TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
AND RELATIONSHIP TO GROWTH IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Stacey Preis

Dr. Peggy Placier, advisor

ABSTRACT

The idea that teaching quality is critical to a student’s success in school may be taken for
granted as a logical principle. However, researchers have struggled with how to identify and
measure teaching quality. This study uses teacher survey data to examine relationships between
best practices in teacher learning communities and professional development and growth in
student achievement. The teacher and achievement data are from a representative sample of
Missouri elementary and middle schools that went through the accreditation review process in

As expected, student-level characteristics showed a strong relationship with student
achievement growth. However, the analysis of teacher learning communities and professional
development and growth in student achievement showed no significant relationships. As the
pressure of limited resources adds to the expectation for return on investment, future research
must further explore interventions thought to increase teacher quality and determine if those
interventions are producing measurable gains in student learning.