each teacher. Their stories and sharing have enlightened me as an administrator, as a researcher, and as a social justice leader.

APPENDIX A

REFRAMING ALTERNATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AS NOTED IN THE STUDY

Format of Professional Development	Reference
Culture Circle Dialogue	Freire, 1970
Needs Assessment	Dunlap & Goldman, 1990
Resource Allocation	Wetzler, 2010
Professional Development Institutes and Centers Networks Long Term Study Groups	Little, 1993
Professional Dialogue Curriculum Development	Collinson, et al., 1995, Stoltenberg, 2005
Action Research	Beyer, 1996 Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Hui & Russell, 2007; Frabutt et al., 2008; Kale et al., 2009; Lopez-Pastor et al., 2011; Ebert-May et al., 2011; Lopez-Pastor et al., 2011
Chalk Talk Consensus Boards Socratic Seminars	Short & Burke, 1996; Harste; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2007
Teaching Murals	Kaplan & Leckie, 2009
Teacher Problem Solving Interdisciplinary Teaching Training for Diverse Learning Needs	Sparks, 1997; Randi & Zeichner, 2004
Peer Coaching Study Groups Portfolios	Glickman, 1998
Rotating Teachers in Role of Principal	Copeland, 2003

Visiting Classrooms	Knapp, Copeland,
Examining Data	Ford & Markholt, 2003
Guided Conversations	
Goal Setting	
Reflective Feedback	Marzano, 2003
Classroom Application Data Analysis	Marzano, 2003
Teacher Team Planning	Blankenstein, 2004
Mentor Modeled Demonstration Lessons	Compal, 2004;
	Witsell et al., 2009;
	Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009
Growth Plans	Fenwick, 2004
Investigate Teaching Practices	Randi & Zeichner, 2004
Internships	Randi & Zeichner, 2004; Pegg, 2010
Clinical Faculty	Randi & Zeichner, 2004;
	Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009;
	Witsell et al., 2009
Collaborative Peer Groups	Shulman & Shulman, 2004
Work Shadowing	Musanti & Pence, 2010
Mentoring	Crippen, 2005; Kale et al., 2009;
	Gimbel et al., 2011
Inquiry Based Learning	Orrill, 2006
Collaboration	
Essential Questions	
Differentiated Practices	
Self Assessment	Ross & Bruce, 2006
Video Self Observations	
Professional Development Schools with	Trachman, 2007;
University Partnerships	Mullen & Hutinger, 2008
Coaching	

Portfolios Inquiry Based Supervision	Sergiovanni, 2007
Community Partnerships Field Practice Interdisciplinary Collaboration	Wood, 2007
Grade or Content Level Collaborative Grouping	Beachum, 2008
Visiting Other Schools	Bogotch, 2008
Book Studies Case Discussions Peer Classroom Walkthroughs	Easton, 2008
On-line Resources	Joyes, 2008; Shanklin, 2009
Workshop or Seminar Lecture Global Networking	Collinson et al., 2009
Online Dialogue	Damore & Murray, 2009
Job Embedded Programming	Fullan, 2009
Professional Journal Professional Learning Network Study Group	Kaplan & Leckie, 2009; Desimone, 2011
Cogenerative Dialogue	Martin & Scantelbury, 2009
Self-Assessment	McCollum & Kajs, 2009
Self Directed Professional Development	Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009
On-Site Professional Development	Stigler & Thompson, 2009; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010
Professors "In-Residence"	Witsell et al., 2009
NBPTS certification Instructional Conversations Discussions with Speakers Interviewing Experts Contextual Personal Journals Prescribed Programs	Anagnostopoulos et al., 2010 Devereaux, et al., 2010

Coursework (especially Masters Studies)	Grieve & McGinley, 2010
On-Site Active Learning	Hanna, Salzman, Reynolds & Fergus, 2010
Video Capture of Classroom Settings Ear Bud Coaching Classroom Simulations On-line Mentoring Use of Emerging Technology	Hirsch, 2010
Reflective Inquiry Systemic Dialogue	Kesson and Henderson, 2010
Small Group Discussions	Lee, 2010
Subject Matter Knowledge Pedagogical Knowledge Pedagogical Content Knowledge	Lui, 2010
Structured Feedback	Meister, 2010
Targeted Programming	Ravitch, 2010
Expert Consultants	Rideout & Windle, 2010
Apprenticeship Approach	Ebert-May et al., 2011
Alternative Methods of Certification Alternative Training Practices (Teach for America)	Gabriel, 2011
Self Directed Learning Professional Literature	Richter, et al., 2011
Instructional Modules On-line Face to Face Personalized Instruction	Ullman, 2012

LETTER OF CONSENT FROM DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY/ST. JOSEPH

DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY-ST. JOSEPH

Date: August 20, 2013

To: Elizabeth Baker

From: Dr. Dan Peters
             Superintendent of Schools
             Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese

Re: Permission to do research

Elizabeth Baker has permission to interview teachers about Diocesan professional development and use Diocesan information related to her study as long as she complies with the following:

1. She has a signed consent form from each teacher being interviewed.
2. The identity of Diocesan personnel is never disclosed in the study.
3. All Diocesan information is properly cited and accurately represented within the study.

APPENDIX C

E-MAIL INVITATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

NARRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

You have been invited to participate in a research study for Elizabeth Baker, doctoral student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. In conjunction with Ms. Baker's dissertation committee with Dr. Shirley McCarther as chairperson, we are asking you to take part in this research study because you have been a teacher in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph for more than ten years and have attended local, regional, and Diocesan professional development events. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. We are asking you to take part in a narrative questionnaire. If you choose to take part, please fill out the attached narrative questionnaire. By completing the narrative and e-mailing it back to the study team, you are agreeing to participate in this study. If you have questions, please e-mail your phone number and questions, so we can explain the parameters of the research study. If you choose not to participate in the study, simply reply to this e-mail that you choose not to take part.

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH

STUDY-NARRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Exploring Meanings of Professional Development: Teacher Perspectives

Shirley McCarther, Ed.D.
Elizabeth Baker, Ed.S.

Request to Participate
You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is being conducted at your own school site or other school locations in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

The researcher in charge of this study is Dr. Shirley McCarther and Elizabeth Baker is the student investigator. While the study will be run by them, other qualified persons who work with them may act for them.

The study team is asking you to take part in this research study because you have been a teacher in the Diocese for ten years, you have participated in Diocesan and regional professional development for ten years and you have completed evaluations about the professional development. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. This document is called a consent form. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. The researcher or study staff will go over this consent form with you. Ask him/her to explain anything that you do not understand. Think about it and talk it over with your family and friends before you decide if you want to take part in this research study. This consent form explains what to expect: the risks, discomforts, and benefits, if any, if you consent to be in the study.

Background
The research study will include questions concerning local, regional, and diocesan professional development. The commitment of lifelong learning as well as the effectiveness of educators teaching and leading other teachers led to the subject of professional development as a tool to promote growth and achievement.
You are being asked to participate because you have the level of experience needed to formulate perspectives of teachers in the Diocese.

You will be one of about 8 subjects in the study in the Diocese of Kansas City St. Joseph.

Purpose
Administrators often have provided professional development opportunities that may or may not have usefulness or meaning for teachers. The purpose of this qualitative study will be to understand the meaning and perceptions of professional development experiences as perceived by teachers. The study will note teacher perceptions of professional development

decisions. Administrators may make decisions surrounding professional development that could enhance teacher growth. The study includes noting the perception of teachers using the social justice theory which takes into consideration teachers' needs in their classroom context and decisions made by administrators about professional development needs. The research questions will include: How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences? The sub-questions used for the systematic research process will include: (a) What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as meaningful and useful?, (b) What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?, (c) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?, and d) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers? The study is significant because there is a lack of research pertaining to the understanding of teacher's perceptions and meanings toward professional development experiences.

Procedures
If you decide to participate, the following activities will occur:

A) You will be asked to write a prompted narrative questionnaire taking no more than one hour at your own school location. You will be asked to perform this narrative one time.

The narrative will be delivered to you via e-mail and can be electronically submitted to the researcher. You will be asked to return the narrative within two calendar weeks.

B) You may receive a follow up phone call to gain feedback.

The follow up phone call will be a time for feedback from you to clarifying responses to the questions.

The initial phase of the narrative will be no longer than a two week time period including up to two contacts with the researcher in the format of a narrative questionnaire and/or follow up phone call. Each contact will be no longer than one hour. The contacts will take place at schools in the Diocese of Kansas City/St. Joseph.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study for up to six months. The initial contact will take two weeks and the investigator may follow up with you up to six months after the first contact.

Participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in certain activities or answer certain questions. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Risks and Inconveniences
Potential risks or inconveniences include the loss of confidentiality or possible emotional feelings when asked questions about professional development during the narrative. Your confidentiality will be preserved through the use of pseudonyms and through careful

protection of the data. You will not be named in any of reports of the results. This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks of taking part in this research study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. There are no other known risks to you if you choose to take part in this study.

Benefits
A likely direct benefit of the research will be the contribution to the analysis of professional development in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. An indirect benefit will be reflecting on professional development experiences that have happened in the past in order to lead to a better understanding of future opportunities for professional development. Other people may benefit in the future from the information about professional development that comes from this study.

Fees and Expenses
There are no monetary costs to the participant.

Compensation
You will be compensated for your time in writing the narrative. The payment will be in the form of a $10 gift card.

Alternatives to Study Participation
The only alternative to study participation is to not to take part in the study.

Confidentiality
While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research, and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

The study may utilize direct quotes you and separate consent will be obtained. Though direct quotes from you may be used in the paper, your name, and other identifying information will be kept confidential.

If at any time during the study, you choose to withdraw from the study, study data collected before your withdrawal will be destroyed.

Your narrative answers, and researcher notes will be stored on a password protected computer that has limited access to other users. The narrative and notes will be destroyed in seven years in keeping with the University of Missouri-Kansas City Policy.

Contacts for Questions about the Study
You should contact the Office of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927 if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research subject. You may e-mail Dr. McCarther at smcarther@umkc.edu or Elizabeth Baker at eabr43@umkc.edu if you have any questions about this study.

Voluntary Participation
Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason.

You have read this Consent Form or it has been read to you. You have been told why this research is being done and what will happen if you take part in the study, including the risks and benefits. You have had the chance to ask questions, and you may ask questions at any time in the future by e-mailing Dr. Shirley McCarther at smcarther@umkic.edu or Elizabeth Baker at eabr43@umkc.edu. Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

By completing and returning the narrative questionnaire to the study team, you are agreeing to participate in this study.

APPENDIX E

NARRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name, Level of Education, Job Title, Location

1) Please submit any past or present professional development plans with this narrative.

2) Describe your personal history of professional development.

3) What factors do you think influence leaders in professional development decisions?

4) Describe the most useful and meaningful professional development experience that you have had in your career in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. This experience can be a local, regional, Diocesan or other offering you have experienced.

5) How do you perceive your professional development experiences as promoting sustained success for teachers? How do you perceive your professional development experiences as promoting sustained success for students?

6) Collaborative learning environments for teachers include a culture of respect and norms build for promoting the voices of all teachers surrounding educational discussions. For example, professional learning networks use on-line opportunities to read, discuss and aspects of educational growth. How does this relate to professional development?

7) What formats of professional development have you participated in? What use or meaning have you found in these formats?

8) As defined in question five, collaboration includes creating a culture of respect or caring, How do you perceive leaders as caring about the professional development decisions that are made?

9) Social justice is defined as the consideration of needs and contexts of teachers as related to decisions made by administrators about professional development. Do you perceive that issues of social justice are enhanced through the decisions made by leaders about professional development?

10) Have you ever been involved in professional development decision making? If so, in what manner? Did you feel that you were being treated with social justice in making those decisions?

11) How do you perceive that leaders use your voice as a teacher to make decisions about professional development?

APPENDIX F

E-MAIL INVITATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY-FOCUS

GROUP SESSION AND INTERVIEW

You have been invited to participate in a research study for Elizabeth Baker, doctoral student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. In conjunction with Ms. Baker's dissertation committee with Dr. Shirley McCarther as chairperson, we are asking you to take part in this research study because you have been a teacher in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph for more than ten years and have attended local, regional, and Diocesan professional development events. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. We are asking you to take part in a focus group session and an interview. If you choose to take part, please reply via e-mail with your affirmative response. You will fill out a consent form before the focus group is conducted. If you have questions about the consent form, please e-mail your phone number and questions, so we can explain the parameters of the research study. If you choose not to participate in the study, simply reply to this e-mail that you choose not to take part.

APPENDIX G

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

FOCUS GROUP SESSION AND INTERVIEW

Exploring Meanings of Professional Development: Teacher Perspectives

Shirley McCarther, Ed.D.
Elizabeth Baker, Ed.S.

Request to Participate
You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is being conducted at your own school site or other school locations in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

The researcher in charge of this study is Dr. Shirley McCarther and Elizabeth Baker is the student investigator. While the study will be run by them, other qualified persons who work with them may act for them.

The study team is asking you to take part in this research study because you have been a teacher in the Diocese for ten years, you have participated in Diocesan and regional professional development for ten years, and you have completed evaluations about the professional development. Research studies only include people who choose to take part. This document is called a consent form. Please read this consent form carefully and take your time making your decision. The researcher or study staff will go over this consent form with you. Ask him/her to explain anything that you do not understand. Think about it and talk it over with your family and friends before you decide if you want to take part in this research study. This consent form explains what to expect: the risks, discomforts, and benefits, if any, if you consent to be in the study.

Background
The research study will include questions concerning local, regional, and diocesan professional development. The commitment of lifelong learning as well as the effectiveness of educators teaching and leading other teachers led to the subject of professional development as a tool to promote growth and achievement.
You are being asked to participate because you have the level of experience needed to formulate perspectives of teachers in the Diocese.
You will be one of about 8 subjects in the study in the Diocese of Kansas City St. Joseph.

Purpose
Administrators often have provided professional development opportunities that may or may not have usefulness or meaning for teachers. The purpose of this qualitative study will be to understand the meaning and perceptions of professional development experiences as perceived by teachers. The study will note teacher perceptions of professional development decisions. Administrators may make decisions surrounding professional development that

could enhance teacher growth. The study includes noting the perception of teachers using the social justice theory which takes into consideration teachers' needs in their classroom context and decisions made by administrators about professional development needs. The research questions will include: How do teachers perceive their professional development experiences? The sub-questions used for the systematic research process will include: (a) What professional development experiences do teachers perceive as meaningful and useful?, (b) What professional development decisions by leaders do teachers perceive as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?, (c) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?, and d) How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers? The study is significant because there is a lack of research pertaining to the understanding of teacher's perceptions and meanings toward professional development experiences.

Procedures
If you decide to participate, the following activities will occur:

A) You will be asked to engage in a one hour focus group session at a Diocesan school. The focus group will meet one time.
The focus group session will have prompting questions for discussion. The session will be audio taped. The focus group will be conducted in one sitting with you and three other participants.

B) You will be asked to engage in a one hour individual interview. The interview will be a one time event.
The interview will have prompting questions and will be audio taped.

C) You may receive a follow up phone call to gain feedback.
The follow up phone call will be a time for feedback from you to clarifying responses to the questions.

You will be involved in the study for no longer than a six month time period including three contacts with the researcher in the form of a focus group, interview, and follow up phone call. Each contact will be no longer than one hour. The contacts will take place at schools in the Diocese of Kansas City/St. Joseph. The investigator may follow up with you until six months after the last contact.

You may opt out of audio taping. I know that I may still participate in the study even if I choose to opt out. The investigator and the investigator's dissertation team will have access to the tapes. Your specific information in the tapes will not be identifiable in the research. The tapes will be maintained for seven years and they will be destroyed at that time.

_____ I agree to audio recording of an interview and a focus group
                     contact (please initial).

Participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in certain activities or answer certain questions. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

Risks and Inconveniences
Potential risks or inconveniences include the loss of confidentiality or possible emotional feelings when asked questions about professional development during the narrative. Your confidentiality will be preserved through the use of pseudonyms and through careful protection of the data. You will not be named in any of reports of the results. This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks of taking part in this research study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. There are no other known risks to you if you choose to take part in this study.

Benefits
A likely direct benefit of the research will be the contribution to the analysis of professional development in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. An indirect benefit will be reflecting on professional development experiences that have happened in the past in order to lead to a better understanding of future opportunities for professional development. Other people may benefit in the future from the information about professional development that comes from this study.

Fees and Expenses
There are no monetary costs to the participant.

Compensation
You will be compensated for their mileage to the Diocesan school from your home school locations for the focus group session and interview. The payment will be in the form of a $10 gift card.

Alternatives to Study Participation
The only alternative to study participation is to not to take part in the study.

Confidentiality
While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Individuals from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research, and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You will not be named in any reports of the results.

The study may utilize direct quotes from the subject and separate consent will be obtained in those cases. Though direct quotes from you may be used in the paper, your name, and other identifying information will be kept confidential.

If at any time during the study, you choose to withdraw from the study, study data collected before your withdrawal will be destroyed.

The audio taped information will be stored with the investigator in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after seven years. The principal investigator and student investigator may have access.

Contacts for Questions about the Study
You should contact the Office of UMKC's Social Sciences Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927 if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research subject. You may e-mail Dr. McCarther at smcarther@umkc.edu or Elizabeth Baker at eabr43@umkc.edu if you have any questions about this study.

Voluntary Participation
Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason.

You have read this Consent Form or it has been read to you. You have been told why this research is being done and what will happen if you take part in the study, including the risks and benefits. You have had the chance to ask questions, and you may ask questions at any time in the future by e-mailing Dr. Shirley McCarther at smcarther@umkc.edu or Elizabeth Baker at eabr43@umkc.edu . By signing this consent form, you volunteer and consent to take part in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

_____   _____
Signature (Volunteer Subject)   **Date**

_____
Printed Name (Volunteer Subject)

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   **Date**

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Socio-demographic information

Name, Level of education, Location, Job Title

1) What do you consider to be an example of useful and meaningful professional development? Why would you perceive this as useful or meaningful?

2) Leaders have to make decisions about professional development centered on teacher and learner growth using parameters as well as noting organizational goals such as sustaining a collaborative culture or providing training around school improvement plans as well as management parameters such as time and space. What professional development decisions by leaders do you perceive as useful and meaningful? What professional development decisions by leaders do you not perceive as useful and meaningful? Recall the most meaningful experience of professional development. What was your perception of why it meaningful to you? Where and when did the experience occur? What gave meaning to the event for you? How did you transfer the event into your classroom setting?
What was your worst experience of professional development? Why?

3) What theories, dispositions, knowledge, strategies, approaches and understandings have you gained in engaging in professional development? What skills have you retained and used in your context from your experience of professional development?

4) Which format of professional development do you perceive as promoting your own professional self or promoting academic achievement in your classroom? Describe the kinds of change in your classroom that resulted from any of your professional development experiences. What factors have influenced your experience of professional development?

5) Social justice is defined as the consideration of needs and contexts of teachers as related to decisions made by administrators about professional development. If you perceive leaders using social justice as a consideration in professional development, describe or give examples of how you perceive this. If not, why do you not perceive leaders as using social justice as a consideration? Have you ever been involved in professional development decision making? If so, in what manner? Did you feel that you were being treated with social justice in making those decisions? How do you perceive that leaders use the voices of teachers to make decisions about professional development? Do you feel your voice is heard concerning professional development decisions?

6) Collaborative learning environments for teachers include a culture of respect and norms build for promoting the voices of all teachers surrounding educational discussions. For example, professional learning networks use on-line opportunities to read, discuss and

aspects of educational growth. In what way should leaders reframe professional development decisions to sustain collaboration, teacher growth, and reframe professional development decisions? Are there other types of professional development that you think would sustain collaboration and teacher growth? Should leaders reframe professional development decisions to sustain collaboration and teacher growth? If so, in what way should leaders reframe professional development decisions?

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Socio-demographic information

      Name, Level of education, Job Title, Location

1) *What professional development experiences do you perceive as useful and meaningful?*

a) What format(s) do you consider to be an example of useful and meaningful professional development? Why?

b) Which of these formats do you perceive as promoting your own professional self? Describe the kinds of change in your classroom that resulted from any of your professional development experiences.

c) Which formats of professional development do you perceive as innovative?

d) Which formats of professional development do you perceive as practical?

2) *What professional development decisions by leaders do you see as useful and meaningful in promoting high levels of academic achievement for all learners?*

a) Which formats of professional development do you perceive as promoting an awareness of your current reality?

b) Which of these formats do you perceive as promoting academic achievement in your classroom?

c) What factors do you think influence leaders in professional development decisions surrounding academic achievement?

d) How do you perceive your professional development experiences as promoting sustained academic achievement for students?

e) If you had a voice in making decisions surrounding professional development, what factors would you prioritize as most important in making decisions about professional development?

3) *How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain teacher growth as perceived by teachers?*

a) How do you perceive your professional development experiences as having purposeful, student focused, current or forward looking expectations?

b) How do you perceive your professional development experiences as promoting sustained success for teachers?

c) How do you perceive your professional development experiences as promoting sustained success for your school community?

d) How do you perceive your professional development experiences as promoting sustained success for the Diocese?

e) In what way should leaders reframe professional development decisions to sustain teacher growth?

f) Are there other types of professional development that you think would sustain teacher growth?

4) *How can leaders reframe professional development decision making to sustain social justice towards teachers?*

a) Do you perceive that issues of social justice are enhanced through the decisions made by leaders about professional development? Describe or give examples of how you perceive this.

b) If not, why do you not perceive leaders as using social justice as a consideration?

c) Have you ever been involved in professional development decision making? If so, in what manner?

d) Did you feel that you were being treated with social justice in making those decisions?

e) Do you perceive that you are treated as a professional during professional development experiences?

f) Do you perceive that you are treated as a professional when helping to make decisions about professional development?

g) How do you perceive that leaders use the voices of teachers to make decisions about professional development?

h) Do you feel your voice is heard concerning professional development decisions?

i) If so, give examples of where you felt you had a voice in professional development decision making.

j) If not, give examples of when you would like to have a voice in professional development decision making.

k) How do you perceive leaders as caring about the professional development decisions that are made?

5) *How do you perceive your professional development experiences*?

a) Do you feel you have ever experienced professional development that seemed disconnected from your context?

b) Do you feel you have ever experienced situations professional development where the presenter seemed unaware or out of sync with the audience?

c) How do you perceive your professional development experiences locally?

d) How do you perceive your professional development experiences in your POD?

c) How do you perceive your professional development experiences in the Diocese?

d) How do you perceive your professional development experiences globally?

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VITA

Elizabeth Ann Baker was born on July 26, 1964 in Kansas City, Missouri. She was educated in a local parochial elementary school, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and graduated from St. Mary's High School in 1982. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Secondary Education in 1986 from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. While working as a high school English teacher at her alma mater, St. Mary's, Baker was awarded a Master's of Science degree in Secondary Education Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Central Missouri in 1997. With the encouragement of administration, Baker applied to and was accepted into the Alliance of Catholic Educational Leadership Program at the University of Notre Dame in 2003. At the same time, Baker accepted the position as principal at her alma mater grade school, Nativity of Mary, in Independence, Missouri. Originally a certification program, the University of Notre Dame offered original leadership participants a chance to return to South Bend, Indiana, to attain a Master of Arts degree in Educational Administration. Baker completed this degree in 2008. Upon her return to Missouri, Baker enrolled in the University of Central Missouri's Educational Specialist program and completed her degree in Administration and Superintendency in 2010. Baker began work toward her Educational Doctorate in January 2010. Upon defense of her dissertation, Baker will complete her Doctorate of Education in 2014. Baker continues her role as principal at Nativity of Mary School.